

SOCIAL SERVICES & WELLBEING DIRECTORATE

SUPERVISION POLICY & PRACTICE GUIDELINES 2026



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Revised

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1. Introduction

Supervision is a formal and accountable process which supports, motivates and enables the development of good practice for individuals working in their relevant roles across the SSWB directorate.

This policy sets out the approach to Supervision for the Social Services and Wellbeing Directorate. This applies to all 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.

This policy provides clear principles which ensures that all Directorate staff are aware of their responsibilities for delivering and actively participating in reflective personal and professional supervision that balances individual well-being and effective workload oversight with the overall aim of improving outcomes for those whom we support.

There is a link between supervision quality and the outcomes of individuals and families that we support, with higher quality supervision being shown to lead to higher levels of outcomes for individuals.

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.

The supervision and appraisal process are interlinked, but separate processes. 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 towards agreed targets should be monitored during supervision.

2. Aims, Commitment and Principles

The Aims of and Commitment to Supervision

Supervision in the Social Services and Wellbeing Directorate will:

- Provide high quality, regular supervision to all staff working within the Social Services and Well-being directorate. Ensure that all supervisors and supervisees have the necessary skills to engage in effective supervision through the provision of training as appropriate.
- Audit the effectiveness of supervision to ensure standards are met and take action where required to improve the supervision process.
- Keep outcomes at the centre of what we do – by monitoring, reviewing, and evaluating progress through supervision.

- Value the contribution made by staff and promote and support personal and professional development.
- Ensure staff know what is expected of them.
- Ensure staff actively contribute to the organisations outcomes by undertaking their responsibilities and duties effectively and efficiently.
- Promote and supports professional development.
- Promote equality and values diversity.
- Ensure appropriate management oversight giving assurance that tasks are being effectively managed and completed within legal and practice frameworks.
- Encourage critical reflection and analysis whilst offering guidance and promoting a learning culture.
- Enhance staff confidence in analysis, decision making and reflective practice.
- Provide an opportunity for celebrating good practice, offering constructive feedback, and addressing areas for development.
- Ensure workloads are manageable, to safeguard the wellbeing of the supervisee, and ensures supported individuals receive a good quality of service to meet their identified outcomes, where relevant.
- Address any concerns regarding health and safety.

Within supervision staff members' ongoing understanding of relevant procedures, codes of practice, and relevant guidance must be reviewed.

The Principles Underpinning Supervision

- Supervision is an accountable two-way process.
- Supervision provides a supportive environment where workers can discuss challenges, reflect on practice and receive guidance.
- Supervision should identify and address training needs and promote professional development to enhance their skillsets.
- Regular Supervision ensures services are delivered to a high standard and in line with regulatory requirements
- 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.
- Staff are accountable for the quality of their work and take responsibility for maintaining and developing their knowledge and skills.
- Managers should provide supervision that supports and motivates staff to meet their role, responsibilities and accountabilities.

3. Types of Supervision and Related Activity

The following sets out the potential supervision activity that may take place across the Directorate. Given the wide-ranging nature of services provided, different settings may opt to use one or more of these supervision methods.

One to One

This is the standard model of supervision where the supervisor and supervisee follow an agenda for personal supervision and workload reflection/discussion. In social work teams, any alternatively qualified social work staff must be supervised by a qualified social work or social care practitioner.

Reflective workload discussions are required to provide management oversight as well as ensuring the current workload is manageable. This must be done in enough depth to ensure effective progress is being made towards targets/outcomes, risks are being addressed and managed, and that any barriers to progress are considered.

Due to workload demands, for example high caseload numbers or number of projects worked on, it may not be possible to review every task/case during each supervision. The supervisor and supervisee should carefully consider which cases they want to bring for discussion prior to the session. It is recommended that the supervisee complete the Supervision One-to-One Update Form found in Section A of the Supervision Record (Appendix 1 of this policy) prior to the supervision, with a brief update (1/2 sentences) relating to each ongoing case/individual/task. This will allow for a triaged model of Supervision, with the Supervisor being provided with an overview of all work underway, and enable focused discussions about specific high-priority/risk cases/tasks/projects to take place during the supervision.

Group Supervision

This involves 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***

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 2*) and individual supervisees should complete a 'reflective log' following the group session (see *Appendix 3*)

The following link offers additional guidance on [group supervision](#).

Joint co-worker supervision

Joint supervision may provide an opportunity to have discussions with other team members who co-work individuals/cases/tasks/projects 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 responsible worker to the relevant records for the individual/case/task/project.

Unplanned/Informal Supervision

Due to the complex nature of the work undertaken by the Social Services and Wellbeing Directorate, there may 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 discussions or decision making is clearly recorded on the individuals/case/task/project record as relevant to ensure a log of this has been maintained. This would usually be completed by the responsible worker, but if possible and relevant the supervisor may wish/choose to do so themselves.

These informal/unplanned discussions are not 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.

4. Supervision Organisation

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 4*

The supervision agreement forms the basis of the supervision sessions, and sets out the basics of supervisions, covering record keeping, confidentiality, expectations and responsibilities, duration of sessions, circumstances under which supervision can be cancelled, and timescales for rearranging cancelled supervision.

The Supervision Agreement should be created at the outset of new supervision arrangements such as during staff induction or where there is a change of supervisor.

The agreement should be reviewed annually or as required if sooner.

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.

Who Will Your Supervisor Be?

All staff will have a named supervisor with whom they will have a supervision agreement. This will usually be their line manager, unless another individual with suitable status, relevant training, and experience has been identified.

Supervisors of staff offering professional supervision will be registered in the same profession.

Recording

A written record of the supervision session must be made in line with service expectations. The record must be signed and dated by both following the end of the session – see *Appendix 1*

This form can be used flexibly and may not cover all aspects in every session, depending on priorities.

All recording must be completed and stored in the relevant place in a timely manner. Any additional associated records specified for any service or role completed within the relevant timescales. Supervision records are not to be stored on private drives as this disables the ability to conduct Quality Assurance activity.

Where discussions have taken place regarding a child or individual, this must be recorded on the Local Authority's case management system. This also includes non-case management services (such as early help or fostering for example) and the child/individual's social worker must be made aware of the record.

Confidentiality and Access to Supervision Records

Supervision is a private but not confidential process as the supervisor has the responsibility to share information of concern. Any details of personal issues contained within the record will only be potentially shared within the line management structure if relevant and required. These must always 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 Baring 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.
- 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.

Cancellation

Supervision 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 must not 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.

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.

Storage Of Records

The supervision record remains the property of the Directorate.

Where discussions have taken place regarding a child or individual, this must be recorded on Local Authority's case management system.

Supervision records for staff within Children and Family Services are stored within the Supervision Folder on the Children and Family Services shared Drive. Access to this folder is restricted to the supervisor and Team Manager.

Supervision records for staff within Adult Social Care are stored within the Team's Folder on the Adults Shared Drive with restricted access for the supervisor, and Team Manager.

ICT must be approached by the manager to manage who can access the supervision folder.

It is recommended that staff save the record in their own Y drives for their own records.

It is the responsibility of Senior and Service Managers to ensure all supervising staff have the relevant access to the correct folders and drives to enable appropriate supervision record storage.

When a person moves from their post, it is the responsibility of the line manager to notify ICT if there are changes required in relation to their permissions on the Supervision folders within the drive

5. Responsibilities in Supervision

Responsibilities of the Supervisor

- * Create an open and 'learning' environment in supervision.
- * Ensure that supervision is held in a private place, free of interruptions.
- * Celebrate and acknowledge good practice.
- * Use approaches consistent with the models of practice to support the supervisee to analyse any presenting problems, clarifying and summarising both the content and the perceptions of the issues under discussion
- * If there are concerns about professional competence or behaviour of the supervisee address these early, giving specific and concrete examples of these concerns.
- * 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 their 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.
- * Modelling a positive attitude to supervision, listening attentively and actively.
- * 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.

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.
- * To ensure that records are stored in an appropriate manner to enable audit activity to take place.

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.
- * To ensure appropriate storage activity is taking place to enable audit activity to accurately reflect supervision activity.

6. Quality Assurance, Monitoring & Review

Management and Leadership Quality Assurance activity in which practice actions and timescales are identified must be recorded within formal supervisions in line with the Assuring Quality Framework.

7. Training and CPD

Training is mandatory, with a refresher required every three years. Training is provided for both staff providing supervision and receiving supervision.

Learning and development is acknowledged as playing a key part in effective practice and professional progression. It is expected that staff should be undertaking relevant learning and development to maintain and improve their knowledge and skills to ensure they are fit to practice, and contribute to the learning and development of others. This discussion as a part of the supervision will help identify learning and development needs that may be addressed by formal training, E-learning, or directed personal research and reading.