

## 1. Introduction

The relationship between core agencies in safeguarding vulnerable children is crucial in identifying the most effective support for children, young people and families and which promotes best practice in delivering interventions that bring about lasting change. Key to this is understanding each other's roles, perspectives and having time to reflect on the emotional impact of this work, both on individuals as well as the professional network. When done well this creates a community of practice around the child and their family and helps the professional network to identify their own and each other's strengths, reduces duplication of effort and ensures children are the beneficiaries of a more cohesive effort.

Effective collaboration through formal joint supervision between agencies provides a safe forum for exploring complex or challenging situations or addressing circumstances where there is drift, to promote an understanding of what may be happening for a child, ensuring we take a trauma informed view, increasing awareness of different perspectives, and promote system wide learning.

The graphic below illustrates the agencies/partners who might be involved in a joint supervision and the stages that take place as part of the joint supervision. (This framework is influenced by the work of Wonnacott & Wallbank 2016 and Keller & Protinsky, 1986).



## 2. The Purpose of Multi-Agency Joint Supervisions

The purpose of joint supervision across partner agencies is to provide a safe space to slow your thinking down and have the opportunity to reflect upon situations, which could

feel complex or stuck, in addition to supporting professionals working as a group to understand how they are working together to help children and families to flourish. Joint agency supervision offers a reflective space for joint analysis of assessment information, an opportunity to explore what professionals know about the lived experience of the child and should help strengthen the relationship between professionals who are working together with families to secure the best outcomes for children.

Joint supervision is not about sharing new information or making case decisions outside of meetings and processes involving the family, we should always be working transparently with children and families.

However, this should not prevent professionals meeting for group supervision, to reflect on the direction, progress, or lack of progress on the child's plan and the emotional impact that the case is having on the professional network. NB: the focus is on how professionals are feeling about the case rather than planning or progress monitoring, which can be achieved through existing statutory meetings. The Joint Supervision Facilitator will support the group to think about what they might do differently to better work alongside the family in supporting them to achieve their goals for the child where this is required. Joint Supervision meetings can be used within all levels of the system including Early Help, Child in Need and Child Protection.

Where there are serious concerns which place a child, young person or their families at immediate risk of harm a Section 47 Strategy meeting should be convened to discuss the concerns and make a plan to keep the child safe.

Where discussion is required regarding disagreement between professionals on the course of action and intervention for a child, the Pan Bedfordshire Safeguarding Children Resolving Professional Disagreements and Escalation Protocol should be utilised.  
[https://bedfordscb.proceduresonline.com/p\\_resolution\\_disagree.html](https://bedfordscb.proceduresonline.com/p_resolution_disagree.html)

### **3. Principles:**

The principles of joint supervision will be to support learning across agencies in the best interests of families to ensure that children, young people and their families receive the right levels of support and interventions at the right time, in accordance with the Central Bedfordshire Children's Safeguarding Partnerships Multi-agency guidance for assessment and thresholds of needs, risk and intervention for children and young people.

As a formal reflective discussion, joint supervision will be recorded on the child's file and any thinking points, theories or questions that come out of it will be shared with the child/parents/carers or at the next Core Group, CiN meeting or Family Support Meeting as each of these demonstrate the community of practice around the child.

Joint supervision does not replace statutory/formal processes such as Child In Need, Core Group and Child Protection Conference and Family Support meetings which fully involve the family, including wider family, in decision-making and planning processes.

Thank you to Norfolk Safeguarding Children Partnership and West Cheshire's Children's Trust Partnership.

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If through the undertaking of joint supervision, there are wider learning points identified by multiagency professionals, for example, trends within the locality or specific agency learning needs, these should be fed back by the agency representative for learning and development, and to the Pan Bedfordshire Quality Assurance Sub-Group.

#### **4. Multi-Agency Joint Supervision Group Procedure:**

Cases which are appropriate for joint supervision may be identified by:

- Practitioner/s working directly with the child, young person or family.
- Safeguarding supervisors who provide single agency supervision
- Team managers/assistant team managers who provide management oversight of cases.

The case should be discussed by the accountable team manager/service manager or safeguarding supervisor and agreement reached that the case should be subject to joint supervision.

Two supervisors should be agreed from two agencies to facilitate the supervision session with one being the lead coordinator (LC) so there is a coordinated approach to arrange the supervision session in order to ensure the appropriate professionals are invited (sessions to include no more than 8-10 supervisees).

The supervision session should be arranged within 15 working days from the date of the accountable leads' decision to provide a joint supervision session.

A record of the supervision should be completed at the supervision session, circulated to all attendees and placed on the child's file by the keyworker.

At the end of the supervision session, the supervisors should agree with the group whether further sessions are required and if so, future dates should be confirmed with the group.

#### **5. Confidentiality:**

The parameters around confidentiality of the information shared will replicate those of the respective agencies' governance around confidentiality and the sharing of information across agencies for the purposes of safeguarding children and young people in accordance with Working Together 2023.

A written record of the supervision session should be produced and placed on the child's file, in line with each agency's policies, professional standards and practice.

- **Appendix A – Multi-Agency Joint Supervision Process Flowchart**
- **Appendix B - Multi-Agency Joint Supervision Record Template**
- **Joint Supervision Feedback Form**