

A set of Methodological Guidelines for the Regional Social Assistance Structures

# MECHANISM OF PROFESSIONAL SUPERVISION IN SOCIAL ASSISTANCE

*PRACTICAL IMPLEMENTATION GUIDE*





**Approved by Order of the Ministry of Labour, Social Protection and Family**

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# **MECHANISM OF PROFESSIONAL SUPERVISION IN SOCIAL ASSISTANCE**

*PRACTICAL IMPLEMENTATION GUIDE*

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This guide contains methodical instructions described in the implementation of the mechanism of professional supervision in social assistance. The social assistance providers are proposed a series of unified forms for practical application, approved by the Ministry of Labour, Social Protection and Family, Order No. 74 of 10.05.2017.

The guide is part of a series of methodological materials developed for the support of the staff working in the social assistance system:

- The foster care service. Support guide for practical use.
- Organization and functioning of the Commission for the Protection of the Child in Difficulty (Gate-Keeping Commission). Support guide for practical use.
- Mechanism of professional supervision in social assistance. Support guide for practical use.
- Case management. Support guide for practical use.
- The Social service for the support of families with children. Support guide for practical use.

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## INTRODUCTION

This guide is designed for social assistance services providers. The guide proposes a standard version of the process of professional supervision mechanism implementation representing a unified methodology to be used by all social services providers.

Supervision originates in psychotherapy, and it has been used in social assistance since 1960-es – 1970-es in the USA and Great Britain, for the monitoring and standardization of the work of volunteers. In most countries with modern social assistance systems in place, supervision is a component of the system, and it is closely related to the evaluation of the effectiveness of the social services provided to beneficiaries.

Effectiveness of the functioning of the integrated social services system depends on the level of professional performance of social services providers. It involves the implementation of the culture of professional supervision and performance evaluation for the social assistance service staff, organized by types of services, areas of responsibility, and levels of competence.

Professional supervision is important component of the social assistance system. It involves the Territorial Structure of Social Assistance (hereinafter – TSAS), as supervisor, and the supervised staff. Improvement of professional performances of social workers, as a result of supervision, directly influences the situation of beneficiaries and contributes to the quality improvement of the provided services.

In this sense, professional supervision of the employed staff is a management and professional activity essential for every TSAS, and it should be an integrated, on-going, and systematic component of the system of services and organizational procedures.

Professional supervision is an opportunity to correlate the objectives of the TSAS with those of the staff. In this process, one of the staff members is delegated the responsibility of providing support to others, supervising them to achieve organizational, professional, and personal development objectives. In their turn, the supervised staff ensures competence, accountability, on-going professional development and personal support.

Professional supervision is on-going process, and not just an event; it should be incorporated into the culture of TSAS, to become an influential part of common values and representations of the staff of the social assistance system. Supervision is a right of the supervised staff to require support in the solution of professional issues or of those generated by professional stress. In addition, supervision offers a means of monitoring and quality control of the professional activity, as from the management perspective, the supervisor makes sure that the supervised staff work in line with the policies, instructions, standards, and positive practices in the area.

The concept of supervision is relatively new to the social assistance system of the Republic of Moldova, and its implementation is based on the following documents: Mechanism of supervision in Social Assistance approved by the MSPFC Order No. 99 of 31.12.2008, Implementation Guide of the social assistance supervision mechanism, approved by the MLSPF

Order No. 15 of 10.11.2009, and Case Management Methodology approved by the MLSPF Order No. 96 of 18.05.2016.

The professional supervision mechanism approved in 2008 describes the activity of the Community Social Assistance Centre (hereinafter, CSAC), for community social workers, and to the Home Care Social Service, for care workers.

This guide describes the methodology of implementation of professional supervision mechanism, and is a revised version that results from the process of piloting and implementation at the national level. The professional supervision mechanism has been implemented nationally since 2009 at a different level and to a different extent of involvement in different regions of the country. The highest efficiency in the implementation was mentioned in the regions that had been provided support within various projects implemented by NGOs in the area of social assistance. In this version, the Guide describes the process of professional supervision mechanism implementation that involves the entire staff of the TSAS. The new focus orients the supervision process towards the strengthening and streamlining of the staff's professional competences, ensuring child's well-being and strengthening families to provide adequate conditions for the children to grow and develop.

The guide contains three parts. Part One describes fundamental concepts of professional supervision; Part Two refers to the methods of professional supervision mechanism implementation in the TSAS, and Part Three focuses on aspects of competence development for the implementation of supervision activities.

## I. CONCEPT OF PROFESSIONAL SUPERVISION IN SOCIAL ASSISTANCE

### 1.1. Definition of supervision. Goal, objectives, and principles of professional supervision

**Supervision is a process of professional support provided to the staff of the TSAS.** Professional support is related to effective management of cases in work, competences development and strengthening for the improvement of the quality of services provided to beneficiaries, strengthening of practical application of theoretical knowledge.

**Professional supervision** is an important component of the social assistance system, and it represents a form of professional support and collegial consultation, contributing to the increasing of the staff's professional competences. Professional supervision is a method of providing support, professional competence evaluation and monitoring of staff's activity. Supervision is integrated into the context of clearly defined professional relations: Head of TSAS – subordinated service managers – supervisors – supervised staff.

The primary **goal** of professional supervision is to improve the quality of social services provided to beneficiaries, ensuring opportunities for professional and personal growth of the staff, understanding their roles and responsibilities, and contributing to the organizational or service development.

Achievement of the primary goal of supervision will make sure that the staff clearly know their roles, responsibilities, and functional assignments, and as TSAS representatives they will have clear understanding of the limits of authority and boundaries of work, will know when, how, and on what kind of issues they can call on their superiors.

The professional supervision process follows the following **objectives**:

- on-going development and strengthening of professional competences of the staff;
- ensuring the compliance with the normative framework and achievement of TSAS objectives by the staff;
- ensuring the quality of social services provided to beneficiaries;
- encouragement of constructive communication between the staff involved in common tasks;
- creation of a favourable climate for positive practices sharing;
- reducing stress and prevention of professional burnout of the staff;
- ensuring access of the staff to all necessary resources for them to achieve their functional assignments;
- progress and difficulties analysis of the staff's work with beneficiaries.

Implementation of the professional supervision mechanism offers a series of opportunities to the staff of TSAS, related to the management of complex social and human issues. Professional support creates advantages through its contribution to the increased effectiveness in the

conditions of limited resources, including human resources in social area, and to the improved quality of social services provided to beneficiaries. Presence of motivated and competent staff functioning in line with the existing policies and procedures and with clear understanding of their roles, competence, and level of accountability within the TSAS ensures the quality of the provided social services.

**Development and support of the staff is essential element of the TSAS activity. By capacity-building and increased effectiveness of staff support, it will improve the lives of the beneficiaries.**

The staff of the social assistance system need supervision to verify own understanding of responsibilities and methods of intervention, to reduce the stress related to the shortage of time and resources, etc. Due to the implementation of the supervision mechanism, the employees are provided informational support, get answers to questions from trustful colleagues, select best solutions of difficult cases in work, have shared understanding of various aspects related to the professional activity, have opportunity to follow the evolution of cases in work (case management). Professional support offers encouragement, possibility to exchange experiences in professional growth, to share opinions and emotions, thus reducing and preventing professional burnout.

The process of professional supervision is guided by a series of principles that base the process organization:

- **The best interest of the beneficiary is a priority** – this is a key principle for all staff of the TSAS. The well-being of beneficiaries should be always in the centre of the employees.
- **Accessibility of professional supervision** means that all staff members should have access to it, that is, professional supervision is not designed only for new or unexperienced staff. Supervision should be organized vertically in the TSAS. Managers also need professional supervision.
- **Shared responsibility** is fundamental for professional supervision. Both the supervised employee and their supervisor should be aware of the importance of supervision, should come prepared to supervision sessions, and should be actively participate in the process.
- **Systematic and uninterrupted nature of professional supervision.** Professional supervision is a work priority. Where it is planned in time, it ensures efficient management, organizational development, and on-going support.
- **Supervision focus** on support and mediation offered to employees, negotiation and solution of conflicts, promotion of reflexive and constructive criticism.
- **Promotion of non-discrimination practices** during supervision involves understanding and respecting different perceptions, values, and feelings of the supervised employees.

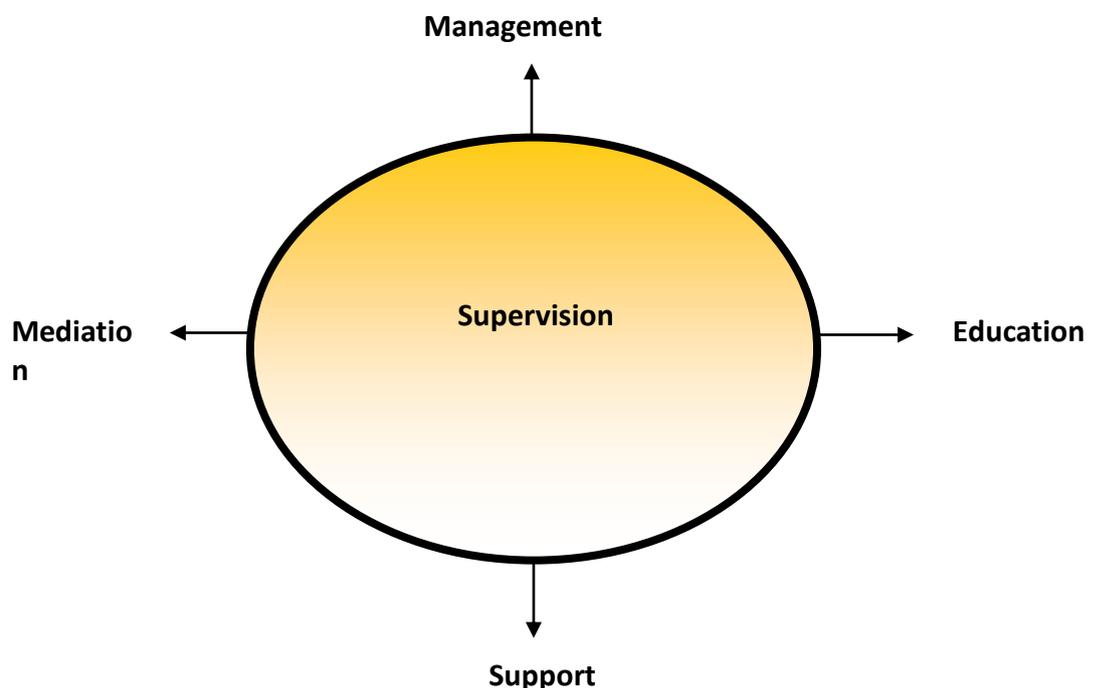
Lack of supervision may lead to a series of consequences that could affect the quality of the provided services, such as: lack of employee's responsibility for the TSAS/service represented, tendency to act independently, without consulting colleagues or other specialists, attempts to make significant decisions independently, etc. These intentions may cause poor management of

cases in work and inefficient planning of beneficiary assistance, or to wrong decisions in complex and difficult cases. In addition, negative consequences resulting from this may affect the performance of the staff, due to a lack of support and failures in the intervention process. Lack of professional supervision may lead to stress of the employees, as they may feel under-appreciated, exhausted or burned out, and all this may lead to high staff turnover.

## 1.2. Functions of professional supervision

There are four inter-dependent fundamental functions of professional supervision, each of them playing an important role in the achievement of the goal and objectives of the process:

- **management** – ensures correct and efficient implementation of policies and work procedures established by TSAS, and controls the quality of the services provided;
- **educational** – ensures the development and strengthening of the employees’ professional competences;
- **support** – ensures necessary support in tasks fulfilment and increases satisfaction from the work done;
- **mediation** – creates opportunities for broader communication, for the solution of more difficult situations, helps to render messages and establish partnerships within the TSAS and outside it.



**Management function** ensures professional performance of the staff and the quality of provided services, understanding and application of policies, procedures, and quality standards established for the TSAS and for concrete services, the employees’ understanding own roles and responsibilities, revision of responsibilities and decisions in line with legal stipulations and changes in the social assistance system, establishment of adequate volume of tasks for each employee, compiling and filling relevant documents, efficient organization of the staff’s worktime.

Fulfillment of this function imposes the need of developing management competences and a clear and holistic vision of the TSAS or each subordinated service functioning: knowledge of staff-related issues (information, on-going training, support of staff members), management of the workload, presentation of the employees' interests in front of the administration, collaboration with other organizations and with the community.

#### **Key points**

- Develop and maintain relations of collaboration with other specialists, services and organizations in the region/municipality;
- Organize internal communication on social services and existing problems at the community level;
- Mediate the solution of problems in the TSAS or subordinated service;
- Represent interests of beneficiaries at the community level.

**Educational function** involves the evaluation of the employees' knowledge and competences, identifications of training needs and on-going development of the staff and the ways those needs can be met, capacity building in reflecting upon the work with beneficiaries, relations with colleagues, collaboration with other specialists and organizations, capacity building in setting professional objectives and offering constructive responses to staff members on their performance.

The supervisor's responsibility in this position is to create a learning environment supporting the staff to familiarize with the basic policies and procedures of the social assistance system, to build effective practice skills in social assistance, to influence attitudes of staff members, to help them apply learning in activities specific to their function, and to strengthen peer learning practices.

#### **Key points**

- The supervisor ensures a level of knowledge and competence, adequate to the position of the supervised employee;
- On-going professional training is efficient way of providing information to staff members, bringing them to a unified and conscious level of competence;
- On-going training/education is a tool and resource able to facilitate the tasks of supervision.

**Support function** helps the staff to analyse the work practice and its emotional impact, to explore emotional breakdowns in the professional activity, contribute to the creation of secure climate within the TSAS, inform the staff about potentially challenging situations, sets limits of support, consultation and confidentiality, provides support in the identification of intervention strategies, in the reflection on difficulties in relations with colleagues, in conflict resolution, and in the reduction of stress caused by professional problems.

Carrying out the support function helps to maintain the integrity of the supervised staff, to provide them emotional support, to create a feeling of professional value, belonging to the organization/service, and a feeling of security in the activity with beneficiaries.

### **Some important suggestions for the carrying out of support function:**

- Plan systematic sessions with all employees, to inform them about changes operated in the TSAS/service/system.
- Be ready to answer the needs of the staff, including that of participating in informal discussions.
- Explain to the employees the possible effects caused by changes in the available resources.
- Establish relations of trust and support, so that the staff see you as a partner, person who is ready to support them in relation to their superiors, who expresses their fears and concerns.
- Create an emotional atmosphere that makes the staff feel free to discuss mistakes, failures and achievements. Adopt an encouraging behaviour, especially in cases of beginning employees who are not confident with the solution of certain situations or who do not have developed self-esteem.
- Encourage the staff to communicate detailed information, concerns and problems faced.
- Develop your own capacity to recognize own mistakes, failures, and challenges in performing your role, which will determine the employees to talk more openly about their own doubts related to aspects of their professional activity.

**Mediation function** ensures the use of existing resources in the most efficient manner, represents or accompanies work relations with other organizations/institutions, involves the staff in decision-making, assists and consults the staff in managing complaints, contributes to the information of managers about limited resources or services.

### **Key points:**

- Supervision is essential part of the TSAS culture;
- TSAS need clear policies supporting staff supervision;
- Supervision is on-going process, not just an event;
- Supervision should involve all staff;
- Supervision is vital to ensure the quality of services provided;
- Supervision helps the staff to cope with the stress related to professional activity.

The above functions describe all aspects of professional supervision and, if taken in a complex, reflect the whole process.

### **1.3. Types of professional supervision**

Professional supervision can be done in a variety of ways. **Formal supervision** is a planned, systematic, structured, monitored, and registered process. It follows procedures and methodologies of professional supervision approved by the MLSPF, within individual or group sessions, conducted by persons in charge of supervision, following a previously developed plan or agenda. During those sessions, the supervised staff receive support in social services delivery.

However, the supervisors should be also available to the staff between formal sessions, when serious issues emerge in relation to the work with beneficiaries that cannot wait till the following supervision session. In addition, the need of informal consultation between colleagues may emerge, especially where there is a new staff member, or anxious employee who has barriers in putting questions in the presence of their colleagues. These contacts represent **informal supervision** that occurs whenever necessary, without a pre-set plan or agenda, and is not structured and officially registered. This communication involves not only the assigned supervisor, but also can take place between colleagues with various degrees of competence and experience. It may be done in different manners: by telephone, skype, face-to-face discussions, field visits. TSAS/services should promote the idea of informal supervision to support the new staff in their professional integration. For this purpose, colleague pairs are recommended to be made, where a better experienced social worker provides consultancy to a recently employed colleague. Informal supervision is a component of on-going process of the supervision system of a TSAS/service, but it should never replace formal supervision.

### **Individual supervision**

Individual supervision is an opportunity for the supervised staff member to get individual systematic support focused on individual professional needs. The supervised staff member is helped to develop skills in the work with beneficiaries, to identify the best methods of individual work, to develop self-confidence and discuss openly about problems faced in the professional activity.

The supervisor ensures on-going process, strengthens knowledge and explains to the employee how they can be applied in new situations, or guides the staff member to discover individually alternative methods of working with beneficiaries. The guidance provided by the supervisor conducts the employee to the achievement of a certain level of independent competence.

Individual supervision represents a systematic professional relation established between the supervised employee and the supervisor, both being in charge of the development of this process.

The core moment of the individual supervision is analysis of the quality of services provided by the given staff member. The supervisor should make sure that the supervised employee applies standard work methods: case management, specific evaluation and intervention tools.

The supervised person's needs of on-going training and support can be easier identified while analysing individual cases, within individual discussions about the activity of the staff member, problems related to the provision of social services, their status within the community.

### **Advantages of individual supervision:**

- Approaches the supervised employee individually;
- Facilitates the discussion of competence-related issues that the employee hesitates to discuss in group;
- Offers opportunity of confidentiality in highly challenging cases;

- Is more appropriate for work with timid persons who are not self-confident or are experiencing professional adaptation;

Individual supervision is done within one-to-one meetings between the supervisor and supervised employee, following a mutually agreed pre-set supervision plan, in line with the recommendations of the previously approved Supervision Mechanism (once in two or three months, and upon need). Each supervision session should be followed by the supervision session report (Annex 3) indicating the name of supervised staff member, venue and date of session, issues discussed, recommendations, term of implementation, and date of the following supervision session. It is important that both participants sign all individual supervision reports: the supervisor and the supervisee.

**Key moments of the individual supervision:**

- Suggests the intervention of a experienced supervisor in the case of a staff member with less experience;
- The supervisee is provided support and individual consultancy, depending on individual professional needs;
- Development of beneficiary work skills, cause-analysis of problems, independent identification of solutions, etc., are typical issues of individual supervision;
- Encouragement of the grow of self-confidence, open discussion of problems are opportunities for professional supervision;
- Possibility for the staff member to analyse work with beneficiaries in a safe and supporting environment, only with their supervisor;
- Support in the acquisition and use of work tools and methods (case management, other specific tools);
- On-going training needs and professional performances identification;

**Group supervision** offers opportunities to the group of employees to meet and revise activity and find together efficient solutions, learn one from another, and create a shared learning environment.

Group supervision is also a team-strengthening activity. In the case of TSAS that have employees in remote geographic areas, group supervision can offer a series of opportunities, comparing to individual supervision.

Group supervision sessions may include discussions of difficult cases, positive practices in work, or used to inform staff members about new trends and work methods.

Group supervision follows a supervision plan that had been agreed upon and written in line with the recommendations of the Supervision Mechanism (monthly or whenever needed). After each group supervision session, a Supervision Session Report should be made (Annex 3), including the list of supervised persons, venue and time of session, issues discussed, recommendations made, term of implementation and date of the following supervision session. All group supervision sessions reports should be signed by all session participants.

**Group supervision has a set of advantages:** it contributes to the generation of ideas and opinions for the identification of solutions, facilitates group learning, communication at equal positions, experience exchange, giving and receiving responses in a supportive setting, creates a feeling of belonging to group, shared responsibility for the solution of problems.

Additionally to the mentioned methods of supervision, TSAS can implement supervision using other forms of activity organization, such as monitoring field visits, supervision by skype, etc. Field monitoring visits are useful in cases when the supervisor or the supervised staff want to see the work process itself, to communicate to beneficiaries, local partners of community social workers, or to visit a community service. This is an efficient way of individual supervision and allows the demonstration of positive practices to other staff members. Such activities require the budgeting of TSAS resources for field visits.

#### **Case study: Professional supervision via Skype (TSAS Falesti)**

Online professional supervision sessions are organized at the initiative of community social workers, supervisor, and TSAS specialists. These are done in a variety of ways, most frequently in small groups, in cases when the issue involves 3-4 community social workers (for example, questions related to social support) and individual sessions (in moments when the community social worker faces a problem and needs advice or opinion). In some cases, online supervision meetings do not have a well-determined structure and are often held without a preliminary agenda "because social work is often unpredictable".

Skype sessions are also used for the consultation of the local multidisciplinary team in line with the agenda and cases proposed for discussion. This is normally done with the participation of the child's rights protection specialist or families with children protection specialist of the TSAS.

Child's rights protection specialist keeps the record of the local multidisciplinary teams' online supervision sessions. Only emergency cases are not planned and do not have a pre-set agenda.

**Obstacles** in the organization and running of online supervision sessions are mainly of technical nature: there is lack of separate area or space, no internet connection in all communities, difficulties in the use of internet and the computer.

**Advantages:** it saves time for commuting, does not impose transport costs, offers possibility to make decisions on cases in appropriate time.

**Disadvantages:** online relations are normally colder and more formal, and imply costs for internet connection.

**Results obtained:** community social workers appreciate online supervision sessions as a new method of getting necessary consultation in emergency; roles of supervisor and supervisee were exercised in offering mutual support and responses online; the level of TSAS specialists' participation in the sessions of local multidisciplinary teams increased, which also increased the quality and effectiveness of those sessions: "The members of multidisciplinary teams were reluctant in the beginning to participate in skype video sessions, and now they have got used to it. We have good results".

**Lessons learned**

- The model of online professional supervision can be appreciated as efficient and creative method that provides new opportunities for professional support.
- Online supervision is efficient for individual consultation, multidisciplinary team consultation, and for advising a small group of community social workers (2-3 persons).
- In order to ensure the participation of all community social workers in online sessions, technical issues need to be solved, including internet connection and costs.

The Head of TSAS should be in charge with the organization of online supervision session.

#### **1.4. Organizational framework of the professional supervision mechanism implementation**

The implementation of the professional supervision mechanism in social work implies the need to ensure adequate organizational framework and distribute supervision responsibilities on administrative levels.

**At the national level**, the MLSPF is responsible for the development of methodologies and informative materials, and for the training of TSAS and social assistance services personnel on professional supervision.

**At the regional level**, TSAS ensures the implementation of the professional supervision mechanism by all TSAS staff. In this context, the head of TSAS and social services managers identify persons to be delegated supervision responsibilities, ensures their training on the methodology of supervision, creates conditions for the fulfilment of those responsibilities, and monitors the supervision process within the subordinated structures. The head of TSAS provides supervision to TSAS specialists and managers of the services provided by or subordinated to TSAS (for example, Community social assistance service, Foster care service, Homecare service, Mobile team service, etc.).

The main goal of professional supervision **within the Community social service** is to improve professional competences of community social workers and to support the members of local multidisciplinary teams in the delivery of qualitative social services at the community level. The attention paid to the professional support of community social workers is explained by the fact that they are in direct contact with the community population, are the first contact persons in community social work, and make one of the largest groups of TSAS staff members. Considering this, the quality of the relation with the beneficiaries, and the quality of the work done by this group of employees is crucial in the establishment of trust and respect-based relations with the community members.

**Social services** within the structures subordinated to TSAS employ different categories of staff: social workers, educators, psychologists, lawyers, etc. Supervision process should be organized by types and groups of staff, or based on the principle of multidisciplinary activity (for members of multidisciplinary teams).

The organization of the professional supervision process makes the head of the TSAS to take responsibility for the organization of this process and to delegate supervision responsibilities to

managers of branches or services subordinated to TSAS (mid-level managers): responsibilities for the organization of the supervision process, identification of staff members who could carry-out supervising responsibilities, creation of conditions and monitoring of the supervision process.

**Supervision responsibilities** for the support provided to the TSAS staff can be delegated to a TSAS specialist or to an experienced social worker (depending on the number and types of staff) who will carry out supervision responsibilities (Annex 1).

While identifying staff with supervising responsibilities, managers in-charge (Head of TSAS and managers of services subordinated to TSAS) shall apply the following selection criteria:

- (a) Education: university degree in social work or socio-human science/secondary specialized education in social work/completed training course in social work.
- (b) Experience: preferably, 2 years' experience in social work activity.
- (c) Other: ability to work under pressure; communication competences; moral qualities; computer awareness and practical use of Windows applications.

At the same time, while selecting supervisors, attention will be paid to the employee's intention to assume responsibilities related to supervision, and their willingness to share experience, knowledge, and practical abilities in the area.

Professional supervision in the TSAS is organized according to **cascade method**, by levels, as follows:

- Head of TSAS supervises service managers within and subordinated to TSAS and specialists working within the TSAS;
- Services managers of the TSAS and those in subordination to TSAS supervise the identified supervisors among staff members;
- The supervisors ensure professional supervision to groups of staff members (community social workers, mobile team members, foster carers, other categories of staff).

Supervision sessions are organized by groups of staff members. Normally, most of the staff members of a TSAS are social workers. However, some social services may include other staff categories: educators, psychologists, lawyers, etc. Supervision sessions are also important for these categories of employees. These are usually one-to-one sessions or group meetings with specialists from several similar services (for example, a group of psychologists, or a group of educators).

### **The schedule of supervision sessions**

Based on the existing practice, when the supervisor combines functional responsibilities with supervisor's duties, the following frequency of supervision sessions is recommended:

- monthly: one group session at the regional level (for example, all community social workers and the head of TSAS or specialists with the head of TSAS; all staff of a social service within or subordinated to TSAS with their direct manager);

- monthly: a sub-group session at the regional level, with 7-10 staff members (for example, the supervisor with the group of supervised community social workers; supervisor with supervised psychologists of the specialised social services);
- whenever necessary– individual sessions;
- whenever necessary – monitoring field visits.

**Accountability** for the organized supervision sessions: the supervisor reports to the subdivision manager/social service manager within or subordinated to TSAS, then these managers report to the head of TSAS. The accountability on supervision activities with the services included into or subordinated to TSAS is based on the form indicated in Annex 5.

**Work conditions** for the fulfilment of supervision responsibilities include: a room for supervision sessions, telephone/access to telephone, internet (for online sessions), financial resources for monitoring field visits (travel), stationery.

### 1.5. Participants in the supervision process

Participants in the supervision process are the supervised staff, supervisors, and TSAS managers/managers of the services within or subordinated to TSAS. The process of professional supervision implies responsibilities assumed by all participants.

Responsibilities of the TSAS manager/manager of a service within or subordinated to TSAS	Responsibilities of the supervisor	Responsibilities of the supervised staff
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ensures the supervision process at the level of division or service;</li> <li>• identifies the supervisors;</li> <li>• makes annual plans of the professional supervision process at the level of division or service;</li> <li>• provides informational support to the supervisors (new or revised legal acts and norms, new work technologies, etc.);</li> <li>• monitors the supervision process at the level of division or service.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• plans the supervision session and informs the supervised staff (venue, time, agenda);</li> <li>• prepares the supervision session (materials, documents);</li> <li>• moderates the supervision session: guiding in case resolution, information, mediation of conflict situations;</li> <li>• analyses the supervision session and makes the supervision report;</li> <li>• monitors the casework between supervision sessions;</li> <li>• regularly reports on the supervision sessions held;</li> <li>• ensures confidentiality.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• presents difficult cases in work and offers relevant information;</li> <li>• respects the recommendations and terms;</li> <li>• ensures confidentiality.</li> </ul>

**The status of a supervisor** imposes the need to combine functional responsibilities with those of professional supervision. This implies the need to develop time and workload management skills.

In order to cope with the identified responsibilities, the supervisor should have case working skills, be aware of legislative changes and with the situation in the social services network, know the needs of groups of beneficiaries, have necessary skills for experience and knowledge sharing, provide constructive responses, be available to offer support and make decisions at the level of the delegated responsibilities.

The supervisor should have good communication skills, be able to establish efficient relations, be up to date with legislative and normative amendments and any changes in the community, be able to offer non-critical and constructive feedback.

### **Feedback in supervision**

Feedback is a bilateral process that allows offering and receiving information about certain behaviour, action, or situation. Providing feedback in professional training and practice is aimed at supporting the learner to model certain behaviours and attitudes based on constructive responses/remarks. Feedback allows us to understand how others see us, which helps us to know ourselves better in order to grow.

**Constructive feedback** is well-intended, descriptive, supported by arguments, formulated from the first person (I), describes behaviour, is offered in appropriate time and in small amounts, is addressed to concrete person.

**Destructive feedback** is general and vague, offending and critical, excessive, contains elements of evaluation and interpretation, is offered too late, and is too heavy, contains prejudices, is formulated in the plural (we), and is not direct. Consequently, the person justifies and defends or locks inside and accuses.

**Feedback result:** reinforces good performance, motivates the employee, encourages doing something differently or to adopt certain behaviour, develop new open and honest relations, improve work standards, agree on performance and improvement planning.

A good supervisor should assume engagement to facilitate efficient responses in concrete situations and reactions to information from different sources. In their turn, the supervisor should be also provided professional support from their superior manager.

The supervisor's activity imposes a set of competences: flexibility to be able to organize in time all activities stipulated in the job descriptions and those determined by the supervisor status. A supervisor should have multilateral vision of social work cases, be able to see things from various perspectives. This responsibility also involves capacity to control emotions, manage power without being aggressive or using destructive criticism, control anxiety and cope with the workload. In addition, being open to learning – for themselves and for the supervised staff, having good mood, being patient and willing to work with others, are premises that contribute to successful professional supervision.

Some newly appointed supervisors feel uncomfortable with their authority, preferring the status of being equal with the others. Other, on the contrary, are too authoritative and intrude excessively into the activity of their supervisees, causing feeling of rejection and/or dependence. A supervisor should admit own orientation to authority and be aware of the way their previous experience influences their own work style. A self-conscious supervisor can use authority in a flexible and balanced manner, to stimulate the supervisee's independence, maintaining at the same time adequate monitoring and control.

### **Guidelines for understanding the role of supervisor:**

**Control your work schedule.** Analyse your work load in the office and, if applicable, at home. In case you do not manage to accomplish all your work plans, this means you are overloaded at work or you do not have capacity to use your work time efficiently. Be always organized and, if necessary, ask for your superior manager's or colleagues' support.

**Find allies among colleagues.** It is good to have someone who shares your ideas and someone whom you trust to discuss work-related issues. See if there are such persons among your colleagues, who can offer you advice and who can be your informal consultant.

**Communicate efficiently with your supervised staff members.** Communication is the foundation of the supervisor's role. It helps staff members to be always informed and to provide necessary information. Use various channels of communication (in writing, via email, skype, phone, etc.).

**Use your authority in flexible and balanced manner** to stimulate the supervisee's independence, maintaining, at the same time, their adequate monitoring and control. Find a balance between authority, excessive involvement in the supervised staff's activities that may create feelings of rejection and dependence on one hand, and supervised employee's responsibility and awareness of the real situation of the beneficiary, on the other hand.

**Use efficient stress management to control own stress.** Remember to monitor and recognize signs of your own exhaustion. Seek and use stress management that are appropriate to you.

**The status of supervisee** offers the employee a possibility to reflect upon their work with beneficiaries and to find solutions to the identified problems. Supervision is a possibility to involve in seeking new options or methods of working with beneficiaries, and to receive support in the professional activity. Supervision helps to use existent resources and to manage time and workload more efficiently. This is why supervision is seen as shared responsibility and a process allowing pro-active participation.

As supervisee, the staff member should accept the requirement of being supervised and imposed certain responsibility, systematically participate in supervision sessions be open for exchange of information and knowledge, seek and use advice and guidance, inform the supervisor about dangers and conflicts in the work with beneficiaries, implement plans accepted during supervision sessions.

In order to intensify the effectiveness of supervision activities, supervision agreement is recommended to be concluded between the supervisor and the supervised staff. This agreement reflects supervision objectives, individual needs of supervised staff, and details of supervision sessions organization with a given supervisee (Annex 2).

## II. STANDARD PROCEDURES OF PROFESSIONAL SUPERVISION IN SOCIAL WORK “SUPERVISION IS A PROCESS, NOT AN EVENT”

### 2.1. Standard procedures of staff supervision

The largest groups of staff in services within and subordinated to TSAS are social workers, foster carers, mobile team members, and TSAS specialists. The main work method used by these employees is case management. In this context, the core aspects of professional supervision are related to the development and strengthening of competences related to the use of case management, creative use of existent resources, personal development, and effective worktime management.

The **goal** of professional supervision is to provide professional support to the employees, for effective accomplishment of the work responsibilities included into their job descriptions, as well as the use of case management and clear awareness of roles and responsibilities of each type of staff categories.

#### Key points:

- A supervisor’s workday never has enough hours to accomplish everything that needs to be done, but with intelligent organization, the work time and tasks can be easier managed. Identify a system of work organization that you find most efficient, and use it.
- Don’t forget to allow time for unforeseen events, as they will surely take place.
- Help your supervisees to understand your style of organization, so that they can call on you in difficult situations as they arise.
- Remember that you are an example for your colleagues who, if they accept your style of organization, will, in their turn, organize themselves.

#### 2.1.1 Competences development for the use of case management

This block of procedures ensures the application of the case management procedure in line with the established standard and according to the case management stages (Case management: practical guide, approved by the MLSPF, Order No. 96 of 18.05.2016).

##### A) *The use of case management.*

##### The Supervisor:

- makes sure the supervised managers use the case management method for all eligible situations, with all social services users;
- makes sure the supervised social workers check the eligibility criteria of beneficiaries recommended for social services (in line with the Regulations and Minimum Standards of Quality for each type of social services);
- verifies the work load (number of cases in work) of each supervised case manager, considering the complexity of the cases;

- makes sure the stipulations of the Social Worker’s Ethical Code are respected in the communication with beneficiaries, colleagues, community, etc.;
- informs the service manager on the eligibility of cases in work, the workload of the supervised case managers, level of case management competences development, professional development and capacity building needs.

#### **Strategies for the improvement of the supervisors’ work effectiveness**

- Systematically monitor and revise the activity of supervisees, using supervision sessions, and discuss relevant information to solve issues emerging in the work with beneficiaries.
- Plan supervision sessions with the new staff, to offer guidance and clarify eventual questions related to the new position and difficulties that may be encountered during professional integration. During the first several weeks daily contacts (sessions, phone conversations) may be recommended, while further on, weekly and/or monthly sessions could be held with this group of staff members.
- Make sure every supervision session starts with the revision of the activities planned at the previous meeting.

#### ***B) The stages of case management***

Case identification – the supervisor makes sure that the supervised case manager:

- uses all possibilities of population information about social services and social payments available at the community and regional level, and about eligibility criteria;
- identifies cases using at least one of the following sources;
  - a) direct query of the applicant, family, or legal representative;
  - b) referral from another service, public or private institution, specialists;
  - c) identification by a social worker;
  - d) report/written or phone notification by other persons in the community;
- regularly keeps the beneficiaries registration book;

Initial evaluation of the beneficiary’s situation – the supervisor makes sure that the supervised case manager:

- makes initial evaluation of the beneficiary’s situation, as soon as possible since the date of case registration, depending on case emergency and complexity (but not exceeding 10 days since the case registration);
- uses the standard initial evaluation form (provided in the Case Management practical guide, Annex 1) or the adapted form approved by the specialized social service;
- verifies the concerns related to the well-being of the beneficiary that represented the reason of initial evaluation;
- formulates correctly the recommendations, based on the initial evaluation data, in order to provide primary family care, initiate or close the case of the beneficiary;

- coordinates with the supervisor all recommended cases for referral to specialized services.

Complex evaluation of the situation of the beneficiary – the supervisor makes sure that the supervised case manager:

- runs the complex evaluation in line with the standard form indicated in the case management methodology (the Case Management practical guide, Annex 2), or using an adapted form of the specialized social service, making home visits (with or without notice), involving the multidisciplinary team in necessary cases, involving the beneficiary in the evaluation process.
- describes objectively the real situation, previous experiences of contacts with health care and social assistance services, offers correct appreciation of the child well-being accomplishment and, based on the collected information analysis, correctly establishes the needs of the beneficiary and his/her strengths and weaknesses. Also verifies whether the case manager consulted the opinion of the beneficiary (including the child) and family members about the existing situation;
- while running the complex evaluation of the family, collects general data about the family, its composition, living and well-being conditions, correctly evaluates the family protective factors (parental resilience, capacity to establish social support relations, parenting and child care and development skills, capacity to require concrete support in times of need, capacity to develop the child's emotional and social skills), established the differentiated level of these indicators for all family members, and formulates correct conclusions about each family protective factor, indicating the actions taken and the family's strengths and weaknesses.

The individual assistance plan and its implementation – the supervisor makes sure that the supervised case manager:

- makes the individual assistance plan of the beneficiary, together with the multidisciplinary team (where relevant), following standard methodology (Case management practice guide, Annex 3);
- plans interventions according to the individual needs for the improvement of the beneficiary's situation and family strengthening, identified in the result of complex evaluation, and considers all relevant and available resources in the community and region;
- involves the beneficiary in the implementation of the individual assistance plan and takes account of their opinions;
- systematically monitors the implementation of the actions planned and the delivery of social services, in line with the individual assistance plan and with the agreement of collaboration concluded with the beneficiary;
- revises the individual assistance plan within the identified terms (at least once in two months, or as it may be necessary);

- coordinates with the supervisor the decision on the case closure or re-initiation, or recommendation of the case referral to specialized social services.

The supervisor makes sure that the case manager respects the stipulations of the Social Worker's Code of Ethics, in terms of principles of communication with the beneficiary, through the following actions (when necessary, in difficult cases, and depending on the availability of resources): verifies whether the relevant documents are signed by the beneficiary, discusses with the beneficiary and family members about the degree of satisfaction with the services provided to them, discusses with the community representatives (mayor, mayoralty secretary, neighbours, relatives, etc.), analyses the beneficiary's queries, etc.

The supervisor makes sure the case manager runs the case-related documents, in line with the case management procedures, and that the cases of the beneficiaries are stored in special place that ensures maximum confidentiality of the information.

**Frequency** of supervision sessions related to the above procedures:

- a) monthly – group sessions;
- b) once in 2-3 months – individual sessions;
- c) more often, where necessary.

**Strategies for the improvement of the supervisors' work effectiveness:**

- Hold control of the information about the files of the beneficiaries in work, current tasks and actions of the supervised staff;
- Support the supervised staff in the prioritization of tasks, based on their importance and terms of accomplishment;
- Make sure that the entire documentation about the supervised staff is updated according to the established terms;

**2.1.2 Personal development of the supervised staff**

**A) In order to provide emotional support to the staff members, the supervisor:**

- supports the supervisees in self-evaluation of stress and professional burnout, in their knowledge of professional stress symptoms;
- analyses the potential of professional burnout caused by the work conditions and specific aspects (lack of resources, conflict relations, lack of information, overwhelming workloads, lack of feedback and appreciations, sanctions, conflict of values, tension caused by the lack of expected outcomes from groups of beneficiaries, etc.);
- applies techniques of professional burnout mediation and stress management, individual stress prevention tactics to provide emotional support to the supervised staff;
- prevents and contributes to the resolution of conflicts that may emerge in the group of employees due to insufficient understanding of their functional obligations and contradicting perceptions, disagreement with colleagues or supervisor, shortcomings

caused by the work place and insufficient resources for effective professional activity running;

**Frequency:** whenever necessary.

**Form of work:** individual or group sessions.

**Causes of stress and overwhelming in the social work activity:**

- lack or insufficient resources the social worker contributes with to the solution of the problems faced by beneficiaries;
- incompetence or lack of experience, which can lead to emotional breakdown of unexperienced or newly employed staff;
- the work itself may constitute the cause of overwhelming, when the stress specific to social work becomes reinforced;
- excessive emotional involvement into the problems of the beneficiary. The most devoted social workers who invest much energy to support beneficiaries risk most of all to experience emotional breakdown;

**The syndrome of professional burnout** is a syndrome of physical and emotional breakdown leading to the development of negative self-appreciation, negative attitude to work and loss of understanding and compassion in the relations with the beneficiary. This does not represent a loss of the creative potential, is not a reaction of boredom, but rather represents emotional overwhelming that appears on the ground of stress caused by interpersonal communication. Components of burnout are emotional breakdown, depersonalization, reduced personal performance.

**Solutions:** to appreciate our life generally – whether we live as we want or not, to organize our life so that we have a hobby not related to work, to pay attention to our own health (sleep enough, be able to treat without medicines, at least in the case of neurotic and psychosomatic issues), to learn to lose without self-justification, to learn to achieve the desired outcomes, not to hurry, to participate in activities that give us opportunities to meet new people and to exchange experience with colleagues, to improve our professional qualification.

Psychological and social factors **positively** impacting the employees at work: satisfaction with the work that depends on the employee's expectations and the possibilities of the work environment to fulfil them, expectations related to salary, professional development opportunities, collaboration with colleagues, degree of freedom to organize own work.

Psychological and social factors with **negative** impact on the employees at work: fear of dismissal and threats of eventual dismissal, salary cut-downs, low opportunities for the employee to influence own work environment, bad relations with the colleagues or administration, far too little stimulating or boring work content and insufficient social support.

**B) For effective worktime organization (time management), the supervisor:**

- analyses together with the supervised staff the effectiveness of worktime use and states the existing problems (overwhelming, inefficient organization of audience hours, transportation of documentation, unscheduled home visits, attendance of beneficiaries, etc.);

- estimates work conditions of the supervised staff (presence of an office or workplace, presence or access to equipment (phone, consumables, computer, copy machine, fax, internet, etc.)), access to the mayoralty's units and means of transport, and informs the head of the service about improvements;
- supports the supervised staff in the effective worktime organization (prioritization and combination of tasks, involvement of local actors in certain actions, delegation of responsibilities to the beneficiary, for the solution of own situation);
- supports the supervised staff in the exclusion and confrontation of the existing factors of distraction (unscheduled visits and sessions, excessive phone calls, correspondence).

**Strategies of effective worktime management and work conditions improvement:**

1. Analyse, how effectively you use your own worktime and how effective is the supervisee's worktime use:
  - see if the conditions of the job description are accomplished;
  - assess, to what extent the monthly time schedule is accomplished;
  - verify whether job checklists are used and priorities are set up;
  - make a random verification of the beneficiaries' case files completed by the supervisee;
  - identify tasks that are not accomplished within the established term;
2. Ensure adequate work conditions:
  - in the office or at the personal workplace;
  - access to equipment (telephone, consumables, computer, copy machine, fax, internet, etc.);
  - possibility to have flexible work program;
  - transport costs or access to existing transport units or means of transportation.

The supervisor should inform the supervisees on methods of effective worktime organization (tasks prioritization, tasks combination, polite refuse when one cannot keep a promise, etc.), and on techniques for the exclusion and confrontation of currently existing factors of distraction (unplanned visits, excessive phone conversations, correspondence).

**Frequency:** once in a year – for information, and whenever necessary – for support.

**Form of work:** individual and group sessions.

**Strategies for the improvement of the supervisors' work effectiveness:**

- Revise, together with the supervisees during supervision sessions, whether they manage their time effectively and whether they manage to meet with beneficiaries following individual assistance plans.
- Suggest to the supervisees that they balance their workload so that not only very difficult or very easy cases predominate.

- Use “to-do” activity lists, written on coloured sheets, in order to keep record of compulsory issues in day-to-day activities and those that must be checked in fixed intervals.

### **2.1.3 Monitor the development of professional skills of the supervised staff**

The supervisor, together with the supervisee:

- assess the professional development needs of the supervisee and write the individual professional development plan (Annex 4);  
**Frequency:** once a year.
- revises the individual plan of professional development, based on performance evaluation, and introduces amendments into the individual plan of professional development;  
**Frequency:** every 6 months since the date of the plan development.  
**Form of work:** individual sessions.
- recommends subjects of the on-going training of the supervised staff, submitting it to the Head of TSAS/service managers within or subordinated to TSAS;  
**Frequency:** once a year.

#### **Strategies for the improvement of the supervisors’ work effectiveness:**

- While preparing a supervision session where you plan to discuss the performances of the supervised staff, it is very efficient to ask the employee to make a list with areas they consider themselves competent and another list with areas they think they need training or support for improvement. The list will be discussed with the active participation of the employee, and will further feed the professional development plan.
- Together with the supervisee, make the professional development plan (Annex 4), indicating strengths, difficulties encountered, needs of individual performances development, and relevant recommendations.
- Promote on-going training of the supervisees and make sure they receive necessary information and training in order to accomplish their tasks. You may be the one who delivers on-going information and training, involving specialists from TSAS and other relevant services from the region.
- Regularly collect information from the supervisees and submit to the head of TSAS/service manager recommendations on the capacity building in professional and organizational activities, improvement of work conditions and environment, etc.
- 

### **2.2. Standard procedures for the supervision of supervisors**

Supervision of supervisors is done by services managers within or subordinated to TSAS. The head of TSAS is responsible for this process organization and monitoring. Capacity building of supervisors, enabling them to accomplish the supervising responsibilities, contains a series of

aspects:

**2.2.1 Capacity building enabling to accomplish supervising responsibilities:** managers of services within or subordinated to TSAS:

- inform the supervisors on new or revised norms and methodologies, positive practices in the area;
- build the supervisors' capacities enabling them to accomplish supervision responsibilities in the use of case management, new work technologies in social work, methodology of organization and promotion of individual and group sessions, field monitoring visits, professional development needs assessment of the staff and writing individual plans of professional development, providing emotional support and worktime management.

**Frequency:** whenever necessary, but not less than once a year.

**Form of work:** group sessions.

**Strategies for the improvement of the manager's effectiveness:**

- Systematically update your knowledge of the news in social work, to be able to share them with the supervisors and other staff during the supervision sessions;
- Use various information dissemination technologies that are relevant to your supervisees (verbal, on paper, email, skype, newsletters, etc.).
- Develop and propose to the supervisees various models of collaboration agreements with organizations and specialists in the community, to establish local partnerships.

**2.2.2 Capacity-building for the monitoring of the case referral process**

The service managers within or subordinated to TSAS:

- verifies the eligibility of each case recommended for referral to specialized social services, based on the analysis of the beneficiary's portfolio, complex evaluation data, actions taken within the case, and the needs of the beneficiary that cannot be met at the community level and that require specialized intervention;
- ensures the compliance with the case referral procedure;
- analyses the social services available at the community and regional level adequate to the needs of beneficiaries, and this information is further submitted to the head of TSAS, to be used in the planning process of local social services network;
- provides consultancy/support to supervisors, for the development of supervising competences, constructive response, conflict mediation, effective worktime management, and professional stress prevention.

**Frequency:** permanently, and as often as necessary.

**2.2.3 Personal development of the supervisors**

- to provide emotional support to employees, a supervisor learns methods of stress and professional burnout self-assessment, techniques of professional burnout mediation, stress and burnout management, individual tactics of stress prevention;

- the supervisor learns methods of analysis of professional burnout caused by conditions and specifics of work activity (lack of resources, conflict relations, lack of information, exhaustion, absence of feedback and appreciations, sanctions, conflict of values, tension caused by the lack of desired outcomes of certain groups of beneficiaries, etc.)

**Frequency:** once a year – to provide information, and whenever necessary – to provide emotional support.

- learns to analyse the effectiveness of worktime management, methods of worktime organization (tasks prioritization, tasks combination, polite refusal in cases when a promise cannot be kept, etc.);
- estimates work conditions of staff members: availability of a workplace, availability or access to equipment (phone, consumables, computer, copy machine, fax, internet), access to transport units and means of transportation in the mayoralty, etc.

**Frequency:** as often as necessary.

#### **Strategies for the improvement of the supervisor's work effectiveness:**

An effective stress control method in social work is the capacity to **identify a control circle** – what can be controlled and what cannot be controlled in the professional activity. Practice shows that one consumes own energy worrying about things that get completely out of their control, rather than concentrating their efforts on things that can be controlled.

A method to measure the level of control is to reflect upon own circle of influence:

- aspects of the situation you can control (own actions and thoughts, etc.);
- things you cannot control but which you can influence. For example, you cannot control certain actions of a staff member you are supervising, in turn, you can influence their activity, offering them support and qualitative guidance;

Things one cannot control. For example, one cannot control decisions made by superior manager, or specific policies and procedures in social work. In addition, one cannot always control what the supervisees do or do not. However, one can think how supervision activity can be influenced, and concentrate on things that he or she can control (working with the supervisees, treating the beneficiary, taking care to have necessary energy one offers to the beneficiaries, etc.).

#### **2.2.4 Monitoring and development of supervision competences**

In order to develop and monitor supervision competences of the supervisors, service managers within or subordinated to TSAS shall:

- assess the supervisors' professional development needs;
- provide support for the writing of individual plans of supervisors' professional development (Annex 4), based on the development needs assessment;

**Frequency:** once a year.

- provide support in the revision of individual plans of professional development, based on the performance evaluation;

**Frequency:** every six months since the individual professional development plan was written.

**Form of work:** individual sessions.

- use the information on the needs of professional development provided by supervisors, in order to plan on-going trainings;
- regularly inform the head of TSAS on the needs of professional development of staff members, to analyse and plan on-going training, and formulate proposals for the improving of the work effectiveness.

**Frequency:** once a year.

### III. ORGANIZATION OF PROFESSIONAL SUPERVISION SESSIONS

The practice of providing and receiving professional supervision should become an integrated component of the TSAS organizational culture.

Professional supervision is an on-going process, with systematic organization of sessions based on a fixed monthly schedule that specifies the agenda, date, place, and time of the session. Setting up a schedule of systematic sessions will help the staff to prepare for supervision sessions and to plan other related activities.

Below is a proposed model of organization of a structured supervision session that can be applied both for individual and group supervision.

#### **Stages of a supervision session:**

##### *Stage I: Preparing for a supervision session*

- Identify the session objective and agenda: any supervision session should have a clear agenda developed in advance with the participation of the supervised staff members (the issues of the agenda can be decided upon at the previous session). It usually includes the revision of the actions since the last session, case work, information of amendments and news in the normative framework, planning or accomplishment of staff members' work tasks, or discussion of issues related to practical aspects of the professional activity.
- Decide on the type of session: depending on its objective, you may decide whether you need to organize an individual or group supervision session. Some issues can be more effectively discussed individually, others in group.
- Collect the necessary information: if you need additional information for the supervision meeting, then you should prepare them in advance. A session with a missing informative component considerably loses in its effectiveness and interest.
- Involve other persons while preparing for the session: this is a good method of attracting some of the supervisees or invited specialists in the supervision session, in order to provide consultancy.
- Prepare the room for the session: the area where the supervision session will be held should be comfortable and appropriate for the number of participants.

##### *Stage II: organization of the supervision session*

- Start and finish the session on time: coming on time to the supervision session demonstrates that it is important and a priority for the organization/service. Massive delays and absences from supervision sessions may show that something might be changed in terms of hour or day of the session.

- Follow the agenda: it is important that the agenda is established prior to the meeting. The agenda shall be a shared responsibility of the supervisor and the supervised staff. Discuss every point of the agenda, formulated brief conclusions.
- Ask the participants to sign the participation list: adopt a practice of recording the participation of supervision meetings.
- Diversify the work atmosphere during the group sessions: before and after the session, offer some time for the participants to discuss informally and establish interpersonal relations. “Meeting after the meeting” can be a time when people discuss informally, attach to the group, generalize new ideas.

In every group there can be persons who create certain difficulties for the group functioning. They may resist decisions and formulated recommendations. During the session, they may tend to dominate through long interventions, inhibiting others to express opinion, or ignore others’ opinions. The behaviour of persons who avoid participation in the group discussions, or who refuse to express opinion on the discussed issues may be difficult alike.

#### **Strategies for dealing with “difficult” participants**

- Use agenda and core established rules for group sessions in order to influence the behaviour of difficult participants;
- Ask for group decisions on the colleague’s difficult behaviour;
- Be sincere: tell what is happening at the group session;
- Use various tactics to deal with difficult persons: accept, solve, or delegate, use humour, body language (when appropriate), make a pause;

#### Stage III: Contents of the supervision session

The content of supervision sessions varies, depending on the agenda and issues proposed for discussion. An ordinary supervision session includes: approval of issues in the agenda, discussion of progress since the previous supervision session, revision of the work with beneficiaries within discussions, providing constructive responses and problem solution, allocating time to reflect on experiences and feelings related to the professional activity, identification of professional objectives, acquisition of knowledge and developing abilities, sharing internal organizational information, setting the time, date, and certain issues to be discussed during the following session.

By the end of the session, the supervisor should make sure they have the engagement of the supervisees to accomplish the discussed tasks and activities.

#### Stage IV: Closing a supervision session

While closing the session, analyse the discussion results. Analysis is necessary to have a whole image of the session’s effectiveness, which will help you to improve the supervision activities. Supervision session analysis can be done by the supervisor alone or together with the manager of the service that is within or subordinated to TSAS.

It is important that the supervisor collects the opinions of the participants concerning the session and eventual improvements for the future.

A supervision session report should be written at the session end, according to the form indicated in Annex 3. The supervisor will need current reports for the development of the annual plan.

#### **Supervision session report**

- is a formal tool helping to monitor the progress and development of the supervised staff;
- follows standard form (Annex 3);
- for each action of the report, the person in-charge should be appointed and the accomplishment term should be established;
- the time, date, and venue of the following session should be registered;
- the report should be signed by all session participants and by the supervisor;
- the head of TSAS establishes the rules for the access to the supervision sessions report and limits of confidentiality.

#### **IV. REFERENCES**

1. Alderson, J. & Jarvis, S. (1999). *Introduction to Supervision for Child Welfare Services*. Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill School of Social Work Freudenberg, (1977:90)
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5. Morrison, Tony (2000), *Staff Supervision in Social Care*, London: Pavilion Publishing.
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## **V. ANNEXES**

**Annex 1.** Supervisor's responsibilities - for the services within or subordinated to TSAS

**Annex 2.** Supervision agreement

**Annex 3.** Supervision session report

**Annex 4.** Individual plan of professional development

**Annex 5.** Annual report on the implemented supervision activities

## **Supervisor's responsibilities**

### **For services within or subordinated to TSAS**

#### **1. Information about the person and structure/service**

**Name and position of the person with supervising responsibilities**

**Head of TSAS/service manager**

#### **2. Status of the supervisor**

The supervisor provides capacity-building support to supervisees. This includes professional consultation on the accomplishment of the supervisee's job duties, use of work methodology (including case management), case referral procedure, and contributes to the professional and personal development of the supervised staff.

#### **3. Supervision responsibilities**

##### **a) Direct subordination**

The supervisor is directly subordinated to \_\_\_\_\_

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##### **b) Supervisor's responsibilities**

- identifies and assesses the needs of the supervisees for consultation, professional and personal development;
- together with the supervisee, makes the individual plan of personal development and helps to accomplish it;
- plans and runs individual and group supervision sessions, for the professional and personal growth and strengthening of the supervised employees, and for the prevention of professional burnout.
- verifies and consults on paperwork, filling individual assistance forms of beneficiaries, writing reports on the situation of the beneficiaries and activity report, in line with the established rules;
- informs the supervised staff about new normative acts and methodologies, as well as about positive practices in the area;
- verifies the volume of work of the supervised staff and analyses the effectiveness of worktime use;
- together with the supervisees analyses the problems existing in the communities and formulates recommendations for the improvement of existing and development of

new social services;

- informs the head of TSAS/service manager about insufficient or lacking resources that affect the functioning responsibilities of the supervisees.

#### 4. The legal and normative framework

- a) Constitution of the Republic of Moldova and legislative acts and norms in the area;
- b) Instructions and methodological documents produced by the MLSPF;
- c) Decisions and ordinances of the local public authorities of the first and second level;
- d) The Social Worker's Ethical Code;
- e) Supervisor's responsibilities.

#### 5. Professional development

The supervisor will be provided supervision and relevant training programs by \_\_\_\_\_

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#### 6. Qualification requirements

**(a) Education:** University degree in social work or socio-human science/secondary specialized education in social work/training courses in social work.

**(b) Experience:** Preferably, 2 years' experience in social work.

**(c) Other:** ability to work under tight schedule;  
moral competences;  
communication competences;  
ability to work with the computer and practical experience in using Windows applications.

#### 7. The supervised staff

The supervisee will provide professional supervision to \_\_\_\_\_ employees

#### 8. Confirmation

**Supervisor's signature**

**Date**

**Signature of the head of TSAS/social service manager**

**Date**

**AGREEMENT OF SUPERVISION**

**Supervisor:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Supervisee:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Supervision objectives:**

- To make sure that the employee understands own role and job responsibilities;
- To make sure that the work is done in compliance with the legal frameworks and standard procedures;
- To provide support for the development and professional capacity-building of the supervisee;
- To provide constructive analysis, emotional and moral support.

**Individual needs of the supervisee:**

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Organization of the supervision process:**

1. Supervision activities, frequency and venue of sessions:
  - Individual sessions \_\_\_\_\_
  - Group sessions \_\_\_\_\_
  - Field monitoring visits (if necessary) \_\_\_\_\_
2. The supervision sessions will be held according to the preliminary agenda and will be registered.

The conditions of this Agreement will be revised annually.

**Supervisor's signature:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Supervisee's signature:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date of Agreement conclusion:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date of Agreement revision:** \_\_\_\_\_

**REPORT**  
**on the supervision session**

**Supervisor:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Supervisee(s):** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Type of session (individual session, group session, field monitoring visit (when necessary)):** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Date of supervision session:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Venue of supervision session:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Agenda:**

Objectives and issues discussed	Actions recommended and resources involved	Person in-charge	Term of accomplishment

**Supervisor’s signature:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Signature(s) of the supervisee(s):** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Date of next supervision session:** \_\_\_\_\_

**INDIVIDUAL PLAN OF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

**Supervisee:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Supervisor:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date when the plan was written:** \_\_\_\_\_

**The supervisee’s strengths:**

**Needs of individual performances improvement:**

<b>Long-term objectives (one year):</b>			
<b>Actions to be implemented</b>	<b>Person in-charge</b>	<b>Term of accomplishment</b>	<b>Comments on the obtained results</b>
a.			
b.			
<b>Short-term objectives (1-3-6 months):</b>			
1.			
<b>Actions to be implemented</b>	<b>Person in-charge</b>	<b>Term of accomplishment</b>	<b>Comments on the obtained results</b>
a.			
b.			
2.			
<b>Person in-charge</b>	<b>Term of accomplishment</b>	<b>Comments on the obtained results</b>	<b>Person in-charge</b>
a.			
b.			

**Date of plan revision:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Supervisee's signature:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Supervisor's signature:** \_\_\_\_\_

**ANNUAL REPORT**  
**on the implemented supervision activities**

**Supervisor:** \_\_\_\_\_

<b>Date of session</b>	<b>Type of supervision</b>	<b>Main topic of the session</b>	<b>Venue</b>

**Supervisor's signature:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date of report submission:** \_\_\_\_\_