



# Supervision Policy

## Children's Services

Applies from senior managers to frontline staff

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## Control

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***Also see the Supervision Procedure for standards and aligned documents and the Supervision Guidance for practice guidance.***

### 1. Introduction

1.1 Supervision and social work practice is, and always will be, delivered within a changing environment. Our supervision policy and practice needs to respond to changes in the: needs of employees; expectations of employers; context of practice; and model of practice to best support practitioners to deliver the highest service standards and best outcomes for our children, young people, and families.

### 2. Scope

2.1 Good supervision is central to good practice in social work in all corners of our service, this includes qualified and non-social work qualified staff from the frontline to the most senior managers. The Supervision Policy, Procedure and Guidance documents apply to all staff within Lancashire County Council (LCC) Children's Services and is consistent with other LCC policies.

### 3. Definition of Supervision

3.1 Supervision is the professional process in which accountability and responsibility is distributed and exercised for the delivery of services to children, young people and families in Lancashire County Council's Children's Services. Supervision is also the process through which staff receive support to develop and improve their performance and practice to contribute to the delivery of high-quality services. Supervision should be thought of as a broad activity, not simply restricted to formal

prearranged meetings, but something that is across management practice in all kinds of less formal daily interactions with supervisees, groups, and teams.

### 3.2 The four key functions of 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.

### 3.3 Our principles in supervision are:

- **Achieving the best outcomes for children, young people and their families** – In a collaborative way the supervisor and supervisee should focus supervision sessions (and records) on: the impact and outcomes for children, young people, and their families; identifying progress in effecting change; and addressing barriers to achieving planned outcomes. In collaboration the supervisor should agree how observing practice is used to inform supervision. The supervisor should routinely make use of the views and feedback from children, young people, and families in supervision to inform analysis of progress, impact, outcomes, and develop future plans.
- **Accountable practice** – Supervisors should discuss with supervisees how supervision is used to monitor and promote the supervisee's responsibility for their practice and decisions. Supervisors should promote accountability in supervisees, supporting practice grounded in evidence and that adheres to expected standards. Both supervisor and supervisee should be clear how decisions relating to children, young people, and families are recorded. The supervisee should be encouraged to give feedback on their supervision.
- **Roles and responsibilities** – Supervisors should support discussions to agree how supervision is used to support the supervisee's understanding of their role and responsibilities drawing on relevant service documents. The supervisor should use induction, individual development or performance plans and make links to our service's purpose, vision, and values.
- **Development and improvement** – Supervisors should lead collaborative discussions with supervisees about how supervision is used to promote individual and organisational learning. Supervision should support the supervisee to analyse their practice, identifying examples of good practice and focusing on any areas for improvement informed by individual and service development plans. As with the first principle, there should be agreement of how observation of practice and feedback from children, young people, and families, as well as audits and other information about practice, is used in planning the supervisee's development.
- **Support** – Supervision should be used as an opportunity to support, recognise, and value supervisees, to celebrate their good practice and achievements. Supervision should be a space to check in on the impact of work for the supervisee to support their health and emotional wellbeing.

## 4. Value of Supervision

**4.1 Supervision practice** needs to be of the highest quality and reflect the standards, values, and vision of Children's Services and LCC. There are parallel process where the nature and quality of supervision links to the quality of our practice for children, young people and families. Our [vision and values](#) are that *here at Lancashire County Council we are helping [you] to make Lancashire the best place to live, work and prosper* through being: supportive, innovative, respectful and collaborative. Our vision in LCC Children's Services is that *children, young people and their families are safe, healthy and achieve their full potential*. Children's Services have clear [practice principles and standards](#) that should be followed in supervision practice. Practice in LCC Children's Services is Strengths-Based, Trauma-Informed, uses the Family Safeguarding model for our Child In Need and Child Protection work and is focussed on keeping children safe in their own families. Our service is founded on good relationships and supervision is no different and should be based on positive relationships as well as the culture and values of our service and LCC.

**4.2 Supervision** is central to ensuring positive outcomes for children, young people, and their families. Supervisors should use supervision to lead by example demonstrating the values, skills, practice, and behaviour expected by our service, LCC and the national bodies to which we are affiliated.

**4.3 Supervision** is central to ensuring the wellbeing of our staff. Practice has developed and integrated more virtual ways of working some and staff may be more autonomous and independent in how they work – in this context supervision is particularly important in effectively supporting staff and checking their wellbeing.

**4.4 Supervision** helps the supervisee:

- Understand and explore the expectations and boundaries of their role.
- Gain a clear understanding of expectations of the service and LCC.
- Understand the expected standards and quality for their work.
- Be updated on changes and the need for change.
- Critically reflect and analyse the history, relationships and circumstances of children, young people, and their families to identify patterns and hypotheses.
- Critically reflect, analyse, and be accountable for the impact of their work in relation to outcomes for children, young people, and their families.
- Give and receive feedback and express their views.
- Make clear decisions, structure their work, and develop clear plans.
- Practice in a collaborative, empowering, strengths-based way with families.
- Feel supported, valued, and celebrated by the service and LCC.

**4.5 Supervision** should also:

- Be a safe, inclusive space that gives reassurance, but also addresses poor practice and performance where necessary.
- Support effective workload management.
- Provide opportunity for critical reflection on tasks and interpretation of tasks.
- Be a learning environment that uses legislation, research, policy, and procedures, but also supports professional curiosity, explores dilemmas, recognises biases, and invites challenge and debate to support evidence

informed practice.

- Identify and support opportunities for personal development.
- Develop skills and professional knowledge base.
- Pay attention to wider structures, pressures and priorities influencing practice.
- Check the supervisee's safety, health, and wellbeing, recognise the emotional component to our work and personal impact this can have.
- Reflect, understand, and support our commitment to diversity and equality though exploring issues in both the families we work with and the workforce.
- Have a clear recording process that includes clearly recording children's, young people's, and families' views.

**4.6 Supervision** is a complex set of processes bounded by appraisal at one end and counselling on the other, and while related, neither of these processes is an inherent part of supervision.

## 5. Wider Practice Standards

**5.1** There are a number of national and local standards informing this policy that supervisors should know, those set out by: [Social Work England](#) (SWE), the [British Association of Social Workers](#) (BASW), the Department of Education (DfE) in their [Knowledge and Skills Statements](#) (KSS), the Local Government Association (LGA) in their [Standards for Employers of Social Workers in England](#), [Working Together to Safeguard Children \(2018\)](#), [Ofsted's guidance for inspecting local authority children's services](#) (ILACS), our own LCC Children's Services [practice principles and standards](#), and LCC's guidance on the [performance engagement process](#).

**5.2** We acknowledge that there are many standards and policies which overlap, however they are complementary and all support good supervision practice. Once supervisors are aware of the following standards and policies, they should focus on the Supervision Procedure document to inform their everyday practice using the forms contained in that Procedure document.

**5.3** Staff are expected to adhere to the [Social Work England Professional Standards](#), the threshold standards necessary for safe and effective social work practice:

1. Promote the rights, strengths and wellbeing of people, families, and communities.
2. Establish and maintain the trust and confidence of people.
3. Be accountable for the quality of my practice and the decisions I make.
4. Maintain my continuing professional development.
5. Act safely, respectfully and with professional integrity.
6. Promote ethical practice and report concerns.

**5.4** Staff should know the SWE standards and the detail within them as they are all relevant to supervision. The detail within standards 3 and 4 are particularly relevant and should be actively used in supervision practice.

**5.5** The [British Association of Social Workers Code of Ethics](#) sets out the values and ethical principles on which the profession is based. Many of these relate to supervision and should underpin all social work practice including supervision. The

code's ethical practice principle 13 specifically relates to *using professional supervision and peer support to reflect on and improve practice*.

**5.6** BASW host our [Professional Capabilities Framework](#) (PCF) which is the profession-owned, overarching framework for social work education and professional development. This framework sets out the capabilities social workers should be able to demonstrate at different stages of their career. Supervision is integral to all these stages and social workers should be familiar with the expectations for the level at which they practice and how they apply to supervision.

**5.7** BASW host the [England Practice Educator Professional Standards for social work \(PEPS\) 2020](#) which set standards in social work education. One of the core standards (A3) is the expectation that practice educators *create reflective spaces for learners' growth and development and provide regular reflective supervision*. Practice educators should know and use the PEPS standards to inform their supervision practice with their student(s). These standards also include the expectation to understand different models of supervision and contribute to the wider supervision, learning and development culture.

**5.8** Supervision is central in the Department of Education's [Knowledge and Skills Statements](#) which set out the post-qualifying assessment and accreditation criteria for social workers supporting vulnerable children and families. All social workers should know their specific KSS. KSS 9 in the [practitioner KSS](#) specifically sets out the role of supervision for practitioners. The [practice supervisor KSS](#) explicitly states that practice supervisors' *primary function is to supervise the practice and decision-making of child and family practitioners, and to develop the skills of individuals and teams within child and family social work services*. All social work staff who provide supervision should know the detail in these [practice supervisor KSS](#) as they inform effective supervision practice:

1. Promote and govern excellent practice.
2. Developing excellent practitioners.
3. Shaping and influencing the practice system.
4. Effective use of power and authority.
5. Confident analysis and decision-making.
6. Purposeful and effective social work.
7. Emotionally intelligent practice supervision.
8. Performance management and improvement.

The [practice leaders KSS](#) are focused on leading and creating the systems and conditions for effective social work practice.

**5.9** The Local Government Association hosts the [Standards for Employers of Social Workers in England](#) for all employers of social workers. [Standard 5](#) is specifically focused on supervision, setting out expectations in the frequency and quality of supervision, although other standards are also relevant to good supervision practice.

**5.10** Our professional guidance [Working Together to Safeguard Children \(2018\)](#) recognises the importance of good supervision and states that (p32 para74) *effective practitioner supervision can play a critical role in ensuring a clear focus on a child's welfare. Supervision should support practitioners to reflect critically on the impact of their decisions on the child and their family*.

**5.11** When Ofsted inspects and evaluates local authority children's services one of their central focuses is *the impact of leaders and managers on social work practice with children and families*. The effectiveness of supervision is also an explicit focus in Ofsted focused visits. In full inspection visits inspectors review a sample of supervision records and when talking to social workers inspectors are likely to ask about the quality and impact of supervision and management oversight.

**5.12** Supervision should be a space that reflects and reinforces our service's core [practice principles and standards](#).

**5.13** LCC's [performance engagement process](#) *is about managers and employees having quality conversations and regular engagement that focuses on the individual, that supports effective performance in delivering the role*. Managers should have discussions that cover the following six objectives at a minimum of once a quarter:

- Each employee can explain their key work objectives/performance expectations on an on-going basis.
- Each employee is clear regarding how well they are meeting work expectations.
- Each employee has regular opportunities to share and discuss issues, ideas and concerns linked to their wellbeing and the workplace.
- Each employee has appropriate access to their line manager for support to enable them to both perform and develop.
- Each employee has the skills and abilities to meet their work objectives or has a development plan in place, supported by their manager, to allow them to gain the relevant skills and abilities.
- Each employee has challenging but achievable workloads.

## **Appendix A – Relevant LCC policies and documents**

- [HR policies and procedures](#)
- [HR and pay advice](#)
- [Reporting an accident or incident](#)
- [Children's Services Practice Statement](#)
- [Coaching and mentoring guide](#)
- [County Council code of conduct](#)
- [Employee wellbeing](#)
- [Health and Safety](#)
- [Induction guide](#)
- [Information governance](#)
- Keeping staff safe guidance
- [Learning and Development](#)
- [Lone working guide](#)
- [Managers' toolkit](#)
- [Managers' standards in Children's Services](#)
- [Occupational Health](#)
- [Oracle self service](#)
- [Performance engagement process – tools and resources](#)

- [Practice Standards](#)
- [Probationary period guide](#)
- [Resilience guide](#)
- [Staff support networks](#)
- [Managing stress guide](#)
- [Trauma at work guide](#)
- [LCC vision and values](#)
- [Working flexibly policy and procedure](#)