Scottish Social Services Council

Supervision Learning Resource

Contents

Acknowledgements

1. Introduction

This learning resource aims to promote good practice in supervision across social work and social care in Scotland. We have based the resource on current literature and research and it draws on examples of good practice. It offers you opportunities to explore your experiences and expectations of supervision and provides suggestions for further reading. It includes links to relevant resources to extend your thinking and support the development of good practice.

1.1 Who is this resource for?

This resource is for everyone who works in social services whether they are involved as supervisee, supervisor or both.

Social Services in Scotland: A Shared Vision and Strategy 2015-2020 (Scottish Government, 2015) describes the social service workforce as a:

'large and diverse sector which employs around 190,000 people – including social workers, people working in residential and day care services for adults and children, care at home and housing support staff, occupational therapy staff, mental health officers, people working in adult and child protection and in criminal justice services'.

If you are already confident about the theory and practice of supervision, this resource will complement your existing knowledge. If you are less familiar, it will introduce you to some models of supervision and direct you to additional resources. We have developed the materials to reflect the characteristics set out at level 9 of the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) and the learning outcomes of each section intentionally reflect this[1]

1.2. Using the resource

Both supervisees and supervisors can use this learning resource. It may be useful to staff who are new to the supervisory role or anyone wishing to develop their skills and knowledge. It is relevant to those who have worked in agencies, sectors or professions where supervision is not so well embedded in professional practice as well as settings where supervision is well established.

Depending on your learning needs and how you like to approach learning you can dip in to relevant sections of the resource or go from beginning to end. If you prefer to choose the sections which interest you most, we suggest you start by reading section 3.1, definitions and functions of supervision. This is because people have different experiences of supervision and it may be helpful to spend time reading some of the definitions of supervision and thinking how these match or differ from your own experiences.

---

[1]Scottish Government (2015) Social Services in Scotland: A Shared Vision and Strategy 2015–2020, Edinburgh, Scottish Government

Throughout the resource you will find exercises designed to help you think about your practice and make your learning and development clear. You might find it useful to share your thinking with peers in supervision or as part of a more formal assessment process if you are using the resource as a step towards an accredited qualification. If you want to take a structured approach we suggest you compile a portfolio to include the completed exercises and any relevant supporting evidence. This could be an eportfolio or hard copy folder which provides an overview of your learning and shows your knowledge, understanding and critical reflection on supervision in social services. Start by reflecting on and noting down your current experience and understanding of supervision.

Before we explore the different definitions of supervision in various professional settings, it is useful to spend some time reflecting on the broader question of why supervision is necessary and important.

Exercise 1

Imagine someone who has recently joined your team or organisation is spending a day with you to become familiar with the workplace and the job role. They have no previous experience of supervision and have asked you to explain what it is about.

During a coffee break tell them what supervision is and what your experience has been.

Once you have read the resource and completed the exercises and additional reading you may want to review your thoughts.

2. Why do supervision at all?

This section will help you think about the:

- key stakeholders for supervision in your own work setting
- organisation's influence and inter-professional working on supervision
- impact supervision has in the wider context of your organisation and beyond
- ways you might take account of others' roles.

The importance of supervision is identified in a number of inquiry reports[2] and in professional training and development. It contributes to safe and consistent standards of practice and forms part of an organisation's system of quality assurance. It provides support for individual workers, making sure they are not working in isolation but have access to advice and guidance from a manager or experienced colleague. This is significant for new or recently qualified employees but the opportunity to test out ideas, review decisions and reflect on practice is valuable for all staff, regardless of their role and level of experience. Research[3] has shown effective supervision helps foster resilience and reduce the risk of burn out. It offers a space for dialogue and critical reflection, recognising social service staff are sometimes involved in situations which can be difficult and distressing. When strong emotions are raised in the worker as a result of practice it can be hard to keep a balanced perspective and exercise sound judgement. You can use supervision to make sure risks are carefully considered and best possible decisions reached.

'Supervision must enable and support workers to build effective professional relationships, develop good practice and exercise both professional judgement and discretion in decision making. For supervision to be effective it needs to combine a performance management approach with a dynamic, empowering and enabling supervisory relationship. Supervision should improve the quality of practice, support the development of integrated working and ensure continuing professional development[4]'

2.1 Influencing and understanding the context

Sometimes the importance of supervision is taken for granted in social care and social work settings. It is less common for people to take the time and opportunity to really examine why it is a worthwhile activity deserving priority in the workplace. This can have negative consequences as people may go through the motions and repeat habits learned from their own supervision experiences without fully engaging with the

[2]Laming, W.H. (2003) The Victoria Climbié Inquiry: report of an inquiry by Lord Laming, https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-victoria-climbie-inquiry-report-of-an-inquiry-by-lord-laming
Flynn, M and Citarella, V (2012) Winterbourne View Hospital: A Serious Case Review, South Gloucestershire Safeguarding Adults Board, South Gloucestershire Council

[3]Adamson, C, Beddoe, L, Davys, A (2014) Building Resilient Practitioners: Definitions and Practitioner Understandings, British Journal of Social Work, 44 (3), 522-541

[4]Skills for Care (2007) cited in BASW/CoSW (2011:3) Research on supervision in social work, with particular reference to supervision practice in multi disciplinary teams, BASW/CoSW England

process and what makes it meaningful. Supervisors, and supervisees, can become stuck in a particular way of working together that is not constructive and is hard to change. Or they may find they are able to establish a useful supervision relationship with one person but not another without really understanding why. One of the ways to think about the question of 'why supervise?' is to look at our assumptions about what difference it makes.

Exercise 2

In your experience, who or what is affected by the discussions you have, or the decisions made in supervision? Try to be quite specific about how these affect different people.

One of the ways you can think about people affected by your work is to use the idea of stakeholders. While this term originates in the world of business, social services commonly use it to refer to everyone who has a stake, or interest, in the work you are doing.

The literature[5] on supervision identifies four key stakeholders:

- people using services
- staff
- the organisation
- partner organisations.

For most social care and social work staff it is clear supervisory conversations should have an impact on them as supervisees and the people they work with. Whether discussing annual leave plans or exploring shared understanding of a practice issue it is clear these conversations have an impact on you as a worker (for example, whether you get the break you asked for; or whether you have the knowledge and skills needed to work with a particular individual). It is also easy to recognise that both of these issues have an impact on the **person you are working with** (when will their practitioner be available? will that worker understand their needs?). For many supervisees it is also clear the **organisation** has a stake in these conversations (how many staff will be available to provide cover? is the agency meeting the required standards and employing competent staff?). In the context of increasing integration and inter-professional working, it is often the case that **partners from other agencies or sectors** are a fourth set of stakeholders (when and how do you best communicate with them? how does their perspective or contribution fit with your own?).

---

[5]Morrison, T (2005) Supervision in Social Care: Making a real difference for staff and service users, 3rd ed. Brighton, Pavilion Publishing
Kettle, M (2015) Achieving Effective Supervision, Insight 30. IRISS, www.iriss.org.uk

From the point of view of a **supervisor** the same is largely true, as they make decisions about annual leave or assessing the supervisee's understanding of a practice issue, they may be considering the impact of both things on all stakeholders.

What impact will it have on:

- the **person receiving support**?
- the **supervisee**?
- the **supervisor as a representative** of the immediate team and on the wider **organisation** or profession?
- any **other professionals/agencies** working with the people using services?

Not every decision or discussion needs assessing in this way and the different stakeholders do not have an equal stake in every issue. However, the concept of these four different perspectives can help you achieve a workable and effective balance across needs which are sometimes complex and competing. At the very least, you should remember the stakeholders who hold least power and whose views may be at risk of being overlooked during supervisory conversations. This is of particular importance given the limited research into the impact of supervision on outcomes for people who use services and carers[6]. It can be helpful to test decisions from their point of view by asking, for example:

- if the person I am working with was listening what would they say we have missed?
- how will our agreed action affect others working with this individual?
- how shall we let them know?

The concept of four stakeholders is a key aspect of the integrated model of supervision[7]. What is valuable in this approach is the recognition that the context in which it is set influences supervision between two people as well as it affecting a wider network of people.

Exercise 3

To what extent do you take account of the perspectives of all four types of stakeholders in your supervision process either as a supervisee or supervisor?

How can you best identify the impact of supervision on each of the different stakeholders?

---

[6]Carpenter, J; Webb, C; Bostock, L and Coomber, C (2012) Effective Supervision in Social Work and Social Care, Research Briefing 43, London, Social Care Institute for Excellence Carpenter,J; Webb,C; Bostock,L; (2013) The surprisingly weak evidence base for supervision: findings from a syetematic review of research in child welfare practice(2000-2012), Children and Youth Services Review, 35(1), 1843-1853

[7]Morrison, T (2005) Supervision in Social Care: Making a real difference for staff and service users, 3rd ed. Brighton, Pavilion Publishing

There are other ways to consider how different interests are represented in supervision. The supervisor's experience is described by some writers as like a piggy in the middle role; trying to balance the organisation's requirements with the profession's requirements. Hughes and Pengelly[8] contrast this with the experience of some medical practitioners who claim both case autonomy over casework (medical) decisions and practice autonomy in organising and prioritising their work independent of the managerial demands of the wider health agency. They suggest that 'organisational aspects of supervision have…often been peripheral' in these professions but it is interesting to reflect on whether this may have changed in recent times. Other writers, focusing on supervision in social work[9], note that much of the early supervision literature emerged from therapeutic traditions where the influence of organisational context was less dominant.
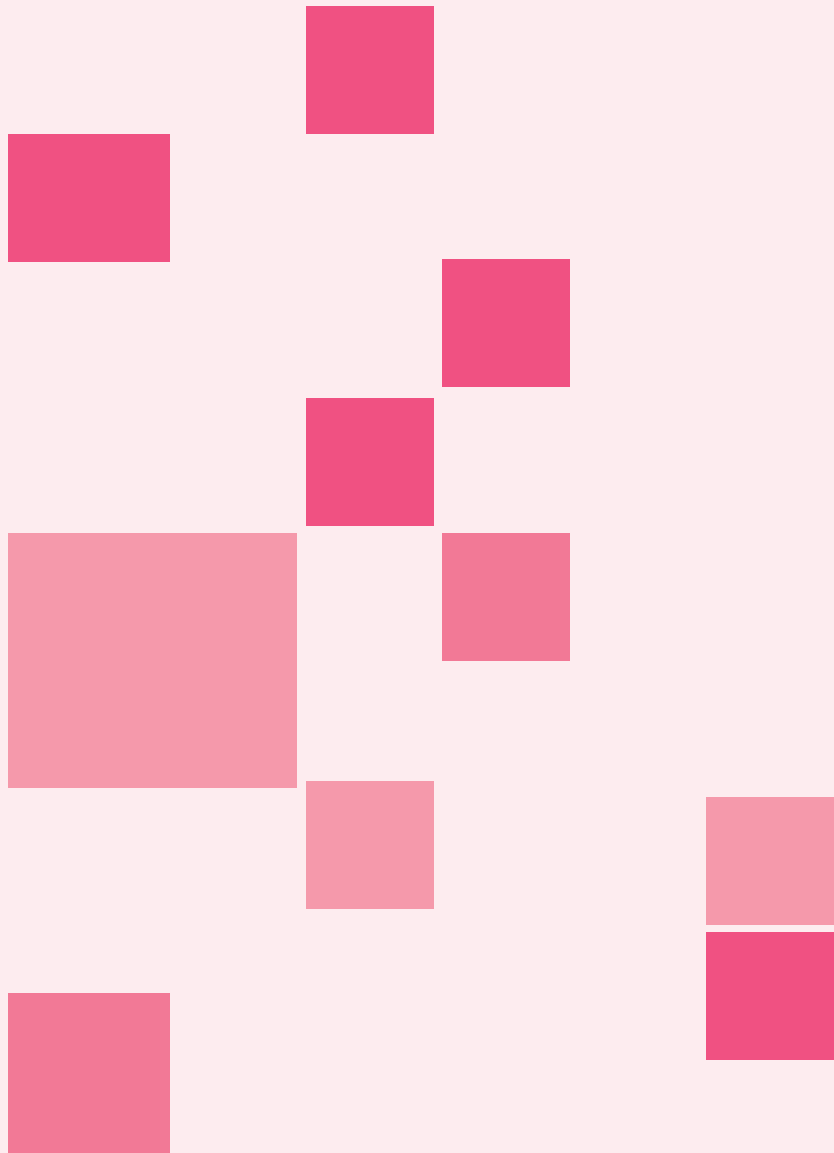
[8]Hughes, L and Pengelly, P (1997) Supervision in a Turbulent Environment, London, Jessica Kingsley

[9]Brown, A and Bourne, I (1996) The Social Work Supervisor, Buckingham, Open University Press

3. What is supervision?

By the end of this section the aim is that you will:

- be more knowledgeable about the different functions of supervision and your responsibilities as supervisee or supervisor
- have an awareness and understanding of some models of supervision and their relevance to your practice
- be able to critically analyse and evaluate the supervision policies in your workplace with reference to relevant models of supervision.

Section 2 on the context of supervision and its impact on the wider system may have felt abstract because it asked you to think broadly about the purpose of supervision. However, you will have seen there are contrasting ideas about supervision which have resulted in a variety of definitions and functions of supervision. Some of these may underpin the supervision policies in your own organisation. This section explores the variation in definitions and models in more concrete ways and provides guidance for further reading.

3.1. Definitions and functions of supervision

Definitions of supervision tell us something about what supervision aims to achieve or the function(s) it intends to fulfil.

Although there are various definitions of supervision there are commonalities between them. Some place more emphasis on the organisational purpose of supervision while others focus more on the individual. When analysing the different aspects of supervision, some authors identify three functions, while others see the process[10] as having four (or more) functions. When reading this section, you will want to consider which definition has resonance in your practice context including how this has influenced your organisation's supervision policy.

IRISS Insight[11] on achieving effective supervision makes use of the Care Council for Wales' definition of the purpose of supervision for the organisation as:

'An accountable, two-way process, which supports, motivates and enables the development of good practice for individual social care workers. As a result, this improves the quality of service provided by the organisation.'

The SSSC Step into Leadership website has the following description of supervision, which emphasises the professional development of the supervisee in the context of the organisation's aims and accountability, particularly in relation to people who use services:

'Supervision is a process which aims to support, assure and develop the knowledge, skills and values of the person being supervised (supervisee),

---

[10]Throughout the learning resource supervision is referred to, and understood, as a process not an event.

[11]Kettle, M (2015) Achieving Effective Supervision, Insight 30. IRISS, www.iriss.org.uk
Wonnacott, J (2012) Mastering Social Work Supervision, London, Jessica Kingsley

team or project group. It provides accountability for both the supervisor and supervisee in exploring practice and performance. It also enhances and provides evidence for annual performance review or appraisal; it sits alongside an organisation's performance management process with particular focus on developing people in a way that is centred on achieving better outcomes for people who use services and their carers.'

Tony Morrison,[12] whose writing on supervision has had a strong influence in social work and social care, explicitly recognises personal and professional functions alongside the organisational. He also positions the overall purpose of supervision towards achieving best outcomes for people who use services:

'A process by which one worker is given responsibility by the organisation to work with another worker(s) in order to meet certain organisational, professional and personal objectives which together promote the best outcomes for service users.'

This highlights the delegated (organisational) authority of the supervisor in relation to the supervisee. In contrast the definition given by Hawkins and Shohet[13] only indirectly recognises the organisation as part of the 'wider systemic context' and instead emphasises the shared professional responsibilities of supervisee and supervisor:

'Supervision is a joint endeavour in which a practitioner with the help of a supervisor attends to their clients, themselves as part of their client practitioner relationships and the wider systemic context, and by doing so improves the quality of their work, transforms their client relationships, continuously develops themselves, their practice and the wider profession.'

A more recent definition[14] highlights not only the separate functions of supervision but also recognises how these may be assigned to more than one supervisor. This is likely to become increasingly common in integrated services and when staff may be line managed by someone from a different professional background.

'Social work supervision is an interactive professional relationship and reflective process that focuses on the supervisee's practice, professional development and well-being, with the objectives of improving, developing, supporting and providing safety for the practitioner and their social work practice. It is distinct and different from counselling/therapy, direct practice and consultation. Supervision may occur through a traditional internal hierarchical arrangement or an external professional arrangement which focuses on all of the areas and objectives, or a mix of internal and external arrangements, which focus on particular areas and objectives.

---

[12]Morrison, T (2005) Supervision in Social Care: Making a real difference for staff and service users, 3rd ed. Brighton, Pavilion Publishing

[13] Hawkins, P and Shohet, R (2012) Supervision in the Helping Professions, 4th ed., Maidenhead, Open University Press

[14] O'Donoghue, K (2015) Issues and challenges facing social work supervision in the twenty-first century, China Journal of Social Work, 8:2, 136-149

The assigned or designated supervisors may be a line manager, colleague or external consultant/contractor or a combination of these where there is a mixed arrangement.'

When considering how the overall purpose of supervision is broken down into different functions Inskipp and Proctor[15] identify three.

- Normative – which they define as the shared responsibility of both supervisor and supervisee to monitor standards and practice in a way which is ethical and reflects the value base[16] of the profession.
- Formative – which they see as the shared responsibility for the supervisee's development.
- Restorative – given the nature of the work supervision needs to provide a restorative space to explore the impact and for the practitioner to re-charge.

Morrison uses different language and adds a fourth element in the functions of supervision:

- competent, accountable performance/practice (this may be referred to as the managerial function)
- continuing professional development
- personal support
- engaging the individual with the organisation (mediation).

Morrison refers to this fourth aspect as the mediation function and highlights the way supervision includes the upward and downward flow of information in organisations. The table in Appendix 1 provides a more detailed description of some of the tasks Morrison identifies as contributing to each function.

Importantly, Morrison sees 'personal support' as a function in its own right as do Inskipp and Proctor when they refer to the 'restorative' function. In contrast, Hughes and Pengelly purposefully do not define support as a separate function. This is because they are concerned that supervisees' own needs could take precedence over the needs of people who use services. They choose instead to think of support as an element underpinning the three key functions of supervision which they identify as:

- managing service delivery
- facilitating practitioner's professional development
- focusing on practitioner's work.

---

[15]Inskipp and Proctor, cited in Davys, A and Beddoe, L (2010) Best Practice in Supervision: A guide for the helping professions, London, Jessica Kingsley.

[16]One place where professional values are outlined is in professional Codes of Practice. For workers in Scotland's social services this is the SSSC Codes of Practice for Social Service Workers and Employers (2016).

Hughes and Pengelly emphasise that there are effectively three participants in supervision. While people using services are not physically present in the room, it is vitally important both supervisor and supervisee actively consider their perspective. It can be helpful to hold the image of a triangle (representing supervisor, supervisee and people using services) as a means of making sure attention stays focused on outcomes for people who use services.

Exercise 4

Find the supervision policy in your organisation

Was it easy to access? Is it referred to regularly? Read it and identify the extent it explicitly draws on and integrates the functions of supervision you have just read about. Is it possible to identify the key theories or principles which have informed the policy?

Consider your own experiences of supervision in the organisation where you currently work

To what extent are the functions outlined in your organisation's policy put into practice? Is there a balance across different functions? If so, how is this achieved? If not, what aspects of supervision seem to take priority and why?

It can sometimes be helpful to look at another organisation's supervision policy to help think about what your organisation does well and what it might want to change. ENABLE Scotland has developed its supervision policy and practice and its head of learning and professional development reflects on the process below, with links to the template (Appendix 2) currently used to record supervision.

Supervision to support personalised services

ENABLE Scotland recently revised its approach to support and supervision to better support personalised services. We used a proactive and dynamic approach for this task. A group of staff met to try, learn, adapt and improve the existing approach and to troubleshoot issues. We used participative leadership, person centred approaches, a focus on the outcomes of the people we support, the European Foundation for Quality Management (EFQM) quality framework and the SSSC competencies of the Continuous Learning Framework to underpin development of the system and processes. The staff used a quick turnaround and followed an iterative plan, do, check, act, approach. This enabled the paperwork to improve as it was trialled.

We chose to use open questions to encourage first line managers and personal assistants to focus on resilience and strength. For example, staff members are asked 'What are your successes? What are you pleased about?' They are also asked 'What will you focus on to help people using services move towards personal outcomes?' Workers are encouraged to seek feedback from others. This complements a 'no blame' improvement culture where staff members have coping strategies beyond the supervision sessions.

See the current form we use to record supervision in Appendix 2. This is merely a support to good conversation and open dialogue in supervision and will be reviewed again based on feedback from ENABLE Scotland staff on its usefulness.

Midlothian Council has also reviewed and amended its supervision policy to strengthen its focus on outcomes for people who use services. Its practice learning and development manager (health and social care) outlines the process taken on the next page.

Midlothian Council's review of their supervision policy

A small group of team leaders across adult and social care and children and families worked with the learning and development manager to review Midlothian Council's supervision policy. We considered a range of outcomes-based supervision policies. After consulting staff and several drafts, we wrote and adopted an outcomes-based supervision policy and guidance.

We recognised the risk at this point was a lack of implementation. Through the initiative of key team leaders and learning and development staff we took forward a number of actions.

- Development of an observed practice template to use for annual feedback with staff in relation to their practice.
- Small group to plan a training day on planning and implementing group supervision – this was identified as an important part of implementing a range of methods of supervision.
- Ongoing training in effective supervision skills – to provide support and practical tools/frameworks for developing supervision practice.
- Gathering feedback from team leaders about how they were shifting their approaches in supervision, for example starting with developmental areas, asking the staff member to prioritise eight most important areas of work for discussion to avoid an overly case management approach.
- Linking supervision policy to the appraisal process so both are outcomes instead of objectives based.

On reflection, the integration (of health and social care) agenda was not addressed alongside developing the supervision policy. The different understandings of supervision and reflection between health and social care provide a range of new steps in the journey of implementation and ultimately ensuring improved outcomes for people using services and carers.

The Changing Lives: 21st Century Review of Social Work report[17] identified the need for practitioners to be both autonomous and accountable. Autonomous does not mean the practitioner is entirely independent but implies they are able to make decisions appropriate to their role and function. Accountability is about being able to explain how and why the practitioner made those decisions. The authority you have (delegated by your organisation and because of your professional and personal

---

[17]Scottish Executive (2006) Changing Lives: Report of the 21st Century Social Work Review, Edinburgh: Scottish Executive

experience) and the authority of your supervisor/supervisee will be relevant when considering the appropriate balance between autonomy and accountability. Reflecting on the definitions and functions of supervision should start to trigger thoughts for you about the authority you assume exists in your supervisory relationships. While all definitions highlight the managerial responsibilities held by supervisors, these responsibilities do not absolve the supervisee of practice (and professional) responsibilities or of all authority to make decisions in work situations. There will be some areas of authority which are negotiated between supervisee and supervisor and others which are assigned to one or other because of their role and responsibilities or their professional background and/or experience.

> **Exercise 5**
>
> Several models of supervision emphasise the shared responsibility that supervisor and supervisee have for making sure supervision is effective. In the example given by ENABLE Scotland this extended to joint responsibility for the design of the supervision process itself. Can you describe the ways you feel responsibility is shared in your own supervision and reflect on ways this could be enhanced?

3.2 Balancing the functions of supervision

You have now considered the different functions of supervision. Using Morrison's framework these include the management, support, development and mediation functions. In Scotland, Changing Lives[18] noted a concern that supervision had become too weighted towards the managerial function. Many writers have identified how the management function may dominate[19] with the result that supervision focuses too much on performance monitoring and caseload management. There is a risk of this happening when all four functions are included in a single supervisory relationship as is common in social work teams.

There are many reasons for this imbalance to occur. Where the **management** function dominates it may be because:

- there is significant pressure to report on work to funders, senior management and inspectors
- there is an aversion to risk and a presumption that one way of managing this is to make sure that comprehensive information is collected and scrutinised

---

[18]Scottish Executive (2006) Changing Lives: Report of the 21st Century Social Work Review, Edinburgh: Scottish Executive

[19] Noble, C and Irwin, J (2009) Social Work Supervision: An Exploration of the Current Challenges in a Rapidly Changing Social, Economic and Political Environment, Journal of Social Work, 9(3), pp. 345–358
Gordon, R. and Hendry, E. (2010) Supervising Assessments of Children and Families: The role of the front-Line managers, in J. Horwath (ed.) The Child's World: The Comprehensive Resource to Assessing Children in Need, 2nd ed. London, Jessica Kingsley
O'Donoghue, K (2015) Issues and challenges facing social work supervision in the twenty-first century, China Journal of Social Work, 8(2), 136-149

- there is a lack of trust between the participants in supervision
- the culture of the organisation is defensive
- the supervisor is uncomfortable with her/his authority and over compensates by being excessively demanding
- the supervisor is less comfortable in the support role and/or lacks the skills to promote development or reflection.

In other situations the **supportive** function may dominate. This might be because:

- the supervisor is aware of the pressure her/his staff are under and tries to compensate by being protective
- the supervisor is uncomfortable with her/his authority and overcompensates by being excessively nurturing
- the boundary between personal and professional issues is unclear and the supervisor gets pulled into a counselling/therapeutic role[20]
- the supervisee is not fully confident in their professional role and can be overly dependent on the supervisor
- the organisation has a tough 'macho' culture and supervision is a compensatory space.

The value of a four function model in a single supervisory relationship is that both parties (supervisor and supervisee) have to manage the balance between functions. In a consistent supervisory relationship you can often work through the tensions even if there is no perfect solution. One of the best remedies for an imbalance in the functions is to consciously reintroduce those elements that have gone missing. A supervisor may pose a learning question to shift the conversation into development or introduce a team or organisational perspective (**mediation**) to shift the focus from more personal discussion.

In some organisations, one approach is to separate the functions of supervision and give these to different people. Bradley and Hojer[21] explore contrasting practice in the UK and Sweden where there is often a divide between line management and consultation. If you are working in a context where the functions of supervision are split, you will want to consider the benefits of this for you, for people who use services and carers and for the organisation. For example it can help to make sure the space for reflection is not lost. A shared supervisory arrangement can create its own challenges. Where there are two people sharing responsibility for the four functions the split may be between an operations manager, who attends to work flow issues, performance monitoring and organisational requirements and a practice or clinical supervisor whose focus is on the practitioner's development and support, sometimes in the context of a particular profession. This may help to make sure professional development and/or support needs are addressed. However if the roles

[20]Cousins, C (2010) 'Treat Me Don't Beat Me' … . Exploring Supervisory Games and Their Effect

[21]Bradley, G and Hojer, F 2009 Supervision reviewed: reflections on two different social work models in England and Sweden, European Journal of Social Work, 12 (1), 71-85

and responsibilities are not clearly defined and understood by all parties involved the practitioner can:

- receive conflicting messages
- fall between two possible sources of support because of assumptions the other person is providing something they are not
- exploit differences between supervisors to avoid tasks or responsibilities.

If you supervise (or are supervised) in a work setting where the functions are allocated to different people, it will be useful to think about how to minimise or avoid some of the potential difficulties including fragmentation, duplication and omission. At a minimum, we recommend you have occasional three-way meetings to discuss arrangements and explore the kinds of challenges that may arise as well as making the most of the benefits.

There is an increasing focus on integration in social services and it is not unusual for someone from a different professional background to supervise staff. In these instances, the different functions may be distributed across two or more members of staff. If this is part of your experience, as a supervisor or supervisee, or you are thinking about the possible benefits this may bring, there is a short film (Supervision in an integrated setting) on the Social Care Institute for Excellence (SCIE) website which shows how practice in an integrated setting can be enhanced by 'complementing line management supervision with clinical and professional supervision'.

Exercise 6

What do you think would be the best possible arrangements for supervision in your organisation? What would the challenges be and how could they be addressed?

3.3 Outcome focused supervision

There has been an increased emphasis on improving outcomes for people who use services and for carers in recent years. In part, this has been in response to evidence that, despite extensive input from social care and social work services, there was limited impact on some people's day to day, lived experience[22]. This emphasis is also informed by shifts in the balance of power between professionals and people using services so individuals have a greater role in designing and commissioning their own support. Reflecting this focus on outcomes for people who use services and carers, there has been a similar shift in supervision with the development of policies which encourage supervisees/supervisors to use an outcome focused approach in supervision sessions.

---

[22]Scottish Executive (2002) "It's everyone's job to make sure I'm alright", Edinburgh, Scottish Executive

In the context of working with young people, Bucknell[23] developed a cyclical model for outcome focused supervision. Working together, the supervisor and supervisee firstly focus on the future – what are the desired outcomes they are working towards? Next they identify specific goals and realistic timescales for achieving these. As a foundation for moving forward, they consider existing strengths and how these can develop further. Progress is sustained by continually looking at the next steps and using the supervisory space to rehearse or prepare for new kinds of engagement with the young person. In this model, the supervisor is committed to giving regular, constructive feedback and the process includes ongoing review so that progress is evaluated and goals revisited as appropriate.

Bucknell highlights the way this approach:

'parallels the supportive and shared process the supervisee is building with the young person'.

Although Bucknell developed this cyclical approach for direct work with young people, it can be applied across other areas of practice. The model might help you think about the different aspects of outcome focused supervision and to focus more clearly on outcomes for people who use services as well as for yourself as a practitioner.

Exercise 7

Use the following prompts based on Bucknell's model to think about a relatively routine problem or issue (for you or for someone you work with) and how a clear focus on outcomes might help. You may want to use this exercise as a basis for discussion in supervision.

- What do you want to achieve or to change in the situation?
- What existing strengths or capabilities might help you?
- What might be the first step? This could include shadowing a work colleague, reading an article or listening to a podcast.
- How might you test out your ideas? This could include rehearsing something with a peer or your supervisor or taking on a new piece of work.
- What is the most effective way for you to receive feedback?
- How will you use feedback to help you achieve your goal?

---

[23]Bucknell, D. Outcome Focused Supervision in H.L. Reid, and J. Westergaard, (2006) Providing Support and Supervision: An introduction for professionals working with young people, Oxon, Routledge 5

4. Supervision contracts

In an earlier section of this resource we asked you to find the current supervision policy in your organisation. One aspect of policy and practice is the use of supervision contracts (also called supervision agreements or working agreements). This section explores the principles which should underpin supervision contracts and how to use them in a meaningful way in the supervision process.

By the end of this section the aim is that you will:

- have an awareness and understanding of the way supervision contracts contribute to the process of supervision and can reflect the values and principles which should underpin supervision
- be able to critically analyse your role and responsibilities in relation to supervision and consider how you can contribute to the supervision contracts.

The literature on supervision highlights the importance of supervision contracts[24]. However, practitioners and managers who contributed to this resource told us their use in practice is variable. Some organisations do not use the contracts consistently with all members of staff; in other instances they are never reviewed after they are prepared at the beginning of a new supervisory relationship; sometimes the supervisee introduces them in response to difficulties in the supervisory relationship or where there are concerns about practice. Even when supervision contracts are in place, they may be viewed as only a 'form filling exercise'[25] rather than being seen as a valuable part of the process of supervision.

There is evidence to suggest processes and dynamics in the supervisory relationship are sometimes mirrored in practice[26] and the converse can also be the case[27]. When critically reflecting on the role of supervision contracts, you might find it helpful to think about agreements or contracts you have with people who use services and how some of the principles underpinning these could transfer to a supervision contract. For example, it would be unusual to draw up a contract with someone using services at the beginning of your working relationship and never review it.

---

[24]Hawkins, P and Shohet, R (2012) Supervision in the Helping Professions, 4th ed., Maidenhead, Open University Press
Morrison, T (2005) Supervision in Social Care: Making a real difference for staff and service users, 3rd ed. Brighton, Pavilion Publishing

[25]Wonnacott, J (2014) Developing and Supporting Effective Staff Supervision: A reader to support the delivery of staff supervision training for those working with vulnerable children, adults, and their families, Brighton, Pavilion Publishing

[26]Munro, E (2011) The Munro Review of Child Protection: Final Report, London, Department for Education
Ferguson, H (2011) Child Protection Practice, London, Palgrave

[27]Hawkins, P and Shohet, R (2012) Supervision in the Helping Professions, 4th ed., Maidenhead, Open University Presse
Ofsted (2012) High expectations, high support and high challenge, Manchester, Ofsted,

[28]Morrison, T (2005) Supervision in Social Care: Making a real difference for staff and service users, 3rd ed. Brighton, Pavilion Publishing www.ofsted.gov.uk

Morrison[28] uses the analogy of a three-legged stool to think about the different components of a supervision contract. This draws attention to the fact that neglecting any of these key areas will cause the stool to wobble and undermine the foundations of the supervisory relationship.

Balanced supervision contracts

Three key elements:

Administrative

Psychological

Professional
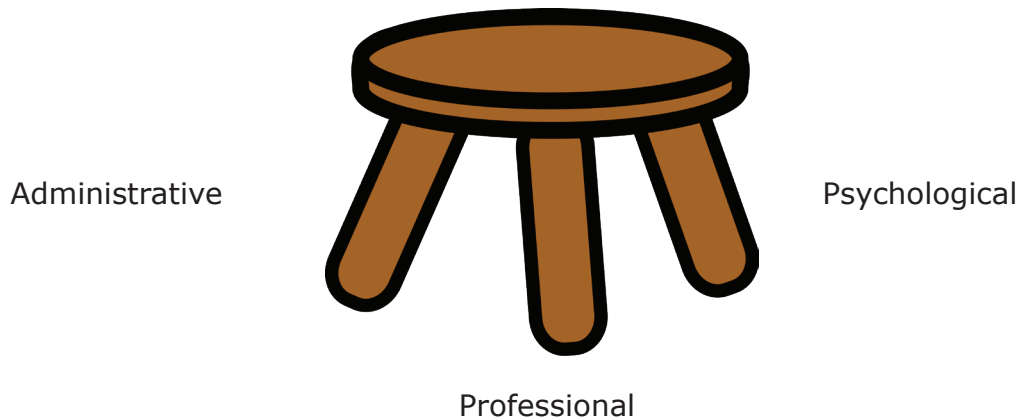
Administrative

This includes practical details about the frequency, location and recording of supervision, including where supervision records will be stored and what arrangements are made for rescheduling supervision if a planned session has to be cancelled. It should also include a date for review. The importance of this basic information should not be underestimated; it provides a level of predictability and clear foundations for the relationship.

Professional

This involves the participants (and the organisation at a wider level) having a dialogue about and explicitly noting the purpose, focus, and principles of supervision. This is to enable clarity about accountability, including the meaning of and limits to, confidentiality. It should outline what participants should do if there are concerns about practice, or about the nature of the supervisory relationship. It may also be helpful to state explicitly what will happen in the event of a dispute between supervisor and supervisee, for example involvement of a third party.

Psychological

This involves a conversation about the motivation, commitment and shared responsibilities in supervision and is based on the principle that each participant contributes to the supervisory relationship. Negotiating this part of the agreement might include reflecting on expectations; clarifying what each person would like to get from the supervisory process and what a successful supervision relationship would look like. It might also include discussion of how the supervisee likes to receive feedback; what would be the likely warning signs if they were experiencing stress or anxiety for example.

The particular design and content of your supervision contract will vary according to your work setting and the people involved. There are examples of supervision contracts in both Morrison and Wonnacott's publications[29] and some suggested content is below. Jane Wonnacott observes the value of a contract lies less in the paperwork produced than in the process that participants have used to come to their agreement.

A supervision contract might include the following areas (adapted from the Social Care Institute for Excellence website).

Arrangements for planned one-to-one supervision – including the venue, frequency, duration and what the arrangements are if supervisor/ supervisee has to cancel due to an emergency.

Arrangements for complementary methods of supervision – for example ad hoc arrangements, phone, Skype or group.

Link between supervision and other management processes – including appraisal, personal development plans, post registration training and learning (PRTL) arrangements (where relevant) and absence management.

The purpose and content of supervision sessions – including agenda items which reflect the different functions of supervision. There will be some routine agenda items and other specific issues brought by supervisee or supervisor. Both parties should be clear how the negotiable aspects of the agenda will be prioritised.

The expectations of the supervisee regarding supervision – when drawing up supervision contracts it can be helpful for the supervisee to reflect on their past experience of supervision and how this may affect their current expectations of the process, along with their expectations of the supervisor.

---

[29]Morrison, T (2005) Supervision in Social Care: Making a real difference for staff and service users, 3rd ed. Brighton, Pavilion Publishing
Wonnacott, J (2014) Developing and Supporting Effective Staff Supervision: A reader to support the delivery of staff supervision training for those working with vulnerable children, adults, and their families, Brighton, Pavilion Publishing

The expectations of the supervisor – including their expectations of the supervisee and what this is based on, including experience and professional expertise.

Preparation by the supervisor – including becoming familiar with the supervisee's current work and previous experiences.

Preparation by the supervisee – including how they can contribute to the agenda by identifying issues/practice situations they wish to discuss.

Factors that you may need to take into account in the development of this supervisory relationship – for example gender, disability, race, culture, age, sexual orientation. It is also helpful to discuss the learning style of the supervisee and how to give feedback in a way which is most effective.

Raising and resolving difficulties – this includes concerns about practice and/or where there are problems in working together and the methods for resolving this.

Recording supervision – this should clarify whose responsibility it is to record supervision; where supervision will be recorded; what processes are in place for resolving any disagreements about what has been recorded and access to records. As part of this discussion, the limits to confidentiality need to be explicit.

Appendix 3 includes a list of questions you might find helpful when drawing up (or reviewing) a supervision contract.

Exercise 8

Think about your current experience of supervision.

Do you use a supervision contract? If not, what benefits do you think it might bring to your supervision? If you already have a supervision contract, do you think it addresses all three elements in an effective way (administrative, professional and psychological)?

A supervision relationship will change over time as you gain experience and develop in your practice. You need to reflect this in your supervision contract. When was it last reviewed? Are there any changes needed and what benefits might this bring?

---

5. Different approaches to supervision

Earlier in the resource you considered the different functions of supervision, however, there are also different models of supervision.

By the end of this section the aim is that you will:

- have a critical understanding of the scope of supervision, including the different forms supervision can take.

The Step into Leadership website has a section on supervision which identifies and defines four different forms of supervision.

One-to-one supervision
One-to-one supervision is widely used and the supervisor is usually the supervisee's line manager. Sessions are formally pre-arranged and take place in a confidential setting and protected place.

Shared supervision
Shared supervision allows teams to share responsibility for supervising individuals. Shared supervision is still conducted one-to-one but the supervisor in this case will not be the supervisee's line manager, instead he or she will be a practitioner who has skills and experience relevant to the supervisee's current projects or caseload and so is able to provide specifically relevant support and/or mentoring.

Group supervision
Group supervision is usually facilitator led via a formal, pre-arranged process that is agreed by the supervisor and supervisees. The make-up of the group depends on the goals of the supervision. Group supervision complements, rather than substitutes, individual supervision, though it may reduce how often you need one-to-one supervision.

Professional supervision
Professional supervision is for professionally qualified workers in social services. Professional supervision supports supervisees to maintain professional identity, knowledge and meet their post registration training and learning requirements.

This is just one way of considering different kinds of supervision. For example, many people might view supervision of all staff, qualified and unqualified, as a **professional** activity. And **one-to-one supervision** is the most common form of supervision for professionally qualified workers.

In some settings, such as residential care, shift working creates challenges for staff supervision and a model of **shared supervision** may be used where two or more managers share the supervision of individual staff. In that situation workers will receive one-to-one supervision but not always with the same supervisor.

Some organisations may offer **peer supervision** or there may be opportunities to consult with an external supervisor as well as the supervision provided by a line manager. There are a variety of ways of structuring group supervision as well as the model described above. In particular, **group supervision** may benefit workers who are themselves engaged in group work and can use the supervision space to explore some of the dynamics and challenges they encounter in their practice.

Depending on your role and your specific work setting you may have experience of different forms of supervision or you may only be familiar with one approach. If you want to learn more about other models you can read more about these in the section on supervision on the Step into Leadership website or the resources listed at the end of this resource.

6. Different types of one-to-one supervision
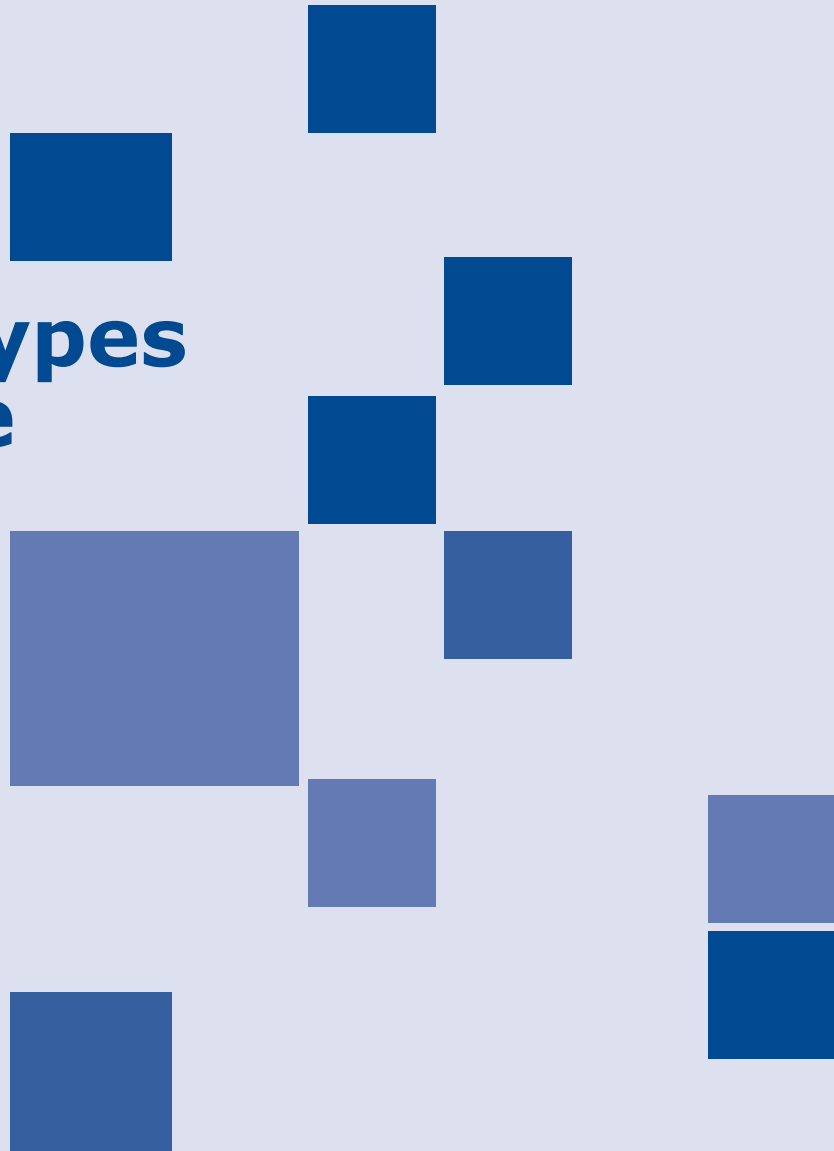
This resource clearly explains supervision is a process, not an event. In the previous section, we asked you to think about a range of approaches to supervision and in this section you will look in more depth at different aspects of one-to-one supervision.

> By the end of this section the aim is that you will be able to:
>
> • critically reflect on the benefits and drawbacks of a number of types of one-to-one supervision and the possible implications where one method is used to the exclusion of others.

As you will know from your own experience working in social services involves dealing with situations which can be unpredictable and challenging. As a result it is important supervision can be responsive and flexible. This means that although structured planned one-to-one supervision sessions are important, there will be times when an issue needs to be discussed more urgently. Wonnacott[30] describes four different types of one-to-one supervision (below), all have benefits and drawbacks. When reading about these you might find it useful to reflect on your own supervision discussions over the last few months and consider whether one kind of discussion tends to dominate and if so, why does that happen? Think about the possible implications of this for you, for the organisation and for people who use services.

Formal and informal supervision

---
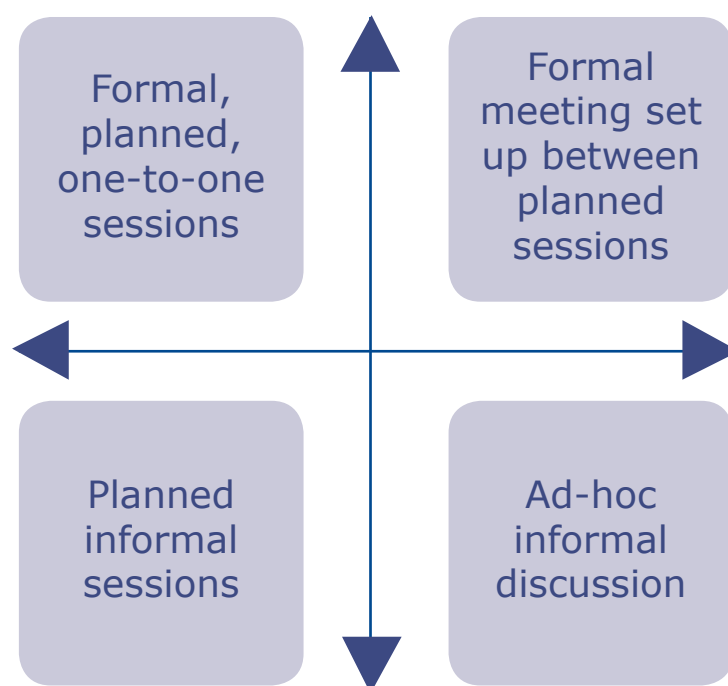
[30]Wonnacott, J (2014) Developing and Supporting Effective Staff Supervision: A reader to support the delivery of staff supervision training for those working with vulnerable children, adults, and their families, Brighton, Pavilion Publishing

- **Formal planned one-to-one sessions**

These provide consistency, predictability and regularity and are likely to facilitate the development of a positive relationship. They allow for the ongoing review of practice issues linked to supervision records (managerial function), as well as maintaining a focus on developmental needs.

But there are drawbacks to relying solely on formal sessions, particularly in situations where there are fast moving practice developments. They may not be sufficiently responsive in unpredictable, challenging situations.

- **Formal meeting set up between planned sessions, often to discuss a specific issue.**

These are responsive to immediate need and likely to be important in debriefing incidents or when making urgent decisions. They are an important aspect of management accountability and support.

But relying on this form of supervision alone is unlikely to address ongoing professional development needs and may result in long gaps between sessions.

- **Planned informal sessions for example arranging a discussion at the workers desk or speaking on the telephone after a visit.**

This may provide support in circumstances where a more formal discussion is not possible.

But there is a tendency to record these discussions poorly. There may be issues relating to the supervisee's support or development needs that need to be noted in their supervision record. It may also mean significant risks and concerns are not formally recorded and there may be lack of clarity regarding roles, responsibilities and actions.

- **Ad-hoc informal conversations (in his report into the death of Victoria Climbié, Lord Laming[31] referred to these critically as 'corridor supervision')**

These may have some limited value in giving reassurance to the supervisee that their issues/concerns are heard.

But it is far more challenging to record important issues relating to the development needs of the worker and/or practice issues, may get lost, with repercussions for plans and decision making in relation to people who use services, carers and/or workers.

Discussions may breach confidentiality and it is likely that supervisee and supervisor move straight to action and overlook reflection and analysis. This may lead to flawed

[31]Laming, W.H. (2003) The Victoria Climbié Inquiry: report of an inquiry by Lord Laming

decision making, with consequences for all stakeholders. The status of the decision may be unclear.

Exercise 9

Do an informal audit of the kinds of supervision discussion you have at work.

Think about the different kinds of supervision you experience. Does one approach tend to dominate and if so, why?

Thinking about formal and informal supervision and about planned or ad hoc discussions what impact does each of these have on outcomes for:

- the people you are working with

- you as a worker

- your supervisor

- your organisation?

How might you raise this issue in supervision and what changes, if any, would you like to make?

---

7. Group supervision

By the end of this section the aim is that you will:

- have a critical understanding of the benefits and limitations of group supervision
- have reflected on how you might use group supervision to complement one-to-one supervision.

There is increasing interest in group supervision and what it can offer. This section explores some aspects of group supervision and considers the benefits of this approach as well as some of the challenges involved in taking part in, or facilitating, group supervision.

Kadushin and Harkness[32] defined group supervision as:

'the use of a group setting to implement the responsibilities (or functions) of supervision'.

They specifically noted how it differs from other organisational activities which might involve groups but are not set up to meet the functions of supervision for example a team meeting is not a form of group supervision. A number of authors including Brown and Bourne[33] highlight that group supervision may not address all the functions of supervision but may be used 'to implement part or all of the responsibilities of supervision'. One of the implications of this is that group supervision is most often used to complement one-to-one supervision and is rarely sufficient on its own to meet the supervisory needs of individual workers.

The literature on supervision has identified positive features associated with group supervision.

- Group supervision allows practitioners to share their experiences with others in similar circumstances, which aims to increase opportunities for learning, new ideas and emotional support.
- Group supervision can be a powerful means of reducing isolation, which is particularly relevant for staff working shifts or work from home or on their own. It can support the development of group cohesion and shared values.
- The group may allow different views and opinions to be voiced. This kind of diversity, including ideas which may challenge those of the supervisor may be more difficult to achieve in one-to-one supervision, so there may be more distribution of power in group supervision.
- Being involved in group supervision may help participants develop skills which are transferable to other practice situations, many of these involve working in teams and groups.

---

[32]Kadushin, A and Harkness, D (2002) Supervision in Social Work. 4th ed., New York,
[33]Brown, A and Bourne, I. (1996) The Social Work Supervisor, Buckingham, Open University

- Group supervision may be seen as an efficient use of time and resources. Issues which are relevant to a number of staff (for example, concerning policies and procedures) can be communicated and discussed in the group rather than on a one-to-one basis.

However you need to consider the benefits alongside some potential challenges.

- In group supervision it is difficult to meet the specific needs of individual participants and there is a risk discussions remain generalised and do not meet anyone's needs in a satisfactory way.
- In individual supervision there is a clear focus on the supervisee, while in a group setting some people may hide or have their needs overlooked.
- In group supervision the facilitator needs to be confident in managing and responding to different group dynamics in a constructive way. In many respects this is a more demanding role than one-to-one supervision.
- In any group there is the risk people who are more confident or outspoken dominate and the voices of quieter or less experienced individuals are not heard. Although the power of the supervisor may be more limited than in one-to-one supervision other power dynamics may have an unhelpful impact.
- There are occasions where the interaction in a group can distract from the task in an unhelpful way or does not feel safe for some/all of the group participants.
- In group supervision the focus can shift from the people who use services to the needs of group members. Although this can also happen in one-to-one supervision it requires particular attention in the complex dynamics of a group, particularly if there is a sense that practice issues are being mirrored or 'played out' in the interactions between participants.
- A group which is too cohesive and harmonious may make it difficult for individual members to express different views or challenge the group norms. This can lead to the kind of conformity which limits new ideas, constructive debate and sound decision making.

The practice example below from Clackmannanshire and Stirling Council shows how it has introduced group supervision as part of its outcomes focused approach to supervision.

Clackmannanshire and Stirling Council: group supervision

Clackmannanshire and Stirling Council has implemented an outcomes focused approach to supervision and practice development planning. In the practice guidance for the policy and practice standards, we identify and validate a range of supervision models used across social services. This has provided both a framework and a clearer focus for group supervision. Previously, group supervision had a more ad hoc structure in a range of formats. Staff said these would often take the form of business meetings or sessions which focused on staff dissatisfaction and which could sometimes feel negative and unconstructive. The new recording tool for group supervision has been sufficiently flexible for managers in adult and children's services to adapt it to meet staff needs in residential and community services. The tool includes prompts to support supervisors to facilitate more reflective discussions with a focus on improving outcomes for people using services and carers. We have evaluated completed records and feedback gathered from supervisors. They found the recording tool provided a framework for discussion which allows staff to share knowledge and best practice and leads to future focused plans for ongoing work with people using services. We have used these completed records to support other supervisors' learning and development. The recording tool is in Appendix 5.

The policy recognises that staff will require one-to-one sessions at times to experience more individualised advice and support, attend to personal practice development planning and deal with sensitive issues of staff welfare or competence. The practice standards set out expectations for individual sessions to complement group supervision where that is the dominant model.

Clackmannanshire and Stirling Council's Group Supervision Record

Appendix 5 highlights the need for clear recording systems. It is equally important in group supervision as in one-to-one supervision to agree clear structures and have a clear purpose. This includes negotiating and making clear the following factors in a group supervision contract or agreement.

1) All participants are clear about the purpose, focus and tasks of the group.
2) The authority and decision making power of the group (including how this might impact on individual supervision) is clear.
3) Agree the boundaries of the group including how long it will meet and whether it is open or closed.

---

[34]Proctor, B (2008) Group Supervision: a guide to creative practice, London, Sage

4) The role and authority of the facilitator (including who performs this role) and the expectations of the group for example, attendance, timekeeping.
5) How to record sessions and how confidentiality is understood in the group.
6) What methods are used for example, discussion, role play, action learning sets.

More detailed guidance on appropriate contracting is in Brigid Proctor's[34] book on group supervision.

Appendix 4 offers practical guidance on preparing for group supervision, making clear this is different from one-to-one supervision and that participants may find it helpful to reflect on their previous experiences of being involved in groups so they can make best use of supervision in a group context.

Exercise 10

What do you think the particular strengths and challenges of group supervision are:

- for you as a worker
- for the people who use your service
- for your supervisor
- for your team or organisation?

---

8. Supervision: a space and place for difficult conversations

By the end of this section the aim is that you will:

• have increased your awareness of the different kinds of challenging conversations which belong in supervision and how you might be better prepared for these.

Earlier in the resource you considered the different functions of supervision and the ways a supervisory relationship should offer a space for critical reflection on:

• practice issues
• professional development
• roles in the organisation
• the support workers need to deal with the emotional impact of the work they do[35].

As part of this critical reflective space, supervision will sometimes include difficult or tough conversations. Those conversations may be difficult because they explore aspects of practice and painful experiences in the lives of people who use services including loss, loneliness, neglect, abuse, conflict, trauma and illness. The conversations may also be challenging because supervision is a space where workers should be able to explore the impact their work is having on them and their own lives and this may include complex and confusing thoughts and feelings. If the wider environment and culture of the workplace is not one which acknowledges the importance of emotions then it is all the more crucial that supervisors offer support and encouragement for workers to recognise when their work is affecting them on a personal level. Opening up this kind of conversation allows staff to understand that expressing feelings is not a sign of weakness but a part of being professional. It helps them make sure their own emotional reactions to traumatic or demanding situations do not spill over inappropriately into their practice. Equally importantly it can help reduce the risk of work spilling over into their personal life in a way which is damaging to their health and wellbeing. Although the issues discussed may be difficult or painful, the quality of these kinds of conversations will generally be supportive and developmental.

There are other difficult conversations in supervision which belong more clearly to the managerial role. These are situations where a supervisor, as part of their role in overseeing safe practice and quality standards, may have to identify and challenge instances where the conduct or practice of a worker is not acceptable and could be harmful to people who use services.

The best foundation for such conversations is a clear understanding from early in the supervision relationship of the performance requirements for the practitioner's role. This forms the basis for ongoing discussion about how work is carried out and

[35]Ruch, G (2007) "Thoughtful" practice: Child care social work and the role of case discussion', Child and Family Social Work, 12, pp. 370–9
Ruch, G (2008) 'Developing "containing contexts" for the promotion of effective direct work: The challenge for organisations', in B. Luckock and M. Lefevre (eds.), Direct Work: Social Work with Children and Young People in Care, London, BAAF

how it impacts on the supervisee. It is more straightforward then to raise difficult issues if problems arise. Over a number of years Rothwell[36] has used a performance framework (Appendix 6) in training sessions with supervisors from a range of practice settings to help them think about and establish a positive approach to managing staff performance. It is much easier to address concerns about performance if there have already been conversations establishing a shared understanding of required standards of practice. While individual workers must be accountable for their own work performance, it is always important to consider the wider context and other factors which may have contributed to unsatisfactory standards for example staff shortages, poor communication. Responsibility may not rest with a single individual and there may be team or organisational issues which you need to address.

In some instances, however, these difficult conversations may form part of a disciplinary process. For supervisors, as well as supervisees, these are stressful situations to deal with. If you are involved in managing serious concerns about a worker's practice it is important to seek support and guidance from your own manager and from human resources (HR). You may also want to refer to the SSSC Codes of Practice.

If you are in a supervisory role and addressing issues of poor performance with a member of staff, the process below[37] may help you take a balanced and systematic approach.

- Describe – what the person is doing (or not doing) that is problematic.
- Explain – why their behaviour or actions are problematic. Does this impact on people who use services, colleagues, staff from other agencies, the profession they represent or their employing organisation?
- Specify – what they should be doing instead. Depending on the nature of the problem this may include the kind of support needed to help bring about change.
- Consequences – what will the consequences be if they are unable or unwilling to change? Who else will become involved for example, HR and what are the required timescales for change to happen.

Morrison[38] proposes an eight stage process which is similar.

1) Describe concerns in clear and evidence-based terms, including what is happening (or not happening), who is affected, what standards/policies/values apply.

---

[36]Rothwell, B (unpublished) adapted from and building on the work of Tony Morrison and Jane Wonnacott

[37]Scragg, T (2003) Managing at the Front Line: A handbook for managers in social care, Brighton, Pavilion Publishing

[38]Morrison, T (2005) Staff Supervision in Social Care: Making a real difference for staff and service user,. 3rd ed., Brighton, Pavilion Publishing

[39]Scottish Social Services Council (2008, updated 2014) the Continuous Learning Framework, Dundee, SSSC, http://www.continuouslearningframework.com/?wpfb_dl=106

2) Listen to the worker's response.
3) Consider the context and circumstances – does this change the nature of the concern.
4) Seek agreement on the nature of the problem.
5) Jointly agree desirable alternatives.
6) Establish an improvement plan.
7) Check the worker understands the plan.
8) Follow through and evaluate within agreed timescales.

Agencies may have their own competency framework or may make use of the Continuous Learning Framework to support workers' professional development. When addressing issues of poor performance it is important also to acknowledge areas of strength.

9. Making the transition from frontline worker to supervisor

New supervisors often talk about feeling unprepared for their new role and responsibilities.

'Moving from direct practice into first line management in social services is a common transition. It is not a trivial change of role however and evokes challenges on both a personal and professional level.'[40]

One of the features of this transition is that for many people moving into a supervisory position can feel like stepping from a role where they felt confident and 'accomplished'[41], into a post where they feel unsure of themselves and still need to find their feet. For those contemplating a transition into a supervisory role, or who have recently been promoted, it may be reassuring to know others share your experiences.

By the end of this section the aim is that you will:

- have reflected on the complexities involved in shifting professional identity from a practitioner to a supervisory role
- have considered how your learning and development needs as a new supervisor might be addressed.

Davys and Beddoe[42] highlight how there can be expectations that people will learn how to supervise 'by osmosis' and they will know how to supervise because 'they have been supervised'. They identify the different phases associated with this transition as those in a supervisory role move from uncertainty, anxiety and possible ambivalence to a space where they are more able to trust their own judgement, be aware of their limits and use authority appropriately and consistently.

In the following exercise think about the kind of learning and development opportunities which would support your transition into a supervisory role and how you might progress these.

Exercise 11

What kind of learning and development opportunities might help you with the transition into a supervisory role?

How will you take this forward?

---

[40]Patterson, F. (2015) Transition and Metaphor: Crossing the Bridge from Direct Practice to First Line Manager. British Journal of Social Work, 45(7) pp. 2072-2088

[41]Scottish Social Services Council (2008, updated 2014) The Continuous Learning Framework, Dundee, SSSC

[42]Davys, A. and Beddoe, L. (2010) Best Practice in Supervision: A Guide for the Helping Professions, London, Jessica Kingsley

Some organisations have developed their own learning and development programmes for people moving into a supervisory position. This may include mentoring by more experienced supervisors. Having conducted a survey of supervision experiences across the service, Fife Council highlighted below and in (Appendix 7) re-designed their training to match the professional development needs of supervisors with different levels of experience.

Fife Council's supervision training

We developed a suite of training for supervisors with three separate modules:

- a half day for new supervisors focussing on the supervision policy and paperwork for recording supervision sessions
- a half day focussing on the performance management element of supervision, including the benefits of performance management systems, setting SMART objectives (specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and timely), the importance of recognising good performance
- a full day looking at supervision practice skills.

Skills identified for the one day course were:

- leadership: what is the difference between being a manager and a leader, what are the different leadership styles, identify what kind of leader they are, recognise the need to use different leadership styles with different staff or situations, French and Raven's theory of power in relation to themselves and the informal leaders in the team
- communication: including questioning techniques, active listening, giving positive and constructive feedback rather than accolades or criticism, having difficult conversations and being assertive
- empathy
- motivation: introducing motivational theories, identifying their own motivation drivers and how understanding of other's drivers can support motivation
- decision making: being aware of different fallacies and looking at the decision making process
- group supervision: discussion on the benefits of group.

There are also continuing professional development courses available, some accredited by universities and recognised by the SSSC as an approved award for supervisors or for registered managers. Depending on your work setting, your specific role and the requirements for registration you will want to consider what kind of ongoing professional development best meets your needs, either as a new or an established supervisor in social services.

10. Evaluating and reviewing supervision

By the end of this section the aim is that you will:

- have a critical understanding of the role that review and evaluation plays in the supervisory process
- have considered how you might prepare, as either supervisor or supervisee, for the ending of a supervisory relationship.

It is useful to build in time at the end of each supervision session to reflect on what added value supervision has brought for all those involved: the supervisee, the supervisor and ultimately for people who use services. Hawkins and Shohet[43] offer the following questions as a basis for reflective dialogue.

- What have we learned that neither of us knew before supervision?
- What have we learned that neither of us could have arrived at alone?
- What do we think this will mean for the person we are working alongside?

You will also want to review supervision more formally, including reviewing the supervision contracts in place. When a supervision contract is drawn up this is one of the areas that should be covered: when and how the supervision contract will be reviewed to make sure it remains meaningful.

10.1 Endings

Although each planned supervision session will have a beginning, middle and end there will be more formal endings: for example, when either the supervisor or supervisee moves to a new post or leaves the organisation. It is important to mark these transitions and acknowledge the significance of the supervisory relationship. Writing in relation to practice, Walker and Thurston[44] comment that 'reviews and endings are occasions like beginnings that can set the tone for future contact and activity' and the same is true of supervision. Reviews and endings are an opportunity to evaluate and recognise progress and identify areas for future development. It is likely that at the end of a supervision relationship you will need to discuss the nature and limits of confidentiality again so the supervisee is clear what information will be passed on, to who, how and why. It may be the policy in your organisation to offer exit interviews and exploring experiences of supervision can be a useful part of this process.

[43]Hawkins, P and Shohet, R (2012) Supervision in the Helping Professions, 4th ed., Maidenhead, Open University Press

[44]Walker, S. and Thurston, C. (2008) Safeguarding children and young people: A resource to integrated practice, Lyme Regis, Russell House Publishing

Exercise 12

In your role as supervisor/supervisee how did you prepare for your last formal ending (you may have been changing jobs or moving to a new role)?

Is there anything you or your supervisor/supervisee could have done differently which might have helped set a positive 'tone' for future activity?

Is there anything you will do differently in the future to prepare for endings in supervision?

10.2 Reflecting and looking ahead

Now you are near the end of this resource you may find it helpful to go back to **Exercise 1** where you imagined you were explaining to a new colleague at work what supervision is and what your experience has been. This will allow you to reflect on your learning while working through the resource and any changes this has brought to your supervision.

By now, you will be aware of different models of supervision, all identifying that professional development is an important function of supervision. You may want to consider whether there are aspects of your own professional development and practice which you think might benefit from more training or learning opportunities and how you will raise this in your own supervision.

The key aim of this supervision resource is to support the development of good practice across the workforce and contribute to improving outcomes for people who use services. It is possible that you have become aware of aspects of policy and practice in relation to supervision which are new or relatively unfamiliar to you. You may want to take some time to find out more about these areas. It may also be the case that reading the resource has enabled you to reconsider and question areas of policy and practice which you are familiar with. For those of you who have chosen to keep a formal record of your learning you will have a comprehensive portfolio which can be used as part of your continuing professional development as a social service worker.

References

Adamson, C, Beddoe, L, Davys, A (2014) Building Resilient Practitioners: Definitions and Practitioner Understandings, British Journal of Social Work, 44 (3), 522-541

BASW/CoSW (2011) Research on supervision in social work, with particular reference to supervision practice in multi-disciplinary teams, BASW/CoSW England

Bradley, G and Hojer, F (2009) Supervision reviewed: reflections on two different social work models in England and Sweden, European Journal of Social Work, 12 (1), 71-85

Brown, A and Bourne, I (1996) The Social Work Supervisor, Buckingham, Open University Press

Bucknell, D (2006) Outcome Focused Supervision in H. L. Reid., and J, Westergaard (eds.) Providing Support and Supervision: An Introduction for professionals working with young people, Oxon, Routledge

Carpenter, J, Webb, C, Bostock, L and Coomber, C (2012) Effective supervision in social work and social care, Research briefing 43, London, Social Care Institute for Excellence. www.scie.org.uk/publications/briefings/briefing43/

Cousins, C (2010) 'Treat Me Don't Beat Me'…. Exploring Supervisory Games and Their Effect on Poor Performance Management', Practice, 22 (5), 281 — 292

Davys, A and Beddoe, L (2010) Best Practice in Supervision: A Resource for the Helping Professions, London, Jessica Kingsley

Ferguson, H (2011) Child Protection Practice, London, Palgrave Macmillan

Flynn, M and Citarella, V (2012) Winterbourne View Hospital: A Serious Case Review, South Gloucestershire Safeguarding Adults Board, South Gloucestershire Council

Gordon, R and Hendry, E (2010) Supervising Assessments of Children and Families: The Role of the Front-Line Managers. In J. Horwath (ed.) The Child's World: The Comprehensive Resource to Assessing Children in Need, 2nd ed., London, Jessica Kingsley

Hawkins, P and Shohet, R (2012) Supervision in the Helping Professions, 4th ed., Maidenhead, Open University Press.

Hughes, L and Pengelly, P (1997) Staff Supervision in a Turbulent Environment: Managing Process and Task in Front-line Services, London, Jessica Kingsley

Kadushin, A and Harkness, D (2002) Supervision in Social Work, 4th ed., New York, Columbia University Press

Kettle, M (2015) Achieving effective supervision, Insight 30. Glasgow, IRISS, www.iriss.org.uk

Laming, W H (2003) The Victoria Climbié Inquiry: report of an inquiry by Lord Laming www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-victoria-climbie-inquiry-report-of-an-inquiry-by-lord-laming

Morrison, T (2005) Staff Supervision in Social Care: Making a real difference for staff and service users, 3rd ed., Brighton, Pavilion Publishing

Munro, E (2011) The Munro Review of Child Protection: Final Report, London, Department for Education

Noble, C and Irwin, J (2009) Social Work Supervision: An Exploration of the Current Challenges in a Rapidly Changing Social, Economic and Political Environment, Journal of Social Work, 9(3), pp. 345–358

O'Donoghue, K (2015) Issues and challenges facing social work supervisionin the twenty-first century, China Journal of Social Work, 8(2), 136-149

Ofsted (2012) High expectations, high support and high challenge, Manchester, Ofsted www.ofsted.gov.uk

Patterson, F (2015) Transition and Metaphor: Crossing the Bridge from Direct Practice to First Line Manager, British Journal of Social Work, 45(7) pp. 2072-2088

Proctor, B (2008) Group Supervision: a resource to creative practice, London, Sage Ruch, G (2007) 'Thoughtful' practice: Child care social work and the role of case discussion, Child and Family Social Work, 12, pp. 370–9

Rothwell, B (unpublished) adapted from and building on the work of Tony Morrison and Jane Wonnacott

Ruch, G (2007) "Thoughtful" practice: Child care social work and the role of case discussion', Child and Family Social Work, 12, pp. 370–9

Ruch, G (2008) Developing 'containing contexts' for the promotion of effective direct work: The challenge for organisations, in B. Luckock and M. Lefevre (eds.), Direct Work: Social Work with Children and Young People in Care, London, BAAF

Scragg, T (2003) Managing at the Frontline: A handbook for managers in social care, Brighton, Pavilion Publishing

SCQF (2012) Scottish Credit and Qualification Framework (SCQF) www.scqf.org.uk Scottish Executive (2002) It's everyone's job to make sure I'm alright, www.gov.scot/Resource/Doc/47007/0023992.pdf

Scottish Executive (2002) "It's everyone's job to make sure I'm alright", Edinburgh, Scottish Executive

Scottish Executive (2006) Changing Lives: Report of the 21st Century Social Work Review www.gov.scot/resource/doc/91931/0021949.pdf

Scottish Government (2015) Social Services in Scotland: a shared vision and strategy 2015-2020 www.gov.scot/Resource/0047/00473374.pdf.

Scottish Social Services Council (2016) Codes of Practice for Social Service Workers and Employerswww.sssc.uk.com/about-the-sssc/codes-of-practice/what-are-the-codes-of-practice

Scottish Social Services Council (2008, updated 2014) Continuous Learning Framework www.continuouslearningframework.com/?wpfb_dl=106

Social Care Institute for Excellence (2013) Supervision in an integrated setting, SCIE www.scie.org.uk/socialcaretv/video-player.asp?v=supervision03

Social Care Institute for Excellence (no date) Supervision resources and services, SCIE, www.scie.org.uk/atoz/?f_az_subject_thesaurus_terms_s=supervision&st=atoz

Walker, S and Thurston, C (2008) Safeguarding children and young people: A resource to integrated practice, Lyme Regis, Russell House Publishing

Wonnacott, J (2012) Mastering Social Work Supervision, London, Jessica Kingsley

Wonnacott, J (2014) Developing and Supporting Effective Staff Supervision, Brighton, Pavilion

Appendices

Appendix 1: Functions of supervision[45]

Some aims of the management function	Some aims of the mediation function
• The overall quality of the worker's performance is monitored and assured. • Agency policies and procedures are understood and followed. • The worker understands her/his role and responsibilities. • Work is reviewed regularly in accordance with agency and legal requirements. • Records are maintained according to agency policies. • Lines of accountability and levels of authority are clarified. • The worker is given an appropriate workload. • Time-management expectations of the worker are clear and checked.	• Resources (including staff time) are allocated effectively. • Staff needs are represented to more senior management. • Staff are briefed about or consulted on organisational developments. • Mediation or advocacy between workers, within or between teams, or with other agencies is undertaken. • Staff are represented or accompanied in work with other agencies. • Staff are involved in team decision making. • Complaints about staff are dealt with.
Some aims of the development function	**Some aims of the support function**
• To assist the worker to build professional competence and capabilities. • Appreciate and assess the worker's theoretical base, skills, knowledge and individual contribution to the agency. • Explore the worker's value base in relation to race, gender etc and its impact on his/her work. • Support the worker's capacity to set professional goals. • Enable access to professional consultation in areas outside the supervisor's knowledge/experience. • Provide summative and formative feedback to the worker on all aspects of their performance. • Support the worker's ability to reflect, generalise learning and encourage commitment to ongoing CPD.	• To validate the complexity of the worker's professional and personal responses. • To clarify boundaries between support and counselling and the limits of confidentiality in supervision. • To create a safe climate for the worker to look at her/his practice and its impact on her/him. • Debrief the worker and give the worker permission to talk about feelings, especially fear, anger, sadness, repulsion or helplessness. • Help the worker to explore emotional blocks to the work. • To explore issues about discrimination, in a safe setting. • To monitor the overall health and emotional functioning of the worker, especially with regard to the effects of stress. • Help the worker reflect on difficulties in relationships, assist in resolving conflict.

---

[45]Morrison, T. (2005) Staff Supervision in Social Care: Making a real difference for staff and service users, 3rd ed., Brighton, Pavilion Publishing

Appendix 2: ENABLE Scotland: template used to record supervision

Support and Supervision for Personal Assistants May 2015

The signatures confirm agreement that this form is an accurate record.

Personal Assistant's name _____

PA signature _____

Line Manager's signature _____

Are you up to date with using your annual leave this year? How much left?

_____

Date of session _____

---

1. Choose areas that you would like to discuss.

For example:
Work or personal or professional issues that might affect you
How you contribute to the team
Support you would like to help you achieve any plans to develop
Team dynamics - how the team is working together.
Anything that would help you to be more confident and competent in your current role
Ideas for the team, people you support
Support that would be useful to help you resolve/cope with any work issues.
Anything else?

PA comments

Line manager comments

2. Completed ACTION PLAN since the last individual supervision session

What have you tried? What are your successes? What are you pleased about?

Do you need to update the Service Design, Support Strategies or Risk Assessments based on what you learnt? Put this into your action plan if you need to change anything.

3. An update on the person you support's progress towards their personal outcomes.
Any good stories of how you/others are supporting the person towards their personal outcomes? (for example, Supporting the person to take more power and control?)

Any concerns?

PA comments:

Line manager comments:

4. Reflection/Learning Log

Date	Training/Learning that I completed Any specific learning I did (eg read an article, tried a new approach at work/saw something on TV, went to learning/sharing session/attended training/ heard something new at a team meeting)	How long did you spend? Eg 1 hour or half day	How do I use this learning in my practice?

What other training/learning/support do you require for your role?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

(If you are completing an SVQ or other award please bring along your current progress report for discussion with your line manager) Keep as evidence for the SSSC

5. Feedback

Please write down any feedback you have received. (This could be from the person you support/family/other team members/other professionals/line manager)

Line manager comments:

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

6. Progress in, for example, using a Policy (or SSSC Code of Practice/part of a Service Design or Support Strategies)

What did you look at since the last session?:	
What are the key points? PA comments	Please give example(s) of how you put this into practice? Any challenge you face? PA comments
What support would help you and your team to understand and put this into practice at work? PA comments	Line manager comments:

7. FUTURE ACTION PLAN that you are now going to work on
Leave this blank until your supervision session.

Based on what we know, what should you do next? **What will you focus on to help the person/people move towards personal outcomes?**
1.
2.
3.
4.
5.

8. Professional Development:

My Strengths/Competencies: Fill up this page over time at the end of supervision sessions/team meetings/observations. When you and your line manager agree that you showed the strength through a specific piece of work – both sign it. When the strength/competency is signed off you have achieved it–congrats!

EMPOWERING PEOPLE - enabling people to lead their own lives

Engaged: I showed in my work that......	You sign	Line Manager sign-off	Established: I showed in my work that	You sign	Line Manager sign-off
I am committed to making a positive difference to the lives of the people I support			I notice the strengths, knowledge and expertise of the people I support and carers		
I am committed to making sure that the people I support direct their own lives and achieve their personal outcomes.			I deliver support in a way that helps the people I support to achieve their personal outcomes		
I value the carers and families of the people I support as equal partners			I work with the people I support, their carers and others to promote positive risk taking		
I recognise the strengths of individuals, families and communities.			I help people to connect with their local communities or communities of interest		
I am aware that I must make sure that children and adults are protected from harm			I remain focused on the personal outcomes of the people I support when faced with conflicting priorities.		

WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP - working together with the people I support and other partners.

Engaged: I showed in my work that……	You sign	Line Manager sign-off	Established: I showed in my work that	You sign	Line Manager sign-off
I understand the importance of relationships and value other people's different ideas and perspectives			I recognise the positive value of diversity and use it to improve the quality of my own practice		
I build positive relationships with the people I support and carers			I constantly check the balance of power in my relationships with the people I support and I work to make sure that they have the power and control		
I build good working relationships with people from different backgrounds, with people in different roles in ENABLE and colleagues in partner organisations.			I take active steps to build positive relationships to develop networks and promote partnership working.		
I put the personal outcomes of people supported by ENABLE first and know that I need to work with colleagues in other organisations to achieve this.			I put the personal outcomes for people supported by ENABLE first. I work with colleagues in other organisations to overcome any areas of conflict to achieve this.		
I understand the importance of relationships and value other people's different ideas and perspectives			I recognise the positive value of diversity and use it to improve the quality of my own practice		

LEARNING/REFLECTING – actively involved in continuous learning and improvement

Engaged: I showed in my work that......	You sign	Line Manager sign-off	Established: I showed in my work that	You sign	Line Manager sign-off
I take responsibility for my own learning and development.			I think about the effect that my actions/words/ approaches have had		
I think about how my learning makes a difference to my practice.			I actively think about what formal and informal learning would help me at my work		
I actively participate in learning opportunities within and out with my workplace			I show how I have used my learning to improve what I do at work		
I contribute to the learning and development of others.			I promote the learning and development of others		
I keep my required learning up to date			I share good practice and good stories about what works		

Check **www.continuouslearningframework.com** to choose another competency when you have shown that you use all of the above ones successfully.

Appendix 3: Some questions to help the contracting process[46]

How will you know that you are getting what you want from supervision?

How will I know that supervision is useful to you? How will you let me know that supervision is on track for you?

Supposing we've been meeting for three months, what else will you hope to be getting from supervision?

How have you made supervision useful for yourself in the past?

How would you let me know if we need to do something different?

What do I need to know about your way of working?

How will you know that your way of working is moving forward? (this can lead to looking at strengths and how they develop and influence client outcomes)

What kinds of cases/situations/problems are you good at working with? What would people using services say about your way of working?

What situations are toughest for you and how will you know that you are moving forward?

What do you know about how you are when you are:

- stressed or distressed
- bored
- confused
- isolated
- overwhelmed?

What is the most helpful way that I could respond to you as a supervisor when this happens?

If I were to feel anxious about what I hear about the way you were working with a particular case, how would you like us to handle that situation? If such a thing has happened to you before, what have you appreciated about the way your supervisor has dealt with the situation?

---

[46]Rothwell, B (unpublished)

Appendix 4: Preparing for group supervision

Group supervision is not a substitute for individual supervision. It is a supplement to the one-to-one session you may have on a regular, if not frequent, basis and can be a useful way to achieve important connections with your colleagues.

Group supervision has a number of forms and it is very important before anyone participates they understand and agree with the arrangements for creating a safe and useful environment for the group to do its work. Group supervision will often be facilitated by a manager/supervisor, although the extent to which they will lead the group will vary.

This paperwork is intended to help you think about your own participation in group supervision, so you can make the most of the opportunity. Think about the questions and write down your answers so when the group creates a set of rules to operate by you are able to contribute.

1. When have you been part of a group that you felt you benefitted from?
   (This might not have been a work based group or a formal group).
2. What were the benefits? What did you gain from being part of the group?
   For example feeling understood; knowing others were having the same experience.
3. How did group members behave so that you benefitted?
   For example listening to you; sympathising.
4. How did you behave so that you benefitted from being part of the group?
   For example listening to others; asking for advice; sharing experiences.
5. What would have made it difficult to benefit from the group?
   For example not attending regularly enough; not knowing each other well enough.

Now specifically think about a group operating at work.

6. What would your best hopes be for a supervision group? How could you benefit from participating in one?
7. What could you do to help others benefit from the supervision group?
8. What could the facilitating manager/supervisor do to help everyone benefit from the supervision group?
9. Which of the following activities would you like the group supervision to include?

Being able to share ideas about working with people using services with others who do a similar job to you.	
Being able to talk to others about the impact of the work on you.	
Being able to compare your experiences of the organisation with your colleagues.	
Being able to help others with problem solving or generating ideas.	
Hearing from your manager/supervisor – expectations and feedback.	
Hearing from people who can help you learn and improve your practice.	
Being able to raise issues about the work you do and discuss how to resolve or manage them.	
Being able to feed back to the organisation about what is working well and what is not.	

10. Which of the following impacts would you like group supervision to have?

Feeling connected to the wider team.	
Feeling that your work is noticed, understood and appreciated.	
Being clear about what you are doing and how you are doing it.	
Knowing that you are working in the right ways.	
Feeling like you've had a breathing space.	
Understanding what the organisation expects of you.	
Feeling that your concerns have been heard.	
Being clear about what actions will be taken by others.	
Understanding the wider context of the work you do, and its impact on you and your clients.	

Appendix 5: Clackmannanshire and Stirling Council's template

Group Supervision Record

Practice Standard:

• Each supervision session will be formally recorded and held as supervision record by line manager, case discussion and decision will be recorded in service user files.

Service/Team:

Date and Time:

Supervisor/Group Facilitator:

Staff present:

Agenda (Include Plan for Session and Outline of Group Learning Methods)

1.
2.
3.
4.
5.
6.
7.
8.
9.
10.

Review of Previous Session – Decisions, Actions and Progress Made

Issues Noted:	Actions Agreed:	Outcome:

Key Information Shared:

Practice/Service Discussion

Issues Noted:	Outcome:	Actions Agreed:	Outcome:

Reflective Practice Discussion

Presenter	Description of Practice	Discussion Points	Learning Points	Actions	Timeline

Learning and Development:

Staff Safety/Welfare:

Date of Next Session:

Appendix 6: Performance management framework[48]

Performance area	Evidence and comments
Clear on (professional) role (including values and ethics of role).	
Has an appropriate relationship with (the right) service user	
a) Uses own authority appropriately. b) Responds appropriately to the authority of others.	
Engages with/addresses issues of discrimination/oppression.	
Is self-aware and self-regulating.	
Is accurately empathic/engages/can take other perspectives.	
Demonstrates accuracy and relevance in observation and information gathering.	
Is able to analyse and synthesise information.	
Devises and executes appropriate plans (case work and workload).	
Interventions are skilful, thoughtful and purposeful.	
Progresses tasks appropriately.	
Demonstrates efficiency with administration, including recording.	
Has positive a) team and b) multidisciplinary relationships (including tolerance of diversity; motivation and social skills).	
Makes appropriate use of supervision	
Is adaptable/responsive to the need for change.	

---

[48]Rothwell, B (unpublished) adapted from and building on the work of Tony Morrison and Jane Wonnacott

Appendix 7: Fife Council Supervision Training

In May 2012 a working group of managers and supervisors from across the social work service developed a new process and recording format for supervision. The aim was to provide consistency in the supervision process, create a recording process that supported clear decision making and accountability for actions and encourage discussion outwith direct case management.

The group agreed the supporting documentation for supervision. This consisted of a supervision contract and forms to record the different elements of supervision: Part A focusing on performance management, Part B covering the main supervision agenda with a focus on the staff member and Part C to record specific case discussions and decisions. There was also an agreed Transfer Summary Form for when staff had a change in supervisor. This would allow the new supervisor an overview of any key areas, in particular in regard to attendance, performance and any agreed development.

Briefing sessions were held and a one day training course developed to support supervisors with the new process and recording format.

Review of training needs

In November 2013 a survey was carried out to gain an overview of staff's perception of their supervision and to ascertain how consistently the supervision process was implemented. The survey was distributed to 3,670 staff and achieved a 9.6% return. Results were analysed in service areas and reported back to service managers. This allowed managers to consider whether further support or action was required. Attendance at training had dropped as the majority of supervisors were now familiar with the process. This, together with feedback from the survey, made it apparent that the training needed to be redeveloped to meet changing needs. Training sessions had to be adapted to be effective with smaller groups. Comments from the survey highlighted the need for a focus on supporting the 'quality' of supervision. It was apparent that quality supervision could not be achieved through forms or processes but needed supervisors to use particular skills and approaches.

With this in mind, a new suite of training for supervisors was developed, consisting of three separate modules:

- a half day for new supervisors focussing on the supervision policy and paperwork for recording supervision sessions
- a half day focussing on the performance management element of supervision, including the benefits of performance management systems, setting SMART objectives, the importance of recognising good performance
- a full day looking at supervision practice skills.

The following skills were identified for the one day course.

- Leadership – what is the difference between being a manager and a leader, what are the different leadership styles, identify what kind of leader they are, recognise the need to use different leadership styles with different staff or situations, French and Raven's theory of power in relation to themselves and the informal leaders in the team.
- Communication – including questioning techniques, active listening, giving positive and constructive feedback rather than accolades or criticism, having difficult conversations and being assertive.
- Empathy.
- Motivation – introducing motivational theories, for example equity theory and Herzberg, an opportunity to identify their own motivation drivers and how an understanding of other's drivers can support staff motivation.
- Decision making – being aware of different fallacies and looking at decision making process.
- Group supervision – discussion on the benefits of group supervision and where this can be effective.

Current position

Feedback on the new supervision skills training has been positive. Comments have included:

> **'I found the information helped me to have a clearer understanding of good supervision.'**
> **'This allowed me to think through how to deal with different situations within supervision.'**
> **'It has helped to focus and get more from my team's supervision. I am now considering the impact of group supervision as a tool.'**

A further survey was carried out in May 2015. This was more in-depth than the 2013 survey and supervisors had the opportunity to comment on providing supervision as well as on the supervision they receive. It also recognised support outwith formal supervision. This survey response rate increased to a 26% return.

The 2015 survey highlighted that although there was still room for improvement, generally, there has been an increase in the implementation of the supervision policy and process as well as the quality of supervision. There was a 28% increase in the number of staff who in response to the question 'Overall, how useful and valued is supervision to you?' chose the statement 'Very, I feel very positive about my supervision'.