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North Somerset Early Years Team **Supervision Toolkit**



Supporting document for leaders on policy and practice for staff supervision meeting statutory guidance.

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Opening statement

Effective supervisions sit within an ethos of 'kindness' in our Early Years settings. One definition of kindness is the quality of being generous, helpful and caring about other people, or an act showing this quality.

An effective leader or manager should know their colleagues well. A keyperson in an Early Years setting tunes into each child's individual interests, personality and cultural capital.

They need to get to know a child before they can plan effectively for their 'next steps'.

This approach should also be adopted to support the professional growth, well-being and development of each adult.

'Supervision is an opportunity to bring someone back to their own mind, to show them how good they can be.'

Nancy Kline



A. Introduction, aims and context of this Toolkit

Good supervision can give staff an opportunity to reflect on their practice, explore any worries or concerns about the welfare of children in the setting and contribute towards developing confident and competent staff groups. All of these are known to be important in establishing safe organisations where children are safeguarded from harm.

High quality, regular supervision also supports the well-being of all members of staff.

This Toolkit will provide information to support managers and staff to undertake effective supervision, it will highlight the difference between supervision and appraisal.

The Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage, setting the standards for learning, development and care for children from birth to five states that:

‘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.’

‘Supervision should provide opportunities for staff to:

- discuss any issues – particularly concerning children’s development or well-being;
- identify solutions to address issues as they arise, and; receive coaching to improve their personal effectiveness’
- Receive coaching to improve their personal effectiveness

What does Ofsted say?

The Ofsted Early Years inspection toolkit states that to achieve the 'met' grading in the safeguarding evaluation area:

'Leaders ensure that supervision, support and monitoring of adults are appropriate.'



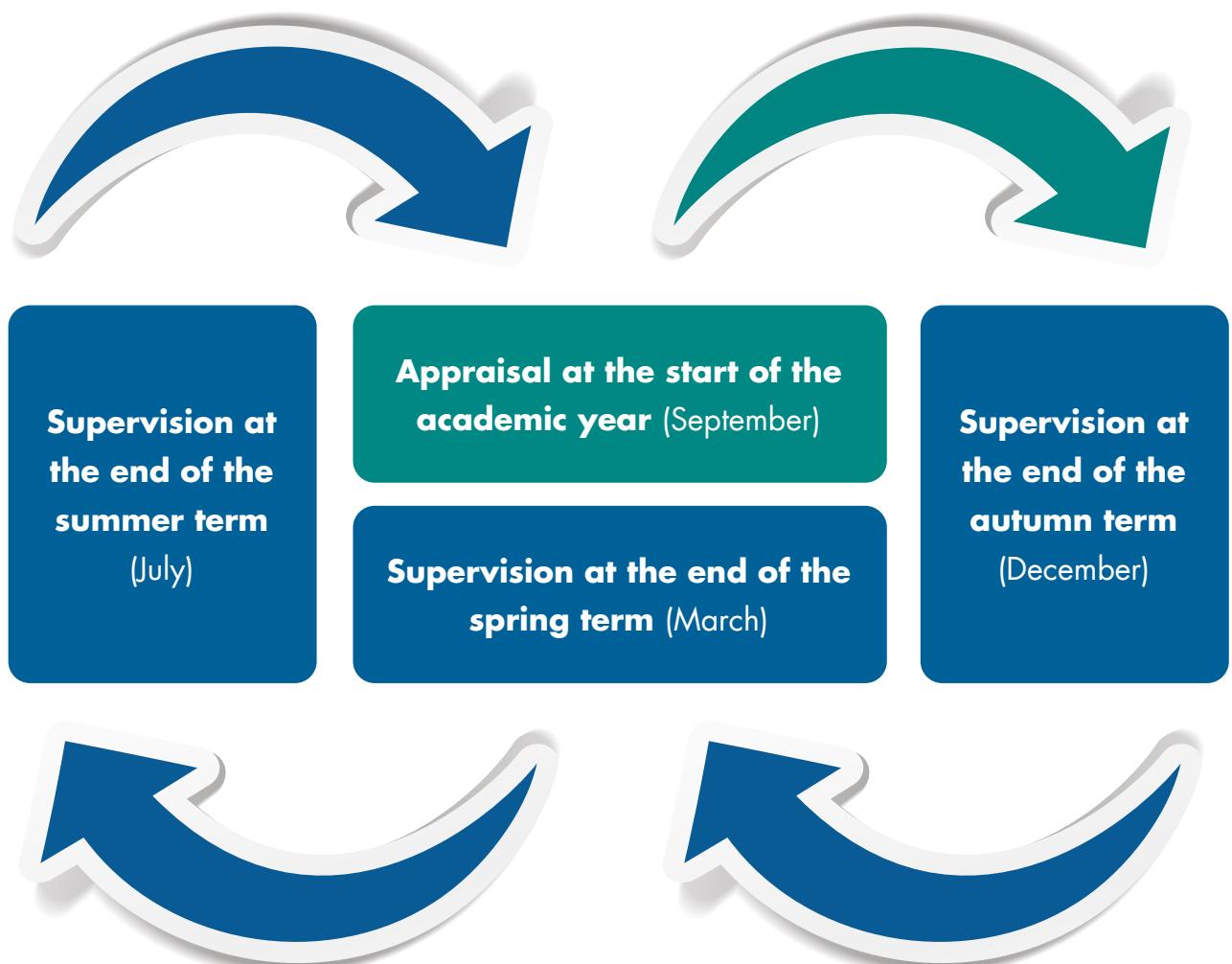
To achieve 'expected standard' in the leadership and governance evaluation area:

'Leaders provide regular, relevant and appropriate professional learning and expertise opportunities and constructive feedback for all practitioners, which equips them to carry out their roles successfully.'



B. Appraisal and supervision. What are the purposes of each process?

An example of the supervision and appraisal cycle



Appraisal is not the same as supervision

The appraiser is making an assessment of performance against the job description (JD) and so should use the JD, previous year's objectives and relevant action points from team meetings. Use the setting's quality improvement plan to determine where performance has been exceptional, good, average or poor.

To validate the assessments, evidence should be collated to illustrate any points that are made. Examples may include positive comments from parents; observations of practice; contribution at events such as parents' evenings or ideas presented for activities that have been successful for the children; attendance records; complaints or the implementation of change and learning following the completion of training; or development

plans set at previous appraisals or team meetings. If the appraisal is with a new staff member then the induction notes will help to identify progress.

The appraisal form can also offer a unique opportunity for an employer to gain feedback on the provision and to ask for comments on specific issues which may affect staff welfare; for example, work/life balance issues, length of journey time, staff facilities or even general staff morale within the provision or group.

Appraisals are annual meetings to review a staff members performance over the previous year, set targets for the next year and discuss any training needs / CPD (Continuing Professional Development) linked to the setting business plan and quality improvement plan.



Supervision is not the same as appraisal

Supervision is a formal and recorded process through which the professional actions of staff are examined and regularly reviewed. It provides a recorded system of decision making that is audited to improve practice and to improve the service that is provided to children and parents. Effective supervision also supports the well-being of each member of staff.

Supervision acts as a means for ensuring that members of staff have access to the support, training and procedures they require for professional growth and development.

Supervision enables supervisors and supervisees to examine and reflect on the quality of their practice and to facilitate discussion.

Supervision is a legal requirement.

In the revised EYFS Statutory Framework (2014) supervision of staff changed from a 'should' to a 'must'. This has been upheld in subsequent versions of the framework.

Supervision Policy should – include a clear statement of purpose; clarify confidentiality and access to notes; reference the supervision agreement and record; state clear expectations and boundaries; stipulate the frequency, duration and recording of meetings; and demonstrate how quality supervision links to staff retention and motivation, performance management and safeguarding of all employees and children.

The Supervision Agreement should

– clarify confidentiality and access to notes; state clear expectations and boundaries; stipulate the frequency, duration and recording of meetings; and be signed and adhered to by both the supervisor and the supervisee.

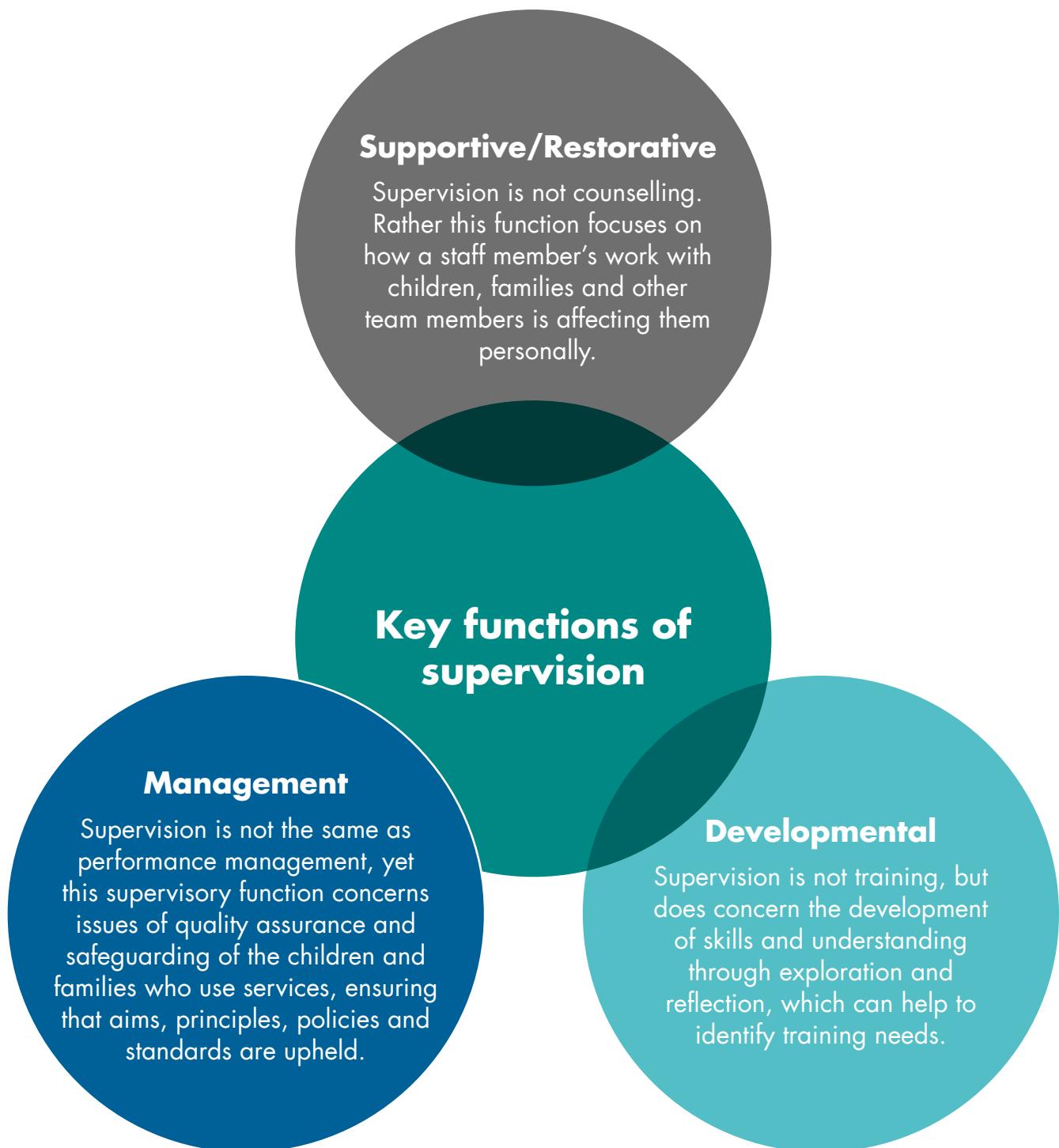
Supervision is a confidential regular face to face meeting between a named supervisor and supervisee, provided at a time and date that is suitable for both parties, which should be agreed in advance. Supervision should support, direct and monitor the work of the supervisee, enabling and empowering professional and personal development. The notes from previous supervision meetings should be reviewed and staff should be supported to explore and reflect upon their work with children and families – including any safeguarding issues.

Supervision should provide an opportunity to reflect on practice rather than just act as a tick-box to check on what practitioners are doing. Discussing individual cases is a valuable part of the process so long as this is done in a way that encourages reflective practice and does not take over the supervision process.

Supervisions should be recorded, dated and signed by both supervisor and supervisee – in order to keep track of discussions and actions, especially ongoing actions in need of regular review.



C. The three main functions of supervision



D. The main purposes of supervision are

- To provide a regular 'safe space' for staff/volunteers to be supported and to reflect upon their work and all areas affecting their health and wellbeing
- To assess staff/volunteers suitability to work with young children, and to review any changes regarding the health declaration and DBS check
- To develop the ongoing professional understanding and skills of each member of staff and direct individuals to relevant training as appropriate. This can be 'in house' CPD or mentoring as well as external or online CPD
- To give praise and/or constructive challenge as appropriate
- To clarify priorities (both individual and wider team)
- To monitor and reflect on personal performance and workload e.g roles and responsibilities and number of key children; including individual cases, identify strengths and how to improve practice
- To recognise and resolve potential and existing problems
- To focus on an individual child of concern (safeguarding and/or development)



- To discuss how personal factors are affecting work and provide support
- To give an opportunity to moderate, reflect on practice and review judgements to ensure accurate and consistent assessment of children's developmental milestones/concerns about children
- Supervision sessions and objectives are linked to the setting business plan and ethos

Quality Improvement (QI) plan and ethos.

Leaders and managers need to be very clear about their QI plan and ethos – this will then support the Learning Walk with Ofsted.

Who should have supervision and how often?

You cannot support if you yourself are not supported, therefore the manager/leader must also receive regular supervisions. Although supervision should be regular, Ofsted does not specify how often supervision should take place or how long it should last.

E. Why supervision is important in the Early Years sector

Supervision will promote and model the following indicators of a safe setting:

- Staff are respectful to all employees as well as children
- Staff are open about discussing good and poor practice
- Blame only occurs in extreme circumstances
- Leaders model the appropriate behaviour
- Staff are knowledgeable about the vulnerability of the children that they look after
- Staff are aware that abusers may already be in the employment of the provision (be prepared to think the unthinkable)
- Children are actively listened to
- Staff are valued, listened to and empowered to challenge poor practice
- Parents are encouraged to be involved in planning their child's care and are welcomed into the provision
- The culture of the setting is embedded and fortified
- Whistle-blowing procedures are in place and staff know how to use them

Supervision will benefit the Provision:

- By getting to know staff as individuals and enabling them to see the direction of the provision they work for and how they can contribute to it
- Giving an opportunity to respectfully challenge practice
- By helping to manage performance and capabilities
- By re-enforcing professional expectations and the culture of the setting
- By making sure children and their families receive the highest quality of care and service
- Through improving communication and sharing responsibility
- By assisting staff retention
- By maximizing the safeguarding of children



Supervision will benefit the practitioner as it offers opportunities to:

- look at professional roles and responsibilities, where each practitioner is now and where they would like to go. This could include training opportunities
- reflect on, analyse and evaluate their own practice
- set personal goals, and a chance to review, change or adapt recent or past actions
- promote confidence and safe working practices
- agree any ongoing actions for both parties
- allow disagreements to be recorded and solutions explored at the earliest opportunity

Supervision is supportive

- It is a time to listen to each other, value, motivate and empower staff, their work and ongoing commitment within
- 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 caseload workload e.g roles and responsibilities and number of key children



F. First thing's first – organise your organisation

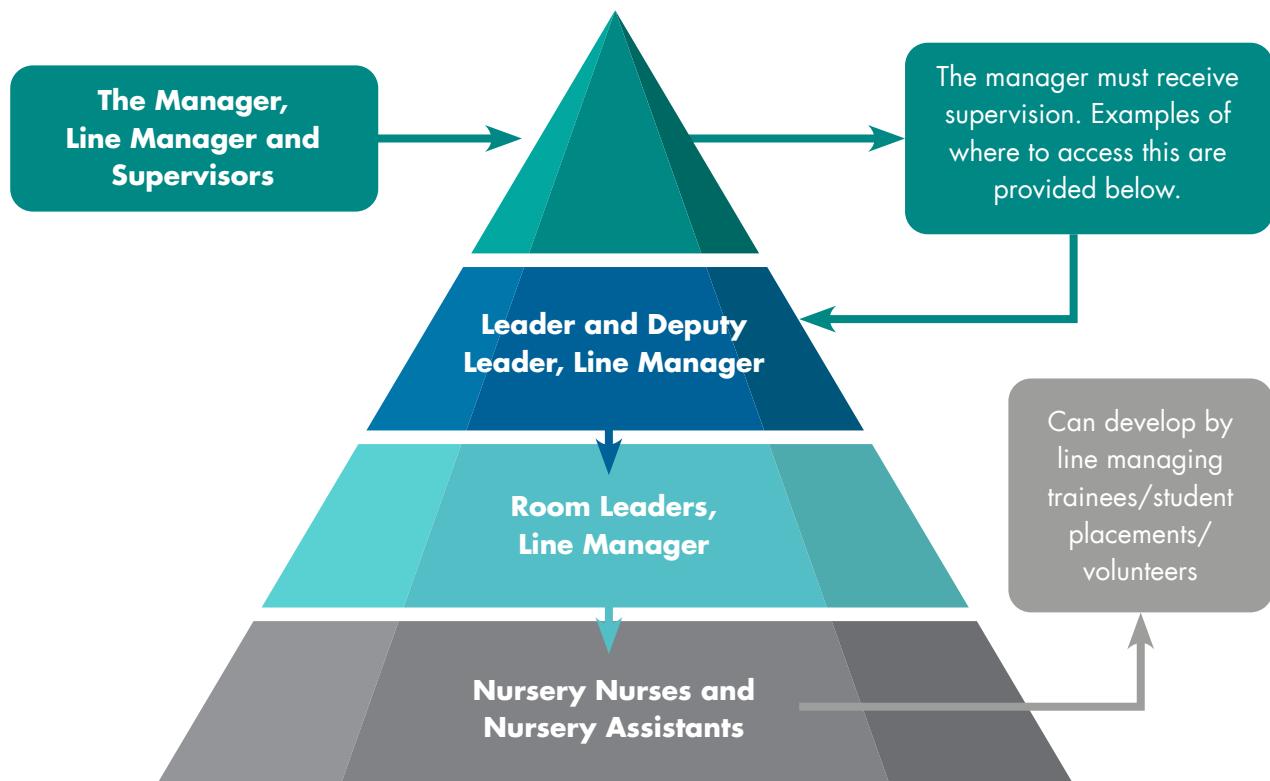
Before the supervision process can be implemented, the following **MUST be in place:**

1. Organisational structure

Line management structure; what is this in your provision and is it clearly communicated? Depending on the size of the provision it may not be appropriate for the manager to be managing the whole team, each supervisor should only line manage a handful of people. Room Leaders/Deputy should be line managing the people they supervise. Not only does this allow for development and progression opportunities, it builds relationships within

the team and frees up the manager's time for strategic tasks. Sharing responsibility will develop the skills of your whole team; home grown talent builds a more competent team.

If the provision is committee run then the manager should be attending committee meetings. This will allow opportunity to discuss budgets, training, capacity, numbers, policy, and will inform business plans and quality improvement plans.



2. Good quality supervisions for the manager

You cannot support if you yourself are not supported. The manager must receive supervisions - this could be with:

- Committee chair/nominated person for childcare
- School governor/head/deputy/nominated person for childcare
- Manager and leader/deputy could line manage each other
- The manager; join up with another provision and receive supervision from each other (peer to peer), this would work really well in a chain or an existing network group.
- EYP/EYT via another provision
- The owner
- The area manager

3. Clear job descriptions (JD) and person specifications (PS)

From recruiting the right staff, to ensuring staff are competent; everything hinges on having clear and accurate JDs and PSs, these can be referred to in the supervision and appraisal process.



Where and how do you start?

Once these above three elements are in place, the supervision process is ready to start

The supervision process will be more effective if the whole team 'buy in' and commit, therefore have a discussion at a team meeting regarding how it will work, be implemented and what is important. Together set a standardised supervision record agenda, agreement and policy

Start the process with the manager and the senior staff she/he supervises, then progress to the next and subsequent layers of staff. The deputy/leader needs to receive good quality supervision in order to give good quality supervision, so spend some time at the top of the organisational chart first; lead by example.

The process should be about the individual's wellbeing, emotional support and development in order to enable them to do their job to the best of their ability.

Part 1 Continuing Professional Development (CPD)

Consider initially choosing an area for development and focus on this; for example it could be an area of the setting they wish to develop such as 'the environment' or it could be an area of their practice which needs development such as 'story-telling' or 'behaviour management'. If they can't think of something they want to develop or research, choose a topic that the individual has an interest in or an area of strength.

Or it could be an area of weakness that they or the setting needs to work on. By choosing the topic together you will gain 'buy in', ownership and commitment from the individual.

Use SMART goals to set targets



- Be **Specific** about what you want to achieve.
- It must be **Measurable** so you know when you have achieved it.
- Don't set yourself up to fail, goals must therefore be **Achievable**.
- Is this goal **Realistic** in the time allowed?
- Tasks need to be completed in a **Timely** fashion, so set a completion date.

Part 2 Children and families

Supervision sessions could include opportunities to discuss learning diaries, observation, assessment and planning, safeguarding and child developments issues. Individual children of concern can be tracked through these meetings.

Part 3 Individual well-being and emotional support

Staff can only fully support the children and their families if they are supported themselves. Are staff emotionally secure?

If early years practitioners are to provide the kind of encouragement and support necessary for the support, development and challenge of children and families, they need to be encouraged, supported and challenged as well – ideally through formal supervision. People who work with complexity, discouragement and distress, are at risk of becoming overburdened, discouraged and distressed. It is only possible for a practitioner to fully support the children and families they are working with if they are supported themselves. Practitioners need to be able to recognise and contain emotions rather than leaking them onto others, this requires support structures and safe spaces, such as individual and team supervision that offer regular opportunities for reflecting and communicating openly, sharing perceptions, practice dilemmas and concerns with others, and together deciding on a way forward. Appropriate support in supervision can help staff members achieve distance and perspective.

Nursery World – Equipped to Lead Article 'Supervision'

In this section you should also ask if there have been any changes affecting their DBS Check and health declaration.

Further items for inclusion in supervision sessions:

Your own setting's training plan should be incorporated into supervision/CPD sessions. Training should be selected to meet a specific need, your individual setting's targets and quality improvement plan. E.g if you have a focus on developing 1.mathematics and 2.enriched vocabulary as areas of learning, it makes sense for this to be reflected in the CPD plans of individual members of staff.

Settings should plan training using a structured needs-based approach that integrates with recruitment systems and links to job descriptions and person specifications. Do you brief staff prior to them attending a training course? Do you de-brief staff after they have attended a training course?

Ask staff to complete a training evaluation sheet. This will reveal the value of the course and points to be shared and cascaded; you

need to get your money's worth. Factor in time to cascade learning with rest of the staff team. Supervision should be linked to the job description and person specification.. Is each staff member meeting all the job requirements? In order to be able to address competency issues and suitability to undertake the role, the job description and person specification must be clear and accurate so you can see what you are measuring against.

The above should provide enough themes to really get discussion going. Supervision can feel like quite a strange process, especially if it is new to either or both parties, so it's important to have a rough plan at the beginning. As a team review the process, assess how it's working and make appropriate changes to improve effectiveness.