

# Supervision Guidance

## Children's Services

Applies from senior managers to frontline staff

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## Control

<b>This guidance was authorised by:</b>	The Senior Management Team 20/01/2022
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### 1. Guidance for Effective Supervision

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**1.1** Supervision should not be treated as an isolated activity but intrinsically linked to all other management oversight, practice development, staff support, and professional development. Managers / supervisors should actively promote and encourage group / team reflection, analysis, discussions, and learning in addition to individual supervision. All staff should contribute to our learning culture – this means taking responsibility in supporting everyone's learning, sharing knowledge, reflecting, analysing, and positively challenging each other to help our service continually improve and provide the best service to our children, young people, and their families.

### 1.2 Supervision agreement

The supervision agreement is there for the supervisor and supervisee to discuss, agree and record what they want to achieve from the supervision process. It should be reviewed at least annually, and good practice is to revisit it after the first six months to check it is still meaningful and update it needed. Completing the supervision agreement should involve the supervisor and supervisee negotiating how the supervisee's practice will be supported, monitored, and recorded to ensure the quality of service to children, young people, and families. It should be a dynamic tool which can be referenced regularly in monitoring the effectiveness of supervision and updated to account for any changes to role, or responsibilities.

### Methods of delivering supervision

#### 1.3 The Integrated Model of Supervision (or 4x4x4x4 model)

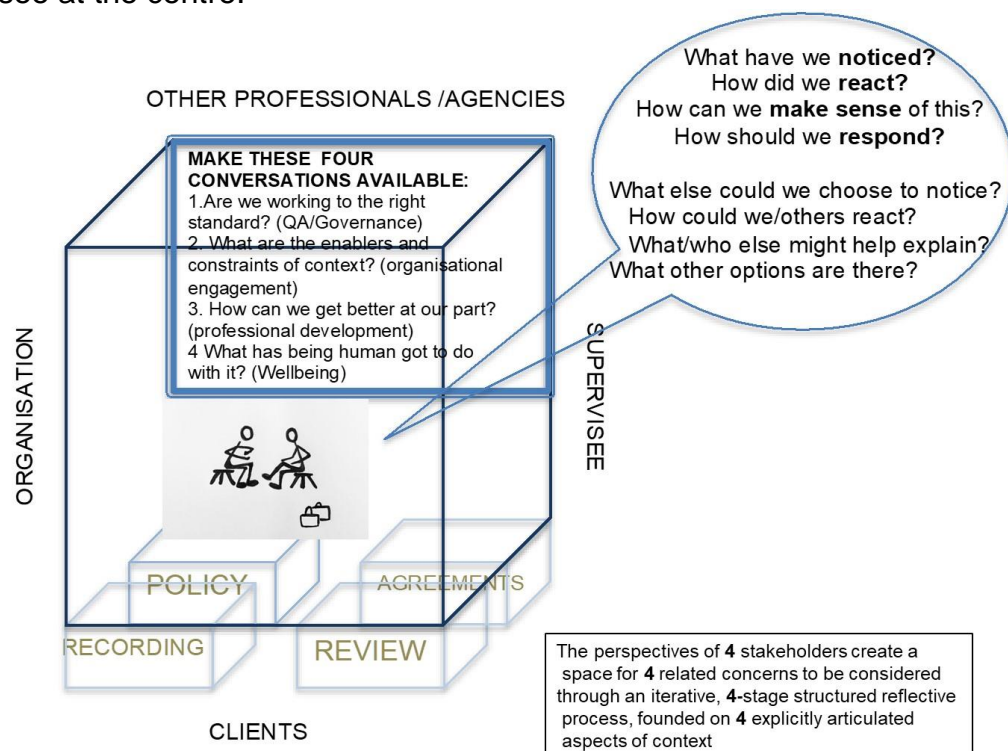
*(detail and diagrams reproduced with permission of Bridget Rothwell 2020)*

This is our main model for supervision practice and should explicitly inform one to one supervision. One to one supervision is a formal, prearranged, and contracted process between supervisee and supervisor where the principles of supervision are achieved within an individual relationship, confidential setting, and protected space. The supervisor should normally be the supervisee's line manager.

**1.4** The integrated model understands that supervision is a relationship – but a complicated relationship for the supervisor to navigate and guide. The central

complexities in this relationship relate to: power, privilege, difference, previous relationships, context, human behaviour, our ethics, and our tasks. The supervisor has to manage these complexities across the organisational, professional, and personal aspects of the supervisor and supervisee's relationship with the knowledge that this is not just a relationship, it is a relationship with purpose in a context. The practice of social work engages with complex, often risky human behaviour which leads to a lot of uncertainties and one of the challenging tasks in supervision is guiding conversations that positively manage this uncertainty. To manage these challenges effective supervision is founded on a negotiated, agreed, and clearly recorded supervision agreement that attends to the administrative, professional, and psychological aspects of supervision.

**1.5** In the integrated model of supervision: the perspectives of **4** stakeholders create a space for **4** related concerns / functions to be considered through an iterative **4** stage structured reflective process, founded on **4** explicitly articulated aspects of context. The diagram below draws these components together with the supervisor and supervisee at the centre:



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**1.6 The 4 stakeholders are:**

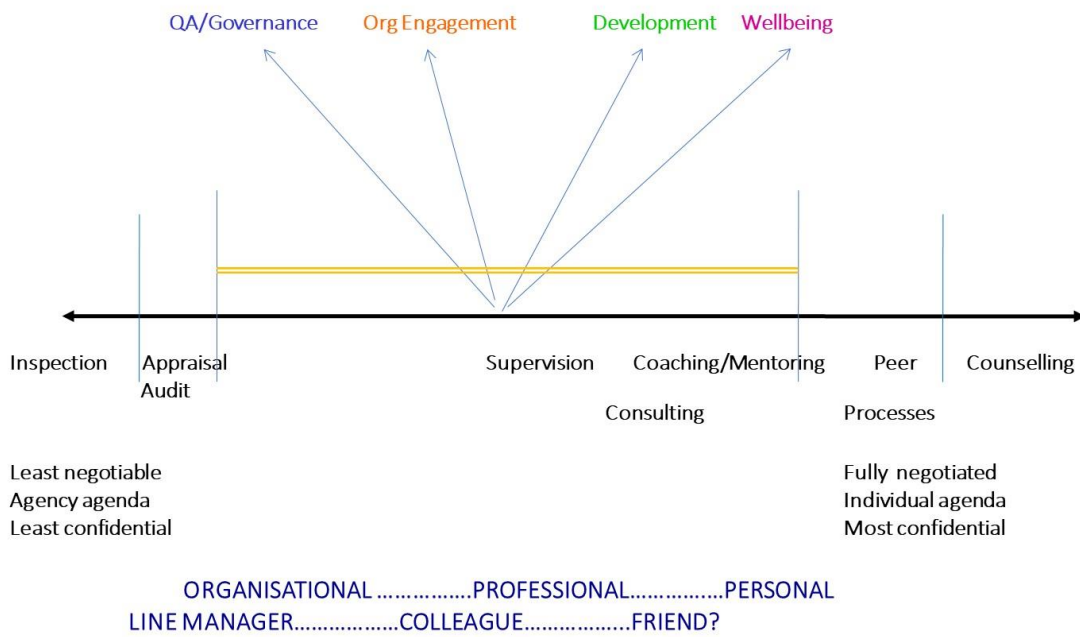
- our **organisation** (LCC), represented by the supervisor in supervision
- **other professionals / agencies**
- the **supervisee**
- our **clients**, i.e. children, young people and their families

In one to one supervision only the supervisor and supervisee are physically present, however these other stakeholders need to be acknowledged, referenced, and an important part of supervision.

**1.7 The 4 related concerns / functions to be considered in supervision are:**

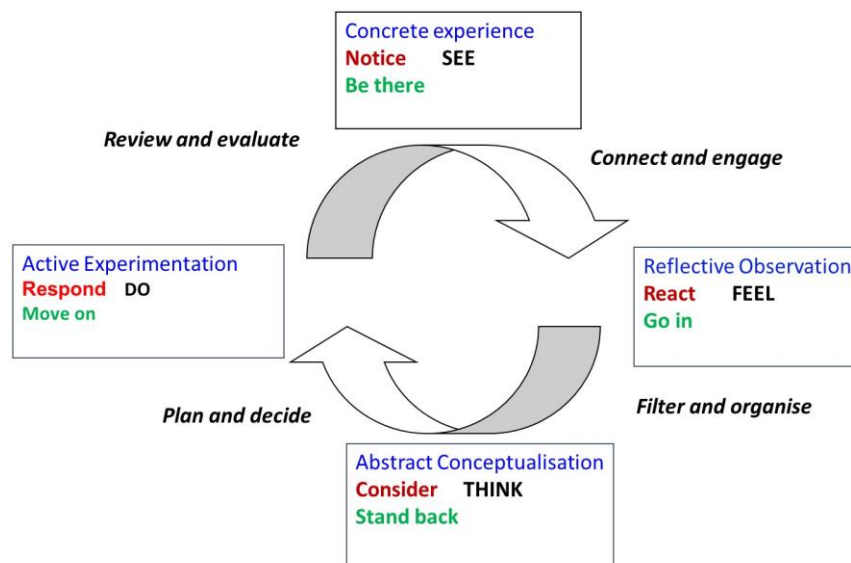
- **Quality assurance / governance** – the management of how well the supervisee is doing their job and ensuring accountability
- **Organisational engagement / mediation** – negotiating the supervisee's relationship with our organisation
- **Professional development** – helping the supervisee work out what they need to keep adapting and learning
- **Wellbeing** – talking about the emotional impact of the job, supporting the supervisee's health and wellbeing

The diagram below illustrates the balance and boundaries of these 4 functions in supervision along a continuum:



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**1.8 A 4 stage structured reflective process (or cycle) is used to structure exchanges in supervision:**



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**1.9 The 4 aspects of context that provide a foundation for supervision practice are:**

- our **supervision policy, procedure, and guidance**
- a clear **supervision agreement**
- good **recording** practice
- regular **review**

**1.10** Supervision is not simply restricted to one to one sessions. Having this wider perspective helps to protect against insularity and draw in a range of views, to develop trust and relationships beyond that of supervisor and supervisee and can help reduce the impact of possible status differentials between supervisor and supervisee. It is important for the supervisor to be aware of the cultures and climate around supervision and acknowledge their impact in supervision.

### **1.11 Ad hoc supervision**

Ad hoc supervision can mean a range of support, discussions, reflecting, analysing, decision-making and advice that goes on outside of the formal one to one supervision sessions. This is as important as one to one supervision and can often be where key decisions and discussions take place. Ad hoc supervision goes on all the time and it's important for the supervisor to acknowledge and be clear how these interactions are recorded for the benefit of the organisation, children, young people, families, and the supervisee. It is also important to be aware that ad hoc supervision is not a substitute for formal one to one supervision either.

### **1.12 Group supervision**

Group supervision is a formal, prearranged group meeting with the participants having agreed the process beforehand with a clear understanding around confidentiality. The definition, principles, values, and standards of supervision set out above still apply, however the focus is primarily on the case management of children, young people, and families the group are working with. A group setting (virtual or in person) is used to enable members to reflect on their work and pool their knowledge, experience, and skills.

**1.13** In a Family Safeguarding Team multi-disciplinary group supervision is an important regular meeting led by the team manager for the different professionals in the team to get together and discuss their work. For Family Safeguarding teams, group supervision is an important forum to analyse and reflect on the dynamics, circumstances, challenges, risks, and achievements for children, young people, and their families, and to review and develop plans of work with the families.

**1.14** The benefits of group supervision can be a more efficient, collaborative space to share, evaluate, and develop the depth of our analyses and understanding, improving the quality of our practice, and enhancing our ability to achieve the best outcomes possible. Participants need to be mindful of any polarisation, role entrenchment, status differentials, and support all members to participate.

### **1.15 Mentoring**

Mentoring is a more informal relationship between an experienced and less experienced member of staff. This can aid both personal and professional

development where the mentor guides the mentee to find the right direction and solutions. Mentors can use their practice experience to empathise and understand the mentee's issues. Mentoring is not explicitly instructing the mentee but supporting them in reaching their own potential where the learning can be both ways. The detailed guidance in this supervision guidance document goes further than mentoring and coaching, if you want to refer to what this is LCC have a separate [coaching and mentoring guide](#).

### **1.16 Frequency and length of supervision**

Supervisors need to refer to the Supervision Procedures document and should be mindful that the frequency and length of supervision accounts for the supervisee's experience, role, and work context. All staff are expected to commit to regular supervision to reflect critically on their practice and to identify areas of strength and areas for development in an ongoing way.

### **1.17 Preparation for supervision**

The practical arrangements for supervision sessions should be clear and agreed between supervisor and supervisee and should include how items for the agenda are agreed beforehand. Both supervisor and supervisee are expected to prepare before supervision, at a minimum this means supervisees know all the basics about their cases in terms of timescales and progress of work and supervisors have taken time to fully appraise some of the supervisee's work. Both supervisor and supervisee should have reviewed the previous supervision record, contribute to the agenda, address past actions from the previous supervision, and identify what has gone well and areas for development.

**1.18** In group supervision supervisees should be prepared to participate in the group process in terms of presenting information, analysis, or supporting others in their reflection and analysis.

### **1.19 Cancellation of supervision**

Supervisor and supervisee need to ensure that the frequency of supervision is still achieved and, if supervision needs to be cancelled, how you will re-arrange the session as soon as possible. Supervisor and supervisee should also agree in what exceptional circumstances supervision might be cancelled.

### **1.20 Recording supervision**

The supervisor is responsible for recording supervision discussions and should agree with the supervisee how sensitive information is recorded. Supervisor and supervisee should acknowledge that this supervision record is a service document and that senior managers, inspectors and staff monitoring performance may access the record.

### **1.21 Actions in supervision**

Managers should ensure that an essential component of every formal supervision session is checking and following up actions set from the previous supervision. The original actions should be SMART and clearly recorded, and then followed up in subsequent supervision with progress and/or completion of the action also clearly recorded. RAG rating of actions can also help managers and practitioners to be clear about the priority and importance of different actions.

**1.22 Confidentiality in supervision**

The supervisor has responsibility for identifying and dealing with issues of safe practice and should be explicit about their duty of care to the supervisee. Supervisor and supervisee should be clear and agree the boundaries of confidentiality in supervision and what should and shouldn't be shared with other parties.

**1.23 Disagreements in supervision**

There may be issues or decisions on which supervisor and supervisee may disagree in supervision. There should be a clear agreement about how any disagreements are resolved, i.e. who either, or both supervisor and supervisee refer to in order to resolve any disagreement.

**1.24 Additional arrangements**

In Family Safeguarding teams the team coordinator organises the group supervision, inviting the different professionals to the session. There is an expectation that professionals will prepare for the supervision session by completing a case summary that they finalise and send to the team manager prior to supervision. The team manager will chair the supervision and the team coordinator records the group supervision straight onto LCS (LiquidLogic) during the group supervision session.

**1.25 Observation of practice**

Supervisors are expected to observe supervisee's practice regularly at a minimum of three times per year. This may occur naturally in some settings, but in others it may need to be planned and at least two of these observations should be of the supervisee engaging with children, young people, and families if this is part of their role. Observation of practice is an important development opportunity where the supervisor gains direct feedback, a different perspective on supervisee's practice. Observation is also a useful source of feedback from children, young people, and families to quality assure how we are achieving outcomes and impact for them.

**1.26** Supervisees can experience apprehension and anxiety around observation and supervisors can work to minimise this. If observations have a clear structure for planning, carrying them out, and feeding back, this can give the supervisee some control over the process and help them invest in it. Supervisees should be engaged in planning and encouraged to think about the desired outcomes and what aspects of their practice they would like feedback on, helping the supervisor to identify strengths and areas for development. It is important that formal permission is gained from children, young people, and their families for any observation, however if the opportunity for observation occurs naturally then good supervisory practice is to acknowledge their presence, assessment, and feedback on supervisee's practice.

**1.27** Supervisees are also expected to self-evaluate and take some responsibility for reflecting on their own practice, rather than just being passively involved. Immediately after the observation the supervisor should give some verbal feedback and this should be formalised in a written form, however this should be after the supervisee has provided the supervisor with their written evaluation of their own practice. The completed written observation should be stored in the supervisee's supervision file and clear agreement reached between supervisor and supervisee about how this will be used in future supervision sessions and how it informs the

supervisee's development.

### **1.28 Probationary period**

Supervisors who have new staff in their probationary period should refer to the [probationary period guide](#). When all new staff begin with LCC they are subject to 6 months probationary period (12 months for ASYE and residential childcare posts). The employee's performance will be monitored and reviewed in consultation with the employee at two months and four months and the appointment will only be confirmed by management as established where the probationary period has been satisfactorily completed. In relation to any inadequacy in performance (or conduct) identified at the review stages, the required level of improvement must be identified and an appropriate timetable for its achievement must be established. However, please refer to the guide for full details on managing an employee's probationary period.

**1.29** For all social workers who are new to LCC, their performance and progress will be monitored through supervision and at the end of the six month probation period (12 months for ASYE), the supervisor will complete the probationary report form.

**1.30** For newly qualified social workers, the requirements of the Assessed and Supported Year in Employment (ASYE) will also apply for the first 12 months of their employment. Newly qualified social workers are required to demonstrate their capability against the KSS and PCF at the ASYE level. The ASYE is a 12 month programme prescribed for all new social workers to help them to develop their skills and confidence. Employers will provide support with the allocation of less complex cases, additional supervision, mentoring and the provision of learning and development opportunities.

### **1.31 Some important skills in effective supervision**

- **Engaging in exploration:**
  - Active listening
  - Attending
  - Paraphrasing/reflecting
  - Summarising
  - Questioning
  - Showing empathy
  - Making issues concrete and specific
- **Promoting action:**
  - Support & holding to account
  - Creative thinking and critical analysis
  - Problem solving and decision making
  - Devising strategies
  - Providing resources
  - Evaluating achievements
  - Giving feedback
- **Demonstrating understanding:**
  - Showing empathy
  - Promoting resilience
  - Confronting/challenging
  - Exploring themes
  - Developing new perspectives



- Setting goals

### **1.32 Tools to support supervision**

- [Research in Practice resources and tools for practice supervisors](#)