

An Evaluation of the

Clinical Supervision Pilots

Key Points



Executive Summary
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Clinical Supervision Exec Summary

Key Points:

- The clinical supervision pilots were rolled out across a number of Riverside services in each of the six regions
- The aim of the pilots was to support staff dealing with challenging issues, events and trauma
- The term 'clinical' was avoided by those participating due to possible negative connotations
- A mixture of quantitative and qualitative techniques were used to evaluate the pilots
- The evaluation suggests that supervision has proven to be very successful and demonstrated a positive impact on staff members involved

Executive Summary

Background and Overview

Clinical supervision, as defined by The Royal College of Nursing, is “an activity that brings skilled supervisors and practitioners together in order to reflect upon their practice. It is a time to think about knowledge and skills and how they may be developed to improve care.” Whilst clinical supervision has been widely used in the NHS and is now used in other occupational areas such as probation and social work, there has also been increasing interest in using it in supported housing. This is evidenced in the Homeless Link publication, ‘Reflective practice in homelessness services’¹.

The purpose of this project was to pilot clinical supervision across a number of Riverside services in each of the six regions. The aim of this clinical supervision was to support staff dealing with challenging issues, events and trauma. Services were given freedom to adopt an approach which suited the service and the staff involved. Common to all evaluated pilots was some level of professional practitioner involvement and regular supervision sessions delivered via group work, 1-2-1 consultations and additional support when needed. None of the evaluated pilots could be described as Clinical Supervision. The term “clinical” was avoided by practitioners involved in the pilot because they felt it could have negative connotations.

The evaluation of the pilots combined a mix of quantitative and qualitative techniques and covered nine services across four regions. The emphasis of the evaluation was placed on qualitative research as a means of understanding the impact and effectiveness of the project. Over the course of the evaluation, 66 staff and 3 external counsellors / practitioners were engaged. This included 37 staff who participated in the qualitative research.

The pilots have been very successful. They have demonstrated a positive impact on the staff who have participated in them. Staff feel better supported and many can point to improvements in wellbeing, morale, confidence, professional practices, retention and absences.

¹ Reflective practice in homelessness services: An introduction – Homeless Link 2014

Generally the pilots were delivered efficiently and effectively and were seen as very worthwhile. However, there are a number of learning points from them which should be considered before any further supervision projects are rolled out.

There are several recommendations going forward, with perhaps the most important being that supervision should be continued in pilot services and further rolled out to those that have not had access so far. The impact observed by staff and management is significant. Furthermore, to withdraw supervision now would be detrimental to staff morale, the opposite effect to that intended.

Overall Impressions

Staff, Service Managers and Area Managers are all very positive about supervision. Indeed, it has confounded the expectations of some of the participants and their managers. Not to be underestimated is the impact the pilots had on staff member's relationship with their employer. Initial cynicism and reluctance has largely been overcome and staff are grateful for the support they have received. As one participant commented, **"It is nice to feel that Riverside cares about you."**

