



## **Dudley Mind Support & Supervision Policy & Procedure**

### **1) Policy**

1.1 Dudley Mind believes that its staff are its most valuable resource and recognises the importance of all staff receiving proper support and supervision from their line manager.

Supervision involves 'regular protected time for staff to sit down with their line manager and to reflect on working practice'. Supervision is a key component in supporting staff in their role and is done on a one to one basis with the discussions recorded. It provides an opportunity for staff and managers to identify development needs which will enable effective and efficient delivery of Dudley Mind's objectives to improve and deliver high quality services to our clients, whilst providing evidence for both professional development and for Service Level Agreements/Quality Assessment Frameworks.

1.2 The overarching aim of this Supervision policy is to support all staff as part of a performance management framework, which enables delivery of best quality services that meet organisational objectives.

This policy also aims to ensure that Support and Supervision is delivered consistently for all Dudley Mind staff and to clarify the responsibilities and expectations of both parties participating in support and supervision.

1.3 The purpose of support and supervision is to:

- Support/develop the member of staff
- Review the workload by offering a challenging but achievable target
- Ensure that work is performed to an acceptable standard and that the staff member is working to Dudley Mind policies and procedures
- Ensure that service users receive a consistent and equitable service
- Set clear standards, priorities and targets
- Enable the manager to delegate tasks – by being clear what the task is, what results the manager expects, how success will be measured, and what timescale is necessary or appropriate.
- Involve staff in the decision making process through consultation and sharing ideas.
- Identify training needs, evaluate training undertaken and check progress against training plans

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- Provide an opportunity for upward feedback

1.4 The purpose will be achieved by

- The manager and the worker being organised and prepared
- Mutual respect
- Active listening
- Checking results
- Mutual preparedness to accept constructive criticism
- Mutual willingness to recognise achievement

### **1.5 Basic Principles**

The basic principles which underscore this policy are:

- Supervision is the right of every employee.
- All staff should engage positively in support and supervision sessions.
- It is one of the key methods of delivering a good service to clients.
- Those giving and those receiving supervision share responsibility for making it work.
- Supervision is a participative activity between the supervisor and the supervisee.
- Dudley Mind is committed to innovation and continuous improvement; supervision assists staff to understand and contribute to new approaches to their work and to turn new ideas into practice.
- Supervision is required for both efficient management of services and the oversight of the quality of service delivery.

### **1.6 The Organisation of Supervision**

All staff will receive supervision on an individual basis, from their line manager irrespective of their position and irrespective of whether they work part-time or in a temporary capacity. Ideally supervisions should take place once a month but as a minimum at least ten times a year. More frequent sessions may be indicated:

- where a staff member has recently taken up their post
- where there is inexperience or a lack of competence
- where the service has special needs

Cancelled supervision sessions should be promptly rescheduled. The supervisor's line manager is responsible for ensuring that alternative supervisory arrangements are made if the supervisor is absent from work for four weeks or more.

Supervision sessions will be scheduled in advance, with adequate lead time, so that both the supervisee and the supervisor can prepare. Dudley Mind lays great

importance on this planning, so neither supervisor nor supervisee should go to a supervision without such consideration.

The duration of supervision will be influenced by the subject matter to be considered. In some circumstances the supervision parties may decide to break the supervision into a session for dealing with client issues and key worker issues and a session for other areas.

In addition to support and supervision sessions, regular team meetings will be held, usually monthly, where practice issues can be discussed, information shared, and support gained from line manager and colleagues. Staff will be encouraged to use each other for ad-hoc peer support.

## **2) Scope**

This policy applies to all permanent and fixed term contract staff and volunteers. All managers within Dudley Mind are required to provide supervision for their staff. Community Project Co-ordinators are responsible for providing supervision for volunteers. As the policy provides for access to supervision at every level in the organisation, managers will also be supervisees.

## **3) Procedure**

### **3.1 The Supervision Session**

It is expected that all support and supervision sessions will cover the mandatory elements listed in the Supervision Record Form (Appendix 1). A support and supervision contract will be signed by both supervisor and supervisee before starting the process of supervision (Appendix 2).

### **3.2 Work Impact**

Although through correct staff selection, good training and effective management staff will be expected to cope with the normal duties of their post, working in Dudley Mind's teams may impact emotionally on staff (e.g. through stress, fear, listening to client's issues and stories which can include abuse incidents). Supervisors therefore must be aware of such pressure as felt by the supervisee and provide opportunity for it to be discussed.

Supervisors will not act as a counsellor to a supervisee. Where the supervisee is clearly in need of more support than the supervisor is able or equipped to provide, team or peer support should be discussed: exceptionally referral to a counselling service, through the HR Officer, may also be an option where the causes are work related. The option is also there for the supervisor to seek advice from their line manager. Any action taken would normally have to be with the agreement of the supervisee, bearing in mind the often confidential nature of the issues being raised.

### **3.3 Responding to Inadequate Performance**

Inadequate performance may well have been discussed or challenged outside of supervision at the time of occurrence. If so supervision will review the previous discussions. Otherwise formal supervision is the forum for identifying and starting to tackle inadequate performance.

It is the responsibility of the supervisor to be aware of the performance of the supervisee including issues such as time keeping. Supervisors should be straightforward and direct in introducing the issue to the supervisee. They should not keep silent as this prevents the improvement of standards and prevents the supervisee explaining, responding to or understanding that there is an issue.

When inadequate performance is being dealt with in supervision, the supervisor should ensure clarity concerning:

- full understanding as to what is the inadequacy
- what specifically must be achieved to remedy the inadequacy and within what time frame
- what support, training or other input may be necessary to assist the supervisee achieve adequate performance
- how the performance will be monitored and reviewed
- at what stage the poor performance will be dealt with under the formal disciplinary procedure.

To ensure consistency line managers should take advice from their own manager and where necessary, the HR Officer.

Detailed records will be made of the discussions concerning the inadequate performance and these may be used in any subsequent disciplinary action.

### **3.4 Formal disciplinary matters**

- Support and supervision sessions should be used to constructively discuss concerns about standards of work or conduct and how these can be addressed.
- The sessions should not be used to address formal disciplinary matters which should be dealt with in separate meetings in accordance with the Dudley Mind Disciplinary Policy and Procedure.
- Support and supervision records may be used as part of the disciplinary process. The approval of the HR Officer (or in the HR Officer's absence the CEO) should be sought if access to supervision notes is required for a disciplinary investigation/hearing or where a person is being transferred to another team because of performance problems. A note will be made of all requests to access supervision notes with reasons why.

### **3.5 Records**

- All supervision records will be kept in a hard copy supervision and appraisal file held securely by the HR Officer in a locked cabinet.
- An agreed record will be made of the discussion and actions or agreements identified at the supervision session.
- If there are detailed discussions about a client, then this will be recorded separately. The supervisee has the responsibility for ensuring it is placed in the client's file.
- It is important that both parties are in agreement with the supervision record. This will be indicated by both parties signing the record. If there is unresolved disagreement about the record then the disagreement will be recorded.
- Support and supervision notes should be kept for the length of employment with Dudley Mind. When an employee leaves, the supervision and appraisal records will be amalgamated with their Dudley Mind personnel file.

### **3.6 Privacy and Confidentiality**

- Supervision should take place in privacy and without interruptions. This means that phones should have been diverted and an indication given that the supervision room should not be entered.
- Any issues that arise in supervision may be reported through line management.
- Line managers have access to supervision records as a means of monitoring the implementation and effectiveness of supervision.
- Usually the content of support and supervision sessions should be kept confidential between those involved. However, there may be occasions when it is appropriate for third parties to see the supervision record and this should be made clear to the supervisee from the start.
- If abusive, unethical practice or misconduct is identified during supervision, the supervisor will ensure it is thoroughly investigated. This may also mean that a mediator will need to be present if requested by one or both parties.

### **3.7 Objective Observation**

One or both parties may request the presence of an objective observer (to be identified by the HR Officer or CEO) at supervision sessions in the exceptional circumstance of unethical, abusive practice, misconduct or other situation where either party feels uncomfortable, until the issue is resolved. The observer will not participate and will act only as observer.

### **3.8 Training**

All those who carry out supervision will receive training.

At induction detailed information will be given about the Dudley Mind approach to supervision, what a supervisee can expect and their active role in supervision.

Development Plans are used to identify staff development needs, and these needs could be met through a number of ways such as; coaching, mentoring, or self-study or on job training courses.

### **3.9 Monitoring of Supervision Practices**

- The frequency and effectiveness of the supervisions carried out by supervisors will be monitored at supervisions with their line manager. This will include whether the numbers being supervised are suitable, that supervision can take place without jeopardising the direct service to users, and the appropriateness of the venue for supervision.
- The HR Officer will keep a record of how often supervisions occur and where they are not being done to the recommended timescales will alert the supervisor's line manager.
- At some supervision sessions, opportunity will be given for feedback as to the effectiveness of the supervision.
- Any staff member who has concerns about the absence or the quality of supervision should discuss this with their supervisor, and if the problem remains with their supervisor's line manager.
- The effectiveness of the supervision process will also be audited through ad hoc staff surveys initiated by the HR Officer.

## **4) Equalities**

Dudley Mind is committed to ensuring that all support and supervision practices are not discriminatory and any consideration of an individual's professional and personal development is based on their capabilities, performance and potential irrespective of age, disability, gender, sexual orientation, race, culture or religion.

Please refer to Dudley Mind Equality and Anti-Discrimination Practice Policy.

## **5) Appraisal**

Appraisal is a more formal process involving review of a person's performance over a year; re-evaluation of their job description; recognising their strengths; identifying ways of improving their weaknesses; and of identifying how further training needs will be met. All Dudley Mind staff will have one supervision session annually that focuses on these aspects and forms the appraisal.

Please refer to Dudley Mind Appraisal Policy and Procedure.

## **6) Related Documents**

Dudley Mind Confidentiality Policy

Dudley Mind Equal Opportunities & Anti-Discriminatory Practice Policy.

## **7) Changes**

Dudley Mind reserves the right to change the provision of the Support and Supervision Policy and Procedure by amendment, addition or deletion or substitution of new procedures from time to time at its discretion. Employees will be consulted and notified of any changes by appropriate means.