



Supervision Guidance - Early Help and Support Service

Here in Blackburn with Darwen, we are committed to ensuring that all workers receive the necessary support and guidance to enable them to undertake their roles. Supervision for staff is underpinned by a culture of high expectations, high support and high challenge with a “No blame” approach.

Regular good quality supervision of staff is necessary to ensure that we appropriately safeguard children, promote their welfare and achieve the best possible outcome for each child and their family.



Supervision Guidance - Early Help and Support Service

Contents

1. **Context**
2. **Purpose**
3. **The Supervision Contract**
4. **The Supervision Model**
5. **Formal Supervision**
6. **Reflective Supervision**
7. **Observed Practice**
8. **Escalation of Concerns**

1. Context

The Early Help and Support Service plays a key role alongside social workers and partner agencies in protecting children at a time when services are under considerable pressure.

Professor Eileen Munro in her report '*A child centred system*', emphasised "that to be able to practice well social workers have to be employed in an organisation that supports them and their professional development".

The managerial oversight of the work of staff at all levels has been a consistent theme that has emerged from serious case reviews over the past 25 years. It is an issue that attracts considerable attention in the course of Ofsted inspections and has been the subject of interest at national level for many years.

'Directors of Children's Social Care must ensure that the work of staff working directly with Children is regularly supervised. This must include the supervisor reading, reviewing and signing (authorising) the case file at regular intervals'. (Laming Report 2003).



Supervision Guidance - Early Help and Support Service

'Supervision is an integral element of practice not an add-on. Through it, Family Support Workers and Early Years Practitioners review their day to day practice on decision making, plan their learning and development as professionals.

'Supervision and case consultations are critical in helping practitioners draw out their reasoning so that it can be reviewed'.

'Supervision is the context in which the critical appraisal of assessment and planning for a child, which is central to promoting good practice and reducing error, can take place'. (A Child Central System, Munro 2011).

2. Purpose

Supervision should.....:

1. Improve the quality of the decision making and interventions;
2. Enable effective line management and organisational accountability;
3. Identify and address issues related to caseloads and work management;
4. Support the achievement of quality standards in the workplace
5. Develop an awareness of the practitioners roles and responsibilities
6. Clarify expectations, aims and objectives as they relate to intervention strategies
7. Provide a sounding board for ideas, concerns, plans and strategies
8. Build professional competence, creativity and new ways of working
9. Give feedback about performance as an aid to improvement and development
10. Support a child centred, outcome focussed service



Supervision Guidance - Early Help and Support Service

Anti-Discriminatory Practice

Anti-discriminatory practice in supervision is essential if staff are to work effectively in a multi-racial, multi-cultural, pluralist society and with those who are disadvantaged and the subject of oppression or exclusion. The relationship between supervisor and supervisee is by definition characterised by an authority and power differential and difference is a constant reality whether it arises from gender, race, age, disability, intelligence, sexuality, religion or nationality.

It is important that supervisors are aware of the implicit power contained in their role that ADP is good practice and that oppressive behaviour diminishes both the oppressor and the oppressed. To counter this there is a need to work with the realities of inequality and difference. Supervisors should seek to understand and engage with the strengths, values and feelings of staff and should include in the supervisees contract problem solving mechanisms in the event of breakdown in the supervisory relationship due to issues of difference.

3.The Supervision Contract

Morrison and Knapman define a contract as:

'a means of making explicit the aims of the parties to work towards agreed goals in agreed ways'.

This definition clearly identifies the supervisory relationship as a partnership based on mutually agreed **expectations**. It is important therefore at the beginning of the supervisory relationship that the mutual expectations of supervisor and supervisee are made clear and are written down in the form of an individual supervision contract.

Each staff member should have a supervision contract negotiated between the participants which should address the following issues:

- **Mandate** - This is the purpose of supervision and should reflect the four functions referred to earlier – management, support, development and mediation;
- **Structure** - When, how often, how long, how the agenda will be created, rules on cancellation, location etc;
- **Confidentiality** - Who will have access to supervision records, what can be kept strictly



Supervision Guidance - Early Help and Support Service

confidential, what would be referred out;

- Recording - How the record of supervision will be made and maintained. Clarification about how 'case material' and 'other' (support / development / mediation) material will be recorded;
- ADP - A statement about anti-discriminatory practice and what remedial actions are available if there are concerns;
- Review - When the contract is to be reviewed (usually annually) and who is to be involved in the process.

4. The Supervision Model

The theoretical model upon which supervisory practice in Blackburn with Darwen is based upon the work of Morrison T (2005) Staff Supervision in Social Care: Making a Real Difference to Staff & Services Users 3rd ed / Pavillion Brighton.

They defined supervision as a process rather than an event and involve negotiating complex relationships beyond that of the supervisor and supervisee.

Supervision is a process by 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 which together promote the best outcomes for service users.

From this definition, four distinct, related, functions were identified:

1. Competent Accountable Performance

Managerial function – to ensure that the worker is meeting the expectations of the organisation in the discharge of their duties. This will include consideration of case material to ensure activity is purposeful and outcome focused and that cases are being managed at an appropriate level upon the Continuum of Need and Response.

2. Engaging the Individual with the Organisation

Mediation function – To facilitate the exchange of information. This function allows



Supervision Guidance - Early Help and Support Service

supervisors the opportunity to inform staff about what is happening in the wider organisation and hearing from them what is happening at practitioner level. This function also allows supervisors to consult with staff when changes are proposed

3. Personal Support

Support Function – to provide the opportunity for staff to consult on practice issues and the personal impact these might have. It is an opportunity to reflect on incidents and work related issues that present challenge, cause the worker difficulty or are particularly stressful, and subsequently agree management strategies. Reflection upon experiences allows workers the opportunity to talk about feelings that may impact on their effectiveness;

4. Continuing Professional Development

Development Function – to ensure that workers are given the opportunity to develop the knowledge, skills and experience necessary to do their job well and progress in their careers. This function looks at current competencies and skills, linked to the DfE Knowledge and Skills Framework and identifies any areas of future development and agrees strategies to address these;

The four functions of supervision will be delivered in the following ways:

Case Supervision

This will explore the **managerial** and **mediation** functions of supervision. In order to achieve best value from supervisions the following procedure will apply

Experienced staff will be supervised monthly. New staff will be supervised fortnightly for the first 3 months

- Each supervision session will last for 2 ½ hours.
- Both parties will prepare beforehand
- The supervisor will allocate 1 x 20minute slot to 6 cases and will offer rigorous challenge and support

The record of this will be recorded within case notes on the child's electronic record; LCS/protocol, EHM/e-CAF



Supervision Guidance - Early Help and Support Service

The remaining 30 mins will cover personal supervision. This form of supervision will explore the management, development, mediation and support functions of supervision and take place on a quarterly basis

- Performance Management
- Professional Development
- Health and Wellbeing

Reflective Supervision

This form of supervision will explore the support and development functions of supervision.

The supervisor will undertake a reflective supervision with the Early Help and Support team bi monthly, where a case will have been identified and prepared for this supervision.

5. Case Supervision

Case supervision will seek to ensure that practice is child centred and that the intervention is both effective and procedurally compliant.

In order to effectively monitor progress, the manager will consider the case records on protocol and e-CAF and will refer to the previous supervision session to review the subsequent progress and previously agreed actions.

Key Issues

Why are we involved and what are the issues?

What have we done?

What are the issues we are addressing on the plan?

Childs Voice

The child's wishes and feelings should be clearly recorded.



Supervision Guidance - Early Help and Support Service

The supervisor will explore and seek evidence that the voice of the child influences the support and intervention being provided.

There is evidence that the child is seen regularly and there is evidence of the family support worker and Early Years Practitioners meaningfully engaging with the child or young person.

Effectiveness of Intervention

There is evidence of challenge and support from the supervisor. Progress of the plan will be reviewed – articulating the journey travelled by the child and family. This will include a review of the presenting issues at referral, followed by a measure of progress to date, identification of desired outcomes with clear timescales.

Actions

Next steps and agreed actions

Procedural Compliance

Case recording – current and of a good quality.

The plan is SMART.

The intervention is of a good quality and tools used identified.

Support is being offered to the child and family at the appropriate level of the CoNR, with consideration being given to the need to escalate or de-escalate.

Any identified tasks relating to procedural compliance should have identified timescales for completion.



Supervision Guidance - Early Help and Support Service

6. Reflective Supervision

The supervisor will undertake a reflective supervision with the Early Help and Support team. The supervisor will identify a case to be prepared and brought to the additional bi monthly session. Consideration will be given to:

- Sudden escalation or de-escalation of a case
- QA activity
- Case that is deemed a cause for concern
- Or by mutual agreement between the supervisor and supervisee

The Senior Manager of the team will undertake one reflective supervision per year with the with Early Help and Support Service.

The reflective session will be recorded on the reflective supervision journal template which can be found in the Early Years shared drive.

The session will explore the following:

Event

Brief description of significant event.

Reflection

What was I thinking and feeling at the time?

Analysis & Action

How did I react and why? What was informing my decisions?

Learning

On reflection I achieved/learned...



Supervision Guidance - Early Help and Support Service

And I could have done differently...

My future learning needs are...

The record of the session will be signed by both parties, no later than 10 working days after the session.

The worker will receive a copy, to be form part of their Learning Journal.

The worker will be required to bring their journal to each reflective supervision session, where consideration can be given to the need to review learning.

The Learning Journal will inform the annual appraisal process.

A further copy will be stored in the worker's personal file.

Case notes in the child's records will be updated by the supervisor to indicate that a Reflective Supervision has taken place.

7. Observed Practice

In addition to case supervision and reflective supervision sessions, the supervisor will complete two pieces of observed practice with supervisees annually. The observations will be selected by the supervisor and may consist of practise, group delivery, meetings, joint home visits.

Following the session, the supervisor will provide feedback on:

- Brief description of the Observed Practice;
- Reflections on the Observed Practice;
- Comments on the feedback given by the observer and reflect on areas for future development.

Service user feedback is integral to this process and should be sought and recorded.

An Action Plan identifying any areas for development, including necessary support will be completed.



Supervision Guidance - Early Help and Support Service

The record of the session will be signed by both parties, no later than 10 working days after the session.

8. Personal Supervision

This supervisor will complete this part of supervision at the end of case management supervision and will consist of the following:

1. **Performance Management and Feedback:**
 - Activities undertaken;
 - Case Consultation and discussion (where applicable);
 - Case file audit discussion (where applicable).
2. **Professional Development discussions of your skills, knowledge base and value base to include:**
 - Induction requirements (as appropriate);
 - Training requirements (and formal completion of Performance Development Plans and Reviews);
 - Longer term development plans and setting of professional goals;
3. **Health and Wellbeing:**
 - Factors affecting performance;
 - Personal issues (as appropriate);
 - Stress-related issues;
 - Absence(s) from work;
 - Health and Safety;
 - Opportunity for you to give feedback on your experience of and expectation of



Supervision Guidance - Early Help and Support Service

supervision;

- Equal Opportunities – to discuss any issues of oppression that the supervisee wishes to raise, from personal experience to institutional and structural matters;
- Annual Leave.