

Children's Services Social Work Supervision Policy

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1. Equality and Diversity Statement

The policy aims to be accessible to everyone regardless of age, disability, gender, race, sexual orientation, religion/belief or any other factor that may result in unfair treatment or inequalities in health/employment

2. Policy Rationale

The policy sets out the Children Services commitment to providing quality support and supervision to all members of staff who have a significant role in working with children and young people.

The Council aims to provide appropriate, responsive and flexible services for the most vulnerable residents of Tower Hamlets and can only do this if staff understand what is expected of them; have the skills, knowledge, behaviours, values and attitudes necessary to carry out their roles, are fully supported in their work and are managed effectively.

Supervision is a key factor in achieving this and the policy sets out how staff can expect to be supervised and provides managers with the key elements needed to supervise staff effectively.

The policy is informed by the requirements set out in the Standards for Employers of Social Workers published by the LGA which require that they provide effective and appropriate supervision by ensuring that social workers have regular and appropriate social work supervision, opportunities for effective continuing professional development as well as access to research and-relevant knowledge

The policy is informed by the requirements set out in the HCPC Standards of Proficiency, which state that registered Social Workers have a duty to: understand the value of critical reflection for practice and the need to record the outcomes of such reflection appropriately; recognise the value of supervision, case reviews and other methods of reflection and use supervision to support and enhance the quality of their social work practice.

3. Scope of the Policy

This policy provides a framework for supervision for all registered Social Workers (whether they are permanent, temporary or agency) working for London Borough of Tower Hamlets (LBTH) Children's Services. For Social workers and their managers 'supervision is an accountable process which supports, assures and develops the knowledge, skills and values of an individual, group or team. The purpose is to improve the quality of their work to achieve agreed objectives and outcomes.'

4. Definitions, Functions and Purposes of Supervision

Supervision is a participative process through which supervisors assure that employees are performing their roles to a satisfactory standard, and have the appropriate support and training to do so in line with the policies and procedures of

LBTH. Supervision also forms a key part of individual performance management.

For Social Workers and allied staff supervision should use critical reflection in their practice to support them in *examining the power dynamics of family and professional situations and the structures which influence perceptions and decisions; reflecting on that experience and analysing our actions and feelings to plan how to act in future*

Whilst supervision can be provided in a variety of ways in Children's Services this is primarily through a regular one-to-one meeting and is an opportunity for staff to talk face-to-face with their supervisors, to influence their own development and that of the service as well as to receive support and encouragement.

The primary purpose of supervision is to achieve better outcomes for children and young people by:

- Offering guidance and support; to construct and oversee plans which provide positive change for children
- Facilitating their performance on behalf of the agency
- Supporting workers to maintain emotional resilience
- Valuing workers views and feelings; motivating them
- Ensuring the supervisee is clear about roles and responsibilities; enabling decision making on behalf of the child and the agency
- Providing space for case discussions and critical reflection; deepening their knowledge of a child and their critical analytical skills
- Identifying gaps in practice skills deepening workers knowledge and promoting a learning culture



Workload pressures and time constraints and a lack of physical space often get in the way of providing supervision. Basic actions to avoid this include: using and reviewing an agreed Supervision Contract; booking ahead and ensuring sufficient time in both diaries; using a suitable environment; using a supervision recording template; separating reflect and case supervision and using additional group supervision to promote reflection.

5. Frequency and duration of supervision

The duration and frequency of supervision sessions will depend on the setting, type of work involved, the experience and expertise of the worker and ongoing operational considerations.

- The usual frequency is every 4 weeks and no less than six-weekly
- Sessions should be between 1½ and 2 hours in duration
- All staff should receive a minimum of 10 supervision sessions per year

No staff member should go without a supervision session for more than two months and it is the shared responsibility of the supervisor and the supervisee to assure this.

More frequent supervision sessions may be required where the supervisor is, for example, working with newly qualified staff, to meet individual deadlines or targets or where the supervisee requires greater support due to ongoing performance concerns.

This should be discussed and agreed by supervisor and supervisee to avoid any suggestion that a particular member of staff is being singled out for different, preferential or unfair treatment.

The actual frequency for individual staff should be set out in the terms of the Individual Supervision Agreement (see Appendix 1) and any permanent deviation from the recommended frequency should be agreed and recorded in the Individual Supervision Agreement.

Formal supervision sessions are normally held on a planned one-to-one basis and group or peer supervision sessions may supplement these.

There may be discussions and decisions about daily work issues, problems arising, or changes in policies and procedures that emerge in group meetings and informal, unplanned or 'ad-hoc' discussions. When decisions about children have been made in between formal supervision sessions, the worker and the supervisor must ensure that key decisions made with regard to a service user are clearly recorded on the service user's record.

6. The Individual Supervision Agreement (see Appendix 1)

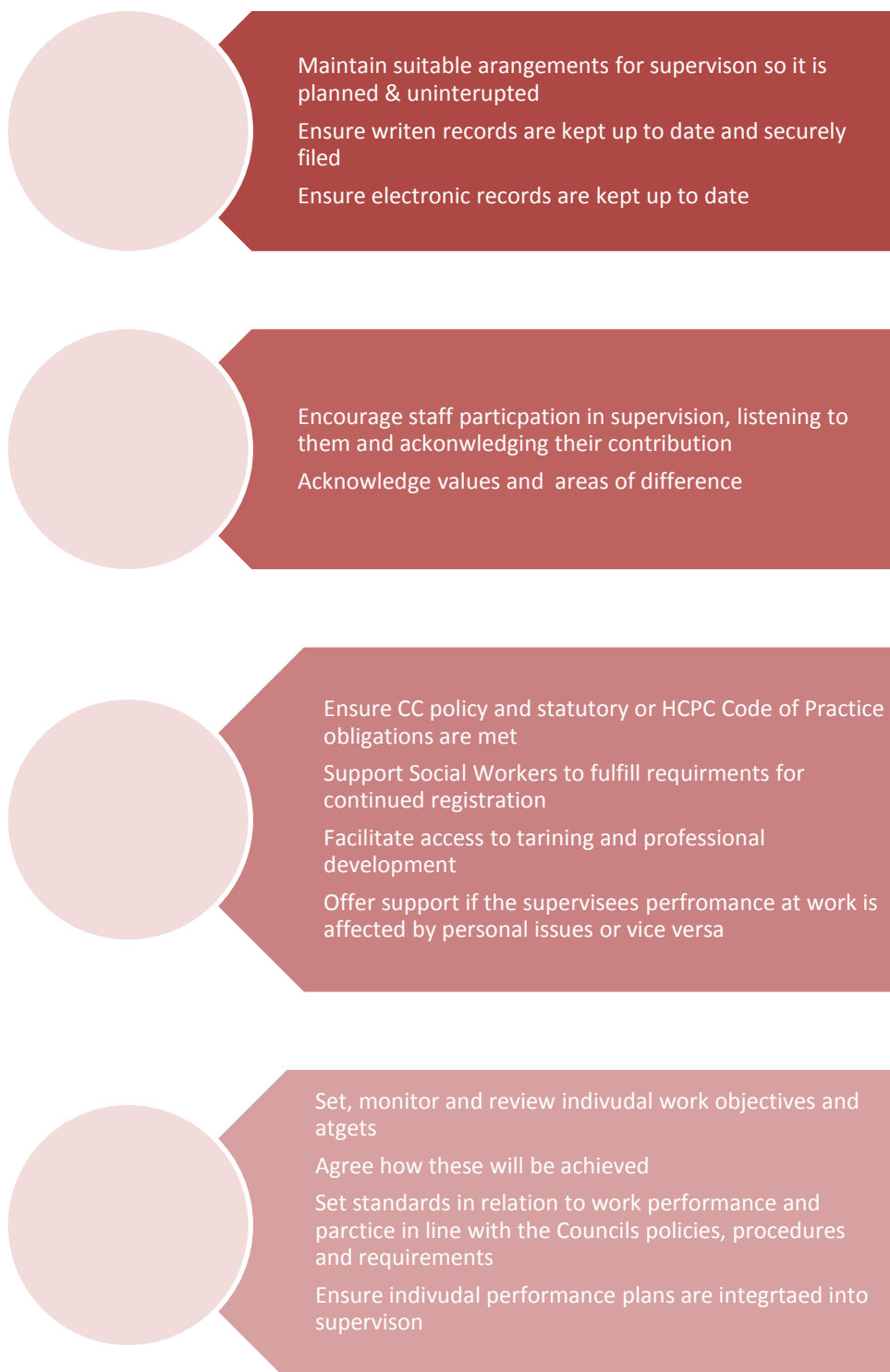
The Individual Supervision Agreement sets out the framework for supervision and provides a degree of protection for the supervisor and supervisee. It also ensures that everybody involved has the same understanding of the supervisory process within their work area. The Agreement should state the supervisory arrangements applicable to an individual member of staff.

The agreement should be drawn up using the Supervision Contract Discussion Pro-forma (see Appendix 1) and a copy retained on the individuals supervision file.

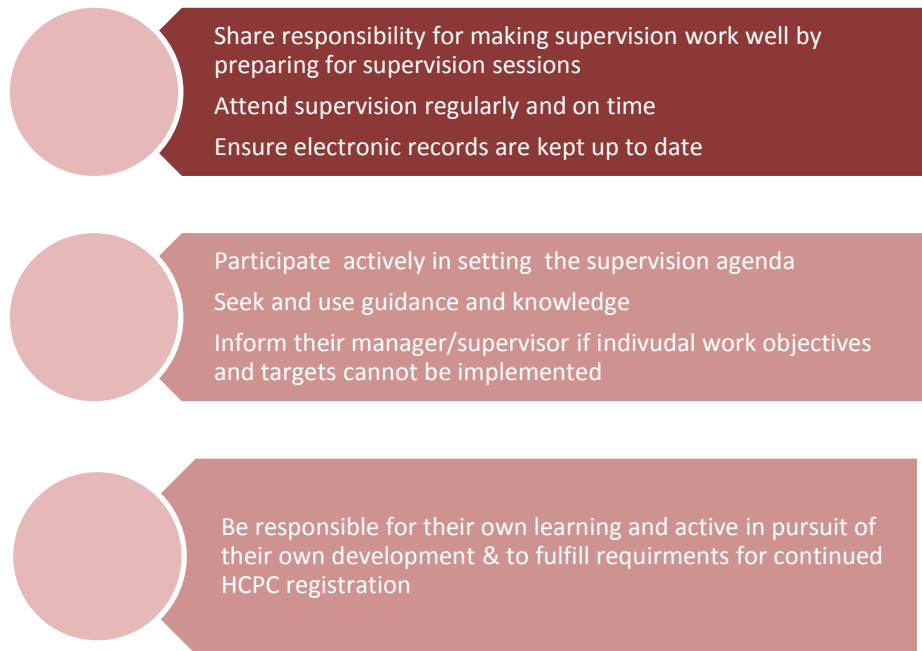
7. Roles and responsibilities

It will normally be the line manager's responsibility to supervise his or her staff. In exceptional circumstances with the agreement of a senior manager alternative arrangements can be made.

Supervisory responsibilities - manager's checklist



Responsibilities of Social Workers – workers checklist



All managers, supervisors and supervisees should ensure arrangements for supervision are made and adhered to.

Where there is an inter-agency agreement in place, this supervision policy should be used.

Individual supervision records are held in an employee's supervision file (see Appendix 4). Staff have the right to access their personal data under the Data Protection Act (1998) and may be used in internal and external audit processes.

8. Performance Management Process

Managers are expected to complete an annual 'Performance Management Review' appraisal as per the staff appraisal process.

http://towernet/staff_services/hr_workforce_development/people_management/PDRs/

Where staff members are not meeting the requirements of their post, the manager should take action to address that within supervision or in cases where this is not addressed appropriately; this should be managed under the Capability process.

http://towernet/staff_services/hr_workforce_development/people_management/managing_performance/

9. Record of Supervision

In general the supervision record (see Appendix 2) should record details of any agreements reached, who is responsible for undertaking any action and the timescales. In the case of any disagreement concerning issues discussed in supervision, the disagreement should be recorded. This is a record held on the social workers supervision file.

Each supervisor will keep a Supervision File of supervision records to be maintained throughout an employee's career. Supervision files should include a copy of the individual's job description, role profile, records of induction and copies of PDRs. The Supervision File must be kept in a secure place.

Supervision records belong to the organisation. To ensure continuity of management accountability, support and development, the records should be transferred to the next Supervisor if the supervisee is moving to another post within the organisation. The records will remain the property of the Children's Services

Access to supervision files will be restricted to the supervisor, supervisee, senior managers, and HR as appropriate, and to officers and other agencies involved in any auditing or personnel purposes.

There may be some occasions when personal information does not need to be recorded. This will normally be where such information does not have a direct impact on work performance or service delivery and it has been agreed by all parties that it will remain confidential within the supervisory or line management relationship.

Where matters relate to a service user and their family these must be recorded separately on the child's electronic file. This should be recorded in the case note 'managers oversight' A brief note may be made on the workers supervision record regarding the individual service user, taking into account confidentiality, to inform future sessions.

A legible, accessible, written record of every supervision session must be made. (See Appendix 2)

The supervisor is ultimately responsible for the production of adequate, accessible supervision records (even if they are written, with agreement, by the supervisee). Every effort should be made to ensure that the record is an accurate reflection of the interaction between supervisor and supervisee.

The supervision record is agreed by the supervisor and supervisee and signed (by both parties) as an accurate record of discussions and decisions made. If the supervisee does not agree with any part of the record and agreement cannot be reached on re-wording, they should be able to add their own comments or amendments which then become part of the record of that session.

In the case of a person leaving the Local Authority, records must be kept locally for at least 2 years. Records should be kept locally for longer if there is any possibility of litigation. Advice should be requested, if needed, from the Freedom of Information Officer.

Where necessary any targets or deadlines must be recorded to enable review at the subsequent supervision session.

It is appropriate for either party to record supervision as long as notes are shared and agreed as part of the individual supervisee's development.

Supervision relating to the child should include:

- Reason for involvement
- Significant events since the previous supervision
- What is the desired outcome
- How will this be achieved
- What challenges are there to achieving the outcome
- What is the child's lived experience and what are their views?
- What actions are required (SMART).

10. Quality Assurance

In order to be effective the supervision process requires monitoring and quality assurance arrangements. The quality assurance process ensures that the Councils expected standards of supervision as outlined in this policy are being followed:

- Staff are being supervised professionally and effectively
- Supervision sessions are recorded
- Individual Supervision Agreements are used and reviewed
- The supervision process promotes anti-discriminatory practice

The quality assurance arrangements include the auditing of a random selection of supervision files on a 3 monthly basis by a Service Manager on behalf of the Divisional Director. The findings along with data from the activities described below will be reported as part of the department's performance reporting and quality assurance schedules

Appendices

The following documents should be used as tools to ensure effective supervision.

Appendix 1 - Supervision Contract Discussion & Agreement

To be completed at the start of a new job (at every change of supervisor) and reviewed annually.

Appendix 2 - Record of Supervision

To be completed at every one-to-one supervision session (PDR Forms- to be completed at the annual or 6-monthly review or at the induction of a new employee)

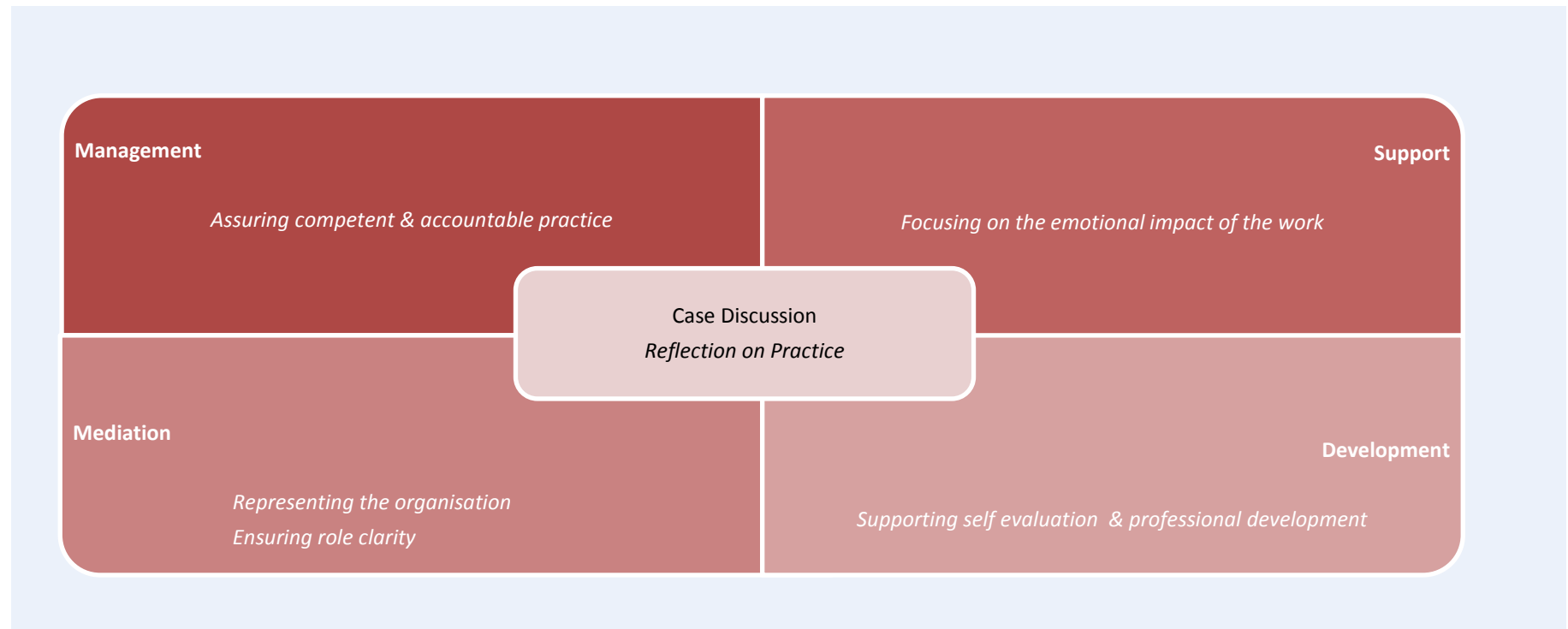
Appendix 3 - Supervision File Structure

Appendix 4 - Supervision Audit Tool

11. Appendix 1 - Supervision Contract Discussion & Agreement

Most supervision policies include a contract between the supervisor and the supervisee. The most important part of the contract is the discussion that takes place prior to signing it, because this is when supervisor and supervisee can explore their expectations both of each other and of supervision and develop a clear understanding of the expectations which can build the kind of trusting relationship that underpins good reflective supervision

This tool can be used to explore and agree the key activity areas of supervision and to record the key outcomes of the discussion in each area. This forms the contract between the supervisor and supervisee



| | | |
|---------------------|--|--|
| Supervisee | | |
| Supervising Manager | | |
| Date | | |

| Areas for Discussion | Details of agreement reached |
|--|------------------------------|
| <i>Supervision Arrangements</i> | |
| Purpose: What is the purpose from the point of view of the Council, the manager and the Social Worker | |
| Frequency: When will supervision occur Where will supervision take place How long is each session | |
| Changing arrangements: In what circumstances may supervision be canceled When might it be interrupted | |
| Agenda Who prepares the agenda How long before should it be available | |
| Confidentiality: When will information be shared outside supervision and with whom | |
| Recording: What will be recorded and how Who will record it Where will it be stored | |
| Review: When will the supervision contract be reviewed How will the experience and quality of supervision be measured and recorded | |

| <i>Management Functions</i> | |
|--|--|
| What information will be required about cases to inform oversight of decision making Who will bring information and in what format | |
| How much time will be spent on casework discussion in each supervision session Where will individual children's casework is to be discussed How will the worker demonstrate effective outcomes from their casework | |
| How will support around managing workload and prioritising tasks be provided, including recognizing the workers learning style, resources and tools to support | |
| How will the manager provide critical and reflective supervision (analysis) | |
| How will feedback about performance be provided, will this be part of regular supervision sessions, how would this be recorded, where and who might it be shared with | |

| | |
|--|--|
| <i>Support Functions</i> | |
| How much time should be spent on support discussion at each supervision session and where should it come in the agenda | |
| Where will discussions about supervisee's feelings around personal and work-related issues be recorded and who else might they be shared with How does the supervisee seek help | |
| Conflicts within the team: How will any issues affecting team relationships and functioning be dealt with, how will they be recorded and who else might they be shared with | |
| <i>Development Function</i> | |
| How will the Social Worker be supported to gain the knowledge and skills required to manage the casework expected of them and how will this be monitored and recorded How will the Social worker share knowledge and skills gained from learning and development activities What is the supervisees preferred learning style | |
| How will supervision support accreditation, registration and knowledge and skill requirements | |
| How will discussion around professional development be recorded and reviewed and who might these be shared with | |
| What opportunities will there be to develop areas of interest and career | |

| <i>Mediation Functions</i> | |
|---|--|
| How will conflict between manager and worker be dealt with, who is the third person who would be involved and how would this be recorded, where and who might it be shared with | |
| How will conflict between Council and worker be dealt with, who is the third person who would be involved and how would this be recorded, where and who might it be shared with | |
| How will conflict between other professionals or agencies and worker be dealt with, who is the third person who would be involved and how would this be recorded, where and who might it be shared with | |

Based on Research in Practice *Reflective Supervision*, 2015

12. Appendix 2 – Supervision Recording Template

| | |
|--|--|
| Name of supervisee: | |
| Date of Meeting: | |
| <u>Agenda</u> | |
| Temperature take | |
| Team issues: | |
| Duty: | |
| Professional development / training: | |
| Equal Opportunities / Anti-discriminatory practise: | |
| Leave / Toil: | |
| AOB: | |

| | |
|-------------------------------|------------------------|
| <u>Cases</u> | |
| New allocations: | |
| Previous allocations: | |
| Out of timescales: | |
| <u>Case discussion</u> | To be uploaded to FWi. |

13. Appendix 3 - Supervision File Structure and Index

Name:

Supervisor:

Team:

Start date:

| Section | Contents |
|---------|--|
| 1 | Personal contact details Supervision Contract Discussion & Agreement |
| 2 | Monitoring Sheet Supervision dates |
| 3 | Supervision notes |
| 4 | Correspondence |
| 5 | Personal development and training record - to include induction programme, training, PDR |
| 6 | Job Description & Person Specification |
| 7 | Personnel information <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Contract letter,- Starter/variation/transfer form(s)- References |
| 8 | Health and Wellbeing issues |

14. Appendix 4 - Supervision Audit Tool

The quality assurance process ensures that the standards of supervision as outlined in this policy are being followed:

- Staff are being supervised professionally and effectively
- Supervision sessions are recorded
- Individual Supervision Agreements are used and reviewed
- The supervision process promotes anti-discriminatory practice

The quality assurance arrangements include the auditing of a random selection of supervision files on a 3 monthly basis by a quality assurance manager on behalf of the DCS and monthly by Service Managers. The outcomes from these activities, including any actions required, will be noted and signed on the manager's supervision record.

In auditing supervision files managers should focus on how far supervision is supporting oversight and decision making for the child through reflective practice, if it addresses timeliness and progress in planning and outcomes and if it is supporting the worker to identify practice needs and in their professional development.

Name of Manager:

Team:

Name of Auditor:

Post:

Team Member supervised:

Date of Audit

Supervision Case File Audit

Part 1

Judgments

| | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Were the actions from the last supervision session reviewed? (Rate the evidence on a scale of 1 to 5) <i>Mediation</i> | | | | |
| | | | | |
| Excellent Poor | | | | |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

| | |
|--|--|
| 2. Were the actions from the last supervision session reviewed? (Tick) | |
| Yes | |
| No | |
| Partially | |
| Unclear | |

| | | | | |
|---|---|------|---|---|
| 3. What evidence is there that reflective casework discussions took place that then informed the making or changes of plans or actions? (Rate the evidence on a scale of 1 to 5) <i>Management</i> | | | | |
| | | | | |
| Excellent | | Poor | | |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

| | | | | |
|---|---|------|---|---|
| 4. What evidence is there that it was ensured that where appropriate case plans are devised, implemented, reviewed and recorded (Rate the evidence on a scale of 1 to 5) <i>Management</i> | | | | |
| | | | | |
| Excellent | | Poor | | |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

| | | | | |
|---|---|------|---|---|
| 5. What evidence is there that outcomes and/or risks for individual children are specifically identified? (Rate the evidence on a scale of 1 to 5) <i>Management</i> | | | | |
| | | | | |
| Excellent | | Poor | | |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

| | | | | |
|---|---|------|---|---|
| 6. What evidence is there that the case discussions included dialogue about any diversity issues pertinent to the case? (Rate the evidence on a scale of 1 to 5) <i>Management</i> | | | | |
| | | | | |
| Excellent | | Poor | | |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

7. What evidence is there that a discussion took place about the level and quality of contact or direct work with the child, that their views were included in the session and action agreed where this was planned? (Rate the evidence on a scale of 1 to 5)

Management

| | | | | |
|-----------|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | |
| Excellent | | | | |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Poor | | | | |

8. What evidence is there that the worker was given feedback on how they are performing, their areas for development and how these would be addressed? (Rate the evidence on a scale of 1 to 5)

Development

| | | | | |
|-----------|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | |
| Excellent | | | | |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Poor | | | | |

| | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|---|
| <p>9. What evidence is there that the workers own well-being was discussed in the session, including aspects relating to attendance, workload management and health and safety? (Rate the evidence on a scale of 1 to 5)</p> <p><i>Support</i></p> | | | | |
| | | | | |
| <div>ExcellentPoor</div> | | | | |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

| | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|---|
| <p>10. Was the supervision session appropriately recorded and the notes copied to the worker promptly? (Rate the evidence on a scale of 1 to 5)</p> <p><i>Management</i></p> | | | | |
| | | | | |
| <div>ExcellentPoor</div> | | | | |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

| 11. Does the Supervision File contain the following documents? | | | |
|--|-----|----|----|
| | Yes | No | NA |
| Job Description & Person Specification | | | |
| Supervision Contract Discussion & Agreement | | | |
| Up to date CRB | | | |
| Print out of current open cases | | | |
| Observation of Practice template | | | |
| Employee Learning & Development Plan | | | |
| Absence Record forms | | | |
| Return to Work proformas | | | |
| Sickness Absence Notification forms | | | |
| Self-certification of Sickness Absence | | | |
| Medical Certificates | | | |
| Occupation Health Referrals | | | |

| 12. What evidence is there of discussions about the professional development needs of the worker and actions planned to meet their training needs? (Rate the evidence on a scale of 1 to 5) | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|------|
| | | | | |
| Excellent | | | | Poor |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

Part 2 Supervisee's Quality assessment

It is the File Auditors responsibility to ensure this section is completed and returned. The supervisee should be made aware that the information is being requested to improvement management and supervision practice across the service and will not be shared



The primary purpose of supervision is to achieve better outcomes for children and young people by:

- Offering guidance and support; to construct and oversee plans which provide positive change for children
- Facilitating performance management; supporting workers to maintain emotional resilience
- Valuing workers views and feelings; motivating them
- Ensuring the supervisee is clear about roles and responsibilities; enabling decision making on behalf of the child and the agency
- Providing space for case discussions and critical reflection; deepening their knowledge of a child and their critical analytical skills
- Identifying gaps in practice skills deepening workers knowledge and promoting a learning culture

Thinking about the above please rate the following aspects of your most recent supervision

| | Very Good | Good | Satisfactory | Poor | Very Poor |
|--|-----------|------|--------------|------|-----------|
| I receive guidance and support to help me construct and oversee plans which provide positive change for children | | | | | |
| I am provided with advice and guidance which helps me to achieve my performance goals | | | | | |
| I get support which helps me develop and maintain emotional well-being and Resilience | | | | | |
| My feelings are valued your and seeks to motivate you | | | | | |
| My manager is clear about mine and their respective work roles and responsibilities | | | | | |
| I am clear about case decisions are made in supervision and how to record them | | | | | |
| My Manager makes sure there is space for case discussion and critical reflection | | | | | |
| I am supported to develop knowledge about the child, worries and strengths | | | | | |
| I am helped to identify gaps in my practice skills and opportunities to learn | | | | | |

Please return this form to the Supervision File Auditor