Tool 42: Supervision policy outline

A supervision policy can support shared understanding of supervision and the kind of practice that is needed for adults and carers (Daly and Muirhead 2015).

This tool sets out areas to consider in your supervision policy.

You can use this to review your current policy or to support you to develop a new policy.

Commitment
Statement of organisational purpose for supervision

Purpose
Why we undertake supervision – to cover adults and carers, staff and organisational wellbeing
How adults and carers are involved

Definition
Our definition of supervision

Context
National and local standards
How supervision fits with other areas of the organisation
Expectations and support
Diversity and equality statement

Scope
Who this policy is for

Model
We suggest that you use the 4x4x4 model

Supervisory relationship
How supervisors and supervisees will work together, and how they will be supported

Practicalities
Frequency and duration of supervision, including for different roles
Who should supervise, including in multi-disciplinary teams
Types of supervision
Location of supervision
Confidentiality of information
Preparation for supervision

Recording
What should be recorded where

Quality assurance
How supervision will be evaluated
How to respond if supervision is not working

Appendices
Templates and tools that may include:
Agenda
Record
Evaluation tools
Reflective tools
Tools to support different functions of supervision

Tool 43: Supervision recording

Preparation, effective use of time and follow up are essential to get the most out of supervision.

This tool helps you to plan for supervision, to cover the main areas in supervision and to record supervision. (Your local supervision policy should cover these areas and will take precedence over the information in this tool.)

You can use the headings below to help you to prepare for supervision – as supervisor or supervisee, to agree an agenda at the start of supervision, or as a recording tool. Organisations can use the tool to inform their supervision guidance.

Supervision should ideally follow the CLEAR model

CLEAR supervision model	Process
Contract	Supervision session starts by establishing the practitioner's desired outcomes, what needs to be covered and how the supervisor and the supervisory process can be most valuable. Ground rules and roles will also be agreed
Listen	By using active listening and agreed reflective models and tools, the supervisor helps the practitioner to develop an understanding of the situation in which they want to effect difference.
Explore	Through questioning, reflection and the generation of new insights and awareness, the supervisor works with the supervisee to identify different options for handling the situation or relationship.
Action	Having explored the various dynamics and options for handling the situation, the practitioner chooses a way forward and agrees first steps.
Review	The agreed actions are reviewed. The supervisor also encourages feedback from the practitioner on what was helpful about the supervision process, what was difficult and what they would like to be different in future sessions. Agreeing how the planned action will be reviewed at future supervision sessions completes the work.

(Earle et al 2017)

Both the supervisor and supervisee should **prepare** for supervision.

Supervision should start with agreement about the **agenda**. This discussion flows into and alongside a discussion about wellbeing – the 'how are you?' discussion.

The headings below cover the main areas that should usually be discussed in supervision. You don't need to cover all the areas in one supervision.

> Review of outcomes and actions from previous session

> Management: workload

> Management: critically reflective discussion of priority cases

> Support: wellbeing and support needed

> Development: review of learning and how this has been used

> Development: discussion of future professional development

> Mediation: relationships with others

> Mediation: practical arrangements e.g. annual leave

> Agreement of outcomes and actions.

The **supervision record** should give an overview of what was covered in the session.

The supervision record is part of the management record and belongs to both the supervisee and the organisation. Each should have a copy. Supervision records should be signed by both parties and any disagreement should be noted.

Notes can be taken during or after the meeting, depending on preference. The method should be discussed and agreed.

Discussions in supervision that relate to **decisions about particular cases** should be noted on the case file as they are part of the intervention in that person's situation. It is important to agree in supervision who will do this recording. These discussions should be mentioned anonymously on the supervision record.

There may be **personal elements** of the supervision discussion that do not go on the supervision record, for example personal issues that it is agreed will not be captured on the supervision form. However, they should be noted in a separate confidential record, in case they become relevant to work later.

Other notes may be made from supervision discussion for example recording learning and development activity or annual leave.

Tool 44: Organisational Culture

This tool helps you to think through how the culture of the organisation you work for supports good supervision.

You can use this tool in groups to consider how your organisation's culture impacts on supervision. It enables you to identify ways to ensure that the organisational culture fits the supervisory culture. This is particularly useful when the organisation is going through change or is introducing new information about supervision.

Supervision is supported by an organisational culture that promotes learning, critical reflection and emotional support (Kettle 2015). The organisational culture is reflected in some particular areas that are listed in the table below (Johnson and Scholes 2007).

Look at each area in the table and consider how these areas support or hinder the values and behaviours that you want to see in supervision. You can then consider what you can do differently so that the organisational culture and supervision practice reflect one another. An example is given.

Organisational Culture Area	Description	How does this support supervision	How does this hinder supervision	What can we do differently
The stories we tell	The organisation is often described as being too bureaucratic	There is a clear process and people understand what is required	We can get caught up in the process and forget to use reflective practice	Ensure that we record reflective conversations within and outside of formal 1-1 supervision; try to have reflective conversations in other forums like management meetings
Our behaviours				
Our environment				
Our roles				
Our organisational structure				
Our communication systems				

Tool 45: Retaining staff

Research points to factors that support people to stay working in social care and those that push them away (Bowyer and Roe 2015). One of the factors is supervision.

This tool enables you to consider the push and pull factors and how you are supporting a context where supervision can thrive.

You can use this in team meetings to talk with your staff about their experience or in management meetings to consider how to support retention in your organisation.

How do we 'pull' staff to stay in our organisation?

Pull Factor	How can Supervision help?
The ability to make a difference	
Opportunities for staff development	
Peer support	
Opportunities for career progression	
Organisational support for emotional wellbeing	
Feeling valued	
What other factors can we identify?	

How do we avoid 'pushing' staff away from our organisation?

Push Factor	How can Supervision help?
Blame Culture	
Lack of clarity about roles	
High levels of stress	
Overly bureaucratic systems	
Negative public perceptions	
What other factors can we identify?	

Tool 46: Workload considerations

One of the functions of supervision is oversight of the quality and quantity of work being done.

This tool highlights considerations around workload for discussion in supervision. It is based on research about workloads (Baginsky et al 2009).

The supervisor and supervisee can use this tool to prepare for and carry out a discussion about workload in individual supervision. You can also use it to discuss the team's workload in group supervision or a team meeting. This tool also helps to support supervisees' wellbeing by enabling discussion of the impact of workload and how to manage this.

Most workload management is done by supervisors based on knowledge of staff and their capacity.

- How well does the supervisor know the supervisee and their capabilities?
- How can we improve this?

Formal systems can help but the level of workload that is manageable requires a professional judgement about the particular situations being worked with.

- How well does the supervisor know what the supervisee is working on?
- How can we improve this?

'Cases' can vary significantly in terms of the work required. Some considerations that affect complexity are: the number of issues; the number of agencies involved; the likelihood of and likely consequence of risk; the likelihood of change; the amount of scrutiny; additional learning required; travel.

- How well does the supervisor know how much complexity is involved in the supervisee's work?
- How can we improve this?

Social care requires professional development for individuals and organisations. It also involves uncertainty so we need some flexibility for unexpected events.

- How well does the supervisor know the supervisee's diary and is there any flexibility in this?
- How can we improve this?

High demand, lack of control and change can be causes of stress. They are helped by support, good relationships and a clear role.

- How well does the supervisor understand the stresses on the supervisee?
- How can we improve this?

Tool 47: Case prioritisation

There may be a perception that each supervision session should include discussion of every open case in order to retain oversight and accountability. This is generally impossible in the time available and does not support workers in taking ownership and prioritising issues and cases for discussion themselves. (Earle et al 2017)

This tool supports prioritisation of cases so that they can be discussed with the appropriate level of critical reflection.

Supervisees can use this tool to prepare for a discussion in individual supervision. Supervisors and supervisees can use this tool to agree the cases to discuss and to ensure that they prioritise appropriately.

List your cases and give them a score from 1-5 with 5 being most complex.

The level of complexity is based on the following factors: the number of issues; the number of agencies involved; the likelihood of and likely consequence of risk; the likelihood of change; the amount of scrutiny; additional learning required; travel.

Case	Complexity	Reason for this score
	5	
	5	
	5	
	5	
	5	

Agreed cases to discuss:

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Cases that need discussion soon and when we will do this:

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