

**REPORT TO: CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLES SERVICE COMMITTEE ON
17 FEBRUARY 2010**

SUBJECT: REVISED STAFF SUPERVISION POLICY

BY: DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY SERVICES

1. REASON FOR REPORT

- 1.1 This report is seeking Committee approval for a revised Staff Supervision Policy for the Children and Families Social Work Service.
- 1.2 This report is submitted to Committee in terms of the Council's Administrative Scheme relating to the function of the Council as Social Work Authority under the Social Work (Scotland) Act 1968.

2. RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 **It is recommended that Committee agrees to approve the policy, governing the supervision of all staff involved in the direct provision of the social work service to children and families in Moray.**

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The Council's Community Services Committee approved the previous Staff Supervision policy for the service on the 23 November 2005 (para 23 of the minute refers).
- 3.2 Since that date there have been a number of national and local developments with implications for staff supervision.
- 3.3 The Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC), which governs the registration of social work staff, launched its 'Framework for Continuous Learning in Social Services', which is complimentary to its Codes of Practice for social services employers and employees, in December 2008.
- 3.4 The Social Work Inspection Agency (SWIA) launched its Performance Improvement Model in 2007 and a revised version with its guide to self-evaluation for social work services in January 2009.
- 3.5 External inspections of the service by SWIA and HMIE identified weaknesses in the quality of key service delivery processes.
- 3.6 When considering our response to these external inspections, it became clear to senior managers that ensuring high quality and reliability in staff supervision had an important part to play in improving the quality of key delivery processes.
- 3.7 The revised Policy attached as **APPENDIX 1** articulates clear responsibilities and accountability, for the quality and reliability of supervision, for the recording of supervision, for maintaining high standards of professional

practice and taking steps to address any weaknesses in practice identified within supervision and the supervisory relationship.

- 3.8 These enhancements to policy are set in the context of the SSSC Codes of Practice and Framework for Continuous Learning.
- 3.9 The Policy has been tested in practice for three months. It is intended to conduct an initial review of its effectiveness in September 2010 and three years thereafter.

4. SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS

(a) Single Outcome Agreement/Service Improvement Plan

- (i) The subject of this report has direct relevance to the continuous improvement of our performance in relation to Outcome 8 in the Single Outcome Agreement.
- (ii) The revision of our Staff Supervision Policy was an action in the Department's Service Improvement Plan, relating to the divisional priority of 'improving key delivery processes'.

(b) Policy and Legal

The Staff Supervision Policy has been developed in accordance with actual policy initiatives referred to in **Sections 3.3 and 3.4** of this report. Supervision practice must be consistent with the council's responsibilities under Human Rights, Equalities, Data Protection, Health and Safety and Safer Recruitment guidance and legislative requirements.

(c) Resources (Financial, Risks, Staffing and Property)

The implications of resourcing this policy are set out in the Policy itself. Supervisory staff exist within the Children & Families staffing structure able to carry out the supervising task. This Policy reduces risk to the Council. If harm were to arise to staff or service users that was directly attributable to the quality and reliability of staff supervision, there is potential for an injured party to seek compensation from the Council, if the Council were found to have been neglectful in discharging its responsibilities.

(d) Consultations

Rhona Gunn, Acting Principal Solicitor, Katrina McGillivray, Senior Personnel Adviser and Deborah Brands, Principal Accountant have been consulted in the preparation of this report and are in agreement with the content relating to their areas of responsibility.

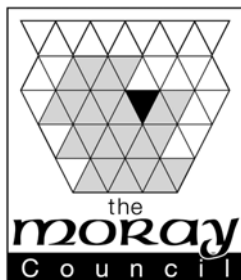
5. CONCLUSION

- 5.1 This Policy is commended to Committee as a basis for securing improvements in the quality of service provision and the welfare of staff through staff supervision.**

Author of Report: Jeremy Akehurst, Performance and Strategy Manager

Background Papers:

Ref: HB727400



Children and
Families
Social Work
Division

Policy Document

Staff Supervision Policy

DOCUMENT HISTORY - AUTHORISATION AND REVIEW DATES

Draft:	22 June 2009
Issued for consultation:	13 July 2009
Approved by Operational Management Group:	31 August 2009
Review date:	1 September 2010

INTRODUCTION/BACKGROUND

Social workers and providers of social work services in Scotland are regulated by the Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC). The SSSC "Codes of Practice" (2003) set out responsibilities of social services employers and employees. The codes state that employers must *"manage the performance of staff and the organisation, to ensure high quality services and care"* and *"effectively manage and supervise staff to support effective practice and good conduct, and support staff to address deficiencies in their performance"* and that practitioners must *"be accountable for the quality of their work and take responsibility for maintaining and improving their knowledge and skills"*.

In the Performance Improvement Model for Social Work Services in Scotland, published by the Social Work Inspection Agency and the Care Commission, under Quality Indicator 7.3: Development of employees, the *very good* standard requires that "there are effective supervision and employee development systems in place". Under Quality Indicator 3.1: Impact on Employees; Motivation and satisfaction, the *very good* standard requires that "employees feel the council provides a range of effective measures to support them personally and professionally".

The SSSC "Framework for Continuous Learning in Social Services" sets out a range of personal and organizational capabilities required to deliver effective social work services, within a framework designed to enable assessment of current capability levels with a view to their development. Among other things, the framework addresses the ability of staff both to provide good quality supervision and to benefit from it.

A number of national sets of explicit standards, or quality indicators, have been created to enable the evaluation of quality and continuous improvement in social work services. Statutory regulations and guidance also articulate other, implicit standards. The Council has a number of checklists or standards monitoring tools that contain or summarize key standards. Evaluation of the quality of practice in individual cases, using these tools and frameworks, provides supervisors with a means of identifying areas for development and evidencing improvements in practice.

RATIONALE

The Moray Council recognises that it has a duty towards service users, partner organisations, elected members and the public in respect of the quality of its services and a duty of care towards its staff. Supervision of frontline operational staff by other members of staff with specific supervisory or management responsibilities and training is one of the key processes through which these and other related responsibilities are discharged. We rely on staff to work well and effectively with those who use our services. If our staff are not adequately trained, supported and their work monitored, we cannot be sure that we are providing high quality services.

The purpose of supervision is to:

- promote and protect the interests of service users;
- maintain the quality of service
- ensure the professional and personal accountability of staff to the organisation
- monitor and evaluate on-going work and to identify future work plans
- inform and involve staff in respect of service development
- identify the continuing professional development needs of staff and plan to meet

those needs

- support staff to do their work effectively
- develop a positive climate for good practice
- manage the workload
- give appropriate consideration to the health, safety and wellbeing of staff

A distinction can be made between formal, planned supervision and two other, related activities – informal and formal consultation. Informal consultation refers to an *ad hoc* conversation about an issue or set of issues arising from work. Formal consultation refers to those situations in which Council or departmental procedures require an officer to consult a specified senior manager or supervisor about a key decision or stage in a process. Formal consultation can take place within or outwith formal planned supervision. This policy relates predominantly to formal supervision, but the note on recording case specific outcomes from supervision covers all three types of activity.

AIM/OUTCOMES

Aim

To ensure that every member of operational staff receives, and participates in, regular supervision.

Outcomes

To ensure that there is a consistent and effective approach to supervision throughout the service.

To ensure that the work of individual staff is under constant review.

To ensure that staff are responsive to the different and differing needs of those who use our services.

To provide a framework within which staff may be clearer about the expectations of the organisation of them and the expectation they should have of the organisation.

IMPLEMENTATION PROCEDURES

Supervision of qualified and unqualified practitioners

1. **Supervision agreements** – each person being supervised must have a written agreement with the person providing supervision, setting out mutual commitments and expectations, using the template provided for that purpose. The agreement should be reviewed annually. Some of the items set out in the attached summary of the functions of supervision must be considered routinely, but some can be considered at agreed longer intervals, which should be specified in the agreement.
2. **Supervision agenda** - Routine supervision must take place at the agreed frequency, to a mutually agreed agenda, using the form provided.
3. **Supervision records** - Regular, routine and *ad hoc* supervision should be recorded. Matters relating to the management of individual service users should be recorded in the client record on Carefirst, using the procedure set out below. Matters relating to the supervisee should be recorded on a separate record, using the form provided. Both supervisee and supervisor should have copies of this record, but a hard copy, signed by both should be retained in the supervisee's

file. A form is also provided to enable supervisors to schedule and monitor their supervision appointments through the year. Supervision records are confidential and must be stored securely. Supervision records in relation to the supervisee do not form part of the employee's personnel record and must be stored separately.

4. **Carefirst records** – Specific discussion or decisions relating to individual cases should be recorded briefly, in the course of supervision, using a DAR screen in Carefirst. Carefirst recognises three different types of *Meeting or Consultation*; the type to be used by the supervisor for formal, arranged supervision sessions is *Formal Supervision*; the type *Informal Consultation* is to be used for ad hoc discussion between sessions, by practitioners, as the need arises; the type *Formal Consultation* is to be used by practitioners in those instances in which procedures require a senior person to be consulted in making a decision – for example in certain stages of Child Protection processes.
5. **Frequency of supervision** – The recommended frequency of supervision is:
 - Qualified staff - 3 weekly
 - Unqualified staff - 4 weekly
 - 4 weekly group supervision
 - All new staff - 2 weekly for first 6 months
 - Sessional staff - 4 weekly
6. **Group supervision** – Group supervision can be appropriate of some unqualified or sessional staff. The attached method for Action Learning Sets may be used as a means of facilitating learning for both qualified and unqualified staff, but are an addition to, rather than a substitute for supervision.

ROLES/RESPONSIBILITIES

Social work practitioners are responsible for their own awareness of national and local standards that are relevant to their work, SSSC Codes of practice for social services workers and of the council's policies and procedures, and for working within these requirements.

They must commit to, plan for and use supervision and the supervisory relationship to reflect on their work in dialogue, to improve their skills, understanding and effectiveness, to *"be accountable for the quality of their work and take responsibility for maintaining and improving their knowledge and skills"*.

Supervisees share with supervisors a responsibility for the wellbeing and safety of service users, carers, staff and other involved parties.

Supervisors of social work practitioners are responsible for their own awareness of national and local standards that are relevant to their work, SSSC Codes of practice for social services workers and of the council's policies and procedures and for working within these requirements.

They must commit to, plan for and use supervision and the supervisory relationship to enable practitioners to reflect on their work, improve their skills, understanding and effectiveness and to be accountable for the quality of their work. This requires that supervisors arrange protected time in an appropriate environment and that they develop their skills as supervisors.

Where there is evidence - arising from supervision, from the scrutiny or audit of files or documents or from direct observation – that practice, skills or knowledge can or should be improved, the supervisor must discuss that with the practitioner, with a

view to achieving that improvement either directly or through specific training or development opportunities.

Supervisors share with supervisees a responsibility for the wellbeing and safety of service users, carers, staff and other involved parties.

Supervisors must also ensure that there are appropriate records of supervision, as set out above.

Line managers of those with responsibility for the supervision of social work practice must ensure that supervision is taking place in a manner consistent with this policy, that it is appropriately recorded and that both the recorded and observable evidence demonstrate that

Supervision is of high quality and is effective in ensuring good outcomes for service users and a positive experience of working with the service. They are also responsible for ensuring the sufficiency of supervisory staff, with appropriate skills and of a suitable physical and professional environment.

The Head of Service must ensure that supervision is taking place in a manner consistent with this policy, that it is appropriately recorded and is effective. The head of service shares with managers, supervisors and those being supervised a responsibility for the wellbeing and safety of service users, carers, staff and other involved parties.

The Chief Social Work Officer – is responsible for the quality of service to service users, as maintained and improved through effective management and supervision.

RESOURCES

Time – Supervision requires the commitment of time, on the part of supervisors and supervisees. Workload management information suggests a requirement for at least 4% of a practitioner's working hours to be available for supervision and associated administrative tasks (5.8 hours over a four week period for full-time staff), most of which should be in pre-arranged sessions at the required frequency. A sufficiency of supervisory capacity would therefore equate to at least this amount of time for each person supervised, plus an additional amount for the additional recording responsibilities carried by supervisors.

Line Management responsibilities in relation to supervision also require time. The more reliable the supervision practice is, the less management time will be required, but the expected minimum is three hours per four week period.

Skills – The skills required for high quality supervision are related to, but not identical with those required for high quality social work. All those expected to provide supervision should receive training, periodically refreshed.

Environment – Supervision requires a comfortable, private space, protected from interruption, with access to Carefirst and other online material – such as policies, procedures, guidance, forms etc.

LEGAL REQUIREMENTS

Supervision practice must be consistent with the council's responsibilities under Human Rights, Equalities, Data Protection, Health and Safety and Safe Recruitment guidance and legislative requirements.

The essentials of these are embodied in council policies or procedures on:

- Health and Safety at Work
- Customer Care
- Recruitment
- Employee Review and Development
- Training and Development - Policy and Guidelines
- Equal Opportunities Policy
- Employee Relations
- Code of Conduct
- Health at Work
- Child Protection Procedures

QUALITY IMPROVEMENT, MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Monitoring – Managers are responsible for ensuring that supervision is taking place at the appropriate quality and frequency and that recording is appropriate.

Evaluation – Evaluation of quality and effectiveness is best undertaken as a periodic participative self-evaluation process, using the appropriate quality indicators – 3.1, 7.2 and 7.3 - in the SWIA Self-Evaluation guide. In this manner, documentary evidence – records of supervision – is considered alongside the views of the immediate parties and external observation. If, between planned self-evaluations, it appears to responsible line managers that there is a problem in relation to supervision practice, they have a responsibility to look at the recorded evidence and talk to the parties involved, in order to evaluate current practice and address any deficiencies.

Quality Improvement – Issues arising from evaluations should be addressed in the relevant Improvement Plan, whether at team or divisional level. Where a requirement for amendment to this policy is identified, the amendment will be subject to consultation and approval by the service committee.

STAFF DEVELOPMENT

This policy requires a re-appraisal of the training on supervision currently available to staff, to ensure that we can offer initial and refresher training for supervision that is consistent with the policy.

CONSULTATIONS

Questionnaires were sent to all practitioners and Senior Social Workers prior to the drafting of this policy. Those returned have been taken into consideration.

The outcome of inspection reports from SWIA and HMIe were also taken into consideration.

Carefirst Officers have been consulted regarding the approach described to enable the recording of case-specific content from supervision and developed the structure within Carefirst to enable the described approach.

All senior social workers and managers were consulted prior to agreement of the Policy by the division's Operational Management Group.

The Moray Council, Community Services Department, Children & Families Services

STAFF SUPERVISION AGREEMENT

This supervision agreement has been devised in accordance with Children & Families Services' Supervision Policy. Both the supervisor and supervisee are required to have read and understood this, prior to entering a supervision agreement.

Supervision provides a flexible framework in which the supervisee and supervisor can build a professional relationship within professional boundaries, in order to promote personal and professional growth and in which the supervisee will feel supported, enabled and valued.

The agreement's purpose is to provide a structure for supervision sessions between.

Name:	(Supervisor)
Name:	(Supervisee)
Post:	
Base:	
Frequency: Date/Times/Location	
Responsibilities:	
Format: Group / 1: 1	
Recording:	
Confidentiality:	
Purpose:	
Equality & Diversity Issues:	
Arrangements for contact between sessions:	

The Moray Council, Community Services Department, Children & Families Services

Supervision is concerned with all aspects of the staff member's workload and performance. It is through supervision that the service aims:

- a. to consider, enable and direct both the content and process of direct work with service users;
- b. To ensure that management accountability is exercised, including identifying priorities, allocation of work, monitoring of performance, management of time, identification of problems and ensuring consistency between individual's work and the aims, procedures and policies of the service;
- c. To ensure effective child protection and safer care in all activities of the service;
- d. To ensure that in all its activities the service, through its staff, complies with SSSC Codes of Practice and Council Policies, including equalities, diversity, non-discriminatory and anti-racist practice;
- e. To support staff's development, learning and professional performance, thereby ensuring good practice. This support will also include the acknowledgement of any personal circumstances of the individual member of staff which affects their work and discussion of these as appropriate;
- f. To offer, where appropriate and possible, professional consultation and the opportunity for staff to reflect on their work;
- g. To ensure that the professional development and training needs of staff are considered and addressed;
- h. To acknowledge the stresses that are inherent, particularly in working with children, young people and families in a social care setting and to minimise their impact through appropriate support.

EXPECTATIONS

What we hope to gain:	
Helpful feedback will be in the form of:	
We will both prepare for the session:	
If things go wrong:	

PROFESSIONAL COMMITMENT

In order to ensure the highest standards in supervision it is important that both supervisor and supervisee are committed to the following:

- Active participation,
- Open, full and honest discussion,
- Continuous and constructively critical feedback,
- A 'no surprises' approach where staff are fully aware of the supervisor's assessment of their strengths and areas for development.

REVIEWS

Date to review agreement:.....

Date and Time of next ERDP:.....

In signing this agreement both supervisor and supervisee have agreed to the content of this individual agreement, but also with the council's Children & Families Policy & Procedure, which sets out the particular responsibilities, and stressed the priority of supervision.

Signed:.....Date:.....

Signed:.....Date:.....

The Moray Council, Community Services Department, Children & Families Services

SUPERVISION AGENDA

Supervisor..... Date:.....

Supervisee:..... Date:.....

1	Review agreed action from previous meeting	
2	Management	Maintaining work in accordance with service policies, procedures, expectations and standards. Holidays, TOIL, mileage and subsistence claims etc.
3	Review	Accountable reflection and analysis of work since last meeting. Carefirst, case files, diaries and other written notes can contribute to this session. Risk assessment.
4.	Work Plan and Workload Management	Determine actions following review of work
5	Professional Development	Supervisor will support the supervisee with addressing practice issues and will provide information in respect of current development in research and practice and how this can be accessed. Discussion and identification of learning and registration CPD needs.
6	Support	Discuss any personal and professional difficulties and determine what support the supervisee requires, to manage their work effectively.
7	Mediation	This is when there are difficulties within relationships e.g. with colleagues, other professionals, client's etc.
8		
9		
10		

Action Learning Sets

This is one way of running an action learning set. There are other models that may also be appropriate.

A group of about 6 people working in related fields and at comparable levels of responsibility, meet regularly for a contracted number of meetings, which is usually five, over twelve to eighteen months. Initially the set works with a facilitator who acts as catalyst and co-ordinator, supporting the set throughout this process. At the end of the initial contract, the set members decide whether or not to continue meeting or a further contracted period, and whether to work on their own or with a facilitator.

At each meeting there is a disciplined process:

- Every set member reports briefly on what has been happening.
- Set members decide who is going to present a particular situation that they currently face.
- The presenter describes their situation/dilemma/challenge. This can be time limited.
- The set members ask questions designed to assist the presenter come to a deeper understanding of their situation/dilemma/challenge.
- Set members do not give advice, tell anecdotes, pass judgement or talk about how it compares to their own situation.
- The set assists the presenter to review options and decide on action.
- The set reflects briefly on the group process and gives feedback to each other on what has taken place.
- At a future meeting, the presenter reports on the action taken.

The facilitator

- Enables the group to reflect on group processes
- Creates safety for individual members to explore sensitive issues
- Takes the group beyond superficial analysis
- Keeps the group focused on the individual presenter
- Ensures that group members follow action learning conventions
- Enables the group to draw out general lessons on management development

The Moray Council, Community Services Department - Children & Families Services

RECORD OF SUPERVISION

Supervisor:..... Supervisee:.....

Team:..... Date of Supervision:.....

Summary of Item Discussed	Decision / Action	By Whom	By When
Review agreed action from previous meeting			
Review – Carefirst, case files, reflective diaries, RISK ASSESSMENT			

Professional Development - Practice Issues /Support/ Induction/ Learning/Registration/CPD needs			
Support – personal / professional difficulties/ colleague/client relations (discussion stage)			
Mediation – to address ongoing difficulties (input stage)			

Management – policies/
procedures/ expectations/
standards/

Management – Holidays,
TOIL, mileage and subsistence

Work Plan and Workload Management – review and plan

Date of next Supervision

Signatures to Agreement:

Supervisee **Supervisor**