

Safeguarding the safeguarders: Improving access to supervision



Current workload pressures have meant that some school nurses have been asked to delay safeguarding supervision, even though it is essential to safe and effective practice. Sharon White explains

Sharon White OBE, CEO, SAPHNA

I am hearing on the ground that school nurses are being asked to 'park' or 'delay' their critical safeguarding supervision due to pressures of work. Yet, these pressures are exactly why there is an even greater need for safeguarding supervision.

Safeguarding work is already challenging and emotional in normal circumstances but when times are tough and workloads risk being overwhelming it is essential that support, and supervision in particular, are in place. To suggest that the latter should be delayed when school nurses are dealing with continued layered complexities in children and young people seems ludicrous. Safeguarding supervision is an essential component to safe and effective practice.

Supervision ensures that the voice of the child remains central to the work school nurses carry out. It affords a space and time to reflect on their practice and to be challenged. It empowers school nurses to analyse cases, make decisions and plan actions, or not, confidently.

Supervision, ensures supervisees have a good understanding of their roles and responsibilities, as well as those of the other professionals involved, or who

should be involved. And the systems they work in. The process is also essential in helping school nurses identify areas in which they may need to develop further

knowledge or skill.

Independent school nurses in particular are struggling to access safeguarding supervision as they are not employed by



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FURTHER INFORMATION

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healthcare but schools or educational organisations.

SAPHNA has been working with Melanie Hayward, associate professor of education at Buckinghamshire New University and SCPHN School Nursing field lead, to develop a guidance document and new model for group safeguarding supervision aimed at independent school nurses, for more information contact: info@saphna.co

As Melanie Hayward put it: 'Due to the nature of safeguarding work, supervision should allow a safe space for supervisees to acknowledge and share their feelings in a positive way. This lets them enter a restorative process, to enhance their thinking, as well as an enabling challenge for the supervisee to critically reflect on the assumptions that may be behind their approach regarding a particular issue,



colleague, profession, service, child, young person and/or family. This supports sound

judgements and hence safe and effective practice.' [CHHE](#)