

Principles and Standards for Safeguarding Supervision Guidance

1. Introduction and Purpose

Working to ensure that adults with care and support needs are safeguarded from abuse or neglect or where they present a significant risk to themselves or others is demanding and requires sound professional judgements to be made. It may also be stressful for the professionals involved. Ensuring the involvement of the person about whom safeguarding concerns exists adds an important dimension to practice.

The Care Act 2014 Statutory Guidance states that *‘Regular face-to-face supervision from skilled managers is essential to enable staff to work confidently and competently in difficult and sensitive situations.’* And that *‘Skilful and knowledgeable supervision focused on outcomes for adults is critically important in safeguarding work’.*

This paper outlines the core principles of effective supervision to which the local safeguarding adult board requires all partner agencies to closely consider. Supervision policies should fully reflect this guidance.

It is acknowledged that partner organisations have different management structures, and proportionate supervision systems will reflect the structure and role of any organisation.

2. Background

It is important to acknowledge that each Local Safeguarding Adults Board (LSAB) partner agency will have its own governance arrangements, supervision culture and organisational structures that will direct the way in which supervision is delivered. This document is not intended to replace individual organisational policies that set out the specific supervision processes within agencies. It provides a statement of expectation about the principles of safeguarding supervision that can be applied across organisations. It is recognised that there is no single model for the delivery of effective supervision. However, fundamental principles are applicable to all organisations and to all services.

3. Definition and functions of safeguarding supervision

Supervision is an accountable process which supports, assures and develops the knowledge, skills and values of an individual, group or team. The purpose is to improve the quality of their work to achieve agreed objectives and outcomes. For those working in safeguarding, this should optimise the capacity of Adults who use services to be safe and to lead independent and fulfilling lives and be able to participate in safeguarding arrangements.

Safeguarding Supervision uses the supervisory relationship to promote positive outcomes for Adults. Supervision should take place within a safe, contained environment where the practitioner has the capacity to think and reflect. It facilitates the practitioner to be able to take responsibility for their own practice and response to the safeguarding needs of adults with care and support needs. This relates specifically to their cases but also generally in their professional development. As a result safeguarding supervision will:

- Enable the individual to reduce the negative impact of human factors on their performance through the recognition of personal triggers and the personal and organisational resources they have to support them in developing and sustaining resilience in the face of challenging and complex work.
- Facilitate the development of the knowledge and skills that are needed for good safeguarding practice
- Challenge inconsistencies in the interpretation of information and reasoning processes such as biases and assumptions
- Enhance the ability of practitioners to work effectively with colleagues ~~and~~ within their own organisation and in other organisations. Supervision should enable staff to be supported to change and develop their own behaviour and practice and to develop and foster effective relationship with others, both staff and Adults at risk.
- Contribute to organisational responsibility for competent accountable performance
- Achieve the goals and objectives of the organisation

Safeguarding supervision should be provided within a structured process. It requires a supervisor with a background or additional training in safeguarding, and who receives regular updates in safeguarding and supervision.

All staff have a responsibility to access safeguarding supervision if they are concerned about the welfare of an adult with care and support needs, and require support and advice about whether action is needed to safeguard the adult in a way that is proportionate and person centred.

Good quality supervision can help to:

- Keep a focus on the adult, outcomes and their involvement in the safeguarding process
- Avoid 'drift' in case management
- Provide a forum for challenging fixed views
- Review the evidence base for agreed actions and decisions
- Agree ways in which the adult themselves can be supported to contribute to being safeguarded
- Address the emotional impact of the work
- Assist in the 'debriefing' process following complex or distressing cases
- Develop specific practice areas

Voluntary Sector Organisations

It is recognised that staff and volunteers working in voluntary sector organisations, including faith, community and leisure groups etc., may not have recourse to a more specialist designated safeguarding lead within their organisation. Where additional support or guidance is needed therefore they and their line manager or chair of trustees, should seek support from the named person within their safeguarding policy and liaise with the Southampton Safeguarding Boards Team who will signpost them to an appropriately qualified specialist within the LSAB membership. Southampton Voluntary Services Chief Executive Officer is also a member of the LSAB and may also be contacted for general advice and guidance by voluntary sector groups around safeguarding practice. Where voluntary organisations work with or involve adults with care and support needs as a minimum they should routinely include discussion of any safeguarding issues or concerns within their normal supervision framework for all staff and volunteers and be clear about their route for onward reporting and escalation of any concerns.

4. Reflective Supervision

Reflective supervision is an important part of Safeguarding Supervision. It is the activity within the supervision session whereby the supervisor asks the supervisee to reflect on certain situations /cases to consider whether a different perspective can be provided and an alternative approach taken that may impact positively on progress or effect a different end result.

It is important that staff who are working with adults are provided with Reflective Supervision as part of their supervision programme. It is acknowledged that not all workload / casework discussions require a reflective approach as some discussions just need a management decision or just confirmation that the work is on track with some suggestions made. However, in certain circumstances, the discussions need to be more reflective and will always inform why certain decisions are taken thereby providing a context on why those decisions were made.

An example of this would be a discussion about an adult who has a safeguarding adults plan in place for 6 months. The supervisor may explore with the supervisee the work undertaken to date and what has been achieved. From a Making Safeguarding Personal (MSP) perspective, this would include thinking about ways to meaningfully evaluate the achievement of the outcomes of the plan. An explanation as to why particular objectives have not been met may lead the supervisor to explore the plan and re-assess the risks in order to establish if the plan should end or be taken down an alternative route. This reflection enables the worker to step 'outside' of their work and re-examine the work plan. As an outcome of that reflection an alternative plan or a different focus may be agreed.

Recording of reflective discussion should be included within both supervisee files, as would be the case for any management supervision, but also any relevant case files so that there it is clear why certain decisions / courses of action have been taken.

5. Models of Safeguarding Supervision

Planned 1:1 Safeguarding Supervision

This is planned supervision with a trained safeguarding supervisor from the safeguarding adults' specialists or elsewhere in the organisation. The supervisee presenting any cases for discussion will be responsible for implementing any agreed actions. The safeguarding supervisor (if not the formal line manager) should provide feedback on the outcomes of the discussion to the supervisee's line manager.

Responsive Supervision

This refers to requests made from any professional to the named safeguarding team or professional for advice and support on safeguarding issues when they have concerns about an adult. This aspect of supervision, day to day support and guidance, is fundamental to good safeguarding practice.

This advice should be sought as and when issues arise and should not be delayed by waiting for regular planned supervision. The supervisee presenting any cases for discussion will be responsible for implementing any agreed actions. The safeguarding supervisor (if not the formal line manager) should provide feedback on the outcomes of the discussion to the supervisee's line manager.

Peer Group Safeguarding Supervision

Peer Group supervision can be considered by any team that has common caseloads or across teams where staff report similar safeguarding challenges or issues. The purpose of safeguarding supervision groups is to support the team in working effectively to ensure the most appropriate care provision. This ensures that there is consistent and a cohesive approach to safeguarding. The purpose of group supervision is to discuss safeguarding cases constructively, to challenge practice, review case studies and to discuss learning points from internal reviews, Safeguarding Adults Review (SARs) and changes in policies and protocols.

6. Safeguarding Standards

For the purposes of these standards, the following definition of supervision has been agreed: “a two way, planned and accountable process that supports, assures and develops the knowledge of an individual, group or team...and ensures good practice”.

1. Each agency should have a written policy for the supervision of staff working with adults with care and support needs which reflects these standards.
2. Supervision should be provided by an appropriately experienced supervisor. Each agency has a responsibility to assure itself that supervisors are sufficiently competent, experienced, and qualified in working with others to assure the safety of Adults. All member of staff acting in a Supervisor role are also required to have undertaken Supervision training. He/she should be able to demonstrate that they maintain the up-to-date knowledge required to offer support to others involved in safeguarding adults.
3. All staff should have regular, planned, protected time and space for case supervision whether this is on a one to one or group basis. This should be uninterrupted time that is a priority for both the supervisor and supervisee – or supervision group. Dates and times should be planned in advance and should not be changed or cancelled without an alternative time being made promptly.
4. For one to one supervision there should be a written supervision agreement signed and dated by supervisee and supervisor, for group supervision this should be a group agreement. The agreement confers importance and status to supervision.
5. The supervision agreement will detail frequency and duration of supervision, practical arrangements, agendas, content and dates for review.
6. Case supervision should be person focussed and should result in clear agreement about who will now do what in relation to the adult to safeguard and promote their well-being, including supporting them to be able to engage in the safeguarding process.
7. A written record should be kept of each session in line with the specific agency’s own supervision policy.
8. Decisions relating to adults should be recorded (or cross referenced) on the supervisee’s supervision records and person’s case file or record within 24 hours of the decision being made.
9. Supervision records will be kept securely by the agency in line with agency policies and procedures.
10. Professional practice supervision should be provided at a minimum of monthly intervals for practitioners working directly with adults with care and support needs.
11. Supervision will take place face-to-face and not over the phone.

12. An open culture of learning and development should be promoted, where good practice is celebrated and mistakes are used to learn and develop.
13. The supervisor and supervisee share a joint responsibility for the supervisory relationship and for preparing for the session. For groups, this will involve shared responsibility of all participants, which should be based on mutual respect and trust and where all feel able to question and challenge assumptions and decisions
14. There should be a developed and monitored TNA, Training Needs Assessment encompassed within the supervisory relationship
15. Discussions in practice supervision should be confidential unless:
 - The Adult may be at risk of significant harm or of harming others
 - There is unsafe practice placing people at risk
 - There is illegal activity
 - Other significant concerns about the wellbeing of the supervisee
 - Where appropriate, the supervisee should be made aware that a concern, such as those listed above, may need to be raised.
16. Other issues, such as concerns about practice, should not be taken outside of supervision without advising the supervisor/supervisee first. Supervision records are the property of the agency, and the agency has access to Supervision records for audit or inspection purposes.
17. Each agency should have a process for handling complaints and disagreements with regards to supervision. The complaint or disagreement should be discussed, agreed and recorded with the supervisee. This will usually involve an agreement to involve the supervisor's line manager in a 3 way discussion to resolve any issue that the worker and supervisor cannot resolve themselves. Such discussions should take place with reference as needed to the professional resolution process, bullying and harassment policy, grievance process or other policies as necessary.

7. Useful Links

- [4LSAB Safeguarding Policies and Procedures](#)
- [Providing Effective Supervision - CWDC and Skills for Care 2007](#)
- [Care and Support Statutory Guidance](#)
- [Making Safeguarding Personal - what might good look like health and social care commissioners and providers?](#)