

**Staff Supervision and Workload**

**Management Policy**

**RENFREWSHIRE SOCIAL WORK – CHANGING LIVES, PROMOTING INDEPENDENT LIVING, PROTECTIONG VULNERABLE PEOPLE**

**1 Introduction**

1.1 This new Staff Supervision and Workload Management Policy has been developed following an assessment of the effectiveness of the previous Strategy. The Staff Supervision and Workload Management Policy was endorsed by the Social Work Extended Senior Management Team on 30th May 2008 for implementation across all Social Work services, including Joint Teams with Health. The policy does not apply to Home Carers at this time and staff supervision and workload for this group of staff will continue to be delivered by the present system of team meetings.

1.2 Section 2 of the Scottish Social Services Council Code of Practice for Employers places an expectation on employers to have in place written policies and procedures to enable staff to meet the SSSC’s Code of Practice for Employees. Section 2.2 of the Code of Practice for Social Services Workers states:

*“Effectively managing and supervising staff to support effective practice and good conduct and supporting staff to address deficiencies in their performance.”*

1.3 This policy outlines *the organisation’s* commitment to its staff by outlining clearly the policy on supervision and making clear the link between supervision and the delivery of services for users. The overall aim of the supervision policy is to ensure that positive outcomes are delivered for service users from a highly motivated and technically competent workforce.

1.4 This overall aim is summarised by Kadushin, one of the earliest writers on supervision within social work as:

*“the supervisor’s ultimate objective is to deliver to agency clients the best possible service, both quantitative and qualitatively, in accordance with agency policies and procedures”*.

Kadushin (1976, page 21).

1.5 The importance of high quality regular supervision cannot be underestimated. Supervision is one of the core responsibilities of managers within Social Work. The responsibility to participate in supervision is however a shared one between the supervisor and the worker being supervised. It is recognised that the policy at present has a heavy waiting towards fieldwork services however the principles of this policy will apply across all of Social Work. Further work will be carried out over the next twelve months to update the policy to ensure

it meets fully the needs of all.

**2 What is Supervision?**

2.1 Morrison (2005) states that:

*“Supervision is the helper’s most important relationship. It is an integral part of the service delivery and intervention systems for users of social services……Within social care organisations, it is also the fundamental performance management tool – the meeting point between professional and managerial systems and the bridge between the employee and their agency.”*

Morrison (2005, Pg. 2)

2.2 He continues:

*“Supervision is a process by which one worker is given responsibility by the organisation to work with another worker(s) in order to meet certain organisational, professional and personal objectives which together promote the best outcome for service users”*

Morrison (2005, page 32)

2.3 *The organisation* accepts the importance of supervision for all staff and has developed this policy as part of our commitment to staff development and to the delivery of high quality services for our users.

**3 Purpose of Supervision**

3.1 *The organisation* in developing the policy established a working group comprising of a cross section of area based staff to review practice in supervision and to make recommendations on the purpose of supervision.

3.2 The working group’s recommendations were considered and accepted by the Extended Senior Management Team for application.

3.3 The purposes of supervision are to:

x Assist the worker to understand their role, responsibilities and accountabilities within Social Work

x Allow social work managers to discharge their responsibilities in relation to the management of staff

x Ensure the worker meets the standards and delivers the objectives contained within the Service Plan

x Ensure that service users receive high quality and effective services

x Assist in creating an environment which is safe and suitable for the worker to practice in a professional manner

x Allow workers to reflect on their professional development and plan their continual professional development

x Support the worker in managing the demands of their job (including dealing with the emotional demands of delivering services to vulnerable people)

x Assist in the development of creative/innovative and effective practice

x Ensure that staff deliver best practice (using research informed practice where possible)

x Ensure that staff deliver best value in terms of the allocation of resources and outcomes for service users

x Promote clear communication between the worker and the service

x Share accountability for the worker’s practice

**4 Principles of Supervision**

4.1 *The organisation* accepts that supervision is an activity which should be underpinned by stated principles. The principles of supervision should reflect the values and principles of our service. The following principles should therefore underpin the supervision policy:

x All staff should have access to supervision

x The best interest of the service users always comes first unless there is an issue of public safety where decisions will be made at an

appropriate level

x Supervision is a shared responsibility between the supervisor and the worker

x Supervision should be regular, uninterrupted and recorded

x Supervision should promote best practice and best value

x Supervision should ensure competency, accountability and empowerment of the worker

x Supervision agendas should be based on negotiation between the worker and the supervisor

x Supervision should promote anti-discriminatory practice including exploration of issues such as poverty, gender and race and how these impact on the lives of the users of our services.

**5 Functions of Supervision**

5.1 The literature on staff supervision identifies four main components of supervision:

*“Effective supervision is a complex relationship between different stakeholders who have both shared and different needs, addressed through its four functions:*

Multi-disciplinary

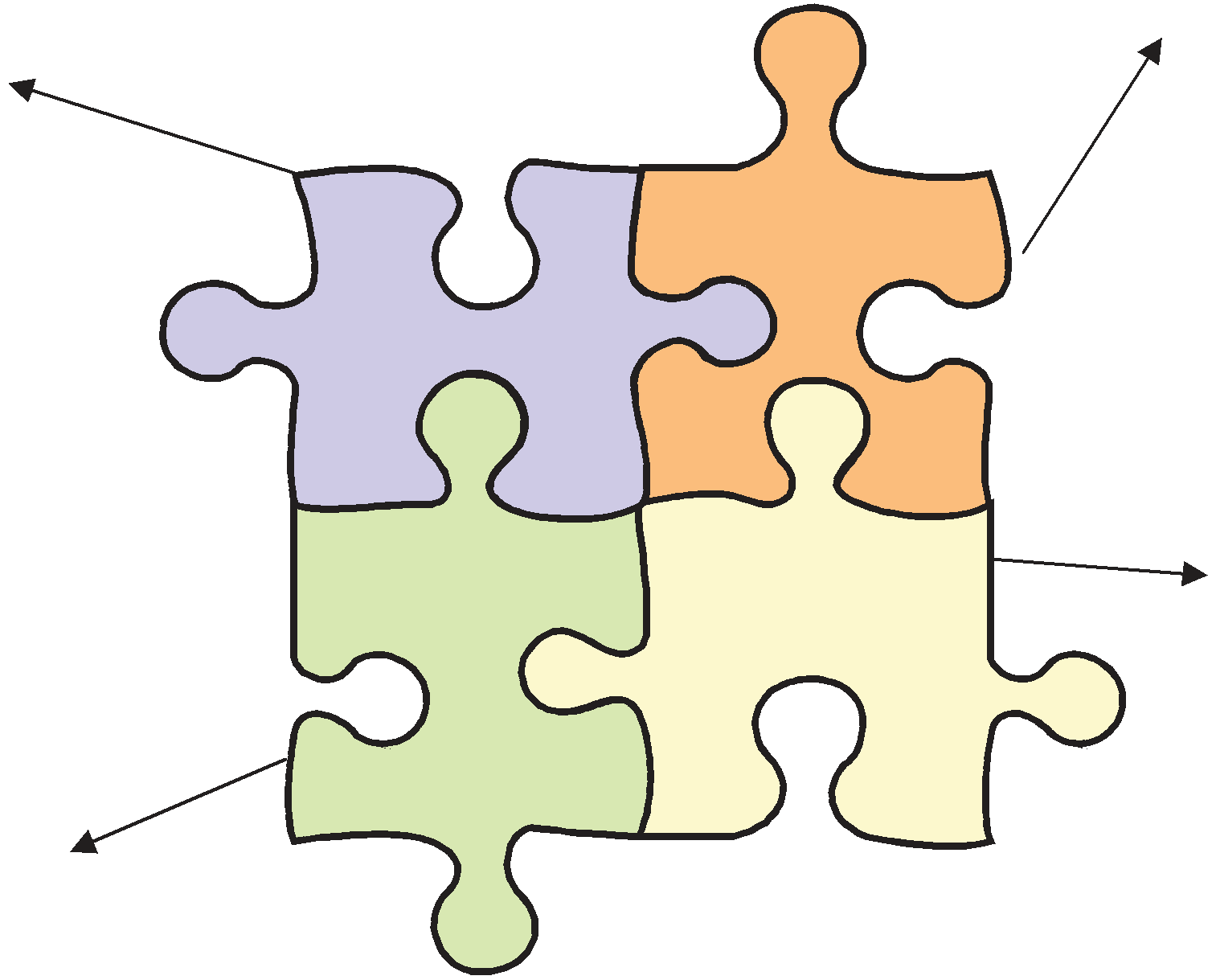
Service User

Development

Accountability

Support

Mediation



Worker

Social Work

Morrison (2005, Pg. 33)

5.2 The first component, accountability relates to the case management/ planning aspect of the work carried out with service users. The supervisor is charged with ensuring that service users receive high quality effective services, provided at the appropriate level, that care plans are in place for all service users which are informed by their assessed needs. The supervisor is responsible for the day to day management of the staff member.

5.3 The care plan should outline clearly the reason for the intervention with the service user, the expected outcome from the intervention and the nature of the services to be provided to meet the outcomes. The care plan should identify the person responsible for providing the service,

the level of contact the service user can expect and the process for review.

5.4 The first component of supervision therefore has a focus on the “doing”

of the work with service users. An agreed work plan will assist in

ensuring that progress is made in delivering outcomes for service users, provide clarity of the worker’s role, agree priorities for attention, consider decisions around risk and ensure that workers have a manageable case load. Any discussion around identification of risk and the agreed risk management plan should be recorded on SWIFT by the supervisor.

5.5 In preparing for supervision the worker should ensure that SWIFT profile notes are up to date and that a care plan is recorded on SWIFT for all service users.

5.6 Supervision for staff not involved in the delivery of direct services or for the assessment and care management functions should also focus on “the doing” of their job. Staff in these categories should use

supervision to help plan the work they are involved in ensuring the delivery of high quality services.

5.7 The second component of supervision concerns the continuing professional development of the worker. This aspect of supervision is often lost in the supervision process with priority being given to the competency and accountability features. To ensure that the development agenda is addressed the supervisor is required to programme one supervision session every six months to address the supervisee’s Individual Development Plan as outlined in paragraph 7.2. If necessary the supervisor should schedule an additional supervision session to ensure the worker’s development needs are addressed.

5.8 For staff registered with the SSSC or other professional bodies there is a requirement that they undertake continuous professional development. As an employer Social Work has responsibility to

support staff in discharging this responsibility although the ultimate responsibility for ensuring that staff meet the requirement of the professional body rest with the worker. Renfrewshire Social Work discharges this responsibility by providing training and development opportunities which allow workers to develop their skills and knowledge.

5.9 The third component of supervision concerns the support the worker requires to perform the role and carry out the tasks they are being asked to do on behalf of the service. This can include the identification of practical issues which will assist the worker in discharging their duties including the provision of appropriate IT equipment, the physical working environment and the emotional support networks put in place to equip the workers with the skills and tenacity to deliver the responsibilities associated with their role in the service.

5.10 The final aspect of supervision is “mediation”. This involves the supervisor acting as a link between the worker and *The organisation*. The mediation function aims to assist staff to understand fully their role and responsibilities and the team role and

responsibilities; involve staff in the decision making process; allow feedback about resource needs from front-line staff to senior management; assist in the development of policy; assign resources in the most effective manner; address issues of performance with individual members of staff and address staff concerns or complaints in the first instance.

5.11 Within the area all staff participating in supervision which relates to the direct delivery of services should use reflective practice to develop the worker’s skill and knowledge base. Reflective practice allows the worker and the supervisor to review direct work with service users, reflecting on the work linking it to the values of social work, social work research, social work theory, consider the impact of the service and develop new approaches to work/service which can be tested in practice. The aim of reflective practice is to assist the worker to deliver high quality services underpinned by effective interventions, inform an agenda for continuous improvement in the delivery of services and improve outcomes for service users.

*“Supervision is one of the key opportunities to stand back, think about practice and develop an informed analysis in place of a hunch or prejudice.”*

Coulshed and Mullender (2006, pg. 170)

**6 Frequency of Supervision**

6.1 The frequency of supervision should be agreed between the supervisor and the member of staff taking account of the role, responsibilities, experience and needs of the staff member. In addition when agreeing supervision the complexity of the work being carried out or the types of cases being held should inform the agreed level of supervision in terms of frequency and intensity. It should be noted that in setting the frequency of supervision it is formal supervision sessions which are planned and not day to day informal consultation between the worker and their supervisor.

6.2 Having agreed the level of supervision the supervisor is responsible for preparing a programmed timetable for each member of staff showing their supervision dates for a six monthly period. Whilst no worker should have to initiate supervision if sessions are planned on a regular basis there requires to be a flexible response to the needs of the worker.

6.3 The frequency of supervision will vary depending on the role and responsibilities of the worker being supervised. When considering the frequency of supervision the supervisor needs to consider the individual needs of each worker.

6.4 Table 1 notes the minimum level of supervision which should be available for staff involved in the management of complex casework or having the lead responsibility for the assessment of users for services. For staff working in joint teams the principles of complexity of work apply. The day to day management of the worker will rest with the service manager as will the case management aspect of supervision. Staff will have access to a manager of their profession for additional clinical supervision.

**Table 1**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Fieldwork and joint team staff with less than three months experience | Weekly |
| Fieldwork and joint team staff with 3 –  12 months experience | Fortnightly |
| Fieldwork and joint team staff with more than 12 months but less than 36 months experience | Monthly |
| Fieldwork and joint team staff with more than 36 months experience | 6 weekly |

6.5 Table 2 notes the minimum supervision levels for staff with responsibility for less complex/simple cases.

**Table 2**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Fieldwork staff with less than three months experience | Weekly |
| Fieldwork staff with 3 – 12 months experience | Fortnightly |
| Fieldwork staff with more than 12 months experience | Monthly |

6.6 Supervision for staff within residential and day care services should again reflect the experience of the staff member, the role they discharge and the needs of the services. Table 3 notes the minimum supervision levels expected in the residential and day care services.

**Table 3**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Residential and day care staff with less than three months experience | Fortnightly |
| Residential and day care staff with 3  – 12 months experience | Monthly |
| Residential and day care staff with more than 12 months experience | Bi-monthly |

6.7 *The organisation* recognises the need for good quality supervision for Business Support staff. Table 4 lays out the minimum levels of supervision.

**Table 4**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Business Support staff with less than three months experience | Monthly |
| Business Support staff with more than 3 months experience | Bi-monthly |

6.8 Supervision is a priority for all staff and should not be cancelled without good reason. Where it is necessary to cancel supervision the reason should be recorded by the supervisor and the worker and

arrangements made as soon as possible to reschedule as close to the original date and time as possible.

**7 Structure of Supervision**

7.1 At present much of what happens within supervision is dependent on implicit agreements between the supervisor and the worker. Supervisors are required to ensure that a written plan (supervision agreement) is in place for each worker which should contain details of when and where supervision will take place and the issues to be addressed at individual supervision sessions. The supervisor and worker should each retain a copy of the supervision agreement.

7.2 Supervisors are responsible for ensuring that the training and development needs of workers are considered at least six monthly. Supervision sessions to consider the workers development needs should make use of the Individual Development Plan. Both the worker and supervisor require to prepare for these sessions, identifying strengths and areas of development. The worker’s development plan should ensure that their training needs assist them to discharge fully their present role.

7.3 The importance of both the worker and supervisor using supervision sessions to critically reflect on practice issues and their interventions with users of our services is an essential element of a good supervision agreement. The worker must be willing to engage in an open manner

in respect of their practice and the manager must likewise be open to reflect on their practice to allow mutual learning.

7.4 Critically reflective practice allows the worker and supervisor to review their practice, review why they intervened in a particular way, learn from previous experience, consider the theoretical approaches used in their work, consider alternative options and approaches for interventions with service users and to allow new ways of work to be explored. The aim of reflective practice is to assist the worker to deliver high quality services underpinned by effective interventions, inform an agenda for continuous improvement in the delivery of services and improve outcomes for service users.

7.5 Where a specific case has been discussed in supervision a profile note should be entered on SWIFT to reflect the discussion and to record any agreed action which results. The supervisor should agree with the worker who will be responsible for creating these profile notes.

7.6 A note on each supervision session should be prepared by the supervisor, signed by the supervisor and the worker and a copy provided to the worker. The content of the supervision note generally remains confidential between the supervisor and the worker however these notes form part of the management function and are therefore owned by *the organisation* and there are some circumstances in which these notes will be shared with other relevant personnel. Staff should be aware that supervision notes could be accessed by either the supervisor or worker during a disciplinary or grievance process.

**8 Workload Management**

8.1 All full-time staff within the area have 140 hours of work time available in any 4 week period. Individual members of staff will be supported by their manager to mange their workload within the available working hours. The workload management system covered in this section relates directly to staff working in fieldwork services.

8.2 Staff working in residential, day care, business support or other services should adopt the principles of the workload management system. Priority tasks should be identified and time allocated to allow these to be delivered. Staff in residential and day care will be required to respond flexibly to the needs of residents and users.

8.3 Social Work recognises the high demand for access to our services.

Access to all social work services is through an assessment of need. It is the responsibility of the assessing worker to identify the need and consider the best method of intervention to meet these needs. The assessing worker should ensure that a care plan is in place for all service users and that their own role in delivering the outcomes for users is identified. The supervisor is responsible for ensuring that the worker is supported to manage their caseload within the work time available.

8.4 A workload management system has been piloted in the Area Team and rolled out across other area based services. The workload management system is a time based approach which helps the worker manage their caseload, assign priority tasks and allow the manager to share decision making around the management of risk between the worker and the supervisor.

8.5 As identified in 8.1 every four weeks all full time workers have 140 hours of work time available (35 hours each week). The workload management system allocates an agreed time for specific tasks and

duties. In addition an agreed time is allocated for other work with service users to allow the delivery of outcomes as outlined in the care plan.

8.6 Supervisors agree time allocation with the worker and total the agreed time allocation for a 4 week period. In situations where the worker’s total of hours allocated exceeds the time available the supervisor with the worker prioritises the work to be carried out during that period. Where the time available is exceeded by the demand the supervisor should record any decision on the allocation of work on SWIFT including noting the priority tasks to be carried out.

8.7 In situations where the worker’s time allocated is less than 140 hours then new allocation of work can take place.

8.8 For staff working part-time the workload management should identify the time (the worker’s hours) available by multiplying the worker’s hours by 4.

8.9 Workers should prepare for workload management by planning the work they require to carry out in any given 4 week period. This work should be linked to the care plan for the service user and cover other aspects of the worker’s responsibilities.

8.10 It is recognised that workload management is not an exact science. It is a tool to be used in an attempt to ensue that staff have manageable caseloads, that prioritisation of tasks are agreed between the worker and the supervisor and relies on the worker actively planning their work over a specific period.

8.11 All supervisors and staff will receive briefings on the operation of the time management system. Appendix 1 contains information on the planned activity time which should be used by managers when discussing workload allocations with staff. Appendix 2 contains examples of completed workload management plans.

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| --- | --- |
| **Planned activity** | **Time allocated** |
| Duty | 8 hours per session |
| Annual leave | 7 hours per day |
| Training | 7 hours per day |
| Children’s Panel IARs | 4 hours per report |
| Children’s Panel SBRs | 6.24 hours per report |
| Social enquiry reports | 6.24 hours per report |
| Community Care Assessment | 6.24 hours per assessment |
| Case Recording | 2.5 hours per week |
| Supervision (including preparation) | 3 hours |
| Travelling time | 2 hours per week |
| Sub-team meetings | 2 hours |
| Professional development | 1 hour per week |

The worker is a qualified social worker in a community care team. In the next

4 weeks the worker has one week of annual leave, 2 days on duty, 1 day training, 17 open cases and been allocated 4 new community care assessments.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Planned activity** | **Time allocated** |
| Duty (8 hrs per session) | 16 hours |
| Annual leave (7 hrs per day) | 35 hours |
| Training (7 hrs per day) | 7 hours |
| Children’s Panel IARs (4 hrs per report) |  |
| Children’s Panel SBRs (6.24 hrs per report) |  |
| Social enquiry reports (6.24 hrs per report) |  |
| Community Care Assessment (6.24 hrs per assessment) | 25 hrs 36 mins |
| Case Recording (2.5 hrs per week) | 7 hrs 30 mins |
| Supervision (including preparation) (3 hrs per session) | 3 hrs |
| Travelling time (2 hrs per week) | 6 hrs |
| Sub-team meetings (2 hrs) | 2 hrs |
| Professional development (1 hr per week) | 3 hrs |
| **Total allocated time for planned activities** | **105 hrs 06mins** |
| **Available case work time (140 less 105 hrs 06 mins)** | **34 hrs 54 mins** |
| **Casework allocation** |  |
| Case 1 (older adult in residential care – review) | 2 hrs |
| Case 2 (older adult – care management) | 2 hr |
| Case 3 (older adult – care management) | 1 hr |
| Case 4 (older adult – community review) | 2 hrs |
| Case 5 (older adult – visit to carer) | 2 hrs |
| Case 6 (older adult – vulnerable adult) | 4 hrs |
| Case 7 (older adult – home care review) | 1 hr |
| Case 8 (older adult – contact with GP) | 1 hr |
| Case 9 (older adult – care management) | 1 hr |
| Case 10 (older adult – care management) | 2 hrs |
| Case 11 (older adult – visit to carer) | 2 hr |
| Case 12 (older adult – community review) | 1 hr |
| Case 13 (older adult – planning meeting) | 2 hrs |
| Case 14 (adult – physical disability) | 2 hrs |
| Case 15 (adult – care management) | 2 hrs |
| Case 16 (adult – care management) | 1 hr |
| Case 17 (adult – mental health) | 2 hrs |
| **Casework time allocated** | **30 hrs** |
| **Casework time available** | **4 hrs 54 mins** |

Worker has 4 hrs 54 mins available for new work. Given annual leave will also have capacity in next workload period for new allocation.

The worker is a qualified social worker in a child care team. In the next 4 weeks the worker will be on duty for 2 days, has 3 days training, 17 open cases and has been allocated 2 Initial Assessment Reports and 2 Social Background Reports.

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| --- | --- |
| **Planned activity** | **Time allocated** |
| Duty (8 hrs per session) | 16 hours |
| Annual leave (7 hrs per day) |  |
| Training (7 hrs per day) | 21 hours |
| Children’s Panel IARs (4 hrs per report) | 8 hrs |
| Children’s Panel SBRs (6.24 hrs per report) | 12 hrs 48 mins |
| Social enquiry reports (6.24 hrs per report) |  |
| Community Care Assessment (6.24 hrs per assessment) |  |
| Case Recording (2.5 hrs per week) | 10 hrs |
| Supervision (including preparation) (3 hrs per session) | 3 hrs |
| Travelling time (2 hrs per week) | 8 hrs |
| Sub-team meetings (2 hrs) | 2 hrs |
| Professional development (1 hr per week) | 4 hrs |
| **Total allocated time for planned activities** | **84 hrs 48mins** |
| **Available case work time (140 less 84 hrs 48 mins)** | **55 hrs 12 mins** |
| **Casework allocation** |  |
| Case 1 (child protection) | 10 hrs |
| Case 2 (child protection) | 8 hrs |
| Case 3 (looked after at home) | 2 hrs |
| Case 4 (looked after at home) | 2 hrs |
| Case 5 (looked after at home) | 1 hr |
| Case 6 (looked after at home) | 3 hrs |
| Case 7 (looked after at home) | 1 hr |
| Case 8 (looked after and accommodated) | 2 hrs |
| Case 9 (looked after and accommodated) | 4 hrs |
| Case 10 (looked after and accommodated – secure) | 8 hrs |
| Case 11 (voluntary contact) | 1 hr |
| Case 12 (voluntary contact) | 1 hr |
| Case 13 (kinship care) | 1 hr |
| Case 14 (looked after at home) | 2 hrs |
| Case 15 (voluntary contact) | 1 hr |
| Case 16 (child care concern) | 1 hr |
| Case 17 (looked after at home) | 2 hrs |
| **Casework time allocated** | **50 hrs** |
| **Casework time available** | **5 hrs 12 mins** |

Worker has 5 hrs 12 mins available for new work. Worker has capacity for new work and given training days will have capacity in next workload period for new allocation.

The worker is a qualified social worker in a criminal justice team. In the next 4 weeks the worker will have 9 social enquiry reports, 2 days training and 17 open cases.

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| --- | --- |
| **Planned activity** | **Time allocated** |
| Duty (8 hrs per session) |  |
| Annual leave (7 hrs per day) |  |
| Training (7 hrs per day) | 14 hrs |
| Children’s Panel IARs (4 hrs per report) |  |
| Children’s Panel SBRs (6.24 hrs per report) |  |
| Social enquiry reports (6.24 hrs per report) | 57 hrs 36 mins |
| Community Care Assessment (6.24 hrs per assessment) |  |
| Case Recording (2.5 hrs per week) | 10 hrs |
| Supervision (including preparation) (3 hrs per session) | 3 hrs |
| Travelling time (2 hrs per week) | 8 hrs |
| Sub-team meetings (2 hrs) | 2 hrs |
| Professional development (1 hr per week) | 4 hrs |
| **Total allocated time for planned activities** | **98 hrs 36 mins** |
| **Available case work time (140 less 98 hrs 36 mins)** | **41 hrs 24 mins** |
| **Casework allocation** |  |
| Case 1 (sex offender case) | 8 hrs |
| Case 2 (sex offender case) | 8 hrs |
| Case 3 (probation month 1) | 4 hrs |
| Case 4 (probation month 1) | 4 hrs |
| Case 5 (probation month 2) | 2 hrs |
| Case 6 (probation month 2) | 2 hrs |
| Case 7 (probation month 2) | 2 hrs |
| Case 8 (probation month 3) | 2 hrs |
| Case 9 (probation month 3) | 2 hrs |
| Case 10 (probation month 4) | 1 hr |
| Case 11 (probation month 6) | 1 hr |
| Case 12 (probation month 6) | 1 hr |
| Case 13 (probation month 8) | 1 hr |
| Case 14 (probation month 8) | 1 hr |
| Case 15 (probation month 12) | 1 hr |
| Case 16 (probation month 16) | 1 hr |
| Case 17 (looked after at home) | 2 hrs |
| **Casework time allocated** | **43 hrs** |
| **Casework time available** | **- 1 hr 36 mins** |

Worker is 1 hour 36 mins over available time. Senior will need to work with the worker to prioritise the work to adjust the time to bring in line.

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