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About this guide

Your workforce is your most valuable resource – and effective supervision plays a key role in supporting them to deliver high-quality care and support.

Effective supervision supports good working relationships, helps you to address any issues and celebrate achievements, gives you the opportunity to discuss learning and development – and, if you're a regulated provider, the Care Quality Commission (CQC) expects you to offer staff regular supervision to ensure that they're competent and confident to do their role.

This guide is for adult social care managers and supervisors and will help them to plan and implement effective supervision. It shares advice and tips about what works well, to help you to think about how you can make supervision work for you and your staff.

This free online version of the guide explains what supervision is, why it's important and how you can develop supervisors. You can also buy a printed workbook edition from our online bookshop which includes guidance, recommendations and top tips to help you to plan and do effective supervision and other techniques to use in sessions. It includes practical activities, checklists, reflection points and templates to help you to put your learning into practice, in the context of your role, your team, your organisation and the people that you support.

If you're new to the sector and are responsible for arranging and/or providing supervision, we recommend reading the full guide.

If you're already familiar with arranging and/or providing supervision, we recommend that you start by reading the sections that are the most relevant to you.



... it becomes clear that the more time that you spend on doing supervision well, the more that you are directly investing in the success of your organisation; and you can really see the positive effects on the people that you support.

Elaine Morton, Stockport Council Reablement and Community Home Support Team (REaCH)



A practical guide for adult social care managers and supervisors

The printed workbook edition of the guide includes practical activities, checklists, reflection points and templates to help you to put your learning into practice, including:

- organising the practicalities
- an outline of a supervision policy
- a template supervision agreement
- preparing for a supervision session
- setting the supervision agenda
- an example supervision recording template.

You'll also learn about other techniques to use in supervision sessions, including:

- Action Learning Sets
- coaching
- reflective practice
- appraisal.



Buy your copy from our online bookshop at www.skillsforcare.org.uk/bookshop



Understanding supervision

It's important that supervisors and supervisees understand what supervision is and how it can benefit them, to ensure that they're both committed to the process and get the most out of it.

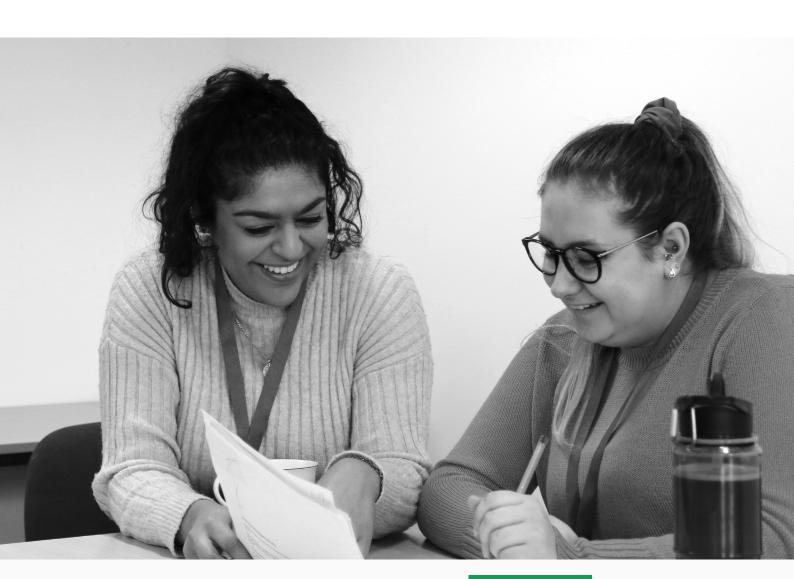
This section of the guide will help you to understand more about supervision, and explains:



why supervision is important

the functions of supervision

what to avoid: the warning signs of ineffective supervison.



What is supervision?

Supervision is a process that involves a manager meeting regularly and interacting with staff to review their work.

Supervision is not about the exercise of power over another person – whilst it can help to manage performance, it is also, equally, a way of helping the supervisee to develop new skills, experience and confidence in their role.

It might include, for example, reviewing their workload, setting the expected standards, monitoring and reviewing performance, identifying learning and development opportunities and keeping them informed with wider organisational news.

Supervision is usually carried out by one person who has some related knowledge and skills, and who takes responsibility and accountability for supporting the wellbeing and performance of the person being supervised i.e. the supervisee.

Supervision sessions are usually done one-to-one and arranged via a formal process – it's important to set aside enough time, and develop and embed the right structures and processes, to enable effective supervision to happen.

Supervision might also happen informally as part of the ongoing supervisor/supervisee relationship, for example through informal meetings to discuss any issues that arise or if there are changes to ways of working. Even for informal supervision sessions, it's good practice to keep a record of this discussion and add it to existing supervision notes.

Sometimes, it might also be useful to do a group supervision session, for example when a group of staff support the same person and they meet to discuss any changes or concerns. The supervisor can use the session to ensure that good practice is shared and followed by the group.



We saw that there was a proactive support and appraisal system for staff. Regular supervisions, annual appraisals and regular unannounced spot checks. We looked at evidence of supervisions and spot checks and found them to be comprehensive. They addressed issues, offered training and gave positive feedback.

CQC inspector, homecare agency, rated 'outstanding' 2019



Why supervision is important

There are lots of reasons why supervision is important.

Maintain quality of care and support

Supervision offers a formal process to outline the expected standards and set personal objectives, to ensure that staff deliver high-quality care and support.

You can also use supervisions to reflect on practice and performance to ensure that standards are maintained, and/or put actions in place to improve – which encourages staff to be accountable for their own work.

Ensure that staff feel supported

Supervision offers a vital channel of communication between management and staff. They can use it to share useful information with each other and discuss any challenges or issues. This ensures that staff feel confident to do their role and can access the support that they need to manage difficult situations.

Support ongoing learning and development

Supervision gives managers and staff the opportunity to discuss any skills gaps and development needs and put action plans in place to address them, to ensure that staff have the skills and knowledge to be competent and confident in their role.

Celebrate achievements

Supervision offers staff the chance to reflect on their successes, and managers to praise them for them, which can really motivate staff and make them feel valued (which, in turn, can improve staff retention and reduce turnover).

Support problem solving

Supervision gives managers and staff the opportunity to talk about any issues and/or problems, and identify ways to resolve them.

Meet regulatory standards

If you're a regulated provider, regular supervisions and appraisals ensure that your service meets Regulation 18 of the Health and Social Care Act 2008 (Regulated Activities), which states that 'staff must receive the support, training, professional development, supervision and appraisals that are necessary for them to carry out their role and responsibilities'. The CQC will look at the supervision process as part of the 'effective' and 'well-led' areas of inspection.

The functions of supervision

There are three key functions of supervision.

Supportive

Supervision involves supervisors providing support for staff members with different aspects of their role. The supportive function can help to address any emerging issues that may impact staff performance and/or wellbeing. For supervisors, this function might include:

- supporting staff with any challenges in their role
- monitoring and supporting staff health and wellbeing, and ensuring that the organisation has the right support in place to address any issues
- dealing with any issues that need further investigation, for example performance concerns or safeguarding investigations
- keeping staff informed about the wider organisation and any changes or developments.

Line management

Supervision can help managers to promote and maintain good standards of work and ensure that staff follow the relevant policies and procedures. For supervisors, this function might include:

- managing team resources you can use supervision to ensure that staff understand their role and responsibilities
- delegating workload you can use supervision to provide meaningful communication between managers and staff at all levels
- performance appraisals you can use supervision to set targets and objectives, and discuss performance and quality
- duty of care you can use supervision to ensure that staff understand the standards that are expected of them and follow the relevant policies and procedures.

Educational and/or developmental

Supervision can help staff to develop critical thinking and analysis skills, explore their own learning and development needs and identify opportunities to address those needs. For supervisors, this function might include:

- assessing staff skills and knowledge, and identifying any gaps and/or learning and development needs
- helping staff to identify their preferred learning styles and barriers to learning
- giving and receiving constructive feedback
- supporting staff to reflect on their learning opportunities and ensuring that they know how to apply the learning in practice.

Performance management and supervision

Supervision provides a good opportunity to monitor and manage staff performance, both positive and negative.

Supervisors need the resilience and expertise to manage staff performance and Skills for Care has practical support to help.

People Performance Management Toolkit

This free online toolkit supports adult social care and health managers, including supervisors, with their responsibilities for people performance management.

It includes information about reviewing performance, managing different types of performance and having conversations about performance, as well as useful scenarios, like what to do if someone's performance is slipping or if they're on extended sick leave.

Download it from: www.skillsforcare.org.uk/PPMT

Understanding Performance Management CPD Course

This one-day CPD course, delivered by Skills for Care's endorsed learning providers, will help managers to explore the performance management cycle, recognise that people perform differently and utilise the available tools and techniques.

Managers will understand how successful behaviours and practical strategies can support them in their day-to-day work. They'll be challenged to put these into practice, boosting their capacity to lead and manage effectively.

The module includes an emphasis on reflection, helping managers to learn from their day-to-day experiences, and think about how they can do things differently or get better at recognising what they do well.

Find out more: www.skillsforcare.org.uk/CPDmodules

Supervision during induction

It's important that new staff get a thorough induction, which should include a mix of training, supervision and workplace assessment. This ensures that they understand what you expect from them, and that they receive the support needed to be confident and competent in their role.

During the induction period, you might do more regular supervisions than with other experienced staff, and it might include more informal supervision from experienced care workers.

Supporting staff that are new to the sector

Supervision with staff that are new to sector might include more emotional support, for example, discussing any concerns with delivering personal care or supporting people at the end of their life. Supervisors should be conscious of this and ensure that they regularly check what impact the work is having on staff, discuss any issues and help new staff to cope with the responsibilities of the role.

Supervision is also a good way to outline what standards you expect staff to adhere to and review whether they're meeting them.

Direct supervision

Direct supervision can help supervisors to observe new staff and assess their competence before they work unsupervised. Direct supervision should be maintained until they're assessed as safe to work independently.

The Care Certificate, the minimum standards for new health and social care staff, includes almost 50 areas of workplace assessment and these duties cannot be performed unsupervised until the new staff member has been observed as competent. The amount of direct supervision required will differ depending on 1) how quickly the new worker can demonstrate competence and 2) circumstances arising that enable the new worker to demonstrate this.

Delegation

Where direct supervision is used to observe new staff and assess their competence, supervisors are accountable for the decision to delegate care and support – they should not delegate tasks that are beyond the skills and experience of the new staff member.

Supervisors should only delegate tasks to someone who has had appropriate training and whom they deem competent to perform the task. If the needs of the people you support exceed the staff member's skills and/or knowledge, then you should provide additional training and assessment until competence is achieved.

- When the supervisor delegates tasks, they must be assured that the new staff member fully understands the nature of the delegated task. The supervisor should always check the staff member's understanding of the task and ensure that they know the boundaries of what they're expected to do, and know what to do if they're required to do something beyond this.
- Supervisors should ensure that everyone who they're responsible for is appropriately supervised and supported. If the delegating supervisor has a different employer to the new staff member, for example a district nurse delegating tasks in a nursing home, they should ensure that the staff member is appropriately supported in their workplace and have good communication with their line manager and/or supervisor in the workplace.
- The supervisor should confirm that the outcome of any delegated task meets the required standards, and communicate this with the new staff member. This ensures that they know what 'good' looks like and that they have achieved it. The supervisor should also record that the competence has been demonstrated for example, in the staff member's Care Certificate workbook. In regulated care services, the registered manager has the overall responsibility for signing off the Care Certificate, and so the supervisor, if a different person, should work closely with them throughout the induction.
- The new staff member should know their limitations and when to seek advice and support from colleagues, their supervisor and/or manager. New staff are likely to be enthusiastic and want to prove their abilities at the earliest opportunity but this risks them taking on more responsibility than they're competent to safely deliver. The supervisor, and other managers, are responsible for creating a culture where new staff are encouraged to ask for advice and receive the appropriate learning and development opportunities.

When the supervisor is happy that the new staff member is competent, and delegates tasks to them, you might decide that they no longer require direct supervision, and the staff member becomes accountable for their own actions and decisions. However, the supervisor is still accountable for the overall management of the service and the workforce.

Ongoing supervision and assessment will enable you to check and assess their skills and knowledge, to ensure that they continue to be competent for the role.

Warning signs: what to avoid

Where supervision is limited or non-existent, or where the supervisor doesn't have the right skills and knowledge to carry out effective supervision, this can have a damaging effect on your service – ineffective supervision can reduce productivity, increase absenteeism, create or prolong workplace conflict and damage the workplace culture, which, for adult social care employers, can all impact the quality of care and support.

The following are warning signs of what to avoid.

If you can relate any of these warning signs to where you work, think about what you can do to improve it – there's lots of handy tips and recommendations in the rest of this guide.





The role of the supervisor

The role of the supervisor is vital to any adult social care team and organisation. They're not only responsible for supervising the work of others, but also coaching, resolving issues and serving as a link between staff and managers.

This section of the guide explains more about the supervisor role, including:



the role of the supervisor



who can carry out supervision

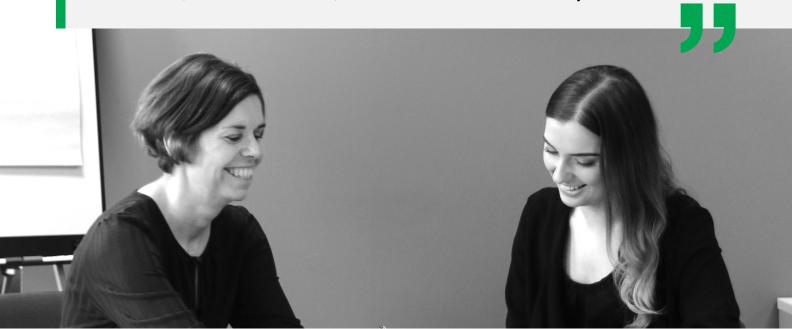


the attributes of a good supervisor.



My manager is really great. I meet with her on a regular basis - usually every six to eight weeks for a formal supervision. I have the opportunity to go through my caseload in detail and she is keen to ask questions about what's going on in each household. If I have any concerns about anything, I can run it by her and she shares her experiences with me and suggests ways that I might manage things or other ways of doing things.

Laurie Cook, Shared Lives Officer, Shared Lives - Lancashire County Council



The role of the supervisor

A good supervisor can make a big difference to staff and your organisation.

The role involves overseeing and managing a team or individual to ensure that they're performing effectively and are satisfied in their role.

As outlined in section one, the supervisor role involves:

- providing support
- line management
- supporting staff to learn and develop.

The specific responsibilities of the role can vary based on your organisation, but might include:

- managing workload
- training new hires
- evaluating performance
- providing feedback
- identifying learning and development opportunities
- helping supervisees to resolve any issues.



Inevitably it takes some time for a supervisor to learn all of the different functions of their job, which is why supervisors have their own manager/supervisor supporting and directing them. It's really important to differentiate between different roles of the work. Sometimes, the line manager will not have actual experience of a specific type of care skill and will rely on another supervisor to provide this and report back. Good communication is vital in all of this work.

Tracey Cooper, Adult Social Care - Leeds City Council



Who can carry out supervision

There are lots of different people who could carry out supervision and here are some examples for adult social care employers (please note, this list is not a definitive list – it'll depend on the way that you work).

Supervisors don't always need to be people in managerial roles – it could involve, for example, experienced care workers overseeing a new member of staff doing the Care Certificate.

You might also choose to have different supervisors for different parts of the role. In this case, it's useful to select an overall line manager for the supervisee who will have oversight of their work and performance.

- Registered managers: in smaller organisations, registered managers might supervise all of the staff team, whereas in larger organisations, registered managers might supervise senior care staff only. In regulated services, the registered manager would be responsible and accountable to the CQC for ensuring that effective supervisions take place.
- **Deputy managers, line managers and team leaders**: some registered managers might delegate supervision responsibilities to their deputies.
- Senior/experienced and/or occupationally competent care workers: some senior and experienced care workers might make great supervisors and it could be a good opportunity for them to develop their management skills and knowledge. Good practice suggests that staff should have at least one year's experience in their work before being given a supervisory capacity in a care setting.
- **Directors/owners**: under the Care Act 2014, there's an increased focus on those responsible for health and social care services at owner/director level to be 'fit and proper'. A director, owner or CEO would, in most instances, be responsible for supervising others, such as registered managers, operational leads and/or training leads.
- **External trainers**: whilst employers should have overall responsibility for the management, supervision and support of their employees, they may use an external trainer or support organisation to support certain elements of supervision.
- Internal trainers: some in-house trainers might be well placed to plan and/or carry out supervision, for example during the induction period and with any learning and development needs.
- Registered nurses: often there are overlaps between different parts of the social care sector, particularly in clinical supervision settings. Registered nurses could take responsibility for supervision where appropriate, for example in a homecare agency where staff shadow a registered nurse to learn about end of life care practice.

The attributes of a good supervisor

Good supervisors have the right values, skills and knowledge to do the role, and should have a good understanding of the work that supervisees do, and of the setting that they work in.

This section outlines some of the attributes of a good supervisor. If you're a supervisor, you can use it to reflect on your current skills and knowledge and identify any gaps. If you're an employer, you can use it to plan induction, learning and assessment for supervisors.

You can find out more about how to develop supervisors in the next section.

Values, attitudes and behaviours

Good supervisors have the right **values, attitudes and behaviours**, and role model them in their everyday work.

In adult social care, the 6Cs, as outlined in the 'Compassion in Practice' strategy (2012), have been identified as the values that underpin high-quality social care provision.

- Care
- Compassion
- Competence
- Communication
- Courage
- Commitment

People's underlying values often shape their attitudes – i.e. 'a settled way of thinking or feeling about something' – and influence how they behave in certain situations.

It's important that supervisors have these values, because if care staff are expected to demonstrate them in their practice, supervisors must lead by example and do the same.

Skills

Good supervisors also have the required skills, including:

- organisational and time management skills
- communication skills, including good listening skills
- an ability to remain calm under pressure
- leadership skills
- problem-solving skills
- conflict resolution skills
- professionalism and a positive attitude.

Knowledge and experience

Supervisors are often experts in their field, but it's not always necessary for the supervisor to have direct experience of all of the work that they're supervising. However, when supervising practical tasks such as moving and handling and administering medication, the supervisor must be competent to ensure safe practice.

Here are some of the things that supervisors might need to know.

Workbook edition

Additional information

As well as the information that we've outlined in this section, there is specific information that supervisors might need to know, including:

- legislation, policy and guidance
- supervision guidance and best practice
- organisational skills
- people management skills.

If you buy the printed workbook edition of this guide, you can learn more about these skills and knowledge, including a sample set of learning outcomes to help you do design or commission relevant training.











Developing supervisors

Providing learning opportunities for supervisors ensures that they have the right values, skills and knowledge to do the role effectively.

In regulated adult social care services, the CQC expects people to be suitably trained and experienced to carry out their role, including those in supervisory roles. People shouldn't take on the supervisor responsibilities without proper training and an assessment to ensure that they're competent.

However, lots of supervisors, particularly in smaller care settings, might find themselves with the responsibility of supervision without much, if any, formal training. If you feel that this is you, you should talk to your manager and/or employer.

Supervisors in adult social care aren't required to hold a formal qualification, but training and on-the-job learning is a great way to ensure that they're confident and competent to do the role.

This section outlines learning and development opportunities for supervisors, including:

qualifications
short courses
Lead to Succeed learning programme
shadowing opportunities through succession planning
social care specific skills and knowledge
top tips for new supervisors.

Qualifications

There aren't many qualifications that are specifically about supervision – they're more likely to form part of a wider leadership and management qualification.

There are lots of these qualifications available, and we suggest talking to a learning provider about your requirements and asking them to signpost you to the most relevant qualification available.

Traditionally, adult social care vocational qualifications are split into levels for people with different responsibilities:

- Level 2 aimed at care workers and those new to front-line care roles
- Level 3 aimed at senior care workers and supervisors
- Level 4 aimed at supervisors, team leaders and assistant managers
- Level 5 aimed at managers, including the registered manager role.

There are parts of the level 4 and 5 qualifications that can help supervisors to develop their skills and knowledge, including those who are responsible for managing other supervisors.

Find out more about these qualifications on the Skills for Care website at: www.skillsforcare.org.uk/qualifications.

Our 'Guide to developing your staff' also has practical tips about choosing the right learning and finding a high-quality learning provider: www.skillsforcare.org.uk/developingstaff.

Short courses

Some learning providers also deliver short courses for supervisors.

They can vary in duration depending on the level of detail, and, whilst there is no definitive list of what will be covered, they're likely to feature the following topics.

- What supervision is
- Understanding the different approaches to and range of models of supervision
- The required communication skills, including listening skills and questioning techniques
- Understanding how to motivate people at work
- The relationship between the supervisor and supervisee
- How to give feedback during supervision
- Balancing professional responsibilities with a developmental role
- Keeping supervision records

- The role of confidentiality in supervision
- The focus of supervision meetings
- How to deal with supervisory dilemmas

Skills for Care can help you to find a high-quality learning provider that delivers short courses. Our Endorsement Framework finds and badges learning providers that deliver high-quality learning and development for the social care sector, and that we see as the best.

Search for an endorsed provider on our online directory at: www.skillsforcare.org.uk/FindAProvider.

Lead to Succeed learning programme

This learning programme is designed to help aspiring leaders and managers to develop their leadership and management potential. It covers a range of learning topics, including effective supervision.

Lead to Succeed was developed by Skills for Care and is delivered by our endorsed providers, who've been given a mark of quality for their commitment to providing high-quality learning and development for the adult social care sector.

Lead to Succeed includes a full-day about effective supervision, and will help you to:

- develop an understanding of supervision within adult social care
- explore leadership behaviour associated with being an effective supervisor
- learn practical strategies to improve your own behaviours when supervising others.

By the end of this session, participants will be able to:

- describe the scope and purpose of supervision in adult social care
- explain key principles of effective supervision
- describe how to use supervision to support their own wellbeing
- describe how to plan, revise and review supervision objectives
- explain the importance of active listening
- explain the factors that could result in a power imbalance and how to address them
- describe how to manage equal participation in supervision
- identify ways to capture evidence and measure the impact of the changes made
- develop an initial action plan to implement the learning that has taken place.

Find out more about Lead to Succeed at: www.skillsforcare.org.uk/LeadToSucceed.

Top tips for new supervisors

Julie and Vanessa are experienced supervisors and share their top tips for new supervisors.

Julie Lusk, Registered Manager, Clinton Lodge (Solar Care Homes Limited)

♦	Don't rush through supervision sessions – you might feel under pressure to get them all completed, but it's important to remember that this is dedicated, one-to-one time for the person that you're supervising.
\Diamond	Supervision can have a long-lasting effect on the supervisee by showing them that you value them.
♦	Don't be afraid to challenge supervisees, when appropriate. Be clear and direct when you do so and try to give constructive feedback.
\Diamond	Don't expect to be able to 'change the world' through supervision – be realistic in what you can achieve as a supervisor.
\Diamond	Get to know the individual and what works for them. A person-focussed approach is really important to get the best from people.

Vanessa Blowing, Manager, Truro Choice Day Provision

♦	Reinforce the message that supervision is not about 'telling off' - it's about support and encouragement.
∜	Build positive relationships with supervisees outside of the formal supervision setting.
⊘	Ask supervisees to develop their own one-page profile that shares information about themselves, the areas of work that they find particularly rewarding and areas that they don't find as rewarding.
⊘	Ask them what a good and bad day at work looks like for them.
≪	Act as a role model. People have to be listened to and heard if we expect them to do the same for the people they support.

Planning and doing effective supervision

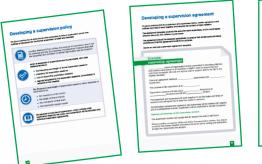
Workbook edition

Effective supervision requires planning and must be supported by the culture of your workplace and it's policies and procedures.

If you buy the printed workbook edition of this guide, you can access useful tips and recommendations to help you to plan and carry out effective supervision, including:

- the practicalities of supervision, including frequency, length and location
- developing a supervision policy
- using a supervision agreement
- preparing for a supervision session
- setting the supervision agenda
- recording supervision sessions
- reflecting on the supervision process.

It includes useful templates that you can download and use in your role, including an outline supervision policy, a template supervision agreement, a supervision recording template and reflection checklist.









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Other techniques to use in supervision sessions

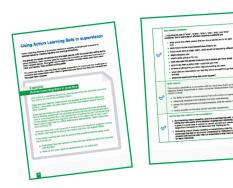
Workbook edition

As well as the recommendations that we've already outlined in this guide, there are some other techniques that you can use in supervision sessions, including:

- Action Learning Sets
- coaching
- reflective practice
- appraisal.

If you buy the printed workbook edition of this guide, you can learn more about these techniques and how they can support the supervision process.

It includes a scenario based activity which shows how you can use Action Learning Sets to support supervision, as well as a template reflective learning log.









Buy your copy from our online bookshop at www.skillsforcare.org.uk/bookshop



Conclusion

We hope that you've found this guide useful, and that you've picked up lots of handy tips and recommendations to help you in your role as a supervisor.

Here are some questions to help you to reflect on some of the key points from the guide, and think about how you might adapt your supervision approach in the future.

Complete this activity to reflect on your learning.

Having re	ead the guide, what have been the key learning points for you?
	eady supervise others, what frameworks and approaches to supervisi urrently use that work well?

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Acknowledgements

Skills for Care would like to thank Freebird Associates Ltd for their contribution to this guide.

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- Accessing Social Care Careers, Oxfordshire
- Isles of Scilly Adult Social Care
- CareShield
- Clinton Lodge (Solar Care Homes Ltd)
- Falcare CIC
- Home Instead Senior Care
- Leeds City Council Adult social care
- Future Directions CIC
- Park House
- Shared Lives Lancashire County Council
- Stockport Council Reablement and Community Home support Team (REaCH)
- Stow Healthcare
- Truro Choice Day Provision
- Westminster Society for People with Learning Disabilities



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