



## Blackpool Children's & Families Service Supervision Guidance September 2020

Blackpool Council



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## 1. Context

Social workers play a critical role in protecting children at a time when social care services are under considerable pressure. Professor Eileen Munro in her report 'A Child-Centred System' emphasised *“that to be able to practice well, social workers have to be employed in an organisation that supports them and their professional development”*.

In Blackpool we are committed to ensuring that our staff receive support and guidance to enable them to undertake their roles in what is often a personally demanding area of work. Our Supervision Model is underpinned by Blackpool Families Rock Principals, the Restorative Practice Social Discipline Window and Morrison's 4x4x4 Reflective Supervision Model. Supervision should be relationship based practice between the supervisor and supervisee. Balancing a culture of high support and challenge, undertaking regular and good quality supervision with all staff, we will ensure that we appropriately safeguard children, promote their welfare and achieve the best possible outcome for each child and their family.

*‘Supervision is the context in which the critical appraisal of assessment and planning for a child, which is central to promoting good practice and reducing error, can take place’.*  
(A Child-Centred System, Munro 2011)

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## 2. The Purpose of Supervision

Supervision should...

1. Improve the quality the quality of support and interventions, provided to children and families, thereby improving their outcomes;
2. Enable effective line management and organisational accountability;
3. Identify and address issues related to caseloads and work management;
4. Help to identify and achieve personal learning, linked to the DfE post qualifying standard; Knowledge and Skills Framework for Children and Family Practitioners / Practice Supervisors, wider learning and development, career development.

### 3. Blackpool's Reflective Supervision Model

The 4 purposes of supervision will be delivered in 3 ways:

- **Reflective supervision regarding children and families (*previously referred to as case management supervision*)**

This will explore the managerial and mediation functions of supervision and will take place every month. Social Workers within their Assisted and Supported Year in Employment (ASYE) will be receiving supervision weekly for the first 6 weeks and then fortnightly until the 6 months review and up to a year if deemed necessary. This supervision will be recorded within a supervision case notes on the child's electronic record.

- **Personal reflective supervision**

This form of supervision will explore the support and development functions of supervision, offering an opportunity for the practitioner to reflect on their personal and professional development. It is expected that this will take place bi-monthly and will last for 1-2hours. These sessions will be facilitated by the supervisee's line manager.

For Social Workers, reflection will also focus on the Knowledge and Skills Statements (KSS) for Child and Family Practitioners. Social Work Managers supervision will reflect on the Knowledge and Skills Statements for Child & Family Practice Supervisors.

- **Observed practice sessions**

Observations of practice should be undertaken by Team Managers, Senior Social Workers, Child Protection Chairs and IROs. For Social workers, two practice observations should every other month (totalling 8 per year), with at least 2 per year being undertaken by their direct supervising Team Manager. If a Social Worker is in their Assisted and Supported Year in Practice (ASYE) observations of practice will occur more frequently, to inform reflection discussions regarding their ASYE portfolio evidence, some may be undertaken by the Children & Families Service Practice Development Team.

Observations of Social Worker's practice ensures they are practicing in accordance with the Knowledge & Skills Statements for Child and Families Practitioners and their Social Work England registration.

#### 4. The Supervision Agreement

Morrison & Knapman define this as *'a means of making explicit the aims of the parties to work towards agreed goals in agreed ways'*.

The relationship between a supervisee and the supervisor is very important. An individualised Supervision Agreement is the foundation for developing this relationship and in respect of Blackpool Families Rock principles forms the basis of supervising managers 'working with' their staff. The provision of a safe place to reflect on practice issues is crucial to achieving positive outcomes for children and their families. The agreement should be developed jointly by the supervisee and the supervisor and should be based on reflection about the supervisee's previous supervision experience and their individual needs.

The Supervision Agreement should set out the arrangement for supervision record keeping, confidentiality, expectations, frequency and duration of sessions, circumstances under which supervision can be rearranged and expected timescales for this.

The Supervision Agreement should set out what needs to happen if there are disagreements about supervision records and if there were to be a breakdown in the supervisory relationship. A restorative approach should be attempted to restore relationships wherever possible.

Blackpool Council expects all staff to have supervision on a monthly basis. However, for certain staff, such as those in their probationary period; newly qualified social workers in their Assessed & Supported Year of Employment this will be more frequent.

The principal functions of the supervisory process should be set out within the Supervision Agreement:

1. Improve the quality the quality of support and interventions, provided to children and families, thereby improving their outcomes;
2. Enable effective line management and organisational accountability;
3. Identify and address issues related to caseloads and work management;
4. Help to identify and achieve personal learning, and for Social Workers linked to the DfE post qualifying standard; Knowledge and Skills Framework for Children and Family Practitioners / Practice Supervisors, wider learning and development, career development.

## 5. Reflective supervision regarding children and families

Reflective supervision seeks to ensure that practice is child centred and that the support we provide to children and their families is both effective and procedurally compliant. In order to effectively monitor progress, the supervising manager will review the children's records and will refer to the previous supervision session, to review the subsequent progress of the child's plan and previously agreed actions. Using the **Reflective Supervision Cycle**, developed by Morrison (2005) and further developed in the work of Wonnacott, supervision should focus on the following, (*italics reference how this should be recorded on the child's electronic records*):

### **Child Centred Practice - *What's life like for the child, what's working well, what are we worried about?***

- The supervisor will explore and seek evidence that the voice of the child, together with a good understanding of their lived experience, influences the support and intervention being provided;
- The child's voice and their lived experience should be clearly recorded;
- There is evidence that the child is seen regularly and there is evidence of the social worker engaging with the child or young person and observations of younger children have been undertaken and recorded.

### **Effectiveness of Practice – *Reflection and analysis***

- *There is evidence of reflection from the supervisor of the current working hypothesis.* This will include exploration of possible bias in the social workers and partnership's thinking;
- Progress of the child's plan will be reviewed - articulating the journey travelled by the child and family and what impact this has had on the child's daily life, safety and current and future outcomes;
- Support is being offered to the child and family at the appropriate level of need as outlined in 'Working Well with Families across Lancashire', with every attempt being made by the partnership to prevent the child's needs from escalating.

### **Procedural Compliance – *Is practice in line with expected practice standards, what needs to happen next***

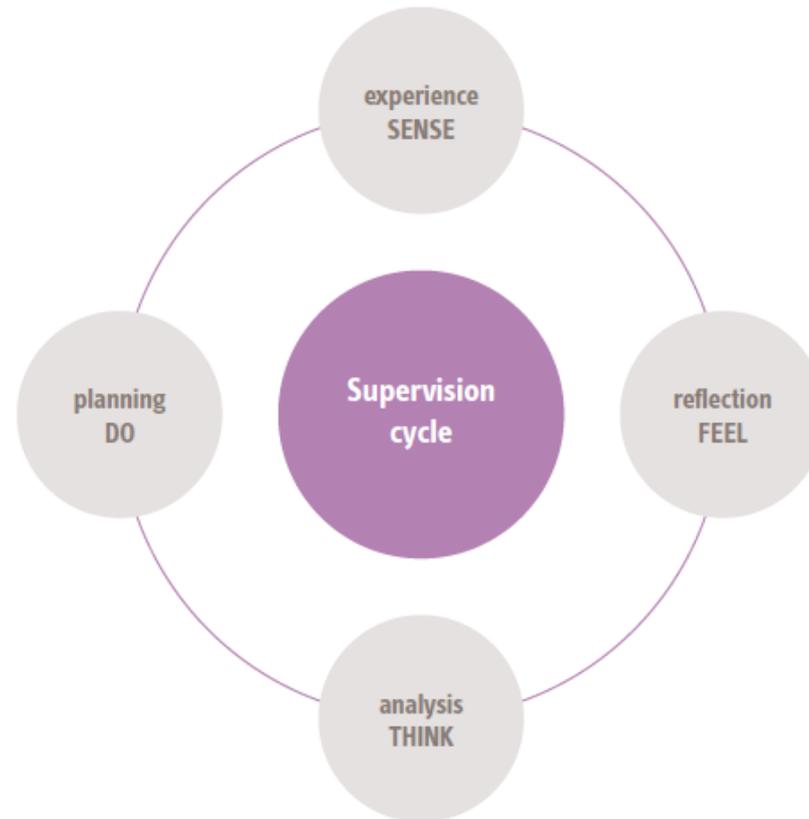
- Case recording – A Case Summary is evident, current and of a good quality;
- An analytical chronology is current and has informed the assessment and planning;
- The plan is SMART and is focused on improving the children's outcomes and daily lived experience;
- There is evidence of permanency planning for the child at the earliest opportunity;
- The intervention is compliant with statutory guidance around statutory visits, core groups etc. and that it is of a good quality;
- Any identified tasks relating to procedural compliance should have identified timescales for completion;

- The child's Plan has been updated at an appropriate review point and reflects previously agree actions.

## Questions which support the Reflective Supervision Cycle

### Planning – Do

Using the accumulated reflections on their experiences, emotional reactions & theoretical understanding & information gathered about the family, move onto thinking about what should happen next? Lead the supervisee to think about how they work with the family and child and agree actions to be included in the child's Plan.



### Experience – Sense

Asking about family's strengths & balance with what are we worried about, opportunity to probe the sensory experience the supervisee had in their work with the family.

### Reflection – Feel

Focus on the impact the work is having on the supervisee, how are they feeling, how do they feel about the child, their family, the child's daily lived experience

### Analysis - Think

Finding out supervisee's reasoning. Test out the knowledge base, research or theoretical approach being used by supervisee to frame questions that further develops the supervisee's thinking & evaluation of their evidence.

Test out hypotheses, if research evidence has been supported by observations of practice & be assured about the quality of critical thinking the supervisee is capable of.

Figure 1: the reflective supervision cycle (Morrison 2005)

## Stage One – Experience (Sense)

|  |   |  |
|--|---|--|
| What has been going well for this child since we last spoke?       | What successes are important to note?                         | What have you done that has had the greatest impact in making a positive difference for this family? |
| Tell me more about what has happened.                              | What have you observed on your home visits?                   | Where else have you seen the child / family?   |
| What has happened with other agencies?                             | Who has been most supportive of the plan?                     | What other things do I need to know?   |
| What are you most worried about?                                   |   |  |
| What did you smell?  | What did you see or hear?                                     |  |
| Which words best describe the environment this child is living in? | How did you feel when you were in the home or with the child? |  |

## Stage Two – Reflection (Feel)

|   |   |  |  |
|---|---|--|--|
| How are you feeling about this work?  | How do you feel about the child?                                      | How do you feel about the parent / carer?                          | How do you think the child feels about their situation?              |
| How are you feeling about the dynamics in the multi-agency network?   | Tell me more about this feeling? Have you had this experience before? | What has helped you manage strong feelings about work in the past? | Who else is picking up how the child feels?                          |
| What happens to you when you feel like you do?  | What impact are the organisational expectations having on you?        | Who is judging how well this is going?                             | What is inhibiting you?  |
| Are there any areas of similarity or difference in the social GRRRAACCEESSS that influence the way you think about or respond to this child and family? Or the way they respond to you? |   |  |  |
| Whose feelings are having the greatest impact on you? Do you know why that is?  | How do you feel as you approach the front door? Tell me more.         | What are you avoiding doing?                                       | Who is most affected by this situation and how do you know?          |
| What surprises you about how you are feeling?   | What would another professional say about how you are working?        | How do you know whether you are doing a great job?                 | How are you using your emotional intelligence in this piece of work? |

### Stage 3 – Analysis (Think)

|   |  |  |   |
|---|--|--|---|
| Why do you think the child (and family members) are behaving in this way?   | How worried are you?   | What strengths can you identify in the family system and in the child's experiences? | Which theories are you using in this work?  |
| Which research evidence has informed your thinking?                         | What other views are there about what is happening in this family?   | Who is best placed to help with this dilemma? Why?                                   | What community resources have you used?   |
| What are the organisation's expectations and timescales?                    | What have you learnt so far?   | Whose viewpoint is missing?  | What don't you know?  |
| What information do you have about how this family operates under pressure? | What helps this family function to their best abilities?   | Tell me what you expect to happen next, why do you think that?                       | What sense do you make of how you are feeling and what is happening to this child / family? |
| Which child are you most worried about? Why?                                | Who else is worried about this family? Why are they worried?   | If there is a difference of opinion, what is it about and how do you resolve it?     | Tell me how you have reached your conclusions?  |
| How do you explain the parent's behaviour?                                  | What might work with this family and why do you think that?  |  | Tell me why you've opted for the legal framework you're using?                              |
| What do you think will happen if we do nothing?                             | If you had a magical wand, what would you do to improve things for this family? How might each family member answer this question? |  |   |

### Stage 4 Planning (Do)

|   |  |  |   |
|---|--|--|---|
| Based on our discussions, what do you think should happen next? | What does the child / family need?   | What do you think the risks are?                                       | How will you manage them?               |
| What support do you need?                                       | How will you know what a successful outcome is?  | How will the child tell you if things are improving?                   | What are the priorities?                |
| What can you do to empower this child / family in this process? | Explain to me why you are thinking of recommending this intervention / service, what do you think can be achieved and how? | What is a realistic timetable for change?                              | What are the legal frameworks in place? |
| What variables are you aware of?                                | What could happen and what would you do?   | What crises can you anticipate and who needs to know what the plan is? | When do we need to review this plan?    |

## 1. Personal Reflective Supervision

All practitioners will receive personal reflective supervision on a bi-monthly basis, facilitated by their supervising manager. The particular issue for discussion can be identified either by mutual agreement between the supervisor and the supervisee, where a particular area for practice development has been identified, either via quality assurance activity or via formal case management supervision.

The session will be scheduled for 1-2 hours and the session will be recorded on the Personal Reflective Supervision Journal template. The record of the session will be signed by both parties, no later than 10 working days after the session. The social worker will receive a copy, to form part of their Personal Learning Journal and for Social Workers will evidence how their practice meets the expected Knowledge and Skills Statements (KSS).

The social worker will be required to bring their journal to each Personal Reflective Supervision session, where consideration can be given to the need to review learning and their professional development. The Learning Journal will inform the annual appraisal process (IPA). A further copy will be stored in the worker's personal file. Case notes in the child's records will be updated by the supervisor to indicate that a Reflective Supervision has taken place.

Personal Reflective Supervision will also reflect on:

### **Performance management:**

- Activities undertaken;
- Case Consultation and discussion (where applicable);
- Case file audit discussion (where applicable);
- Observed Practice feedback.

### **Professional development - skills, knowledge base and value base:**

- Induction requirements (as appropriate);
- Training requirements (and formal completion of Performance Development Plans and Reviews);
- Longer term development plans and setting of professional goals;
- For Registered Social Workers: Review of training progress against the Knowledge and Skills Statements (KSS) in accordance with their Social Work England Registration;
- For newly qualified Social Workers in the Assessed and Supported Year of Employment, on-going assessment and appraisal using the ASYE level of the Professional Capabilities Framework (PCF).

## **Welfare and support Issues**

- Factors affecting performance;
- Personal issues (as appropriate);
- Stress-related issues;
- Absence(s) from work;
- Health and Safety;
- Opportunity for you to give feedback on your experience of and expectation of supervision;
- Equal Opportunities – to discuss any issues of oppression that the supervisee wishes to raise, from personal experience to institutional and structural matters;
- Annual Leave;
- Flexi/Time of in Lieu.

## **2. Observed Practice**

In addition to formal supervision regarding children and families and personal reflective supervision sessions, the supervising manager will complete at least two pieces of observed practice with supervisees annually. These can be in the form of joint visits or observations of social workers chairing core groups or CIN meetings, etc. Additional practice observations can be undertaken by Child Protection Chair, IROs and Senior Social Workers to an expected total of 8 sessions of observed practice taking place each year.

The social worker will need to prepare for the session by completing the first 2 sections of the Observation of Practice document:

1. Brief background to the Observed Practice.
2. What is the purpose if the interview/meeting/experience being observed?

Following the session the Social Worker should complete the following sections

3. Brief description of the Observed Practice;
4. Reflections on the Observed Practice;
5. Comments on the feedback given by the observer and reflect on areas for future development;
6. Children and family's feedback is integral to this process and should be sought and recorded.

At the end of the session the supervisee should be given verbal feedback by the supervisor.

Following the session the Observer should complete a holistic assessment of the social workers capability demonstrated within the session. A Development Plan, identifying any learning needs and practice development, including necessary support will be completed. The record of the session will be signed by both parties, no later than 10 working days after the session.

### **3. Confidentiality**

The exchanges that take place within supervisions are largely about work related matters and therefore attract limited confidentiality. Information contained within the supervision record is the property of the Department and can be accessed by the supervisor's line manager at his / her discretion and Ofsted too (if they wish).

Occasionally workers will want to discuss personal, non-work related issues (which may impact on their work). When this occurs, a higher level of confidentiality can be negotiated and a separate record kept – providing the information does not give rise to childcare and child protection issues when the normal procedures would apply.

These records should be kept separately and secure and only disclosed with the supervisees permission subject to the above proviso.

### **4. Escalation of Concerns**

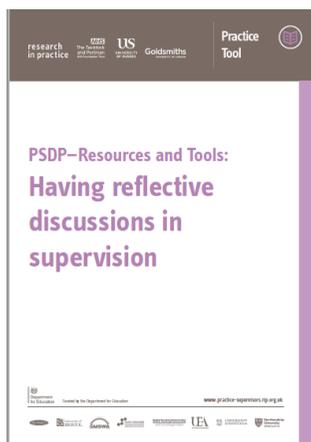
If the manager and supervisee cannot agree on any aspect of work performance or service delivery, either party may refer the issue to the relevant Service Manager for resolution. The disagreement and its resolution will be recorded on the Supervision Record.

In the case of managers the resolution process will be as follows:

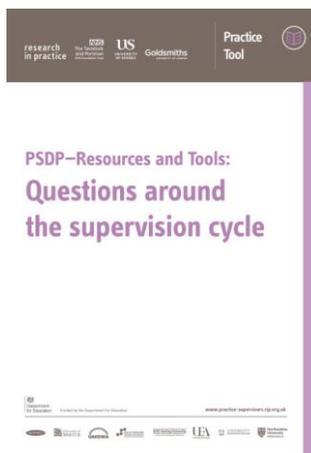
The Head of Service in the case of dispute between a Service Manager and Team Manager; the Assistant Director in the case of dispute between the Head of Service and a Service Manager. The disagreement and its resolution will be recorded on the Supervision Record.

If a supervisee is concerned about any aspect of the manager's supervision practice and they are not able to resolve the issue in discussion with the manager, they may speak with the relevant Senior Manager who will address the issue raised.

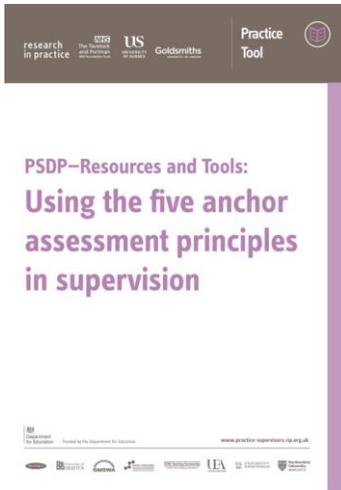
## Appendix 1: Research in Practice (RiP) Practice Supervisor Guidance & Toolkits



<https://practice-supervisors.rip.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/Questions-around-the-supervision-cycle.pdf>



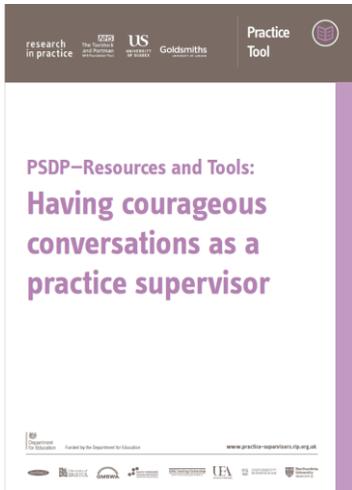
<https://practice-supervisors.rip.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/Questions-around-the-supervision-cycle.pdf>



<https://practice-supervisors.rip.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/Using-the-five-anchor-assessment-principles-in-supervision-v4.pdf>



<https://practice-supervisors.rip.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/Safe-uncertainty.pdf>



[https://practice-supervisors.rip.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/PT-Having-courageous-conversations-as-a-practice-supervisor\\_FINAL.pdf](https://practice-supervisors.rip.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/PT-Having-courageous-conversations-as-a-practice-supervisor_FINAL.pdf)

## Appendix 2: Supervision Agreement Template

### Supervision Agreement

**Between Supervisee (Name & Role)  
&  
Supervisor (Name & Role)**

**Date**

This agreement sets out the foundation of the supervisory relationship between the above supervisee and supervisor. The agreement should be informed by a reflective discussion about the supervisee's previous supervisory relationship experiences. The process and facilitation of supervision must be considered as a safe and supportive environment and process for both the supervisee and the supervisor. All information between supervisor and supervisee will be treated with respect and in a professional manner.

Supervision agreements should be regarded as "living" documents that may be changed according to the changing needs of the supervisee, reviewed every 3 months. A new Supervisory Agreement should be undertaken if a supervisor changes.

#### **1. Practical arrangements**

Supervision frequency

Duration of each supervision

Venue

#### **2. Content**

Process for agreeing the agenda of supervision

Supervisor and supervisee will identify agenda items for supervision, to include:

- Health & Well-being / Work life balance
- Case Discussion
- Performance (Caseloads, Report manager / mosaic dashboard for overall performance/ workload management)
- Praise & good practice / skills & resources
- Training & Development

### **3. Developing a restorative and reflective supervisory relationship**

- What does the supervisee bring to the supervisory relationship? *Consider previous work experience, supervisory relationship experience and preferred learning style*
- What are the supervisor's expectations of the supervisee?
- What does the supervisee expect from the supervisor?
- Are there any factors relevant to the development of the supervisory relationship?
- Agreed 'permissions' e.g. *It's ok for the supervisor not to know all the answers....for the supervisee to say he/she is stuck*
- How will the supervisor know if the supervisee needs more or different forms of support?
- How will we recognise if our supervisory relationship is not working?
- What methods could we use to restoratively resolve any difficulties in working together?

### **4. Recording of supervision**

- Formal supervision sessions will be recorded on the supervision record, sent to the supervisee and placed on the supervisee's file. Responsibility for completing the record lies with...
- Decisions taken in a formal supervision session relation to a child/young person/family will be recorded on their electronic record. Responsibility for this lies with...
- Ad hoc informal discussions, or other information obtained in between supervision sessions relating to staff development, compliments or performance issues will also be noted on a supervision record sheet and reviewed at the next formal supervision.

**5. Any other relevant issues for this agreement**

**6. Date the agreement is to be reviewed**

**Signed  
Supervisor  
Date**

**Supervisee  
Date**

### Appendix 3: Reflective Supervision regarding children and families - Template for Children's Records & Guidance document

#### Reflective Supervision regarding children and their family – *Headlines for Case Note Recording*

|  |
|--|
| <p><b>Actions identified within previous supervision</b></p> <p><b>What is life like for the child / children?</b></p> <p><b>What's going well?</b></p> <p><b>What are we worried about?</b></p> <p><b>Reflection &amp; Analysis</b></p> <p><b>What's changed for the child / children as the result of support offered?</b></p> <p><b>Is practice in line with the expected practice standards?</b></p> <p><b>What needs to happen?</b></p> |
|--|

## Reflective Supervision Regarding Children & Family – Guidance Document

### **Actions identified within previous supervision**

*Is this the first supervision regarding this child? If not, review the previous record, have previously agreed actions, in line with the child's Plan, been undertaken within expected timescales? Cross reference with the child's electronic record and review the child's Plan.*

### **What is life like for the child / children?**

*What does the child's voice, behaviour and presentation tell us? What do your observations tell you about the impact of concerns/worries & strengths on the child's daily lived experience*

### **What's going well?**

*What are the strengths in the family and wider network of support? What aspects of parent / child interactions, home conditions, is there evidence that the impact of support is achieving the desired outcomes, what does this mean for the child's lived experience?*

### **What are we worried about?**

*What are we worried about for this child? What if any are the barriers to the parent engaging in the child's plan? What are the child's unmet need(s) / what significant harm are they experiencing? What does this mean for the child's lived experience?*

### **Reflection & Analysis**

*Evidence reflection re: hypotheses, what is happening in the family / wider family? This should include exploration any social worker / partnership bias in thinking. Reflect on the social worker feelings, how they are reacting when working with family and what is informing their decision. Reflect if the support is being offered to the child and family at the appropriate level of need as outlined in 'Working Well with Families across Lancashire', with every attempt being made by the partnership to prevent the child's needs from escalating.*

### **What's changed for the child / children as the result of support offered?**

*Reflect on the progress of the child's Plan, the journey travelled by the child and family and what impact this has had on the child's daily life, safety and current and future outcomes.*

### **Is practice in line with the expected practice standards?**

*e.g. Has the assessment been updated, regular core groups undertaken, date child last seen, statutory visits been undertaken & recorded. If neglect concerns has a Graded Care 2 assessment informed the child's plan? If the expected practice standards have not been met, clear actions should be recorded with timescales for completion.*

### **What needs to happen?**

*State agreed next steps with clear timescales. Remember - the child's Plan needs to be updated to reflect new actions at the next planning / review meeting.*

## Appendix 4: Personal Reflective Supervision

## Personal Reflective Supervision Template

### 1. Performance Management discussions to include:

- Activities undertaken;
- Case Consultation and discussion (where applicable);
- Case file audit discussion (where applicable);
- Observed Practice reflection.

### 2. Professional Development discussions of your skills, knowledge base and value base to include:

- Induction requirements (as appropriate);
- Training requirements (and formal completion of Performance Development Action Plan and Reviews);
- Longer term development plans and setting of professional goals;
- For Registered Social Workers: Review of training progress against the Knowledge and Skills Statements (KSS) in accordance with their Social Work England Registration;
- For NQSW's in the Assessed and Supported Year of Employment (ASYE), on-going assessment and appraisal using the ASYE level of the Professional Capabilities Framework (PCF).

### 3. Welfare/Support Issues

- Factors affecting performance;
- Personal issues (as appropriate);
- Stress-related issues;
- Absence(s) from work;
- Health and Safety;
- Opportunity for you to give feedback on your experience of and expectation of supervision;
- Equal Opportunities – to discuss any issues of oppression that the supervisee wishes to raise, from personal experience to institutional and structural matters;
- Annual Leave;
- Flexi/Time of in Lieu.

## Appendix 5: Observed Practice Template

## Observed Practice Template

*The first 2 sections should be completed by the supervisee **before** the observation.*

**Brief background to the observed practice**

**Purpose of the interview/meeting/experience being observed**

**Practitioner's reflections of the observed practice**

**Observer's reflection on the quality**

- *If Social Worker needs to be benchmarked against each of the Child & Families Practitioner 10 KSS*

**Children and family's feedback**

**Agreed Practice Development Action Plan**