



Supervising Staff and Volunteers Policy (V3 – October 2025)

1 Statement of Purpose

1.1 This policy:

- provides a framework for the one-to-one supervision of all staff and volunteers working with or for Transom Trust;
- sets out how staff and volunteers can expect to be supervised and provides line managers and project leaders with the key elements needed to supervise staff and volunteers effectively.

2 Aims of supervision

1.2 The aims of supervision are to:

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

3 Definition of supervision

3.1 Supervision:

- is a regular one-to-one meeting between the supervisor (eg: line manager/Operations Manager and staff/volunteer in order to meet organisational, professional and personal objectives;
- forms a key part of individual performance management. It underpins the Induction programme (for newly appointed staff and volunteers) and is the foundation on which staff appraisal is built.

4 Supervision agreements

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

5 Formal and Informal or ad-hoc supervision

5.1 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.

5.2 It is a 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 line manager must make sure that any decision made with regard to a staff member of Transom Trust is clearly recorded on the staff member's file.

6 Minimum frequencies

6.1 The frequency of formal supervision will be set according to the nature and frequency of the duties of the staff or volunteers, but will not normally be less frequently than every 3 months. It is expected that supervision will also occur informally when needed.

7 Roles and responsibilities

Line managers and Operations Manager

7.1 The Line manager and Operations Manager must ensure that formal supervision takes place for all staff and volunteers for whom they have managerial responsibility. Supervision must be conducted in accordance with this policy and guidance.

Staff

7.2 It is the responsibility of staff to:

- attend supervision sessions with their supervisor (ie: line manager/Operations Manager). They should use these sessions positively to discuss their work and development, and to implement agreed actions;
- 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.

8 Disputes

8.1 Disagreements should be initially dealt with by discussion between the supervisor and staff 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 Grievance policy and procedure.

9 Recording

9.1 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.

9.2 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.

10 Storage and retention

10.1 A specific supervision file should be maintained by the line manager or project leader, so that the record can be reviewed at appropriate times.

11 Confidentiality and Access

11.1 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 manager or Operations Manager. 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:

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

12 General Guidance

12.1 These guidance notes may be used as a checklist to help audit supervision practices, and help get the best out of the supervision session, both as a supervisor and staff or volunteers.

Good Supervisors

12.2 Good supervisors:

- 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 supervisor 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 and volunteers, and build on existing skills and knowledge;
- Set clear targets with action, and write these down;
- Anticipate and raise problems and issues before they get serious;
- Do what they say they will do;
- Are specific in any comments made relating to supervisee's performance;
- Whatever their present levels of capability/competence:
 - convey confidence that they and their staff and volunteers can reach new levels;
 - try to stretch the staff and volunteers towards reaching new levels;
- Write down actions on either side;
- Record any disagreements;
- Make their own experience, knowledge and skills available to help the staff or volunteers;
- Set the staff or volunteer'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 they haven't got "all the answers";
- Think who else can help with the issue;
- Give themselves time to seek further information or seek advice, if they are not sure;

- Help staff and volunteers to reflect on their practice - eg: what worked or didn't work, why, and lessons for the future;
- 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 their own understanding and application of knowledge, theory and their skills, and how this has an impact on outcomes for the service user;
- Use supervision to reflect on how they promote the values of anti-oppressive practice, and meaningful user involvement and participation.

Common Barriers to the delivery of effective supervision

12.3 Common Barriers to the delivery of effective supervision include:

- "Dumping" – saving up criticisms and discussing them all at once;
- Unplanned, rushed agenda, and unfocussed sessions;
- Inadequate preparation by supervisor or staff or volunteer;
- Unclear or unrealistic goals for employees and 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.

The Trustees will review the policy every 2 years.

Approved by Trustees on: 16/10/2025

Signature on behalf of Trustees:



Next review date: 16/10/2027