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# CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE SUPERVISION POLICY

## Policy/Report Summary

This policy provides a framework for the supervision and support of Children's Social Care staff working within the Trust, to ensure they are working to a common goal, meeting required standards of practice and contributing to the ongoing development of good and effective practice and the Trust vision ensuring children are "safe, secure and successful".

**Policy Owner:** Sandra Davies  
Head of QA and Safeguarding

**Version:** Final July 2020

**Review Date:** July 2021

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St Martins Place, 51 Bath Road Slough SL1 3UF

Registered Company: England and Wales:  
9487106



A hands-on approach to help children in Slough be



Safe, Secure and Successful



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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Supervision provides a safe environment for critical reflection, challenge and professional support. It includes time for reflection on practice issues that arise in the course of everyday work; and can help social workers and their managers do their jobs more effectively. It enables social workers and other practitioners to develop their capacity to use their experiences to review practice, receive feedback on their performance, build emotional resilience and think reflectively about relationships they have formed with children, adults, families and professional networks.

This policy provides a framework for the supervision and support of Children's Social Care staff working within the Trust to ensure they are working to a common goal, meeting required standards of practice and contributing to the ongoing development of good and effective practice and the Trust vision ensuring children are *"safe, secure and successful"*.

**The national Supervision Framework highlights four key elements of effective supervision:**

- Supervision provides an opportunity to focus on the **quality of decision making and interventions**.
- Supervision provides **effective line management and organisational accountability** between the employer and the employee on behalf of the public.
- Supervision provides a way to **monitor caseload and workload management**, addressing any issues that may impact on delivering effective services.
- Supervision is a way to **identify further personal learning, career and development opportunities**.

Supervision also provides a mechanism to ensure staff working with children and families are meeting the post qualifying standards identified in the [Knowledge and Skills statement for Child and Family Practitioners](#), updated in May 2018:

### 1.1 Underpinning Principles

**All children's social care practitioners, permanent or agency will have planned, regular supervision, this includes managers, social workers, newly qualified social workers, personal advisors, family support workers and students.**

**All those responsible for the provision of supervision (supervisors) and those receiving supervision (supervisees) will commit to ensuring they are prepared for supervision and that it takes place in a planned and structured way that is beneficial to both parties.**

**Supervision should identify and promote the employees continuing professional development needs, including discussion about how recent learning activity is being applied in practice.**

**Supervision should be a safe place for employees to reflect on the emotional impact of work and any personal matters that may affect their practice, capability and / or health and wellbeing.**

**Supervisors should ensure employees understand their role and responsibilities and that they are accountable for meeting legal and statutory requirements, implementing the vision and values of the Trust and following policy, procedure and practice standards effectively.**



Where the supervision standards are not being met this will be addressed under the Trust Performance Management and capability framework.

## 1.2 Forms to support the Supervision Policy

A set of forms have been developed to support the implementation of this Policy and are attached in the annex of this Policy document. The case supervision form will be available in ICS and the expectation is that the forms will be systematically used across the Trust to ensure we are able to provide a consistent and clear record of supervision within the child's journey.

## 1.3 Reflective and Reflexive Supervision

The "*safe, secure, successful*" vision for Slough Children's Services Trust is underpinned by Systemic Theory and crucially relies on relation based social work and good quality reflective and reflexive practice to ensure we are delivering positive outcomes for children and families.

Skilled use of reflection and critical thinking within supervision will enable a focus on the quality of practice and may at times alert the supervisor to situations where the work of the supervisee is unlikely to promote the best outcome for the service user.

Reflection on feelings engendered by the work, including consideration of assumptions or biases that may be driving practice, is an important element of supervision.

Alongside this, an evaluation of the strengths and weaknesses of particular courses of action, and how the worker might have acted differently for the greater benefit of the person who uses services, is an essential learning tool facilitating appraisal and continuous improvement.

### Principles of Reflective Supervision

Reflective supervision can be used to:

- Deepen and broaden the worker's knowledge and critical analysis skills.
- Enable confident, competent, creative and independent decision making.
- Help workers to build clear plans that seek to enable positive change for children and families.
- Develop a relationship that helps staff feel valued, supported and motivated.
- Support the development of a worker's emotional resilience and social awareness.
- Promote the development of a learning culture within the organisation.

The role of the supervisor in facilitating reflective learning is critical and the way in which questions are asked will promote reflection and learning, enabling the supervisor and supervisee to be:

- **Curious** – trying to understand how someone has arrived at a particular point of view and asking why a worker has chosen a particular course of action, or why a particular event occurred.



- **Strengths based** – enabling learning through reflection on what is working well, what is working less well and what more can you do / do differently.
- **Solution focused** – asking how problems have been solved previously and encouraging solutions to be used more. Looking at what needs to happen next to make an impact.

### 1.4 Kolb's Cycle of Reflective Practice

Kolb's Cycle of Reflective Practice is one of the more widely used basis for supervision in social work.

The cycle demonstrates how experience is turned into learning via four different stages

<b>Experience (engaging and observing)</b>	<b>Telling the story – what happened?</b> Awaken awareness. Recollect and describe the event, provide the context, clarify the issue, identify the goal for supervision.
<b>Reflection (investigating the experience)</b>	<b>What was it like?</b> Feelings, beliefs, behaviours, intuition, values, identify patterns of behaviours transference, links to past, resistance.
<b>Analysis (seeking to understand, hypothesising)</b>	<b>Asking why, what does this mean?</b> Theory, professional practice, standards and values, policy and protocol, practice wisdom, relationship dynamics, roles and authority, wider organisational social and political context.
<b>Plan and act (preparing for action, trying things out)</b>	<b>What next?</b> What has been learned by reflecting, how practice might change, flexibility and limitations of plan, strategies and implementation, contingency plan, skill or resource requirements follow up and recording, review the plan, evaluate whether the issue has been addressed, and review the session.

## 2. SUPERVISION STANDARDS

Supervision forms one part of a broader performance management framework within the Trust and is designed to provide effective support, development and performance of staff.

There are three connected elements:

**Supervision:** a regular personal one to one meeting between the supervisor and supervisee in order to meet organisational, professional and personal objectives.

### ***Personal One to One***

*All staff within the Trust will have a personal one to one supervision on a monthly basis.*



### **Case supervision**

*Social workers, Family Support Workers, Personal Assistants will also have case supervision with an expectation that each case is discussed at least every other month.*

*ASYE social workers will have more regular supervision in line with the programme requirements.*

**Appraisal:** an annual meeting, to review objectives and targets set in the previous year, to set measurable objectives and targets in line with the overall vision of the Trust and service requirements and identify future learning and development needs. The development plan created as a result of the appraisal should be reviewed six monthly and outcomes contribute to supervision and ongoing personal and professional development.

**Performance Management:** provides the framework for supervisors and managers to address issues including poor practice through informal and formal mechanisms (see Trust Behaviours Framework and Trust Capability Policy).

### **STANDARD 1: FREQUENCY AND DURATION OF CASE SUPERVISION**

Minimum requirements for supervision should consider the supervisees level of experience and competence as well as any particular circumstances that apply to the supervisee that mean they may require more frequent supervision (e.g. difficult / complex case, level of risk associated with the work, performance issues of personal difficulties).

Case supervision should take place on all cases that have been open for 12 weeks or more; prior to this new referrals that are progressing through assessment and early stages of S47 / ICPC, or CIN the expectation is that there will be clearly visible management oversight in terms of referral, management agreement and oversight of any assessment or report written, and management oversight within case notes to provide direction or consultation with the social worker.

The **minimum frequency** for supervision within Slough Children's Services Trust is as follows:

#### **Newly Qualified Social Workers (ASYE)**

Formal supervision weekly for the first six weeks of professional practice.

Progressing to fortnightly up to six months.

Monthly from six months to the end of the ASYE period.

It is the supervisor's responsibility to judge the worker's level of competence, although a decision should take into account how well the NQSW is progressing against their development plan, including the requirements of the ASYE programme and the Professional Capabilities Framework.

Supervision should not be adjusted to be less frequent if the supervisor has not observed at least one piece of direct work and judged it to be at an adequate level.

Any NQSW who is appointed must additionally be available to attend all training, mentoring and support groups along with their peers as part of the ASYE Programme.

During this first year it will be important to ensure that information from supervision is recorded and this can contribute to the ASYE assessment at the end of the first post qualifying year.



It is essential that managers recognise that workers in this early stage of their career will require additional support and oversight and as such may be offered informal and impromptu supervision between formal sessions.

### Social Workers

**Personal one to one** – this is required on a **monthly basis** to address any personal issues, professional development, and progress appraisal priorities, agree leave, and consider any health and safety matters.

**Case Supervision** – will look at progress of any actions, any key developments and issues, reflections of what is working well, what, is working less well and identifying actions and timescales. **It is expected that all cases (children) will be discussed in supervision at least bi-monthly.**

*Where a social worker is new to the Trust it may be necessary to provide more frequent supervision for the first few months to ensure the worker has a clear understanding of the Trust and expectations of them in their role.*

### Family Support Workers (FSW)

**Personal one to one** – this is required on a **monthly basis** to address any personal issues, professional development, and progress appraisal priorities, agree leave, and consider any health and safety matters.

**Case Supervision** - Family Support Workers case supervision to be undertaken as relevant to the role of the FSW in supporting a case. **It is expected that while working with a family all cases (children) will be discussed in case supervision at least bi-monthly.**

*Where a FSW is new to the Trust it may be necessary to provide more frequent supervision for the first few months to ensure the worker has a clear understanding of the Trust and expectations of them in their role.*

### Personal Assistants (Leaving Care)

**Personal one to one** – this is required on a **monthly basis** to address any personal issues, professional development, and progress appraisal priorities, agree leave, and consider any health and safety matters.

**Case Supervision** - which will look at progress of any actions, any key developments and issues, reflections of what is working well, what, is working less well and identifying actions and timescales. **It is expected that all cases (young people) will be discussed in supervision at least bi-monthly.**

*Where a PA is new to the Trust it may be necessary to provide more frequent supervision for the first few months to ensure the worker has a clear understanding of the Trust and expectations of them in their role.*

### Assistant Team Manager

**Personal one to one** – this is required on a **monthly basis** to address any personal issues, professional development and operational matters, and progress appraisal priorities, agree leave, and consider any health and safety matters.

*Assistant Team Managers who are new to their role may require more frequent supervision for a few months to ensure there is a clear understanding of the Trust and*



expectations of them in their role.

**Team Manager**

**Personal one to one** – this is required on a **monthly basis** to address any personal issues, professional development and operational matters, and progress appraisal priorities, agree leave, and consider any health and safety matters.

*Team Managers who are new to their role may require more frequent supervision for a few months to ensure there is a clear understanding of the Trust and expectations of them in their role.*

**Head of Service**

**Personal one to one** – this is required on a **monthly basis** to address any personal issues, professional development and operational matters, and progress appraisal priorities, agree leave, and consider any health and safety matters.

*Head of Service who are new to their role may require more frequent supervision for a few months to ensure there is a clear understanding of the Trust and expectations of them in their role.*

**2.1.1 Management Oversight (informal / impromptu supervision).**

**Management Oversight (Informal (Impromptu) Supervision )**

Supervision should not be confined to the formal 1 to 1 supervision arrangements outlined above, but should be seen as part of a continuum of management support and oversight offered to staff.

The nature of social work and fluidity of children and families circumstances mean that staff often have to check out something with a supervisor, obtain a decision or gain permission to do something between formal supervision sessions.

This additional impromptu supervision and consultation with supervisors and managers outside of formal arrangements ensures that staff can respond to unexpected and complex needs of and decisions within their case work.

Whilst the nature of impromptu supervision leads to an informality of process, it is essential that this sits within a framework for the oversight and management of social work for individual children and their families.

All decisions and discussions that are in response to the need for social work intervention, with or on behalf of children must be formally recorded by the manager on the child’s case file **under the tab heading Management Oversight.**

The designation and role of the manager should be clear.

Where an impromptu supervision takes place in response to the need to discuss a personal matter, this should be recorded on the individuals personal supervision file.

**There is no prescribed frequency of management oversight, this will be determined by the requirements and complexity of the case and may change over time.**





## 2.1.2 Group Supervision

### Group Supervision

Group supervision supports the Trust to embed systemic practice across the organisation.

It enables workers to become more agile, and confident in action learning; building information, analysis, and action using the collective skills, knowledge and experience of the group.

It is not a requirement to have group supervision on every single case across the Trust as some cases are progressing well, with fewer complexities and the plan is being progressed through 1 to 1 supervision and ongoing management oversight.

Group supervision is most beneficial when there is a complex case, when a case may have got a bit stuck, or where there has been significant drift.

The need for Group supervision can be highlighted by a worker and can be arranged at the request of the social worker or their manager.

Any group supervision that takes place should be recorded in the child's case notes.

### STANDARD 2: PREPARATION

Preparation is key to effective and impactful supervision and there is an expectation that both parties will attend supervision prepared for the meeting.

- The very first supervision between a manager and supervisee will ensure a supervision agreement is completed which clearly lays out the expectations of the supervisee and supervisor and what supervision is expected to address. An exemplar for the supervision agreement is in annex 1 forms.
- Supervision is a two way process and both parties have a responsibility for bringing items for the agenda at the start of each supervision.
- The supervisor should bring accurate information about the employee's strengths and gaps in performance and capability.
- The supervisee should bring accurate information about developments in their case work.
- Both parties should have read relevant materials, reports and case records for discussion in advance
- Dates for supervision should be planned and adequate time allowed for key issues to be covered (1.5 to 2 hours).
- Supervision must not be cancelled unless there is no alternative, where it is cancelled this should be recorded on the personal file and a new date rearranged as quickly as possible.



### STANDARD 3: CONTENT AND FOOTPRINT ON CASE FILES

In addition to the personal element of supervision there is a requirement to discuss **all cases on a bi- monthly basis**.

The content of case discussion will be dependent on the case and will be a matter of professional judgement to determine which cases are discussed in depth and which case is “lighter touch”, see examples below.

**Example 1:** Case is volatile and complex with a high level of activity underway could include S47, ICPC, progressing to seeking removal. This would be discussed in depth and may be more frequent than the minimum requirements; regular management oversight would be evident in case notes as well.

**Example 2:** Child is looked after and experiencing significant difficulties in settling down, experienced frequent placement breakdowns and has complex needs due to the impact of their experiences. This would be discussed in depth and may be more frequent than the minimum requirements; regular management oversight would be evident in case notes as well during periods of volatility.

**Example 3:** Child is looked after, is in a long term settled placement and is doing well in all areas of life showing good outcomes. This would be a lighter touch.

#### **Personal One to One supervision will cover:**

*Workload / Case Management* – ensuring there is an opportunity to discuss caseload, prioritise tasks and ensure that it is manageable.

*Practice issues* – arising from any QA activity including performance data, audit activity including ensuring any actions identified are followed through.

*Performance management* – any issues of performance of the supervisee must be discussed and where relevant actions identified to address concerns. It is important to ensure that good practice is recognised and recorded as well as poor practice.

*Link to probation and appraisal* – where a worker is on probation supervision should include any probation requirements, and where relevant link back to appraisal objectives and development plan.

*Direct observation* - It is best practice to carry out direct observations of practice in order to inform the ongoing personal development of the supervisee and contribute to ensuring the quality of work with children and families.

*Discussion about equality and diversity* – to reflect the needs of the those working within the Trust, to reflect the diversity of Slough and to reflect how this may impact on the way in which we are working with families and children.

### STANDARD 4: RECORDING

**Personal One to One supervision** - will be recorded in the supervisees own personal development record, using the form provided in annex 1. These can be typed or handwritten (then scanned) and should be signed by the supervisee and supervisor.

Any areas of performance management will be recorded on the personal supervision file and not on the case file of any child.



Recording should reflect the key discussion points and any actions identified as a result of the discussion.

When a supervisee transfers to a new supervisor the records should be available to the new supervisor.

A final version of the supervision will be saved into a secure folder and the Team Manager will send a monthly return to [HR@scstrust.co.uk](mailto:HR@scstrust.co.uk)

**N.B it is important to note that the personal supervision notes may be viewed by others for a number of reasons:**

- Head of Service or Director of Operations undertaking quality assurance reviews of personal supervision as part of exercising their responsibilities of management oversight and workforce management.
- Ofsted will request personal supervision notes of individuals when they carry out regulatory inspection activity.
- HR may request personal supervision notes in the event of an investigation, grievance or disciplinary matter.
- HCPC may request supervision notes should there be a matter of misconduct for a social worker.

**Case Supervision** – any discussion relating to a case should be recorded using the forms function on ICS. Supervision records must show a clear evidence based approach to planning and decision making.

**Management Oversight** - is to be written up in case notes using the case note headings under the management oversight drop down tab.

**Group Supervision** – to be recorded in case notes outlining the discussion that has taken place, any analysis of information and any agreed actions.

### 3. QUALITY ASSURANCE

It is important to ensure all staff across the Trust are aware of the Supervision Policy and are clear about their right to expect regular and good quality supervision. The policy will be shared with all new staff as part of their induction so that they are clear and aware of what they should expect in terms of supervision.

The quality of supervision will be reviewed in a number of ways:

#### **Personal one to one Supervision:**

The Head of Service for any particular service area will have overall responsibility for ensuring that the quality of personal 1 to 1 supervision is set to a good standard and that this is monitored on a regular basis.

The Head of Service and Team Managers will conduct a regular audit of 1 to 1 personal supervision within their own service areas in order to be assured that personal 1 to 1 supervision is taking place on a monthly basis and is supporting workers individual needs and personal development.



### **Direct Observation of Supervision**

The Head of Service may observe supervision occasionally to ensure this is being delivered according to the required standards.

### **Case File Audit**

Cases are audited as part of an ongoing monthly programme of audit and within this case supervision is reviewed to ensure the quality and frequency of supervision is providing effective support for case management.

### **Annex 1 – Forms**

1. Supervision Agreement
2. Personal Supervision Record
3. Case Supervision Record



**Annex 1 - SUPERVISION AGREEMENT – SLOUGH CHILDREN’S SERVICES TRUST**

Name of supervisor	
Name of supervisee	
Supervisee has been given a copy of the supervision policy which has been read: <i>This agreement should be read alongside Slough Children’s Services Trust Policy of July 2020 (author: Sandra Davies) – located on the intranet.</i>	Date:
Date of agreement	
Date of review	

This agreement outlines the basic standards of supervision requirements within the Trust.

Both supervisee and supervisor are required to sign the agreement after a discussion has been held and the policy has been read and understood.

The supervisor is required to provide a copy to the supervisee for reference; the supervision agreement will be reviewed every 12 months alongside the annual appraisal.

There are clear guidelines for the frequency of supervision, relating to each practitioner within the service and a clear definition of ‘formal one to one supervision’, ‘Group Supervision’ and Management oversight within the policy.

**SUPERVISION STANDARDS**

**Formal/Planned Supervision**

- All children’s social care practitioners, permanent and locum, will have planned, regular, protected individual time for formal supervision with their manager; this relates to personal supervision and case supervision.
- Both parties will attend supervision and agree an agenda.
- Supervision will be recorded using the relevant forms and signed by both parties. Case supervision to be completed on ‘Forms’ within ICS which contains the form template.
- Case Supervision to be recorded using the form on ICS no less than 5 working days after supervision is held.
- Group supervision will be recorded in case notes with a description of the discussion that has taken place, analysis of the discussion and any actions identified.
- A final version of the personal supervision will be saved into a secure folder and the Team Manager will send a monthly return to [HR@scstrust.co.uk](mailto:HR@scstrust.co.uk)
- Managers must underpin their supervision with the Trust Behaviours and Values Framework.



### Management Oversight 'Informal Supervision'

- Both the supervisee and supervisor can bring to attention any matters s/he needs to discuss as a priority in-between formal supervision. In the supervisor's absence, other senior practitioners or managers can be consulted for advice and/or guidance, which is to be recorded under management oversight.
- It is important that any changes within the care plan and direction of the case is recorded alongside the rationale, showing clear reasons for decisions and actions taken.

### Commitment to Supervision

- The Trust expects full commitment and compliance with the Supervision Policy; non compliance will be monitored through regular audit and oversight by Heads of Service.
- Formal supervision dates should be fixed in advance, with three months of one to one supervision booked into the supervisor and supervisees diary as a supervision cycle.
- Group supervision to be booked as and when the case requires this level of discussion and input from team members.
- Supervision should take place in a private room which allows personal discussions to take place.
- Supervision should only be cancelled/rescheduled in an emergency. If this occurs, a further date at the point of cancellation is agreed. If the cause of the cancellation is the sickness/absence of either supervisor or supervisee, another supervision session will be booked within five working days of return to work.
- The supervisor is responsible for recording the reason for cancellation and maintained on personal records.
- In the event of a disagreement of the supervision record this will be clearly recorded and where possible new wording agreed, if there is a significant disagreement between the supervisor and supervisee in relation to a supervision record the Head of Service will be asked to mediate in order to seek a resolution to the differences.
- If the disagreement is not able to be resolved through the actions above then HR advice will need to be sought.

### Signed:

<b>Supervisor</b>		<b>Date:</b>
<b>Supervisee</b>		<b>Date:</b>



## Annex 2 - PERSONAL ONE TO ONE SUPERVISION

<b>Date:</b>	
<b>Supervisor:</b>	
<b>Supervisee</b>	

<b>Agenda Setting: any items that supervisor / supervisee wish to discuss</b>

<b>Wellbeing and resilience: any issues relating to the health and wellbeing of the supervisee.</b>

<b>Personal Development: training planned training, appraisal objectives, performance of individual, KPI's).</b> <b>If ASYE targets and planned reviews and ensuring work undertaken evidences KSS / PCF.</b>

<b>Case Loads, managing work loads and priorities.</b>

<b>Equality And Diversity: to reflect the needs of those working within the Trust, to reflect the diversity of Slough and to reflect how this may impact on the way in which we are working with families and children.</b>

<b>Leave / TOIL or absence from work.</b> <b>If ASYE discuss planning of study days and shadowing opportunities.</b>

<b>Any priority cases to be discussed in case supervision: any specific worries about children</b>

<b>Any Other Business:</b>



Additional Section for Manager's Supervision

**Any issues relating to staff within the team / staffing updates.**

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**Any service specific updates?**

--

**Any resource issues and how these are being identified and met?**

--

**Any specific management issues / difficulties?**

--

Signed Supervisor

Supervisor	
Date	

Signed supervisee

Supervisee	
Date	

Next One to One Supervision Date

--





### Annex 3 - CASE (INDIVIDUAL CHILD) SUPERVISION – In forms on ICS

#### Drop Down (role of supervisee)

- Social Work Supervision
- Family Support Worker Supervision
- ASYE Supervision
- PA Supervision
- Joint Supervision (will need to state with whom and what roles)

Date of Supervision

Supervisor

Supervisee

1. **Update on Actions from last supervision** (*provide an update on any actions identified and where actions not completed state why it has not yet been completed and ensure it is added to the action plan below with SMART timescales*).
  
2. **Explore what is working well and what we are worried about?** (*identifying what are the strengths and positive aspects of the progress made within the family and what remains a cause for concern that impacts on positive progression of the plan for the child/ren and the family*)
  
3. **Critical Reflection** (*include within this any reflections about the progress being made and any hypothesis about why progress may be delayed, is the approach by the worker the right approach, could something be done differently?*)
  
4. **Voice of the Child** (*where supervision relates to more than one child in the household be explicit about each child, what is the child's view about what is happening, what is the impact on the child, how might their voice be made more explicit?*)
  
5. **Action plan – What Needs to happen?**

*(Pull anything forward from previous actions that are ongoing or delayed – delayed actions are made a PRIORITY)*

<u>Outcome</u>	<u>Action</u>	<u>Who</u>	<u>When</u>

Next supervision Scheduled: