**Handling Supervisory Files – more info can be found in the Supervision Policy 2021-26**

[**https://www.methodist.org.uk/media/22468/finalised-supervision-policy-2021-26.pdf**](https://www.methodist.org.uk/media/22468/finalised-supervision-policy-2021-26.pdf)

Please note. This guidance review is an update of that issued as part of the Supervision Policy owing to new pieces of advice being requested for bespoke circumstances.

**Formal Records**

**The Supervisory File**

In this document we refer to the ‘Supervisory File’ to mean the place where a full set of completed Covenant Agreement Forms, Agreed Records and Reports to and from MDR (Ministerial Development Review) or other appraisal processes are kept.

**The Supervisory File contains:**

**1 Covenant Forms**

* This form is held in confidence between the Supervisor and Supervisee with a copy being sent to the nominated third party/minister in oversight.

**2 Agreed Records**

* Everything that happens in the supervision is confidential to the supervision relationship except that written on the Agreed Record which is shared with the nominated third party/minister in oversight.

**3 Formal Reports**

* E.g. to/from the Ministerial Development Review process or to a District Probationers’ Secretary.

There are two official copies of the File. One is kept by the supervisor and one by the nominated third party (who will usually be the minister in oversight if the minister in oversight is not the supervisor).

The supervisee may also keep a copy of the File for their own records and to reflect on.

Files should be kept in a locked filing system (If in a paper format) or in a password protected electronic format. In some cases arrangements can be agreed to store these records on a secure memory stick as long as the supervisee is comfortable with the arrangement. Instructions on what to do with the Supervisory File at the end of a supervisory relationship are given within this document.

**Informal Record-keeping**

* It is good practice for supervisors to keep their own informal notes of supervisions for the sake of tracking and monitoring the supervisory relationship. These are to be kept in a locked filing system or in a password protected electronic format. Supervisors should be aware that these notes are subject to rights contained in the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) for example the right to Subject Access Request (SAR).
* Informal notes can be kept for an agreed length of time e.g. a connexional year before destruction or for the duration of the relationship. This should be made clear during the covenanting process
* Informal notes must be destroyed at the end of the supervisory relationship. These records are not passed on as part of the Church’s processes. An exception to this may be where there is an ongoing unresolved matter e.g. Disciplinary issues, Safeguarding concerns or a serious wellbeing situation that has been referred on and where the supervisor may be called on for input.

**How Information may leave the Supervisory Space**

* A supervisee may choose to share the content of their supervision with others.
* Supervisors are also in supervision and will disclose information to their supervisors that is necessary for effective supervision of their practice. This process covers the supervisors’ practice and not the content of their supervisees work but inevitably there may be some generalised disclosure.
* Anything that will need to be acted on by a minister in oversight (MiO) or other party needs to be recorded on the Agreed Record. (Supervisors who are supervising colleagues will need to be very careful to act clearly as supervisors and not cross boundaries.) The MiO will also use this form to carefully consider any issues of wellbeing raised as part of reflective supervision.
* Annual reports to the MDR process or other appraisal processes should be compiled from the Agreed Record on the forms provided. The supervisee should have the chance to comment on any report made before it is sent.
* Reports may be required by a safeguarding investigation or competence or complaints procedure.
* Themes arising across various supervisory experiences may be raised with the Supervision Reference Group to able the church to carefully consider matters of wellbeing in ministry. Any themes are anonymised.
* Those supervising probationers will need to write evidential reports articulating the probationer minister’s willingness to engage fully in the supervision process. This feeds into the process that determines whether a minister is ready for ordination and to be received into Full Connexion.

**Roles and Responsibilities**

**The Supervisor**

* An agreed record of the supervision session should be completed at the end of each supervision and recorded on the Agreed Record Form. This form should be signed by both parties **no later than 7 days** after the session and it is the responsibility of the supervisor to ensure that this timeframe is agreed and adhered to. Agreed records are to be kept in a file, in a locked filing system or in a password protected electronic format. The supervisee should have a copy and a copy should be sent immediately the signed copy is available, by the supervisor, to the person named on the Supervision Implementation Plan who is designated to receive the third party records.
* At the end of a supervisory arrangement the supervisor’s copy of the File should be either posted by recorded delivery (or sent as a password protected electronic file) to the new supervisor or to the keeper of the SIP if the new supervisor is not yet known.
* For ministers retiring from the active work or ceasing to be in Full Connexion the supervisor’s copy of the File should be sent to the Chair of the District to where the supervisee is residing. The File will be held until the supervisee’s death and then destroyed by the Chair. The File’s content may be drawn upon and reinstated should the supervisee wish to move back into active work. For those ceasing to be in Full Connexion a right to erasure may be applied for: advice should be sought from The Conference Office before agreeing to such a request.
* For ministers leaving the British Connexion and returning to their sending context, the File should be sent to the connexional supervision team. If reflective supervision is part of the receiving conference’s process then liaison will take place to establish if records should be sent on. If they are retained in the UK they will be kept for a maximum of 7 years then destroyed in line with HR Guidelines.
* For ministers who are suspended and/or under disciplinary investigation there is a possibility that supervision may continue, although this is not mandatory. The District Chair will make a choice about whether the supervision relationship remains the same or if alternative support should be provided. The supervisory File should be retained by the supervisor during the period of suspension until such time as a decision is reached. If the minister returns to active work the first agreed record can be marked to note the legitimate period of inactivity or that separate records have been created and where they are being kept. If the minister ceases to serve records should be sent to the connexional supervision team for confidential storage. *(This advice may be reviewed again during the winter of 2023)*
* For ministers resigning from their ministry within British Methodism, Files should be sent to the connexional supervision team. They will arrange confidential storage and a note will be added to their ministry file to ensure reinstatement of the supervisory File should circumstances change or destruction at the point of death.
* For lay people leaving their role in the connexional team, Files should be sent to the connexional supervision team. They will arrange confidential storage and ensure the files are destroyed after 7 years in line with HR recommendations. Should the reason for leaving their church role be connected to Safeguarding matters then the records will be kept for x years as determined by the Safeguarding Team.
* For lay people leaving their role in the wider church, Files should be sent to the connexional supervision team. They will arrange confidential storage and ensure the files are destroyed after 7 years in line with HR recommendations. Should the reason for leaving their local/circuit/district church role be connected to Safeguarding matters then the records will be kept for x years as determined by the Safeguarding Team.
* If a supervisee dies in service, the supervisor’s copy of the File should be destroyed by the supervisor and the conference office advised.

**Nominated Third Party/Minister in Oversight Receiving Agreed Records**

* A supervision File, for each minister or lay person who the third party receives records for, should be kept in a locked filing system or in a password protected electronic format.

* The Third party is responsible for ensuring they are in receipt of a full set of records for each person for whom they receive records. Ideally this will be a natural process as records are typically received every 6-8 weeks. On occasion though annual checks may be of value to ensure supervision is in place and the process is being well handled.
* The Third party is looking at the forms to check the following.
* Are they the right person to receive these records?
* Do they have sight of a covenant form that confirms the supervision relationship is ongoing and working appropriately? ( The covenant is renewed annually)
* Are the agreed records arriving at regular intervals?
* Are the topics discussed/ reflections undertaken seemingly relevant to the work and ministry of the supervisee?
* Are there any safeguarding issues or matters of risk that have been flagged and require attention?
* Are there any referrals or wellbeing issues of note that require action?
* If the supervisee is themselves a supervisor, have they taken supervision to supervision for reflection on their practice at the required interval?
* Having read and reviewed the Agreed Record (checking that there are no actions needed) the record is filed accordingly.
* When the third party /minister in oversight ceases to be the third party /minister in oversight there is no need to pass on a copy of the file providing the supervision File held by the supervisor is complete and transferred appropriately. It can be marked for destruction 6 months after the responsibility is laid down. Any new Third Party is only responsible for oversight of the supervision when it comes under their remit. Exceptions to this may include situations that are still under review or may have to be referred to around matters of discipline or safeguarding. They can be taken on a case by case basis.
* When the supervisee is moving into a role that does not require supervision under the policy (e.g. retirement) the supervisory File will be forwarded to the District Chair where the minister is planning to reside and the 3rd party copy can be destroyed, as long as there is confidence that one copy has been forwarded as required. This is in case the Minister involved engages in supervision in the future and to fulfil the policy requirements that records are retained until the death of the minister.
* If a supervisee dies in service the nominated third party’s copy of the File should be destroyed by the nominated third party.

**Keeper of the Supervision Implementation Plan (SIP)**

* The keeper of the SIP shall ensure that each supervisee knows who their supervisor is and who will be their nominated third party.
* In the event of a change of supervisor or nominated third party the Supervision File may be sent to the keeper of the SIP who will be responsible for forwarding it to the appropriate person. This will happen when there is a lack of clarity about the new supervisor to whom records should be sent

**The District Chair (sometimes but not always the SIP holder)**

* If a supervisee is retiring into the district the District Chair will receive one copy of the supervision file (that held by the supervisor). The File is retained (in case the supervisee requests a return to the active work, a reference is needed, or there is a request regarding safeguarding or complaints and discipline) until the minister’s death whereupon it should be sent to the Conference Office where it will then be destroyed. Should a minister move home then the file should be sent to the chair of the district where they have chosen to reside.
* If a supervisee, who is residing in the district, is moving into a role that does not require supervision under the policy this should be recorded on the SIP. The District Chair will receive one copy of the supervision File (that held by the supervisor). They should retain that file in case the supervisee returns to an appointment that requires supervision under the policy where upon the District Chair should send the files to the new supervisor.

**The Supervisee**

* An agreed record of the supervision session should be completed at the end of each supervision and recorded on the Agreed Record Form. This form should be signed by both parties no later than 7 days after the session and it is the responsibility of the supervisor to ensure that this timeframe is agreed and adhered to. It is though a shared responsibility and every supervisee should be mindful of signing the record sent and returning it in the timeframe.
* Supervisees are welcome to keep an informal copy of their supervision File but are not required to.