

# Effective Supervision



## Role of the Supervisor

Good supervision involves:

- ✓ Encouragement
- ✓ Advice
- ✓ Support
- ✓ Constructive suggestions
- ✓ Critical appraisals
- ✓ Pastoral care
- ✓ Encouraging and developing independent thinking
- ✓ Willingness to listen and engage intellectually



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# Supervision

## Supervision

The EYFS sets out the requirement for supervision arrangements to be in place. It stipulates that regular staff supervision is a statutory requirement.

3.21. Providers must put appropriate arrangements in place for the supervision of staff who have contact with children and families. Effective supervision provides support, coaching and training for the practitioner and promotes the interests of children. Supervision should foster a culture of mutual support, teamwork and continuous improvement, which encourages the confidential discussion of sensitive issues.

3.22. Supervision should provide opportunities for staff to:

- discuss any issues – particularly concerning children’s development or well-being, including child protection concerns
- identify solutions to address issues as they arise
- receive coaching to improve their personal effectiveness.

Professionally, staff supervision has become a normal part of counselling, psychotherapy and social work practice and now in early years education and children’s services. At a time of heightened awareness of safeguarding issues, there is increasing recognition that working in the early years includes a high degree of outreach work and contact with families. Many practitioners find themselves working in unfamiliar contexts and dealing with unpredictable issues. The need for keeping practice and practitioners ‘safe’ is a priority.

### What is supervision?

Practitioners often manage increasingly complex issues in their intensive work with children and families. They can feel anxious, discouraged or overwhelmed, lose confidence and perspective, feel threatened and unable to cope with the demands of their jobs. Even when things are going well, there is a need to step away from the day-to-day demands and review and reflect on practice.

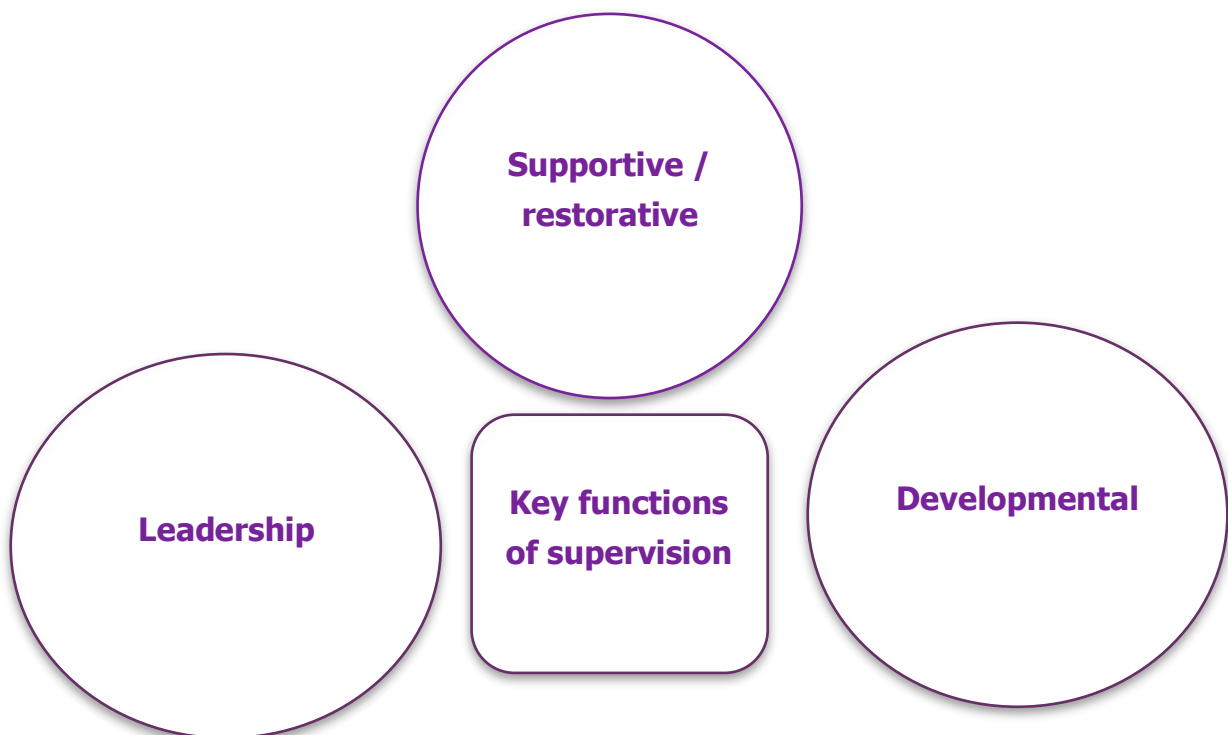
Supervision provides a regular, dedicated time (approx. 1-1.5 hours) for 1-1 or small group reflection and discussion. Commonly, supervision is organised over a 6-weekly cycle. The following

definition recognises supervision as a core process by which those with leadership responsibilities regularly provide support and challenge to ensure and improve the quality of their services

*'Staff supervision is a two-way process which promotes accountability and staff support and development. Both parties should be committed to making supervision worthwhile, positive, honest, objective and unbiased. The needs of the individual, the project or department where they work and the organisation as a whole should all be taken into account. Parties should be fair and open and promote equality and trust. Supervision should be a positive experience for all and take place regularly. If managers are not supervising their staff, they are omitting a key function of management.'*

Developing Supervision in Children's Centres, Chris Pascal (2012)

### **Key functions of Supervision**



#### **Supportive/Restorative**

Supervision is not counselling. Rather this function focuses on how a staff member's work with children, families and other team members is affecting them personally.

#### **Developmental**

Supervision is not training, but does concern the development of skills and understanding through exploration and reflection, which can help to identify training needs.

## Leadership

Supervision is a supervisory function that concerns issues of quality assurance and safeguarding of the children and families who use services, ensuring that aims, principles, policies and standards are upheld.

Critically, supervision should take place in the context of a supportive professional culture built on trust and respect, recognising the influence and impact of establishing good working relationships.

In relation to safeguarding, there needs to be recognition of the need to provide a 'safe' space to 'hold' the strong emotions that are sometimes aroused by issues that arise in efforts to protect children. This also applies to everyday, often personal issues presented by staff, impacting on their well-being and effectiveness. Such scenarios require emotionally intelligent leaders who confidently offer opportunities for open, honest reflection and demonstrate commitment to supporting supervisees in finding ways forward.



## The supervision agreement

**Supervision agreements help to:**

- set out the expectations you have of one another in how you conduct the supervisory relationship
- encourage a discussion about your priorities
- make clear what is negotiable and what is not
- clarify the expectations from the organisation

- underline the importance of supervision and clarify expectations about why you are meeting and what is likely to happen as a result
- establish expectations about the emotional labour of work with children, young people and families – who will sometimes be highly distressed – that make it easier to manage emotionally distressing or difficult conversations should they arise in the future.

## **An example supervision agreement**

### **SUPERVISION AGREEMENT**

This is an agreement between \_\_\_\_\_ (Supervisee) and \_\_\_\_\_ (Supervisor).

This agreement is designed to be a working tool to underpin the development and maintenance of a good supervisory relationship. The agreement should be:

completed at the start of a new supervisory relationship, or at the earliest point after that and reviewed every 6 months.

The expectations of the organisation regarding supervision are set out within the supervision policy, non-negotiable, and provide the framework for this agreement.

The effectiveness of the supervision agreement depends upon the quality of conversation between the supervisor and supervisee, and it is very important that this document provides a foundation for discussion.

It should be completed at the conclusion of a discussion in supervision rather than filled out at the time.

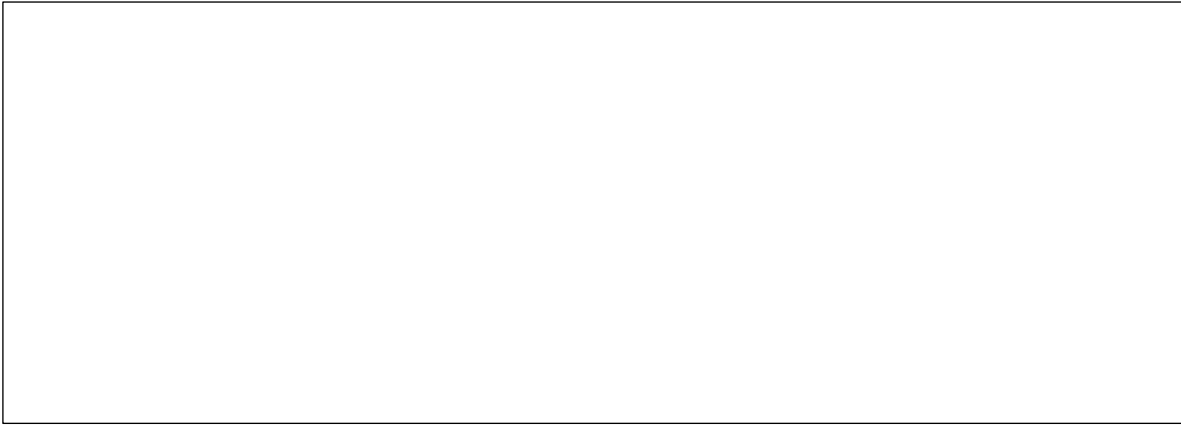
The purpose of supervision is to ensure that leaders and practitioners meet the requirements of their roles and responsibilities; and to identify key strengths and areas for development, including professional training needs.

Effective Dates:

Frequency of Meetings:

Duration of supervision session: minimum of 1 hour.

Availability of supervisor for ad hoc discussions between sessions



**Type of Supervision:** Individual

Supervisor’s definition of supervision: Good quality professional supervision is essential for excellent leadership and early childhood and education practice. It allows the individual leader and/or early years practitioner / teacher the time and space to reflect on their professional identity, development and the wider social and political environments that influence early childhood policy and practice. Through supervision we aim to:

- secure strong and effective leadership
- promote and encourage consistently high quality teaching, learning and care
- secure positive outcomes for all children attending the setting.

**Purpose, Goals And Objectives Of Supervision:**

- To fulfil requirements of EYFS and other relevant legislation
- To promote development of supervisee’s professional identity and competence
- To secure continuous improvement – ultimately working towards achieving and maintaining outstanding practice.
- (Other) as agreed upon by supervisor and supervisee.

**Context And Content Of Supervision:**

The content of supervision will focus on the acquisition of knowledge, conceptualisation, and skills within the defined scope of practice.

The context will ensure understanding of ethics, codes, rules, regulations, standards, guidelines (including consent, confidentiality/ privacy), and all relevant legislation.

A supervisory record form will be used to document key actions of each supervisory session.

Feedback will be provided at the close of each session. Supervision notes will be shared with the supervisee.

Particular priority areas to be discussed regularly

E.g. Safeguarding / child protection, key children

## **4. Rights and Responsibilities of both parties**

### **a. Supervisor Rights**

1. To raise issues about the supervisee's work.
2. To question the supervisee about their work and workload.
3. To give the supervisee constructive feedback on their work performance.
4. To observe the supervisee's practice and to initiate supportive / corrective action as required.
5. To not always know the answer – but to have time to find out.

### **b. Supervisor Responsibilities**

1. To uphold ethical guidelines and professional standards.
2. To make sure supervision sessions happen as agreed and to keep a record of the meeting.
3. To create a supervision file containing supervision records and other documents relating to development and training.
4. To ensure that the supervisee is clear about their role and responsibilities.
5. To record the supervision session and to provide a copy of notes for supervision file.
6. To monitor the supervisee's performance.
7. To assess the supervisee against agreed standards and expectations set by the provider.
8. To know what the supervisee is doing and how it is being done.
9. To deal with problems as they impact on the supervisee's performance.
10. To support supervisee and the agreed personal development plan.

### **c. Supervisee Rights:**

1. To uninterrupted time in a private venue.
2. To Supervisor's attention, ideas and guidance.
3. To receive feedback.
4. To set part of the agenda.
5. To ask questions.
6. To expect Supervisor to carry out agreed action or provide an appropriate explanation, within an agreed time frame.
7. To have their development/training needs met.
8. To challenge ideas and guidance in a constructive way.
9. To say when they are feeling stuck and in need of additional support / help.

### **d. Supervisee Responsibilities:**

1. To uphold ethical guidelines and professional standards;
2. To be prepared to discuss child cases e.g. looked after children / safeguarding and child protection / children with disabilities and/or special educational needs with the aid of written case notes or other evidence materials
3. To validate diagnoses, interventions, approaches and techniques used;
4. To be open to change and use alternate methods of practice if required;
5. To consult supervisor or designated contact person in cases of emergency;
6. To implement supervisor directives in subsequent sessions; and
7. Maintain a commitment to on-going education, learning and development.

This contract is subject to revision at any time, upon the request of either the supervisee or the supervisor. A formal review, however, will be conducted every 6 months and revisions to the contract will be made only with consent of the supervisee and approval of supervisor.

We agree, to the best of our ability, to uphold the guidelines specified in this supervision contract and to manage the supervisory relationship and supervisory process according to agreed professional practice.

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Supervisor

Supervisee

This contract is in effect from DATE

Date of revision or termination: DATE \_\_\_\_\_

## **Activity 5: the Supervision Agreement**

What do you like about the supervision agreement?

How would you improve it?

How will you introduce a supervision agreement to your team?



## Activity 6 – review the Supervision Record

### Supervision meeting record

Employee name:

Name of person leading supervision meeting:

Date:

Personal update

Progress on actions from previous meeting:

Tell me about recent success, something you are proud of or that went well (for example: compliments, problems solving, qualifications). Including specific area's of responsibility

Name of key child

Overview of development and well-being discussion:

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Action to be taken:

When:

By who:

Action to be taken:	When:	By who:

Workload (amount; time; duties; targets etc.):

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Action to be taken:

When:

By who:

Action to be taken:	When:	By who:

Training/development (agree what will be put in place and when, for areas of development): How have your recent Continuing Professional Development activities improved practice? (Please provide examples):

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Action to be taken:

When:

By who:

Action to be taken:	When:	By who:

Any other areas for discussion:

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How have your recent Continuing Professional Development activities improved practice? (Please provide examples):

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Time management (toil/annual leave/general attendance):

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Number of days holiday  
outstanding for current  
leave year:

Planned dates for leave  
in the coming month:

Date of next meeting:

Factual accuracy of record - supervisee's comments.

Employee signature:

Line manager signature:

The Staff Supervision Record is designed to ensure that key areas are considered in supervision so that supervisor and supervisee are protected in the working relationship. Not every section needs to be covered during every session. However, it is recommended that each session begins with an open slot (welcome) and ends with a summary discussion and evaluation of the session (ending), including identifying the date of the next meeting.

# Appraisals Vs Supervision

Both appraisals and supervisions (also called one-to-ones or 1-2-1s) play a vital role in the development of your workforce but can often be confused. The table below outlines the difference between the two and how they can be applied.


Appraisal	Supervision
An annual event	Occurs on a regular basis, as and when required.
This is an opportunity for managers to review last years objectives and performance and look at what has been achieved.	This should be an opportunity for employees to spend some time with their manager to discuss how things are going with work and wellbeing
New SMART objectives based around the workers goals and aspirations should be agreed for the next year.	Managers should take a step back and allow the worker to lead the conversation, unload and identify what they need to be doing moving forwards.
Appraisals are an opportunity to motivate and celebrate successes over the past year as well as identify any lessons learned and training needs	Supervisions are an opportunity to identify any new development opportunities such as buddying
The objectives set in the appraisal should be discussed regularly at supervisions to ensure they are being progressed	Objectives set at appraisals should also be reviewed at supervisions to ensure they are being progressed

Appraisals and supervisions are one of the few opportunities you have to sit with your staff and focus on them. It's about valuing them and also working with them to identify areas of improvement that they are motivated to work towards.

## **Activity 7**

**Keeping our focus on Supervision – why are these sessions so important?**

**Discuss and make notes**

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin black border, intended for students to take notes during the activity. The box occupies most of the lower half of the page.

## Activity 8: What do you need to consider when planning supervisions?

Notes

## **Reflective questions – for after you have implemented supervision agreement.**

What did you learn from discussing the agreement in supervision?

What has worked well as a result of having a supervision agreement?

What feedback did you receive from the supervisee about how they felt the negotiations went? If you didn't get any feedback, consider asking for their response next time.

To what extent were you able to use supervision as a platform to discuss issues of power and privilege?

Can you identify any learning from the experience of negotiating a supervision agreement which is useful for you to take forward?

How well is the organisational commitment to address barriers to inclusion and career progression reflected within the supervision agreement?

Are there any aspects of using a supervision agreement which you might want to discuss with your own supervisor?

***The best leaders are the best learners.***

***You have to believe that you (and others) can learn to lead, and that you can become a better leader tomorrow than you are today.***

***Leaders are constant improvement fanatics, and learning is the main skill of leadership.***