

## Core Purpose and Guiding Principles

### Supervision Matters: An Integrated Framework for Supervision across Children's Services

#### Introduction and rationale

This supervision guide offers a framework for a congruent and integrated multi-agency approach to supervision. The core purpose is to ensure consistency across the Children's Workforce in providing a safe and supportive learning environment in which to reflect on practice and evaluate the quality of decision making in promoting the welfare of individual children and young people.

The Guide is intended to work as a 'living document', open to change, and able to incorporate new and evolving ideas. It works on the principle that each supervisee will be supported by his or her line manager to access a range of supervision support from a number of sources as appropriate. In doing so it seeks to ensure that supervision is not confused with, or restricted to, performance or workload management.

As Research in Practice suggests "in a target driven culture pressures of work force the pace (which) .. can get in the way of, or become a substitute for, thinking. When this is allied to supervision that emphasises meeting targets and performance indicators at the expense of exploring the nature and quality of decision-making, it can have disastrous consequences" (2009, *Analysis and Critical Thinking in Assessment*).

In his progress report, Lord Laming expresses similar concern at the over emphasis on process and targets. He stresses the need for supervision to be "open and supportive, focusing on quality decisions, good risk analysis and improving outcomes for children rather than meeting targets" (2009, *The Protection of Children in England: A Progress Report*). The final report of the Social Work Task Force recommends a programme which sets new standards for employers to ensure that high quality supervision, time for continual professional development and manageable workloads are set in place (2009, *The Social Work Taskforce*). This applies to all those who work with Children, Young People and Families.

#### Guiding principles

This guide considers a range of ways of providing quality supervision across children's services in line with five core principles:

- Good supervision within a positive organisational culture can support the development of analytical, critical and reflective thinking in practice.
- Supervision is a shared responsibility and can be drawn from a multiplicity of sources. It is a process rather than an event, session or method.
- Supervision is relational and invites regular feedback in all directions.
- Supervision arrangements are set out in a clear contract which is negotiated and reviewed, and which includes regular, uninterrupted, structured and recorded sessions.
- The organisation values and supports the process, recognising the critical influence of supervision on transformational practice.