

Effective supervision

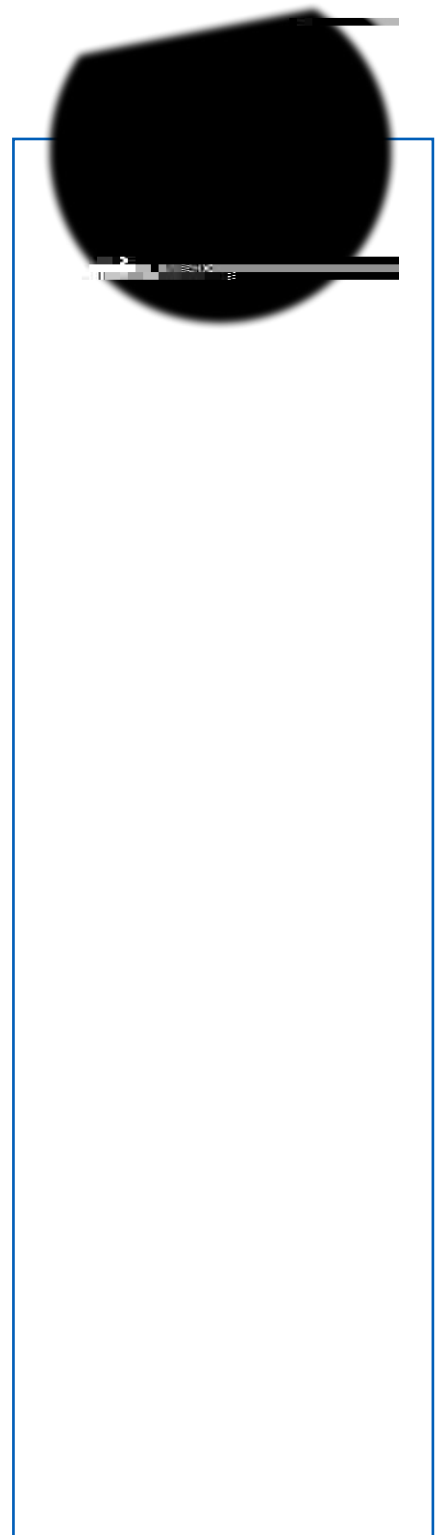
A practical guide for adult social





About this guide





Understanding supervision

It's important that supervisors and supervisees understand what supervision is and how it can benefit them, to ensure that they're both committed to the process and get the most out of it.

This section of the guide will help you to understand more about supervision, and explains:

- what supervision is
- why supervision is important
- the functions of supervision
-

What is supervision?

Supervision is a process that involves a manager meeting regularly and interacting with staff to review their work.

Supervision is not about the exercise of power over another person – whilst it can help to manage performance, it is also, equally, a way of helping the supervisee to develop new skills, experience and confidence in their role.

It might include, for example, reviewing their workload, setting the expected standards, monitoring and reviewing performance, identifying learning and development opportunities and keeping them informed with wider organisational news.

Supervision is usually carried out by one person who has some related knowledge and skills, and who takes responsibility and accountability for supporting the wellbeing and performance

Why supervision is important

There are lots of reasons why supervision is important.

Maintain quality of care and support

Supervision offers a formal process to outline the expected standards and set personal objectives, to ensure that staff deliver high-quality care and support.

You can also use supervisions to reflect on practice and performance to ensure that standards are maintained, and/or put actions in place to improve – which encourages staff to be accountable for their own work.

Ensure that staff feel supported

Supervision offers a vital channel of communication between management and staff. They can use it to share useful information with each other and discuss any challenges or issues. This ensures that staff feel confident to do their role and can access the support that they need to manage difficult situations.

Support ongoing learning and development

Supervision gives managers and staff the opportunity to discuss any skills gaps and development needs and put action plans in place to address them, to ensure that staff have the skills and knowledge to be competent and confident in their role.

Celebrate achievements

Supervision offers staff the chance to reflect on their successes, and managers to praise them for them, which can really motivate staff and make them feel valued (which, in turn, can improve staff retention and reduce turnover).

Support problem solving

Supervision gives managers and staff the opportunity to talk about any issues and/or problems, and identify ways to resolve them.

Meet regulatory standards

If you're a regulated provider, regular supervisions and appraisals ensure that your service meets Regulation 18 of the Health and Social Care Act 2008 (Regulated Activities), which states that 'staff must receive the support, training, professional development, supervision and appraisals that are necessary for them to carry out their role and responsibilities'. The CQC will look at the supervision process as part of the 'effective' and 'well-led' areas of inspection.

The functions of supervision

There are three key functions of supervision.

Supportive

Supervision involves supervisors providing support for staff members with different aspects of their role. The supportive function can help to address any emerging issues that may impact staff performance and/or wellbeing. For supervisors, this function might include:

- ✓ supporting staff with any challenges in their role
- ✓ monitoring and supporting staff health and wellbeing, and ensuring that the organisation has the right support in place to address any issues
- ✓ dealing with any issues that need further investigation, for example performance concerns or safeguarding investigations
- ✓ keeping staff informed about the wider organisation and any changes or developments.

Line management

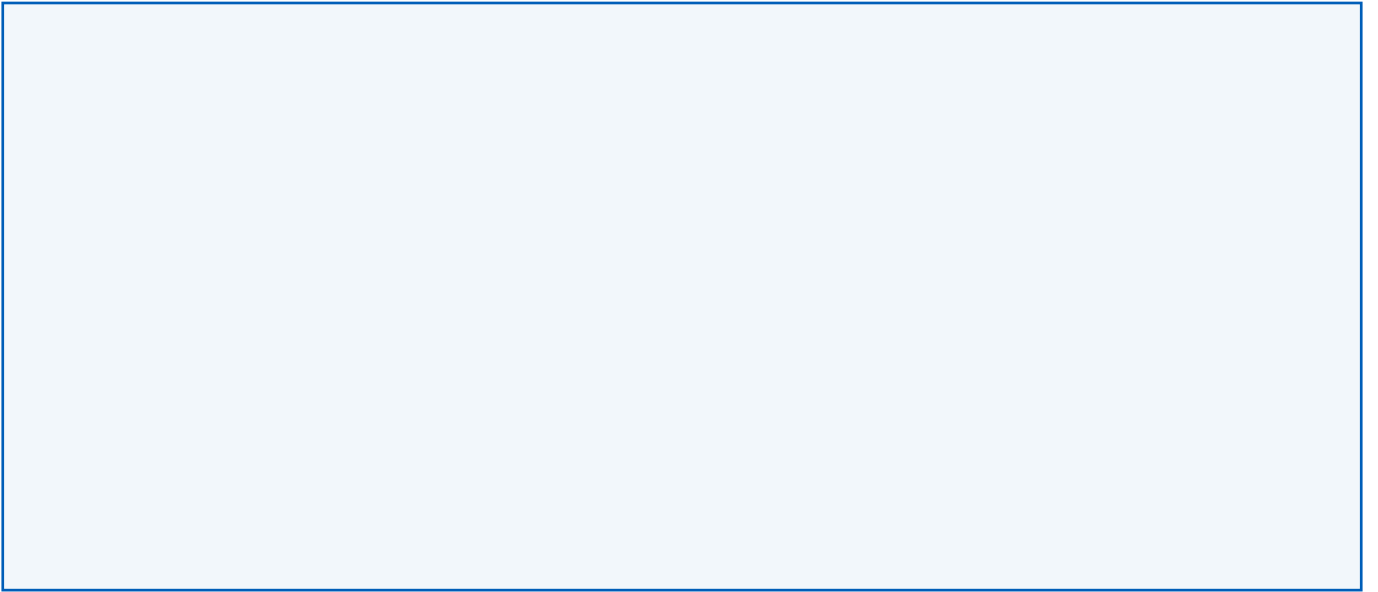
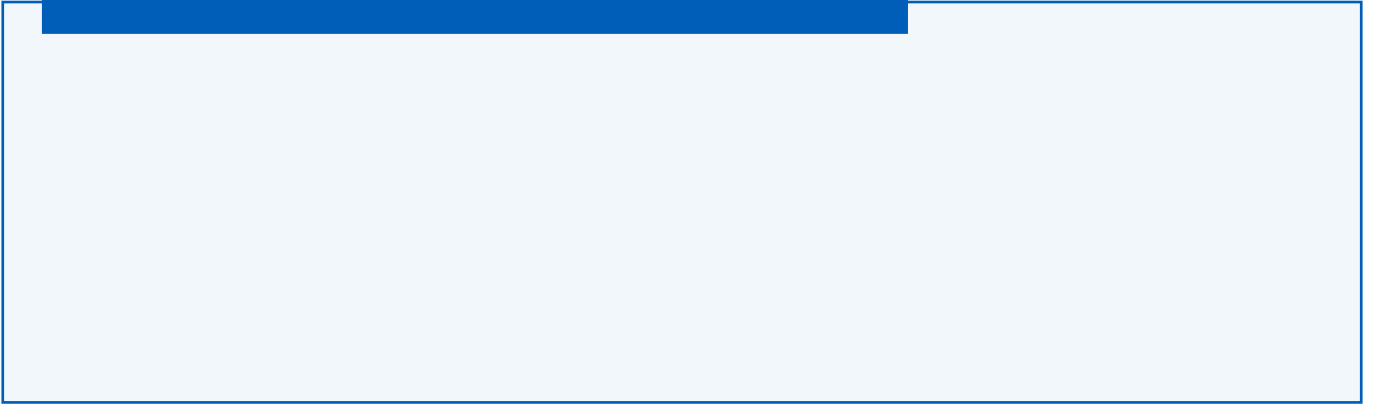
Supervision can help managers to promote and maintain good standards of work and ensure that staff follow the relevant policies and procedures. For supervisors, this function might include:

- ✓ managing team resources – you can use supervision to ensure that staff understand their role and responsibilities
- ✓ delegating workload – you can use supervision to provide meaningful communication between managers and staff at all levels
- ✓ performance appraisals – you can use supervision to set targets and objectives, and discuss performance and quality
- ✓ duty of care – you can use supervision to ensure that staff understand the standards that are expected of them and follow the relevant policies and procedures.

Educational and/or developmental

Supervision can help staff to develop critical thinking and analysis skills, explore their own learning and development needs and identify opportunities to address those needs. For supervisors, this function might include:

- ✓ assessing staff skills and knowledge, and identifying any gaps and/or learning and development needs
- ✓ helping staff to identify their preferred learning styles and barriers to learning
- ✓ giving and receiving constructive feedback
- ✓ supporting staff to reflect on their learning opportunities and ensuring that they know how to apply the learning in practice.



Supervision during induction

It's important that new staff get a thorough induction, which should include a mix of training, supervision and workplace assessment. This ensures that they understand what you expect from them, and that they receive the support needed to be confident and competent in their role.

During the induction period, you might do more regular supervisions than with other experienced staff, and it might include more informal supervision from experienced care workers.

The role of the supervisor

The role of the supervisor is vital to any adult social care team and organisation. They're not only responsible for supervising the work of others, but also coaching, resolving issues and serving as a link between staff and managers.

This section of the guide explains more about the supervisor role, including:

- the role of the supervisor
- who can carry out supervision
- the attributes of a good supervisor.



My manager is really great. I meet with her on a regular basis - usually every six to eight weeks for a formal supervision. I have the opportunity to go through my caseload in detail and she is keen to ask quese exePabouwhtey

The role of the supervisor

A good supervisor can make a big difference to staff and your organisation.

The role involves overseeing and managing a team or individual to ensure that they're performing effectively and are satisfied in their role.

As outlined in section one, the supervisor role involves:

- ✓ providing support
- ✓ line management
- ✓ supporting staff to learn and develop.

The specific responsibilities of the role can vary based on your organisation, but might include:

- ✓ managing workload
- ✓ training new hires
- ✓ evaluating performance
- ✓ providing feedback
- ✓ identifying learning and development opportunities
- ✓ helping supervisees to resolve any issues.



Inevitably it takes some time for a supervisor to learn all of the different functions of their job, which is why supervisors have their own manager/supervisor supporting and directing them. It's really important to differentiate between different roles of the work. Sometimes, the line manager will not have actual experience of a specific type of care skill and will rely on another supervisor to provide this and report back. Good communication is vital in all of this work.

Tracey Cooper, Adult Social Care - Leeds City Council



Who can carry out supervision

There are lots of different people who could carry out supervision and here are some examples for adult social care employers (please note, this list is not a definitive list – it'll depend on the way that you work).

Supervisors don't always need to be people in managerial roles – it could involve, for example, experienced care workers overseeing a new member of staff doing the Care Certificate.

You might also choose to have different supervisors for different parts of the role. In this case, it's useful to select an overall line manager for the supervisee who will have oversight of their work and performance.

- ✓ Registered managers: in smaller organisations, registered managers might supervise all of the staff team, whereas in larger organisations, registered managers might supervise senior care staff only. In regulated services, the registered manager would be responsible and accountable to the CQC for ensuring that effective supervisions take place.
- ✓ Deputy managers, line managers and team leaders: some registered managers might delegate supervision responsibilities to their deputies.
- ✓ Senior/experienced and/or occupationally competent care workers: some senior and experienced care workers might make great supervisors and it could be a good opportunity for them to develop their management skills and knowledge. Good practice suggests that staff should have at least one year's experience in their work before being given a supervisory capacity in a care setting.
- ✓ Directors/owners: under the Care Act 2014, there's an increased focus on those responsible for health and social care services at owner/director level to be 'fit and proper'. A director, owner or CEO would, in most instances, be responsible for supervising others, such as registered managers, operational leads and/or training leads.
- ✓ External trainers: whilst employers should have overall responsibility for the management, supervision and support of their employees, they may use an external trainer or support organisation to support certain elements of supervision.
- ✓ Internal trainers: some in-house trainers might be well placed to plan and/or carry out supervision, for example during the induction period and with any learning and development needs.
- ✓ Registered nurses: often there are overlaps between different parts of the social care sector, particularly in clinical supervision settings. Registered nurses could take responsibility for supervision where appropriate, for example in a homecare agency where staff shadow a registered nurse to learn about end of life care practice.

The attributes of a good supervisor

Good supervisors have the right values, skills and knowledge to do the role, and should have a good understanding of the work that supervisees do, and of the setting that they work in.

This section outlines some of the attributes of a good supervisor. If you're a supervisor, you can use it to reflect on your current skills and knowledge and identify any gaps. If you're an employer, you can use it to plan induction, learning and assessment for supervisors.

You can find out more about how to develop supervisors in the next section.

Values, attitudes and behaviours

Good supervisors have the right values, attitudes and behaviours, and role model them in their everyday work.

In adult social care, the 6Cs, as outlined in the 'Compassion in Practice' strategy (2012), have been identified as the values that underpin high-quality social care provision.

- ✓ Care
- ✓ Compassion
- ✓ Competence
- ✓ Communication
- ✓ Courage
- ✓ Commitment

People's underlying values often shape their attitudes – i.e. 'a settled way of thinking or feeling about something' – and influence how they behave in certain situations.

It's important that supervisors have these values, because if care staff are expected to demonstrate them in their practice, supervisors must lead by example and do the same.

Skills

Good supervisors also have the required skills, including:

- ✓ organisational and time management skills
- ✓ communication skills, including good listening skills
- ✓ an ability to remain calm under pressure
- ✓ leadership skills
- ✓ problem-solving skills
- ✓ conflict resolution skills
- ✓ professionalism and a positive attitude.

Knowledge and experience

Supervisors are often experts in their field, but it's not always necessary for the supervisor to have direct experience of all of the work that they're supervising. However, when supervising practical tasks such as moving and handling and administering medication, the supervisor must be competent to ensure safe practice.

Here are some of the things that supervisors might need to know.

A green circular badge with a white torn-edge effect at the top, containing the text "Workbook edition".

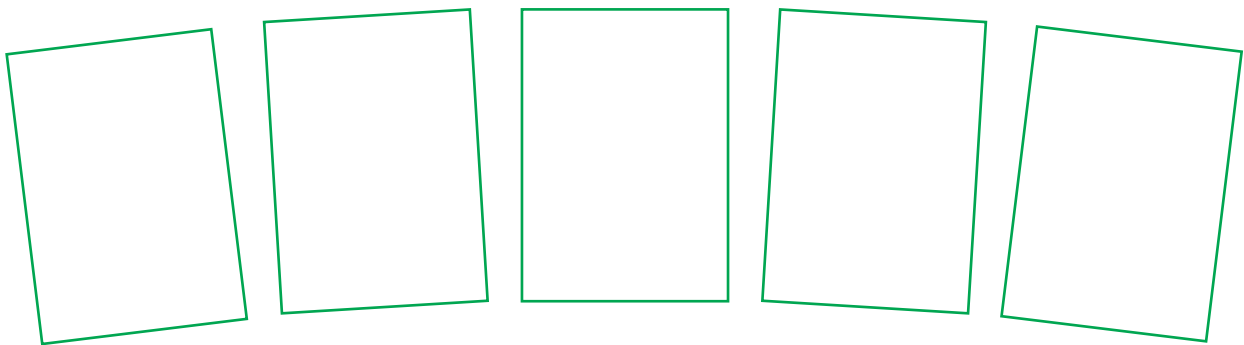
Workbook
edition

Additional information

As well as the information that we've outlined in this section, there is specific information that supervisors might need to know, including:

- ✓ legislation, policy and guidance
- ✓ supervision guidance and best practice
- ✓ organisational skills
- ✓ people management skills.

If you buy the printed workbook edition of this guide, you can learn more about these skills and knowledge, including a sample set of learning outcomes to help you do design or commission relevant training.



Qualifications















Top tips for new supervisors

Julie and Vanessa are experienced supervisors and share their top tips for new supervisors.

Julie Lusk, Registered Manager, Clinton Lodge (Solar Care Homes Limited)

	Don't rush through supervision sessions – you might feel under pressure to get them all completed, but it's important to remember that this is dedicated, one-to-one time for the person that you're supervising.
	Supervision can have a long-lasting effect on the supervisee by showing them that you value them.
	Don't be afraid to challenge supervisees, when appropriate. Be clear and direct when you do so and try to give constructive feedback.
	Don't expect to be able to 'change the world' through supervision – be realistic in what you can achieve as a supervisor.
	Get to know the individual and what works for them. A person-focussed approach is really important to get the best from people.

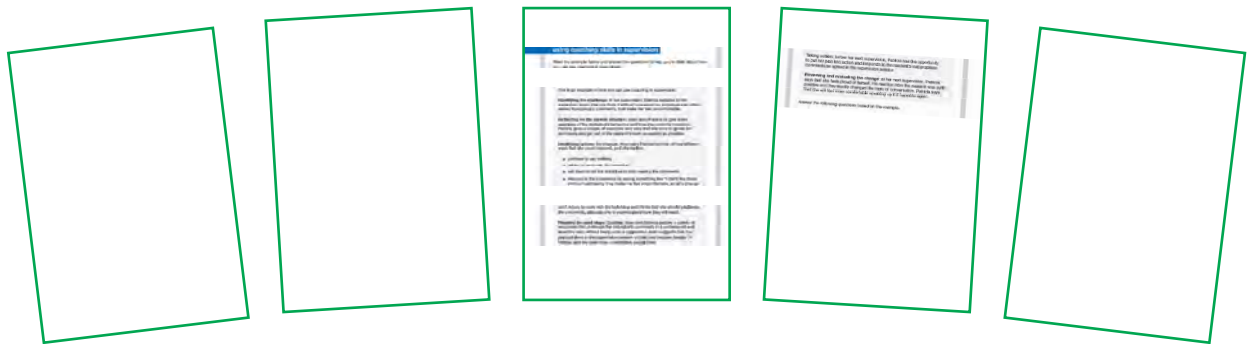
Vanessa Blowing, Manager, Truro Choice Day Provision

	Reinforce the message that supervision is not about 'telling off' - it's about support and encouragement.
	Build positive relationships with supervisees outside of the formal supervision setting.
	Ask supervisees to develop their own one-page pro le that shares information about themselves, the areas of work that they nd particularly rewarding and areas that they don't nd as rewarding.
	Ask them what a good and bad day at work looks like for them.
	Act as a role model. People have to be listened to and heard if we expect them to do the same for the people they support.



Other techniques to use in supervision sessions

Workbook
edition



Conclusion

We hope that you've found this guide useful, and that you've picked up lots of handy tips and recommendations to help you in your role as a supervisor.

Here are some questions to help you to reflect on some of the key points from the guide, and think about how you might adapt your supervision approach in the future.

Complete this activity to reflect on your learning.

Activity: conclusion

Having read the guide, what have been the key learning points for you?

If you already supervise others, what frameworks and approaches to supervision do you currently use that work well?



Acknowledgements

Skills for Care would like to thank Freebird Associates Ltd for their contribution to this guide.

We'd also like to thank the following organisations that supported the initial development of this guide in 2016/17, of which much of the content has been retained in this updated version.

- ✓ Accessing Social Care Careers, Oxfordshire
- ✓ Isles of Scilly - Adult Social Care
- ✓ CareShield
- ✓ Clinton Lodge (Solar Care Homes Ltd)
- ✓ Falcare CIC
- ✓ Home Instead Senior Care
- ✓ Leeds City Council – Adult social care
- ✓ Future Directions CIC
- ✓ Park House
- ✓ Shared Lives - Lancashire County Council
- ✓ Stockport Council Reablement and Community Home support Team (REaCH)
- ✓ Stow Healthcare
- ✓ Truro Choice Day Provision
- ✓ Westminster Society for People with Learning Disabilities

