CHILD AND FAMILY SUPPORT AGENCY

STAFF SUPERVISION POLICY

(STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES AND INTERIM STANDARDS)\(^1\)

2013

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\(^1\) HSE Children and Family Services will move to the CFSA, once this agency is established in 2013. This policy applies to HSE Children and Family Services staff during the transition period.
National Child and Family Support Agency Staff Supervision Policy

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Introduction

Part 1 of this document is a review of the Children and Family Services Staff Supervision Policy (HSE, 2009). This relates to all staff of the Child and Family Support Agency (CFSA).

Part 2 outlines standard operating procedures for social work and social care staff transferring to the CFSA in 2013.

There has been targeted consultation on this documentation with the following reference groups

- Nominees of HSE Children and Family Services principal social workers.
- Nominated social care professionals.
- The Staff Practice Subgroup of the National Advisory Group for HSE Children and Family Services Workforce Development (Education, Training and Research).

Standards for supervision based on clear criteria are required to ensure that the quality of supervision meets an approved standard (HIQA, 2012)\(^2\). Part 3 includes a set of Interim Standards\(^3\) drawn from best practice in this area to support the implementation and monitoring of supervision within CFSA. The Interim Standards have been adapted to the Irish context. Consultation with practitioners on these standards will be undertaken as part of the implementation process and the review of the policy.

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\(^3\) Adapted from the Supervision Standards and Criteria, Regional Policy for Northern Ireland Health and Social Care Trusts, Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (N.I.) 2008
Part 1

Child and Family Support Agency Staff Supervision Policy
1.0 Policy Statement and Definition

1.1 This policy relates to all staff working within the Child and Family Support Agency (CFSA).

1.2 It is CFSA policy that all social workers and social care workers will receive supervision from within their line management structure as per the procedures provided with this policy document (Part 2).

1.3 Within this policy, supervision is defined as “A process in which one worker is given responsibility to work with another worker(s) in order to meet certain organizational, professional and personal objectives. These objectives are competent, accountable performance, continuing professional development and personal support”. (Harries – 1987).

1.4 This model of supervision requires the integration of line management, clinical and professional supervision as a responsibility delegated to the direct line manager.

1.5 This policy requires the primary method of provision of supervision to be through regular individual sessions.5

1.6 Staff supervision supports the overall management of worker performance. The diagram below shows where staff supervision fits with other systems and tools that contributes to overall management of worker performance in the agency.6

\[
\text{Adapted from Morrison (2005)}^7
\]

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4 'Policy' refers only to Part 1 only of this document
5 Consideration needs to be given to other methods of staff supervision such as group and peer supervision but these are outside the scope of this policy for now.
6 As a Performance Management System is developed for CFSA, Supervision will be further integrated within this framework.
2.0 Purpose of this Policy

2.1 The purpose of this policy is to ensure that all CFSA staff members receive consistent and effective Supervision.

3.0 Scope of this Policy

3.1 This is a mandatory policy for all CFSA staff. Standard Operating Procedures have been developed to ensure that the policy can be implemented fully for all social work and social care staff. These SOPs and pro forma templates can be applied to other staff groupings as appropriate.

4.0 Function and Aims of Supervision

4.1 Supervision provides a regular, structured, opportunity to discuss work, review practice and progress and plan for future development.

4.2 Supervision has the four distinct but equally important functions of Management, Support, Learning/Development and Engagement/Mediation.

- **Management** to hold the worker accountable for performance and practice, to ensure safe, quality care for children and families.
- **Support** for the individual staff member in what is a demanding and potentially stressful working environment. This may involve debriefing which addresses the emotional impact of such work.
- **Learning and development** of each individual to identify their knowledge-base, attitudes, learning style and skills; to identify learning needs and the strengths and weaknesses of the worker; and to plan and set targets for ongoing development.
- **Engagement/Mediation** to ensure healthy engagement with and communication between the individual and the organisation.

Effective supervision will ensure that each function receives attention over time.

4.3 The aims of staff supervision in the CFSA are

- to provide oversight of direct work with children and families.
- to ensure staff members know what is expected of them by the agency.
- to ensure staff members carry out their duties effectively and efficiently.
- to ensure good practice and to challenge and manage poor practice.
- to ensure that health and well-being at work issues are addressed.
- to develop workers’ skills in and capacity for reflective practice.
• to assist in the continuous professional development (CPD) of staff.
• to ensure that staff members operate in an anti-discriminatory way and in line with Professional Codes of Practice.

4.4 Staff supervision operates alongside many other professional, management and practice meetings and processes. While these may over-lap and complement each other, Supervision is NOT
• counselling
• formal appraisal
• mentoring or coaching
• consulting
• formal disciplinary or grievance processes.

It should be noted that while staff supervision may identify issues that require referral to or initiation of any of the above, it is the responsibility of the supervisor to ensure these processes are dealt with in a separate forum.

5.0 Core Values and Principles of this Policy

5.1 These are the core values which underpin the Staff Supervision Policy and Standard Operating Procedures:
• Supervision must always put the needs of children first.
• The quality of supervision has a direct bearing on the quality of service delivery and outcomes for children and families.
• Effective supervision contributes to the management of risk in relation to children, families, staff and the agency.
• Supervision should affirm and develop the highest standards of worker performance, while identifying and addressing issues of under-performance.
• Supervision must ensure the balanced and effective management of staff practice; development and support of staff and promote their engagement with the organisation.
• All staff members have individual responsibility for the quality of their own work.
• All staff should prepare for and make a positive contribution to the supervisory process.

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8 Where formal appraisal exists, supervision will inform the appraisal process
9 Disciplinary and grievance issues may initially surface and be addressed in Supervision. Records of Supervision sessions may become relevant as part of disciplinary and grievance processes. However, it is essential that the supervisor and/or manager with responsibility for initiating disciplinary process manage the transition from Supervision to this arena.
• Senior managers have responsibility to promote effective supervision by implementing this policy and ensuring training is provided for both supervisors and supervisees.

• Senior managers need to conduct regular audits to ensure that this policy, standard operating procedures, related standards and criteria are being implemented.

• Supervision must promote anti-discriminatory practice.

• All practice must be consistent with the relevant legislation and statutory instruments that apply to health and social care professionals.

6.0 Review of this Policy

6.1 This policy will be reviewed by end 2015 or at an earlier date if so required by CFSA Management.
Part 2

Standard Operating Procedures for CFSA Staff Supervision
(Social Work and Social Care)
These standard operating procedures should be read and applied with reference to the National Child and Family Support Agency Staff Supervision Policy (2013). While these standard operating procedures have been developed to direct practice in social work and social care professions, they provide a framework of best practice that can be applied within other professions and service areas.

1.0 Roles and Responsibilities

1.1 General Responsibilities

- Each line manager has responsibility for ensuring compliance with the National Child and Family Support Agency Staff Supervision Policy (2013) and all relevant standards and procedures, by all staff under his/her remit.

1.2 CFSA Responsibilities: The Agency is responsible for

- the creation and promotion of a climate in which supervision can be introduced, developed, monitored and evaluated.
- making supervision a core function of child welfare and protection services, and ensuring that the process of supervision is recognised, supported and resourced.
- providing appropriate resources to enable staff and managers at all levels participate in the activity of supervision and in training to support this.
- ensuring that all grades of staff, including supervisors, have access to supervision.
- identifying, acknowledging and providing for external supervision where appropriate.
- ensuring that the process of implementation, evaluation and review of the policy is facilitated and that this includes mechanisms for consultation with all parties involved.

1.3 Supervisor Responsibilities: As a supervisor, you have responsibility to ensure that

- in conjunction with the supervisee, the supervisee’s supervision needs are identified and addressed; while at the same time having regard to organisational objectives.
- while you may delegate to or collaborate with others in addressing the supervisee’s supervision needs, you maintain overall responsibility for the process. In such situations there must be agreement between you as the line manager, the supervisee and the person to which the supervision task has been delegated, to agree how feedback will be managed.
- there is an overall equal emphasis on each of the four functions of supervision; bearing in mind that the emphasis on each may change from session to session.
• Supervision is considered a priority and that appropriate arrangements are put in place to facilitate the process. If there are identified regular difficulties in delivering on supervision, a contingency plan needs to be agreed and implemented in consultation with the next line manager.

• supervisees comply with relevant professional standards, codes and legislation. Where it is apparent that a supervisee is in breach of such standards, codes or legislation, you have a responsibility to his/her/your profession to identify such issues to the supervisee and may have to refer to other processes outside of supervision.

• supervisees comply with relevant CFSA policies. Where it is apparent that a supervisee is in breach of such policies, you have a responsibility to identify such issues to the supervisee and may have to refer to other processes outside of supervision.

1.4 **Supervisee Responsibilities: As a supervisee you have a responsibility to ensure that**

• you are proactive in getting the support you need to do your work.

• you seek clarification regarding your role and ways of working.

• you take responsibility for your personal and professional development.

• you prepare for supervision, give and accept constructive feedback.

• you implement agreements and plans as agreed.

• you communicate to the supervisor when supports are needed or when you find yourself unable to complete tasks.

• you take responsibility for your own performance

• you engage proactively in supervision under your professional code of ethics, in order to maintain registration.
2.0 Frequency and Duration of Supervision

2.1 The frequency and duration of supervision sessions will vary according to the role and needs of the individual supervisee however, the **minimum standard** for the following groups is:

- **Social workers and social care workers on probationary year** – Every 2 weeks for the first three months after appointment. Every 4 weeks for remainder of probation.

- **All other grades of social work and social care staff** - Every 4-6 weeks

2.2 Individual supervision sessions should ordinarily be of 1.5 to 2 hours in duration.

2.3 The supervisor has responsibility to ensure that time is kept free from interruptions. Cancellation of supervision should only be in exceptional circumstances as it should be seen as a priority for both parties. If a cancellation is made the supervisor and supervisee should immediately set a new date and time for supervision.

3.0 Supervision and its Relationship to Other Processes

3.1 While the policy indicates the requirement for individual one-to-one supervision, the contribution of other forms of supervisory activity cannot be underestimated. These events may be planned or ad hoc, formal or informal, individual or as part of a team. Examples would be

- seeking advice or support by telephone.
- preparatory work when dealing with a particularly challenging situation.
- case management reviews on one-to-one or team basis.
- debriefing following a critical/significant incident.
- staff meetings and handover briefings at change of shift.

Different service models and roles shape the overall requirements and opportunities for such events. However, it is essential that individual supervision sessions allow for a full and effective integration of learning, accountability and support from all such processes.

3.2 Supervision operates as a key forum for reviewing caseloads.\(^{10}\) Tools and guidance to support the caseload management process are currently being developed under the caseload management project. These tools will be of use across Children and Family social work services and will support the social worker in reflecting on their process as a developing practitioner.\(^{11}\)

4.0 Supervision Contracts

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\(^{10}\) 2.10.2 National Standards for the Protection and welfare of Children, HIQA, July 2012 states as follows: There are defined manageable caseloads for all social workers which are reviewed on an ongoing basis to ensure best outcomes are achieved for children and families.

\(^{11}\) The pilot phase of this project is due to be completed by the end of Q 2 2013.
4.1 All supervision relationships must be based on clarity of purpose, shared understanding of responsibilities, trust and honesty. Such foundations require time and effort. A formal, written supervision contract is the best demonstration of commitment to supervision and such should be developed for all supervision relationships.

4.2 All supervision contracts must clearly state the frequency, purpose, venue, and duration of supervision sessions.

4.3 All supervision contracts must demonstrate that supervision is a two-way process and must include expectations and commitments from both those giving and receiving supervision. This should outline their responsibilities in making supervision effective, including preparation for supervision, sharing information, and actively contributing.

4.4 All supervision contracts should be signed by both supervisor and supervisee, with an identified date for review of the contract.

4.5 A pro forma contract is provided as Appendix IV.

5.0 Confidentiality of Supervision

5.1 Supervision should take place as a private meeting; however, confidentiality cannot be absolute. There may be circumstances in which matters discussed in supervision may appropriately be brought to others. For example, the supervisor may feel the necessity to bring issues raised in supervision to the attention of the next line manager. In such circumstances, it is incumbent upon the supervisor to first advise the supervisee of their intention to take such action.

6.0 Recording of Supervision Sessions

6.1 Supervision should always be recorded in a timely manner and in such a way that the content and decisions can be readily understood and audited. Supervision records are held on the staff file in a separate, removable, section.

6.2 In general, there should be records at three distinct levels of recording

1. **Schedule of Supervision Meetings:** This schedule should provide information on dates, times, details of cancellations etc of supervision meetings and should be held by the supervisor as part of the supervisee’s supervision file. A pro forma record is provided as Appendix V.

2. **Record of Supervision Meetings:** A written record summarising the main points discussed in supervision should be maintained by the supervisor with a copy provided to the supervisee. There should be a clear indication of who is responsible for actions to be undertaken, with specified time-scales as appropriate. Where other personnel are providing aspects of supervision, it is the responsibility of the supervisor to seek feedback and have this recorded appropriately. Similarly, the
specific contribution of other supervision formats and events should be noted and recorded as relevant. A pro forma template is provided as Appendix VI.

3. **Case Supervision Record:** Where workers hold a client caseload, it is the supervisee’s responsibility to record any case-related decisions on the client case file. They should make it clear with whom they have consulted, especially if a decision is made outside formal supervision or involves another manager. Pro forma records are provided as Appendix VII.

6.3 All notes should be signed as agreed records at the end of a session or beginning of the next. Personal information will only be recorded where it is impacting on the individual’s work performance. This impact and action taken should be recorded in the supervision notes.

6.4 All supervision records are the property of the CFSA and, as such, may be subject to the same disclosure under Freedom of Information, Data Protection and Complaints processes as any other CFSA records. They may also be accessed as part of an inspection or monitoring process.

6.5 Other parties that may have access to supervision documentation include:

- HIQA Inspectors and monitors of services
- HR personnel in the event of grievance or disciplinary procedures
- Legal services where documents are sought under discovery.
- Various forms of Enquiries
- Professional Practice Hearings

7.0 **Records of Differences of Opinion regarding Decisions**

7.1 At times when the supervisor and supervisee disagree on the recording of the meeting or on decisions reached within supervision, these differences need to be identified and signed by both parties within the supervision record.

8.0 **Resolving Disputes within Supervision**

8.1 If difficulties arise in the supervisory relationship, within the context of supervision, these must be acknowledged and addressed by both parties. If issues remain unresolved, either party can inform the next line manager and a separate meeting can be arranged to address the issues under dispute. The next line manager will either facilitate this meeting or appoint an independent person to act as mediator and make every effort to resolve the issue.

8.2 At this point, it could be agreed without blame that the supervision relationship is not tenable. Where named and agreed, line managers should endeavour to delegate the supervision responsibility to a different staff member.
9.0 Unresolved Differences

9.1 Unresolved differences may need to be addressed through the separate Grievance and Disciplinary Procedures. Clearly, differences may also arise that are unrelated to the supervision process and these too, if unresolved, should be addressed through Grievance and Disciplinary procedures. Such issues should be regularly monitored by line managers.

10.0 Ending and Transitioning Supervision Arrangements

10.1 The ending of a supervision relationship and the transition to a new supervisor or supervisee should be managed in a manner that respects the integrity of the supervision process while ensuring that there is some continuity of progress for service users, staff and the organisation.

10.2 Ideally, the transition from one supervisor to another should be managed by way of a three-way meeting between them and the supervisee. This will protect the integrity of the supervision relationship while ensuring that outstanding issues are carried forward.

10.3 When one or other party of a supervision relationship moves, the supervision records should be sealed and maintained within the supervisee's file. It would generally be inappropriate for a new supervisor to access these records. There should be agreement between the supervisor and supervisee about what information will transfer to the new supervisor.

10.4 In many cases it may be more practical for the supervisor and supervisee to jointly generate an End of Supervision Report which would be passed to the incoming supervisor. This report would identify those issues that require continuity.

11.0 Training to Support Supervision

11.1 Access to training should be provided to all those involved in the provision of supervision. This should address the principles of supervision as well as skills and techniques, having regard to the experience and expertise of the supervisor.

11.2 Supervisors should be provided with opportunities to refresh or further develop their understanding and skills in supervision, through training or other processes.

11.3 Supervisees must also be provided with training on the purpose and function of supervision.

12.0 Review of the Supervision Process

12.1 The supervisor and supervisee should undertake a planned review of the process and content of supervision at least once per year. This is to ensure that the process remains focused and in keeping with its stated objectives. The original supervision contract should be reviewed at this time and amended as required.
13.0 Quality Assurance of Supervision

13.1 Managers of services should ensure that an audit of supervision within their remit is undertaken on a yearly basis. This should include a random review of

- Supervision contracts.
- Records of supervision sessions.
- Records of Staff training in the process of supervision.

An audit tool is provided in Appendix VII to support managers in auditing against the interim standards in Part 3.
Part 3

Interim CFSA Standards for Staff Supervision
(Social Work and Social Care)

Adapted from the Supervision Standards and Criteria, Regional Policy for Northern Ireland Health and Social Care Trusts, Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (N.I.) 2008
**Standard 1**

Supervision is mandated, supported and resourced by management within the agency.

Criteria:

- Supervision is named within employment contracts as a core responsibility of all agency managers.
- There are agreed arrangements for the provision of supervision to all social work and social care staff regardless of grade.
- Senior managers ensure that services are adequately resourced to ensure that supervisors do not have excessive numbers of staff to supervise.
- No supervisor is required to supervise more than 8 supervisees on an on-going basis.
- Supervisors and supervisees are provided with time and other resources to enable effective engagement in supervision.
- There are appropriate supports for issues that arise in supervision but may require additional interventions e.g. critical incident debriefing, staff counselling, occupational health, training, HR and employee relations.

**Standard 2**

All staff members are provided with formal and regular supervision.\(^\text{12}\)

Criteria:

- During their first 3 months of employment staff should receive supervision every 2 weeks.
- For the remainder of the probationary period, staff should receive supervision every 4 weeks.
- Following confirmation in post, practitioners receive formal supervision, as a minimum, at 4-6 weekly intervals.
- The individual supervision needs of staff members who are promoted, transfer to a new service role or return from extended leave should be assessed within at least 2 weeks of transition and the requirement for more frequent supervision considered.
- A supervision session lasts on average between 1.5 to 2 hours. In addition time will be needed for preparation and recording.

\(^{12}\) The frequencies stipulated in this standard assume workers are in full-time employment. There may need to be adjustment where staff members are employed part-time.
**Standard 3**

Supervision is arranged and conducted in such a way as to permit proper reflection and discussion.

Criteria:

- Supervision is not subject to cancellation and is only postponed in exceptional circumstances. Any postponed session is reconvened at the earliest opportunity.
- Where the supervisor is absent long-term from work (because of e.g. sick leave) alternative arrangements should be made by senior management to provide supervision.
- Supervision takes place in an environment which affords privacy and where arrangements have been made to avoid interruptions (other than in circumstances described in the supervision agreement).
- Supervisors should follow the service specific protocols for staff debriefing following particular interventions and incident

**Standard 4**

All supervisory relationships are subject to a written supervision contract to be drawn up within the first six weeks of the start of the relationship, (see Appendix III).

Criteria:

The supervision contract addresses:

- Respective roles and responsibilities.
- The frequency of supervision.
- How agendas are to be drawn up.
- How the supervision sessions are to be recorded.
- How confidentiality is to be maintained – and what the limits are to this.
- How differences in the working relationship are to be managed.
- How the principles of diversity (within the supervisor/ supervisee relationship and in service delivery) are to be handled.
- How and when the supervision contract is to be reviewed.
Standard 5

Supervision is a planned and purposeful activity.

Criteria:

- Both supervisor and supervisee prepare for supervision by identifying issues to be addressed.
- An agenda will be drawn up in advance of any supervision meeting.
- Both supervisor and supervisee may contribute to this.
- Decisions made at the previous supervision meeting are reviewed to ensure actions have been taken.

There is a further criterion under this standard where the supervisee works directly with children and families. This is:

- The supervisor reads a sample of the supervisee’s case records regularly. S/he must sign and date the records to indicate they have been read. From this s/he selects a number to review in supervision.

Standard 6

All supervision sessions should be recorded promptly, competently and stored properly.

Criteria:

- All records relating to cases (whether individual or joint supervision or discussions outside of formal supervision) are recorded on the relevant file/pro forma (see appendices) by the supervisee, signed by the supervisor, other than in exceptional circumstances within 10 working days. The supervisee should place these on the client case file.
- Records relating to other matters are recorded on the relevant pro forma, signed by the supervisor and placed on the supervisee’s file by the former within, other than in exceptional circumstances, 10 working days. A copy should be handed to the supervisee.
- This record would normally only be read by more senior management for the purposes of auditing the quality of work and supervision.
- Records demonstrate that issues of diversity have been addressed both in the supervisory relationship and service delivery.
- All supervision records are typed.
**Standard 7**

**Supervisors and supervisees are trained to carry out their role.**

**Criteria:**

- Induction of all staff addresses the supervision policy and standards.
- Supervisors attend a designated course within 12 months of taking up their first supervisory/management post.
- Refresher training is available to supervisors (e.g. peer discussions, action learning, critical reflective practice workshops) to consolidate skills and is discussed within the supervisor’s own supervision.
- Supervisors receive regular feedback from their managers regarding their performance and from supervisees as part of the supervision review process.
- Supervisees attend training in first year in practice to ensure continuing professional development.
- All staff members are provided with training to enable them to make optimum use of available technology for managing case information, staff-related information and other administrative details.

**Standard 8**

**The supervisor ensures that the management (competent, accountable performance) function is met.**

**Criteria:**

Supervision meets this function by ensuring that:

- Agency policies and procedures are understood and adhered to.
- The supervisee’s workload is managed and priorities are set.
- The quality of the supervisee’s performance (including anti-discriminatory practice) is measured.
- Statutory responsibilities are addressed.
- Work is allocated according to the experience and skill of the practitioner and the team’s/agency’s business plan.
- Case recording, including daily records are of the requisite standard.
- Case files are audited regularly by supervisor.
- Case plans are devised, implemented, reviewed and recorded on the case file.
• Any advice/consultation on case work given outside formal supervision by the line manager or other manager should be recorded by the supervisee on the file.

• The needs and desirable outcomes of service users are understood; and that risks are identified and countered.

• Objectives and priorities are set and reviewed on a regular basis.

**Standard 9**

**The supervisor ensures that the continuing professional development function is met.**

Criteria:

Supervision addresses this function by:

• Helping staff to develop their professional competence.

• Enabling staff to meet their CPD and supervision requirements related to their ongoing professional registration.

• Helping staff to initiate fresh ways of working in response to changing needs, including through the use of technology.

• Enabling staff to relate theory and research to practice.

• Assessing training and development needs.

• Developing skills and knowledge.

• Helping workers to reflect on their work and interaction with service users.

• Providing feedback on performance.

• Discussing knowledge and skills gained in training events and identifying opportunities to integrate these into the supervisee’s work.
**Standard 10**

The supervisor ensures the support function is met.¹³

Criteria:

Supervision addresses this function by:

- Enabling staff to cope with the stresses that the work entails.
- Offering advice on help available to cope with stress and personal issues.
- Creating a safe climate for workers to examine their practice.
- Helping workers explore the effect of the work on them, both personally and professionally.
- Helping workers explore emotional blocks to the work.
- Monitoring the overall functioning of workers, especially with regard to the effects of stress, team dynamics and relationships.

**Standard 11**

The supervisor ensures the engagement (of the individual with the organisation) function is met.

Criteria:

Supervision addresses this function by:

- Communicating effectively with staff about organisational changes and initiatives.
- Briefing management about resource deficits.
- Representing staff needs to management.
- Seeking policy clarification.
- Consulting with staff and feeding back to management on how organisational policies/practice is perceived.
- Arbitrating between team members when required.
- Negotiating on differences which may arise between supervisors and other professionals, teams or services.

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¹³ It is important to distinguish between support and counselling. Whilst the impact of the work on the supervisee is an appropriate focus of supervision, seeking to resolve the personal problems of the supervisee is not. Staff support services should be easily accessible for all staff.
Standard 12

Supervision promotes a commitment to diversity in all aspects of work (i.e. that all children and families are entitled to the same quality of service irrespective of ethnicity, religion, language, gender, age, disability, membership of the traveller community or sexual orientation).

Criteria:

Supervision addresses this function by ensuring that:

- All assessments, plans and interventions address the implications of the child’s ethnicity etc (see list above).
- The potential vulnerabilities of specific children e.g. disabled/ deaf are identified and countered.
- Discrimination that children may experience is acknowledged and, in so far as this is possible, countered by service provision.
- There is effective communication with all children (this to include e.g. children for whom English is a second language or who are disabled).
- All children receive an appropriate level of protection.
- Children and families receive appropriate services irrespective of ethnicity etc (see list above).

Standard 13

Managers assure the quality of supervision.

Criteria:

- If any functions of supervision are undertaken by a third party, the line manager coordinates the process and ensures effective communication.
- Senior management ensures there is an audit, at least once every 6 months of a small sample of:
  - Case files to track the decision making process, actions and children’s outcomes.
  - Supervision records placed on casework files and on supervision files.
- Senior management conducts an annual audit of supervision in their service area, against each and every one of the standards set out in this document.
- A plan is in place to remedy any deficits found in the audit against the supervision standards.
Appendices
Appendix I

Glossary of Terms and Definitions:

**Coaching:** A coach is an individual who helps another identify and remedy performance or skill deficit via modelling and rehearsal. (Hay, 1995)

**Consulting:** Providing professional or expert advice.

**Counselling:** Counselling denotes a professional relationship between a trained counsellor and a client. This relationship is usually person-to-person, although it may sometimes involve more than two people. It is designed to help clients to understand and clarify their views of their life space, and to learn to reach their self-determined goals through meaningful, well-informed choices and through resolution of problems of an emotional or interpersonal nature. (Burks and Steffire 1979: 14)

**Group Supervision:** There may be two models to this (1) This is a negotiated process whereby members come together in an agreed format to reflect on their work by pooling their skills, experience and knowledge, in order to improve both individual and group capacities (Morrison, 2001) or (2) Involves the use of a group setting to implement all or part of the responsibilities of supervision (Browne and Bourne, 1996)

**Mediation:** A medium for the engagement of staff and the organisation so as to jointly address issues of mutual interest

**Mentoring:** Mentoring is a developmental alliance between equals in which one or more of those involved is enabled to increase awareness, identify alternatives, initiate action and develop themselves. (Hay, 1995)

**Peer Supervision:** Supervision provided by a peer rather than by a direct line manager. There may be varying degrees of delegated line management responsibility to the process.

**Performance Appraisal:** The process by which a manager or consultant (1) Examines and evaluates an employee’s work behaviour by comparing it to pre-set standards. (2) Documents the results of the comparison and (3) Uses the results to provide feedback to the employee to show where improvements are needed and why. Performance appraisals are usually employed as part of an annual cycle and used to determine who needs what training or supports to improve or maintain performance.

**Supervision:** “A process in which one worker is given responsibility to work with another worker(s) in order to meet certain organizational, professional and personal objectives. These objectives are competent, accountable performance, continuing professional development and personal support”. Richards and Payne (1990) state that supervision is ‘primarily concerned with overall performance of the worker and ensuring this is in line with the agency’s expectations and standards’
Appendix II

Legislation/other related policies:

Below are detailed a number of legislative and policy documents that provide guidance on, or support the supervision process.

1.0 ‘Child Care Act 1991’

Supervision is a process wherein managers and staff can monitor the delivery of services in line with statutory responsibilities as identified in the Child Care Act 1991. – Section 3. (1) (2)

2.0 *Children First: National Guidance for the Protection & Welfare of Children*

*Department of Children and Youth Affairs 2011*

Chapter 6 of this document details the following responsibilities of the HSE in relation to staff support and supervision

- Given the nature of child protection and welfare work, the HSE as an employer should have the risks involved in child protection and welfare work included in its Corporate Risk Strategy and should implement risk assessment procedures accordingly. (6.1.1)

- The HSE should ensure that there is a Staff Supervision and Support Policy in place that supports the staff involved in the delivery of child protection and welfare services. (6.1.2)

- It is essential that managers of all disciplines involved in child protection and welfare work acknowledge the levels of actual or potential stress that may affect their staff, including when clients may exhibit aggressive behaviours, and take steps to address any problems (6.1.3)

3.0 *Child Protection and Welfare Practice Handbook, Health Services Executive, 2011*

This handbook details the importance of supervision in managing risk, supporting staff and facilitating professional development (Chapter 4).

In a practice note on how a practitioner can make best use of her/his supervision, the following points are stressed:

- A shared responsibility – between you and your supervisor
- Prioritise your supervision sessions – book slots and keep them free
- Keep it regular – reschedule as soon as possible if it has to be cancelled
- Prepare for your supervision sessions – keep a list of issues/observations
- Reflect and hypothesise – it’s not just a ‘to do’ list
- Focus on outcome planning – look at each child individually
- Write up your supervision records clearly
• Ask for feedback. Use the opportunity to discuss your practice and identify areas for development.


Many of the health and social care professionals are to be statutory regulated by CORU within the next 3 years. The first group have been the social workers whose register opened on 31st May 2011. The Code of Professional Conduct and Ethics for Social Workers states the supervision expectations for Social Workers

“You should seek and engage in supervision in professional practice on an on-going and regular basis.

You must seek support and assistance from your employer if you do not feel competent to carry out any aspect of your work or if you are unsure about how to proceed in a work matter” (ref Code of Professional Conduct and Ethics for Social Workers Bye Law 211 SI No 143 of 2011; 22 (f)(g))

Other relevant legislation pertaining to other professions

• Medical Practitioners Act 2007
• Nurses Act 1985
• Medical and Pharmacy Act

5.0 Freedom of Information Act 1997

This Act details the responsibilities on public bodies with respect to information held on individuals and on decisions that affect individuals.

The Act establishes three statutory rights:

• A right to access records held by public bodies;
• A right to have personal information in a record amended where it is incomplete, incorrect or misleading;
• A right to obtain reasons for decisions affecting the person;

6.0 Data Protection Act 1988 and 2003

This Act applies to all personal information kept on computer or in a structured manual file about individuals. This legislation must be complied with in relation to supervision documentation where staff and/or service user information is likely to be recorded.

The provisions of the Act may be summarised in terms of eight "Rules" which must be followed, and which are listed below.
1. **Obtain** and process the information fairly

2. **Keep** it only for one or more specified and lawful purposes

3. **Process** it only in ways compatible with the purposes for which it was given to you initially

4. Keep it **safe and secure**

5. Keep it **accurate and up-to-date**

6. Ensure that it is **adequate, relevant and not excessive**

7. Retain it **no longer than is necessary** for the specified purpose or purposes

8. **Give a copy of his/her personal data** to any individual, on request.

(Data Commissioner Website)

### 7.0 Standards for Residential Children’s’ Centres 2001

This document sets out the standards that must apply in all Statutory and Registered Children’s Centres -

**‘Supervision and Support**

2.13 All staff members receive regular and formal supervision, the details of which are recorded.

2.14 There is an effective link between supervision and the implementation of individual placement plans.

2.15 Staff meetings, hand-over meetings and other forums take place regularly to facilitate good communication, co-operation and consistency between staff in implementing care plans, providing consistency of care and maintaining safety.

2.16 The employer ensures that there are support mechanisms in place for staff, in particular for those who have suffered stress or injury in the course of their work.

2.17 The employer ensures that all statutory provisions in relation to employment law are adhered to.

### 8.0 Performance Management in the HSE: Guidance Document 2012

1.1 The HSE is introducing a formal Performance Management System in fulfilment of the terms of the Public Service Agreement. The system will cover all grades and professional disciplines and will be introduced on a phased basis commencing with National Directors to grade VIII and equivalent including comparable clinical grades in 2012.

*It is the policy of the HSE ‘to implement, maintain and monitor a Performance Management System that develops the capacity and capability of its employees, improves*
the performance of the organization and addresses underperformance in a timely and constructive manner. (Reference ‘HSE Performance Management System Framework’ document, Jan 2012)

9.0 National Standards for the Protection and Welfare of Children For Health Service Executive Children and Family Services July 2012

Standard 2:10 Child protection and welfare case planning is managed and monitored to improve practice and outcomes for children.

2.10.2 There are defined manageable caseloads for all social worker which are reviewed on an ongoing basis to ensure best outcomes are achieved for children and families.

Standard 5:3 All staff members are supported and receive supervision in their work to protect children and promote their welfare.

Features to meet the requirements of this standard include:

5.3.1 Supervision and support is provided to staff so they are clear regarding accountability and reporting lines, and the appropriate child protection and welfare procedures to be followed.

5.3.2 All staff members are supported and managed to effectively exercise their personal, professional and collective accountability for the provision of effective and safe services to children.

5.3.3 There are procedures to protect the workforce by minimising the risk of violence, bullying and harassment by other members of the workforce or people using the services.

5.3.4 Staff members are provided with access to support and advice. Staff members are provided with regular supervision and support by appropriately qualified and experienced staff.

5.3.5 There is an annual formal appraisal of each individual staff member's performance by his/her line manager.

5.3.6 Written records are kept of each supervision, support and performance appraisal given to staff. The record is signed by the supervisor and individual at the end of each supervision, support and performance appraisal session and is available for inspection.

5.3.7 There are procedures to inform the relevant professional regulatory body, where they have reasonable evidence to suggest that the performance or conduct of a health or social care professional may be below the requirements of the professional regulatory body.

5.3.8 Staff members are facilitated to make protected disclosures about the effectiveness and safety of the service in line with legislative requirements, where appropriate.

5.3.9 Training and development opportunities are provided to staff to equip them with skills required to meet the needs of children using the service.
5.3.10  Accredited management training is provided to all managers who are managing staff.

5.3.11  Training in supervision theory and practice is provided to managers who supervise staff.
Pro Forma - Supervision Contract Guidance:

**Frequency:** Every 4-6 weeks

**Length of session:** 1.5 to 2 hours duration

**Records:** Record of supervision to be kept by the supervisor. *(Appendix VI: Pro Forma Supervision Record for staff file)* This record is signed by both parties. Decisions and actions in relation to cases, should be made in the case supervision record and placed by the supervisee on the child's file *(Appendix VII: Pro Forma – Case Supervision Record for Child's File)* This record is also signed by both parties.

**Confidentiality:** Supervision should take place as a private meeting; however, confidentiality cannot be absolute. There may be circumstances in which matters discussed in supervision may appropriately be brought to others. For example, the supervisor may feel the necessity to bring issues raised in supervision to the attention of the next line manager. In such circumstances, it is incumbent upon the supervisor to first advise the supervisee of their intention to take such action.

**Organisation if cancelled:** It is recognised that cancellations are sometimes inevitable. However, supervision should be seen as a priority and rearranged by the person who has cancelled as soon as possible. As much notice as possible should be given for cancellations.

**Storage of supervision record:** The supervision record will be retained in a separate section in the staff file and stored in a secure place by the supervisor.

**Review:** Supervision contracts / agreements should be reviewed at a minimum every twelve months. This review also presents an opportunity to evaluate the usefulness of the sessions and allow for feedback from both parties.

**Mutual Expectations:** These will be individual to the supervision relationship, depending on a range of factors. It is useful to discuss and include preferences in the contract / agreement.

Questions which help this discussion:

- What the supervisee would like from the supervisor
- What the supervisee will contribute to the supervisory process to make this work
- What the supervisor would like from the worker as supervisee
- What the supervisor will contribute as a supervisor to make this work
Appendix IV

Pro Forma - A specimen contract for Supervision

Between Team Manager: ________________________________________________

and Team Member: ____________________________________________________

The key areas to be addressed in supervision are:

1. To enable the worker to perform to the standards specified by the agency
2. To ensure that the worker is clear about his/her roles and responsibilities
3. To ensure accountability for the work undertaken by the worker
4. To assist in the worker’s professional development
5. To be a primary source of support for the worker
6. To provide regular and constructive feedback to the worker on their performance
7. To review the supervision contract annually

It is expected that both the supervisor and the supervisee will prepare for supervision.

Arrangements agreed for supervision:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Length</th>
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<th>Location</th>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Recording of supervision</th>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Purpose(s) for which the supervisory record may be used?</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Storage of supervision record?</th>
</tr>
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<td></td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>If a supervision session is not held/attended then another will be organised within</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How will we agree the agenda for sessions?</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
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<td></td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What is the contribution of and how will we record other supervision events between sessions?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Mutual Expectations:

What I as the supervisee, expect from you as my supervisor:

_____________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________

What I as the supervisor, expect from you as my supervisee:

_____________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________

Permissions that we have agreed:

If the supervisee does not agree with an item, it should be recorded:

_____________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________

What will we do if there are difficulties working together?

_____________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________

Signed: ______________________________________________________________

Date: ________________________________________________________________

This agreement to be reviewed at (frequency): _____________________________

(adapted from ‘Staff Supervision in Social Care’ © Pavilion 2005)
### Appendix V

**Pro Forma – Schedule of Supervision Meetings**

*This record is to be held at the front of the individual staff supervision file*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Supervisee Name</th>
<th>Supervisor Name</th>
<th>Team</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scheduled Date</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Supervisor Initials</th>
<th>Supervisee Initials</th>
<th>Notes – Cancellations, rescheduling etc</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Appendix VI

Pro Forma – Supervision Record for Staff File

The table below should be used to record briefly what was discussed any decisions and actions.

When discussing cases only record minimal information on this form. All case decisions and actions should be recorded on separate Case Record pro forma and a copy placed on the child’s file.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Record of supervision meeting held on Date</th>
<th>Supervisee Name</th>
<th>Supervisor Name</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Supervision Area</th>
<th>Actions Agreed</th>
<th>By whom</th>
<th>When</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Management &amp; Case Discussion</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional Development</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engagement</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AOB</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Record of any Disagreement</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Supervisee Signature Date

Supervisor Signature Date
**Appendix VII**

**Pro Forma – Case Supervision Record for Child’s File**

This form should be used to record any decisions or case actions made in either formal supervision or informal consultation. It does not replace other methods of recording formal decisions such as child care reviews or strategy meetings and discussions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of Child</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>D.O.B</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Discussion |  |

| Decisions and actions agreed: |  |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Supervisee Signature</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Supervisor Signature</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
Appendix VIII

Supervision Audit Tool

This tool is designed to assist managers to audit supervision (see standard 13) with a view to establishing whether supervision policy has been adhered to.

It is intended that this tool can generally be completed with reference to supervision notes recorded on the pro forma (Appendix VII) and placed on the supervision file. However, auditing of case-specific supervision records (Appendix VII) will present a fuller picture.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Standard 1 – Supervision supported and resourced</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Are there arrangements for all staff to receive supervision, including the supervisor?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Partially</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Has the supervisor less than 8 staff to supervise on an ongoing basis?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is there evidence that supervisor and supervisee have access to a range of other agency supports?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Comment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Standard 2 – Formal and regular supervision</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Has supervision been provided at the stipulated intervals?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Partially</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Comment
### Standard 3 – Permitting proper reflection and discussion

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Partially</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Was supervision postponed only in exceptional circumstances – and sessions reconvened ASAP?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Where the supervisor was absent long-term, were alternative arrangements made?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Comment**

### Standard 4 – Written Supervision Contract

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Partially</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Was a written Supervision Contract drawn up within the stipulated timescale?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did the contract address the stipulated issues?</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Has the contract been reviewed as agreed?</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Comment**

### Standard 5 – Planned and purposeful activity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Partially</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Is there evidence that supervision was planned?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Were decisions made at the previous session reviewed?</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Comment**
### Standard 6 – Recording and storage

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Partially</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Were all records made on the correct pro forma and signed within the stipulated timeframe?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do records demonstrate that issues of diversity/ anti-discriminatory practice have been addressed?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are all records typed?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Comment

### Standard 7 – Training

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Partially</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Has the supervisor received training/ refresher training in their role (as outlined in this standard)?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Comment

### Standard 8 – The Management Function

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Partially</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Has the workload been managed and work allocated as specified in the standard?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Has supervision ensured that case plans are devised, implemented, reviewed and recorded?</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Has supervision ensured that outcomes and risks are identified?</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Comment
### Standard 9 – The Professional Development Function

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Partially</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Has supervision provided opportunities to staff to develop their skills, knowledge and competence?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have training needs and opportunities been identified?</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Has feedback on performance been provided?</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Comment

### Standard 10 – The Support Function

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Partially</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Is there evidence that the supervisee has received appropriate support?</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Comment

### Standard 11 – The Engagement Function

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Partially</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Has supervision enabled staff needs to be represented to management?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Has supervision enabled negotiation of differences (within and outside of the agency)?</td>
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</table>

Comment
### Standard 12 – Diversity/ anti-discriminatory practice

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Partially</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Has supervision promoted the integration of diversity principles into assessments, plans and interventions?</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Has supervision helped to identify specific vulnerabilities?</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Has discrimination been acknowledged and (in so far as this is possible) countered by service provision?</td>
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<td>Comment</td>
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</table>

### Standard 13 – Managers assure the quality of supervision

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Partially</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Can managers demonstrate clear oversight of supervision within their teams?</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Have managers conducted random reviews of documentation that tracks supervision impacts on service delivery?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Has an annual audit of supervision within the service been conducted to identify how standards are being met?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Has a plan been put in place to remedy any deficits?</td>
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<td>Comment</td>
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