

Integrated Children's Services Supervision Policy

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About this document

Title	Supervision Policy
Purpose	To provide a Kent Integrated Children’s Services Policy to inform staff and managers about the expectations of effective supervision
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1. Introduction

This policy is applicable to any Kent Integrated Children's Services (ICS) supervisee working directly with children, young people and carers and will be supported by separate guidance. It defines the functions of professional support and casework supervision being different but equally importantly provides a wholistic framework to support supervisees.

Supervision is a key process in the delivery of effective services to children, their families and carers. Reflective and safe supervision supports staff to think holistically, stimulates their creativity and pays attention to the impact of the work on the supervisee and how this may influence their practice with a family.

2. Supervision Framework, Frequency & Recording

All staff, irrespective of their grade, must have regular planned supervision with their line manager. For staff who have no case responsibility this may be six-weekly.

The guidance breaks down what frequency of supervision should be provided to specific supervisee experiences.

Front Door

Front Door supervisors may access their Dashboard to select cases at random, or the supervisor or supervisee may identify a highlighted family for discussion, using the following criteria for each case supervision session:-

1. A family who experienced a strategy discussion.
2. A family progressed to a Children Social Work Services' assessment.
3. A family progressed for an Early Help assessment/intervention.
4. A family provided with information, advice and guidance.

3 or 4 cases should be discussed during each session across the range of criteria.

The supervisor will record the child's unique data number within the professional support supervision template and will not use names within the record in order to avoid data breaches. The purpose of the supervision is to be reflective of processes and practice given the child's files will be either closed or managed by an allocated worker where supervision will take place accordingly.

Recording

Professional support supervision must be uploaded to Share Point under the supervisee's folder. Each folder must have restricted permissions to comply with Information Governance so only the supervisee's management hierarchy has access to their folder. Casework supervision will be saved under a child's system file.

Length and ground rules

Sessions should last 1 to 1.5 hours. Supervision should take place in a private room, should begin punctually and interruptions should be permitted only in exceptional circumstances. Frequent lateness, cancellations or interruptions caused by either party should be discussed and recorded within professional support supervision records.

Frequency for discussing children and families

Quality casework supervision sessions held at least four weekly may discuss a small number of families. There will be families who are only open for assessment and do not require ongoing provision of services. In such circumstances, supervisors may record on the assessment and on the child's case notes a record of their decision making.

Each family remaining open after assessment should be discussed at least every 90 days (3 months) and this must be evidenced on each child's case file. However, the supervisor and supervisee are equally responsible for increasing the frequency of supervision on a family if this is proportionate to risk.

New allocations

Supervisors must ensure newly allocated work is discussed within 24 hours or sooner depending on the level of risk. This may increase the frequency of supervision sessions.

Frequency of professional support supervision

Quality professional support supervision sessions must take place at least every 90 days.

3. Professional Support Supervision

Supervision Agreements

The first supervision between supervisor and supervisee must explore Kent's supervision agreement (awaiting link) which is signed by both participants. Both must explore one another's protected characteristics and how this may both positively influence the work environment whilst implementing strategies to address challenges. Supervisors must discuss Kent's [Equality and Diversity](#) Strategy, [Dignity and Respect](#) and support supervisees in considering how they may participate in [staff engagement groups](#). This will support tailoring the supervisory relationship to the individual needs of the supervisee.

Good conversations

Professional support supervision must include the [Good Conversation](#) at least twice a year, once to plan and the other to review. Supervisees who observe an interest from their supervisor in their wellbeing and development, by planning to improve opportunities, are likely to become resilient in managing challenges whilst improving a family's opportunities.

Core components of professional support supervision

The process of supervision is based on a relationship between supervisors and supervisees which provides a safe environment to review: -

- Health and wellbeing,
- [Health and safety](#) in the workplace, including lone working where applicable,
- Professional development,
- Review supervision agreements and the good conversation

It can become necessary to consider the [performance and capabilities framework](#). Separating the functions of professional support and casework supervision supports positive experiences of the P&C framework for supervisees. It allows greater focus on the supervisee's conduct and behaviour towards a family and within Kent; casework supervision analyses the family's capacity to change. Providing two spaces of supervision prevents either dynamics influencing one another. This leads to stronger analysis to either develop the supervisee's practice or understanding whether the supervisee "can't or won't" improve their performance.

Probation period

All permanent staff joining Kent experience a six-month probationary period. This does not apply to agency staff. New staff are assessed on their performance and conduct by their manager. The probationary period determines the suitability of the employee to the post. Probation applies to those joining from another service within Kent as well as those joining from other local authorities. Supervisors assess probationary progress at months one, four and five when an assessment of overall performance is recorded [using the probation form](#).

4. Casework Supervision

Professional support supervision explores how a supervisee's unique experiences may support Kent in consistently delivering good services for children and families. Casework supervision explores how those unique experiences may influence a supervisee's interpretation of their observations. This motivates discussions about consistent service delivery and influences practice. Supervisees must understand: -

- What they are seeing, feeling, sensing and to consider how this may impact on a child's world.
- How to separate the facts from their opinions and feelings, to consider how their views and values may influence their interpretation of the facts, ***respectful challenge***.
- Their empathy to understand how all family members are experiencing their world, ***analysis of family dynamics and the children's world***
- Making sense of the children's future experiences and to support the supervisee to identify what needs to happen using a SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Time) approach, ***SMART planning***.

This overall approach is the best safeguard against over-optimism and risk adverse practice.

Respectful challenge

Supervision must be a safe place for the supervisee to be open to challenge and understanding how their unconscious biases may influence practice. It should allow the supervisee to respectfully challenge their supervisor when the supervisor's own unconscious biases may be influencing decision making and practice direction. Therefore, whilst the supervisor brings management and leadership experience, they too must observe a safe space to be reflective and open to learning something about their own

practice. Respectful challenge within the supervisory relationship leads to the supervisee mirroring the same respectful challenge towards families. This supports a learning culture to be flexible and creative to adapt practice to need.

Analysis of family dynamics and the children's world

KCC policy and good practice requires a genogram and chronology to be present on each child's file which is analysed within supervision. Supervision must analyse the quality of practice a child experiences, including the supervisee's understanding of each child's experience and how they may relate and impact on one another. The experiences of the parents and how they interpret the parenting they received must be understood in relation to how that impacts on their children. There must be analysis of the family's capacity to change.

SMART planning

Supervision of casework planning should be clear about impact, who, what, why, when, where and how things will be achieved. This should also include and record the impact of not providing a service or the family not engaging. There must be contingency planning, recording the impact of the supervisee not completing the work within timescales and/or having alternative options.

Reviewing the impact on families of completing previous actions

Supervision must review the children's plan, previous supervision actions and analyse the impact of the family's participation with services. Comparing between where the family was, what was aspired to be achieved and the impact of the family engaging with services, allows supervision to challenge drift and assess the effectiveness of service delivery. There must be a willingness to accept the practice may have been limited and to try something different against analysis of the family's capacity to change.

There must be analysis of the impact of not providing the practice, or the family not making changes. This supports documenting defensible decision making with respect to ending ICS' involvement or understanding the level of support a family requires (whether to step up or step down). It supports the supervisee in developing the narrative to share with families and multiagency to explain next steps.

5. Group Supervision

Group supervision promotes a learning culture in teams and organisations. It is not just a means to discussing families. Kent holds three formats of group supervision: team meetings, case discussion and case progression.

Team meeting

Discussing KCC's mission and vision, exploring leadership messages, exploring solutions to challenges whilst understanding changes to policy/guidance is a way of encouraging mutual understanding and consistent service delivery. It is critical for teams to discuss the practice framework, learning from auditing and reviews and to share ideas about best practice. Health and safety with respect to specific families/individuals and buildings should be explored whilst ensuring safety plans in place for isolated working are discussed. These discussions may also need to take place within professional support supervision if a supervisee is struggling to participate with discussions. Therefore, it is important the group meets regularly and has a clear agenda, is well facilitated and mandates attendance by all team members.

Case discussion

To ensure consistency across ICS, the group should use the [Appreciative Inquiry template](#) to shape discussions and allow for a record to be saved under each child's file. The Appreciative Inquiry helps supervisees to develop their reflective and analytic thinking. Teams benefit through the sharing of their practice, reflecting on and through the work of peers, feedback and creative ideas, and they gain a greater understanding of theirs and others' practice. It is an ideal platform for a strengths and risks approach to be used when considering a child within a family/placement.

Case progression

Children Social Work Services are using Case Progression and will continue until the process is reviewed and amended to be inclusive of all ICS services.

6. Observation of Practice

Observation of practice adds a further dimension, giving richness to the reflection of the child's lived experience and contributing to the professional development of the supervisee. For frontline supervisees directly involved with families, there is an expectation there will be two formal observations a year.