Supervision guidance for early years and childcare settings

This document is for reference only and you must adapt it to reflect the service your setting offers.

What is supervision and why is it important?

Supervision is an opportunity to meet at regular intervals to discuss and provide support and empowerment to staff to make sure they feel equipped and happy to fulfil their job effectively. The meeting needs to foster a culture of open discussion where staff have the time to discuss any concerns, worries and constraints within their role and the setting as a whole.

The key elements of supervision are coaching, training, personal development and the focus on children and their well being. It should also be a two way process that enables both parties involved to develop a positive and mutually supportive discussion and ongoing development plan.

Please remember not all supervision needs to be planned. Spontaneous supervision must occur in the event of concerns or safeguarding issues arising. An ‘open door’ culture should be emphasised when implementing a system for supervision.

Supervision and appraisals what is the difference?

**Supervision** is a regular one to one meeting in order to meet organisational, professional and personal objectives. This should include current feelings and well-being, concerns or constraints and review of notes from last supervision.

**Appraisal** is an annual meeting to:

- Assess and record a staff members performance, potential and development needs over the year - what has gone well/not so well
- Set measurable targets and objectives for the coming year
- Identify training needs and support continuing professional development

It is important to remember that although appraisals and supervision are different, annual targets from appraisals should be discussed and reviewed through supervision and changed or adapted as necessary.

What is the purpose of Supervision?

**Organisational**

- To find out about staff as individuals and enable them to see where the setting they work for is going and how they can contribute to it
- An opportunity to respectfully challenge practice
- To manage performance and capabilities
- Reiterates organisational expectations
- To make sure children and their families receive the highest quality care and service
- To improve communication and share responsibility
- Assist staff retention
- Maximise safeguarding of children
Professional

- Opportunity to look at your role and responsibilities, where you are now and where you would like to go. This could include training opportunities
- To reflect on, analyse and evaluate own practice
- Supports the setting of personal goals and a chance to review, change or adapt recent or past actions
- Promotes confidence and safe working practices
- Provides an opportunity to agree actions for both parties
- Allows disagreements to be recorded and solutions explored at the earliest opportunity

Supportive

- It is a time to listen to each other
- Value, motivate and empower staff with their work and ongoing commitment
- Get staff involved in decision-making and problem solving
- Can be used to reduce stress and explore staff feelings
- Will support staff to manage work effectively
- Any issues can be discussed including issues related to health and safety, safeguarding and workload
- Allows implementation of Coaching and Delegation

Records

It is important to keep a record of all supervision meetings in order to keep track of agreed discussions and actions, give a starting point to the next meeting and an opportunity to review where you have got to with any goals or actions. These records will also link with staff appraisals, management of performance and overall training and development plans. You will also need written records of any concerns, issues or disagreements that have arisen.

Supervision policy

Following the introduction of the new statutory framework for the early years foundation stage all early years settings must put appropriate arrangements in place for the supervision of staff who have contact with children and families.

Settings should implement a supervision policy as a ‘best practice’ approach to provide guidance for staff as well as a way of demonstrating and evidencing their commitment to on-going professional development. The Supervision policy should take into account the following:

- Needs a clear statement of purpose
- Must clarify confidentiality and access to supervision notes
- Needs a setting pro forma for supervision contracts and records
- States clear expectations and boundaries
- Stipulates frequency, duration and recording
- Demonstrates how quality supervision links to staff retention and motivation, performance management and safeguarding of all employees and children
Points to consider

- How could staff be involved in developing the supervision policy and the process you are going to use?
- What is the purpose of supervision and why is it important to your setting, staff and children?
- What are your overall aims and objectives?
- Who is going to carry out the supervision sessions?
- Are there clear lines of accountability in your process?
- How are you going to develop a contract that sets out what each staff member can expect from supervision? This may include: frequency, location and length of sessions, main areas for discussion, confidentiality, agreement of note taking and procedure for reconciling differences or concerns.
- When, where and how often will the sessions take place?
- Will there be opportunities for spontaneous sessions when needed?
- How can staff instigate these?
- How are you going to ensure a safe, undisturbed and appropriate environment?
- How long will sessions last?
- What records will be kept from discussions and who will be responsible for note taking? Where will these records be kept and who will have access?
- How will confidentiality be managed?
- What are the rights, responsibilities and expectations of the supervisor? Supervisee?
- How does your supervision policy link to other policies for managing risk, supporting staff and their well-being, performance management and safeguarding?
- Does your policy provide clarity of the roles and responsibilities around safeguarding issues?
- Are all staff up to date with their safeguarding training?
- Does your setting promote a culture of openness and transparency?
- How are you going to ensure that all staff feel empowered and confident to bring up uncomfortable issues if and when they arise?
- Does your policy/procedure state how issues that arise will be managed?
- How will you ensure supervision meets the individual needs of staff?
- Do all staff have access to supervision?
- Will specific roles be entitled to more frequent sessions? For example new staff, volunteers or trainees?
- How are you going to introduce supervision to new members of staff?
- Are you going to have an agenda for each supervision session? Are you going to have set items?
- Can other items be added as and when necessary? Who will be responsible for composing the agenda?
- What do you have in place for Supervision and support of all managers?
- When will you review your supervision policy and its impact? Who will review it?
- How are you going to allow staff to evaluate the supervision process? When? Will there be time set aside for this?
- What other ways can you measure the difference supervision makes?

Useful resources and websites

- CWDC workforce tool ‘Providing Effective Supervision’ can be found at www.skillsforcare.org.uk
## Sample supervision contract or agreement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Setting name/logo</th>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Supervision Agreement</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Between: and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frequency:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Location:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Duration of session:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Agenda and Structure

Preparation work will have been completed by both the supervisor and supervisee and where possible an agenda set before the supervision session.

Set agenda items will include:

These will be discussed and reviewed at every session. Additional agenda items will be prioritised at the beginning of the session by both parties to ensure the most effective use of time. Each session should last between one to one and a half hours. In the event of serious disagreement or concern a session may be extended or reconvened at a mutually convenient time.

### Content

Supervision will cover:
- Organisational functions
- Professional functions
- Supportive functions

### Record keeping and confidentiality

All supervision sessions will be recorded including:
- areas covered
- discussion points
- agreed action plans, timescales
- who is responsible for each action

Copies of the record will be available to both the supervisor and supervisee and access permitted in the following situations: Auditing, Grievance, Disciplinary, Safeguarding and Complaints

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Cancellations</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In the event that a scheduled supervision session needs to be cancelled, it will be re scheduled at the point of cancellation. The session should be re scheduled to take place within 5 working days of the date of the original booked session. It is the responsibility of both the Supervisor and the Supervisee to ensure that the new session is carried out as soon as is conveniently possible.</td>
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### Disagreements

Areas of disagreements between the Supervisor and Supervisees will be recorded on the supervision records. Areas of disagreements that cannot be resolved may be referred to the Manager/Owner/Proprietor or Management Committee.

### Review of supervision

The supervision process including, content, length, frequency, format and record templates should be reviewed by all participants within the supervision process at least annually.

### Agreement

We agree that supervision will be given and received in accordance with (setting/company name) Supervision Policy wherein more details regarding supervision can be located.

Signed:
Print Name:

Signed:
Print Name:
Sample supervision frequency chart

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Volunteers</td>
<td>Fortnightly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apprentices</td>
<td>Fortnightly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New staff</td>
<td>3 weekly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff undergoing training</td>
<td>Monthly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newly qualified staff</td>
<td>Monthly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Practitioners</td>
<td>6 weekly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leaders</td>
<td>6 weekly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Managers</td>
<td>6 weekly</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Sample supervision agenda and record sheet

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Setting name/logo</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>supervisee: ________________________________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>supervisor: ________________________________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>date: ________________________________</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Agenda</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• review of previous supervision</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• progress of previous set objectives (link/review appraisal set targets)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• workload/health and safety</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• concerns/team issues/support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• learning and development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• achievements since last supervision</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• any other business</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Record of discussion</th>
<th>Agreed actions: when and by whom</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

signed:

print name:

signed:

print name: