



# Supervision Policy

## Statement of Purpose

This policy will provide a framework for the one-to-one supervision of all employees & volunteers working with or for Small Charity Support.

This policy sets out how employees & volunteers can expect to be supervised and provides managers with the key elements needed to supervise employees & volunteers effectively.

## The aims of supervision are

- ✓ To ensure employees & volunteers know what is expected of them
- ✓ To ensure employees & volunteers carry out their duties effectively and efficiently
- ✓ To ensure good practice and to challenge and manage poor practice
- ✓ To ensure that health and well-being at work issues are addressed
- ✓ To assist in the continuous professional development (CPD) of employees & volunteers
- ✓ To ensure that employees & volunteers operate in an anti-discriminatory way, and in line with good practice

## Definition of supervision

Supervision is a regular one to one meeting between the supervisor (*eg*: line manager) and supervisee in order to meet organisational, professional and personal objectives. Supervision forms a key part of individual performance management. It underpins the Induction programme (for newly appointed workers) and is the foundation on which appraisal is built.

## Supervision agreements

Arrangements for personal and individual supervision with the line manager should be subject to a written Individual Supervision Agreement and each formal session must be recorded in an appropriate format.

## Formal and Informal or 'ad hoc' supervision

'Formal' supervision will be recognised by regular, planned, private, one-to-one meetings, on an on-going basis between an employee or volunteer and their line manager.

Even when supervisees and supervisors work closely together, it does not eliminate the need for private one-to-one time together on a regular basis. The focus of these sessions is wholly on the individual, their performance, their development, and any issues arising from their work that do not arise on a day-to-day basis.

It is normal to expect that there may be discussions and decisions about daily work issues, problems arising, or changes in policies and procedures that emerge in group meetings, and unplanned or 'ad-hoc' discussions. However, when decisions have been made in between formal supervision sessions, the manager must make sure that any decision made with regard to a user (or users) of Small Charity Support are clearly recorded on the user's file.

## Minimum frequencies

The frequency of formal supervision will be set according to the nature and frequency of the duties of the employee or volunteer but will not normally be less frequently than every 2 months. It is expected that supervision will also occur informally when needed.

## Roles and responsibilities of the Line Managers

Line managers must ensure that formal supervision takes place for all employees & volunteers for whom they have managerial responsibility.

Supervision must be conducted in accordance with this policy and guidance.

## Roles and responsibilities of the Employees

It is the responsibility of employees to attend supervision sessions with their line manager. They should use these sessions positively to discuss their work and development, and to implement agreed actions.

It is the employee's responsibility to prepare prior to each supervision session, and bring a list of issues for the agenda in order for a two-way discussion to take place.

## Disputes

Disagreements should be initially dealt with by discussion between the supervisor and employee or volunteer, or by reference to the supervisor's line manager if necessary. Any further dispute not dealt with in this way should be addressed within the usual Disciplinary procedures.

## Recording

The recording of supervision sessions is the responsibility of the supervisor. The detail included is a matter of judgement but in general the record should be detailed enough so that the issue can be revisited, if necessary, at a later date and still be understood. A short summary of the discussion and the decisions or action points arising from it should be sufficient in most cases.

Records should clearly detail any decisions that have been made, the reasons for these, any agreed actions including who will take responsibility and the timescale for carrying out these actions. The records should be signed and dated by both parties. If there is disagreement as to the content of the record this should be recorded by the supervisor.

## Storage and retention

A specific supervision file should be maintained (for hard copies) by the line manager so that the record can be reviewed at appropriate times.

## Confidentiality and Access

Supervision is a private but not a confidential process. This means that the records are the property of the organisation, not the individual. From time to time supervisors will need to discuss the content of supervision sessions with others, eg: their own line managers. This should always be with the knowledge of the supervisee. Access to supervision records should be controlled and all records should be locked away. Other people may from time to time require access to supervision records. These might include:

- ✓ managers providing cover in the absence of line manager
- ✓ senior managers (for quality assurance purposes)



## General Guidance

These guidance notes may be used as a checklist to help you audit your supervision practice, and help you to get the best out of the session, both as a supervisor and a supervisee.

### To be a good supervisor you need to:

- ☺ Plan a joint agenda (*eg*: review previous supervision notes before meeting and make a note of issues you wish to raise);
- ☺ Clarify tasks and areas of work that the manager expects of the employee or volunteer;
- ☺ Encourage honest and open discussion of real issues;
- ☺ Hold regular sessions at agreed dates and times and be on time;
- ☺ Ensure the session is uninterrupted and is comfortable;
- ☺ Praise work done well;
- ☺ Listen, summarise and check out;
- ☺ Be constructive, and offer balanced feedback, focusing on the positives first;
- ☺ Support employees & volunteers, and build on existing skills and knowledge;
- ☺ Set clear targets with action, and write these down;
- ☺ Anticipate problems and issues before they get serious;
- ☺ Do what you say you will do;
- ☺ Be specific in any comments you make relating to supervisee's performance;
- ☺ What ever the supervisee's present levels of capability/competence, convey confidence that he/she can reach new levels. Try to stretch him/her towards them;
- ☺ Write down actions on either side;
- ☺ Record any disagreements;
- ☺ Make your own experience, knowledge and skills available to help the supervisee;
- ☺ Set the supervisee's work in the context of legislative and agency requirements, signposting to relevant statute, regulations and agency policy/procedure as appropriate;
- ☺ Acknowledge conflict and tensions openly, *eg*: as between 'ideal-case' actions and resource or budget constraints;
- ☺ Acknowledge that you haven't got 'all the answers';
- ☺ Think who else can help with the issue;
- ☺ Give yourself time to seek further information or seek advice, if you're not sure;
- ☺ Help employees & volunteers to reflect on their practice, *eg*: what worked, didn't work, why, and lessons for the future.

### To be a good supervisee you need to:

- ☺ Plan a joint agenda (*eg*: review previous supervision notes before meeting and make a note of issues you wish to raise);
- ☺ Openly discuss real issues;
- ☺ Attend regular sessions at agreed dates and times and be on time;
- ☺ Raise problems and issues before they get serious;
- ☺ Do what you say you will do;
- ☺ Keep up to date with related reading around legislative changes, policy and procedures;
- ☺ Keep up to date with related reading around research and theory related to service user's needs;

- ☺ Use supervision to reflect on your understanding and application of knowledge, theory and your skills, and how this has an impact on outcomes for the service user;
- ☺ Use supervision to reflect on how you promote the values of anti-oppressive practice, and meaningful user involvement and participation.

**Common Barriers to the delivery of effective supervision can include:**

- ☹ 'Dumping' – saving up criticisms and discussing them all at once;
- ☹ Unplanned, rushed agenda, and unfocussed sessions;
- ☹ Inadequate preparation by supervisor or supervisee;
- ☹ Unclear or unrealistic goals for employees & volunteers;
- ☹ Telling rather than listening;
- ☹ Failure to offer constructive commentary on performance;
- ☹ Misuse of power, eg: bullying, harassment, victimisation;
- ☹ Allowing interruptions;
- ☹ Running out of time;
- ☹ Poor recording of supervision;
- ☹ Emotional issues unaddressed;
- ☹ Case management rather than a developmental focus.

## Change Record

| Date of Change: | Changed By: | Comments:                       |
|-----------------|-------------|---------------------------------|
| dd/mm/yy        | XX          | Policy approved by the Trustees |
|                 |             |                                 |
|                 |             |                                 |



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