GIG CYMRU NHS WALES
Addysg a Gwella Iechyd Cymru (AaGIC)
Health Education and Improvement Wales (HEIW)

Supporting Supervision:
A Multi-Professional Guide



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Executive Summary

This guide sets out a practical, all Wales approach to multi-professional supervision that supports the delivery of safe, effective, person-centred care by a confident and skilled workforce.

It complements, rather than replaces, profession-specific and regulatory requirements and aligns with the All-Wales career-spanning approach to preceptorship and restorative clinical supervision in Nursing[1].

This guide supports employers, supervisors and staff working in multi-professional teams to organise supervision that is proportionate to role and risk, accessible, and of consistent quality rather than as a contractual guide.

Scope and audience

This guide can be used by health and care services across Wales and is for employers, managers, supervisors and supervisees working in multi-professional teams across all settings.

What we mean by supervision

The guide adopts a shared language based on Proctor's model[2]:

- Formative (Educational/Professional): building capability, reflection and safe practice
- Normative (Managerial/Evaluative): assuring standards, policies and safe systems
- Restorative (Supportive/Wellbeing): maintaining resilience and psychological safety

Supervision is distinct from line-management, appraisal, action learning sets, coaching and mentoring. These may be supportive but are not supervision.

Minimum expectations

Organisations should:

- Provide protected time; a private and safe space; ensure equitable access
- Ensure supervisors receive training and support for their supervisory role through appropriate profession, programme or multi-professional training

- Commit to supervision agreements and support supervision plans
- Maintain a log of supervision activities and evaluate quality and impact
- Adopt robust governance structures with a clear process to escalate concerns regarding person and/or practitioner safety

How to use this guidance

- Agree local purpose, scope and frequency proportionate to career stage and risk
- Select a supervision model appropriate to the needs of the supervisee(s) and context
- Use the supervision templates and HEIW Supervision Hub resources to plan, document and review supervision activities
- Monitor coverage across scope of practice, experience and outcomes, during supervision meetings and complete the learning cycle

By adopting a common, clear and proportionate approach, organisations can embed supervision in multi-professional teams that improves quality, safety, workforce wellbeing and retention, while respecting the distinct requirements of each profession.

Principles of Multi-Professional Supervision

No.	Principle
1.	Supervision should be based on mutual trust and respect, and the value of supervision is enhanced by a positive culture and a workforce that champions its benefits.
2.	Supervisees should be offered a needs-based, flexible model of supervision with a choice of supervisor where able, with consideration to personal match, cultural needs and professional expertise.
3.	Supervisory models should be based on the needs of the individual / setting.
4.	The employer should create protected time, private space and individuals to facilitate the supervisory session, which is supported within job plans.
5.	The multi-professional team should have a shared understanding of supervision across professions and the sharing / enhancing of knowledge and skills to support multi-professional development to improve service delivery.
6.	Supervisors and supervisees should have a shared understanding of roles and the purpose of the supervisory sessions, which are based on a supervision agreement.
7.	Supervision specific training / support should be provided to the supervisors to enhance the provision and effectiveness of supervision.
8.	The opportunity to self-reflect and feedback on the quality / effectiveness of supervision should be provided for supervisors and supervisees.
9.	Readily accessible resources should be available to support the documentation/recording of supervision practices.

Introduction

A Healthier Wales[3] recognises the increasing demands and challenges facing the health and social care system across Wales. It sets out the vision, ambition and approaches that are needed to put wellbeing at the heart of our workforce plans. We need to develop a workforce with the values, behaviours, knowledge, skills and confidence to deliver evidence-based care to enhance safety, quality of care and impact for service users. Supervision can play a key role in aligning activities that support inclusion, wellbeing and engagement of the workforce with the quality of health and care experienced by the people we serve.

Much of the future workforce are with us today, and staff retention is as important as recruitment. Supervision cannot be provided where the supervisor does not have the knowledge, skills or experience to be able to perform the role or components of the role they are supervising or required supervision skills. In teams where individuals have or intend to develop advanced skillsets, this may require a flexible approach that involves a supervisory team.

To expand scope of practice effective supervision is necessary to ensure high-quality care and professional development across traditional professional boundaries. Historically, education and training have traditionally been delivered in uni-professional or uni-disciplinary formats. This needs to change to reflect multi-professional approaches, seamless working and accessibility to those under-represented in the workforce[3].

Access to supervision is an essential requirement for all health professionals, and it should be valued within the context of the culture of the organisation, which is crucial in setting the tone, values and behaviours expected of individuals. The overall provision of supervision is the responsibility of the employer and employees need to ensure that they participate. Regular supervision is deemed essential as an on-going process within the workplace setting and includes feedback and enabling reflection on clinical practice to ensure service user and employee safety and wellbeing. Supervision helps to build confidence in clinical decision making through critical thinking in person-centred care from diagnosis, treatment and ongoing management[4].

Following formal education, ongoing supervision is essential in developing healthcare practitioners. Due to the growing number of multi-professional teams and environments, the supervisory role may be undertaken by a practitioner of a different profession. With minimal guidance available to employers, a recent scoping exercise by HEIW highlighted that there is significant variation in the supervision experienced by members of developing multi-professional teams across Wales.

The King's Fund[5] have highlighted the need for more attention to be paid to successfully integrating roles and the need for effective support mechanisms including supervision, to embed effective multi-professional team working and

address cultural issues. The King's Fund's extensive review [5] includes lessons learned for multi-professional working. Role integration was also a theme identified in Wales during engagement for the Strategic Workforce Plan for Primary Care[6], and the resultant action to develop the 'Improving Multi-Professional Working: A Toolkit for Primary and Community Care[7]. Despite the focus being on primary care, the principles are transferrable to settings and services across Wales.

Implementing the principles of effective supervision within multi-professional environments will involve a broad multi-professional team approach where practitioners work together effectively to meet the needs and preferences of individuals and improve how they practise. The Multi-Professional Framework for Integrated Working[8] can be used as a tool to support the development of multi-professional working in Wales. Implementing principles of supervision can support employers to identify how best to supervise practitioners bringing value and expertise and ultimately, building the multi-professional team to achieving the quadruple aim as set out in A Healthier Wales[3]:

- High-quality care
- Improved outcomes and experience
- Better value healthcare
- An engaged and sustainable workforce.

Purpose

This guide aims to support provision of supervision in multi-professional environments and brings together current supervision guidance in a single document. It has been developed following stakeholder engagement. It is designed to support implementation of and should be read alongside guidance from professional and regulatory bodies, Royal Colleges and Welsh Government. This guide does not provide guidance relating to induction or specific contractual supervision requirements.

The purpose is to outline supportive structures which **enable effective supervision for registered professionals.** It:

- Sets out clear principles of multi-professional supervision for application across different health and care settings
- Supports the creation of a safe, high-quality learning environment for our workforce
- Supports employers, managers, supervisors and staff to understand each person's role and responsibilities
- Supports the supervisee to develop new skills and competencies

- Provides signposting to education which supports supervision skills development
- Provides guidance on how multi-professional teams can be supported to provide high-quality care through clear support structures for supervision

What is supervision?

While there is no single definition of supervision across all roles, professions, settings or organisations in health and care, there are some common elements:

- a reflective component
- skilled facilitation
- a focus on evidence-based practice
- personal and professional development
- improving quality of care

Integrating supervision requirements for different professions requires a comprehensive but flexible approach. It can include different supervision models but should be co-ordinated by a senior professional, meet the needs of the supervisee and include regular 1:1 meetings.

Supervision can have different functions, and several terms are used to describe these. In this guide, the following terms are used as described on the Supervision Hub:

- Educating (Formative or Professional): Regular supervision is provided by a designated senior/experienced practitioner to promote high professional standards, building capability and developing expertise
- Evaluating (Normative or Managerial): Promotion and maintenance of good standards of work, co-ordination of practice with policies and standard operating practices and the assurance of an efficient, safe, quality service and practice
- Restoring (Practice or Supportive): Focuses attention on the development and preservation of the emotional and intellectual capacity of the supervisee for personal well-being and to support good working relationships

Regulatory requirements

Requirements of providers

As healthcare providers, NHS Wales and independent healthcare services, have specific legal, regulatory, and ethical responsibilities to ensure safe, effective, person-centred care. Providers are required to deploy enough suitably qualified, competent and experienced staff to meet these responsibilities[9].

This includes responsibility for employed staff. The regulatory definition of 'employed' is broader than staff directly employed through an employment contract, it refers to anyone who works on behalf of the provider, under its ongoing direction.

Providers need to ensure that their employed staff members are fit to practise. This includes ensuring employees have the qualifications, skills and necessary experience for their role, that they are physically and mentally fit for their role, operating within their scope of practice. Supervision and professional development of employees enable the delivery of safe, effective, person-centred care[10].

Supervision can support employees to identify their training and development needs at the start of their employment and regularly review them. Where indicated, this will support employees to fulfil the regulatory requirements for revalidation[11].

Further information on profession specific standards and regulation, scope of practice and competencies can be found in Improving Multi-Professional Working: A Toolkit for Primary and Community Care[7].

Confidentiality

Confidentiality underpins the psychological safety of the supervisory relationship. The supervision agreement should include a section on confidentiality and how any serious concerns identified during supervisory meetings will be addressed and escalated in line with regulatory or organisational policies to ensure service user and practitioner safety[12].

Documentation and Reporting

It is the responsibility of both supervisor and the supervisee to keep clear, accurate and up to date record of supervision. Records should document the core themes and learning from any supervision session. This should not include any service user identifiable information. This will demonstrate that practitioners are engaging in safe, effective and professional supervisory processes. Records must be kept confidential in accordance with local policies and support development of a culture of self-evaluation by both supervisor and supervisee. As a minimum the supervisor must record the date, duration, supervisee name and workplace on the supervision record. Supervisees should keep their own more comprehensive confidential record, which will support reflection between sessions and support documentation of continuous professional development.

Audit of supervision

It is important to evaluate the supervision provided to demonstrate its impact on meeting the needs of service users and staff. This includes development of supervisors and supervisees as well as the wider multi-professional team. This will require different methods depending on the type of supervision. Evaluation should lead to further development of supervision practice within the service and/or organisation as appropriate to ensure that:

- All staff have access to supervision where required
- Standards of supervision are consistent within each professional group
- Supervision remains compliant with regulatory body guidance

Future Considerations:

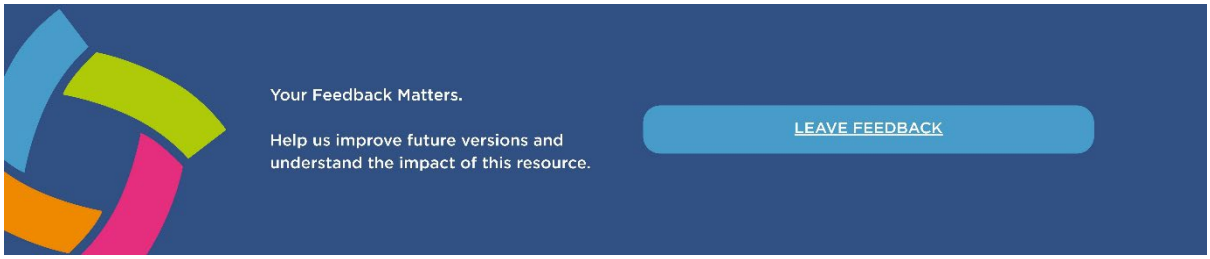
As health and social care in Wales evolves, the role of multi-professional supervision will become increasingly important. Future considerations may include:

- Integration with digital health initiatives: Incorporating supervision practices that address the growing use of digital health technologies
- Focus on population health: Aligning supervision guidance with population health management approaches to support more proactive and preventive care models
- Enhanced user involvement: Exploring ways to incorporate service user feedback and perspectives into the supervision process, ensuring that care remains person-centred
- Research and innovation: Encouraging supervision practices that support research and innovation, fostering a culture of continuous improvement

Conclusion

Evidence consistently demonstrates that multi-professional supervision, when implemented effectively, can lead to improved care, enhanced professional development, better collaboration, increased job satisfaction and greater staff retention. It is hoped that such practices will be embedded and adapted to the changing need met by health and care services. Prioritising multi-professional supervision and implementing the principles described in this multi-professional supervision guide will play a vital role in shaping the future of many healthcare settings. Wales will be able to create a more robust, adaptable, integrated and person-centred healthcare system that supports its diverse workforce effectively facilitating new models of care.

By investing in high-quality supervision, services will be able to optimise the benefits for service users, health and care professionals and the wider health and care system.



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Glossary

Term	Definition
Action Learning Set	A facilitated group process where practitioners work collaboratively on real work challenges, using questioning, reflection and peer support to generate learning and improvement. This may complement, but does not replace, formal supervision.
Audit (of Supervision)	A structured process used by organisations to review supervision provision, participation and quality to ensure standards are met and to support service improvement.
Governance	The systems and processes through which organisations are accountable for continuously improving the quality and safety of services and safeguarding high standards of care.
Coaching	A development focused process that supports individuals to achieve specific goals or improve performance. Coaching may complement supervision but does not replace it.
Confidentiality	The principle that matters discussed in supervision remain private between supervisor and supervisee, except where concerns arise relating to safety, legality, professional standards or local policy, which must be escalated through appropriate routes.
Evaluating (Normative) Supervision	The supervisory function focused on accountability, standards, policies and safe systems of work, ensuring practice is effective, ethical and aligned with professional and organisational requirements.
Formative (Educating) Supervision	The supervisory function focused on learning, reflection, professional development and skill enhancement to support safe and effective practice.
Mentoring	A supportive developmental relationship, often longer term, focused on career guidance, professional identity and personal growth. Mentoring is not a substitute for supervision.
Multi-Professional Team (MPT)	A group of practitioners from different professional backgrounds working collaboratively as equal partners to deliver coordinated, person-centred care and support.

Multi-Professional Supervision	Supervision provided within or across professional groups, enabling shared learning and support while recognising profession specific standards, scope of practice and regulatory requirements.
Multi-professional Working	A way of working in which practitioners from different professional backgrounds across health, social care, independent and third sector, collaborate as equal partners to plan, deliver and review person-centred care and support. It involves shared decision-making, mutual respect for professional roles and scopes of practice, and coordinated approaches to improve outcomes for individuals, populations and services.
Person-centred Care	An approach that places the individual at the centre of decision-making, respecting their needs, preferences, values and lived experience.
Practitioner	A qualified and appropriately trained professional working within health or social care who delivers care, support or interventions within their scope of practice. This includes clinicians and other registered or regulated professionals, and may also include others working under appropriate governance, supervision and organisational arrangements.
Protected Time	Time formally recognised within job plans or workloads of the supervisor and supervisee to enable effective participation in supervision without interruption.
Restorative (Supportive) Supervision	The supervisory function that focuses on wellbeing, emotional resilience, psychological safety and sustaining professional capacity to practise.
Scope of Practice	The activities, responsibilities and boundaries within which a professional is educated, competent, authorised and indemnified to practise.
Supervisee	The practitioner receiving supervision to support safe practice, professional development and wellbeing.

Supervisor	A suitably skilled and supported practitioner who provides supervision in line with their competence, scope of practice and organisational arrangements.
Supervision Agreement (Contract)	A written agreement between supervisor and supervisee outlining purpose, roles, boundaries, frequency, confidentiality and escalation arrangements for supervision.
Supervision Model	The structure through which supervision is delivered, for example, one-to-one, group, peer, line manager-led or blended models.
Supervision Record / Log	Concise documentation capturing the date, duration and key themes of supervision sessions, excluding any identifiable person information, and supporting CPD and governance requirements.
The Supervision Hub	A national NHS Wales resource providing guidance, models, tools and learning materials to support effective supervision across health and care services.
Wellbeing	The mental, emotional and psychological health of the workforce, supported through restorative practices, inclusive cultures and effective supervision.

