



## **Operational Procedure: Service Delivery**

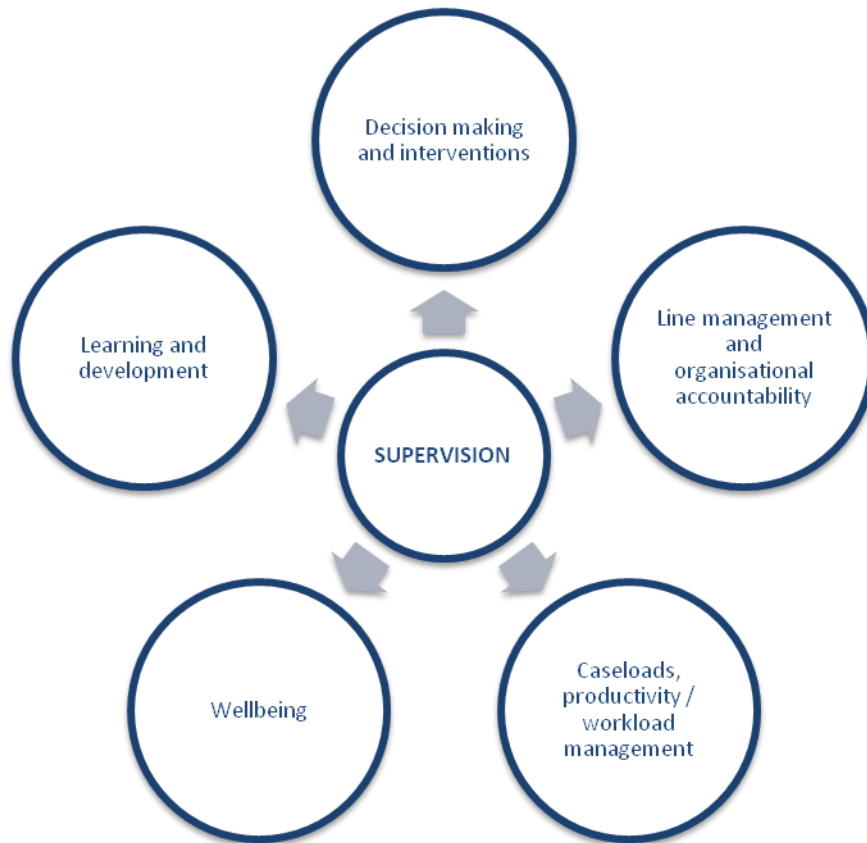
# **Supervision for Practitioners and Practice Managers**

## 1. Introduction

- 1.1 Supervision is an integral part of good management practice. Organisations are more likely to succeed by having employees who are skilful, knowledgeable, clear about their roles, and who are assisted in their practice by sound advice and emotional support.
- 1.2 Supervision will aim to recognise and champion equality and diversity and the value these bring to our organisation.
- 1.3 Cafcass Cymru is committed to and understands the role which supervision must play in the delivery of an effective and successful service.
- 1.4 Supervision is one of the ways we invest in the capability of our staff, to ensure we have the skills we need for now and in the future.
- 1.5 The primary functions of supervision are: administrative case management; reflecting on and learning from practice; personal support; professional development and mediation, in which the supervisor acts as a bridge between the individual staff member and the organisation.
- 1.6 Supervision must be an active partnership and an integral part of the working relationship between line managers and practitioners and should be based on mutual trust and respect.
- 1.7 Supervision seeks to monitor, evaluate and develop performance in order to provide the best possible quality service to children and families, local authorities and the Courts by allowing staff to experience support, direction and opportunities for self-appraisal.
- 1.8 Supervision will recognise innovation and initiative; avoid blame and ensure we learn from what could have been done differently when things don't work out.
- 1.9 Line managers will give clear, constructive, honest and regular feedback, supporting individuals and teams to succeed.
- 1.10 This procedure only applies to Family Court Advisors (FCAs), Family Court Social Workers (FCSWs) and Practice Managers (PMs). For all non-practitioner staff please refer to the Welsh Government's [Performance Management: Guidance for Individuals and Managers](#). For the purposes of this procedure the terms *practitioner* and *line manager* will apply throughout; *practitioner* relates to FCAs, FCSWs and PMs, *line manager* relates to PMs and Heads of Operations.
- 1.11 The intention of this procedure is to build upon and learn from good practice and provide a clear framework for the promotion of an effective and consistent supervision process across all operational area offices of Cafcass Cymru.

- 1.12 All line managers providing supervision are expected to be familiar with this procedure, attend any identified training, prepare for the supervision sessions and fulfil their supervision responsibilities positively and effectively, ensuring that each member of staff is afforded equality of opportunity.
- 1.13 Practitioners receiving supervision are expected to be familiar with this procedure, prepare for the supervision sessions and work positively and constructively to ensure that the desired outcomes are achieved
- 1.14 Practitioners in conjunction with line managers are expected to complete a supervision agreement, which must be reviewed on an annual basis ([Annex A](#)). The agreement must be signed by the line manager and practitioner, retained on the practitioner's supervision file and a copy provided to the practitioner.

**The domains of supervision in Cafcass Cymru**



**2. Types of supervision**

- \* **Situational supervision**
- \* **Practice Review Discussions (PRD)**
- \* **Practitioner Support Meetings (PSM)**
- \* **Group supervision**

## **Situational supervision**

- 2.1 A dynamic process available to practitioners when needed. Situational supervision can take place between practitioner and line manager via telephone, email or face to face. The principles are based on support and advice being available to staff at the point of need in relation to any of the domains, for example case consultation, problems solving and personal support.
- 2.2 Case discussions that take place in situational supervision should be recorded by the line manager in the electronic case file in the case recordings section of IRIS, by selecting the 'supervision' option and 'situational supervision' descriptor. Key details of the case discussion should be recorded succinctly, alongside any actions or decisions if relevant. Situational supervision discussions that are not case related should only be recorded by the line manager if relevant on the practitioners supervision file.

## **Practice Review Discussions (PRD)**

- 2.3 The Practice Review Discussion (PRD) is a planned formal meeting between line manager and practitioner that facilitates feedback and analysis following a Practice Review (internal appraisal of practice type). Please refer to the [operational guidance](#) on Practice Reviews for further information.
- 2.4 The line manager must undertake a PRD with the practitioner as soon as practically possible after undertaking a Practice Review, ideally within 10 days of conducting the review. There will be 3 PRD's annually; one every 4 months relating to the area of practice reviewed. These can be held separately or as part of the formal Practitioner Support Meetings.
- 2.5 The PRD will focus on the practice review results. The discussion should be collaborative and provide rationale and evaluation of the practice review and any associated comments made in the IRIS Practice Review template. The purpose of the discussion is to focus on the quality of practice; recognising strengths and acknowledging good practice whilst also setting direction in any identified areas of development relating to the practice review type. There should be no more than 3 areas of development identified in each Practice Review to enable focus and achievement. Line managers should apply the [principals of effective feedback](#) when undertaking PRD's with practitioners.
- 2.6 The line manager in conjunction with the practitioner will record the PRD on the day of the meeting, using the PRD recording template ([Annex B](#)), setting out any areas of outstanding / good practice and any developmental areas that require improvement. Identified actions should be supported with realistic timeframes and evaluated via a further meeting between the line manager and practitioner, which must be mutually agreed in advance. This can take place in the next scheduled PRD or as part of the next Practitioner Support Meeting (PSM) if required. The PRD recording must be provided to the practitioner and saved on their personal supervision file.

- 2.7 Only serious issues such as illness or a very high priority and unexpected work commitment should cause planned PRDs to be deferred, and in such circumstances a new date and time should be arranged as soon as possible.
- 2.8 In the event of a dispute between line manager and practitioner regarding the PRD results and any associated actions, it is desirable for the two parties to attempt to resolve the dispute in the first instance. If the dispute cannot be mutually resolved, the matter must be escalated to the Senior Manager. The Senior Manager will arrange a meeting with both parties to attempt to resolve the issues. The Senior Manager will appraise the practice review results and any associated actions and agree an outcome with the line manager and practitioner together.

### **Practitioner Support Meetings (PSM)**

- 2.9 Practitioner Support Meetings (PSMs) are formal planned meetings between line manager and practitioner that provide an opportunity to discuss all of the supervision domains.
- 2.10 The agenda for PSMs should be mutually agreed between line manager and practitioner. Key areas to consider are:
- Supportive
  - Developmental / educational
  - Mediation / advocacy
  - Managerial / administrative

These are broken down further for reference in [Annex C](#). An example agenda can be found in [Annex D](#), however the agenda can be adapted according to need and requirements.

- 2.11 Frequency of PSMs should be determined between line manager and practitioner and should be based on individual need / requirement. A minimum of 4 PSMs should be undertaken annually, one in each quarter, in addition to situational supervision and Practice Review Discussions. However, some practitioners will require more frequent PSMs, e.g. a new practitioner will require regular support during and following the induction period, or a practitioner returning to work following a lengthy absence may require more support than usual. Frequency of meetings and levels of support should be determined between line manager and practitioner and set out in the supervision agreement. Frequency of PSMs can be varied according to need.
- 2.12 Line managers with the agreement of practitioners may combine the Practice Review Discussion within the Practitioner Support Meeting. This must not affect the time and focus required for both types of supervision and will require ample time set aside to ensure thorough and meaningful discussions that incorporate both elements.

- 2.13 The line manager in conjunction with the practitioner will record the key points discussed in the PSM, ideally within 10 working days after the meeting has taken place, setting out any agreed actions and timeframes. If the meeting has combined the Practice Review Discussion, a separate recording must be made using the PRD template and the guidance followed in paragraphs 2.3 - 2.6 of this operational guidance. A copy of the PSM must be provided to the practitioner, signed and stored confidentially on the practitioner's personal supervision file, used and reviewed at the next supervision meeting. Any case related discussions must be recorded in the electronic case file in the case recordings section of IRIS, by selecting the 'Supervision' option and 'Practitioner Support Meeting' descriptor. Key details of the case discussion should be recorded succinctly, alongside any actions or decisions if relevant.
- 2.14 Practitioner Support Meetings should be planned ahead, meetings should only be cancelled in the event of illness or high priority work commitments and should be rescheduled as soon as is practically possible.

### **Group supervision**

- 2.15 Group supervision is reciprocal learning and evaluation through the sharing of experiences in a professional peer group setting. Practitioners and line managers can facilitate peer group supervision sessions focussed on a distinct area of practice, using case examples, current research, theory, internal procedures or specialist guest speakers.
- 2.16 Group supervision for practitioners can take place in a scheduled Practice Development Forum, a Lunch and Learn session, or it can take place via telephone conference or direct discussion between small groups of peers during the working day.

## **3. Performance Management**

- 3.1 All staff are required to have a Performance Management Plan every year. Please refer to Welsh Government guidance on [Performance Management](#) for more information.
- 3.2 Key areas identified from Practice Reviews discussions, Practitioner Support Meetings and Group supervision, if relevant, must feed into the evidence required for either the performance management review discussions and / or the setting of performance management objectives; demonstrating strengths and areas of development for each individual practitioner and contributing in part to the overall performance management grading.

## **4. Confidentiality**

- 4.1 The process of supervision and the supervision records are confidential. However, confidentiality does not mean secrecy. The Chief Executive, the Deputy Chief Executive and other Senior Management staff may need to access supervision

records either when specific enquiries arise or as part of the monitoring process. Dangerous or inappropriate practice and / or abusive behaviour must be brought to the notice of the Head of Operations / Deputy Chief Executive immediately.

4.2 Circumstances where line managers may share information that arises during supervision include:

- Where some professional issues may be usefully discussed at a team meeting with other practitioners; agreement must be sought first.
- If the work of a practitioner breaches agreed standards of practice and in such instances, supervision notes could be used in a discussion about training and development needs, or in a capability or disciplinary enquiry (which are separate Welsh Government procedures).
- If the behaviour of a practitioner gives cause for concern and the line manager may need to refer the matter to the Deputy Chief Executive who in turn may wish to consult HR.
- If the physical or emotional health needs of a practitioner requires a referral to specialist services.

4.3 Wherever possible, the line manager will inform the practitioner of the need to breach confidentiality.

4.4 Equally, the practitioner may discuss concerns with a senior manager if he / she has concerns about:

- The line manager's failure to abide by the Supervision Agreement
- The quality of the supervision received
- The line manager's standards of practice or behaviour

4.5 All staff should be aware of the Welsh Government's [whistle-blowing](#) and [grievance](#) policies. Please click to obtain these policies.

## 5. ANNEXES

<b>Annex A</b>	<a href="#">Supervision Agreement</a>
<b>Annex B</b>	<a href="#">Practice Review Discussion recording template</a>
<b>Annex C</b>	<a href="#">Practitioner Support Meeting areas to consider</a>
<b>Annex D</b>	<a href="#">Practitioner Support Meeting example agenda</a>