

## Supervision Procedure

### Introduction

The EYFS 2017 states:

*3.21. Providers must put appropriate arrangements in place for the supervision of staff who have contact with children and families. Effective supervision provides support, coaching and training for the practitioner and promotes the interests of children. Supervision should foster a culture of mutual support, teamwork and continuous improvement, which encourages the confidential discussion of sensitive issues.*

*3.22. Supervision should provide opportunities for staff to:*

- *discuss any issues – particularly concerning children’s development or well-being, including child protection concerns*
- *identify solutions to address issues as they arise*
- *receive coaching to improve their personal effectiveness*

### What is supervision?

Formal supervision has been around for many years in Social Work, therapy and counselling. More recently, government guidance has identified that effective supervision is important for any practitioner, from any agency, involved in day to day work with children and their families (Working Together to Safeguard Children, 2018). Similarly, lessons from serious case reviews have found that supervision is essential for any staff working in this sector “Supervision is ... essential to help practitioners to cope with the emotional demands of work with children and their families which has an impact at all levels of intervention” (DCSF:2008).

Supervision is a regular, planned, accountable two-way process which should offer support and develop the knowledge, skills and values of an individual, group or team. Its purpose is to monitor the progress of professional practice and to help staff to improve the quality of the work they do, thus improving outcomes for children as well as achieving agreed objectives. Supervision also provides an opportunity to discuss sensitive issues including the safeguarding of children and any concerns raised about an individual or colleague’s practice.

## Who benefits from supervision?

The main beneficiary of supervision should be the service user, so in the case of Early Years Providers, the children who attend your setting and their families. Effective supervision ensures the delivery of efficient and safe care through regular monitoring of practice, professional support and the identification of an employee's training and development needs. It also supports increased staff retention which ensures continuity of care for children.

For the employee, supervision provides professional one to one support and "space" away from the direct work environment to discuss progress, professional role, workload and concerns. The supervisory relationship should develop trust which will allow for free and open discussion and learning without the fear of being criticised. Employees should receive constructive feedback about their work, with concerns being challenged sensitively and honestly and successes being acknowledged on a regular basis. This hopefully increases the feeling of being valued by management at the setting which in turn, increases job satisfaction.

For the employer, communication between staff and management is improved, allowing for full discussion of the setting's objectives, and priorities. Effective supervision encourages motivated, confident employees who understand the principles of safe practice and can mentor and support each other more effectively in the setting. Staff are more focussed and efficient, knowing their individual priorities which increases productivity. Staff are clear about their responsibilities, what policies and procedures should be followed and what to do when they have concerns about either their own or others' practice.

## Qualities of a 'good' supervisor

Supervision is only effective and positive for individuals and the organisation if it is carried out by the 'right' person. Supervisors should be competent, perhaps gaining skills through a management training programme, specific supervision training or shadowing a more experienced supervisor. They need to be clear about their role and responsibilities and on where to access additional advice when they need it.

Supervisors are normally the line managers of staff. A supervisor will have responsibility for the day to day oversight of staff and the work they do, as well as conducting regular supervision meetings and yearly appraisals with the staff members they supervise. However, it is vital that setting management give careful consideration to 'matching' who is the most appropriate person to supervise each member of staff. For example, if there are known tensions between a room leader and an individual member of staff, it is going to be difficult to achieve a positive, trusting supervision relationship for either member of staff.

Some of the skills of a 'good' supervisor are;

- Honesty; accountability; challenging; trustworthy; supportive; diplomatic; empathic; reliable; competent; good time keeping skills; interested; responsible; non-judgemental.

The aim of supervision is to allow staff and their supervisors to:

- Discuss and challenge concerns, issues or difficulties;
- Identify solutions to address concerns and issues;
- Be coached in tackling issues as they arise and plan future action;
- Review work and workload;
- Explore feelings and emotional impact;
- Develop practice and competencies, including training needs;

Explore the understanding of setting policy, philosophy and practice;

- Ensure every child's safety and wellbeing;
- To maintain an accurate and agreed record of professional progress.

The rights and responsibilities of a supervisee

- To receive effective and sensitive supervision;
- To be treated in an anti-discriminatory manner;
- To have their feelings and opinions recognised;
- To raise issues of concern about their own practice and that of their colleagues;
- To learn from mistakes and seek advice if they are unsure;
- To be listened to and receive appropriate professional support;
- To be briefed about changes;
- To commit to regular supervision and understand its value.

## **Supervision Contracts**

Every supervisor should make a written contract/agreement with their supervisees taking into account;

- Frequency of supervision sessions;
- Approximate length of sessions;
- Location of sessions;
- Main areas for discussion/agenda items;
- Confidentiality issues;
- Agreement regarding notes, when they will be produced and by whom;
- Procedure for complaints and/or reconciling differences.

## **Why should Supervision be recorded?**

- To keep a record of what was discussed and actions agreed;
- To keep a record of any disagreements;
- To benchmark and audit the quality of supervision;
- For performance management of staff.

At the end of each session, or as soon as possible thereafter, both supervisor and supervisee should sign and date the supervision notes to confirm its accuracy and both

should keep a copy. The supervisor's copy may be kept in a supervision file or personal staff file.

## **Confidentiality**

It is important for staff to be comfortable in discussing all aspects of their work but there needs to be clarity as to what will happen to information discussed if it raises concerns about the practice of a particular member of staff or a child. Accordingly, any supervision policy must be compatible with the safeguarding children, allegations against staff and confidentiality policies within the setting.

Supervision records should be maintained confidentially and not be accessible to other setting staff.

## **Frequency**

The frequency of supervision may depend on a number of factors including staff ratios, availability of supervisors and availability of rooms, for example. Although no guidance is given in the Early Years Foundation Stage 2017 as to the expected frequency of supervision, "appropriate arrangements" should be in place with sessions held sufficiently often to allow it to be a meaningful experience for both the supervisee and supervisor and to ensure the purpose of supervision, as outlined above, is met. Our aim is to ensure that one to one confidential supervision should be held at least once every 10-12 weeks.

Some staff, for example if they are newly qualified or less confident, may need supervision sessions to be held more regularly. Also, where there are any concerns over a member of staffs performance or conduct.

## **Group supervision – monthly room meetings**

This should not replace individual supervision but can be used to complement it. It will involve a group of staff, meeting with their supervisor (room leader) to discuss issues about their work or the way they work together as a team. This may be done in the context of a regular team meeting or as a separate session to look at specific issues.

Discussions should look at:

- any issues – particularly concerning children's development or well-being, including child protection concerns
- identify solutions to address issues as they arise
- receive coaching to improve their personal effectiveness

Minutes of these discussions should be recorded as noted above, and stored in line with our Confidentiality and client access to records policy.

Further to this, safeguarding is a standing agenda item for staff meetings and managers meetings.

## How does supervision fit in with the appraisal process?

Appraisal and performance management clearly has some crossover with supervision. In the appraisal system targets are set, for example in terms of performance, activities and training needs and usually relate to the business plan of the organisation and to the professional standards required in providing a service. The targets are set annually and are often formally reviewed at the midway point of the year. It is likely that for small organisations business plans will be quite simple with Early years settings having their own performance review and assessment systems. Professional standards will relate to training and policy and guidance most of which will be outlined in the EYFS 2017. In terms of good practice it is recommended that if each member of staff has half quarterly supervision sessions (four times a year) then two could be largely set aside for the annual appraisal and the mid year review. Issues related to performance and training needs would be considered as part of the agenda of every supervision meeting and appraisal templates may be a helpful tool in structuring discussion.

A focus on how well an individual is performing in relation to organisational needs and priorities should not, however, be the main focus of the other supervision sessions. If one considers the comments of Mike Craddock, the Chair of the Little Ted's Serious Case Review panel, it is clear that he was considering the need to provide a safe space where difficult issues may be raised in a supportive and confidential manner. The kind of issues to which he alluded were working relationships, concerns about colleagues' behaviour and actions and the impact of personal relationships on reporting concerns. Individual attitudes and the opinions, values and beliefs underpinning these need to be explored to assist staff in distinguishing personal and professional beliefs and to develop a professional identity. This is particularly important for less experienced staff or those who have not had independent professional training.

### For each supervision session

- Agenda e.g., what needs to be discussed and actions from the previous supervision session
- Ensure you have suitable paperwork on which to write a record;
- Check whether there are going to be any unavoidable interruptions – this should be avoided if at all possible to ensure the supervisee benefits as much as possible from the sessions;
- Any future dates for supervision should be agreed so both the supervisor and supervisee are aware in advance;

*Extracts taken from: Safeguarding in Education - Supervision Guidance, Claire Ray & Mike O'Connell, KCC Education Safeguarding Team September 2013*

*Internal use only*

<b>This policy was adopted on</b>	<b>Signed on behalf of the nursery</b>	<b>Date disseminated to staff</b>	<b>Date for review</b>
<i>May 2019</i>			<i>May 2020</i>