



## 5. Different approaches to supervision



Earlier in the resource you considered the different functions of supervision, however, there are also different models of supervision.

By the end of this section the aim is that you will:

- have a critical understanding of the scope of supervision, including the different forms supervision can take.

The [Step into Leadership](#) website has a section on supervision which identifies and defines four different forms of supervision.

### One-to-one supervision

One-to-one supervision is widely used and the supervisor is usually the supervisee's line manager. Sessions are formally pre-arranged and take place in a confidential setting and protected place.

### Shared supervision

Shared supervision allows teams to share responsibility for supervising individuals. Shared supervision is still conducted one-to-one but the supervisor in this case will not be the supervisee's line manager, instead he or she will be a practitioner who has skills and experience relevant to the supervisee's current projects or caseload and so is able to provide specifically relevant support and/or mentoring.

### Group supervision

Group supervision is usually facilitator led via a formal, pre-arranged process that is agreed by the supervisor and supervisees. The make-up of the group depends on the goals of the supervision. Group supervision complements, rather than substitutes, individual supervision, though it may reduce how often you need one-to-one supervision.

### Professional supervision

Professional supervision is for professionally qualified workers in social services. Professional supervision supports supervisees to maintain professional identity, knowledge and meet their post registration training and learning requirements.

This is just one way of considering different kinds of supervision. For example, many people might view supervision of all staff, qualified and unqualified, as a **professional** activity. And **one-to-one supervision** is the most common form of supervision for professionally qualified workers.

In some settings, such as residential care, shift working creates challenges for staff supervision and a model of **shared supervision** may be used where two or more managers share the supervision of individual staff. In that situation workers will receive one-to-one supervision but not always with the same supervisor.

Some organisations may offer **peer supervision** or there may be opportunities to consult with an external supervisor as well as the supervision provided by a line manager. There are a variety of ways of structuring group supervision as well as the model described above. In particular, **group supervision** may benefit workers who are themselves engaged in group work and can use the supervision space to explore some of the dynamics and challenges they encounter in their practice.

Depending on your role and your specific work setting you may have experience of different forms of supervision or you may only be familiar with one approach. If you want to learn more about other models you can read more about these in the section on supervision on the [Step into Leadership](#) website or the resources listed at the end of this resource.