**Maintaining your ongoing learning and development**



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You can use this resource to help workers take practical steps to maintain their ongoing learning and development and discover the skills and habits they need to experience learning as a lifelong and life-wide exercise. Although this learning resource has been designed to enable workers develop knowledge to promote good practice in all their work, they may find it particularly helpful if they are undertaking, or about to undertake, a Scottish Vocational Qualification (SVQ) in Social Services and Health.

You can download the app here:

<http://learningzone.workforcesolutions.sssc.uk.com/course/view.php?id=38>

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**Introduction**

“Intellectual growth should commence at birth and cease only at death”

**(Albert Einstein)**

Wise words from one of the great minds of the 20th century and a call to action for everyone to make lifelong learning their expectation, rather than an exception.

In this learning resource, we will explore various aspects of the knowledge and skills you will need in order to continue to develop and learn new things and continue to be effective social service worker:

* maintaining your learning and development
* becoming a reflective learner
* planning and recording your learning
* accessing and using support
* keeping up to date.

You can work through each of these topics in turn, or you can jump straight to the topics you want to work through by tapping the topic title above.

Each topic combines providing knowledge with some activities for you to carry out. Please take the time to do all of the activities. Remember, what you get out of this depends on what you put in!

Although this learning resource has been designed to enable you develop knowledge to promote good practice in all your work, you may find it particularly helpful if you are undertaking, or about to undertake, a Scottish Vocational Qualification (SVQ) in Social Services and Health. In conjunction with the other apps in this series, it contributes to knowledge that you will require to complete SVQ’s. For example more information about equality and diversity can be found in the Principles of Care Good Practice app.

It’s been proven time and again, that the most effective learning we do is learning we apply in the real world as soon as possible. So, in this resource, most of the activities will ask you to carry out tasks in your workplace and discuss the outcomes with your supervisor/assessor/mentor and/or line manager.

We will provide the resources you’ll need and you will have the option to do some of the work on your tablet, or you will be able to print the resources out and complete the activity without the IPad. We’ll provide help with this along the way.

We hope you find this resource interesting, challenging and enjoyable. But, above all else, we hope you learn something you didn’t know before you started reading.

**Maintaining your development**

Maintaining your own ongoing learning and development is vital to improving the way you support service users and carers, develop yourself and your career, and make the best possible contribution to the work of your organisation. The information in this learning resource will enable you to look at how you can develop yourself and use your learning, your organisation and other resources to improve your knowledge, skills, understanding and use of the value base. You will look at how important it is to take responsibility for your own learning and development, to work towards becoming a reflective learner and practitioner, and to record and plan your development. You will also look at using the support of supervision, mentoring and coaching, and the importance of keeping up-to-date and networking.

**Taking Responsibility for your own development**

Workers in care and support services do important and often difficult jobs. You should expect to receive induction and training in the essential areas of your work from your employer. Also as part of your commitment to service users, your organisation and your own career development and fulfilment, YOU have a part to play in maintaining your learning and development, taking responsibility for optimising your learning and development as a way of ensuring that your practice is as good as it can be. The SSSC Codes of Practice for Social Service Workers and Employers state these responsibilities:

**Codes of Practice**

* As a social service worker, you must be accountable for the quality of your work and take responsibility for maintaining and improving your knowledge and skills.
* As a social service employer, you must provide training and development opportunities to enable social service workers to strengthen and develop their skills and knowledge.

What does this really mean? You can undertake learning and development in a number of ways many of which will be explored further in this app. These include:

* on the job learning
* supervision, mentoring and coaching
* short courses, either internal or external to your organisation
* formal qualifications
* discussion with colleagues
* informal learning e.g. reading books and researching internet websites
* participating in conferences, events and workshops
* participating in networks and forums
* secondment and job-shadowing opportunities
* reflection and thinking about practice.

It’s very tempting to take the view that continuing your learning and development should be down to your employer or manager but, there are real benefits to you taking control of your own learning:

* improves your practice and contribution to the lives of service users
* broadens your skills and knowledge
* enables you to cope with change
* improves your career prospects
* gives you greater job satisfaction
* contributes to enabling you to meet registration requirements
* enables you to support and develop other workers.

It can be daunting knowing where to start, but there are tools and frameworks in place to help you with this like the Continuous Learning Framework.

|  |
| --- |
| **Activity**Before going any further, it’s often helpful to have some sense of what your starting point is. You should refer to and complete the Skills and Abilities personal checklist **(Appendix 1)**. You can then discuss this with your manager/mentor if you choose. |

**The Continuous Learning Framework**

An important tool which you and your organisation can use to enhance learning and development is The Continuous Learning Framework (CLF). This emphasises the importance of developing reflective learning and practice.

The CLF Aims:

* to improve the quality of outcomes for people using social services by supporting the workforce to be the best they can be
* to highlight the shared commitment required from social service and their employers to lifelong learning and continuous improvement that’s already established in the SSSC Codes of Practice for Social Service Workers and Employers.

The CLF:

* sets out what people in the social service workforce need to be able to do their job well now and in the future and what employers need to do to support them
* is for everyone working in social services in Scotland in the public, private and voluntary sectors and those involved in their education, training and development.

For more information on the CLF and how you can use it to guide your learning and development follow this link:

<http://www.continuouslearningframework.com/>

|  |
| --- |
| **Activity**As you can see the CLF has a key role in supporting social service workers in maintaining their learning and development. We’d like you to read through the Personal Capabilities, which you’ll find on the CLF website, and complete use these to help you think about what your personal learning plan might look like.You should complete the Personal Learning Plan **(Appendix 2)** and discuss it with your supervisor/mentor/line manager. |

**Becoming a reflective learner**

**Reflective learning and Practice**

“We learn from our experience… if we reflect upon our experience”.

**John Dewey (1993)**

Reflection is the process of thinking about every aspect of your learning and practice including identifying where and how they could be improved. This is especially important in providing care and support where what you do depends not just on your knowledge and skills but how you apply these in a multitude of different situations.

Put simply, this section encourages you to think and reflect on both your learning and your actions. It encourages you to take a reflective approach to your learning and to think before you act, when you are in action and after your actions, to develop the habit of asking yourself questions rather than learning passively and acting impulsively. This can make the world of difference to the service people receive from you, and reflects many aspects of personalisation in terms of meeting individual needs and wishes.

Both formal and informal supervision and discussion play an important part in developing reflective skills, but you must also develop the habit of self-reflection as an important tool in your development.

It is important to realise that your background, experiences and beliefs will have an impact on your self-reflection. You may find it helpful to take some time to think about the values and beliefs that are important to you, and how your background and experience has affected these:

Reflection helps to:

* explore and analyse and make sense of your learning and experience
* gain fuller understanding
* examine your feelings
* review the outcomes of your learning and actions
* compare with previous experiences and situations
* explore what you may have done differently
* enable you to transfer learning from one situation to another
* develop your confidence and competence
* plan for and improve future work.

Through the reflective process you can build more skilled and knowledgeable approaches to your practices. The reflective process is continuous and is illustrated in the diagram below, beginning with reflecting on an action, situation or learning experience, progressing to new understanding and meaning, which then affects how you act and use your learning in the future.

**Trying out Reflection**

The best way to understand reflection is to try it out for your-self.

|  |
| --- |
| **Activity**Think about one or two events in your life. We want you to describe the event or role and what it involved (e.g. responsibilities/tasks). Then try to identify the skills and knowledge gained as a Result, and provide examples of each.You can use this form to record your work. When you have completed this activity, discuss it with your supervisor/mentor/line manager. |

**Transferring learning from one situation to another**

One of advantages of becoming a reflective practitioner is the ability to transfer skills, knowledge and/or attitudes that were learned in one situation to other situations. If you did not transfer some learning from one situation to another then every new experience would also be a totally new learning situation. You would be starting from scratch every time. Transferring learning doesn’t always come naturally, as the following examples illustrate.

* Among a group of new social service workers several lacked the confidence to perform the simplest domestic task at work and lacked the confidence to converse with service users. In their applications and interviews they all demonstrated that they had skills in their home settings and the ability to form meaningful relationships with people in their family and previous work settings. Essentially there had been little or no transfer of knowledge and skill from the home and family situation or from previous work settings.
* Similarly, in further education, lecturers often comment that knowledge and skills learned at school or through previous experience are not transferred to new learning situations. Reflective practice helps you gain the confidence to appreciate the benefits of your prior learning and experience in dealing with new situations.

**Planning and recording your learning**

As essential part of your development as a care and support worker is to undertake learning to enhance your knowledge and skills, and to regard this as part of a continuous and lifelong process. In this section consideration is given to ways in which planning for and recording your development can contribute to the learning process. This is done through:

* your personal and professional development plan
* your learning logs, to include the reflective journal or log already discussed and a summary log, which may be used to support your achievements and your registration
* your performance development review undertaken with your line manager at specific intervals e.g. annually.

There can be considerable overlap between these with, for example, your personal and professional plan and logs contributing to your performance development review. For the sake of clarity they are however considered separately.

**Personal and professional development plan**

Every worker should develop, with the support of their line manager / supervisor a personal and professional development plan which details plans for development and change over a specified period of time. The plan should be updated at intervals e.g. annually when you should record how the objectives of the plan have been achieved, any new objectives you need to add and any other changes that need to be made.

You could use the CLF, especially the section on personal capabilities , to help you to write broad goals and more detailed objectives for your development.

**Learning Logs**

To get into the habit of reflective learning and practice it is useful to keep a reflective log. What do you think you might include in this log?

The learning log should include reflections about practice actions and situations and about other learning experiences you had e.g. workshops, training days, books etc. You could use the categories of the reflective cycle to structure your reflections and present them in the same table form as the reflective exercise. You may want to record reflections about practice separately from reflections about other learning experiences, or even keep two separate logs.

A more formal record of learning has been developed by SSSC as a means of detailing learning and development for the purposes of continuing registration. Such a record should be kept by every social services worker to detail their lifelong learning and continuous professional development.

Please access MySSSC (<https://my.sssc.uk.com/SequencePortal/Login.aspx>) to view the SSSC PRTL (Post Registration Training and Learning) Record of Achievement.

**Personal and Development Review**

At specified times. Usually once or twice a year, every employee should have the opportunity formally to review their progress and performance. This process has various titles ranging from ‘Annual Appraisal’ to ‘Performance and Development Review’. This should take place face to face with your line manager / supervisor:

During your performance Review Meeting you should:

* review the goals and objectives established in your personal and professional development plan
* agree and record achievements against these, as well as identifying any barriers you encountered
* review any objectives not achieved and whether these should be carried over into your next plan
* review your performance against the value base and your organisation’s ethos and requirements
* agree new goals and objectives jointly for the forthcoming year and record these on a revised personal and professional development plan
* discuss specific actions and resources required to meet objectives
* agree achievable and realistic timescales for completion
* identify and discuss your personal career aspirations and how these may be progressed
* record the information on your organisation’s record form. One copy should be given to you and another kept by Human Resources.

(adapted from material provided by Voluntary Service Aberdeen).

**Appendix 4** is an example of an Annual Performance Review Record.

**Accessing and using support**

**Supervision**

Every care and support worker, including you, has the right to receive supervision. Those who use care services have the right to receive their help and support from properly supervised staff. This is clearly reflected in the National Care Standards (NCS). For example the NCS for care homes for children and young people state:

You can be assured that staff and volunteers are properly supervised and appraised and have access to advice and support (Standard 7)

It is also reflected in the National Occupational Standards (NOS).

Your need to know and understand your role and the role of others in evaluating and developing your skills and knowledge through supervision and appraisal or other arrangements (SCDHSC033; knowledge, January 2014)

These standards place a responsibility on employers to ensure that appropriate systems of supervision are in place, and upon you to make use of supervision opportunities so that you can reflect upon and improve your practice.

Read this hand out on supervision before reading on.

**What can make a difference to the quality of supervision?**

For supervision to be good quality and to be successful in achieving the development of individual workers and the objectives of the organisation, there are some basic requirements that supervision should meet:

* **It should occur on a regular basis -** Supervision should ideally be scheduled on a planned basis. The interval between sessions may vary from a week to a month, or longer sometimes, but whatever interval is defined, it should not be subject to sudden and unexpected variations.
* **It should be reliable and have high priority -** Sessions should not be cancelled, postponed or rescheduled without very good reason. Sadly, supervision sessions, especially with staff in position of little authority, often receive los priority and are the first thing to be affected when ‘something important’ happens. Remember, supervision is your right; it is a requirement of national regulations and standards.
* **There should be an agenda -** There should be a way for each of the people who are giving or receiving supervision to contribute to and work to an agenda of some sort. This might take the form of a pre-printed organisational format or one that is devised for this particular supervision.
* **There should be an agreed time -** Sufficient time needs to be allocated in advance so that there is enough time to explore the items on the agenda in sufficient depth. There should be time for reflection and no one should feel they are being rushed through sessions.
* **It should be confidential -** The nature and boundaries of confidentiality should be understood. Whilst much of your discussion should be confidential, some information shared in supervision may have to be shared with others in the organisation. You may have to remind yourself of this.

**Mentoring and Coaching**

A mentor ‘provides support, advice and guidance in a relationship which is confidential, open and non-judgmental and where the mentor listens and asks questions which promote the mentee to reflect on their own development. Mentoring is not about championing the mentee’s cause, or solving their problems, or telling them what to do. Mentoring must be separate from the roles of line manager and assessor. Coaching and counselling should not play any significant role within mentoring’. (Morton, 2003)

**Mentoring** is an increasingly useful tool for supporting personal and professional development. It has tended to describe a relationship in which a more experienced person uses their greater knowledge and understanding of the work or workplace to support the development of a more inexperienced person. Anyone can be a mentor if they have something to pass on and the skills, time and commitment to do it. The origin of the word comes from the Greek myth where Odysseus entrusts the education of his son to his friend Mentor.

While the mentoring role is different from the role of line manager and assessor, and often presents a useful way for workers to gain support outside the regulated relationships that exist in their organisation, the Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) Mentor Guidance indicates that there are situations where a mentor may also be a line manager, supervisor, trainer, or SVQ Assessor. It is very important in these circumstances to recognise the differences in roles and goals existing in the same relationship.

**Coaching** is a tool that is increasingly used for supporting personal and professional development. It may form part of supervision or more usually be used as a separate form of support for workers. The aim is to facilitate the individual’s learning and development.

**CIPD** (Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development) defines coaching as developing a person’s skills and knowledge so that their job performance improves, hopefully leading to the achievement of the organisation’s objectives, It targets high performance and improvement at work, although it may also have an impact on an individual’s private life. It usually lasts for a short period and focuses on specific skills and goals.

The table below, adapted from Alred et al (1998), highlights the differences between mentoring and coaching, though they often overlap.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Mentoring** | **Coaching** |
| Ongoing relationship that can last for a long time | Relationship generally has a short duration |
| Can be more informal and meetings can take place as and when the mentored individual needs some guidance and or support | Generally more structured in nature and meetings scheduled on a regular basis |
| More long term and takes a broader view of the person. Often known as the ‘mentee’ but the term client or mentored person can be used | Short-term (sometimes time bounded) and focused on specific development areas/issues |
| Mentor usually passes on experience and is normally more senior in organisation | Not generally performed on basis that coach needs direct experience of clients formal occupational role |
| The focus is on career and personal development | Focus generally on development And issues at work |
| Agenda is set by the mentored person with the mentor providing support and guidance to prepare them for future roles | Agenda focused on achieving Specific, immediate goals |
| Revolves more around developing the mentee professionally | Revolves more around specific Development areas/issues |

**Keeping up to date**

**Accessing information**

Good decisions and good practice depend to a great extent on good information. An important part of your learning and development is the ability to access information you need but you can also enhance your learning by accessing information yourself from a variety of sources. The internet is often a very good source of information as are the media, books and information sheets.

**Lessons from research**

Practice can be enhance and improved by implementing the findings of research. Research into what works and what doesn’t work can help you to develop evidence-based practice and contribute to reflective thinking. You can both use research in your practice and contribute to it.

To find out what research may be relevant to your practice you can refer to many websites including the SSKs and SCIE websites and also the websites on the specialist centres in Scotland

**Lessons from inquiries**

There have been many inquiries into social service practice, usually taking place to investigate situations where something has gone wrong. These reports often contain useful findings and recommendations for the improvement of practice.

Accessing training courses, development days and networking opportunities

Training courses and development days present great ways to learn, not only because they can give you access to useful information presented by experienced and knowledgeable people, but also for the discussion and networking opportunities they provide. Your own organisation should provide some of these learning opportunities but there are others that you may be able to access. There are other networking opportunities, most of which also provide evidence of continuing professional development, provided by a number of organisations.

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**Appendix 1 - Skills and Abilities personal checklist**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Skills and abilities** | “I feel confidentabout this” | “I’m OK at this” | “I need todevelop this” |
| Making and using contacts |  |  |  |
| Delegating |  |  |  |
| Coordinating and making arrangements |  |  |  |
| Managing time |  |  |  |
| Deciding on priorities and setting goals |  |  |  |
| Working without supervision |  |  |  |
| Setting and meeting deadlines  |  |  |  |
| Handling a variety of tasks and responsibilities |  |  |  |
| Concentrating |  |  |  |
| Questioning |  |  |  |
| Gathering and remembering large quantities of information |  |  |  |
| Reading quickly |  |  |  |
| Keeping records, filing and retrieving information |  |  |  |
| Advising or counselling |  |  |  |
| Helping people develop themselves |  |  |  |
| Running training sessions or teaching |  |  |  |
| Speaking to meetings |  |  |  |
| Planning, chairing or running a meeting of any kind |  |  |  |
| Making a presentation |  |  |  |
| Expressing appreciation and compliments readily |  |  |  |
| Saying “No” without feeling guilty |  |  |  |
| Asking for help or information |  |  |  |
| Giving constructive criticism |  |  |  |
| Accepting a rejection |  |  |  |
| Stating your views to an authority figure |  |  |  |
| Refusing to allow yourself to be manipulated or “put down” |  |  |  |
| Accepting different opinions |  |  |  |
| Listening intently and accurately |  |  |  |
| Communicating information and opinions in writing |  |  |  |
| Thinking quickly on your feet |  |  |  |
| Explaining difficult concepts or ideas |  |  |  |
| Giving clear instructions |  |  |  |
| Writing minutes |  |  |  |
| Dealing well with the public |  |  |  |
| Speaking on the phone |  |  |  |
| Interviewing  |  |  |  |
| Getting people to work together |  |  |  |
| Negotiating |  |  |  |
| Persuading people |  |  |  |
| Promoting change |  |  |  |
| Accepting change |  |  |  |
| Listening intently and accurately |  |  |  |
| Taking risks |  |  |  |
| Making and carrying out decisions |  |  |  |
| Spotting and solving problems |  |  |  |
| Challenging ideas you find unacceptable |  |  |  |
| Using imaginations |  |  |  |
| Supervising others |  |  |  |
| Judging people’s effectiveness and potential |  |  |  |
| Giving feedback |  |  |  |

**Appendix 2 - Recognition of prior informal learning - Reflective exercise 1**

Reflect on one of the life experiences that you identified on the profiling tool

Experience: Describe the experience, what happened?

Knowledge: What do you know now that you did not know before you had the experience?

Skills: What can you do now that you could not do before you had the experience, or can do better now because of the experience?

Reflections:

What were your feelings and thoughts? What did you do well? What would you do differently? What values did you use?

Application: Think of a situation in which you could apply what you have learned.

**Appendix 3 - Personal development plan**

In the last couple of activities, you’ve mapped out some ideas where you want to go in work and made a note of your aspirations for your life outside work. These are the main components of your career plan.

In this exercise we want you to think about how you are going to find out the specific information you need to make a rational decision about how to achieve your goals.

Things to consider include:

* What do I need to know?
* Where will I find the information?
* Who do I need to speak to?
* Would it be best done face to face or by phone call or email?
* What do I need to ask the specifically?
* Could I “shadow” someone to learn from them?

Use the grid and questions which follow to help you work out some of that detail.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Planned objectives** | **What will I need to achieve my objectives** | **Support required and from who?** | **When will I do this and what is my target date?** |
|  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |
| What else do I want to do? |  | How will I achieve these additional aims? |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |
| Obstacles/constraints to overcome? |  | What other sources of help will I need? |
|  |  |  |

**Appendix 4 - Annual performance review record**

Name:

Position:

Location / Dept.:

Line Manager:

Date of Review:

Review Period:

1. Performance and Achievement of Objectives (Refer to worker’s Personal and Professional Development Plan)

This section should be used to record discussion in relation to:

* the achievement of set objectives and general performance in relation to such objectives
* barriers experienced by the employee to achieve these objectives (resources, timescales, relationships etc.)
* new objectives for the year ahead – record on revised Personal and Professional Development Plan.

**Summary of discussion:**

|  |
| --- |
|  |

2. Core behaviours and value base (these are examples - this section will vary from organisation to organisation)

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Core behaviours** | **Comments** | **Areas for development** |
| People focused |  |  |
| Health and Safety |  |  |
| Learning and Development |  |  |
| Value base and ethos |  |  |
| Dealing with change |  |  |
| Planning and organising |  |  |
| Teamwork |  |  |
| Communication |  |  |
| Use of Resources |  |  |

3. Career Aspirations

This section should be used to discuss career and personal development aspirations

**Summary of discussion:**

|  |
| --- |
|  |

4. Overall comments about this review

**Line manager comments:**

|  |
| --- |
|  |

**Employee comments:**

|  |
| --- |
|  |

Reviewee’s signature:

Date:

Line Manager’s signature:

Date:

This document should be used alongside the Personal and Professional Development Plan.

Adapted from material provided by VSA

**Appendix 5 - Supervision guidance**

Every care and support worker, including you, has the right to receive supervision. Those who use care services have the right to receive their help and support from properly supervised staff. This is clearly reflected in the National Care Standards (NCS). For example the NCS for care homes for children and young people state:

You can be assured that staff and volunteers are properly supervised and appraised and have access to advice and support. (Standard 7)

It is also reflected in the National Occupational Standards (NOS):

* identify the supervision and support systems available to you within and outside your organisation
* seek and use appropriate supervision and support to reflect on and identify ways to enhance your practice (HSC33 b)

These standards place a responsibility on employers to ensure that appropriate systems of supervision are in place, and upon you to make use of supervision opportunities so that you can reflect upon and improve your practice.

**But, what is supervision?**

Supervision aims to achieve a number of things and is often misunderstood. It has huge potential for helping with your development as well as ensuring that your organisation achieves its objectives. It may be defined as:

“... a process through which an organisation seeks to meet its objectives through empowering its staff.” (Thompson, 2002)

The tasks of supervision can be examined in relation to four main areas: quality assurance; learning and development; support; shared decision-making. These four areas overlap but, for the sake of clarity, tasks are listed in association with each one.

Quality assurance:

* Monitoring and evaluating work tasks
* Ensuring legal and organisational requirements and policies are adhered to
* Facilitating links with other parts of the organisation, including higher management
* Assessing availability of resources and any issues that arise from this

Learning and development:

* Sharing and facilitating the development and implementation of your personal and professional development plan (this belongs to all four areas of supervision)
* Enhancing and assessing your knowledge, skills, values and understanding
* Promoting reflective practice
* Optimising your practice in relation to personalisation
* Ensuring you and your organisation keep up-to-date and explore new ways of working

Support:

* Enabling you to examine your work / life balance
* Working through difficulties
* Enabling you to discuss areas of work that you find stressful and to deal with stress
* Validating and supporting you both as a person and as a worker
* Ensuring that both as a person and as a worker you are not unnecessarily left to carry difficulties and problems alone

Shared decision-making:

* Promoting team work and collaboration
* Encouraging shared-decision making through team opportunities for support
* Encouraging openness and collective responsibility in a supportive environment

**Successful supervision**

Supervision most often takes place in a one to one situation between worker and supervisor. There are also other forms of supervision, such as group supervision where a manager can deal with issues facing a whole team, and peer supervision where team members offer support and guidance to one another. Supervision may be formal or informal. Informal supervision takes place regularly in the workplace. You have a discussion about practice with your supervisor / line manager as part of your everyday work, you are ‘shown the ropes’ by a more experienced colleague, you discuss a difficult situation on a shift with your supervisor; these are all examples of informal supervision. Supervision is a vital part of a person’s learning and development and individual, pre-arranged supervision is usually the way that organisations fulfil their formal responsibilities to workers.

**Appendix 6 - Sources of information**

**The Social Services Knowledge Scotland website**:

[www.ssks.org.uk](http://www.ssks.org.uk)

Social Services Knowledge Scotland (SSKS) has been developed as a single integrated point of access for information and learning resources to help you unlock knowledge for practice. On the SSKS website you can take advantage of the free resources available.

**Social Care Institute for Excellence**:

[www.scie.org.uk](http://www.scie.org.uk)

SCIE’s purpose is to collect and synthesise up-to-date knowledge about what works in social care. It hosts ‘Social Care On-line’ (www.scie-socialcareonline.org.uk ), an extensive database of social care information up-dated daily, and SCIE Social Care TV (www.scie.org.uk/socialcaretv ). Be careful if you are using these websites and working in Scotland since the information is often focussed on services and legislation in England. On the other hand a lot of the information is transferrable and useful to all social service workers.

**Open Learn - The Open University**:

[www.open.ac.uk/openlearn](http://www.open.ac.uk/openlearn)

Open Learn provides a range of free learning materials and supporting forums from

the Open University ranging from units to help you with studying, to short taster units in a wide range of subjects. Available courses include ‘Learning, thinking and doing’ (T205), ‘Learning from audio-visual material’... (D208), ‘Social Problems: who makes them?’ (D218), and ‘Psychology in the 21st Century’ (DSE212).

The Open University also provides many fee-paying courses including those progressing to a degree or diploma e.g. the Degree in Social Work and Diploma in Health and Social Care. Go to www.open.ac.uk for more information.

**Learndirect Scotland**:

[www.learndirectscotland.com](http://www.learndirectscotland.com)

Learndirect Scotland provides help to choose from thousands of courses available in

Scotland. The ‘help with...’ section of the website also describes different learning styles to assist you with deciding the best way for you to learn.

**Journals and Newspapers**

There are many journals and newspapers that contain content that can help with your learning and development. These include:

**Community Care Magazine**:

[www.communitycare.co.uk](http://www.communitycare.co.uk)

A weekly magazine of news and information relating to care and support in the UK.

Also has an excellent website with a learning and development section providing up to date information about practice and research.

**Social Caring Magazine**:

[www.socialcareassociation.co.uk](http://www.socialcareassociation.co.uk)

The quarterly journal of the Social Care Association with news and articles about practice.

**The Herald newspaper**:

Daily Newspaper - the ‘Society’ section every Tuesday provides interesting articles that often relate to care and support.

**Appendix 7 – Lessons from research**

**IRISS (Institute for Research and Innovation in Social Services)**:

[www.iriss.org.uk](http://www.iriss.org.uk)

IRISS aims to promote positive outcomes for the people who use Scotland’s social services by enhancing the capacity and capability of the social services workforce to access and make use of knowledge & research for service innovation & improvement. As well as being a partner in the development of SSKS, IRISS has developed a programme of work to embed the use of research and evidence in practice, including free workshops, a ‘Confidence through Evidence’ toolkit and a series of podcasts.

**SCLD (Scottish Consortium for Learning Disability)**:

[www.scld.org.uk](http://www.scld.org.uk)

SCLD’s mission is to work in partnership with people with learning disabilities of all ages and family carers to challenge discrimination and to develop and share good practice. The on-line library is available for anyone in Scotland to borrow resources.

**SIRCC (Scottish Institute for Residential Child Care)**:

[www.sircc,org.uk](http://www.sircc,org.uk)

SIRCC aims to ensure that residential child care staff in Scotland have access to the skills and knowledge they require to meet the needs of children and young people in their care. It operates a library and information service, and publishes the Scottish Journal of Residential Child Care (SJRCC) with articles on policy, practice, training and research.

**STRADA (Scottish Training on Drugs and Alcohol)**:

[www.projectstrada.org](http://www.projectstrada.org)

STRADA works to improve the competence of staff working in the substance misuse field in order that the interventions available locally aid the recovery of those affected by substance misuse. It provides courses, training events and a ‘Community of Practice’ for all staff working in the substance misuse field.

**CJSW (Criminal Justice Social Work Development Centre for Scotland)**:

[www.cjsw.ac.uk](http://www.cjsw.ac.uk)

The CJSW Development Centre is an independent national resource providing a range of services to those working in, or concerned about, criminal and youth justice social work services. It works in partnership with statutory and voluntary sector service providers and with central government to identify, promote, develop and disseminate good practice and management, based on the best available evidence.

**DSDC (Dementia Services Development Centre)**:

[www.dementia.stir.ac.uk](http://www.dementia.stir.ac.uk)

DSDC at the University of Stirling exists to extend and improve services for people with dementia and their carers in Scotland. The electronic library includes research and evaluation reports. Among the helpful project are:

* caring memories life story book project. A caring memories book captures memories and keeps them alive through a weekly activity plan
* design audit tool and design audit certificate providing ways of evaluating and providing dementia-friendly design in care homes, day centres and medical centres.

The centre itself models good design in relation to people with dementia and is worth a visit if you are working in this field.