Devon & Torbay

Safeguarding
Children Boards

Child protection supervision across the Partnership

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1. **Summary of principles for agreed child protection supervision**

This document defines what needs to be in place in order for agencies to ensure a consistent approach to child protection supervision at all levels and across the organisations within the Safeguarding Children Board partnership.

These overarching principles have been drawn together from agency and professional body frameworks and with local consultation, so we as the Working Group feel they have full ownership by local frontline practitioners.

### Principle 1

Group 3[[1]](#footnote-2) staff (who regularly work with vulnerable children or their parents) should have formal and regular child protection supervision from the outset of their employment which enables them to be clear about their roles and responsibilities and the objectives they need to meet.

### Principle 2

Supervision is arranged and conducted in such a way as to permit proper reflection and discussion, acknowledging good practice and achievement and promoting evidence based practice.

### Principle 3

All supervisory relationships are subject to a clear agreement between the supervisor and supervisee which includes the plan and purpose.

### Principle 4

All supervision sessions should be recorded promptly, competently and stored securely. In respect to particular cases this should be on the casework file.

### Principle 5

Supervisors and supervisees are trained to carry out their role and should take part in appropriate multi agency training.

### Principle 6

The supervisor ensures that the continuing professional development within safeguarding is identified and the practitioner is supported to develop the skills and capabilities to do their job.

### Principle 7

Supervision will demonstrate a challenge of assumption and fixed thinking while promoting equality and diversity.

### Principle 8

Supervision should be supportive and offer the individual worker the opportunity to offload and obtain support when coping with difficult situations and volumes of work and through recognising issues which might affect the ability to cope with the work.

1. **Introduction**

This guidance has been produced by the Devon and Torbay Safeguarding Children Boards. It is well recognised that good supervision and support is essential to effective child protection.

The principles are intended to provide an overarching supervision policy framework for all staff working in multi-agency organisations across Devon and Torbay Children’s Services, and those services working with adults who are parents and carers, acknowledging that many of them already have existing and effective supervision processes in place. It is not intended to replace those but to reinforce them and to extend sound principles and good practice in all these organisations.

It provides a supervision framework and minimum standards to support individual performance for all staff working with child protection cases, regardless of their role or area in which they work.

It recognises the demanding nature of child protection and safeguarding and child protection working. Regular supervision is particularly important both in supporting the individual worker but also ensuring that there is appropriate reflection and assessment of risk as well as help in making decision in a supportive and learning environment.

It is important to recognise, as services for children are moving to a more integrated approach, that supervision will mean different things for different professions. Some varying definitions are included in Section 5 but this policy outlines overarching principles set by the LSCB's.

This document highlights the right of all workers engaged in safeguarding activity to have access to formal child protection supervision arrangements.

Supervision has been described as a regular one to one meeting between the supervisor and employee in order to meet organisational goals, professional standards and personal objectives. Other terms are sometimes used for supervision such as catch-ups; 1:1’s, group supervision and (peer) review.

 ‘It is known that both of the children were living in bleak conditions for some periods of their lives, and that all involved agencies had intermittent concerns. There was a significant volume of work undertaken to no effect….had the case been recognised as one of abusive levels of neglect on occasion resources would have been made available’.

*Torbay Serious Case Review C24*

Supervision is an accountable process that supports, assures and develops the knowledge, skills and values of an individual, group or team. The purpose is to improve the quality of their work to achieve agreed objectives and outcomes, whilst enabling development and progression through the organisation.

 ‘ The death of a 7 month baby girl of natural causes – identifies a number of features of the care that B was receiving at the time of her death that heightened the risk to her, including: sleeping position, smoking in the home, and bed and bedding unsuitable for an infant………recommendations include robust supervision for pastoral and family support staff’.

*Area M Serious Case Review*

### **2.1 Aims**

The aims of this document are to define:

* The rights and responsibilities of all staff in respect of supervision.
* The minimum standards to be met.
* The means by which the practice of child protection supervision should be qualitatively assessed and monitored.

‘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’

*Ferguson H. (2011), Child Protection Practice, Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan*

### **2.2 Core Values**

These are the core values which underpin the document. They have been developed through literature review and local staff consultation.

* Supervision must ensure the effective management of practice, develop and support staff and promote their engagement with the organisation.
* The quality of supervision has a direct bearing on the quality of service delivery and children’s outcomes.
* All staff, irrespective of their role, have the right to receive high quality supervision.
* All staff bear responsibility for the quality of their own work and, to this end, should prepare for and make a positive contribution to the supervisory process. They are not passive recipients.
* Senior managers have a responsibility to promote good supervision by implementing these standards and ensuring training is provided for both supervisors and supervisees.
* Senior managers need to conduct regular audits to ensure that this document and standards are being implemented.
* Supervision must promote anti discriminatory practice.

### **2.3 Responsibilities**

2.3 Responsibilities

To ensure robust supervision there are responsibilities for supervisee, supervisor, the employing organisation and the Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB).

Supervision is a process not an event. It entails preparation, open discussion and the implementation of decisions. All parties have a responsibility to contribute positively to all levels of this process, including monitoring.

Supervisees should make a substantial contribution to the quality of their own supervision by, for example:

* Ensuring that actions agreed within supervision are carried out in a timely manner
* Notifying the supervisor of any difficulties in implementing decisions or plans
* Identifying prior to supervision cases where they have concerns and which they would like to discuss
* Identifying development and support needs
* Understanding and implementing policy
* Raising concerns about the quality of supervision

Where the supervisee is a practitioner s/he will also contribute to the supervision process (and promote high quality service delivery) by, for example, ensuring that:

* There is a written plan for each child
* The desirable outcomes for each child are defined, including the purpose of contact and agreed interventions, and progress measured against these
* Case files contain clear analysis, plans and summaries
* Diversity is integrated into all work records

Supervisors are responsible for the supervision of their staff and they should ensure the quality of the process by, for example:

* Providing an appropriate environment and sufficient time for supervision
* Ensuring that actions agreed within supervision are carried out in a timely manner
* Notifying the supervisee of any factors which will impact on the implementation of decisions or plans
* Identifying particular cases to discuss in addition to those identified by the supervisee
* Identifying and facilitating access (where appropriate) to development and support opportunities
* Ensuring the supervisee is aware of, and understands, relevant policies and procedures
* Responding to any concerns raised about the quality of supervision
* Undertaking training for this role

The Organisation has a role to play in ensuring that supervision is provided on a regular basis should ensure the quality of the process by, for example:

* Ensuring that the adoption of these standards which will be contained within a supervision policy which has a clear review date
* Providing clarity about documentation and storage/access to records
* Ensuring all staff requiring supervision receive it on a regular basis (that regularity to be set in line with the Principles
* Ensure all staff providing supervision provide it on a regular basis and to the required standard as set out in the Principles.

The LSCB are responsible for the overall provision of a robust child protection supervision process across all partner agencies and will monitor this through a variety of mechanisms, including the annual Section 11 Audits (Staff Survey) and Multi-agency case audits (MACAs). Member organisations will be informed of the monitoring arrangements as this is likely to need reflection in organisational policies for staff and capacity planning.

### **2.4 Methods**

The principal recognised method of child protection supervision within the partnerships is one-to-one supervision – where one worker is given the responsibility to work with another worker to meet certain organisational, professional and personal objectives.

However, it may be unrealistic to expect one-to-one supervision to meet all functions for all staff all of the time. It is therefore appropriate to use other methods of supervision. These include group supervision, team supervision and mentoring by a senior practitioner or the use of other expertise and skills. This may be by techniques such as peer review with quality control. See Section 5 for definitions.

1. **Child protection supervision principles and criteria**

The principles define what needs to be in place in order for agencies to ensure a consistent approach to supervision at all levels and across the organisations.

### Principle 1

Group 3[[2]](#footnote-3) staff (who regularly work with vulnerable children[[3]](#footnote-4) or their parents) should have formal and regular supervision from the outset of their employment which enables them to be clear about their roles and responsibilities and the objectives they need to meet.

‘I didn’t realise, until I met with my supervisor, that things had drifted as much as they had. We thought about how things must be for the children. Then she helped me look at what I needed to do and how to do it, with the guidance there in front of us.’

*Frontline practitioner*

### Principle 2

Supervision is arranged and conducted in such a way as to permit proper reflection and discussion acknowledgement of good practice and achievement and promoting evidence based practice.

### Principle 3

All supervisory relationships are subject to a formal written agreement between the supervisor and supervisee which includes the plan and purpose[[4]](#footnote-5) (See appendix A for example).

Flexibility in accessing other reflective opportunities to think differently about what is happening in a family and what might help, can be very limited. A common experience amongst social workers is that the few supervision opportunities are dominated by a managerial need to focus on performance …. This leaves little time for thoughtful consideration of what is happening in the lives of the children and their families

*The Munro review of child protection: final report A child-centred system Mar 2011 para 7.33*

### Principle 4

All supervision sessions should be recorded promptly, competently and stored securely. In respect to particular cases a summary of any discussion or decisions should be noted on the casework file.

### Principle 5

Supervisors and supervisees are trained to carry out their role (organisation responsibility) and should take part in appropriate multi agency training.

### Principle 6

The supervisor ensures that the continuing professional development within safeguarding is identified and the practitioner is given the skills and capabilities to do their job.

I hadn’t realised that the information I held about ‘x’ coming for contraception at her age, when added to the information the foster carer had about her being out late so often, and her days missing school, was pointing towards possible sexual exploitation.

My supervisor helped me to sign up for training on information sharing and exploitation and we’ve used it since in the team.

*Frontline practitioner*

### Principle 7

Supervision will demonstrate a challenge of assumption and fixed thinking while promoting equality and diversity.

### Principle 8

Supervision should be supportive and offer the individual worker the opportunity to offload and obtain support when coping with difficult situations and volumes of work and through recognising issues which might affect his/her ability to cope with the work.

**4. Qualitative assessment and monitoring.**

**Supervisee.** All group 3 practitioners can use ‘evidence’ of supervision arrangements and reflective practice within appraisal. Additionally Continuing Professional Development discussions that clearly link with supervision evidence will demonstrate effectiveness.

I was worried what the family might think but…well, I said it’s part of my job…we all do it…What surprised me was that they were really OK with it – especially when we next met and we had a clearer chat about what we were aiming for. I think it was the time but also someone more trained….more expert.

*Frontline practitioner*

**Supervisor.** All child protection supervisors will be expected to provide evidence within appraisal of supervision arrangements and practice. Continuing Professional Development plans are expected to contain any training needs to meet the supervisor standards within this policy.

The supervisor is key in supporting individual supervisee engagement in the process.

**Employing organisations** can usefully include their supervision policy in evidence against their Section 11 declaration. The LSCB has an expectation that clear arrangements will be in place for audit of supervisee/supervisor engagement, supervision training needs analysis and monitoring of quality. In addition there is an expectation that records of supervision will be available to external audit, peer review and inspection processes.

**LSCB** monitoring could be done through direct methods. This may include sub group evaluation of access to child protection supervision training provided. Also multiagency case audit and peer review could include review of records and feedback from staff about quality of supervision. Indirect methods could include organisation declaration with evidence of effective policy (monitored through Section 11 audit) and by member audit presentations.

**LSCB** monitoring could also include monitoring of internal organisation training and workforce development.

**5. Glossary and Definitions**

Child protection is ‘activity undertaken to protect specific children who are suffering, or likely to suffer, significant harm’.[[5]](#footnote-6)

Supervision is defined as ‘a process in which one worker is given responsibility by the organisation to work with another worker(s) in order to meet certain organisational, professional and personal objectives.’ [[6]](#footnote-7)

These objectives are competent, accountable performance, continuing professional development and personal support”. [[7]](#footnote-8)

Supervision is a meeting that provides staff with the opportunity to reflect upon their work and decision making in relation to child protection.[[8]](#footnote-9)

Group 3 staff are all staff working predominantly with children, young people and parents i.e. Staff who are working at Level 3 and above within the ‘*Safeguarding Children and Young People: roles and competences for health care staff inter collegiate document’ (2014)* or Group 3 of the *Working Together to Safeguard Children (2010)* document.

Peer review is taken here as the evaluation of work by one or more people of similar competence to the producers of the work (peers). It constitutes a form of self-regulation by qualified members of a profession within the relevant field. Peer review methods are employed to maintain standards of quality, improve performance, and provide credibility.

Group or team supervision is taken as the process in which one worker is given the responsibility to work with a defined group or team in order to meet certain organisational, professional and personal objectives.

Working Group Members

Designated Doctor (Chair)

Detective Chief Inspector for Public Protection, Police

Named Nurse, NHS Trust

Organisation Development Officer, Council

Senior Probation Officer

Head of Behaviour Support, Education

HR Change Lead, Council

**Appendix A: Example of supervision agreement**

Child Protection Supervision

Individual Practitioners Agreement

Between: Supervisor

And Supervisee

**[organisation] expects all staff working directly with children and their families to access supervision in line with the [organisation] safeguarding children supervision policy.**

Arrangements agreed for Supervision

Frequency: ………… ……………………………………………………..

Length: ……………… …………………………………………………….

Location: …………… ……………………………………………………..

Process to be followed as per [Safeguarding Supervision Policy]

Cancellations or interruptions of safeguarding supervision are only acceptable under unavoidable circumstances such as sickness, unexpected leave or urgent, unavoidable work*.* It is the responsibility of the supervisee to ensure that the supervisor is informed and that a new date is negotiated within 2 weeks wherever possible.

Making supervision work: agreement of contribution:

**What I want from you as my Supervisor:**

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**What I will contribute as the supervisee to make this work:**

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**What I want from you as a supervisee:**

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**What I will contribute as the Supervisor to make this work:**

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**What we will do if there are difficulties working together:**

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………………………………………………………………………………………..

Supervisor Name: …………………………………………….

Signed: …………………………………………………………

Date ……………………………..……………………………..

Supervisee Name: …………………………………………….

Signed: …………………………………………………………

Date ……………………………..……………………………..

This agreement to be reviewed annually

**Responsibilities of the supervisee**

* Identifying families or situations for Child Protection Supervision: you should identify, through practice or supervision guidelines, families or situations that need to be discussed.
* Preparing for the session: you should have a working knowledge of the current situation, have case files and all necessary information available at the session.
* Asserting yourself: success of the session depends mainly on the supervisee. You should be able to assert yourself in decisions about your supervision and be empowered to use the session in the most effective way.
* Seeking & negotiating supervision: you need to arrange your own supervision.
* Protecting the time for supervision: give the session priority, arrange cover to avoid interruptions. Inform your manager if your workload is preventing you from accessing supervision.
* Supervision action plans: making, documenting and following through action plans that arise from reflection during supervision.
* Learning & change: allow yourself and be open to learning & change.
* Being open to challenge: use challenges as a learning tool. Do not interpret all challenges as personal attacks or discriminatory.
* Feed back to your supervisor about their facilitation: what worked or was helpful, what wasn’t.

**Rights of the supervisee**

* To receive regular Child Protection Supervision: Child Protection Supervision is mandatory.
* To be treated with respect: you are an equal partner in Child Protection Supervision.
* To be treated as an equal: decisions should be made through discussion.
* To confidentiality: unless your practice is unsafe, illegal or you do not attend/seek supervision.
* To know if this is breached: your supervisor will discuss with you the reasons for a breach in confidentiality.
* To a prepared, committed & knowledgeable supervisor: your supervisor will allow time for the session and seek guidance from the wider Safeguarding team if necessary to ensure you are given the best advice.
* To enough time for a session: Child Protection Supervision is endorsed & supported by the Trust.
* To protected space: your supervision will be conducted in private with no interruptions. The location will be at the supervisee’s base where possible.
* To discuss difficulties & vulnerable feelings: your supervisor will not criticise or discourage you from expressing these.

**Appendix B: Example of competency framework for supervisors**

The framework covers competencies in:

* Knowledge of supervision and underpinning theories.
* Attributes and values of the supervisor.
* Managing the supervision process.
* Facilitator interventions.
* Self-awareness - development needs in role as group facilitator.

Knowledge of supervision and underpinning theories:

* + Understands the purpose of supervision (including support and to enhance quality of work) - and able to explain this to supervisees.
	+ Able to set a supervision climate that is empathic, genuine & safe.
	+ Understands the purpose of a Supervision contract, negotiating a mutually agreed and clear contract.
	+ Is clear about the boundaries of supervision.
	+ Has knowledge of supervision model i.e. non-managerial.
	+ Can usefully focus on:-
		- the child/young person and their experiences.
		- Supervisees interventions.
		- Supervisee/clients relationship.
		- Supervisees counter transference.
		- Supervision relationship.
		- Supervisors counter transference.
		- Wider context.
	+ Able to manage relevant supervision data collection and understand the purpose for doing so.
	+ Has in depth knowledge of the local Supervision Policy and able to reflect this is supervision practice.
	+ Knowledge of professional standards (underpinned by relevant policy, procedures and code of conduct e.g. professional body such as Nursing & Midwifery Council NMC, Safeguarding Board child protection procedures).

Attributes and values of the supervisor:

* + Values/ believes in supervision.
	+ Shows commitment to the supervisory role.
	+ Sensitive to supervisees professional & personal needs.
	+ Aware of the potential power and authority in the supervisor.
	+ Can encourage and motivate people and carry appropriate optimism.
	+ Respects the individual differences of supervisees in group supervision, understanding group dynamics and able to manage challenge, competitiveness & conflict.
	+ Aware of and able to adapt to supervisees individual differences due to:-
		- Gender
		- Age
		- Cultural & ethnic background
		- Class
		- Sexual orientation
		- Personality
		- Professional background & experience.
	+ Able to highlight and challenge discriminatory attitudes & behavior.
	+ Awareness of own supervisory strengths & weaknesses.

Managing the supervision process:

* + Can set and maintain ground rules in supervision e.g. agreed venue, timekeeping, staying focused. Can fully understand the limits of confidentiality and able to recognise and respond appropriately to situations where it is necessary to share information to safeguard service users.
	+ Can encourage supervisee to take learning needs identified in supervision into their PDP

Facilitator interventions:

* + Can demonstrate the following interventions
		- Listening – (paraphrasing, summing up, clarification, reflecting back)
		- Challenge
		- Supportive
		- Catalytic
		- Informative
		- Can read verbal and non-verbal signals
		- Can intervene at group level e.g. handle competitiveness, scapegoating
		- Can create a learning environment
	+ Can shape a group supervision session i.e. beginning, middle and end, managing the time, keeping focus.

Self-awareness- development needs in role as group facilitator

* + Reflects on practice as a supervisor and attends supervision for role.
	+ Recognises limits and development needs in role as a supervisor and is able to discuss with an appropriate member of the safeguarding staff
	+ Keeps up to date with issues relating to changes in supervision
	+ Produces a PDP (personal development plan) for role as Safeguarding Children Supervisor facilitator.



 Gibbs Reflective Practice Cycle 1998

1. All staff working predominantly with children, young people and parents i.e. Staff who are working at Level 3 and above within the *‘Safeguarding Children and Young People: roles and competences for health care staff inter collegiate document’ (2014)* or Group 3 of the *Working Together to Safeguard Children (2010)* document. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. All staff working predominantly with children, young people and parents i.e. Staff who are working at Level 3 and above within the *‘Safeguarding Children and Young People: roles and competences for health care staff inter collegiate document’ (2014) or Group 3 of the Working Together to Safeguard Children (2010)* document. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
3. *LSCB ‘ If your role requires you as a minimum to make decisions about whether to refer information to the Safeguarding Hub and take part in child protection meetings’* [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
4. *https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/munro-review-of-child-protection-final-report-a-child-centred-system* [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
5. Working Together to safeguarding children 2013 Glossary p86 [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
6. Morrison 2001 [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
7. Morrison 1993 [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
8. Joint statement Caerphilly LSCBs [↑](#footnote-ref-9)