



PSDP–Resources for Managers of Practice Supervisors: Evaluating your learning needs: a tool for managers of practice supervisors

Introduction

Managers of practice supervisors (i.e. middle leaders) often inhabit different levels of responsibility within an organisation.

As a middle leader you are likely to be very busy. As you take on more responsibility within your organisation, it can become difficult to make the necessary time to create reflective space in which to consider your own development / learning needs.

The first section of this tool provides you with an opportunity to do just that by inviting you to review your knowledge, skills and confidence in relation to the different aspects of your role. Given that you are likely to be the line manager of practice supervisors, i.e. actively offering supervision as well as having strategic or operational responsibility for certain elements of service delivery, this tool gives you an opportunity to rate yourself against standards drawn from the:

- > [Post-qualifying standard: knowledge and skills statement for child and family practice supervisors.](#)
- > [Knowledge and skills statement for practice leaders.](#)

The final section of the tool asks you to consider your learning from this task, focusing on both your strengths and areas for development.

No matter how senior your position within your organisation, your own line manager plays a key role in supporting and encouraging you to maximise your potential. The second section of this tool prompts you to think about how they might achieve this most effectively.

The process of getting feedback on your performance, taking time to evaluate your skills as a supervisor and talking this through with your line manager is really valuable, irrespective of your role. However, supervision discussions are often dominated by operational issues and do not tend to include a reflective space in which to cover such things.

For this reason, we have developed two additional tools that link with the content presented here. 'Giving feedback to managers of practice supervisors' can be used by your line manager to review your work against the same criteria shown below, and to instigate discussion about how line management supervision could become more reflective.

A third tool, 'Reviewing your supervisory relationship with a practice supervisor' can be used to seek feedback from a practice supervisor you line manage about their experience of having supervision discussions with you.

All three tools can be used to gain comprehensive feedback which combines your own self-evaluation with your manager's evaluation, as well as that of a practice supervisor you line manage.

Before you do this, it's important to note that your hierarchical position affords you more authority and power than the practice supervisors you line manage, which may inhibit their capacity to be fully honest in their feedback. Similarly, it's important to consider how issues of diversity and difference might also affect this. The same goes for your relationship with your own line manager.

You might want to consider these factors, your response to them, and how you might attempt to discuss them.

Section one: evaluating your knowledge, skills and confidence

Please take a few minutes to rate yourself on a scale of 1-5 for each of the following questions (informed by the [Post-qualifying standard: knowledge and skills statement for child and family practice supervisors](#) and by the [Knowledge and skills statement for practice leaders](#)).

1. Lead and govern excellent practice (practice leader KSS 1)					
	1 I'm still developing my knowledge, skills and confidence	2	3 I can do this but need to strengthen my knowledge, skills and confidence	4	5 I'm confident, skilled and knowledgeable in this area
Be a highly visible and highly valued figure, occupying a position of significant influence at a local level, and be known for exceptional knowledge and skill in the profession of child and family social work.					
Hold accountability for child and family social work practice and its impact on the lives of children and families locally.					
Secure an up to date, working knowledge of relevant legislation and case law and Lead by example with integrity, creativity, resilience, and clarity of purpose.					

2. Creating a context for excellent practice (Practice Leader KSS 2)

	1 I'm still developing my knowledge, skills and confidence	2	3 I can do this but need to strengthen my knowledge, skills and confidence	4	5 I'm confident, skilled and knowledgeable in this area
Champion the organisations vision and drive strategic leadership throughout the organisation, so that it is applied to everyday practice.					
Focus on best outcomes for children and families and ensure that the vision, purpose and plan for the organisation is welcomed and owned by all.					
Create a culture in which excellent practice is expected and celebrated; critical incidents are handled with grace and discipline; and public commitment to protecting children and supporting families is frequent and authentic.					

3. Effective use of power and authority - (from practice supervisor in child and family social work KSS 4)

	1 I'm still developing my knowledge, skills and confidence	2	3 I can do this but need to strengthen my knowledge, skills and confidence	4	5 I'm confident, skilled and knowledgeable in this area
Supporting practitioners to use authority in a way which is open and respectful and keeps families and children included in the decision-making process.					
Helping practitioners to recognise and intervene in patterns of relationships within professional networks, family systems and wider contexts.					
Supporting practitioners to actively address diversity, including the effects of racism, discrimination and poverty and other inequalities in their work.					

4. Developing excellent practitioners (practice leader KSS 4)

	1 I'm still developing my knowledge, skills and confidence	2	3 I can do this but need to strengthen my knowledge, skills and confidence	4	5 I'm confident, skilled and knowledgeable in this area
Critically appraise theory, the best evidence and rationale for different practice approaches.					
Secure the resources and support needed to implement the practice framework and shape, in partnership with others, the current and future quality of practice through effective training and sustained professional development for all staff and throughout a practice career.					
Provide sufficient organisational, professional and personal support to ensure the wellbeing of practitioners so that they can provide excellent social work services to children and families.					

5. Support effective decision-making (Practice Leader KSS 5)

	1 I'm still developing my knowledge, skills and confidence	2	3 I can do this but need to strengthen my knowledge, skills and confidence	4	5 I'm confident, skilled and knowledgeable in this area
Build a culture where managed risk is accepted and understood as being inherent in every decision that is made and make sound and complex decisions in high pressure, fast-paced conditions, striking a balance between speed and depth of thought.					
Encourage practitioners to make decisions and take subsequent actions in this context making sure they know they have the backing of the organisation to act reasonably and in a child's best interests.					
Actively demonstrate trust in the workforce and develop a culture that promotes learning, reflection and the acceptance of accountability.					

6. Quality assurance and improvement (practice leader KSS 6)

	1 I'm still developing my knowledge, skills and confidence	2	3 I can do this but need to strengthen my knowledge, skills and confidence	4	5 I'm confident, skilled and knowledgeable in this area
Set and uphold high quality practice standards, instilling a strong sense of accountability in staff for the impact of their work on the lives of children and families.					
Establish rigorous and fair processes for managing the performance of staff, including accurate measures of practice through direct observation.					
Recognise and commend hard work and excellent practice, which builds social workers' confidence in their practice. Meet complacency with a commitment to continued improvement and confidently hold poor practice to account.					

7. Emotionally intelligent practice supervision – (from practice supervisor in child and family social work KSS 7)

	1 I'm still developing my knowledge, skills and confidence	2	3 I can do this but need to strengthen my knowledge, skills and confidence	4	5 I'm confident, skilled and knowledgeable in this area
Supporting practitioners to reflect on their own emotional responses and those of families and professionals and to use this understanding to inform their practice.					
Supporting groups of practitioners to think reflectively and reflexively.					
Supporting practitioner's personal growth and professional development, providing appropriate challenge or support where necessary e.g. where personal values and beliefs impact on practice and decision-making.					

8. Purposeful and effective social work 5 – (from practice supervisor in child and family social work KSS 6)

	1 I'm still developing my knowledge, skills and confidence	2	3 I can do this but need to strengthen my knowledge, skills and confidence	4	5 I'm confident, skilled and knowledgeable in this area
Helping practitioners to maintain a balance between risk, need, strengths and rights, and authoritative intervention and collaborative partnership working with children and families.					
Supporting practitioners to demonstrate curiosity and reflection, as well as decision-making.					
Ensuring that practitioners involve all relevant family members, including fathers and support networks, in shaping plans that empower them to make changes.					

Section two: reflecting on your response and support for future development

Having completed your responses to the statements in section one, please spend a few moments looking back over what you have written. Then read the questions below, which are designed to support you in thinking more holistically about any potential areas of strength or for development. They also invite you to consider what kind of ongoing support might be helpful:

- > Which areas of the Post-qualifying standard: knowledge and skills statement for child and family practice supervisors and the Knowledge and skills statement for practice leaders do you feel most confident in?
- > What areas are you less confident in / would like to develop further?
- > Were there any elements of your role that were missing and need to be recognised?
- > Imagine yourself in a year from now, receiving excellent support from your line manager and excelling in your role. What has your manager done to make you feel so satisfied?
- > Having completed this tool, is there a goal you'd like to set yourself to achieve in the next three months?
- > Feedback is more beneficial when sought from those with a diverse range of backgrounds and experiences. Given this, who else in your professional network could help you to review your progress? Your supervisees? Other organisational colleagues? Professionals from other agencies? How do you assess the impact supervision has on the people to whom you provide services?
- > What support do you need to continue to develop in your role?

Other ways you can use this tool:

If you have supportive peers who are also managers of practice supervisors, you may wish to give each other feedback based on the questions in section one. It can be powerful and affirming to hear from others, who are often less critical than we are of ourselves.



We want to hear more about your experiences of using PSDP resources and tools. Connect via Twitter using #PSDP to share your ideas and hear how other practice supervisors use the resources.

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