



# Reflective Safeguarding Supervision Standards

## Supporting safe practice, enabling critical awareness and taking care of the safeguarding children workforce in Oldham

Reflective supervision allows time to move from the often complex and challenging tasks related to safeguarding matters, to focussing on the staff member's reflection on their own approach and practice, thoughts and emotional challenges. Effective support and supervision can:

- Keep a focus on the child's safeguarding needs
- Acknowledge and help address the emotional impact of the work
- Provide support following particularly complex or distressing cases
- Provide a forum for challenging views and exploring other possibilities and perspectives
- Provide a forum for identifying what works and what needs to develop
- Avoid delays in taking or following up action

The following standards aim to support organisations whose staff regularly deal with safeguarding children dilemmas and cases. It is recognised that each setting will have its own supervision policies and culture; these standards can therefore be used to inform or strengthen existing organisational supervision arrangements and policies.



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| Each agency is responsible for ensuring arrangements are in place to supervise and support staff working with children and young | Agencies are encouraged to have agreed written guidance in place which reflects the standards given here. That guidance should set out how staff will be supported through reflective safeguarding supervision, and the methods and techniques to operate this (such as use of one-to-one sessions, group and peer sessions)  |
| Supervision should be focussed on the safeguarding outcomes for the child(ren)   | Giving focus to safeguarding outcomes within reflective safeguarding supervision can give clarity to action that needs to be done, and can help staff feel supported, increase confidence, and develop a sense of empowerment in their work. In turn this can positively influence their approach to decision making and their professional relationships with children, families and also other agencies.  |
| Reflective Safeguarding Supervision is relationship based  | Evidence shows relationships as a key source of resilience when dealing with emotionally challenging issues such as child protection. Holding the importance of a relationship-based approach in safeguarding supervision will influence how your agency provides safeguarding supervision, and the experience of staff accessing it.   |
| Staff can expect to confidently have access to safeguarding supervision to help them practice safely                             | Safeguarding children is an emotionally challenging aspect of what might already be a demanding role. Within this it is important to recognise the difference between line management requirements and reflective supervision. Line management supervision will often be task-orientated, whereas reflective supervision can offer emotional support, a chance to reflect and learn from experiences and give clarity to the approach that underpin the tasks needed.     |
| Staff should have regular, planned protected time and space for reflective supervision   | Agencies are encouraged to provide access to reflective supervision, which is protected and uninterrupted time, and planned in advance. Agencies should determine how this is done – for example as one-to-one and/or group supervision.  |
| Reflective supervision supports an open culture of learning; recognising good practice and using mistakes to learn and develop   | Learning what works well and in what contexts is important for both individual and collective practice. Taking the time to consider the factors of how and why something worked can help develop confidence in practice. Similarly understanding the factors which may have influenced why something didn't work so well, including mistakes, is important for practice development.  |
| Reflective safeguarding supervision supports professional challenge  | Many local and national serious case reviews have highlighted the lack of professional challenge relating to a decision another agency has taken. Whilst there are many influencing factors as to why challenge isn't made – there is opportunity in reflective safeguarding supervision to consider a range of perspectives and build confidence to raise any concerns to another agency using informal or formal processes (see OSCP Escalation and Resolution Policy). |
| The supervisor and supervisee share a joint responsibility for the supervisory relationship                                      | It is important that reflective supervision provides a trusting space. Within this each and all participants share the responsibility to enable mutual respect and trust, where all can feel confident to question and challenge assumptions or raise concerns.   |
| The supervisor ensures the support function is met, including awareness and recognition of vicarious trauma                      | Recognising how helping and wanting to help children affected by neglect and abuse impacts workers, is a key part of supervision. Enabling staff to cope with the stress should be provided through offering emotional and practical support. Recognising the impact of trauma on staff, whether due to a traumatic case or accumulative — is an important function of reflective safeguarding supervision.   |
| Discussions in practice supervision should be confidential unless risk identified  | Being able to speak in confidence is important for all staff members, however if any of the following arise, it should be acted on— <i>for example</i> (i) if a child/family member is at significant risk of harm, (ii) there is unsafe practice placing people at risk, or (iii) there is illegal activity.   |

