



Practice Supervisor Development Programme

Everything you need to know about the PSDP...

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About the PSDP

Research in Practice, together with a group of Partners, have formed a Consortium to develop and deliver a national Practice Supervisor Development Programme (PSDP) funded by the Department for Education (DfE).

Since 2018, the PSDP has provided high-quality continuing professional development (CPD) for approximately 1650 practice supervisors throughout England making the transition from practitioner to first-line manager. In 2020 the programme was extended to managers of practice supervisors, and in 2021 more places were offered to practice supervisors regardless of experience in role. The programme has been well received by the sector and we are delighted that the DfE have recently awarded an extension to the programme enabling us to now offer a number of additional cohorts commencing in January 2022.

Who is in the partnership?

Research in Practice is leading a consortium which includes: The Tavistock and Portman NHS Foundation Trust, University of Sussex and Goldsmiths, University of London. The Consortium is supported by a network of Local Delivery Partners (LDPs). These are:

- > D2N2 Teaching Partnership (East Midlands region)
- > Northumbria University (North East region)
- > Greater Manchester Social Work Academy (North West region)
- > South Yorkshire Teaching Partnership (Yorkshire and Humber region)
- > University of East Anglia (Eastern region)
- > University of Bristol (South West region)
- > University of Birmingham (West Midlands region)
- > In-Trac (providing additional / contingency delivery capacity).
- > Goldsmiths will act as the Local Delivery Partner for London, and University of Sussex will act as Local Delivery Partner for the South East region.
- > Tavistock and Portman NHS Trust

The PSDP does not replace the wealth of existing CPD provision available. With limited numbers of places on the PSDP, Local Authorities (LAs)/ Trusts will need to select carefully which supervisors should attend the PSDP, and should certainly continue to engage with their local teaching partnership/ higher education institution. Every effort will be made to ensure the PSDP builds upon and complements existing CPD.



How has the programme been planned?

By scoping and surveying the sector to gain an understanding of current best practice and then using this understanding to shape a training and development programme. Feedback throughout the programme informs any necessary changes.

What are the key values, principles and related expectations for the wider PSDP partnership?

The programme aims to provide consistent and coherent delivery that is a positive experience for participants and facilitators with the best outcomes for all concerned. We achieve this by collectively adhering to the principles reiterated below:

- > Be sector facing, giving due respect to practice wisdom and making sure we engage with stakeholders at every opportunity.
- > Be open, constructive, collegiate and inclusive.
- > Be values driven, offering mutual respect and appropriate challenge where necessary.
- > Be informed by evidence.
- > Be professional, reflective and responsive.

What have we achieved so far?

As at March 2021, three Waves of the programme have been delivered equating to 79 cohorts in total. Some other facts:

- > **1650** practice supervisors/managers trained
- > **38** facilitators engaged
- > **800** feedback forms completed
- > **1230** certificates issued

To find out more about the difference the PSDP has made, please look at our Impact Page on the [Resources and Tools website](#).

Is the PSDP just for Children's Services?

Yes, the PSDP was commissioned by the DfE and is focused on child and family social work within LAs/ Trusts. We are, however, very keen to learn from and share learning with the adults' social work sector. Any colleagues wanting to explore this issue should contact psdpevents@researchinpractice.org.uk.

Additional places - how to nominate?

The programme has been extended to July 2021 (Wave 4) and aims to deliver a further:

- > 4 generic cohorts, for any Practice Supervisors
- > 3 bespoke cohorts for specific LA/Trusts selected in consultation with DfE
- > 1 Supervising the Supervisor cohorts for Line Managers of Practice Supervisors.

What if I can't make all days of the teaching element of the PSDP?

The expectation is that participants will attend all planned days of the programme, and as such we ask that this time is protected in participants' diaries by their managers and we will ask for confirmation of this from both participant and manager as part of the agreement of the Terms of Engagement.

We do however understand that in rare cases, unavoidable and exceptional circumstances may arise that make it difficult for a participant to attend a particular day or session. In these circumstances we will make every attempt to accommodate the participant whilst ensuring the delivery and experience of others is not impacted, but unfortunately we cannot guarantee that they

will be able to fully complete the course. Where possible arrangements can be made to catch up on missed elements.

How will places be allocated?

We will be asking LAs/Trusts to nominate participants during November 2021 – these requests will be sent out to all Directors of Childrens Services and Principal Social Workers via the Research in Practice network.

- > **Generic cohorts** - we will ask for one name per organisation and provide a [Nomination Selection Guide](#). As we have a finite number of places we will allocate nominees on a first come first served basis. Any nominees who are not allocated a place will be added to a waiting list as additional places can become available at short notice.
- > We have a very limited number of places available on the Supervising the Supervisor PSDP and will be contacting individual LAs and Trusts separately to progress nominations.



How many participants will there be per course?

Courses will be delivered to cohorts between 18 and 21 participants.

Other important considerations when nominating...

When nominating staff we particularly encourage you to consider how you might use this programme for black and minoritised practice supervisors and middle leaders. The DfE have asked us to invite LAs/ Trusts to reflect on whether nominations for additional cohorts are representative of their workforce demographic. You can access the latest published data (Feb 2021) on the ethnicity of children and family social workers [here](#). Reference the guide on extracting LA/Regional data

Your nominees should be also be supported with access to required technology for this type of virtual learning.

Why has the criteria changed to include more experienced practice supervisors?

We listened to feedback from previous participants and sector colleagues who advised that there were many elements of the course that would be equally useful to more experienced practice supervisors. **The PSDP is now available to all practice supervisors regardless of length of experience and contract type i.e. permanent, fixed term and agency.** The course content is based on the most recent research and practice which we feel all colleagues will benefit from. The course content has been adapted to take into account which elements more experienced participants would benefit from so it is targeted to this audience.

Are we just talking about 1:1 line management supervisors being able to access the course?

No, not necessarily. Practice supervisors are defined by DfE as those whose professional role is to support and develop practitioners who are working directly with children and families. These practice supervisors may not hold formal line management roles; they may be called ‘advanced practitioners’, ‘consultant social workers’, or something similar.

Is the Supervising the Supervisor course a PSDP for Managers

While some participants felt the PSDP or many elements within the PSDP would be of value to their management teams, the aim of this course is not to deliver the full PSDP to participants’ line managers but to work on strategies to embed learning back in the workplace. The aim of the Supervising the Supervisor course is to discuss and provide strategies and support to enable this learning transfer.

Why are we asked to register now when our course delivery isn't until early next year?

The course is very popular and we would like to ensure that all LAs/ Trusts have an opportunity to take up their places before we offer them to candidates on the waiting list.

“Being part of the PSDP programme was one of the highlights of my learning as a manager in my social work career” PSDP participant

Are there any pre-course requirements?

Yes, we are keen to retain a focus on learning needs and achievements throughout the programme. This is to ensure that participants are able to recognise the value, impact and benefit of the learning and transferring it into practice.

We ask participants to complete a three-fold evaluation process. This comprises of a self-evaluation, a manager’s evaluation and a guided conversation with one or more supervisees. This provides an indication of the objectives you want to focus on and acts as a baseline for measuring progress. The participant and their manager are also required to sign a Terms of Engagement document as both an individual and organisational commitment to allow protected time for this important CPD initiative.

The PSDP Team are available to support participants and their managers to complete the evaluations where necessary.

There is also some self-directed learning.



About the Programme

What does the programme look like and what will be covered?

The PSDP has an applied and experiential framework, which will provide a solid grounding in the values, skills and knowledge that the evidence suggests are important for practice supervisors. Course delivery will remain virtual.

The delivery model now comprises of:

- > **Generic cohorts - Six days plus a half day introduction** of in person learning – delivered in three blocks over three months. The cohort begins with an introduction session that will offer participants the chance to meet their facilitators and course colleagues, begin the learning process, discuss self-directed learning, offer technical support and to complete any outstanding pre-requisites.
- > **Supervising the Supervisor cohorts - Three days** in person virtual learning – delivered in two blocks over two months **plus a two hour onboarding session** to discuss self-directed learning and offer technical support.

"Considering this is virtually, it has worked well and well-paced, with use of slides, handbooks, small and larger group discussions."

This full programme aims to support practice supervisors to embed their learning as follows:

- > **In person learning days** - Each day consists of five themed sessions covering topics such as shaping and influencing the practice system; enabling change; emotion in social work; leadership and management and developing excellent practitioners.
- > **Small group practice development sessions** - These comprise of three small group practice development sessions, that take place during the six days. These are an opportunity to bring live issues from practice for discussion and reflection with peers and a facilitator, using a specific method of reflection.
- > **1:1 individual reflective development sessions** - Practice supervisors will have access to specialist 1-1 development sessions from the Tavistock and Portman NHS Foundation Trust to support them in applying their learning from the programme to their practice setting.

- > **Self-directed study** - Structured online self-directed study and reflection is the final dimension of the programme using the Tavistock's virtual learning environment, Moodle. A range of materials are available on this site. Moodle enables you to access course and other materials as well as book your 1-1 individual reflective development sessions and be part of the online cohort community.

Attendance is expected at all elements.

"The PSDP course which provides learning through six key aspects of professional leadership has undoubtedly been revolutionary for me. I can't sing enough praises for the content of this course and the course leaders whose skills and containment took me and others through what I would call a journey of discovery and enlightenment."

Who will facilitate the course?

Facilitators will be identified by the LDPs. Each course will have two facilitators who will be experienced practitioners with experience of CPD delivery and/or will be experienced CPD facilitators from a local HEI with good knowledge and understanding of practice. As part of their engagement with the course, these facilitators participate in a Community of Practice (CoP) which will ensure the core values and principles are embedded across all LDPs and that a consistent body of knowledge is applied across all delivery. Peer review activities between LDPs is used to quality assure the consistency of course design and delivery.

What are the links with the National Assessment and Accreditation System?

The materials developed for both the PSDP repository and the formal course clearly reflect – but are not limited to – the Post Qualifying Standards (KSS) for practice supervisors. The PSDP should therefore be highly valuable and relevant for those going on to undertake the assessment and accreditation for practice supervisors, but the PSDP is not intended to ‘teach to the test’.

Will participation in the PSDP be accredited?

There won’t be any formal academic accreditation, as this was not part of the contract with the DfE. However, all candidates who successfully complete the programme will receive a certificate in recognition of their participation. An inclusive and flexible approach to recognition will be offered with two tiers of award as agreed by DfE.

- > **Level One** - PSDP Certificate of Participation will be awarded to participants who have attended all delivery days
- > **Level Two** - PSDP Certificate of Completion is optional and will be awarded to participants who hold a Certificate of Participation and have:
 1. Undertaken as a minimum LNE1 and LNE3
 2. Attended 1-1 Individual Development Sessions
 3. Completed a self-reflective assignment evidencing learning over the duration of the programme

Find out more about the [PSDP Reflective Assignment Briefing Document](#).

Submit your [PSDP Reflective Learning Log](#).



Virtual Delivery

Why is the programme being delivered virtually?

It is in the interest of participants and overall public health and safety we have taken the decision that PSDP will continue to be delivered virtually. We don't feel it is responsible to bring together groups of colleagues from across regions at this time. The PSDP team are experienced in virtual facilitation and delivery and a high-quality learning programme has been adapted so that participants will be able to engage in online.

"This was the best virtual training I have been on and I was impressed with the limited challenges that were experienced."

How can I make virtual learning more effective?

We would encourage all participants and their managers to ensure they have dedicated time away from business and other distractions to fully engage in all elements of the programme and in particular the in person virtual learning sessions. You will also be sent a resource pack to support online learning. This contains your printed workbooks, useful tools and resources to take back to your teams and some treats to keep you motivated!

"The resource pack is amazing plus it was the nicest thing ever to receive the pack of goodies. It left me feeling 'cared for' and 'thought about' - it is so rare to be given anything like this in social work."

Which virtual learning platforms will you be using?

We will be using Zoom for the majority of cohorts and Microsoft Teams for a smaller number. Zoom is the preferable platform based on functionality and feedback.

Why are we using Zoom as the chosen digital delivery platform?

The success of the PSDP to date has been in the relational, personal nature of the course and delivery, so it is important to retain this. Participants and facilitators have fed back that Zoom is the best platform to create this important relational learning environment because:

- > The whole group can see each other while they are learning
- > Small group work, which is integral to the pedagogical model

- > Is simple and intuitive to use
- > Accessible from a web browser and does not require software downloads or user accounts to be set up for the participants.

Do organisations need a Zoom account to participate?

Some Zoom users download the app to their device to enhance their experience, but this is not necessary to enable participants to join and be involved in training activities rather it is a useful tool for facilitators running the training sessions. We know that some LAs and Trusts have taken the decision not to use Zoom for a range of activities, including work with families, professional meetings, as well as training.

We recognise the reasons for this and share some of the concerns, particularly those related to data capture. However, in light of clear feedback from participants that Zoom is the preferred platform, we have worked hard to mitigate these concerns.

We have procedures and protocols on Zoom, GDPR and Terms and Conditions that we are able to share to support LAs and Trusts to be confident that participants will be able to engage on the platform safely and securely. We are also aware that a number of those LAs and Trusts who are not using Zoom for service delivery have also developed workarounds, which include, allowing the use of Zoom if it is set up by an external organisation and participants are invited to attend with secure password entry, limiting its use to training only, which is our intention.

How will I know that the platform will work for me? I am not familiar with Teams/Zoom, what if I have problems with access?

The introductory session for Generic cohorts and the onboarding session for the StS cohort will help you prepare for the course. This will include logging into and navigating Zoom / Teams to help you test access and gain familiarity. We will aim to have some support available if required.

I'm nervous about spending a whole day or two days online...

We are mindful of the impact of too much time in front of a screen and as a result have built course delivery so sessions are of a suitable length and frequency. Sessions will also be interactive and varied with appropriate breaks. You should expect to spend some time off line or working in pairs or small groups in-between 'screen' sessions on a given day. We will be taking regular feedback and adapting delivery and sessions as necessary.



What support will I get if I have technical difficulties?

Since 2020 many colleagues have adapted to virtual learning and the opportunity to learn and embrace different methodology. We will continue to provide as much guidance as possible and will aim to have someone available to support you with access issues prior and during the programme deliveries.

What experience do facilitators have in virtual delivery?

We will be working with all facilitators to ensure they are confident and skilled in virtual delivery. Most will have experienced this method via their work during Wave 3, or with HEIs and organisations, many whom have moved to virtual delivery as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic social distancing requiring changes to working practices. Facilitators will be supported by Consortium Partners in training, technical support and delivery as required.

"Brilliantly facilitated and good use of Zoom breakouts really innovative and whilst didn't completely mirror benefits of face to face it was the best on-line experience I have had of training."

How can organisations benefit fully from the PSDP?

In addition to making sure that participants have protected time to engage with the programme, LAs and Trusts have a key role in embedding the PSDP learning and we invite organisations to take a whole system approach. Strategic and operational leaders are encouraged to think about increasing the reach of the programme beyond nominated participants and their immediate teams and consider what else might need to be in place to maximise impact and keep the learning 'live' long term across the practice system. For example, by establishing a PSDP champion's network, developing a PSDP community of practice, reviewing your supervision policy and practice in line with the programme or building on your existing CPD offer by incorporating some of the PSDP tools and resources.

The PSDP team also offer support post programme and will run workshops to further embed learning. LAs and Trusts are encouraged to maximise their investment by supporting attendance and engagement in these sessions.

PSDP Resources and Tools website

What about participants not being put forward by their local authority? Or those that work outside of local authorities? Or who are not allocated a place?

The open access [PSDP Tools and Resources for Practice Supervisors](#) website has been created so that all social work professionals can engage with high-quality materials to support their own professional development in relation to supervision. There are over 100 different resources in the website which have been developed with practice supervisors and middle leaders (who are managers of practice supervisors) in mind. The resources are all inspired by the PSDP and include knowledge briefings, podcasts, presentations, films and practice tools for use in supervision.

We regularly release blogs on the [Research in Practice](#) website and keep in touch with participants and Points of Contact through newsletters and emails.

Who will have access to data about participants?

The events team at Research in Practice, together with Local Delivery Partners, will have access to the basic data they need to book people onto the course/s and send out resources. Only the Tavistock and Portman NHS Foundation Trust will have access to sensitive/ personal data (eg scores from individual skills analysis exercises, etc). Nobody else – including other Consortium members and the DfE – will be able to access individual participant data. Aggregated data will be available so that course take up can be monitored and promoted.

We recommend that participants and their line managers discuss the LNE responses. When requested Manager LNE's will be shared with participants.



Is there a cost associated with this programme?

The PSDP programme is funded by DfE, so there is no direct cost to LAs or participants. The PSDP is funded by public money – please help us to ensure maximum value is achieved from this investment by keeping us informed if you/ one of your nominated participants are no longer able to take up the place on the programme so we can reallocate it to someone else.

Compliments, Concerns and Complaints Procedure

We hope there will continue to be more Compliments than Concerns or Complaints around the PSDP and its delivery. However, we acknowledge that there is room for continuous improvement so we want participants, their employers, facilitators and all partners to express any complaints and concerns and of course compliments where appropriate. If you have a compliments, concerns or complaint please email psdpevents@researchinpractice.org.uk.

"Engaging and well paced training. Good to share ideas and experiences with other people in similar roles. Some interesting themes and thoughts for further development."

"Facilitators were amazing at making sure the training ran smoothly despite the training being virtual."

"The 2 day sessions have been really informative and refreshing. I have learnt knew things and have been reminded of previous learning and systemic approaches. Group participation has been really positive and inclusive."

"The themes were very relevant in my role. This space gave me a time to reflect and explore a variety of tools that can be utilised during supervision, to enhance the practice of practitioners and improve the outcomes for our children and families."

"Practice Supervisors, and those middle leaders who supervise them in turn, are key to in enabling excellent social work practice.

These colleagues deserve the space, time and support to hone their knowledge and skills and nurture their professional development. We are delighted to be providing this highly-regarded programme, working with such a fantastic range of partners. Through close consultation with the sector, we have been able to create a programme that holds research knowledge, practice wisdom and the voice of children and families at the heart of professional learning. The feedback from participants and their employers has been superb, and we are so grateful for the high levels of engagement. Skilled social work has never been more important to enable a fair and compassionate society; we are immensely proud to be contributing to a strong and confident workforce."

Dez Holmes, Director of Research in Practice (2021)

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