

# Supervision Policy

The purpose of this policy is set out how supervision will be delivered for all staff. The policy explains the requirements and processes for supervision whether you are a supervisor or a supervisee. For practitioners there are additional elements that need to be part of the process and these are also set out within this policy.

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## SUPERVISION POLICY September 2008

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## 1. BACKGROUND & CONTEXT

- 1.1 Effective supervision is a core component of managing for performance in Cafcass. Quality 4 Children strengthens the ability of supervision to assess the quality of work and related development needs on an ongoing basis. Supervision helps to ensure that we are fulfilling our statutory duties and responsibilities as a safeguarding agency; providing a high quality service to children and families in the family courts; and meeting the commitments set out in the Cafcass National Standards. Supervision forges a line of accountability between the child, the employee and the organisation.
- 1.2 For supervision to add value it needs to ensure that both supervisors and supervisees across the whole organisation are clear about their roles, responsibilities and accountabilities. An effective supervision system has benefits for children because it has a direct impact on the quality of the work we undertake and is therefore able to contribute to better outcomes for children and families. For our staff it needs to enhance professional development and provide support in managing the complex demands of work. Individual supervision can be complemented by other activities such as mentoring and peer support. For further information about how the two can work together refer to Cafcass policy for mentoring.<sup>1</sup>

## 2.0 SUPERVISION POLICY

### 2.1 Cafcass defines supervision as:

A process by which one worker is given responsibility by the organisation to work with another worker. The objective is to meet certain organisational, professional and personal objectives in order to promote positive outcomes for service users.

### 2.2 Cafcass' model of supervision makes clear links between good supervision and delivering improved outcomes for children. The model Cafcass has adopted has four functions, which are:

- Performance Management - Ensuring competent, accountable practice
- Development - Ensuring continuing professional development
- Support – Providing personal support
- Mediation – Ensuring that staff are engaged with the organisation  
(see *appendix one and tool 2 for more detail*)<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Cafcass is grateful to Wakefield Housing & Social care Department for some of the ideas in this section

<sup>2</sup> Concepts from Tony Morrison, *Staff Supervision in Social care*, p.32 Pavilion Press, 2005)

- 2.3 This model applies to both practitioners, business support and support staff at all levels of line management. Although, each session will not always address all 4 functions, the supervisor must make an assessment of the supervisee's performance against the service objectives.
- 2.4 The supervision model promotes active questioning and challenge alongside support and development. It promotes learning in the context of the relationships and interactions in which supervision occurs. It takes into account the *process* of learning as well as the *content* that is learned. The collaborative process between supervisor and supervisee is as important as what is actually discussed because the communication and problem-solving techniques used in the dialogue are part of what is learned.
- 2.5 An '*active-reflective*<sup>3</sup>' approach to supervision is likely to be appropriate to most staff and in respect to most situations; however on occasions a more "*active-intrusive approach*" will be required depending on the needs and level of skill and experience of the individual worker and the needs of the individual case or work situation.
- 2.6 Decisions as to the approach required should be informed by the evidence gained by the supervisor. Toolkits for making an assessment about the quality of the work in an open and constructive way have been developed as part of the broader Cafcass Performance Framework and this will need to be used alongside this supervision policy. [See Cafcass intranet → Knowledge base → Performance framework](#)
- 2.7 If another colleague is contributing to the overall supervision e.g. as an induction supervisor, practice supervisor or mentor, their role should be clarified and recorded within the supervision contract. Within this, another manager of equivalent grade or above can cover for the supervisor should she or he be unable, e.g. through long-term sickness, etc, to carry out these functions.

### Links to other policies/frameworks

- 2.8 A number of other policies support performance and staff development. This policy should be delivered alongside Cafcass practice and HR policies, including:
- Quality 4 Children including appraisals, competences, service objectives quality assurance and contract management
  - National Standards
  - The corporate and area business plans
  - Safeguarding Framework
  - Professional Record keeping policy

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<sup>3</sup> See Appendix One , Theoretical basis and Tony Morrison, page 54

- Performance and conduct policy and management toolkit
- Grievance policy
- Confirmation Policy for new staff

The following tools from the Supervision Toolkit should be used to ensure the implementation of the policy:

- Tool 1 – Supervision Agreement
- Tool 2 – Proforma for recording a supervision session
- Tool 3 – Supervision record of an individual case to go on the case file
- Tool 4 – Learning and Development Outcomes Plan
- Tool 5 – Individual Action Plan

### 3. POLICY REQUIREMENTS

3.1 All staff within Cafcass share the commitment set out in Cafcass National Standards to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. For practitioner staff, this is evidenced in their day-to-day work. For business support and other specialist roles, it can be a less immediate focus. However, the following procedures **are required of all employed staff**.

#### Timing of supervision

3.2 Formal face-to-face supervision meetings must take place every 6 weeks with at least 8 meetings per year meetings should usually last for a minimum of one and half hours. New staff or those with less experience in a new role may require more frequent supervision.

3.3 An appraisal must take place on an annual basis with a separate dedicated time.

3.4 One of the eight supervision meetings should be extended to allow for the mid year review of the staff members' appraisal.

3.5 All staff will also have access to their supervisor on an unplanned basis for urgent matters.

#### Planning for supervision

3.6 Both supervisor and supervisee must plan and prepare (reviewing the supervisee's performance against the service objectives<sup>4</sup> and reviewing actions from previous supervision notes) for each formal supervision meeting. This is to include an active review of evidence, including the quality of work, training and other developmental opportunities.

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<sup>4</sup> "Service objectives" are the role based objectives based on the priorities agreed for Cafcass i.e. Safeguarding; Making a good assessment; Writing a clear case analysis and a focused case plan; An acceptable standard of record keeping; and Child engagement . Letter to staff from Anthony Douglas, CEO, July 2008 re: Performance Management and Improving Practice Framework.

## Addressing diversity in supervision

3.7 Addressing diversity must be an integral part of the supervisory relationship in terms of:

- the differences between the supervisor and the supervisee and the impact of this on the supervisory relationship
- the supervisee's practice and service delivery to children and families and or engagement with service users, partners and stakeholders.

## Recording supervision

3.8 A written supervision agreement which links to an individual's service objectives will be agreed on an annual basis between the supervisor and the supervisee, with each retaining a copy (see tool 1 for the pro-forma).

3.9 All supervision meetings (formal and impromptu) must be written up promptly, typed or written clearly, signed or endorsed by both parties<sup>5</sup> and a copy retained by each. The quality of work, summary of evidence reviewed and any actions relating to the service objectives must be recorded electronically on the Q4C database.

3.10 The records of supervision are owned by Cafcass and may be subject to internal or external inspection.

3.11 All records must give sufficient detail of the discussion to reflect the content of the meeting, identify actions as agreed and record any disagreements and concerns raised. The standard format as supplied in the Toolkit should be used as a framework for recording purposes.

3.12 If there are significant concerns regarding the work of an individual member of staff which cannot be addressed in normal supervision then these must be addressed using the Practice /Management Advisory Notice<sup>6</sup>

3.13 On leaving, your supervision records are passed to the Human Resources (HR) Department for placing on your Personnel file, which is retained by the HR Department.

## Learning and supervision

3.14 Ensure that learning from training and other developmental opportunities is applied to improved service delivery including implementation of Learning and Development Outcomes Plans.

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<sup>5</sup> Where signatures are asked for on the pro-forma, these can be email agreement rather than direct writing on paper

<sup>6</sup> The Practice/management Advisory Notice proforma is contained in the HR Performance Toolkit.

*In addition to the above, in casework supervision the following procedural requirements apply to all practitioner staff*

## **Observing practice for supervision**

3.16 Observation of direct engagement with children and young people will take place on a planned basis at least once during each year, using the appropriate tool.

3.17 Observation of direct engagement with an adult service user will take place on a planned basis at least once during each year, using the appropriate tool. This will normally be the first substantive meeting with an individual service user.

## **Evidence for supervision**

3.18 Direct evidence will be collected that key national standards and service objectives have been met and processes have been followed particularly with regard to our safeguarding duties. This evidence should be retained to justify the assessment of the quality of the practice.

3.19 There must be evidence that:

- Screening and risk identification is carried out and recorded, including transfer of risk information to the CMS.
- Case plans are prepared and maintained through the life of a case, which evidence a planned and effective approach to practice including the active involvement of children and young people.
- The Safeguarding Framework is adhered to
- All work is recorded.
- Evidence that the child or young person's own views were obtained as far as possible, and recorded on the case file.
- Where risk factors are identified, the case plan specifies the risks and identifies the response – for example, the frequency of visits to a child placed at home during care proceedings.
- Where high and/or imminent risk is identified, the service manager is informed promptly and a referral to children's social care may be necessary.
- At any stage of the case, the Service Manager is informed promptly when a referral to children's social care may be necessary<sup>7</sup>.
- Where a safety assessment is undertaken, it complies with the 'key elements' set out in the Safeguarding Framework.
- Feedback from children and parents, feedback from colleagues, review of case files and reports to court.

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<sup>7</sup> See 2.81 of the Cafcass Safeguarding Framework

## **Quality Assurance in supervision**

3.20 The standard of case plans and reports must be checked before they are finalised either by the supervisor or someone who has been delegated this responsibility unless there is an unavoidable reason. The Supervisor is accountable for ensuring the work of the practitioner is quality assured and meets the required standard.

## **Recording in casework supervision**

3.21 All decisions made in supervision in relation to individual children / cases must be recorded on the Case Supervision Record (see tool 3 in the toolkit), and retained in the case file (see tool 3 in the toolkit).

## **Supervision of self employed contractors**

3.22 Equivalent arrangements must be in place for self employed contractors. As a statutory safeguarding agency Cafcass has a responsibility to ensure that the service provided to children, their families and the courts is of the highest possible quality. In particular, there should be no discernible difference between the standard of work provided by employed or self-employed practitioners. This will be made clear through the SEC contracts and this will form the basis of contract review. A suggested approach is contained in Appendix 2

## **4. GUIDELINES FOR HOW TO PUT THE SUPERVISION POLICY INTO PRACTICE**

4.1 This guidance is attached to the supervision policy, to provide more detailed information about how the policy should be applied in practice.

## **Responsibilities of supervisors & supervisees**

4.2 To ensure the effective implementation of this policy it is good practice for supervisors and supervisees to adopt the following responsibilities.

### **Joint responsibilities shared between supervisor and supervisee:**

- Ensure clarity of purpose when negotiating and agreeing the statement of arrangements
- Locate individual supervision within the context of wider constructive working relationships between supervisor and supervisee; the team; and Cafcass
- Be open to learning, feedback and challenge within an atmosphere of mutual respect

- Arrange dates in advance, including for the appraisal process
- A supervisee should provide evidence of work and the supervisee should make constructive use of evidence e.g. project work; and in casework: observations of practice; use of QI tools; internal and external feedback; CMS.
- Within supervision, discuss and plan how the variety of needs, which are identified, may be addressed outside the individual supervision setting e.g. use of the confidential counselling line; expert consultation; mentoring.
- Implement agreed actions between supervision settings
- Seek agreement wherever possible and where not, escalate in accordance with the policy

### **Responsibilities of the supervisor:**

- Maintain balance: between reflection and accountability; between positive feedback and constructive challenge; between celebrating strengths and identifying issues to be addressed.
- Record supervision sessions promptly and clearly and maintain a complimentary electronic supervision record to capture information /discussions which arise in that format especially emails.
- Include workload considerations
- Log assessments made on the Q4C database

### **Additional responsibilities for Casework supervisors**

- Ensure that casework practice meets the minimum standards as set out in Cafcass' national standards
- Ensure that safeguarding processes are being followed
- Ensure issues arising from the case planning process are addressed
- Ensure a child-centred approach to all casework discussions
- Observe direct engagement with children and young people on a planned basis at least once during each year
- Observe direct engagement with an adult service user on a planned basis at least once during each year
- Place any case-related supervision notes on the child's file as well as referring to these on the supervision file<sup>8</sup> using the proforma in the toolkit.

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<sup>8</sup> Where signatures are asked for on the pro-forma, these can be email agreement rather than direct writing on paper.

## The supervision relationship as a partnership

4.3 To ensure the effective implementation of this policy it is good practice to observe the following points for the supervision relationship:

<b>The partnership should:</b>	<b>And should not:</b>
Be a continuous process	Be a one off event
Encourage and involve you	Undermine you
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
Be structured and focussed	Include 'small talk and cosy chat'
Identify the resources you need to do the job	Make unfair demands
Be planned and private	Be rushed or interrupted
Be a two way process	Be one-sided
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
Treat you as an individual respecting diversity issues	Ignore the supervisee's individual needs
Be confidential regarding issues specific to the supervisee, subject to the safety of people or staff	Break confidentiality
Deal with situations sensitively and clearly	Ignore or fail to support the supervisee
Support and promote the application of emotional intelligence within Cafcass practice (self-awareness, self-management, the ability to work with others, social awareness)	Expect these traits of the supervisee without the supervisor developing them him/herself

## APPENDIX ONE

### Theoretical basis

#### The four functions of supervision

There are four key functions, which support the supervision and review process. They give a balanced approach to the process through relying heavily on one another. You cannot perform one element effectively without the others. This does not mean they will be attended to equally in every session but over time all should be visited and none dominate unduly. As a result of any meeting, actions may be required by any party in relation to any of the four key elements. These actions should be recorded appropriately.

The four functions are:

Management	Ensuring competent, accountable practice
Development	Ensuring continuing professional development
Support	Providing personal support
Mediation	Ensuring that staff are engaged with the organisation - the psychological contract

#### **Within the Management function your supervisor should address:**

- Overall management of the quality of your work, using the appropriate toolkits, and logging the assessments of quality electronically
- Overall management of your workload and priorities
- Provision of resources
- Provision of a safe environment in which to work
- Professional discussion of your performance against individual, team and service objectives, and national standards

#### **Within the Support function your supervisor should:**

- Support you both as a professional and as an individual person in your own right
- Support your well being at work

#### **Within the Development function your Manager should:**

- Identify your individual strengths
- Identify areas for development in order for you to carry out your job to the required standard and objectives
- Identify development opportunities
- Plan how your development needs could be met
- Ensure that you have induction training.
- Evaluate the impact of the development opportunities you have received.

### **Within the Mediation function your Manager should:**

- Act as a key link between you, senior management, the team and any outside agencies
- Help you contribute to the development of the organisation
- Help you to implement organisational policies
- Mediate in any conflicts between you and the organisation
- Transfer relevant information between you, senior management, the team and any outside agencies
- Deal sensitively but clearly with any complaints about staff

### **Styles of supervision process**

From Wonnacott- reported by Tony Morrison p.54

**Note:** As indicated in the Policy at 2.5 the “active intrusive” style may be required alongside the primary “active reflective” styles depending on the needs of the individual and the work situation. The “laissez faire” style has been common in social work organisations including Cafcass and is not recommended.

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#### **Active Intrusive**

'The supervisor operates in a largely directive role to ensure that the worker carries out key agency requirements. Its benefit is that the supervisor has a good knowledge of the worker's cases and can ensure that practice is carried out in accordance with agency procedures. On the other hand, there is little attention to the workers feelings or to worker-user interactions such as mirroring or parallel processes'.

#### **Passive**

'This describes the collusive alliance in which the supervisor regards the practitioner as being competent, and leaves it up to him/her to decide if and when contact with the supervisor is required. Although this leaves the worker in control at one level, the supervisor has effectively abandoned him/her and therefore the agency cannot take responsibility for the work that is undertaken. If things go wrong, the worker, supervisor, users and employer are all vulnerable'.

### Active reflective

'The supervisor is proactive and knows about the work being undertaken, and seeks to engage in a collaborative and reflective process. Attention is paid to the worker's feelings and to the worker user dynamic as an additional source of information. When the worker is struggling or has lost focus, these supervisors help the worker reflect on what is going on, using challenging and user focused questions, rather than resorting to proscription. The supervisor also creates opportunities to observe the workers relationship with the family, as a basis for gaining an accurate assessment of the workers competence and limitations'

Active intrusive	Active reflective	Passive
Prescriptive	Collaborative	Laissez-faire
Knows the cases	Knows the cases	Cases not known
Task and procedure	Task and process	Supervisee led
Assessment of worker's tasks and output	Overall assessment of worker's Competence	Lack of Assessment
Checking up	Reflection and challenge	Avoidant
Directive	Developmental focus, including emotional competence	Collusive

## APPENDIX TWO

### Applying the four-fold model relation to

- **self-employed practitioners**
- **employed practitioners**
- **Business Support staff**

<b>Management function</b> ensuring competent, accountable practice	<b>Developmental function</b> ensuring continuing professional development	<b>Supportive function</b> providing personal support	<b>Mediation function</b> ensuring that staff are engaged with the organisation
<b>Examples of how this applies for a self- employed practitioner In contract review</b>			
<p>Compliance with Cafcass policies, Government guidance and legislation</p> <p>Ensuring that the standard of work is satisfactory</p> <p>Safeguarding and risk processes</p> <p>Issues of risk for the worker – work planning around this</p> <p>Review of case planning</p> <p>Comply with any complaints, serious case reviews or other formal processes</p>	<p>Identification of learning needs by the contractor, the contract manager or the agency.</p> <p>Consultations</p> <p>Information from the contract manager about minimum requirements for the contractor’s continuing development, in order for the agency to be confident about the standard of expertise, skills and knowledge.</p> <p>Information from the contractor about how learning needs are to be met /</p>	<p>In this work, personal support is crucial but it is not appropriate for the contract manager to provide this directly.</p> <p>The review should include identification of this need; with information from the SEC about how it is being met e.g. regular meetings with a ‘buddy’ group or regular professional supervision arranged externally to Cafcass.</p> <p>The contract manager needs</p>	<p>Contract issues</p> <p>GSCC registration</p> <p>CRB</p> <p>Ensure notification and understanding of new policies</p> <p>Ensure receipt of Channel C</p>

<p>Use of resources</p> <p>Availability for new work</p> <p>Use of information from range of QA resources including case recording; review of court reports; direct feedback. These mechanisms will sometimes be within the life of a case and sometimes after it has closed as part of a review. Arrangements for direct observation of practice, and any issues arising</p>	<p>have been addressed.</p>	<p>the details of such arrangements, in order to ascertain that they provide the level of support identified as necessary for this work to be done well on behalf of the agency and the child.</p>	
<p><b>Examples of how this applies for an employed practitioner in supervision</b></p>			
<p>Compliance with Cafcass policies, Government guidance and legislation</p> <p>Ensuring that the standard of work is satisfactory against the service objectives for the role</p> <p>Safeguarding and risk processes</p>	<p>Overview of the personal development plan agreed at annual appraisal</p> <p>Identifying new learning needs – either by the supervisee, supervisor or by the agency for all staff – and a range of techniques for meeting those</p>	<p>Direct provision of support relating to personal circumstances or casework issues</p> <p>Identifying other sources of support – e.g. confidential counselling line</p>	<p>Contract issues</p> <p>GSCC registration</p> <p>CRB</p> <p>Ensure understanding of new policies</p> <p>Team planning</p>

<p>Issues of risk for the worker – work planning around this</p> <p>Compliance with any complaints, serious case reviews or other formal processes Review of case planning</p> <p>Use of resources</p> <p>Availability for new work</p> <p>Use of information from range of QA resources including case recording; review of court reports; direct feedback to assess quality of work These mechanisms will sometimes be within the life of a case and sometimes after it has closed as part of a review.</p> <p>Arrangements for direct observation of practice, and any issues arising.</p>	<p>needs.</p> <p>Ensuring that learning from training and other developmental processes is translated into better practice</p> <p>Consultations</p> <p>Learning points arising from casework</p> <p>Identification of strengths and the possibility of the supervisee providing training for other staff, sharing experience</p>		<p>Team issues</p>
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<b>Examples of how the four-fold model applies to Business Support staff in supervision</b>			
<p>Compliance with Cafcass policies, Government guidance and legislation</p>	<p>Overview of the personal development plan agreed at annual appraisal</p>	<p>Direct provision of support relating to personal circumstances or work related issues</p>	<p>Ensure understanding of new policies and office procedures</p>
<p>Ensuring that the standard of work is satisfactory against the service and business support objectives for the role</p>	<p>Identifying new learning needs – either by the supervisee, supervisor or by the agency for all staff – and a range of techniques for meeting those needs.</p>	<p>Identifying other sources of support – e.g. confidential counselling line; peer support</p>	<p>Team planning Team issues</p>
<p>Use of resources</p>	<p>Ensuring that learning from training and other developmental processes is translated into better business support practice</p>		
<p>Use of information from range of resources including CMS, Financial reports from open accounts; direct feedback from both internal/external service users to assess quality of work</p>	<p>Consultations that impact on the business support service</p>		
	<p>Identification of strengths and the possibility of the supervisee providing training for other business support staff, sharing experience and training</p>		