



social development

Department:  
Social Development  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

# **DRAFT DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT (DSD) SUPERVISION POLICY FOR THE SOCIAL WORK PROFESSION**

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## GLOSSARY

**Department of Social Development:** It is the employer of social workers and social auxiliary workers.

**Learner Social Auxiliary:** A learner social auxiliary is a person who is registered with the South African Council for Social Service Professions (SACSSP) in terms of chapter 2 Section 18B sub-section 1 of the Social Service Professions Act, 1978 (Act No.110 of 1978), as amended.

**Organisational Learning:** it is a dynamic process of creation, acquisition and integration of knowledge, aimed at developing resources and capabilities that will improve the performance of the organisation.

**Record:** Recorded information regardless of form or medium. It is an evidence transaction, preserved for the evidential information it contains (National Archives and Records Service of South Africa. Department of Arts and Culture, 2004).

**Records manager:** a records manager is a person responsible for the effective and appropriate management of an organisation's records from their creation through to their eventual disposal. They provide access to accurate records for a range of operational and strategic purposes.

**Social Auxiliary Work:** Means and act or activity practiced by a social auxiliary worker under the guidance and control of a social worker and as a supporting service to a social worker to achieve the aims of social work (Department of Social Development, 2011).

**Social Auxiliary Worker:** Social auxiliary worker is a person registered with the South African Council for service Professions (SACSSP) in terms of Chapter 2 Section 18 of the Social Service Professions Act, 1978, (Act No.110 of 1978) as amended.

**Social Worker:** Social worker is a person registered with the South African Council for service Professions (SACSSP) in terms of Chapter 2 Section 17 of the Social Service Professions Act, 1978, (Act No.110 of 1978) as amended.

**Social Work Manager:** Social work manager is a social worker operating at a level(s) of management within the organisation.

**Social Work Supervisor:** A social work supervisor is a social worker with the required experience and qualifications to whom authority is delegated to supervise social work practitioners.

**Supervisee:** A supervisee is a social worker, student social worker, social auxiliary worker and learner social auxiliary.

**Supervision File:** An organised arrangement of records on the same subject accumulated in chronological order within the cover or folder.

**Registration Certificate:** It is a registration certificate issued by the South African Council for Social Service Profession in terms of Chapter 2 Section 17 (2a) of the Social Service Professions Act, 1978, (Act No.110 of 1978) as amended.

## **ABBREVIATIONS**

**DSD:** Department of Social Development

**PMDS:** Performance and Management Development System

**SACSSP:** South African Council of Social Service Professions

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## **1. INTRODUCTION**

Social work supervision is currently considered to be the most critical element in the ability of practitioners to deliver services in a professional and accountable manner. If done appropriately, this function can ensure that practitioners comply with organisational code of conduct and practice (professional) code of ethics. The DSD in collaboration with stakeholders developed the Supervision Framework for Social work profession to guide the effective and quality supervision of social workers across the sector. One of the requirements of the supervision framework is that each organisation must develop its supervision policy which addresses supervision in its own context.

## **2. SUPERVISION POLICY SITUATIONAL ANALYSIS**

Supervision is an inherent integral part of social work practice. When all parties, agency, supervisor and supervisee involved in the supervision value chain add value as expected or even exceeding their ascribed roles they stand to benefit immensely. However, each one of these parties is a critical conduit; the ultimate beneficiary of supervision is a satisfied client about quality service delivered.

According to the literature reviewed nationally and internationally, the following are a summary of amongst others challenges pertaining to supervision:

- Supervision: It was seen as being process or procedurally driven and overly focused on the management of cases, checking on compliance at the expense of reflection and professional development.
- Supervisors: During the transition from being a supervisee to supervisor, supervisors have reported that they have received little or no formal training on how to supervise.
- Supervisee: Due to the supervisors receiving little or no formal training in supervision, supervisees feel that the focus of supervision is more on compliance with the processes and procedures rather than their personal development.

- Beneficiary: supervision has been seen as focusing on the supervisee's needs and not the outcomes for the service user.

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- Functions of supervision:
  - ✓ The management/administrative function were seen as taking precedence over other functions like the educational and supportive function.
  - ✓ Managers and supervisees' confusion on the functions of supervision. Supervisees emphasise personal development aspects of supervision without a focus on the client outcomes and managers increasingly focusing on the procedures and processes.

## 2.1 CONTEXTUAL FRAMEWORK

According to Wonnacott (2011:22), "supervision is a process which supports, assures and develops the knowledge, skills and values of an individual, group or team. The purpose is to improve the quality of work to achieve agreed objectives and outcomes to the benefit of the client". Therefore the function of supervision is to recognise the managerial and administrative tasks necessary to protect the organisation and the client from poor quality practice, while also respecting the emotional and educational needs of newly qualified and experienced practitioners exposed to the demands of high-risk judgement and practice' (Godden: 2011). All parties involved are expected to optimally contribute if this function is to be possible:

**Organisation:** It plays a key role in delivery of social work services. Therefore it creates necessary conducive environment for supervision to take place starting with policy development to ensuring that such a policy is implemented by putting systems in place and resourcing it accordingly. Central to appropriate implementation of supervision policy by the organisation, is the adoption of learning organisation principles and practices.

**Supervisor:** Is the implementer of an agency supervision policy. Is an intermediary between the supervisee and the client receiving quality service within a context that



observes practice ethics. Defining entry requirements into supervisory role upfront ensures that only practitioners with supervision potential are selected, trained and licensed. The extent to which the supervisor is assisted to transit from supervisee to supervisory role coupled with continuing professional development determines the quality of supervision and consequently, service delivered. Periodic credentialing based on peer review for the purposes of maintaining desired supervision practice standards keep the supervisor current or allow natural attrition of dated supervisors from the system.

**Supervisee:** Is the immediate beneficiary of supervision services. Regular, appropriate, adequate and proper supervision ensures that the practitioner is well managed with emotional and educational needs simultaneously met. In a conducive working environment that continuously improves working conditions coupled with supervision the practitioner is motivated to adhere to code of ethics, stay in the profession, invest on personal development thus improving own value add and consequently delivers quality service to the benefit of the end user, the client.

**Beneficiaries:** It is reasonable to assume that well-supervised social workers who are supported both in their roles and tasks and also in dealing with their emotional aspects of their jobs will be able to provide a better service and improved outcomes for beneficiaries. A confident, happy social worker, leads to a satisfied, happy client!

### **3. Policy Outcome**

- 2.1 Individual growth and professional development of supervisees.
- 2.2 Effective and efficient quality services rendered to beneficiaries.

## **4. OBJECTIVES**

The DSD supervision policy objectives are to provide for;

3.1 Supervision of social workers, social auxiliary workers, social auxiliary learners and student social workers.

3.2 Enabling environment for effective supervision.

3.3 Minimum requirements of supervision.

3.4 Management of supervision within the DSD.

3.5 Standardised supervision in the Department of Social Development.

3.6 Clarity on the roles and responsibilities of supervisors and supervisees.

## 5. POLICY AND LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK

With reference to the supervision of social workers, student social workers, social auxiliary workers and learner social auxiliary workers, organisations and employers operate within the ambit of different policies and legislative frameworks, which include but are not limited to the following:

<b>Policy and legislative framework</b>	<b>Core mandate</b>
Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, No.108 of 1996	Chapter 10 of the Constitutions highlights the basic values and principles governing public administration. Section 195 (1): a & h identified the following principles: (a) a high standard of professional ethics must be promoted and (b) good human-resource management and career-development practices, to maximise human potential, must be cultivated.  Chapter 2, Bill of Rights. They are the cornerstone of democracy in South Africa. They
Social Service Professions Act, No.110	Stipulates that a social worker may only be supervised on social work matters by another competent and registered

<p>of 1978 as amended, its Regulations and Rules</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Code of Ethics</li> </ul>	<p>social worker.</p>
<p>DSD. (2005). Integrated Service Delivery Model towards improved social services</p>	<p>The model provides the nature, scope and the levels of intervention based on the developmental social service delivery that provide guidance on service delivery.</p>
<p>DSD.(18/2009) Recruitment and Retention Strategy for Social Workers</p>	<p>Recruitment and Retention Strategy calls for the effective management and supervision of social welfare professionals as part of effective service delivery.</p>
<p>Batho Pele “People First” White Paper on Transforming Public Service Delivery (1997).</p>	<p>Batho Pele principle promotes service delivery which is quality driven and person-centred. It also allows access to information, encourages transparency, redress and respect, standards, cost effective and time bound.</p>
<p>Labour Relations Act, No.66 of 1998</p>	<p>The Act ensures the right to fair labour practices. The Act reflects the vision of workers' and employers' rights as envisioned by the Constitution.</p>
<p>White Paper for Social Welfare (1997)</p>	<p>Chapter 4 of the White Paper for Social Welfare gives an overview of the status of human resources within the welfare sector, specifically social workers. It reflects issues of re-deployment, capacity building and orientation, education and training, remuneration and the working conditions.</p>
<p>DSD. (2011, August). Framework for Social</p>	<p>Supervision of social service practitioners aim to ensure the delivery of quality services to beneficiaries, whilst supporting</p>

Welfare Services.	and building the capacity of the practitioner.
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## 6. SCOPE OF APPLICATION

This is a mandatory policy which is applicable to social workers, social auxiliary workers, student social workers and social auxiliary learners in the Department of Social Development Nationally. It is applicable to all methods of supervision.

## 7. CORE VALUES AND PRINCIPLES OF SUPERVISION

The following principles amongst others underpin supervision of social workers, social auxiliary workers, student social workers and social auxiliary learners (Australian Association of Social Workers, 1999; SACSSP, 2007; Regional Ireland Health and Social Care, 2008 and New Zealand Social Workers Registration Board, 2009):

- **Promote and protect:** The priority of supervision should be to promote and protect the interests of beneficiaries.
- **Promote active recognition of the cultural systems that shape the social workers, social auxiliary workers, student social workers and social auxiliary learners' practice.**
- **Professional development is valued and encouraged:** Supervision is located in the learning environment where professional development is valued and encouraged.
- Senior managers have the responsibility to promote good supervision by implementing the policy and ensuring that continuous professional development is provided for both supervisors and supervisees.
- Supervision is the shared responsibility between the supervisee, the supervisor and the organisation.
- **Accountability:** Supervision promotes safe and accountable practice to the organisation, profession and beneficiaries.
- **Social workers respect the inherent dignity and worth of every person.**

- **Diversity:** supervision recognises cultural and ethnic diversity and is cognisant of specific beneficiary needs.
- **Anti-discriminatory practice:** supervision promotes anti-discriminatory practices.
- **Effective management of practice:** supervision must ensure effective management of practice, develop and support social workers and promote their engagements with the organisation.

All social workers must make ethically accountable professional decisions based on the SACSSP Code of Ethics.

## **8. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

The roles and responsibilities of the supervisors, supervisees and organisations are vast, amongst others, below are some of the roles and responsibilities:

### **8.1 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF SUPERVISORS**

The supervisor shall:

8.1.1 Ensure orientation of supervisees on organisational policies.

8.1.2 Ensure that supervisees are registered with the relevant professional body (SACSSP).

8.1.3 Plan and prepare for the supervision sessions.

8.1.4 Ensure that intervention techniques and approaches used by the supervisee are appropriately applied.

8.1.5 Assist in identifying the training needs of supervisee and implement a personal development plan.

8.1.6 Ensure correct interpretation of policies and legislation.

8.1.7 Ensure compliance with SACSSP Code of Ethics and departmental policy regarding the receipt of incentives or gifts from beneficiaries.

8.1.8 Conduct performance management and appraisal.

8.1.9 Ensure that reasonable steps towards meeting the emotional well-being of supervisee's are taken.

8.1.10 Keep records of the supervision sessions.

8.1.11 Keep abreast with new developments in the professional field.

## **8.2 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF SUPERVISEES**

Supervisees shall take substantial contribution to the quality of their own supervision by:

8.2.1 Complying with the Social Service Professions Act, No. 110 of 1978 as amended and the SACSSP Code of Ethics.

8.2.2 Registering with the SACSSP.

8.2.3 Planning and preparing for the supervision sessions.

8.2.4 Ensuring that they attend agreed supervision sessions and actions agreed within supervision are carried out in a timely manner.

8.2.5 Keeping records of the supervision sessions.

8.2.6 Keeping abreast with new developments in the professional field.

8.2.7 Notifying the supervisor of any difficulties in implementing decisions or plans.

8.2.8 Understanding and implementing policies.

8.2.9 Implementing the agreed personal development plan.

## **8.3 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT**

The Department of Social Development shall provide an enabling environment for supervision sessions to take place by:

8.3.1 Allocating supervisees with a designated supervisor.

8.3.2 Ensuring that all supervisees attend an orientation programme upon appointment.

8.3.3 Ensuring that appointed supervisors are social workers, registered with the South African Council for Social Service Professions (SACSSP).

8.3.4 Ensuring that appointed supervisors have a minimum of five years and required skills to supervise social workers. They must have a minimum of three years' experience to supervise social auxiliary workers, student social workers and social auxiliary learners.

8.3.5 Making provision that all supervisors attend a comprehensive supervision course presented by an accredited service provider recognised by the SACSSP.

8.3.6 Ensuring that recruitment of supervisors include a combination of educational requirements, performance expectations and competencies.

8.3.7 Providing continuous professional development of supervisors on supervision.

8.3.8 Ensuring that all acting supervisors are appointed in accordance with the provision of public service policies and regulations.

8.3.8 Allowing time and priority for supervision for all supervisees.

8.3.9 Ensuring that supervisors 'key responsibility is supervision and it should be included in their job description and work plans.

8.3.10 Ensuring that there are clear communication channels between the supervisor and management.

8.3.11 Ensuring that they comply with the ratios as stipulated in the Framework for Social Welfare Services (May, 2013) and the Supervision Framework for Social Workers in the Social Work Profession (February, 2012); where 65% of supervisors' time is allocated for supervision 1:13 and if travelling is considered as a factor 1:10, in cases where 50% is allocated for casework or office management the ratio is 1:3. In case of non-compliance, a clear plan must be developed to work towards compliance.

8.3.12 Providing supervisors and supervisees with tools of trade to enable them to carry their duties effectively.

## **9 SUPERVISION CONTRACT**

9.1 It is mandatory that social workers, social auxiliary workers, student social workers and social auxiliary learners must have a supervision contract. The contract must be signed by both parties.

9.2 The contract should be developed within the first month of supervisee's commencement of duty.

9.3 Review of supervision contract may be yearly.

9.4 Breach of contract will result in unprofessional conduct to be dealt with in terms of the Social Service Professions Act and or mechanisms instituted by the Department of Social Development.

## **10. MINIMUM FREQUENCIES OF SUPERVISION**

10.1 Mandatory supervision during the first year of practice should be at least on a fortnightly basis, after which the frequency may be contracted to at least once a month.

10.2 Additionally, newly qualified social workers must be on structured supervision for three years. Experienced social workers who are new in the organisation's supervision sessions must be at the discretion of the supervisor and the supervisee.



10.3 Newly appointed social auxiliary workers must have structured supervision on a fortnightly basis for at least five years.

## **11. DISAGREEMENTS**

11.1 It is the responsibility of the supervisor and the supervisee to first take personal responsibility for making every effort to resolve the issue within the supervision session. If this is not possible, the next stage is to involve the line management chain.

11.2 Further disagreements not dealt with the way above should be handled as disputes and dispute procedure according to the prescripts of policies of DSD and DPSA must be followed.

## **12 CERTIFICATES**

12.1 Supervisors and supervisees should display their SACSSP registration certificate in their offices or work stations at all times. “

12.2 Post graduate qualification certificate as a supervisor should be displayed.

## **13 SUPERVISORS FORUM**

13.1 There must be a Provincial supervisor's forum established in each province. Such forums have to be replicated at district level to ensure support and professional development of supervisors.

13.2 All supervisors must participate in district or service office supervisor's forum.

## **14. CONFIDENTIALITY**

14.1 Supervision records are the property of DSD, not the supervisee. Supervisors will need to discuss the content of supervision sessions with others, for example, their own line manager; the supervisee must have knowledge of such discussions.

14.2 There should be control to the access of supervision records. The principle of confidentiality should be adhered to.

14.3 Sensitive and personal information do not need to be recorded in full in the supervision record. However, where decisions are made in supervision that have a bearing on casework or the supervisee's terms of employment, then these must be recorded in line with any legal and organisational policy requirements.

## **15. RECORDING**

15.1 Recording of the supervision session is the responsibility of the supervisor. However, the supervisor and the supervisee should co-sign the supervision session report.

15.2. Recordings of the supervision session must be detailed including the purpose of the session which should be properly linked with the personal development plan of the supervisee. Method of supervision should be outlined, agenda must be attached, comments or reflections, plans for the next session, date, time and venue.

15.3 Informal discussion or discussions outside formal supervision in which decisions are made about a client must be recorded and signed by both parties and each must retain a copy. Records of those decisions must be placed on the supervision file.

## **16. STORAGE AND RETENTION**

16.1 When supervisee move to another unit, within DSD their records should be passed onto the new supervisor.

16.2 When a supervisee is transferred to the new supervisor within DSD, their records should be passed accordingly.

16.3 Supervision records are the property of the Department of Social Development and will be contained in locked storage and be accessed only by the supervisor or other appropriate managers.

16.4 Records of supervisees' personal development plan, supervision contract, reports and performance appraisals should be kept by DSD as a portfolio of evidence after the supervisee terminates service with the organisation.

16.5 Information management are the custodians of all the records in the Department therefore, the Records Manager shall be the custodian of all the records.

16.6 No records shall be removed from DSD premises without the permission of the Records Manager.

16.7 Disposal of the supervision file shall be processed according to the National Archives and Records Service of South Africa Act No.43 of 1996 which states that there must be prior written authorization from the National Archivist.

## **17. QUALITY STANDARDS AND QUALITY ASSURANCE**

17.1 All supervisors should undergo training on supervision and there should be adherence by supervisor and supervisee to the policies and legislations guiding the implementation of supervision and execution of duties.

17.2 The supervisor has a responsibility to quality assure the work of the supervisee.

17.3 There should be random selection auditing of supervision files and records on a six monthly basis by the district manager and/ or provincial manager.

17.4 Line managers should regularly read a sample of the supervisee's case records to ensure adherence to policy and quality of work undertaken.

17.5 Random auditing of supervision records by staff from Quality Assurance and Performance Monitoring and Evaluation Units can be conducted as part of overall programme audit.

## **18. REVIEW OF THE POLICY**

18.1 The interim review of the policy will be after three years.

18.2 Impact evaluation of the supervision framework and the supervision policy must be after five years whereby an independent service provider must be appointed.

## **19. CONCLUSION**

The impact of appropriate supervision to the organisation, supervisor, supervisee and the beneficiaries cannot be over emphasised. The department is compelled through adequate implementation of supervision to adopt principles and practices of learning organisations. Supervisors and supervisees alike are forced to be on the cutting edge of their practice if they are to retain their positions with dignity and respect whilst delivering quality service to clients directly and indirectly.

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