

Working together to safeguard children, DFE 2018

(p 57 & 58) says that:

- Designated professional roles should always be explicitly defined in job descriptions
- Professionals should have sufficient time, funding, supervision & support to fulfil their safeguarding responsibilities effectively
- Professionals should have regular reviews of their own practice to ensure they improve over time

Effective supervision:

- Provides support, coaching & training for the practitioner & promotes the interests of children
- Should foster a culture of mutual support, teamwork & continuous improvement
- Encourages the confidential discussion of sensitive issues
- Regular one-to-one meetings that support professionals to reflect critically on the impact of their decisions
- Should be a safe environment where trust and confidentiality are maintained (as appropriate)
- Promotes equal opportunities and anti-discriminatory practice

Supervision should provide opportunities to:

- Discuss issues
- Identify solutions
- Receive coaching to improve their professional effectiveness

The purpose, venue, timing, specific responsibilities, recording, sickness arrangements, complaints & reviewing processes should be agreed by both parties in a 'supervision agreement'.

Frequency:

Supervision should be at least every 8 weeks and reflect:

- The level of experience & competence (not necessarily length of service) of staff
- Particular circumstances e.g. difficult work, risk, personal & performance issues, levels of stress

Changes to supervision should be by agreement between the two parties and be clearly recorded.

Agency and temporary staff should receive supervision in the same way as permanent staff.

The four main functions of supervision are:

Management:

- Quality of performance
- Discussion of relevant policies & procedures
- Safeguarding roles and responsibilities
- Development and monitoring of workload

Learning and Development:

- Identifying learning style and barriers, development needs and learning opportunities
- Giving and receiving constructive feedback
- Reflective practice through case discussion

Personal Support:

- Clarifying boundaries
- Allowing staff to express their feelings about the impact of their safeguarding work
- Monitoring their health
- Obtaining appropriate health support when appropriate

Mediation:

- ensuring that staff, the setting, the agency and other organisations are working together effectively
- dealing sensitively with concerns
- consulting and briefing staff on changes and developments that affect their area of work
- advocating between worker or team and other parts of the agency or with outside agencies

Who needs supervision?

- Supervision should be offered to all staff whose work brings them into contact with children, young people and their families
- Whilst the main focus may be on the safeguarding team members, other staff will need support either on an ongoing or specific basis
- Staff should be made aware that supervision is available if they want it and to contact the Designated Safeguarding Lead to discuss further

Early years providers in schools must put appropriate arrangements in place for the supervision of staff who have contact with children and families:

[Statutory Framework for EYFS 2021](#)

A written record of supervision:

This is the supervisor's responsibility & should:

- Allow an issue to be revisited later and still be understood
- Record all decisions, the reasons for them, agreed actions, who will take responsibility and the timescale for carrying out these actions
- Be typed where possible
- Be signed and dated by both parties
- Be copied to the supervisee
- Be access restricted

If there is disagreement about the content of the record this should be recorded by both parties.

If a student is discussed, a summary of the discussion & agreed actions & timescales must be put in the student's safeguarding file.

Supervision records are the property of the commissioning organisation, not the individual.

Supervisors may need to discuss the content of supervision sessions with e.g. their line manager; this should always be with the knowledge of the supervisee.

When a supervisee leaves the organisation, the records should be retained for two years after the member of staff has left and then shredded.

Where a member of staff transfers to another section or supervisor within the organisation their records should be passed onto the new supervisor.

Who should provide formal supervision?

One of the purposes of safeguarding supervision is to provide specialist guidance and advice in relation to safeguarding and child protection matters.

This means that the person providing supervision needs to be fully trained and experienced in safeguarding children as well as being trained in providing supervision itself.

This may mean that an education setting will need to use the supervision skills of people outside the setting, either across other areas of the organisation, or from private or independent organisations.

If this is the case for your setting you must ensure that the supervisor follows appropriate confidentiality and data security processes.

Types of supervision:

There are 4 broad types of supervision; the type your staff need will depend on regularity and purpose. Your safeguarding team will benefit from all 4 types.

One to one supervision:

- The most common supervision method
- In private, pre-arranged time & agreed agenda
- Having the same supervisor develops trust, openness and honesty and confidentiality

However, other methods can complement, rather than replace, one to one supervision.

Group supervision:

- A group of staff involved in the same task, meeting together with supervisor to discuss work issues
- May be done a regular team meeting or as a separate session to look at specific issues

Unplanned or "ad-hoc" supervision:

- Allows staff to discuss, obtain a decision or gain permission to do something quickly
- Staff who work closely with their supervisor may communicate daily but will still need regular one to one supervision

Peer supervision:

- A systematic approach where colleagues discuss professional issues & key topics with one another
- Should result in solutions that are helpful to the person who presented his or her problem

It may be necessary to supplement supervision for staff who are experiencing trauma, e.g. where they have been involved in providing information for a court case or Serious Case Review or coming to terms with serious injury or death of a child or young person.

In these situations staff may need extra support from their line manager, the setting's safeguarding team and Occupational Health.

Useful resources:

- [Working together to safeguard children, DFE 2018](#)
- [Maintaining a Safe Culture: Supervision, section 4.2, SCSP Child Protection and Safeguarding Procedures Manual](#)