

SOCIAL SERVICES & WELLBEING DIRECTORATE

STAFF SUPERVISION POLICY & PRACTICE GUIDELINES Social Services and Wellbeing Workforce



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1. Introduction

The purpose of this policy and practice guidance is to provide clarity for all Directorate staff regarding supervision. This includes permanent, full-time, part-time, casual and agency staff. For allied professional staff in integrated health and social care teams and multi-disciplinary teams, supervision will be in conjunction with and parallel to any clinical or professional supervisory requirements of each profession.

There is a separate policy for staff working in direct care services.

It will set out clear expectations to ensure that all staff within the Directorate are aware of their responsibilities in relation to delivering and actively participating in high quality, timely and reflective personal and professional supervision that balances individual well-being and effective case management oversight with the overall aim of improving outcomes for those whom we support.

This includes sharing a consistent approach to assessment, care and support planning, and service delivery for children, adults, carers and families, in line with legislative frameworks, whilst allowing for different models of practice across the directorate.

There is a significant link between quality supervision and improving the outcomes of individuals, children, carers, and families with whom we work.

In line with the ethos of the Social Services and Well-Being (Wales) Act 2014, supporting well-being, prioritising safety, and promoting independence and choice is at the heart of the work undertaken in partnership with children, adults, families, and carers. This work can only be effective and safe when supported by regular, quality supervision by those qualified and trained to do so.



While supervision is an ongoing process appraisal consists of an annual meeting between a member of staff and their line manager during which several objectives will have been agreed. Progress should be monitored during supervision.

Our Commitment to Supervision – We will:

- Provide good quality, regular supervision to all staff working within the Social Services and Well-being directorate.
- Ensure supervision effectively balances caseload management, practice, and staff well-being and development and encourages reflection and analysis through appreciative enquiry.
- Ensure that all supervisors and supervisees have the necessary skills to engage in effective supervision to a consistent standard and will provide training as appropriate.
- Audit the effectiveness of supervision to ensure standards are met and take action where we fall short.
- Keep children, families, individuals, and carers at the centre of decision making.
- Keep outcomes at the heart of what we do – by monitoring, reviewing, and evaluating progress through supervision.
- Be responsive to the changing needs of individuals and families whilst recognising our responsibility for safeguarding.
- Value the importance of choice in people's lives and will seek to promote this wherever possible.
- Value the contribution made by staff and promote and support personal and professional development.

Definitions

A broad definition of supervision states that:

"Supervision is a process by which one worker is given responsibility by the organisation to work with another worker in order to meet certain organisational, professional and personal objectives which together promote the best outcomes for those who use care and support services". (adapted from Morrison, T. (2005))

A focus on practice through reflection is important.

"Where the supervisor is "curious" and asks questions designed to assist the supervisee to think around the case but from a different perspective, this can be enormously helpful. The exploration of personal and professional values is also an essential aspect of reflective practice." From *Effective supervision*, [Hilary Lawson](#) Updated: 3 April 2017 from 2011

A focus on the wellbeing of the worker is vital:

"Quality supervision must acknowledge the emotional impact of the work and be a place where the supervisee undergoes a regular "health check". Supervisees have often expressed the relief and appreciation of a genuine "and how are you?" from their supervisors which is offered as an acknowledgement of the challenges of the work and an invitation to talk through how the person beneath the professional is bearing up."

From *Effective supervision*, [Hilary Lawson](#) Updated: 3 April 2017

2. Scope of the Framework

The Aims of Supervision

Supervision:

- Ensures staff know what is expected of them.
- Ensures staff actively contribute to the organisations outcomes by undertaking their responsibilities and duties effectively and efficiently.
- Promotes and supports professional development.
- Promotes equality and values diversity.
- Ensures effective management oversight and gives assurances that risks are being effectively managed.
- Should encourage critical reflection and analysis whilst offering guidance and promoting a learning culture.
- Should enhance staff confidence in analysis, decision making and reflective practice.
- Provides an opportunity for celebrating good practice, offering constructive feedback, and addressing areas for development.
- Should ensure caseloads and workloads are manageable, to safeguard the wellbeing of the supervisee, so that children, families, adults, and carers receive a good quality of service to meet their identified outcomes.
- Address any concerns regarding health and safety.
- Reassures the supervisor that the supervisee is practising safely and in accordance with legal and practice frameworks.

Critically, for the maintenance of a healthy workforce Carpenter et al., 2013 stated:

“effective supervision is associated with job satisfaction, commitment to the organisation and retention, helps reduce staff turnover, and is significantly linked to employees’ perceptions of organisational support.”

The Principles Underpinning Supervision

- Supervision should be focussed on achieving positive outcomes for children, families, adults, and carers.
- All supervision will meet good practice guidance and be to a consistent standard, offering staff a safe and supportive space to explore, reflect and develop their practice.
- Supervision is prioritised and valued as imperative to the maintenance of a healthy and effective workforce.
- The Directorate is committed to the supervisory process and sees the quality of supervision as having a direct bearing on the quality of services and outcomes for individuals.

- Effective supervision is a two-way process. Supervisors should adopt an active reflector approach to supervision and the supervisee should not merely be a passive recipient.
- Supervision has an essential role in the effective management of staff performance and practice and is a primary means by which staff are supported to evidence accountable practice.
- Regular, planned, and competent supervision is both a right and a requirement for all members of staff working for the Directorate regardless of role or grade.
- Supervision is an authority relationship in which the dynamics of power and the recognition of difference are crucial. The good practice guidelines set out in this document value people and acknowledge and work with difference. In this way, issues relating to anti-discriminatory practice and equal opportunities should become integral to good practice.
- Supervision supports staff to identify their practice and professional development needs.
- Supervisors should ideally not supervise more than 6 staff on a regular basis.

[The Code of Professional Practice for Social Care Workers](#) tells social care workers:

“You must be accountable for the quality of your work and take responsibility for maintaining and developing knowledge and skills” and tells managers they must provide “supervision and appraisal to support and motivate staff to meet their role, responsibilities and accountabilities”.

[The Code of Practice for Social Care Employers](#) states that employers must:

“Have effective arrangements for management and supervision of workers to promote best practice and good conduct and support workers to improve their performance. This includes making sure that workers are fit to practice.”

The Supervision Model

This policy is based on the 4x4x4 model of supervision developed by Tony Morrison, which defines four functions of supervision:

The managerial and accountability function	the quality and quantity of our work
The developmental and learning function	how we can improve our practice
The supportive function	attending to our wellbeing
The advocacy/mediation function	our relationship with the organisation

For more details about each of the functions and what they include, see *Appendix 1*.

3. Types of Supervision and Related Activity

One to One

The standard model of supervision, which will apply to most staff in the Directorate, is that of one-to-one, with a supervisor and supervisee following an agenda for personal supervision and practice reflection/discussion. Non-qualified social work staff must be supervised by “*a registered social work or social care practitioner*” SSWBA Code of Practice, Part 3, page 12

Within one-one supervision case supervision is to ensure individual cases are discussed and reflected upon in depth to ensure that effective progress is being made towards outcomes, risk is being addressed and managed and that any barriers to progress are considered.

Whilst supervision should take place every 4 weeks for social work practitioners, 4-6 weeks for part-time practitioners, it is not possible to review every case in depth during each supervision session so the supervisor and supervisee should carefully consider which cases they want to bring for discussion.

It is important to ensure that each case is considered in proportion to the complexity and risk and monitored regularly through supervision. Other routine or non-complex cases should be identified by the supervisee, and a summary provided in supervision.

High risk cases, or those subject to Court jurisdiction will require more regular supervision and oversight to be responsive to need and support risk management.

Within supervision staff members’ ongoing understanding of relevant procedures, codes of practice, and relevant guidance must be tested through supervision. (This could also be tested within Group Supervision – see below).

Also, learning and development has a key role in effective practice and professional progression. The Code of Professional Practice says that practitioners should be “...*undertaking relevant learning and development to maintain and improve your knowledge and skills to ensure you are fit to practise, and contributing to the learning and development of others*” (6.9) This will identify learning and development needs that may be addressed by formal training, E-learning, or directed personal research and reading.

This process is supported by **annual appraisal**, which whilst a separate process is also integral to supervision as neither can be fully effective in the absence of the other. To make appraisal a live and meaningful experience, there is an expectation that actions identified are reviewed in supervision every three months.

Group Supervision

Group supervision involves the use of a group setting to enable members to reflect on their work. By pooling skills, experience and knowledge, the aim of the session is to improve the skills and capability of both individuals and the group.

Group supervision:

- Encourages open and professional attitudes to learning
- Uses the various abilities within the group
- Offers a range of perspectives and skills to individuals
- Supports the concept of collective practice and service delivery
- Reflects the group approach of residential and day care services
- Focuses on direct work with users and carers

Group supervision is not:

- ***a Team Meeting (concerned with team business).***
- ***to be used as a substitute for one-one supervision***

The principles outlined in this policy can be adapted for group supervision, Action Learning Sets, or peer mentoring as opportunities for colleagues to meet to share experiences, knowledge, and skills.

Group supervision will be necessary in some settings and can be used to support maximum learning and development alongside ensuring service quality. A record of the group session should be kept by the facilitator (*see Appendix 6*) and individual supervisees should complete a 'reflective log' following the group session (*see Appendix 7*)

The following link offers additional guidance on [group supervision](#). (Managers and team leaders should have activated their Community Care Inform licence in order to see this document)

The standard model of supervision, which will apply to most staff in the Directorate, is that of one-to-one, with a supervisor and supervisee following an agenda for personal supervision and case reflection/discussion. Non-qualified social work staff must be supervised by "a registered social work or social care practitioner" SSWBA *Code of Practice, Part 3, page 12*

Joint co-worker supervision

Joint supervision may provide an opportunity to have discussions with other team members who co-work cases to ensure clarity of roles and responsibilities and monitor progress outside of formal review mechanisms. The date, participants, details and what resulted from the discussion should be added by the case responsible worker to the individual's WCCIS record.

Unplanned Supervision / Informal Supervision

Due to the complex nature of social care work, there will always be occasions where formal discussions regarding guidance and support cannot wait and take place outside of a formal supervision setting. It is important that these conversations are still viewed as supervisory activity and that any case discussions or decision making is clearly

recorded on the individuals/child's record in WCCIS usually by the case responsible worker or where the supervisor may wish to do so themselves.

These informal/unplanned discussions should not be a substitute for formal supervision and where possible, supervisees should be encouraged to reflect on the issue and more in-depth discussions can take place in formal supervision if appropriate.

Supervision within the MASH

Due to the nature of the working arrangements within the MASH, the traditional model of one-to-one supervision may take a more fluid form, taking place more frequently and informally as cases dictate, reflecting the pace of work and nature of the role.

It is important that informal supervision and decision making is captured, evidenced, and recorded and that these impromptu sessions are in addition to and not a replacement for regular supervision.

Adult Mental Health Practitioners Supervision

In addition to abiding by the requirements of this policy, AMHPs must attend regular 'Professional Supervision' sessions as determined by the service. These sessions provide additional specialist support for the AMHP in their role and are provided by an external mental health experienced professional and trainer.

Management Oversight

Management oversight is different to case supervision and its function is to ensure tasks are completed on time, children/adults and carers are seen within timescales and plans are progressing without drift.

Oversight can take place during formal case supervision, discussions with others involved in the case or at legal planning meetings.

There are key trigger points where management oversight of a case is critical:

- Initial allocation – offering clarity on purpose
- On starting a new assessment – Initial checks, preparation, and analysis of presenting information
- At the end of the assessment – Making sense of the information gathered and consideration of next steps, supported by clear decision making that “shows workings”.
- Closing a case/not progressing an assessment – clear record of decision making
- Key case planning juncture e.g. Reviews, Planning meetings, Strategy discussions/meetings, Initial Child/Adult Protection Conference and Review Adult/Child Protection Conference.

- Significant decision-making points – incidents of significant harm (adult and child protection concerns), major changes in the individuals/families/child's circumstances or points of crisis,
- Case transfer and transition

Supervision Agreements

- There should be a signed agreement between each supervisee and each supervisor taking part in one-to-one supervision using the model agreement – see *Appendix 3*
- The supervision agreement forms the basis of the supervision sessions, and should cover record keeping, confidentiality, expectations, frequency and duration of sessions, circumstances under which supervision can be cancelled, and timescales for rearranging cancelled supervision.
- Establishing a supervision agreement between supervisor and supervisee will also help make expectations and responsibilities clear. This is important for ensuring a positive and supportive working relationship is established from the start and maintained.
- The Supervision Agreement should be reviewed annually or when there is a change of supervisor.

Frequency

- The standard for the frequency of supervision may vary in different settings, and for different staff groups, also considering complexity of work, and the experience of staff, but must be defined and agreed between managers of services, supervisors, and supervisees.
- Supervision on a one-to-one basis should take place every 4 weeks for full-time staff, and 4-6 weeks for part-time staff. This will also apply to agency staff. (where additional support is required, supervision may be provided more frequently)
- NQSW – First Year of Practice – weekly for the first four weeks, then every four weeks for the rest of their first year in practice.
- Social Work Students – 1.5 hours for every 5 working days. Alternative between practice educator and on-site supervisor (where applicable)

Who Will Your Supervisor Be?

- * All staff will have a named supervisor with whom they will have an explicit arrangement regarding their supervision reflected in a supervision agreement.
- * Supervision will usually be provided by the line manager or another person with suitable status, relevant training, and experience.
- * Supervisors of staff offering professional supervision will be registered in the same profession.

- * All qualified Social Workers will be supervised by a Senior Practitioner / Assistant Team Manager / Team Manager and from someone who is suitably professionally qualified to offer professional oversight of practice.
- * NQSW – as above plus additional reflective supervision from a Practice Educator.
- * All student social workers will be supervised by their onsite and (where applicable) off-site practice educator.

Recording

- * A written record of the supervision session must be made by either the supervisee or supervisor (by agreement), or in line with service expectations. For example, in Services to Children, it is expected that supervisors will always record the sessions. The record must be signed and dated by both following the end of the session – see *Appendix 4a*
- * This form can be used flexibly and may not cover all aspects in every session, depending on priorities.
- * For recording actions/decisions and rationale on individual cases please follow WCCIS guidance and templates. This should be added to the WCCIS in real-time where possible or within 48hrs – see *Appendix 5*
- * Where group supervision occurs, notes of the session must be taken and circulated to attendees see *Appendix 6*. Following group supervision, supervisees should complete a personal reflective log – see *Appendix 7*
- * The recording in WCCIS of unplanned supervision of cases should usually be completed by the case responsible worker, unless the supervisor wishes to add to the WCCIS record themselves.

Confidentiality and Access to Supervision Records

- * Supervision is a private but not confidential process, though details of any personal issues contained within the record will only be potentially available within the line management structure (and can be redacted in respect of audit or inspection activity).
- * Supervision agreements, records and evaluation forms may all be read by the supervisor's line manager and other appropriate stakeholders as required e.g., where there is a change of manager, audit/quality assurance/inspection staff, the coroner, serious case review investigations, Social Care Wales, and the Disclosure and Barring Service, where there may be concerns regarding conduct and registration. They may also be used as evidence to evaluate supervisees' progress at appraisal or in the event of capability, resolution (or grievance) or disciplinary procedures.
- * The supervisor has the responsibility to share information that arises in supervision if:
 - the supervisee's works breaches agreed standards of practice – in this case, supervision records could be used in a discussion about training and development needs or when dealing with capability or disciplinary or resolution procedures. (Refer to HR policy and procedures).

- the supervisee's behaviour gives rise for concern – the supervisor might need to refer to the line manager or Human Resources.
- the supervisee's physical or emotional health requires referral to a medical or staff care professional.

Equally supervisees have a responsibility to discuss any concerns with their supervisor's manager if they cannot be resolved together. These will include concerns about such as:

- ✓ The supervisor not adhering to the supervision agreement.
- ✓ Concerns about the quality of supervision offered.
- ✓ Concerns about the supervisor's standards of practice.
- ✓ Concerns about the supervisor's attitude and behaviour.

Where a supervisee does not feel able to raise concerns with a supervisor's line manager, he/she should contact the line manager's own line manager or another senior manager.

Cancellation

Supervision is a critical component of safe and effective practice and should be prioritised with cancellation only happening in exceptional circumstances. If cancellation must happen it should be rearranged at the earliest opportunity (preferably within 5 working days) and should not automatically wait until the following month.

Areas Of Complaint and Disagreement

- * If there are any disagreements between the supervisor and supervisee about what goes in the record, these should be noted. The supervisee may complete an electronic copy and send it to the supervisor within two working days. Both should provide electronic signatures.
- * Once both signatures have been included, the copy should be 'protected' i.e. locked.

Storage Of Records

- The supervision record remains the property of the Directorate. Both the supervisor and the supervisee are responsible for the safe storage of these records.
- Key **decisions** affecting children/families/individuals/carers must be recorded on the electronic record on WCCIS by the supervisor using the electronic document available. (*Appendix 5*) This should be printed and added to any hard copy file **only** where it is necessary for the purposes of shared hard copy files.
- Supervision records for staff within Children's Social Care are stored within the Supervision Folder on the Children's 'O' Drive. Access to this folder is restricted to the supervisor and Team Manager.
- Supervision records for staff within Adult Social Care should be stored within the Team's Folder on the Adults 'O' Drive with restricted access for the supervisor,

and Team Manager. ICT must be approached by the manager to manage who can access to this folder.

- Supervisees can save the record in their own Y drives if they wish.

4. Responsibilities in Supervision

Responsibilities of the Supervisor

- * Modelling a positive attitude to supervision, listening attentively and actively.
- * Creating an open and 'learning' environment in supervision.
- * Ensure that supervision is held in a private place, free of interruptions.
- * Use a strengths-based approach to support the supervisee to analyse any presenting problems, clarifying and summarising both the content and the perceptions of the issues under discussion
- * Celebrate and acknowledge good practice.
- * If there are concerns about professional competence or behaviour of the supervisee address these early, giving specific and concrete examples of these concerns. There is a template held by SCWDP by which to document an Action plan in relation to managing competence.
- * Promoting anti-discriminatory practice and behaviour and challenging unconscious bias.
- * Ensure that supervision does not become just a checklist, look beyond caseload management, encouraging creative approaches to the discussion of work issues.
- * Identify training and development needs and the need to consolidate practice.
- * Assist with generating solutions and realistic action plans.
- * Make any disagreements with the record of supervision known.

Responsibilities of the Supervisee

- * Accepting the requirement to be supervised and accountable.
- * Actively and honestly participate.
- * Maintain a competent standard of practice, seeking help and guidance to do so where required.
- * Express opinions, disagree where appropriate to learn from mistakes and be honest if unsure of what to do.
- * Make the supervisor aware of his or her own work and development needs.
- * Be open to feedback both about good practice and areas of concern.
- * Be open to challenge about anti-discriminatory practice or areas of bias in relationships with individuals or colleagues.
- * Engage in exploring options, finding solutions, and making realistic action plans.
- * Make any disagreements with the record of supervision known.
- * Be honest where practice or performance is affected by personal circumstances or workload demands. Seeking health and wellbeing support should be considered.

Shared Responsibilities in Supervision

- * Prioritising supervision and attending on time.
- * Abiding by the supervision agreement.
- * Having an agreed joint agenda and participating fully
- * Clarifying and agreeing standards of practice based on professional and Directorate guidelines
- * To support anti-oppressive practice
- * Identifying evidence that will demonstrate competent practice
- * Reviewing the supervision process itself
- * Developing action plans and timescales
- * Agreeing who will record the supervision session.

Breakdown Of the Supervision Relationship

- Both parties should work to establish a respectful, trusting, purposeful and effective relationship within supervision. If the supervision relationship breaks down and the problem cannot be resolved by the supervisor and supervisee, the supervisor's line manager should investigate, consider solutions or alternative options and take appropriate action. The supervisee may approach the line manager's own line manager if appropriate.

5. Quality Assurance, Monitoring & Review

All Team Managers Have a Responsibility

- * To be familiar with and follow the supervision policy and guidelines.
- * To ensure that supervisors and supervisees are fulfilling their responsibilities and that the desired outcomes are being achieved.
- * That supervision within their team is taking place in line with expected guidance and is of a high standard, contributing to achieving positive outcomes.

The Directorate Management Team (Heads of Service, Deputy Heads of Service and Group Managers) have a responsibility

- * To monitor and evaluate the standard of the supervisory process across their service area, ensuring that it is taking place regularly and meets the requirements of delivering a consistent and quality service that safeguards those that are vulnerable and promotes the attainment of personal well-being outcomes.
- * Prioritising supervision and demonstrating their own commitment as required.
- * For undertaking or supporting audit activity that monitors and reviews the effectiveness of supervision across their service area.

Quality Assurance Process re Supervision in BCBC

There will be regular audit of supervision and more details will be inserted when finalised.

6. Training for Effective Supervision

All staff who have a responsibility to supervise staff can expect to receive appropriate training to support them in their role.

All staff who are supervisees can also expect to receive appropriate training to provide them with guidance to enable them to actively participate in the process.

Training is mandatory, with a refresher required every three years.