



Worker Supervision Policy

Guidance

Worker Supervision Policy

Introduction

is committed to providing an effective and well-managed service. It is therefore the responsibility of all its managers to ensure that staff and volunteers are regularly supervised.

Supervision is a key element of staff development for all team members, paid or unpaid. Team meetings and mentoring also form part of quality support and supervision, and the development of team structure within the staff team.

The purpose of supervision is to provide support to all team members as well as to promote and provide accountability for work practice. Good supervision supports decision-making, development of the work and development of the staff member's knowledge, skills and competencies.

Supervision is a regular face to face, uninterrupted meeting, usually between a named supervisor and supervisee, provided at a time and date that is suitable for all parties, agreed in advance. Supervision supports, directs and monitors the work of the supervisee, enabling and empowering professional and personal development.

The purpose of supervision is:-

- To provide mutual organisational accountability between the employer and the worker, to ensure they are both following policies and guidance within their practice
- To ensure that policies, procedures and standards are understood and correctly applied and implemented
- The provision of a safe environment in which to work
- professional discussion of performance and objectives as an individual and within a team
- Mediating in any conflicts between the worker(s) and the organisation
- Transferring of relevant information between the worker, senior management, the team and any outside agencies
- Dealing sensitively and appropriately with any complaints
- The physical health and emotional well-being of the worker
- Reflecting on the impact of the work upon them and working to prevent issues adversely affecting them and their work.
- Giving praise for achievements and good practice.
- Training and Development needs
- To provide a regular space for staff/volunteers to reflect upon their work and work plans (current and future)
- To monitor progress in accordance with development plans
- To develop understanding and skills their role
- To commend or constructively challenge as appropriate
- To clarify priorities within the organisation and specifically for their role
- To monitor work performance and improve practice
- To recognise and address potential and existing problems
- To discuss if outside factors are affecting work
- To ensure work quality
- To discuss sickness/annual leave

Although formal supervision is usually carried out by a line manager with an individual employee on a one to one basis, sessions may take place with two people who are job-sharing, or groups of colleagues from the same team.

Supervision can also be given by a colleague as part of a package of support, but this should not replace formal Supervision from the line manager. All supervisors should (ideally) have more knowledge/experience than their supervisee. It is important to ensure that all supervisors are suitably qualified and trained to carry out supervision. It should be recorded on timesheets and agreed and signed off by the line manager.

Unplanned Supervision

At times, youth workers and their managers will have detailed discussions about a particular case outside of formal supervision meetings. It is important to capture such discussions. Therefore, these can be recorded as supervision by agreement and recorded as such, using all or part of supervision template, and revisited within the next formal supervision session.

Supervision Requirements

Supervision should be regular:

- Full-time staff are required to have supervision every 4-6 weeks and should have at least 6 sessions per year, plus one annual appraisal
- Part-time staff are required to have supervision every 3 months and should have at least 3 sessions per year, plus one annual appraisal
- Volunteer staff will be treated the same as part-time staff
- If learning supervision is being provided as part of a training course this should be extra to normal supervision.

When supervision sessions have been cancelled, rearranged or are held less frequently, reasons for this should be recorded and placed on the individual's file. During the course of the year, at least one formal supervision meeting should be extended to allow for a mid-year review of the staff members' appraisal targets. While this is separate from supervision, it makes practical sense to add this to the end of one of these meetings. All staff will have access to their supervisor on an unplanned basis for consultation and supervision on urgent matters, in order for decisions to be made and actions agreed.

Support for the supervisor

Supervisors will be supported by their own line manager via the supervision process. Training will be offered to all staff who act in the role of a supervisor.

Recording supervision sessions

Agreed notes, including actions, should be kept of all sessions using the appropriate Supervision Record Sheet, signed off by both parties. Notes should be made by the supervisor.

There may be times when information shared during supervision may need to be shared with a third party, if this is the case the supervisee must be informed first. This could link to the disciplinary procedure. Further information is available from HR or from your line manager.

It's recommended that supervision, appraisals and reviews of employees be kept for at least 5 years. Following staff's departure from the organisation, you should keep employee records for 6 years. Many employee records contain sensitive information so it's essential they are disposed of correctly, this may include the cross shredding of paper records and the secure disposal of hard drives, which should be destroyed rather than formatted.

Safeguarding children and Young People within Supervision

As outlined and defined within the safeguarding policy, it is likely that staff will have safeguarding concerns regarding the children and young people who are in contact with the organisation.

Supervision is an opportunity to ensure:

- The safeguarding of children practices is consistent throughout the organisation
- Workers fully understand their roles and responsibilities, and the safeguarding reporting process
- A reflective space to analyse ongoing concerns, work and specific incidents, where risk and need is reviewed and decision-making and planning undertaken
- Is the young person safer/at an increased risk as a result?
- An opportunity to raise new concerns

One to One Work – Decision-Making and Achieving Positive Outcomes

For staff who undertake ongoing work with individual children and young people, supervision provides time to focus on the challenges faced by workers in carrying out such work. It includes reflection on what work has been done, what has worked and what difference this has made to increase positive outcomes and plans for future interventions and actions.

Key questions include:

What difference is the work making to each young person?

- The views, wishes and feelings of the young person concerned
- Provision of resources/tools
- Plans for next steps, actions and timescales
- Relationships with the young person
- Barriers to effective working
- The worker's own well-being and any support they need

Management Supervision should include an analysis of caseload and workload management, and address any issues relating to the extent of the time available to work directly with young people, adults and their families as well as meeting other demands.

This will include:

- Discussion about workload
- Reviewing progress against previous actions/decisions
- Identifying priorities
- Overall management of the quality of the work
- Monitor TOIL and annual leave commitments

Professional Development

Address any necessary professional development needs.

Problem Solving

Ordinarily most issues regarding practice can be resolved within the supervisory relationship. When difficulties arise, which cannot be resolved between the worker and the supervisor, and where significant concerns regarding the work of the worker which cannot be addressed in normal supervision, then these must be addressed using the formal HR performance management and capability procedures.

Volunteers v Paid Workers Supervision Requirements

is comprised of a wide variety of people in order to carry out its mission and vision, in particular paid workers and volunteers. It is important to understand the difference between those two categories before planning your supervision.

Bear in mind the three main categories in which volunteers and paid workers differ. These are:

- **Work**
Paid Workers are given definite job descriptions on which their salary and position is based. Volunteer workers may have more diversified roles that are not necessarily aligned with their professional experience. Regardless of whether a member of staff is paid or unpaid, they are entitled to the same protection and liabilities.
- **Hours**
Paid workers usually have set hours on specific days per week. Most of the time, whatever is in excess of that is considered as over time that the employer has to pay as well. Volunteers are often working around their other obligations, such as their paid work. Therefore, more flexibility is usually expected.
- **Motivation**
Paid workers are employed to earn a wage from their employment to pay for their needs. Although that does not preclude them from the same reason volunteers work at the organisation, often volunteers work because they believe in the cause that the organisation is campaigning for. It may also be in line with their passion or talent. Their role fulfilment comes supporting the activities of the organisation. This is important to recognise for the maximum retention of volunteers.

Volunteers are more likely to feel valued, accepted and satisfied with their roles if your organisation provides adequate support and supervision.

Getting the balance right gives volunteers the opportunity to offload problems, gain feedback and learn from the experiences of other volunteers and staff. This makes it easier for volunteers to cope with their tasks and ultimately allows them to add value to your organisation.

Volunteers and Paid Staff both require:

- Appreciation
- Responsibility
- Clear Communication

Volunteer Supervision should specifically include:

- Offering the volunteer the opportunity to raise any issues
- Checking how the volunteer's relationship with other staff, volunteers, clients and management is going
- Covering any practical problems such as safeguarding, expenses or health and safety concerns
- Discussing any training that might benefit the volunteer
- Providing an opportunity for the volunteer to provide personal feedback
- Providing feedback to the volunteer on their work. It's best to begin with positive feedback about specific things they have done well. If there is anything critical which needs to be addressed, it is important that it is specific, based on their behaviour or practice, and constructive.

The level and formality of supervision required for volunteers, support offered and how closely you manage volunteers will depend on many factors, including:

- How experienced the volunteer is and how long they have been with the organisation
- The role of the volunteer and the level of responsibility they have
- The potential for things to go wrong and how serious the problems could be
- Whether volunteers are doing work that needs to be monitored or which has to meet organisational targets
- The personal circumstances of the volunteer
- How often you are in contact with the volunteer and whether this contact is in person or by phone or e-mail
- What type of work they do and where (on-site, at a distance or in the community)

You should take all of these factors into account when considering how much support to offer, how supervisions should be conducted and how closely you'll need to manage your volunteers. Organisations will want to keep appropriate boundaries between their paid staff and their volunteers, while endeavouring to ensure both are valued equally. While volunteers do not have the same employment rights as staff, do make sure that volunteers are treated fairly and consistently. The main reason organisations find themselves in difficulties over this issue is when a volunteer has made a complaint and they felt it wasn't addressed internally. They have tried to establish employee status in order to get the complaint resolved. This is a complex issue and the organisation may need to take legal advice.

Managing the risk

This is not a significant risk as volunteers are unlikely to want to be 'employees'. However, if things do go wrong, the impact can be significant and an organisation's reputation may be damaged. To manage the risk there are several things to consider:

- anything that could be seen as a payment for work, for example, paying expenses should be a genuine reimbursement of out-of-pocket expenses rather than a fixed amount per week
- training offered should be linked to the role that the person is carrying out, rather than a general perk or enticement to volunteer
- phrasing the volunteer relationship in terms of expectation rather than obligation
- language that suggests employment – a volunteer agreement rather than contract, role rather than job description.

Supervision Documents

- Template 1: Supervision Agreement
- Template2: Supervision Record for Staff File (hard copy and electronic)

The Supervision Agreement template has been pre-populated to help save time and unnecessary duplication. This should be reviewed before being agreed and signed. The template can be added to or edited depending on the supervisory relationship. It should be signed within four weeks of commencing the supervisory relationship and saved in the supervision file. As a minimum, the Supervision Agreement should be reviewed jointly on an annual basis.