

## Juliet Butterworth

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**From:** Juliet Butterworth  
**Sent:** Wednesday, 26 October 2022 3:30 PM  
**To:** [REDACTED]  
**Subject:** CM: Formal Access Application - Notice of Decision - Our ref: GIPA22/[REDACTED]  
**Attachments:** Information within scope - Full Release.PDF

**Follow Up Flag:** Follow up  
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**Record Number:** [REDACTED]



26 October 2022

Our ref: GIPA22/[REDACTED]

### NOTICE OF DECISION

Good afternoon

I refer to your formal access application under the *Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009* (GIPA Act) that you lodged with the Department of Communities and Justice (the Department), where you requested access to:

- “*Supervision Policy for Child Practitioner Practitioners from 18 August 2018 to 26 July 2019*”  
[REDACTED]”

#### Decision

I am authorised by the principal officer of the Department to decide your access application under section 9(3) of the GIPA Act.

Under section 53 of the GIPA Act, the Department must undertake reasonable searches as may be necessary to find any of the government information applied for that was held by the Department when the application was received, using the most efficient means reasonably available to the Department. I can confirm that a thorough search has been conducted of the Department’s records management systems for any information that falls within the scope of your request.

I have considered your request in view of the objectives of the GIPA Act where you have a legally enforceable right to obtain information, unless there is an overriding public interest against disclosure of the subject information. Further, I have also considered the requirements of section 74 of the GIPA Act, which provides that an agency may delete information from a record if the deleted information does not fall within the scope of the information applied for.

In deciding your application, I was required to conduct a “public interest test” where the public interest considerations favouring disclosure of government information were weighed against those factors that do not favour disclosure. On this occasion, I have not identified any public interest factors against the disclosure of the information that you have requested.

Therefore, in accordance with section 58(1)(a) of the GIPA Act, I have decided to provide you with a complete copy of the information that falls within the scope of your request.

### **Review rights**

If you disagree with any of the decisions in this notice that are reviewable, you may seek a review under Part 5 of the GIPA Act. You have three review options:

- An internal review lodged with the Department's Open Government, Information and Privacy Unit, within 20 working days of the date of this Notice;
- An external review by the NSW Information Commissioner, within 40 working days of the date of this Notice; or
- An external review by the NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal, within 40 working days of the date of this Notice.

I have assessed that the information released in response to your formal access application is information that would be of interest to other members of the public and is suitable to be recorded in the disclosure log. The Department will record certain details about your application (excluding your personal information) in its 'disclosure log' (under sections 25 and 26 of the GIPA Act), which is available on our website. Please advise if you object to the information released being included in the Disclosure Log.

Please do not hesitate to contact me in the first instance to discuss any concerns you have in relation to this decision, noting that you have been provided with a complete copy of the information requested.

Further information about your review rights can be located on the Information and Privacy Commission's website at <https://www.ipc.nsw.gov.au/fact-sheet-your-review-rights-under-gipa-act>.

Please contact me at [juliet.butterworth@fac.nsw.gov.au](mailto:juliet.butterworth@fac.nsw.gov.au), if you have any queries regarding this matter.

Kind regards,

**Juliet Butterworth** (*she/her*)

OGIP Advisor

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I acknowledge the traditional custodians of the land and pay respects to Elders past and present. I also acknowledge all the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff working with NSW Government at this time.

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# Supervision policy for child protection practitioners

# Document approval

The Supervision policy for child protection practitioners has been endorsed and approved by:



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Deputy Secretary, Southern and  
Western Cluster  
Approved: 16/08/2018



Simone Walker  
Deputy Secretary, Northern Cluster  
Approved: 16/08/2018

## Document version control

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Psychologists

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# 1. Purpose of policy

## 1.1 Purpose

*'Central to organisational containment is the provision of supervision that gives workers the space to talk openly, think, be still, to process their feelings, and to enable them to know their experiences and make sense of what is reverberating within them'* (Ferguson, 2011)

Contemporary child protection literature strongly supports the need for, and benefits of professional supervision. This document sets out FACS expectations for, and responsibility in delivering professional supervision to its child protection practitioners. The term 'child protection practitioners' refers to practitioners who work directly with children and families; practice leaders who support them; and support workers who contribute to decisions made.

The main goal of professional supervision in child protection work is to improve practice, strengthen the decision making process, and sustain an effective, hopeful and skilled workforce. This policy sets out how FACS will achieve this.

This policy document outlines:

- how practitioners receive informal, individual and group supervision
- the minimum requirements for supervision
- the difference between individual and group supervision, and when to use each
- the expectations of each person involved in group supervision
- guidelines and templates for documenting supervision sessions

This policy is applicable to the following FACS roles:

- Caseworkers
- Managers Casework
- Manager Client Services
- Casework support workers
- Casework Specialists

- Psychologists<sup>1</sup>
- Administrative support staff
- Permanency Support Coordinators
- Directors Child and Family
- Executive District Directors
- The Senior Practitioner

The relevant programs this policy also applies to includes:

- FACS Performance Development Program.

## 1.2 Background and policy links

This policy should be read in conjunction with:

- NSW Practice Framework
- FACS policy for managing unsatisfactory performance
- FACS Performance Development Program
- NSW Public Sector Capability Framework
- [Minnesota Practice Model](#) Lohrbach (2011)
- Consultation and Risk Sharing Framework
- Care and Protection Practice Standards

This Policy supersedes any other document, agreement or arrangement about supervision in child protection.

This Policy was developed in consultation with:

- FACS districts
- Statewide Services
- Corporate Human Resources

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<sup>1</sup> Psychologist's supervision requirements differ to the requirements set out for employees in this policy. They are however, involved in the role of consultant in group supervision.

## 2. Definitions

The table below is a list of terms, keywords and/or abbreviations used throughout this document.

Term	Definition
Critical reflection	The process of examining the experiences and feelings that arise from work with a family; and challenging any underlying values, beliefs, assumptions, biases, power or cultural positions that influence the decisions made.
Group supervision	Group supervision is a formal and structured process that brings a team together to discuss a particular decision that needs to be made for a child and their family. While the discussion is centred on a particular family, the model encourages practitioners to explore practice themes that can be applied to other families; develop their practice skills; build their knowledge; and attend to the emotional aspects of child protection work. Group supervision sessions follow the Minnesota model and attend to all four aspects of professional supervision.
Individual supervision	Individual supervision is a formal process where employees meet with their supervisors on a one to one basis to discuss their performance and set and review individual learning plans. Individual supervision conversations are related to issues arising from a practitioner's work with children and their families. As is the case for group supervision, individual supervision attends to the four aspects of professional supervision and aims to improve practice and the decisions made for children.
Performance Development Program (PDP)	The FACS PDP supports, develops and improves employee performance aligned with FACS goals. The program is centred on meaningful, two-way conversations between employees and their managers or team leaders that inform the development and review of a performance development plan. The performance development plan documents the employee's agreed performance objectives, capability requirements and development plan.

Child protection practitioners	<p>FACS employees who provide and support direct child protection service delivery, namely:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Caseworker</li> <li>Casework Support Officer</li> <li>Manager Casework</li> <li>Casework Specialist</li> <li>Manager Client Services</li> <li>Directors Community Services / Directors Operations</li> <li>Managers Practice Support</li> <li>Directors Practice Support</li> </ul>
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### 3. Legislation

FACS provides workplace services in compliance with the relevant legislation, policies and procedures. FACS supervisors should make sure employees are aware of the legislation, policies and procedures relevant to their work.

This may include:

- FACS Code of Ethical Conduct
- FACS Conflict of Interest Policy
- Respectful Workplace Policy
- FACS privacy policy
- Workforce Safety and Wellbeing policies and procedures
- FACS Performance Development Framework
- The NSW Public Sector Performance Management Program
- Part 8 of the Government Sector Employment Rules 2014

### 4. Policy statement

The purpose of supervision is to make the best possible decisions about children and their families and provide the best possible practice to improve their safety by:

- aligning practice with families with the systems, approaches, capabilities and principles of the NSW Practice Framework

- promoting the development and use of evidence informed practice that leads to better outcomes for children
- developing and strengthening professional judgement and decision-making
- continually building practitioners' skills and knowledge
- exploring multiple perspectives, expertise, practice opportunities, values, ethics and bias to provide the best service to families
- fostering positive work cultures where practitioners feel supported, confident in their skills, and open to critique
- identifying areas for further development of practitioners
- providing practitioners an opportunity to reflect on their experience of the work and integrate knowledge into practice
- promoting hopeful and resilient practitioners and reducing the emotional impact of the work
- providing organisational support for delivery of accountable, professional practice.
- exploring opportunities to understand and implement new initiatives, mandates, and practice changes and align these with a practitioners values and ethical base.

Supervision is the foundation of quality practice with children, young people and families.<sup>2</sup> It is central to child-centred decision making and supports practitioners to explore and contain the emotional aspects of the work.<sup>3</sup>

With this in mind, group supervision is one of the key foundations of the NSW Practice Framework (the Framework). It helps practitioners; practice leaders and the agency fulfill their mandate in embedding principles, approaches and capabilities into practice with children and families.

The Framework outlines the systems, principles, practice approaches and capabilities required to be an effective practitioner.

Supervision, including group and individual sessions, is based on a structured and purposeful model. When led well it can transform practice.

<sup>2</sup> Morrison, T. (2005) *Staff Supervision in Social Care*. Brighton: Pavilion

<sup>3</sup> Munro, E 2010, '*Learning to reduce risk in child protection*', *British Journal of Social Work*, vol.40, no.4, 1135-1151.

Supervision in FACS child protection services is provided in the following ways:

- group supervision
- individual supervision
- Performance Development Plans
- team meetings
- case review
- day-to-day supervisory conversations.

## 5. Evidence and approach

FACS is building a supervision culture where critique, advice and support are provided in both formal and informal ways. Supervision should support practitioners through the complex and challenging work of child protection. It should help practitioners be clear about their role and purpose with families, grow confidence in their skills and knowledge, and be aware of where they can access more information, resources and learning to inform their work.<sup>4</sup> To support this, all types of supervision should cover the four interdependent and equally important functions of supervision<sup>5</sup>. These are:

### **Administration**

This function helps to structure the allocation of tasks to support role clarity, prioritise and assign tasks, manage workloads and measure the quality of practice. This function ensures accountability of practice and compliance with FACS mandates, legislation and practice guidance.

### **Support**

This function supports practitioners with the demands of the role. It provides an opportunity to explore feelings arising from the work and develop strategies to attend to these.

### **Mediation**

This function allows practitioners to explore and mediate any tensions between agency priorities, reforms and mandates with their ethics and values.

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<sup>4</sup> Munro, E 2008. *Improving reasoning in supervision*, Social Work Now

<sup>5</sup> Morrison, T. (2005) *Staff Supervision in Social Care*. Brighton: Pavilion

This function ensures practitioners gain an understanding of new directives and practice approaches.

## Development

This function supports practitioners to grow their practice skills. By being open to giving and receiving critique; exploring theory and research; reflecting on personal values and potential bias; and practicing new practice approaches; practitioners develop their practice expertise.

### 5.1 Group supervision

[Group supervision](#) is the key formal process through which supervision is delivered to child protection practitioners in NSW. Group supervision takes place for each casework team.

Contemporary evidence confirms the importance of group supervision in child protection work.<sup>6</sup> It benefits work with children and families because it:

- shares risk in decision making, so it is not just sitting with one individual
- provides practitioners with multiple views and perspectives to support decision making
- promotes ethical, transparent and dignity driven practice
- keeps managers close to practice
- supports workers collectively to manage uncertainty
- supports practitioners to identify feelings arising from the work and draw on each other for structured emotional support
- develops important group work skills
- is a forum for learning and professional development

There is a strong and emerging evidence base about the value of group supervision in child protection. Well delivered, it supports strength-based, family-focused child protection practice.<sup>7</sup>

Group supervision needs to be undertaken in an environment where practitioners have trust and confidence in the team, the model and how it

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<sup>6</sup> Lohrbach, S, 2008, *Group supervision in child protection practice*, Social Work Now.

<sup>7</sup> Turnell, A & Edwards, S 1999, *Signs of Safety: A solution and safety oriented approach to child protection casework*, New York: Norton.

supports their practice. The sessions need to capture the diversity of skills, experience, knowledge and culture of everyone in the room. These different perspectives make a collective difference for children and families<sup>8</sup>.

Critical reflection is integral to child protection practice and central to supervision.<sup>9</sup> Group Supervision is an effective model of critically reflective professional practice.<sup>10</sup> The group supervision model facilitates a culture of critique, where practitioners are supported by their team to become more aware of the power they hold, and how it can be used to stand in solidarity with families, instead of causing further oppression or harm.<sup>11</sup>

Group supervision in NSW will use an adaptation of the Minnesota model developed by Sue Lohrbach. This model has been adapted to suit the NSW context and align with the NSW Practice Framework. The model is a structured framework that encourages practitioners to explore decision making from multiple perspectives while systematically working through ten domains. The model encourages analytical thinking by providing the space to slow down and explore a child's experience. Sue Lohrbach describes the ability to 'slow down' as integral to good child protection practice, noting that we need to 'slow down to speed up.'<sup>12</sup> The Minnesota model is designed to safeguard practice by attending to the predictable errors in child protection; supporting practitioners to build knowledge and practice skills and attending to the four functions of supervision – administration, mediation, professional development and emotional support.

Group supervision promotes the four functions of supervision in the following ways.

**Administration** - The team is supported to:

- look at what tasks need to be done, and how workloads or resources could be adjusted to ensure tasks are completed
- be clear about the roles and responsibilities of everyone involved, especially who is responsible for which tasks

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<sup>8</sup> Lohrbach, S, 2008, *Group supervision in child protection practice*, Social Work Now.

<sup>9</sup> Munro, E 2008. *'Improving reasoning in supervision'*, Social Work Now

<sup>10</sup> Hawkins, P & Shohet, R 2000, *Supervision in the helping professions: An individual, group and organisational approach*, Milton Keynes, England, University Press.

<sup>11</sup> Reynolds (2014) *Centering ethics in therapeutic supervision: Fostering cultures of critique and structuring safety*. The International Journal of Narrative Therapy and Community Work. No. 1, 1-13.

<sup>12</sup> Lohrbach, S, 2015 NSW Practice Conference

- make sure records meet agency requirements (timeframes, processes, language principles, and practice standards)
- use a systems lens to think about how practitioners are working with children and families in accordance with policy and legislation
- explore the best use of resources to best respond to families and meet agency priorities.

**Support** - The team is supported to:

- give and receive support through the use of mutual aid<sup>13</sup>
- talk about the emotions associated with work with a family
- debrief in an honest and respectful way
- promote emotional sustainability by creating a community of support
- undertake emotional shifts through the sharing of perspectives and the witnessing of transformations in group members
- relieve individual stress through collective responsibility for families
- help team members find opportunities for positive change and hope.<sup>14</sup>

**Development** – The team is supported to:

- bring together multiple perspectives and different experiences, encouraging quality practice as well as the development of skills
- safeguard practice by exploring predictable errors and bias in child protection
- break through biases and assumptions about the families practitioners work with, and what the practitioner brings to the role
- build skills and knowledge about theory and research that informs casework
- build practice confidence
- bring learning from discussing a specific family, to broader application across other families
- practice new approaches in the group, before trying these out on families.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> DeWane, C. Considerations in Group Supervision, *New Social Worker*. Fall 2013, Vol. 20 Issue 4, p14-15. 2p

<sup>14</sup> Reynolds, V. (2010). A Supervision of Solidarity. *Canadian Journal of Counselling*, 44(3), 246-257.  
Bell, H, Kulkarni, S, & Dalton, L 2003, Organizational prevention of vicarious trauma. *Families in Society: The Journal of Contemporary Social Services*, vol.84, no.4, 463-470.

**Mediation** – The team is supported to:

- mediate and resolve conflict in a team
- plan as a group how resourcing or blockages will be addressed
- mediate the balance of power, care and authority in statutory child protection work
- mediate, explore and create solutions about tensions between the team's own ethics and values, and agency priorities, reforms or mandates.

Positive outcomes of group supervision for workers reported in the literature include:

- improved social and emotional wellbeing
- improved self-efficacy and sense of empowerment
- organisational commitment and intention to stay<sup>16</sup>
- improved knowledge and skill development

## 5.2 Building cultural competency through group supervision

Group supervision plays a critical role in building FACS cultural competence. Literature suggests that Group Supervision can improve cultural practice.<sup>17</sup> Group supervision requires team members to enact FACS practice principles, the first of which honours the centrality of culture.

The framework used in group supervision has been adapted to better suit the NSW context, including adaptations that bring culture to the forefront. The model prompts practitioners to explore the impact of past policies and how these may be a complicating factor in current work with Aboriginal families. Practitioners are also encouraged to explore their own culture and how this

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<sup>15</sup> Lohrbach, S, 2008, *Group supervision in child protection practice*, Social Work Now.

<sup>16</sup> Egan, R 2012, Australian Social Work Supervision Practice in 2007, Australian Social Work, vol.65, no.2, 171-184; DeWane, C. *Considerations in Group Supervision*, New Social Worker. Fall2013, Vol. 20 Issue 4, p14-15. 2p; Field, J 2008, Rethinking supervision and shaping future practice. Social Work Now , vol40, August 11–18; Lohrbach, S, 2008, *Group supervision in child protection practice*, Social Work Now; Morrison, T. (2007) Emotional intelligence, emotion and social work: Context, characteristics, complications and contribution. British Journal of Social Work 37, 2, 245-263

<sup>17</sup> Hair, H J & O'Donoghue, K 2009, 'Culturally relevant, socially just social work supervision: Becoming visible through a social constructionist lens', .Journal of Ethnic & Cultural Diversity in Social Work, vol.18, no, 1-2, 70-88.

informs their work with people from cultures different to their own, and are encouraged to look at a child's network through a cultural lens, rather than a traditional genogram approach that limits thinking about connection to blood lines. The adaptation of the model also encourages practitioners to look for acts of resistance. This is particularly relevant to Aboriginal families who show enormous resistance. When not well understood acts of resistance can be viewed as reluctance or lack of compliance and engagement, but when understood and explored through group supervision, practitioners will be supported to understand resistance as the building blocks for enduring safety.

The model is designed in a way that appropriate consultation is central to its functioning. This provides a system in which cultural consultation can occur, with the benefit of growing the knowledge and skill across the group. Aboriginal employees, or other Aboriginal community members, may be asked to join a group session for the specific purpose of providing a consultation. The systematic review of family's previously discussed allows Aboriginal consultants to receive feedback about how their advice has been implemented.

Aboriginal team members should not be required or expected to provide consultation for all Aboriginal families brought to group supervision for discussion. It is critical that Aboriginal employees are given the space to benefit from the four functions of supervision alongside their colleagues.

Group supervision will be the primary mode of supervision for all practitioners, including Aboriginal practitioners. It is however acknowledged that Aboriginal practitioners may require additional cultural support or supervision to that of their non Aboriginal colleagues. Literature suggests that any culturally specific support or supervision should be determined by Aboriginal people.<sup>14</sup> To this end, this policy recommends that the exploration and implementation of additional support or supervision for Aboriginal practitioners is undertaken by Aboriginal employees.

The approach of group supervision may be adapted for rural JIRT teams.

### 5.3 Requirements, objectives and roles – casework teams

Led by the Manager Casework, all members of a casework team will attend group supervision for three hours each week. Any reduction to this

commitment will impact the effectiveness of the model. All members of casework teams including caseworkers, casework support workers and administrative support staff must attend.

Group Supervision is the process to guide key decisions about a child. It is the facilitators' responsibility to ensure that key decisions are brought to group supervision to collectively guide decision making. Case complexity, including significant decisions such as taking a child from or returning a child to their parent, and requests from caseworkers are the key criteria for prioritising families for group supervision. Attachment C outlines rules for bringing families to group supervision.

Not every family will be discussed in group supervision. While other supervision methods are explored below, group supervision has the potential to benefit families who are not discussed in the group. By participating in discussions about casework with other families, and taking part in critical reflection and practice opportunities, practitioners will learn new skills, approaches and strategies for use in their work with other families. Group supervision also aims to create a culture shift, so practitioners are supported to hold case management with confidence and skill.

Group supervision is a key opportunity to introduce new learning to casework teams including knowledge, resources and skill based learning. The Office of the Senior Practitioner will provide a range of learning packages for use in group supervision, designed to build practice skills and knowledge that will be transferrable to all families.

## 5.4 Requirements and objectives – leadership teams

**Business unit leadership teams:** Led by the manager client services, members of a units leadership team will attend group supervision for three hours once per month. This team is comprised of managers casework, casework specialists and any other specialist positions that are deemed by the unit to form part of their leadership team.

**District leadership teams:** Led by district leaders (directors operations, directors community services), members of the district leadership team will attend group supervision for three hours once per month. This team is comprised of managers client services, managers / directors practice support, and any other members deemed by the district to form part of their district leadership team.

## 5.5 Roles and responsibilities during group supervision

There are seven key roles for group supervision. Some roles will be present in every group supervision session and others will visit depending on the needs of the group, children and families being discussed.

- 1. Presenting caseworker** – The presenting caseworker presents a family to group supervision with a consultation question for the team to answer. The presenting caseworker prepares the consultation question (with the support of the facilitator or consultant) and shares this and other relevant background information about the family with team members prior to the group supervision session.
- 2. Facilitator** – The consultation is led by the facilitator who is the manager casework. The facilitator uses the Minnesota model to lead the consultation, organising relevant information as they go to ensure all aspects are discussed. The manager casework also ensures a system is in place to oversee the family cases to be discussed for consultation or review each week as well as ensuring that all caseworkers in the team have equal opportunity to be the presenting caseworker.
- 3. Consultant** - A casework specialist or psychologist is a consultant for group supervision. Their role is to help the group explore different perspectives and support the group learning process. This may be through bringing relevant practice research and practice tools to support discussions and decision making. They also provide support to the caseworker preparing for group supervision and partner with the facilitator to ensure group supervision evolves to the needs of the group, children and families.

A consultant will not be available for all teams every week. CSC and district practice leadership teams will need to consider how best to allocate this role to ensure that all teams benefit from the consultant role equitably.

- 4. Casework Support** – This role may be a regular or visiting consultant in one or many group supervision teams. They offer insight and assistance with casework support discussions and activities. A caseworker support officer may be referred work from group supervision.
- 5. Administration officer** – This is a key role within group supervision and is a regular participant. The administration officer is responsible for recording key decision making and administration tasks that are agreed within group supervision - using a group supervision consultation template. This allows the group to focus on discussion and decision making. The administration officer is often also a good person to give an independent perspective to the discussion.

- 6. The casework team** - The casework team shares responsibility for casework and decision making for the children and families discussed at group supervision. The casework team offer shared wisdom, knowledge and experience through the consultation to encourage conversations of critical reflection and critique.
- 7. Visiting consultants / participants** - depending on the needs for the family or group, supervision may have various visiting consultants who do not attend every session, but who may attend specific sessions.

This may include the manager client services, Aboriginal community members, Culturally and Linguistically Diverse community members, Seeing More Children and Permanency Support roles or other internal roles such as employees from the Serious Case Review or Clinical Issue teams. External practitioners working with the family may also be invited to group supervision to support the work that is needed to keep shared children safe.

Any visiting consultant should be prepared for what to expect from the session, made aware of and agree to the collective commitment of the group, and advised of any confidentiality issues. They may also need a follow up discussion or debrief afterwards from the consultant or facilitator. If the consultant is Aboriginal or from a culturally diverse background, any cultural protocols should be explored with them and put in place.

## 5.6 Supporting group supervision through training

All employees carrying out a facilitator or consultant role in group supervision must complete mandatory role-specific training provided by the Office of the Senior Practitioner, and actively participate in any structured post training support to enhance their skills and competencies in group supervision.

Caseworkers are introduced to supervision (and group supervision in particular), as part of their initial entry level training.

## 5.7 Maintaining quality group supervision

The skill of the facilitator and consultant is crucial to quality group supervision. All facilitators and consultants must demonstrate their ability to fulfill their role and meet the needs of employees, children and families through skillful facilitation and consultation of supervision using the group supervision model. To this end, group supervision training will include an assessment. This assessment will occur as part of the:

- Introductory three day leadership training course - this course is delivered to all district leaders from manager casework/casework specialist to director level.
- Follow up leadership course - this course is delivered to all district leaders from manager casework/casework specialist to director level 6-12 months after the initial implementation of group supervision.
- Strategic leadership course – this course is for employees that will lead CSC and/or district based leadership group supervision sessions. This is primarily targeted at managers client services, directors operations/community services, managers practice support and directors practice support.

The assessment process will require a practical demonstration of skill. Any employee unable to demonstrate the required competency, will not be certified as having passed group supervision, and will not be able to facilitate or assume a consultant role in group supervision.

District leaders will be required to address any performance issues and make decisions if a leader is determined to not be competent in facilitating group supervision. They will also need to ensure that group supervision continues to be delivered. The Office of the Senior Practitioner will work alongside districts to support individual employee's skill development.

## 6. Individual supervision

In addition to group supervision, all FACS employees will benefit from individual or one to one supervision. Individual supervision will occur a minimum of nine times per year. This includes bi-monthly formal one on one meetings between a practitioner and their supervisor, plus three individual discussions required as part of FACS Personal Development Program.

Individual and group supervision may be used to support each other - for instance individual supervision may identify a family or a practice issue that would benefit from being brought to group supervision, and similarly individual supervision may support work planning resulting from decisions made in group supervision.

Districts have discretion to require their staff to participate in additional individual sessions should this be deemed necessary for their on-going support and development.

Districts will be responsible for reporting on compliance with the minimum individual supervision requirements as set out above.

## 6.1 Performance Development Program

All employees also benefit from participation in the FACS [Performance Development Program \(PDP\)](#) process. Providing feedback and guidance to employees throughout the year is an integral part of all manager and team leader roles. PDP integrates performance planning, review, development, and recognition, and centres on ongoing meaningful two way conversations between employees and their managers or team leaders.

Group supervision and individual supervision are key activities that help to inform an employee's PDP, alongside their day to day work.

All FACS employees are expected to have a Performance Development Plan that documents the employee's agreed performance goals, capability requirements and development plan.

PDP includes the expectation that managers and team leaders provide regular performance feedback to employees throughout the year.

## 7. Day-to-day supervisory conversations

Practice leaders will continue to have day to day conversations with employees through coaching, personal discussions, feedback, mentoring, on the job activities, task monitoring, and reflection activities such as Pre Assessment Consultation (PACs), Assessment Consultations (ACs) and Structured Decision Making (SDM). While not as formalised as group and individual supervision sessions, these activities should always include conversations that are supervisory in nature.

While key decisions about casework with a family should always be made in group supervision, day-to-day supervisory conversations can be used to make less formal casework decisions. This supervision policy recognises the often unplanned nature of child protection work and provides for day-to-day supervisory conversations to be used for key decisions about children when it

is not practical for such a decision to wait for a scheduled group supervision session.

When the decision to take a child from their parents is made outside of group supervision, the child and family should be discussed at the next available group supervision session so that the decision can be reviewed and future case direction agreed to by all team members.

## 8. Case reviews

Mandates for case reviews are to be established at a district level. Case reviews do not replace the function of supervision. They should not be used to make key decisions about a child, unless there are specific circumstances why. Case reviews require accurate record keeping of conversations and decisions about children.

Case review meetings can be used to:

- carry out work load planning
- plan day-to-day casework that does not result in key decisions being made about children and families
- support new caseworkers who may need more guidance around their work
- decide which families should be discussed in group supervision, what consult question will be put to the group, and who will be invited.

## 9. Data management, privacy and confidentiality

The practice of supervision in FACS needs to model the sharing of information in a purposeful and meaningful way that is managed in line with FACS policies and procedures.

Child protection practitioners, particularly participants in group supervision, will be expected to share emotive and sometimes personal information in supervision because of the insights it may provide about other families, for their own development and the learning of others. Trust is developed over

time in supervision as a supported environment where confidentiality is respected.

The *Group supervision recording* template (Attachment A) captures essential information and records the agreed outcomes for the family/child as discussed during group supervision. This template is attached to the child's records on Child Story.

Facilitators use the *Group Supervision record for managers* template (Attachment B) to record who attended, practice themes discussed, the learning brought to group supervision, including any concerns about individuals and how these were raised.

Records of group supervision are the property of the agency, not the individual and there are some legal and professional requirements that override a supervisees' right to confidentiality, for example, breaching the code of conduct, placing a colleague or client at imminent risk etc. There may also be occasions where the supervisor will need to discuss the content of a supervision meeting with others (i.e. their own line supervisor).

See section 12 about who can provide support or advice if an employee has a concern that their confidentiality has been breached

The [Performance Development Program](#) has specific templates for recording one to one conversations, supervision outcomes and individual performance development plans in the PDP system that is overseen by Human Resources (HR).

## 10. Performance management

[Managing unsatisfactory performance](#) sits outside of supervision, both group and individual supervision as well as the PDP process. Performance management matters are dealt with by local management, with advice and support from Human Resources about consistency with:

- The NSW Public Sector Performance Management Framework
- Part 8 of the Government Sector Employment Rules 2014.

Performance issues must be addressed as soon as they arise through daily interaction in the workplace and reinforced during scheduled supervision sessions in the first instance.

Participation in group supervision is compulsory and failure to comply or actively participate in supervision, for example an employee fails to attend or deliver group supervision as in line with the requirements set out in this policy, may result in both informal and/or formal performance management.

## 11. Monitoring, evaluation and review

Monitoring, evaluation and review mechanisms are built in to the various supervisory methods.

### 11.1 Group supervision

This occurs in group supervision via the *Group Supervision recording* template. Monitoring of agreed actions ensures compliance with the administrative functions of supervision.

FACS Casework Practice site contains a leadership section that provides practical information to facilitators to monitor the progress of the group. Critical reflection about the teams practice skills and knowledge during group supervision sessions is another important way that success and progress is monitored and evaluated.

The *Group Supervision recording* template records outcomes for children (progress and agreed tasks) and is attached to the child's record on Child Story.

Supervisors will maintain separate documentation that outlines the regularity of supervision; who attended and supervisory issues discussed during group supervision sessions. This is recorded in the *Group supervision record for managers* template and kept locally by the group facilitator.

Practice leaders will be responsible for Quality Improvement measures around group supervision. This will include maintaining reports about:

- the frequency of group supervision in the unit
- attendance at group supervision
- the number of skill based sessions occurring in a calendar year and the specific skills being built.

This information will be collated centrally and included in District Quarterly Business Review meetings with relevant Deputy Secretaries.

## 11.2 Individual supervision

Districts will be required to implement their own systems to monitor the occurrence and quality of individual supervision sessions.

## 11.3 Performance Development Plans

PDP compliance, monitoring and individual outcomes are recorded through performance development plans, and on the online PDP system. Quarterly Business Report (QBR) highlights compliance / attendance to Divisional Executive Directors

## 11.4 Policy review

This Policy will be reviewed every three years and/or when any significant new information, legislative or organisational change warrants amendments to this document. Reviews will be undertaken in consultation with stakeholders to ensure the procedures are relevant and effective.

# 12. Support and advice

Practitioners can get advice and support about this policy from:

- HR – Organisational Development / PDP
- Local HR Advisor
- The Office of the Senior Practitioner : Practice Quality and Clinical Support team (for advice and support relating to group supervision)

If you are reviewing a printed version of this document, please refer to the FACS Intranet to confirm that you are reviewing the most recent version of the policy.

## **GROUP SUPERVISION RECORDING TEMPLATE**

**Child/young person's name:**

\* The group Supervision event in ChildStory is currently not reflective of the current Group Supervision domains. Due to this, please attach this template to a 'Group Supervision' Event in ChildStory.

\* Caseworker to complete the grey areas and send to all attendees for them to read prior to the group supervision session.

### **Work with the family and holistic information**

Information that is important for people to know about the family.



## Shared consultation and group supervision

**1. What does (the child) need from our group today?**

**Date:**

**Facilitator:**

**Consultant:**

**Attendees:**

**2. Who cares about (child)?**

Past connections, existing connections and potential connections.

**3. Relevant context:**

#### **4 Complicating factors**

#### **Views of child/young person:**

What has (child) told us about..... What have they said to you/others.....

#### **5. Worry statements**

Who is worried? What are they worried about? And what is the impact of that worry?

#### **6. We are curious about...**

#### **7. Strengths**

#### **8. Protective Factors**

**Group Discussions:**

### 9. Practice opportunities

#### With children and families

<b>What will be done</b>	<b>Who will do it? Who could help?</b>	<b>By when</b>

#### To grow practice (capabilities and practice approaches)

<b>What will be done</b>	<b>Who will do it? Who could help?</b>	<b>By when</b>


**10. Other Steps**

<b>What will be done</b>	<b>Who will do it? Who could help?</b>	<b>By when</b>

**Financial/expenditure/submissions:**

\*Be specific about the amount approved and for what purpose.

\*\*Financial approval must be in line with the delegation schedule

**Next Group Supervision / Review date:**

## Group Supervision - Family Review/Update

**Date:**

**Facilitator:**

**Consultant:**

**Attendees:**

**What was the purpose of the last consultation / review?**

**What has been achieved / actions completed since the last consultation / review?**

**Are there any outstanding actions from the last consultation / review? If yes, what is outstanding?**

**Did we receive new information or have circumstances changed since the last consultation / review?**

**What does this mean for the decisions that have been made / need to be made? (include rationale)**

**Summary and analysis and narrative of work with the family since the last Group Supervision session:**

**Group discussion:**

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**Additional practice opportunities**

**With children and families**

<b>What will be done</b>	<b>Who will do it? Who could help?</b>	<b>By when</b>

**To grow practice (capabilities and practice approaches)**

<b>What will be done</b>	<b>Who will do it? Who could help?</b>	<b>By when</b>

**Additional Other Steps**

What will be done	Who will do it? Who could help?	By when

### Attachment B - Group Supervision record for managers

#### Group Supervision Record for managers

<b>Facilitator:</b> <b>Consultant :</b>		<b>Date:</b> <b>Duration:</b>	
<b>Participants</b>		<b>Location:</b>	
<b>Number of families presented:</b> <b>Presenting worker:</b> <b>Presenting worker:</b> <b>Presenting work:</b>			
<b>Group Supervision Content:</b> a. Type of case b. Practice theme discussed c. Operational issues,			

<p>including client related work</p> <p>d. Learning and development</p> <p>e. Other</p>		
<p><b>Practice Discussion:</b></p> <p>a. Identification of any individual professional development needs and how these issues were raised.</p> <p>b. Examples of good practice to use as a learning opportunity for others.</p> <p>c. Relevance if any to a particular employee PDP and implementation of a learning and development plan.</p> <p>d. Other issues.</p>		
<p><b>Action Plan</b></p>	<p><b>Supervisor</b></p>	<p><b>Supervisee(s) –</b></p>

<b>Next Meeting:</b>	Date:	Location:		
<b>Agreed and signed:</b>	Supervisor	Date:	Supervisee:	Date:

## Attachment C - Group Supervision Rules for facilitators

### *What comes to group – decision making process to support the prioritisation of families discussed at group supervision.*

- **Fairness**

Group supervision provides support to all participants, not only to the practitioner presenting through shared learning and development. Facilitators should ensure that each individual team member has equal opportunity to present.

- **How many families are discussed?**

At least **two** families are to be consulted on each week for caseworker group supervision and at least **one** family for Managers Casework group supervision on a monthly basis.

- **Prioritising families**

Decision making criteria:

- ✓ Aboriginal children who are at imminent risk of entering care/have entered care and placement decisions are required.
- ✓ Families where entry into care, restoration or other permanency decisions are required.
- ✓ Families where practitioners are not clear on future direction.
- ✓ Any Aboriginal child who has entered care and an Aboriginal consult has not yet occurred (an Aboriginal practitioner will be required to attend this session).
- ✓ Any child entering residential care or who is being accommodated in a motel.
- ✓ Any child who is the subject of a Reportable Conduct report.
- ✓ A group of siblings who are in out of home care and placed separately (ideally, if different siblings have different caseworkers, all workers – including NGO employees – will participate in the session. If this is unable to occur the presenting caseworker will explore options for all siblings to have consistent permanency goals and improved time with each other and will liaise with other caseworkers outside of group supervision to support a consistent approach for the family.

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