



## **Supervision Policy**

### **Purpose**

Supervision must be regarded as an essential part of the work process and participation required of all members of staff at all levels, including pool staff, temporary staff, locum staff and volunteers, as a positive and meaningful method of achieving efficiency and accountability and hopefully of realising the full potential of each staff member.

The organisational requirements of Parents in Partnership i.e.: accountability, policy implementation, quality assurance, and equality, should underpin the supervision process at all levels.

The supervision process contributes to and forms the basis of annual Performance Appraisal. Appraisal sessions must, however, be held separately.

Any training or development issues raised during supervision are to be addressed and raised by the Manager to the Trustees

In all instances, signing records indicates that it is a true record, not that both parties reached agreement.

Relevant to Employees. All amendments to be agreed by Board of Trustees. This policy will be reviewed annually.

### **Contents**

1. Aims
2. Scope of Supervision
3. Supervision
4. Scheduling of Supervision
5. Conducting Supervision
6. Supervision notes
7. Resolving supervision issues
8. Requirements for Supervision – Supervisors
9. Requirements for Supervision – Supervisees
10. Equal Opportunities
11. Review

### **Appendices:**

1. Supervision notes

## Related Documents

### 1. Aims

Regular, planned, contractually agreed, and recorded supervision is a fundamental requirement for any organisation. It must be seen as the means through which any organisation can support, understand, develop, and manage its workforce.

Supervision forms a central part of the management process of the organisation. It also provides an early warning system if there are issues. It must be made an absolute priority for both staff and managers. Pressure of work is not an excuse for failing to conduct, document or attend supervision. If any person feels they are unable to meet any of the requirements of this policy then they must inform their manager immediately and review workload. If necessary, the outcome of this discussion should be an adjustment of workload – never a reduction in supervision activity.

Supervision notes should be held by both parties, paper copies must be stored in a locked cabinet and electronic copy is saved in staff's personal folder.

Staff are essentially accountable for the work they do, but must feel able to use clear communication structures to obtain the advice, guidance or direction required to carry out responsibilities in a respectful, organised, clear and effective manner.

### 2. Scope of Supervision

Case Work: staff must be able to make use of regular, planned sessions to explore the multiple issues raised during case work. These issues can cover just about anything but are likely to include: power, dependence, gender, race, sexuality, safety, despair, equality, rights, decision-making, focus, problem-solving, direction. This list is not exhaustive and supervision should create the opportunity for staff to explore any issues safely and confidentiality with their supervisor.

For Administration staff, supervision will not involve casework but should include all functions of their job description.

Health and Safety: Staff must feel as safe as possible during their work and if any issues do exist; these should be shared with the supervisor so that support, advice, guidance and direction can be offered.

Personal: At times all of us will experience periods when, for personal reasons, it becomes hard to do the work. If this arises it is important that staff can provide information, seek support and feel supported. Again this would be confidential to the worker, their supervisor/line manager and their senior manager.

Enmeshment: The nature of work can mean that on occasions, the worker feels stuck, over involved, smothered and so on by the parent/carer relationship. Equally, the worker may not be aware of this and, during discussion about casework these issues may manifest themselves. The Supervisor and Supervisee both have a duty to ensure that clarity of boundaries; control and dependence are understood so that either party contributes to a disservice to our consumers.

Appraisal: By keeping records of personal and professional development the Supervisor and Supervisee will have to hand evidence-supporting performance, which will contribute directly to the Appraisal system. Equally where issues arise during supervision, which requires the direct involvement or support of the supervisor/line manager, and this is not forthcoming, the supervisee can draw from supervision records where disputes/conflicts arise.

Team Work and Relationship: Teams are made up of individuals who will possess their own skills and style which need to come together, at times, for the purpose of team working, mutual understanding and support. During supervision individuals can give thought to their performance as a team player, and can address any issues, difficulties or conflicts, which may arise. This is crucial to the effective management of conflict; the worker can “test out” different approaches and options during supervision, negotiating how to address a colleague or colleagues.

Equal opportunities: Remembering that we are all influenced by our education, background, social and familial relationships, beliefs and values, supervision is where staff can explore personal value systems in relation to their work: race, gender, sexuality, disability and so on.

Action planning: The outcome of supervision should be clear action points documenting what has to be done, by when and who is responsible. By agreeing an action point in supervision, individuals are taking responsibility that they will be able to achieve this in the timeframe agreed. All action points must be reviewed at each supervision. If action points are being agreed and then missed on a regular basis, this should be taken up as a performance issue.

Feedback on performance: All staff need to have clear feedback on their performance. Managers need to remember both to praise achievements and good practice and to identify and put in place corrective measures for underperformance.

If we are to accept the premise that “where I stand affects my point of view” it is crucial that we all address these issues on an on-going basis for the purpose of learning, equality, personal development, and crucially, for clients.

### **3. Supervision**

All staff are accountable for the work they carry out and how their time is utilised. Supervision should primarily monitor the effectiveness of our service delivery but it should also attend to the professional development needs of the supervisee. These dual purposes having as their driving force the improvement of our service in meeting the needs of Parents in Partnership clients.

Manager together with the Board of Trustees are responsible for ensuring that supervision of staff coming under their management control is a regular and essential part of the professional work process.

### **4. Scheduling of Supervision**

All staff should be supervised regularly. For established staff members, supervision should generally happen monthly and the absolute minimum level of supervision should be a rate of 10 times per year reasonably spread through the year. Where staff are new, under stress,

lacking confidence or in performance management or there are relationship problems in the team the level of supervision may need to be increased to every two weeks or more often. This must be mutually agreed between the manager and staff member and documented. The Trustees are also entitled to insist on this where he or she regards it as necessary.

If the manager and the staff member are unable to agree on the proper level of supervision, they must write to the manager's manager who will meet with both jointly to agree a solution.

It is the responsibility of the Manager to schedule supervision. This must be done at the latest within 5 working days (excluding leave) of the previous supervision. If the staff member has not heard from the supervisor within this period, they should write to their manager requesting a date. If they have no response within another 5 working days of doing this, they should write to their manager's manager who must address the issue as soon as possible.

The staff member must make themselves reasonably available for supervision. If the date proposed by the manager is not possible, they should propose alternatives close to that date. If there is a difficulty matching diaries then the supervisor and the staff member should meet and identify what other meetings can be moved. If there is no solution identified, then the issue should be referred to the manager's manager who should either resolve the issue or, failing everything else, take on responsibility for conducting the supervision.

If the supervisor feels that the staff member is not making themselves available for supervision in a reasonable manner, then they should meet with the staff member to resolve. If the supervisor is not satisfied with the outcome of the meeting, they should flag this to their manager. If necessary this should then be treated as a performance issue.

Once the date is set both parties must treat as a priority and not change unless absolutely necessary:

- Acceptable reasons for changing supervision dates are emergencies, important external meetings or unexpected leave;
- Non-acceptable reasons for changing supervision are pressure of work in the normal course of business, meetings scheduled by one of the supervision participants, non-important meetings.

If one party changes the supervision timing, it is their responsibility to find a suitable alternative dates close to the original date.

## **5. Conducting Supervision**

Supervision should take place in a private, confidential, quiet space, free from interruptions, on average the session should last 1 to 1½ hours.

Wherever possible, supervision should be conducted in a location where a third person is present in the building. This third person can then handle emergencies or, if the emergency is critical, interrupt the supervision. This will enable both the supervisor and supervisee's phones to be switched off and so prevent interruption from non-urgent calls.

If it is not possible to conduct supervision with a third person in the building, then mobile phones can be left on. Prior to the supervision, both supervisor and supervisee must identify

a single number of someone who can pick up emergency calls (e.g. Mind reception or the housing bleep). This number should be identified as the emergency number in their voicemail message. They can receive calls from this number but no-one else during supervision.

Supervision must always open with the question 'How are you?' This should be sincerely asked and the supervisor should be willing to explore any issues raised allowing up to half-an-hour for the discussion. Discussion of non-work issues should be limited to discussion of how the issue impacts on the staff member at work and any reasonable adjustments that need to be made as a result. It is not the role of the supervisor to give advice or support on non-work issues.

Supervision must be fully documented in the format shown in Appendix 1. Supervision should be planned on the basis that the agenda for discussion is the shared responsibility of the supervisor and supervisee, with clear built-in opportunities for supervisee to raise issue he/she feel need to be addressed, in addition to items on the checklist. The supervisor will be required to have a recording system to make sure that, periodically, all areas referred to in section re: scope of supervision are discussed.

Supervision must always close with the question 'Has this supervision been comprehensive and adequate to your needs'. If the staff member answers 'yes' to this question they are confirming that:

- The manager has been adequately supportive
- The quality of the supervision has been adequate
- Everything necessary has been discussed
- All issues that have been raised have been fully and adequately discussed
- The staff member is clear what actions have been agreed and that they commit to achieve these actions in the timeframes agreed

If the staff member answers 'Yes' to the question, this must be documented. If the employee answers 'No' then the supervisor and staff member must either continue the supervision until the issues are resolved or meet again as soon as possible to resolve. Every attempt must be made by both to resolve the problem.

If the staff member still does not agree that the supervision has been comprehensive and adequate to their needs, then the supervisor should anyway complete the notes in line with the process. The notes should mention that the staff member is not happy and give the reason why they are not happy. The staff member should then write to their supervisor's manager explaining their concerns within 5 working days of receipt of the notes. The issue will then be handled in line with the resolving supervision issues process.

## **6. Supervision notes**

The supervision notes should be in the format shown in the appendix below.

It is the responsibility of the supervisor to discuss and agree with their line manager the nature/style of recording for each item e.g. detailed, abbreviated, bullet points, notes etc.

Casework decisions should be recorded on case file by the supervisee, and reviewed periodically by the supervisor and supervisee. For uniformity case notes/files should be used to record information, supervision summary sheets for the summaries.

This should be done within 5 working days (excluding leave) of the supervision date

If both parties are happy with the notes then they must be signed before the next supervision starts.

If the staff member is not happy with the supervision notes, then they should write to the supervisor detailing their concerns within 5 working days (excluding leave) of receipt. The supervisor and staff member should then meet within a further 5 days (excluding leave of either party) to resolve the issue. If they cannot agree supervision notes, the staff member should write to their supervisor's manager explaining why they disagree with the notes. The supervisor's manager should address the issue as soon as possible.

The next supervision cannot happen until the issues of the previous supervision are resolved and the notes are signed. Every attempt should be made to get this done. If for some reason this isn't possible within a reasonable timeframe, the supervisor's manager may have to temporarily act as supervisor.

Copies of the notes must be in a locked place. The manager's copy should store the copy in the employee's personnel file.

## **7. Resolving supervision issues**

It is the role of the supervisor's manager to resolve supervision issues as detailed above.

Before taking any further action, the supervisor's manager must check that the procedures defined have been followed especially:

- Have both parties followed the procedures?
- Have concerns been detailed in writing?
- Has sufficient time been allowed to resolve the problem?
- Where relevant, have the supervisor and the staff member met to resolve the problem?

If there is clearly an issue with one party, the supervisor's manager should address. If necessary, the performance management process should be used.

If the issue results from a difference of opinion, the supervisor's manager should meet jointly with the supervisor and staff member to understand both points of view. The supervisor's manager should then attempt to reach a compromise. If this fails, then the supervisor's manager should make a decision about the best way to proceed and document this to both parties in writing.

If either party is not happy with the outcome, then they should use the grievance process.

## **8. Requirements for Supervision – Supervisors**

- Give advice, support, appropriate encouragement and practical assistance when necessary.
- Maintain and improve standards of professional competence, linked to the published service specification and standards as appropriate.
- Act as forum for addressing issues of poor performance.
- Monitor workloads and work pressures, planning, organisation and effective line management.
- Ensure that any health issues (either mental or physical) which are relevant to the work of the supervisee are discussed and that all necessary reasonable adjustments have been made.
- Ensure accurate assessment and planning to meet users' needs (long and short term) and to provide an appropriate service.
- Ensure administrative policies, aims and objectives are understood and followed.
- Ensure organisational policies, aims and objectives are understood and followed.
- Determine areas of difficulty and advice accordingly.
- Monitor progress and help career and professional development of staff, identifying areas where further training and development may benefit
- Clarify legal procedures and points of a technical nature in light of legislation, and the need to seek specialist assistance if appropriate.
- Act as an "early warning" system in particularly difficult and complex cases or issues of potential danger to a client, family member, general public or a member of staff. In the context above, it is of vital importance that in supervision any report of violent or threatening behaviour or suicidal intent should be fully examined. It is the duty of the supervisor to ascertain if such incidents have taken place and if so, the duty of the supervisee is to report on any circumstances that could be described as threatening, violent, potentially violent or suicidal that has transpired in the process of work. The supervisor must be alert to whether an issue requires the safeguarding process
- Be a constructive form of feedback between supervisor and supervisee, which will contribute to and inform the Appraisal system. Feedback from staff should include looking at unmet needs, i.e. identifying new service developments.
- Time for the supervisor to raise issues of team, service or organisational importance.
- Enable the constructive exploration of the relationship between individual values, beliefs and perceptions, and organisational requirements, ethos and philosophy with an emphasis on anti-discriminatory practice.

Supervisors are responsible for familiarising themselves with each of the workers' workloads and the team and organisational expectations placed upon them.

Supervisors are responsible for discussing new items and issues as soon as possible after work has been allocated to supervisee.

Supervisors ensure that all clients (where appropriate) are regularly reviewed as per service specifications/requirements and anti-discriminatory practice and all reports are discussed/read/amended as necessary and are available for consideration in supervision sessions.

Supervisors and supervisees keep a file in which co-signed supervision records are kept in a safe and secure place. They should be read and reviewed prior to each session.

## **9. Requirements for Supervision – Supervisees**

Supervision should provide the following opportunities for staff:

- to be held accountable
- to be listened to and get feedback on their work
- to have an opportunity to review their work
- to get encouragement and support
- to have an exchange of information
- to be acknowledged as an important part of the organisational process
- to feel clear and confident about their work
- supervision must be seen as the initial forum to air any grievance
- to receive constructive criticism
- to negotiate future work and to plan and prioritise
- to receive advice and guidance
- to have an opportunity to bounce ideas around

To get the most from supervision, all staff need:

- willingness to approach supervision positively
- commitment to the organisation
- be familiar with the organisation's policies and procedures
- openness and honesty
- willingness to listen
- willingness to change
- respect, trust and confidence in the supervisor wherever possible
- ability to give or accept praise and criticism
- assertiveness
- willingness to give or act on given advice or instruction
- discretion

Supervisees have the right to have any disagreement with their supervisor recorded in the supervision notes.

## **10. Equal Opportunities**

Throughout the supervisory process, both supervisor and supervisee should be aware of issues within their relationship, and of the organisational Aims and Objectives, relating to Equal Opportunities.

During supervision session, the supervisee and supervisor are obliged to consider equality issues particularly with an emphasis on race, gender, access and disability.

## 11. Review and Updating of Policy and Procedures

This Supervision Policy detailed above was agreed and minuted at a meeting of the Board of Trustees on:

<b>Approved by:</b>  <b>Julie Newton-Smith</b> <b>Chair of Trustees</b>	<b>Signed:</b>	<b>Date:</b>  <b>Review: July 2018</b>
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## Appendix 1 - Supervision Notes

Supervision Notes

Supervisee:

Supervisor:

Date:

Project	Action	Responsible	Date
General Health			
Hours			
Admin/DB			
Client work			
Code of conduct			
Training			
Review of appraisal's goals			
AOB			

Signed:

Signed:

Date:

Date: