

Adult Care Supervision Policy

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1. Introduction and Scope.

This policy applies to all operational staff in Adult Care who manage a caseload.

The supervision policy is to be used in conjunction with the Supervision and Appraisal document held in the [Local Resource Library](#)¹, the Research in Practice tool '[Getting the most out of supervision](#)'², and the practitioners' corresponding professional standards.

Adult Care is committed to ensuring that staff receive effective supervision on a regular basis in accordance with their range of responsibilities, role and their level of professional knowledge.

Adult Care is committed to supporting supervisory staff to have the necessary knowledge and skills to provide effective supervision.

*"Good supervision leads the worker to be confident, secure and to engage in problem solving"*³.

Supervision supports Lincolnshire County Council to provide high quality services and positive outcomes for services users, whilst ensuring that practice and conduct meets the requirements of national legislation, registering bodies and Lincolnshire County Council standards. Supervision should recognise the strengths and development needs of the worker and provide the appropriate support to enable them to achieve continuous professional development.

Supervision allows staff who work with people with complex and challenging needs an environment in which they can explore their own personal and emotional reactions to their work.

Supervision supports Social Workers, Occupational Therapists and Nurse Practitioners to meet the professional standards that apply to their professions.

Supervision must include an analysis of case load and work load management and address any issues relating to this. There should be a focus on protecting the public, delivering effective services and identifying barriers to effective practice.

¹ <https://lincolnshireadults.proceduresonline.antser.com/resources/local-resource-library>

² Research in Practice for Adults (2013) *Getting the most out of supervision*. Dartington: Research in Practice for Adults

³ Wonnacott J (2012) *Mastering Social Work Supervision*. London: Jessica King

2. The Key Elements of Effective Supervision

Reflective Practice:

Reflective practice is key to effective social work and regular, high quality supervision should be an integral part of practice. All organisations employing social care workers should make a positive, definite commitment to a strong culture of supervision, reflective practice and adaptive learning. Supervision should be based on a rigorous understanding of the key elements of effective supervision, as well as the research and evidence which underpins good practice. Supervision should challenge practitioners to reflect critically on their cases and should foster an inquisitive approach to their work⁴.

Supervision should encourage workers to reflect on their learning and record learning activity.

Quality of Decision Making and Intervention:

This aspect of supervision provides the opportunity to focus on the challenges faced by workers in carrying out their work. It includes reflection on what work has been done, plans for future interventions and actions, and discussions on improvements in practice.

There should be a focus on protecting the public and delivering effective services, with time spent reflecting on the relationships that have been formed with adults and families, and the mental and physical health of the worker.

Barriers to effective working on particular cases, including levels of stress experienced by the worker, should be identified and addressed.

The supervisor should be an experienced and registered practitioner, usually with expertise in the same area of practice, and should encourage shared professional decision making. There will be access to additional/ peer supervision sessions for workers that are not supervised by someone with the same registered profession.

⁴ Adapted from Standard 5 of the Social Work Reform Board (2012) *Standards of Employers and Supervision Framework*

Line Management and Organisational Accountability:

This element of supervision provides mutual organisational accountability between the employer and the employee on behalf of the public. It is a tool for monitoring the quantity and the quality of the work being done. It involves the evaluation of the job and the organisational effectiveness of the employee, and includes appraisal. This demonstrates how supervision is an important governance tool, ensuring that actions have been carried out in ways agreed or ways compliant to practice requirement. This accountability requires a supervisor to have suitable oversight and confidence that agreed actions have been completed in line with organisational expectations.

The supervisor is also required to record key elements of discussions during the supervision session. This may include the staff member's conduct, competence, absence management, physical or mental health concerns. This aspect of supervision is essential for all staff in the organisation, and is carried out by the line manager or supervisor as appropriate.

Caseload and Workload Management:

Supervision should include an analysis of caseload and workload management. It should address any issues relating to the time available to work directly with adults and families as well as meeting other demands. There should be a focus on protecting the public, delivering effective services and identifying barriers to effective practice. This may be included in the line manager's role.

Identification of further personal learning, career and development opportunities. Supervision in this context is about monitoring and promoting continuing professional development (CPD), including maintaining professional registration. This could include career development advice and time to explore professional development opportunities, such as further qualifications.

This can be included in the line manager's or professional supervisor's role.

3. Roles and responsibilities

"The first aim of supervision is to improve the quality of decision making and interventions"⁵.

All staff are required to fully participate and contribute to the supervision process.

⁵ Social Work Reform Board (2010) *Standards for Employers and Supervision Framework*

Each supervisor and supervisee will enter into a supervision agreement; a signed copy of this is to be kept within the supervision file.

The supervisor will manage the agenda, and the supervisee will contribute and provide focused input into the agenda.

It is important that the Supervisor and Supervisee:

- Ensure that a supervision agreement is in place and is reviewed.
- Book regular supervision slots ensuring that a suitable location is found.
- Agree a process for changing the time, date and location of a session.
- Create a regular supervision agenda.
- Ensure a supervision file is in place, which may be an electronic or paper file.
- Ensure that time and support is available to prepare for the meeting.
- Accurately record the session.
- Within an agreed time frame, provide a copy of the record for signing.

The Supervisor will:

- Undertake supervisor training offered by the Directorate before commencing a supervisory role, or as soon as it is practicable afterwards. To refresh training every three years in line with the "Must Do" learning policy.
- Ensure that the work is within the scope of the supervisee's job description, person specification, qualification and registration status, taking into account complex case status.
- Be supportive and facilitative in their approach, in order to help the supervisee identify issues, manage their practice and identify continuous professional development needs.
- Ensure that the supervisee's workload is monitored with regard to quantity, quality and balance.
- Recognise and acknowledge good practice.
- Raise issues or concerns, providing and engaging with constructive feedback and challenge where applicable.
- Provide support and advice, or help to access support and advice from appropriate sources.
- Act appropriately with sharing information where there are serious concerns about conduct, competence or the health and wellbeing of the supervisee.
- Ensure organisational policies, frameworks and procedures are followed.

- Be responsible for conducting the Quality Practice Audit Process.
- If supervision has been delegated to a senior member of the team, a copy of the supervision record also needs to be forwarded to the line manager.

The Supervisee will:

- Undertake supervisee training offered by the Directorate and refresh every five years.
- Prepare for supervision sessions, including identifying issues from their practice to discuss with their supervisor.
- Take an active role in their continuous professional development including Quality Practice Audits.
- Take responsibility for identified outcomes and actions taken as a result of supervision.
- Request support and advice when required.
- Follow all organisational policies, frameworks and procedures.

The Line Manager:

- Retains responsibility for all practitioners they line manage in ensuring they have regular and effective supervision sessions. This includes overseeing the quality of supervision even if this has been delegated to a senior member of their team. This will include ensuring that appraisals and continuous professional development is considered and completed.
- Will ensure that all staff access the appropriate supervision training applicable to the practitioner.
- Will ensure that any senior member of the team which has delegated supervisory responsibility also has the appropriate support and training to help them do so.

4. Principles and Standards

Who can provide Supervision:

- Line managers are responsible for their teams' supervision arrangements as outlined in their job descriptions.
- Supervision can be delegated to level two registered practitioners (i.e. Social Workers, Occupational Therapists and Nurses) in line with their job descriptions. They can supervise up to four non-registered social care practitioners (e.g. Community Care Officers/ Unqualified Practitioners).
- It is not within level one, registered practitioner job descriptions to supervise others however; there may be exceptions if they volunteer to take on supervision responsibility as part of a development opportunity, in order to progress to a level two position. In this instance, they may supervise one non-registered practitioner (level one) to be overseen by the line manager.

Frequency:

- The Social Work Reform Board recommendation for supervision is that a newly qualified Social Worker should receive supervision weekly for the first 6 weeks of employment, then fortnightly for the first 6 months⁶.
- The minimum standard for Adult Care workers supervision is monthly. Supervision sessions should be at least 1½ hours of uninterrupted time.

Organising Supervision:

- The venue for supervision should be private and free from distractions. There must be no possibility of the discussion being overheard. Supervision sessions can take place over virtual platforms such as Microsoft Teams if required and agreed by both parties.

Group supervision:

- Where staff are undertaking the same job role and have shared issues that are best addressed in a group setting, it may be appropriate to substitute one-to-one supervision with group supervision. Team meetings are not group supervision and should not be used as such.

⁶ Social Work Reform Board (2012) *Standards for Employers and Supervision Framework*

Requirements:

- The Supervision Agreement is a working tool to underpin the development and maintenance of an effective supervisory relationship. The Agreement should be completed within the first two months of a new supervisory relationship being established and reviewed at least once a year.
- Supervision of workers must be overseen by the team's Lead Practitioner. The Lead Practitioner may delegate the direct supervision to a senior member of their team, but the Lead Practitioner retains the responsibility to ensure that the supervision provided meets the standards set out within this policy. There will be access to supervision support and training to those who take on supervision responsibilities. Managers of staff that carry out supervision will be responsible for monitoring the quality and frequency of the supervision that their staff member provides. This will be dependent upon the persons level of experience and may be through discussion within their own supervision or where required sharing of records / observation of practice.
- As an absolute minimum, one case should be discussed in depth and reflected upon in a supervision session.
- There is a minimum standard of 1 appraisal and 1 appraisal review per year.
- Cases regarding safeguarding should be discussed during each supervision session.
- Cases with the Complex Case status should be discussed during each supervision session.
- All agency staff must receive supervision in line with policy and procedure.
- If the supervisor is absent for longer than 4 weeks, alternative arrangements should be made for the on-going supervision arrangements. This will be the responsibility of the supervisor's line manager. If a Quality Practice Audit is due to be completed whilst the original supervisor is absent, then it is the responsibility of the covering supervisor to complete with the practitioner in their supervision session. Quality Practice Audits cannot be delayed or cancelled for this reason.
- Any decisions or actions relevant to a case within formal supervision sessions should be recorded on Mosaic. The person responsible for recording this should be agreed within the supervision session.
- Ad Hoc/Informal discussions or decisions are likely to be needed between planned supervision sessions on a case by case basis. The responsibility to ensure any actions/decisions are recorded on Mosaic as appropriate should

lie with the person identified within the Supervision Agreement/Record. This should be an accurate reflection and completed in a timely manner.

- Any supervisee who is concerned about the effectiveness of their supervision arrangements should discuss their concerns with their supervisor in the first instance. If this does not resolve the matter, the supervisee should raise their concerns with the supervisor's line manager. This process should be agreed in the Supervision Agreement.

5. Additional Professional Supervision

The term 'professional supervision' is defined as that which can only be provided, for example, to a Social Worker by another qualified Social Worker. The same applies for other professions, such as Occupational Therapists and Nurses.

Adult Care is committed to ensuring that all practitioners have access to 'effective supervision'. This does not mean, for example, that only supervisors qualified as Social Workers themselves can provide social work supervision.

Adult Care recognises the importance of effective supervision and of additional professional supervision. This would be applicable where, for example, a registered Social Worker is not line managed by a qualified Social Worker, or where staff work in multi-disciplinary environments. In these circumstances, there are different means by which the need for additional professional supervision can be met. For example, the need for additional professional supervision can be met through both formal and informal peer networks.

Additional professional supervision will be arranged locally, where possible. Alternatively, additional professional supervision may be addressed through a buddy system, group supervision or by attendance at the Continuing Professional Development Days, if these are the most appropriate option.

6. Direct Observation of Practice

At least once a year, supervision should take the form of a direct observation of practice (see Practice Observation Template). The outcome will contribute to the supervisee's supervision, appraisal and CPD requirements. Supervisors should use the Practice Observation Guidance and Form in the [Local Resource Library](#)⁷.

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⁷ <https://lincolnshireadults.proceduresonline.antser.com/resources/local-resource-library>
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Observations should be made in the context of the relevant professional codes of practice and capability statements.

For supervisors, one observation will be of them in their supervisory role. The observer must obtain permission from the person being supervised, and any refusal of permission must be respected.

7. Continuing Professional Development

Supervision is essential to support practitioners to meet their professional capabilities framework and professional standards. Social Workers, Occupational Therapists and Nurse Practitioners must demonstrate continued development of their knowledge base, skills and competencies as part of maintaining registration as a professional with Social Work England (SWE), Health and Care Professionals Council (HCPC) and The Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC). All operational staff employed by Adult Care will be supported to demonstrate continued development of their knowledge base, skills and competencies.

In addition to mandatory training, staff are allocated 3 days pro rata for agreed learning. This equates to:

- 1.5 days for 0-19 hours contracted hours per week
- 2 days for 20-28 contracted hours per week
- 3 days for 29-37 contracted hours per week

This is an opportunity for all staff to undertake up to 3 days of elected training of CPD work related activities each year. This may be selected from the formal training programme offered by the Workforce Quality and Development Team or as self-directed learning.

The content of the days must be agreed with the staff member's supervisor, who should be satisfied that the time is being used productively and will be relevant to the employees agreed learning objectives as stated in the supervision and appraisal records.

Records of learning and development will be maintained within supervision records and CPD portfolios, and will support career progression, as appropriate. Registered professionals may use learning and development records to evidence continued professional development and to assist with continued registration.

8. Confidentiality

All information discussed during supervision must be treated as confidential.

There are circumstances where it is necessary for information to be discussed with third parties, such as monitoring the quality of supervision or as evidence in disciplinary or legal proceedings.

There may be cause to disclose information discussed during a supervision meeting where concerns are raised regarding a staff member's conduct, competence, physical or mental health.

Care must be taken that information is shared on a need-to-know basis only.

Every effort should be made to avoid recording personal identification of third parties, as people may be able to apply for access to such records under the Data Protection Act and the Freedom of Information Act.

The principle of confidentiality within supervision does not exclude the supervisee or supervisor from their responsibilities under the Codes of Conduct.

Where issues of a personal nature, to the member of staff, are contained within a supervision record, the confidentiality of such material should be protected in line with the GDPR & Data Protection Act 2018. For further information please refer to the County Council's Information and Data Policy and Guidance.

It is important to acknowledge, that during supervision sessions it may become apparent that further support is required beyond usual supervision capabilities. This may be work related, such as after a traumatic event, or there could be personal issues raised that are significantly impacting on the supervisee. In these circumstances, it is worth considering Lincolnshire County Council's Employee Support and Counselling Service.

This can offer a free face-to-face service providing professional, strictly confidential, non-judgmental counselling and support to all directorate employees. Please visit <https://lincolnshirecc.sharepoint.com/sites/HumanResources/SitePages/Employee-Support-and-Counselling-Service.aspx> for more information.

9. Recording

- The supervisee must read and acknowledge the record in accordance with their supervision agreement, with any notes or amendments they make clearly shown. Electronic records should be e-mailed to the supervisee to give them an opportunity to comment and make amendments made as required. The e-

mail trail can serve in lieu of a signature. Any hard copies should be kept secure and confidential and adhere to the County Council's [Data Protection Policy](#).

- All supervision discussions will be recorded on the supervision record template. The supervisor and supervisee will ensure that a true record of the session is made and is forwarded in a timely manner.
- Any elements of the supervisee's performance at work, such as conduct, competence or absence management, should be recorded on the supervision template.
- Not every case must be discussed every time. Cases with safeguarding or the complex case status should be discussed and recorded during every supervision.
- Reflective practice in relation to client specific conversations will be recorded on the supervision notes. Only actions relating to the care management function will be recorded on the service users' file.
- Supervision records will contribute to the evidence for annual appraisal.
- Audit tools and action plans should be added to the supervision file. Progress of any actions should be tracked and logged in subsequent supervisions.

10. Supervision - Quality Assurance

As part of Adult Care's commitment to ensuring that staff receive effective supervision on a regular basis, in accordance with their range of responsibilities, role and stage of professional development, a small number of supervision records will be audited. A sample of practitioners will be asked to complete a survey regarding the quality of their supervision.

This is intended to support continuous professional development, and to affirm and enhance the professional capability of practitioners.

11. Quality Practice Assurance Reviews

The Quality Practice Assurance Reviews (QPARs) are intended as a vehicle for supporting Continuous Professional Development. They provide assurance that our practice demonstrates the professional capability of the practitioners undertaking the

work.

The QPARs provide the opportunity for detailed reflective scrutiny of selected cases and are an important learning and supervision tool. They are based on the Quality Practice Assurance Standards, which alongside professional standards are the benchmark to all our practice, which should be identifiable during supervision case discussions.

It is intended that the 2 audits per year for each practitioner form part of the requirements for supervision not in addition to. It is best practice that the audit takes place within the supervision session, so the supervisee is a part of the process and that it is "not done to them". There must be specific reason if this cannot happen, but feedback should be provided to the supervisee in all circumstances. The supervisor must save a copy of the completed audit in the supervision file, and provide a copy to the supervisee (*and line manager if supervision has been delegated to a level two registered practitioner*).

Audits are a way to celebrate the positive work we do, but to also identify any learning and development needs to continually improve practice.

If there are actions to address practice and recording issues highlighted from this process, this should be evidenced in the supervision record as a way to review progress and ensure actions have been completed.

Audit feedback can also be referenced as part of learning logs to reflect Continuous Professional Development and Appraisal objectives.

12. Related Guidance and Legislation:

- [RIPFA: Getting the most out of supervision: Practice Tool \(2013\)](#)
- [RIPFA Supervision Tool Workbook](#)
- [Department of Health and Social Care. Post-qualifying Standards for Social Work Practice Supervisors in Adult Social Care \(2018\)](#)
- [Department of Health. Knowledge and Skills Statement for Social Workers in Adult Services \(2015\)](#)
- [Supervision – Guidance for Occupational Therapists and their managers \(2015\)](#)

13. Appendices:

Appendix A: [Supervision Agreement](#)

Appendix B: [Supervision Record Combined Appraisal \(2023\)](#)

Appendix C: [Supervision 1: Getting the Best out of Supervision in Adult Care \(AC\) \(learningpool.com\)](#)