

This document contains a breakdown of each part of the government’s [knowledge and skills statement for child and family practice supervisors](#) with links to different types of learning resources on Community Care Inform that can help you develop and evidence your knowledge and skills in that area. There are close links between the different parts of the statement so different resources are likely to help you with more than one area but we have tried to highlight the most relevant content for each section.

1. Promote and govern excellent practice

What does the statement say?	Resources to help you
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Establish and maintain a highly valued position of influence within the organisation, and be recognised for extensive knowledge and skill in the profession of child and family social work.</i> • <i>Help shape and influence an environment which enables excellent practice by setting high standards and motivating others to do the same.</i> • <i>Demonstrate optimistic behaviour, and build positive relationships with children and families and other professionals.</i> • <i>Lead by example, showing integrity, creativity, resilience and clarity of purpose.</i> • <i>Be visible and accessible to all staff, children and families.</i> • <i>Be accountable for ensuring the highest professional standards and professional conduct.</i> • <i>Design and implement measures to assure the quality of practice and the effective throughput of work.</i> • <i>Interrogate decisions, ensuring they are underpinned by theory and the best evidence and that they will contribute to the goals of the family and their social work plan, whilst ensuring that the safety of children remains the highest priority.</i> • <i>Closely monitor the wellbeing of children in public care, ensuring that they grow up in homes in which they are happy and thriving, holding high ambitions for their futures.</i> 	<p>Leadership knowledge and practice hub Includes guidance on how to develop and draw on your own leadership style and skills, plus case studies by social work managers of how they motivated others and promoted high quality practice.</p> <p>Tips from the Firstline leadership programme cover areas including resilience, decision-making, impact and influence, and inspiring others</p> <p>Case study: from manager to leader Here a manager shares what she learned from working with demotivated team and turning it around: the journey to improve performance, create an ‘atmosphere of growth’ and pride in excellent practice.</p> <p>Developing emotional resilience Explores how to develop resilience in both yourself and practitioners. This guide takes an approach of ‘realistic optimism’ and provides suggestions for building a personal emotional resilience toolkit..</p> <p>Evidence-based practice Considers how to use research to base decisions on current best evidence, with the person’s best interests in mind.</p> <p>Analysis and decision-making Suggests approaches to gathering and analysing evidence for decision-making.</p>

2. Developing excellent practitioners

What does the statement say?

- *Recognise, respect and value the expertise of practitioners and provide a practice framework, underpinned by theory and the best evidence, within which they can work effectively. Explain and champion the framework to practitioners, other professionals, children and families and set an expectation that this framework will be applied to practice.*
- *Facilitate use of the best evidence to devise effective interventions, which are most likely to support family welfare and reduce risk to children.*
- *Secure excellent practice through an analytical understanding of different patterns of family functioning, matched with service responses which are most likely to effect change for families, as well as support children in public care and young people leaving care.*
- *Recognise the strengths and development needs of practitioners, and use practice observation, reflection and feedback mechanisms, including the views of children and families, to develop practice. Develop a culture of learning and improvement, where staff are sufficiently stretched and mentored to meet their aspirations. Gauge different learning styles and recognise when the role of the Practice Supervisor is to teach and when it would be more effective to draw on practitioners' own knowledge. Invest available resource into staff and service development, drawing on the expertise of children and families.*

Resources to help you

The [supervision knowledge and practice hub](#) includes a range of guides offering different ways to meet practitioners' needs and help individuals develop:

- [Shake up your supervision](#) suggests ways to support social workers with specific practice dilemmas
- [Promoting critical reflection](#) offers guidance on questions that prompt critical thinking, learning styles and 'learning cycles'

[Tips for giving feedback to team members or supervisees](#)

Supports you to feel more comfortable giving feedback about strengths and development needs and make feedback a routine part of your role.

Information and guidance on using different practice frameworks can be found in these resources:

- [Applying trauma-informed practice in direct work](#)
- [Applying Signs of Safety in high-risk cases: an example from practice](#)
- [Quick guide to Signs of Safety](#)
- [Quick guide to solution-focused practice](#)
- [Strengths-based practice hub](#)
- [Systemic practice](#)
- [Relationship-based practice scenario videos](#)
- [Restorative practice: podcast](#)
- Motivational interviewing: [guide](#) and [podcast episodes](#)

[Evidence-based practice](#)

Discusses the debates around evidence-based practice to help social workers feel more confident using research evidence to inform their practice and find appropriate interventions and responses.

[Tools and models to try in supervision](#)

Offers tips to support staff with different learning styles or to suit their needs in particular situations.

[Managing support workers](#)

Includes ideas for staff development and involving service users in practitioner and service development, which are applicable across the workforce.

3. Shaping and influencing the practice system

What does the statement say?

- *Provide a safe, calm and well-ordered environment for all staff, ensuring that processes are fit for purpose and efficient. Create an ethos within which staff are motivated and supported to be ambitious on behalf of children and families.*
- *Use resources, including those that lie within families and communities, to the best effect. Facilitate constant reflective thinking about the welfare of families and the safety of children. Build and develop influential and respectful partnerships between practitioners and partner agencies. Pay attention to different structures, pressures, priorities and levers for influencing and shaping the thinking of others.*
- *Share practice knowledge and expertise and influence the wider organisation and national system to function to the best effect.*
- *Offer constructive advice and creative, strengths-based solutions to difficulties*

Resources to help you

[Case study – from manager to leader](#)

[Case study – working more effectively with partner agencies](#)

[Case study – managing upwards](#)

[Case study – managing older and more experienced team members](#)

These examples from managers in a range of roles and locations give insights into how others have motivated staff, created a team culture and ethos, managed different structures with partners and influenced the thinking of others.

[Videos and guides in the supervision hub](#) help supervisors facilitate reflective thinking. You could also encourage practitioners to use the exercises and examples in [Critical reflection: how to develop it in your practice](#) [Introduction to social work leadership](#)

Based on research by Firstline, this guide explores qualities leaders use to influence others and prompts you to think about how you would respond in different situations.

[Strengths-based working knowledge and practice hub](#)

Provides information on strengths-based approaches such as motivational interviewing, systemic practice, Signs of Safety and solution-focused practice, with podcasts and videos demonstrating what these techniques and approaches might look like in practice.

4. Effective use of power and authority

What does the statement say?

- *Apply a proportionate and ethical approach to the exercise of authority, which develops and maintains relationships with families and professionals and ensures the protection of children. Maximise opportunities for children and families to make informed choices.*
- *Secure an up to date, working knowledge of relevant legislation and case law.*
- *Exercise statutory powers where social work assessment shows that families require help and support and children are at risk of significant harm, ensuring that actions are proportionate to risk.*
- *Support practitioners to always communicate clearly, honestly and respectfully the purpose and content of the social work plan.*
- *Recognise the patterns of relationships between professionals, identifying where these are likely to compromise the welfare of families and the safety of children, taking immediate and corrective action. Invite challenge and debate and be accessible to children, families and professionals. Ensure the professional network identifies the logic by which children and families are functioning and use this as a basis for effective engagement.*
- *Take into account diversity, the experience of discrimination and the impact of poverty.*

Resources to help you

[Developing social work care plans](#)

This guide and [group learning activity on the same topic](#) suggest approaches to planning (applicable to all areas of children's social work) that are collaborative with families.

[Relationship-based conversations: practice scenario videos](#)

These example conversations between a social worker and parent or young person and the accompanying commentary/reflection questions provide tips on communicating in clear and respectful ways, providing service users with information to make choices and developing relationships.

[Rethinking 'disguised compliance'](#) considers the implications of statutory involvement in families' lives and provides suggestions on taking an ethical, relationship-based approach.

[Community Care Inform's legal hub](#)

Use the hub to quickly access digests of case law, key legislation and tips on court and legal skills.

[Managing risk](#)

Aims to help managers take a balanced and proportionate approach to risk.

[Guide to child protection conferences](#)

Explains the process following a section 47 investigation, communicating with other professionals, involving the child and family and developing an outline child protection plan.

[Multi-agency working: leading the professional network and chairing meetings](#)

Provides advice for practitioners on the biases and narratives that can influence professions from different disciplines and how to respond to challenges.

[Working Together 2018: how it affects your role](#)

Explains what the statutory guidance means for social workers, especially in relation to assessments, plans and reviews and child protection procedures. Also includes links to current supplementary guidance.

[Learn on the go: poverty, child protection and the care system](#)

Leading researchers discuss the links between deprivation and safeguarding work and how social workers can better support families.

[Equality, diversity and inclusion hub](#)

Gathers resources on working with diversity (including race, gender, sex, sexuality, class, religion and disability) and applying anti-discriminatory and anti-oppressive practice.

[Cultural competence](#)

Considers how our own beliefs and attitudes can shape how we respond to aspects of other cultures and how to work effectively with minority and marginalised groups.

5. Confident analysis and decision-making

What does the statement say?

- *Create a culture of focused thinking which consistently explores a wide range of contexts (including family and professional stories, the chronology of critical events, social and economic circumstances). Generate multiple hypotheses which make sense of the complexity in which children and families are living. Help practitioners to make decisions based on observations and analyses, taking account of the wishes and feelings of children and families.*
- *Ensure that practitioners are ambitious for children and families and that the long-term and life-long consequences of decisions are fully considered at all stages of planning and review, and in consultation with children and families.*
- *Build relevant relationships with children and families and professionals to test current hypotheses and dominant perspectives. Ensure that children and young people's expectations are met where possible and any disappointment sensitively acknowledged and sufficiently addressed.*
- *Establish recording processes, provide the full analysis underpinning decisions, making sure the rationale for why and how decisions have been made is comprehensive and well expressed.*

Resources to help you

The guide to [analysis and decision-making](#) and [accompanying group CPD session](#) (which supervisors could use with their team) explain an approach to decision-making based on evaluating risks and strengths, generating multiple hypotheses and taking into account wishes and feelings when considering relevant options,

The resources listed below help practitioners ensure chronologies, plans and reviews are carried out in consultation with children and their families and have a focused approach:

- [Writing chronologies](#)
- [How to develop social work care plans](#)
- [Learn as a group: developing better care plans](#)
- [Child-centred reviews for looked-after children and young people](#)

[Direct work knowledge and practice hub](#)

Includes a [directory of different tools](#) that can be used and a [guide to confidently using direct work](#) to build trusting relationships and undertake tasks to support children and explore issues with them.

[Case recording and record keeping](#)

Provides guidance on meeting the many purposes that records need to fulfil, how to improve clarity of writing, express the analysis and decision-making used and record the wishes and feelings of service users. There is also a [Learn as a group on this topic](#) you can use with your team to discuss the issues and promote more consistency among the team.

Care-experienced social worker Rebekah Pierre shared tips on writing caring and accurate records in [this webinar based on her experience of accessing her own case records](#)



Interactive supported learning

If your organisation has a workforce licence, you can access [interactive quizzes and case scenarios](#) to help test knowledge and decision making. The scenarios looking at decision-making for young people at risk of [child sexual exploitation](#) and [safeguarding concerns about a boy with autism](#) can be used by individuals or with groups of practitioners to practice analysis and decision-making skills in a simulated case scenario environment.

Find out more about supported learning by [contacting our helpdesk](#).

6. Purposeful and effective social work

What does the statement say?

- *Ensure practitioners adopt an approach to practice which is proportionate to identified risk and need.*
- *Use supervision processes to challenge the balance of authoritative intervention and collaborative engagement to determine how current practice is achieving the best long-term outcomes for children and families.*
- *Use focused questioning with practitioners to clarify the direction of work, and identify whether practitioners need to adopt a more reflective and curious approach, or respond with greater pace and assertion.*
- *Ensure that family narratives are sought and listened to, that all relevant family members, including fathers, are engaged in shaping plans and supported to carry these out, and that practice empowers families to make positive changes.*
- *Ensure methods and tools used are based on the best evidence, that progress is frequently reviewed and that the social work plan is adjusted accordingly.*
- *Reflect upon and review the welfare and support needs of children and families and be alert to evidence of actual or likely significant harm ensuring that identified risks are managed and new risks identified, assessed and addressed.*
- *Implement effective strategies for ensuring throughput of work. Frequently review the requirement for continued involvement so that cases are closed in a timely manner and that families have an appropriate and long-term support plan where that is required, and ensure that no child or family is left unnoticed in the system.*

Resources to help you

[Managing risk in social work](#)

Helps managers promote a balanced approach to risk and identify when practitioners are missing signs of harm or are overly anxious about cases.

Supervision knowledge and practice hub

Provides a range of resources to support you in making the most of supervision time, [including videos comparing a more reflective to a more task-focused approach](#) and how to focus on and clarify the key dilemmas affecting the practitioners' approach (see [Shake up your supervision](#) and [13 questions to use in supervision](#)).

These guides can help you develop practitioners' core skills for safeguarding, supporting and empowering children and families:

[Evidence-based practice](#)

[Developing care plans](#)

[Writing chronologies](#)

[Direct work tools directory](#)

[Working with fathers in child protection: lessons from research](#) looks at the barriers to working with fathers and how to overcome them.

The [benefits A-Z](#) and [guides to housing issues](#) can assist practitioners looking for practical advice on meeting welfare and support needs.

Knowledge and practice hubs on [neglect](#), [CSE](#), [radicalisation](#), [FGM](#), [domestic abuse](#) and [child sexual abuse](#) contain a range of written and multimedia resources to help practitioners identify, assess and manage different safeguarding risks and meet children and families' support needs.

The [looked-after children](#), [fostering](#), [adoption](#) and [working with disabled children](#) knowledge and practice hubs help practitioners support children, families and carers in long term work and deal with difficulties such as adoption disruption, placement transitions, service closures and potential significant harm risks.

[Learn on the go podcast: motivational interviewing](#)

This podcast includes example conversations using a motivational interviewing (MI) approach to support people to make changes in their behaviour. Key learning points and a written transcript are included if you prefer to learn by reading.

Discussing the learning from serious case reviews as a team or group using these resources may be also be useful.

[Learn as a group: domestic violence and professional judgment \(Child K serious case review\)](#)

[Learn as a group: analysing the Ellie Butler serious case review](#) [Learn as a group: a case of complex medical needs and domestic violence](#)

7. Emotionally intelligent practice supervision

What does the statement say?

- *Recognise how different relationships evoke different emotional responses, which impact upon the effectiveness of social work practice and provide responsive, high quality individual supervision.*
- *Use mechanisms such as peer supervision and group case consultation to help identify bias, shift thinking and the approach to case work in order to generate better outcomes for children and families.*
- *Recognise and articulate the dilemmas and challenges faced by practitioners and use this expertise and experience to guide, assist and support the provision of services.*
- *Identify emotional barriers affecting practice and recognise when to step in and proactively support individuals.*
- *Promote reflective thinking to drive more effective discussions so that reasoned and timely decision-making can take place.*
- *Demonstrate a high level of resilience within pressured environments, be attuned to the effect of high emotion and stress and respond in calm, measured and pragmatic ways.*
- *Reflect upon the confidence of practitioners and adapt management and leadership style according to the needs of individuals and the organisation.*
- *Protect practitioners from unnecessary bureaucratic or hierarchical pressures and have in place strategies to help manage the root causes of stress and anxiety. Continually energise and reaffirm commitment to support*

Resources to help you

[Talking about emotion in supervision](#)

Tips to help you discuss emotional responses to practice in supervision, with examples based on real life sessions.

[Group supervision: quick guide](#)

How to use group supervision effectively to avoid bias and generate better outcomes, avoiding pitfalls such as “groupthink”.

The [analysis and decision-making learn as a group session](#) provides a model for case consultation in the team to generate new hypotheses and address errors in reasoning such as confirmation bias.

[Developing emotional resilience](#)

Helps supervisors consider the emotional impact of practice and how to make the most of supervision and peer coaching. It also looks at coping skills and maintaining appropriate empathy, to avoid burnout.

[Use of self and emotional intelligence: quick guide for practice educators](#)

Looks at ways to support students in understanding their own emotional make-up and their personal and professional selves.

[How your attachment history affects your practice: quick guide](#)

[Compassion fatigue, burnout and secondary trauma](#)
These guides consider what might be influencing practitioners’ emotional responses to work and how to support them during difficulties.

[Critical reflection: how to develop it in your practice](#)

supports you to promote reflective thinking

[Managing stress – a manager’s guide](#)

Designed to help you manage stress in both yourself and your team, this guide helps you understand the particular pressures that cause stress in your specific context, with practical exercises and ideas to care for yourself and staff.

[Case study: ‘managing upwards’](#) explores strategies one manager used to protect frontline workers from pressure from above and reduce sources of stress.

[Learn on the go podcast – supervision](#): in this episode, principal social worker Tom Stibbs and lecturer and research David Wilkins discuss what makes for ‘good supervision’, the role of reflection and how it might help outcomes for the children and families social workers work with.

8. Performance management and improvement

What does the statement say?

- *Explain to practitioners the full legal, regulatory, procedural and performance framework within which they operate and be accountable for their work within it.*
- *Provide opportunities for staff to give and receive constructive feedback on performance. Recognise and commend hard work and excellent practice and build social workers' confidence in their practice.*
- *Challenge complacency with a commitment to continued improvement and confidently hold poor practice to account.*
- *Establish available capacity so that work is allocated appropriately across the staff group and ensure best use is made of resource, ability, interests and ambitions.*
- *Devise and implement systems which both demonstrate effective practice and trigger immediate corrective action where necessary. Produce and utilise data to understand current demand, historical patterns and likely future trends.*
- *Scrutinise system performance and devise and implement effective and timely improvement plans.*
- *Strike a balance between employing a managerial, task-focussed approach and an enabling, reflective leadership style to achieve efficient day-to-day functioning.*
- *Develop a strategy for future improvements and contribute to similar within the wider organisational system.*
- *Draw on and share best practice within local and national contexts. Implement communication channels with children, young people, families and other professionals inviting feedback and ideas for improvement.*
- *Respond thoughtfully and proactively to complaints and mistakes, creating learning opportunities for self, staff and the organisation.*

Resources to help you

[Community Care Inform's legal hub](#) Offers digests of the acts of parliament, regulations and guidance that shape practitioners' work.

[Working Together 2018: how it affects your social work role](#) Makes clear the statutory framework and how it links to the law and regulations.

Advice on providing opportunities to give and receive feedback can be found in [this guide](#).

[Case study: from manager to leader](#) provides a detailed example of tackling poor performance within a team – using data, allocating work and implementing new systems to create improvement and allow staff to develop in an 'atmosphere of growth'.

In this [case study about leading a multi-agency team](#), a manager describes an approach to ensuring work is completed to timescales in a fast-paced screening team, while also creating opportunities for reflection.

Video examples of a [routine supervision session](#) and [providing support after a challenging visit](#) prompt you to analyse when and how you employ more reflective and more task-focused approaches.

[Managing support workers](#) provides suggestions on managing a mixed staff group of social workers and non-social work qualified workers, including how to develop systems of allocating work and managing risk. It also includes advice on involving service users and carers in the development of services.

Listen to Community Care's [Ofsted interview podcast series](#) to hear examples of strategies senior leaders in improving councils have used.