

**Complexity and challenge: a triennial analysis of serious case reviews 2014 – 2017(DfE March 2020)**

**Supervision Learning Points:**

* Opportunities for protection can only be identified if cases are the subject of active and ongoing review. It is important that the selection of cases for discussion in supervision is not left to practitioners alone.
* Cases with persistent ongoing concerns, but which fall below the threshold for child protection, should be brought to attention and monitored. This is particularly relevant in the context of neglect, where risks may be cumulative over time.
* The use of terms such as ‘non-engagement’ should be interrogated in supervision. Such jargon discourages exploration of why a person is reluctant to engage. Workers will need support in managing their responses to families’ fear of or hostility to involvement with services.
* Supervision should address the risk of confirmation bias – ie, the temptation to accept only views that accord with one’s own preconceptions and thereby confirm one’s own interpretation of a situation.
* Supervision can be particularly important in providing challenge in the case of families who have been known to the service for years, allowing the facts to be viewed from a different perspective.
* Supervision must provide space to explore the impact of the work on the practitioner’s wellbeing – including any feelings of powerlessness, frustration, guilt and anxiety. The aim is to ensure practitioners are supported and protected to work with families and the overwhelming feelings such work often evokes.