Leeds City Council
Children's Services
Children's Social Work Service

Case
Supervision

Personal
Supervision

Workforce
Development

Quality
Assurance

Group
Supervision

Appraisal
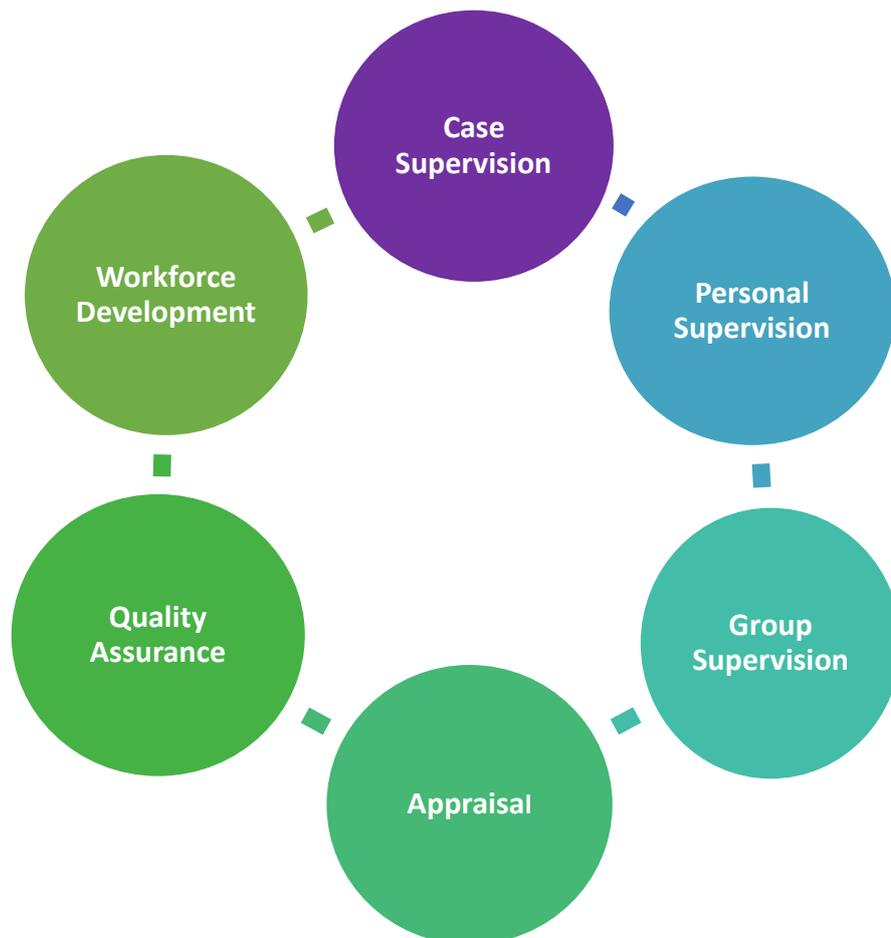
'Making a Difference'

Staff Supervision:
Policy, Procedure and Guidance

March 2016

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1. Scope of policy, procedure and guidance

'Making a Difference' – Staff Supervision: Policy, Procedure and Guidance sets out how supervision is carried out within Children's Social Work Service and Child Health and Disability Social Work in Leeds. It encompasses: social work (field work); residential work; fostering; and adoption.

Included in the scope of this policy, procedure and guidance are social workers, newly qualified social workers and unqualified social care support staff in all settings throughout Leeds City Council Children's Services.

2. Supervision Policy

2.1 Introduction

'Supervision is the cornerstone of all good social work practice'
(Lord Laming, Victoria Climbié Inquiry Report, 2003)

It is a fundamental belief in Leeds Children's Services that our staff are the most important asset in fulfilling our responsibility to provide a quality service to service users. The supervision and development of all staff are significant processes in the success of the organisation. This is consistent with the Council's value of 'Working as a team for Leeds'.

Supervision is an important right and benefit for all those working in social care. It benefits the individual, the organisation and indirectly, *as part of an intervention*, it benefits those who use services. Supervision which supports staff to critically analyse, reflect on their practice and to manage the emotional impact of their work will result in better outcomes for service users.

Supervision arguably has the greatest influence on practice other than the practitioner her / himself. Managers, supervisors and practitioners (supervisees) are jointly responsible for ensuring that supervision meets the requirements as set out in this policy.

Leeds City Council aims to provide appropriate, responsive and flexible services for the most vulnerable citizens of Leeds and can only do this if the staff employed by Children's Services:

- Understand what is expected of them;
- Have the skills, knowledge, behaviours, values and attitudes necessary to carry out their role; and
- Are fully supported in their work and managed effectively.

Supervision is one of the ways that this can be achieved. All staff have a right to expect supervision which is appropriate to their needs and that of the organisation. This policy sets out how staff can expect to be supervised and provides managers with the key elements needed to supervise staff effectively.

The aim of this policy is to provide a framework for the one to one supervision of all children's services social care staff with client contact. This policy has been written, following consultation, to ensure it meets the needs of the service, the staff and their supervisors, regardless of the professional area in which they work. The ethos and context of this policy is communicated through regular training for managers (supervisors) and staff

(supervisees). This framework is intended to provide an understanding about the requirements and processes of staff supervision. This framework consists of:-

- Policy for Supervision;
- Procedure for Supervision;
- Practice Guidance for Supervision; and
- Forms and guidance tools for use within supervision. – See the [Forms Library](#)

2.2 Definition of Supervision
Supervision is a regular one to one meeting between the supervisor and supervisee in order to meet organisational, professional and personal objectives.

2.3 Context:
This policy has been developed within the context of the following standards and guidance:
- Leeds City Council Children's Social Work Service Practice Standards Manual (2010)
- [Children's Homes Regulations 2015.](#)
- [Fostering Services: National Minimum Standards 2011.](#) These standards also specify the requirements for supervision of foster carers.
- [Adoption: National Minimum Standards 2013.](#)
- Standard 5 of the revised Standards for Employers of Social Workers in England, Effective and appropriate Supervision: [The Standards for Employers of Social Workers in England](#) published by the Local Government Association (2014);
- The Assessed and Supported Year in Employment 2015 guidance;
- The Council's policy and procedures for staff appraisal;
- The Children and Families Trust Board and Leeds Safeguarding Children Board: [Supervision: Policy and Guidance – Minimum standards for the supervision of staff and volunteers working with children, young people and families](#); and
- Leeds restorative practice approach.

And the following text and research:
- Morrison, T (2005) Staff Supervision in Social Care: Making a Real Difference to Staff and Service Users, (3rd edit.) Pavilion, Brighton;
- Morrison, T (2009) Guide to the Supervision of Newly Qualified Social Workers. CWDC Leeds; and
- CWDC/Skills4Care (2007) Providing Effective Supervision: Effective Workforce Development Tool. CWDC/Skills4Care Leeds.


2.4 Theoretical Framework
This policy, procedure and guidance draws on the work of Tony Morrison and his publication - 'Staff Supervision in Social Care' (2005) - and endorses the approach using the Kolb Experiential Learning Cycle (adapted by Morrison, 2005) often referred to as the 4x4x4 supervision model.

'The importance of getting the supervision of staff right in social care, and of positive role modelling by managers, cannot be overstated. The quality of services to vulnerable users and the level of staff morale, skills and motivation are all inextricably bound up with the fate of supervision and the degree to which supervisors and managers model the attitudes and behaviours that the organisation wishes its frontline staff to adopt. Put starkly, it is not the

existence of supervision per se that makes a difference; what is necessary is good supervision' (Tony Morrison- Staff Supervision in Social Care).

This model has three fundamental elements which together provided an integrated framework for supervision that can be adapted to work effectively across both health and Social Care Settings. The three elements are:

- 4 Functions of supervision – Management, Development, Mediation, Support
- 4 Stakeholders in the supervisory process – Service Users, Staff, Organisation, Partners
- 4 Stages of the Kolb learning cycle – Experience, reflection, analysis, plans and action

4x4x4 Model
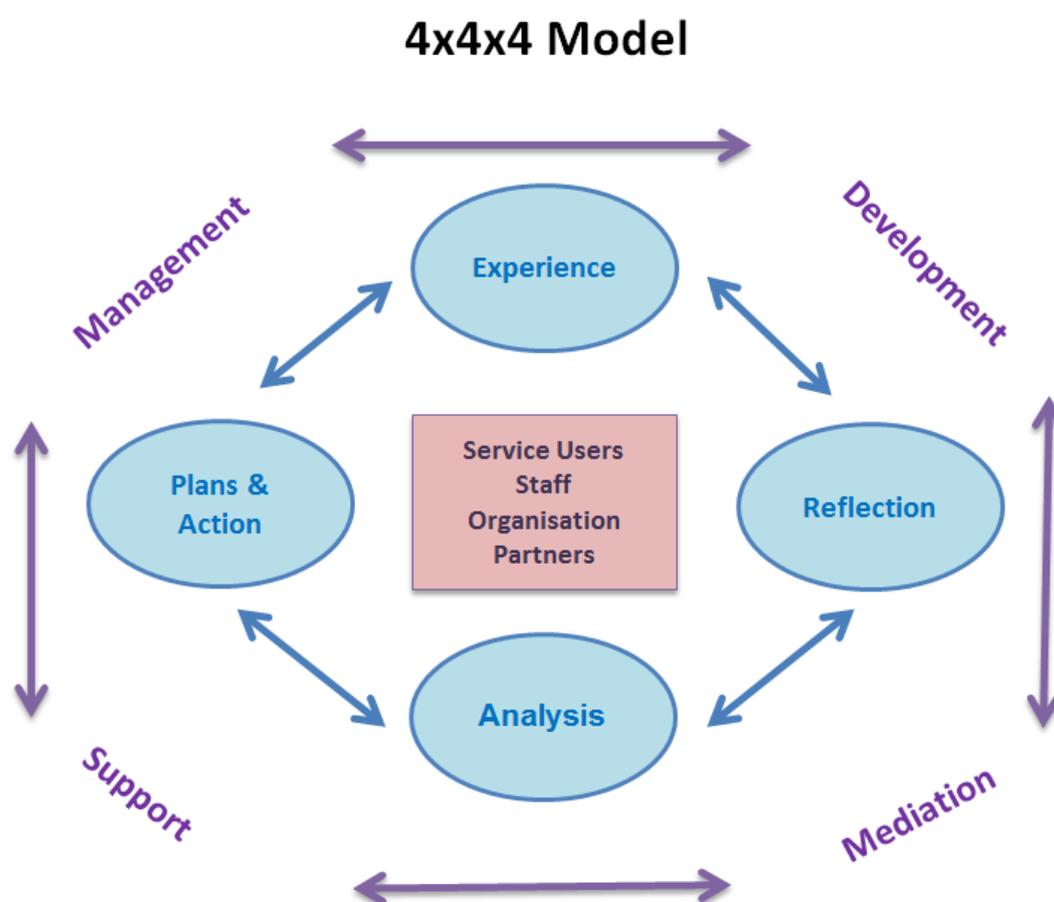
Adapted from Morrison, 2005

3. Supervision Procedure

3.1 Frequency of Supervision
The frequency of supervision will be dependent on the role you play within the organisation, your skills, experiences, team requirements and government/professional guidelines. The guidance for staff in different roles is included at **section 3.7.**

Case supervision - the frequency for discussion and review of all cases for children and young people should be three monthly at a minimum or more frequent if this is required due to the particular circumstances. This includes children and young people subject to a Child in need plan, Child Protection plan and Looked after Children plan.

Personal supervision - you and your supervisor should agree on the duration and frequency of your supervision taking into account your experience, the complexity of your work and the professional standards to be met. It will be appropriate to arrange for more frequent supervision for staff who are newly qualified or new to Children's Services but also if there are particular pieces of work which need more time in supervision.

Supervision meetings must be planned a minimum of three months in advance.

3.2 Supervisor / Supervisee Ratios
It is difficult to give an explicit numerical recommendation as the nature of roles across children's services varies significantly, and with it the need and frequency of supervision. The frequency of supervision delivery will also vary according to the experience and development of the individual worker and their personal circumstances at the time. However, as a general guide, for those supervisors who directly supervise staff having face to face contact with children and families the recommended maximum ratio is 1 Supervisor to 8-10 supervisees.

Where that ratio is exceeded the line manager should review the arrangements to ensure that any potentially negative impact is reduced. This may involve agreeing a different frequency for supervision, arranging for more experienced staff to take on some supervisory responsibilities, supplementing 1:1 supervisions with group supervision. It must be remembered that all supervisees are entitled to 1:1 supervision and that any alternative arrangements should complement and not replace it.

3.3 Newly qualified social workers
The Assessed and Supported Year in Employment (ASYE) was recommended by the Social Work Task Force and introduced in September 2012. It replaces all former arrangements for newly qualified social workers.

When supervising newly qualified social workers, team managers must refer to ASYE Booklet and other ASYE related documents.

The ASYE is based on the expectation that NQSWs will have:
- a reduced caseload
- regular supervision – up to 1 ½ hours duration of uninterrupted time, weekly for the first 6 weeks; fortnightly up to the 6 month review and at least monthly thereafter

- protected professional development time – 10% of their working week
- regular reviews – 3, 6 and 9 with the final review 11 months post starting the ASYE programme
- continuous holistic assessment

3.4 Mentoring and co-working

In addition to formal case supervision and personal supervision, Advanced Practitioners have mentoring sessions with ASYEs on a fortnightly basis. These sessions can be individual or group meetings.

3.5 Residential, fostering and adoption services

Colleagues working in residential services must receive supervision to meet the requirements of the Children's Homes Regulations 2015.

Colleagues working in fostering must receive supervision to meet the requirements of the Fostering Services: National Minimum Standards 2011. These standards also specify the requirements for supervision of foster carers.

Colleagues working in adoption must receive supervision to meet the requirements of the Adoption: National Minimum Standards 2013.

3.6 Group Supervision

Group supervision may be used to complement 1:1 supervision. It cannot be used as an alternative to 1:1 supervision. It can be particularly useful within a residential setting, with groups of ASYE's, with teams implementing change etc. See **section 4.9** for practice guidance on group supervision.

3.7 Summary of frequency of supervision

Which staff	Frequency
Non-qualified social work qualified staff	Monthly by Team Manager or Advanced Practitioner
Student Social Workers	Weekly then fortnightly at a point agreed by the Practice Educator and the student – by a Practice Educator who has completed the Professional Standards for Social Work (PEPS) training
Newly qualified social workers / Assessed and Supported Year in Employment (ASYE)	Regular supervision: Up to 1 ½ hours duration of uninterrupted time, weekly for the first 6 weeks; fortnightly up to the 6 month review and at least monthly thereafter by Team Manager
Social Workers returning to work or who have had a major change of role	Every two weeks for an agreed period, then monthly by Team Manager
Social Workers with more than 12 months experience	Monthly by Team Manager
Senior Social Workers	Monthly by Team Manager
Advanced Practitioners	Monthly by Team Manager
Team Managers	Monthly by Service Delivery Manager
Service Delivery Managers	Monthly by Head of Service
Administrative Support Services Managers	Monthly by nominated Service Delivery Manager

Senior Administrative Officers and Administrative Officers	Monthly by Administrative Support Services Manager
Administrative Support Assistants	Alternate supervision by Senior Administrative Officers or Administrative Officers. Team Meeting every 4 – 6 weeks
Heads of Service	Monthly by Chief Officer
Assistant Chief Officer	Monthly by Chief Officer
Chief Officer	Monthly by Deputy Director Safeguarding Specialist and Targeted

Children's Homes:
The supervision of Children's Home care staff who should have regular supervision sessions at monthly intervals should take account of, recognise and allow for flexibility around:
- the shifts of supervisor and supervisee;
- school holiday periods when the young people are in the home more and need more face to face staff time; and
- the regular daily informal supervision that goes on during shifts and during the transfer of shifts.

Children's Homes Managers (Registered Managers)	Monthly by Service Delivery Manager – Children's Homes
Deputy Home Manager	Monthly by Children's Home Manager (Registered Manager)
Senior Practitioner	Monthly by Deputy Home Manager
Care Officers and Assistant Care Officers	Monthly by Senior Practitioner
Casual Residential Support Worker	Monthly by Care Officer

3.8 Supervision Agreement
The supervision agreement or contract between yourself and your manager should clearly outline the responsibilities and expectations of both parties. When the Individual Supervision Agreement has been agreed, it should be signed by both the supervisor and the supervisee. A copy should be retained on the file held by the supervisor for the supervisee. The supervisee should be given a copy. The agreement is essential and will form part of the supervision records.   It should be reviewed annually. The supervision agreement can be found in the Forms Library: **Individual Supervision Agreement**

At the start of the supervisory relationship and prior to negotiating the Individual Supervision Agreement it is recommended that a Supervision History is completed. See **section 4.4.** The completion of the Learning Styles questionnaire may also be useful. See **section 4.7.**

If at any time during the supervisory relationship or if the supervision agreement is not being upheld, **both parties** have a responsibility to raise this in line with the Dispute Resolution. See **section 3.11.**

3.9 Cancelled Supervision:
In the event that a scheduled supervision session has to be cancelled by either party, it will be re-scheduled at the point of cancellation proving to be unavoidable. The session should be re-scheduled to take place within 10 working days of the date of the original booked session.

If the cause of the cancellation is the sickness absence of either party then another supervision session will be booked to take place within 5 working days of the person's return to work. In the event that the supervisor is absent from work for more than 2 weeks unplanned leave, it is the responsibility of the **supervisee** to report to the supervisor's line manager for alternative supervision arrangements to be made.

Any supervision that is cancelled or rearranged must be recorded in the supervision log so that any pattern of disruption to quality supervision on the part of the supervisor or supervisee can be noticed as early as possible and restorative action taken.

3.10 Co-Working
Where there are co-working arrangements for a particular case, the particular responsibilities and actions for each worker should be clarified and recorded on the child's case notes. Confirmation of co-working arrangements should be included in the personal supervision records for each worker and include reflection on how well the arrangement is working.

3.11 Dispute Resolution
It is important that you take action to ensure you are receiving quality supervision and having your development needs identified and met. If it becomes apparent at any point that you are not receiving supervision to the standard required you should:

- In the first instance discuss with your supervisor the difficulties, which you feel, have arisen.
- You and your supervisor may find some of the following activities useful in analysing and reflecting on why supervision is not working effectively
    - Supervision History Exercise
    - Review of the Supervision agreement and expectations
    - Reflecting on the Kolb 4 x 4 x 4 model and its use within your supervision
    - Using the Kolb Reflective questions more formally to help the reflective cycle
    - Starting the reflective discussion in a different part of the Kolb cycle
    - Completing the learning styles questionnaire to help understand the impact of differing learning styles and needs

If difficulties still arise or you are unable to find solutions you (and your supervisor) should meet with the Line Manager. The difficulties should be discussed and outcomes agreed. It is the responsibility of your manager's line manager to ensure that these difficulties are satisfactorily resolved. It may be appropriate for the Line Manager to observe supervision to help both parties understand the difficulties and identify solutions. See Forms Library: **Observation of Supervision.**

It is absolutely essential that all parties understand that however difficult it is, any member of staff who feels that the quality of supervision is not meeting the needs of themselves or other stakeholders in the process must raise it through the line management; if necessary,

seek support from a peer within your team to do this. It is also the responsibility of Supervisors and their line managers to check out with staff when opportunities arise within daily practice, how effective supervision is at meeting their needs. Service users and partner agencies have a right to work with effectively supervised staff.

It should also be recognised that on occasions, where a sufficient degree of understanding and trust cannot be reached by a supervisor and supervisee, then a change of supervisor may be the solution as dysfunctional supervisory relationships can present a risk to the service user and the agency.

3.12 Supervision Records
The supervision file will contain:
a) Supervisee Personal Details -this should be completed as soon as possible in the first week. See Forms Library: **Supervisee Personal Details**
b) Supervision Monitoring Log – this should be updated on paper throughout the year and scanned and uploaded at the end of each appraisal year to the electronic Supervision File. Forms Library: **Supervision and Appraisal Log**
c) Supervision Contract
d) Records of Personal Supervision
e) A copy of any key case discussions which have prompted reflections within personal supervision
f) A copy of the annual appraisal
g) Any attendance or sickness monitoring and management
h) Any performance management data and discussions or Individual Action Plan
i) Interactive Learning

It may also be useful to include:
j) Compliments and Complaints;
k) Doing simple things well documents
l) Previous supervision folder, if a worker relocates to a new team

3.13 Record Keeping:
General
- The recording of supervision sessions is the responsibility of the supervisor;
- The supervision record and appraisal is the property of Leeds City Council Children's Services and will be subject to inspection and audit;
- There are two elements to recording: the recording of personal supervision and the recording of Case discussions (whether formal and planned or informal and ad hoc).

Case supervision
- Supervision and discussions on individual children will be stored only within the relevant Frameworki record for the child;
- Formal Case discussions: these are the discussions held within formal or planned Supervision and will be recorded on the child's case file within Frameworki using the Supervision Episode. A sample of the format for case recording is available in the Forms Library: **Case Recording – Frameworki**;
- Informal or ad hoc Case discussions: Where the discussion relates to significant decisions about case planning, or significant analysis of the case dynamics, it must be recorded on Frameworki **Case Decisions** (not in Case Discussions) by the Supervisor;

- Alternatively less significant consultations will be recorded in the child's case note by the worker. The supervisor will be responsible for judging where the record should be held.

Personal supervision

- All supervisees will have an electronic Supervision File. It must not be stored on a supervisors individual access drive. It must be stored on a restricted access and view folder so that the supervisor and their line management can access it;
- For each supervisor, the electronic Supervision Folder should follow the same naming convention;
- Within the supervisor's electronic Supervision Folder there will be a separate Supervision File for each supervisee. Each file should follow the same naming convention. The file will contain items – a to l as in 3.12 above;
- However, where agreed by the Supervisor/Supervisee a paper 'working file' may be kept in order to facilitate easy reference to previous discussions. It must be stored confidentially and remains the property of Leeds City Council. All documents must be saved electronically to the electronic Supervision File. Thus, any documents not already saved electronically to the Supervision File must be scanned and saved accordingly.
- Personal Supervision will be recorded on the template – see Forms Library **Personal Supervision Record**;
- Mentoring Sessions for ASYE's are recorded by the Advanced Practitioner who must email the notes to the worker and their Supervisor so that they can form part of the overall Supervision File. A template that can be used is available from the Forms Library **Record of Mentoring Meeting.** Role outline of the ASYE mentor.
- The supervisor must adhere to the following standards of recording; this will be checked during the quality assurance process.

3.14 Recording standards:
- The detail included in the supervision record is a matter of judgement for the supervisor and supervisee. In general the record should be detailed enough so that the issue can be revisited, if necessary, at a later date and still be understood. A short summary of the discussion and the decisions or action points or understanding arising from it should be sufficient in most cases.
- Where possible supervision records should be typed. If the supervisor is unable to type them personally they should be passed to a member of business support services section to be typed. **Note: this should be with the agreement of the supervisee and should form part of the Individual Supervision Contract.**
- The actual content of the Record of Personal Supervision template should be negotiated if issues of a very personal or confidential nature are discussed. Supervisors should sensitively and briefly summarise supervisees learning from personal reflections.
- If the supervisor prefers to handwrite personal supervision records, this is permissible providing it forms part of the Individual Supervision Contract and the supervisor's handwriting is legible. All handwritten records or templates must be scanned in and uploaded to the electronic Supervision File.
- Supervisors should aim to give a copy of the record to the supervisee for signature within 10 working days. This should form part of the Individual Supervision Contract. The supervisee should sign and return it to the supervisor in five working days to be uploaded. Any record not signed by the supervisee within five days of receiving it is assumed to be agreed as an accurate record of the discussion.

- Records should clearly detail any decisions that have been made, and the reasons for these, any agreed actions including who will take responsibility and the timescale for carrying out these actions.

3.15 Supervision file retention

When a supervisee leaves the council the records should be retained for six years after the member of staff has left and then deleted. The archived electronic file will be stored on the Supervision Archive as maintained by the relevant area Administration Support Services Manager (ASSM). Archived folders should be saved using the same naming convention which should include the **deletion Date and the worker's name.** The Supervisor is responsible for forwarding the folder for archive to the relevant area ASSM within one month of the worker leaving.

It is the responsibility of the ASSM to arrange timely deletion of archived files. The Supervisor should arrange for any paper 'working file' for supervision to be shredded once all documents are uploaded to the electronic file, and the electronic is archived.

Where a member of staff transfers to another team or to a new supervisor within Children's Social Work Service, their electronic Supervision File should be sent to the new supervisor who will store it as a sub folder within in the new Supervision File that they create for the worker. It should be named **Previous Supervision – Name of Supervisor.** Any significant information should be brought to the new supervisors' attention during the transfer process.

3.16 Confidentiality and Access

Supervision is a private but not a confidential process. This means that the records are the property of the organisation, not the individual. From time to time supervisors will need to discuss the content of supervision sessions with others, e.g. their own line manager, this should always be with the knowledge of the supervisee.

Access to supervision records should be controlled and all paper records should be locked away so that others who do not have a legitimate right to see the records cannot access them. Equally, access to the electronic file must be accessible only by the Supervisor and their line management.

Supervisees should be aware, however, that other than themselves and their supervisor, others will, from time to time, access records, these might include:

- Senior Managers (for quality assurance purposes)
- Investigating Officers (e.g. for disciplinary purposes)
- Inspectors (e.g. Ofsted)
- Workforce Development Staff (e.g. for audit and quality assurance purposes)

3.17 Training in Supervision

'Frontline managers are the keystones of the organisation. They have a key role in determining whether standards of practice are consistently maintained in supporting staff engaged in complex, personally demanding practice, and ensuring staff are continually developed in knowledge based practice, Report of Chief Inspector of Social Services 2000.

In Leeds, Children's Services recognise the importance of supporting managers to develop supervision skills and will provide access to training and tools for this.

Supervision skills training for new managers will be provided in a timely manner as required (within 12 months of becoming a permanent Supervisor). Refresher courses will be available to book through PALs and it is recommended that existing managers refresh their learning every five years at a minimum or when recommended by their manager.

Staff who are Aspiring Managers should also be considered for access to supervision training; however in order to make the most of the training they should have some experience of delivering supervision prior to or immediately after attending the training.

3.18 Managing Performance
a) Newly qualified staff and performance
Through appropriate support, guidance, training and supervision it is the aspiration that newly qualified social workers will progress in accordance with the HCPC Professional Capabilities Framework. Development is monitored via the ASYE Learning agreement in three, six and nine month reviews.

b) All staff performance
On occasions the performance of staff can be affected by a range of factors, some of which are temporary in nature. If performance of a staff member does give rise to concern then there should be an open acknowledgment of this at the earliest opportunity. This should occur within an existing culture of openness. Various adjustments and extra support can be agreed in order to remedy the situation. An action plan should be recorded in supervision.

If performance does not improve or is not sustained managers should seek support from their line manager and from Human Resources.

It is imperative that any concerns and identified actions to support staff are clearly documented in personal supervision records and that this is reflected in the supervision and appraisal processes.

3.19 Pre-Supervision Report
For field Social Workers a tool has been developed to support performance management – 'Pre Supervision Report'. This report can be run on Frameworki by either the Supervisor or Supervisee and its aim is to provide an accurate overview of the workers full caseload and to spot any trends in managing the workload. It is not expected that this will reflect work to be 100% compliant with all standards, but it should provide an early indication of problem areas and prompt discussion.

Useful suggestions about its use include:
- Worker generates the report a week before supervision and takes remedial action to update records that are inaccurate;
- Supervisor generates the report and selects a theme arising from it to discuss in in supervision;
- Worker and Supervisor identify IT issues and involve admin/IT to take remedial action to children's casefiles that have arisen due to unintended consequences elsewhere in the system;
- Worker and Supervisor use this to discuss the appropriateness, quantity of the workload;

- An additional session is arranged between the Supervisor and Supervisee to go through the report to develop an action plan for remedial actions on case files; and
- Mentoring is arranged for a Supervisee who is finding Frameworki compliance challenging with a supervisee who is more effective at this.

NB: The intention of this report is that it is to be used to support managerial oversight and themes for discussion. It should not ever become the sole focus of supervision as a means to discuss every case. That would be completely contrary to the principles enshrined in: this policy; the principles of restorative practice; and the Interactive Learning Audit.

3.20 Quality Assurance

Supervision will be quality assured by:

a) *Completion of the Supervision and Appraisal Monitoring Log:* This is a means of monitoring that the required standards for the frequency of supervision are being met. It can also help in the early identification of patterns of avoidance, collusion or cancellation.

   The log should be completed at the end of each supervision session, or when any supervision is missed, cancelled or rearranged. A copy must be sent to the Service Delivery Manager (SDM) every six months. The SDM will discuss with the Team Manager any issues arising from this within the Team Managers Supervision.

b) *An annual quality assurance audit of supervision records* (minimum) – SDMs will be required to inspect a sample of supervision records and practice relating to supervision by a Team Manager periodically. This will include checking the supervisees file and obtaining feedback from the supervisee to ensure that supervision is taking place to the standard required. For more information see **section 4.5.**

   The minimum requirement is that each SDM audits one supervision file per supervisor every 12 months. The template in [Forms Library](#)– **Supervision Quality Assurance and Audit** should be used to record the file audit and the quality assurance conversation. This should be entered on the supervisors electronic supervision file.

c) *An annual survey of staff -* An annual questionnaire about supervision will be carried out. It is an anonymous questionnaire, which seeks feedback from staff about the supervision process. The outcomes of the survey are analysed and improvements are identified.

d) The Line Manager will keep a *record of supervision quality assured* each year.

3.21   Responsibilities of staff when the supervision of others is taking place

When staff members are having their supervision meeting, other staff members are responsible for not disturbing the supervisee or the supervisor. Most issues do not require immediate attention and staff should seek solutions themselves or from colleagues (who may be more experienced or senior in the team). If no solution can be found, the worker with the query should wait to speak to the supervisee or supervisor when the supervision meeting is ended.

If a staff member does disturb the meeting and the query is directed to the supervisor, it is their responsibility to state that they are unable to discuss the issue there and to offer a time to discuss the query after the supervision meeting has concluded.

If in the extremely rare event that there is a life or death situation that needs the immediate attention of the supervisor or the supervisee, then an interruption may be requested.

4   Supervision Guidance for Supervisors and Supervisees

4.1 Background

The aim within this section is to provide practice guidance and background reading to support the delivery of safe and effective supervision within Children's Social Work Service in Leeds. Supervisors should also receive appropriate training, and support from their line manager.

It is the intention that supervision delivered within Leeds Children's Social Work Service will be of the quality described within the framework for the knowledge and skills for supervisors (Trowler 2015).

We therefore aim to ensure that safe and effective supervision:
- Promotes and governs excellent practice;
- Develops excellent practitioners;
- Shapes and influences the practice system;
- Supports the effective use of power and authority;
- Develops confident analysis and decision making;
- Promotes purposeful and effective social work;
- Encourages emotionally intelligent practice supervision; and
- Supports performance management and improvement.

4.2 Partnership in Supervision

Safe and effective supervision can only be achieved through a partnership between the supervisor and the supervisee. This relationship may take time to become fully established and will require time, effort and trust by both parties; there may be occasions when this does not come easily and both the supervisor and supervisee share a responsibility to explore areas of difficulty in order to reach a point where complexity, vulnerability, ambiguity and uncertainty can be effectively explored.

In order to achieve this, supervision will need to focus on much more than casework, whilst at the same time retaining a focus on the needs of the children we ae responsible for. This in itself is a complex task but it is only through achieving this that we can support staff to effectively engage, listen and support the vulnerable children and families we work with:

'To work with families with compassion but retain an open and questioning mind-set requires regular, challenging supervision.... The emotional and intellectual demands on social workers are substantial…' (Munro, 2010, p54)

'Supervision that focusses too heavily on the management of cases at the expense of the emotional needs of the workers is dangerous supervision' (Bradley 2006)

'Workers state of mind and the quality of attention they can give to children is directly related to the quality of support, care and attention they themselves receive from supervision, managers and peers' (Fergusson 2011)

It is the line manager's responsibility to ensure that an effective supervisory relationship exists and for the majority of people the supervisor and the line manager will be the same person. Where that relationship is not effective it should be brought to the attention of the Supervisor, and if necessary the line manager of the supervisor; **see section 3.11.**

The partnership will:	And will not:
Be confidential, subject to the safety of service users or staff whistle blowing	Break confidentiality
Be a continuous process	Be a one off event
Encourage and involve you	Undermine you
Be structured and focused	Be 'small talk and cosy chat'
Be planned and private	Be rushed or interrupted
Be a two way process	Be one sided
Recognise your good performance and personal achievements	Avoid challenge where this is needed
Help you to be clear about your roles and responsibilities	Confuse you
Focus on your individual needs	Focus on the supervisor's needs
Be motivating	Feel negative or demoralising
Address professional development	Ignore the right and need for development
Anticipate, acknowledge, discuss and manage the emotional impact of the work	Ignore the way you feel, avoid discussion about the emotional impact of the work
Deal with situations sensitively and clearly	Ignore or fail to support you

4.3 A Practice Model for Supervision
This practice guidance draws on the work of Tony Morrison and his publication - 'Staff Supervision in Social Care' (2005) - and endorses the approach using Kolb's Experiential Learning Cycle (adapted by Morrison, 2005) often referred to as 'The 4x4x4 supervision model'; **see section 2.4.**

When used effectively this model will enable supervisors and supervisees to:

- Critically reflect upon practice;
- Achieve the Practice standards expected of both Social Workers and Practice Supervisors;
- Learn from the practitioners experience with the child, family and other agencies; and
- Balance the need to focus on the individual worker and the individual child

How the model works:
There are three interlinked aspects, with four components in each (twelve interlinked components in all):

Four Functions
- Management - Knowing the supervisee and helping them assess how well they are fulfilling their role
- Development - Helping the supervisee to reflect on our work and themselves in their work, so that they can learn and adapt.
- Support - Helping the supervisee process the emotional impact of the work we do
- Mediation -helping the supervisee to negotiate their relationship with the social and organisational context of our work

Four Stakeholders
- The supervisee
- The child and their family
- Other agencies and professionals
- Our own agency and its subsets

Four stages of the Kolb cycle
- The Experience - what happened, detailed descriptions, paying attention to the detail as well as the bigger picture
- Reflection - the exploration of emotions associated with the experience
- Analysis - Articulating the thinking and understanding that is occurring in relation to this experience
- Action Plan - Deciding what to do in response to what has/may happen and the thoughts and feelings you are aware of, having applied knowledge, theory and practice wisdom to the experience

Through structured conversations the supervisor will help the supervisee to explore different aspect of their work experience. This might be through discussion of things like:
- What the child was communicating verbally and non-verbally and what this means (rather than was the child seen alone)?
- How effective is this multi-agency meeting at focussing on the needs of the child?
- What dynamics are being played out that may mirror or oppose the family dynamics (rather than did the meeting take place, is the plan up to date?
- When have you experienced anything similar to this and how is that affecting your perception and understanding?
- Encouraging the worker to explore the experience through the perspective of a different stakeholder (the child, parent, or another professional) can bring depth and breadth to their understanding and allow empathy, emotion and bias to be safely acknowledged and explored.

The challenge for the supervisor is not to allow the external influences about performance measurement and monitoring, and public accountability to dominate supervision so that conversations about timescales and targets prevail along with closed questions that aim to monitor compliance (is the assessment completed, was the child seen?).

It is not to say that these things are not important, they are, but they should be achieved in a way that ensures that the child and the workers experience is validated, not dismissed into a box ticking exercise.

Appendix **9 – Four Functions of Supervision** includes a checklist of the four functions of supervision which can be a useful starting point for a supervisor and supervisee to begin to evaluate the quality of the supervisory process they are mutually engaged in.

Appendix **10 – Questions to Explore the Kolb Cycle** contains some questions that can be used to explore each part of the Kolb cycle, some of which will lend themselves to being asked from a stakeholder perspective.

Appendix **11 – 4x4x4 Model** is a tool to use as a visual prompt within supervision to cover all aspects of the model.

4.4 The Supervision History:
The supervision history exercise is a useful way to get to know a new supervisee and can help with:
- Identifying positive motivation for supervision;
- Identifying gaps in training or experience;
- Being alerted to possible blocks or barriers to supervision, especially around race, gender, power;
- Unpicking problems in the supervisory relationship;
- Building commitment and a shared sense of responsibility for supervision;
- Understanding the significant professional influences that shape the workers style, values and motivation; and
- Identifying the workers coping style, resilience and vulnerabilities.

A template for this exercise which will prompt the reflective process is at appendix **12 – Supervision History.**

Seek the consent of the supervisee for undertaking this exercise. The supervisee should remain in control of the information that is generated.

Explain that, you do not need to record any detail about the past, rather it is about understanding what influences the here and now and that you would like to use this exercise to help review/negotiate the supervision agreement so that you can develop an effective working alliance.

Be explicit about confidentiality and that you do not need to know the name of any previous supervisors.

Set aside enough time for a decent reflection on the findings – both the taking of the history and the meeting will demonstrate your commitment.

This exercise is also of great value in trying to improve any supervisory relationship that is experiencing difficulty.

4.5 Quality Assurance and Audit of Supervision; and the Supervisory Relationship
Line Managers should audit a minimum of one supervisor/supervisee file and feedback each year. There are four aspects to this:

a) Reviewing the content of the electronic file for compliance with the guidance and to consider the quality of recording – see **section 3.14** for the recording standards and appendix **8 – Quality Assurance and Audit** template.

b) Obtaining feedback from supervisees about the nature of supervision and the supervisory relationship, about how well it meets their needs and the needs of other stakeholders

c) Discussing the supervisors perception of the quality and effectiveness of supervision and feeding back the supervisee/line manager perceptions

d) Developing an action plan – see appendix **8 – Quality Assurance and Audit** template.

There are a range of ways in which feedback can be obtained from supervisees to contribute to this process and it is recommended that a combination of strategies are used to form an overall view of the quality of supervision. It is a matter of professional judgement for those involved as to how best to achieve this:

Some suggestions are below:
- Use the annual 360° feedback for managers (this has been found helpful in giving staff a voice). A template for 360° is available from the appendix **13 - 360° Feedback**
- During day to day contact with staff, ask them how supervision is working for them. Scaling questions are particularly useful –
    - 'On a scale of 1-10 how well does supervision meet your needs?
    - 'On a scale of 1-10 how effective is supervision at keeping children safe?'
    - 'What could you/your supervisor do to improve that by 1 or 2 points?'
- Observe a supervision session – see appendix **2 – Observation of Supervision**
- Ask a Supervisor/Supervisee to video record a session and then critically review it together
- Have a three way discussion between the supervisor, their line manager and the Supervisee
- Use the quality standards as a focus for reflection with the Supervisor

The impact of power dynamics should always be considered to ensure that the supervisee has a voice in the process and an appropriate boundary is maintained in terms of confidentiality.

4.6 Quality Guidelines: Safe and Effective Supervision

- The environment for supervision should be a private, safe, nurturing space which is free of interruptions
- Supervision provides an opportunity to test out experimental thinking, ideas and hypotheses in a safe environment
- A supervision history is taken at the start of any new supervisory relationship which informs the understanding of the supervisee needs and influences the Individual Supervision Contract
- Engagement and psychological commitment to the supervision process is evidenced in the preparation by the supervisee before each session
- It is recognised in supervisory discussions that there are other key stakeholders embedded in the supervisory process (the child/young person, parents/carers, the organisation, partner agencies, other practitioners, communities)
- Supervision is based on Morrison's 4 x 4 x 4 model for supervision
- Reflective discussions (patterns/emotions/connections) on each case are recorded
- Supervision is a collaborative activity
- Supervisors demonstrate emotional competence and empathy in supervision
- Supervision provides the supervisee with constructive feedback
- Supervision builds practitioner confidence
- Supervisees are clear about their tasks, follow up actions and delegated responsibilities at the end of each session
- Supervisees feel valued and supported through the supervisory process
- Authoritative approaches (being appropriately demanding and responsive whilst acknowledging power imbalances) are positively modelled by the supervisor
- Supervision is user centred (focuses on the experience, feelings and story of the user/child/young person in case discussions)
- The social workers ability to establish and maintain effective relationships with service users (especially children and young people) is a focus of each supervision session
- Supervision enables workers to be innovative
- Supervision enables workers to calculate risks
- Supervision helps workers to be persistent
- Supervision acknowledges and contains uncertainty and anxiety
- The supervisor is perceived as a role model, educator and enabler of others with a responsibility to share knowledge, values and skills of effective practice

4.7 Learning Styles

Understanding how you learn and being able to apply this in your practice is fundamental to effective supervision. It is your responsibility to reflect on your experience of learning and establish ways in which the learning can be transferred back into your daily working practice.

At the start of the supervisory relationship and the development of a supervision agreement (see **section 3.8** and appendix **1 – Individual Supervision Agreement**), you should complete a Learning Style Questionnaire. The Learning Styles questionnaire is designed to find out your preferred learning style(s). Over the years you have probably developed learning 'habits' that help you benefit more from some experiences than from others. Since you are probably unaware of this, this questionnaire will help you pinpoint your learning preferences so that you are in a better position to select learning experiences that suit your style. See appendix **14 – Learning Styles Questionnaire.**

Your learning and development needs should be related both to the objectives that you need to achieve and to your future roles within the Directorate. These will be identified and agreed through the appraisal process. The objectives that you set with your supervisor and review every six months should include developmental objectives that will enable you to perform your current tasks effectively, training which supports this and these lead to personal and professional growth.

Personal development plans should be continuous and link to career pathways and core training where these are clear and identified for particular jobs.

4.8 Appraisal
The objectives of appraisal are to ensure that all employees within an organisation have an opportunity to discuss their work plan and development needs. Guidance about all aspects of appraisal and the expectations and responsibilities for employees and managers in Leeds City Council is available on InSite.

Appraisals have proved to be an invaluable tool for both practitioners and managers. They should ensure that all employees:

- Are working to objectives and targets set within the service and City Wide overall targets
- Understand what is expected of them and why
- Are clear about the level of performance they are expected to achieve
- Have the necessary skills and knowledge to do their job well
- Have training and development provided where agreed
- Have good work performance recognised and poor work performance rectified
- Have the opportunity to raise work/life balance issues
- Are involved in discussion about service improvement

The appraisal discussion should be supplemented by regular, informal discussions either in one-to-one sessions or at team meetings during the course of the year to follow up on agreed actions, discuss progress and consider any issues. If a 360° exercise has been carried out to seek feedback perhaps for a team manager, this could useful in informing the appraisal.

a) Setting Objectives
The primary purpose for setting objectives/targets is to ensure that the activity of the employee links to the service/city wide objectives. Therefore there needs to be a clear agreement and understanding between manager/supervisor and the employee as to what these objectives are.

b) Feedback to Manager/Supervisor
The appraisal discussion gives the employees the opportunity to give feedback on the performance of the Manager/supervisor. In addition as employees are often at the forefront of service delivery; appraisal gives the opportunity to discuss possible ideas for service improvement and to contribute to the continuous improvement agenda.

c) Training and Development
As part of the appraisal process the manager/supervisor and employee should agree on a development plan together which sets out how training and development needs will be

addressed. Such a plan should include appropriate professional requirements/guidelines for continuing professional registration.

d) Career Development
Appraisal should be an opportunity to explore whether employees have any longer term aspirations and whether there is scope to broaden their experiences. This is a critical part of succession planning to ensure that the service has the skills to meet the future demands of the organisation.

e) Frequency
Everyone should have an annual appraisal and a mid-year review.

4.9 Group Supervision
In some cases it may be agreed by the Service Delivery Manager that it is possible to have supervision as part of a group and this can be agreed through line management. There are many benefits to be gained from group supervision including problem solving, peer group learning and giving and receiving strong feedback within a supportive setting. Group supervision is not a short cut to reflective practice, it takes time and detailed consideration to set up and develop an effective group.

The type of group and whether or not there should be a facilitator should be considered as part of the setting up of group supervision. The framework below (Eric Berne in Brigid Proctor "Group Supervision", Page 32) may provide a useful starting point:

- **Authoritative Group:** Supervisor supervises each supervisee in turn and manages group. Supervisees are primarily learners/observers
- **Participative Group:** Supervisor responsible for supervising and managing group, also for inducting and facilitating supervisees as co-supervisors
- **Co-operative Group:** Supervisor is a group facilitator and supervision monitor; supervisees also contract to actively co-supervise and develop a supervising system
- **Peer Group:** members take shared responsibility for supervising and being supervised

Other issues for consideration when setting up group supervision:
- Number of participants, closed or open group
- Facilitator, availability, skills and knowledge
- Group working agreement
- Type of Group Supervision
- Functional arrangements (venue, time etc.)
- Interpersonal ground rules
- Agenda and Expectations
- Recording and Accountability
- Exercises, Ideas and Reflective frameworks to be used within group

A group supervision session is not a decision making forum. Any recommendations for case planning should be discussed with the Team Manager in supervision and outside of. Any new risks identified need to be raised with the Team Manager**. In addition, peer or group supervision should not replace individual and case supervision.**

Group supervision enables social workers to go beyond individual limitations and to expand on their knowledge, skills and experiences. The group should establish ground rules and a working agreement at the start of this activity and clarify and agree the boundaries of confidentiality. The Kolb/Morrison model can be used very effectively within group supervision and will enable the group to explore feelings, doubts, opinions and differences. The activity should be restorative in its approach.

Using Kolb in Group Supervision:
Kolb and the 4x4x4 Model for supervision sit very effectively at the heart of group supervision and many of the other exercises you may use will be different ways of exploring different parts of the Kolb cycle.

If your organisation uses the Kolb/Morrison Supervision model for 1:1 sessions then it can also be an effective starting place for group supervision to develop. It is therefore important that all group members are familiar with the 4 x 4x 4 model and that the group facilitator is confident about its use and willing to learn and develop their own Kolb/Supervision skills.

Examples of Kolb Exercises for Group Supervision:

Using Kolb's Cycle in Supervision
Based on an exercise by Tony Morrison:

a) Identify someone willing to bring a real case or other issue that they will work on with the group for 20/30 minutes. The presenter should give a brief (three minute) outline of the issue.

b) Allocate the other four members of the group to one part of the Kolb Cycle (e.g. experiencing; reflecting; analysing; plan and act). You are the interviewers. Your task is to use your role to assist in exploring the issue.

c) The four interviewers spend 10 minutes preparing. They can use the set Kolb questions as a prompt. Think about where to start i.e. explore the facts (experience), explore the feelings (reflection). Decide in your group of four. Try to ask open, exploratory, curious questions.

d) Discuss the issue with the interviewee using the four different interviewing roles. You have 25mins. Don't worry if you don't solve the issue in this time. Please try to stay in your allocated role, if you think another role needs to ask a question, you can invite them to. For example, the "analyser" may invite the "reflector" to ask about the presenters feelings.

e) At the end of 20/30 mins each interviewer should summarise what they have heard to the interviewee i.e. the reflector summarise what they heard in terms of feelings.

f) Having listened to the summaries the presenter is then asked to identify:
   - What has become clearer?
   - What has become more perplexing?
   - What ideas they have for taking the issue forwards?

- What help they need and who from?

There are many possible variations of this exercise. The advantage of doing this in a quite structured way to begin with is that group members have the opportunity to become more familiar with the Kolb process and the way in which they interact with it. It is incredibly useful to have a set of 4x4x4 floor cards to help group members connect with the process and notice patterns.

One of the things you may notice is how challenging people find it not to 'tell/advise'. As the facilitator you may have to help people develop their skills in asking open, curious, reflective and exploratory questions: An exercise to help with this is:

- The presenter speaks about the issue for five minutes.
- In pairs people work out what they would like to tell/advise the worker, they then share this with the group. The presenter listens without responding.
- In pairs, the gm work out what question(s) to ask in order to explore the issues they were thinking of.
- They then ask the presenter who responds.
- At the end of the exercise both questioners and presenters can be asked what was most useful/difficult
- Over time, you can reduce the advice giving, to writing down, and then working out questions so that the focus is more on effective questioning than on advice giving.

Kolb - Breaking out of the Short Circuit:
- Place the floor cards on the floor.
- Ask the presenter to stand on either Reflection (or Analysis) card.
- The presenter may speak for up to five minutes about their feelings and the feelings of others in relation to the issue
- The group members ask questions to help explore feelings
- Optional to repeat with the analysis card