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# WELCOME ...

to the *Learning Curve* training pack on *Supervision and Leadership* skills.

It is a well-established principle of modern-day management that people are an organisation's most important and valuable resource. How they are supervised and led is therefore a major issue for organisations to consider. This pack is designed to do just that - to explore what is involved in:

- i. supervising staff and helping them to maximise their potential; and
- ii. promoting strong and effective leadership.

The pack examines the basic elements of supervision and locates them firmly in a context of staff development, taking seriously the notion that effective organisations depend for their success on well-supported, well-equipped staff who are committed to doing a good job and achieving the best possible outcomes in the circumstances. Good managers need to be able to work closely with their staff and do all within their powers to enable them to achieve their full potential. This is the essence of supervision.

The pack also goes beyond individual supervision to look at what is involved in the broader process of leadership. This involves motivating not just individuals on a one-to-one basis,

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but also teams, other groups or networks of staff and even whole workforces, by setting a positive tone, creating a helpful and supportive working environment and contributing to the development of an organisational culture in which people are genuinely valued for the contribution they make and are therefore happy to make the commitment necessary to achieve high standards and positive outcomes.

As we shall see, supervision and leadership have a lot in common. They both involve, amongst other things:

- motivating or, better still, inspiring staff;
- helping people to maximise their potential;
- identifying problem areas and tackling them positively;
- creating a positive working environment and a supportive culture; and
- ensuring that the organisation is focused on achieving its current objectives and preparing effectively for the future.

This pack has been written with the aim of helping managers and trainers who are involved in helping existing supervisors and leaders to develop their knowledge, skills and confidence and to prepare others who are considering taking on the role of supervisor or leader. We hope you will find our efforts helpful and we wish you well in tackling the challenges that you will encounter.

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# LEARNING CURVE PUBLISHING

This pack is the second in a series of training and development resources to be developed by *Learning Curve Publishing*, a division of *Avenue Consulting Ltd*. It represents an important step in building up a library of materials to guide and support trainers, staff development officers and others involved in human resource development.

The team behind *Learning Curve Publishing* has considerable breadth and depth of experience in what can broadly be termed the 'human relations' field - training and development; management; psychology; social work and social care; nursing and health care; and organisational development. Our focus is on personal, professional and organisational development.

To find out more about *Learning Curve Publishing* or to keep up-to-date with developments, visit our website at

**[www.avenueconsulting.co.uk](http://www.avenueconsulting.co.uk)**

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# THE AUTHORS

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Following a first career in the Army, Peter worked for twenty-seven years in local government social services, as a practitioner, practitioner/manager and senior manager. Stints with West Sussex, the London Borough of Merton and Kent Councils then saw Peter move to Staffordshire County Council as Operations Director in 1992 to take responsibility for implementing the NHS and Community Care Act 1990. He then took on the role of Director of Social Services in Worcestershire from 1997 to 2001, following local government reorganisation.

A Master's degree in modern history from Balliol College, Oxford, was complemented by a Master's degree in social work from Sussex University, and later an MBA from Roffey Park Management Institute/Sussex University. Peter is a Visiting Research Fellow at Sussex University and an Honorary Research Associate for Staffordshire University.

Peter is co-author (with Terry Scragg) of 'Managing to Care'

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and has contributed to a number of edited works and handbooks. He has contributed to a number of conferences on managing service change, best value, regulation and so on. This training pack has enabled Peter to bring together a number of themes around leadership which he has been interested in and engaged with over a number of years, in particular, an holistic approach to leadership.

Neil Thompson is a Visiting Professor at the University of Liverpool and a Director of *Avenue Consulting Ltd*, a company offering training, consultancy and dispute resolution services to a wide variety of organisations concerned with people and their problems. He has also acted as an expert witness in a number of court proceedings.

Neil has over 80 publications to his name and has been a speaker at conferences and seminars in Britain, Greece, the Netherlands, Canada, the United States and Australia. His books include: *Promoting Equality* (Palgrave, 1998); *Stress Matters* (Pepar, 1999) and *Tackling Bullying and Harassment in the Workplace* (Pepar, 2000). He is also the co-author (with Ian Crompton) of the *Learning Curve* training pack on the Human Rights Act 1998 and, with Ros Harrison, of the packs on *Learning Matters* and *The Intelligent Organisation*.

He is a Fellow of the Royal Society of Arts; the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development; and the Institute of Training and Occupational Learning. He is a member of the

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British Psychological Society; the Academy of Experts; the International Stress Management Association; and the International Work Group on Death, Dying and Bereavement.

Neil holds qualifications in social work; management; training and development; and mediation and alternative dispute resolution, as well as a PhD and a first-class honours degree. He acts as an external examiner to a number of universities and has links with academic and professional colleagues in various countries around the world.

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Peter would wish to thank Kim Bray and Maggie Holloway for expert help in typing the manuscript; his family for their forbearance; and valued colleagues over many years for helping to hone his ideas on this important subject.

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# **DISCLAIMER**

This pack has been researched, prepared and presented in good faith, with all due care and attention. However, no responsibility can be taken for any errors or oversights.

The pack and its contents are intended as a resource to facilitate training and staff development and should not be seen as a definitive statement of employment law. The pack is not a substitute for professional legal advice or guidance and should not be relied upon as such.

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# WHO IS THE PACK FOR?

Actual and aspiring supervisors and leaders, and those involved in training and supporting them, would be the obvious answer, perhaps. This would include:

- team leaders or team managers or others involved in supervising and leading groups of staff (section heads, for example);
- senior managers, both operational and strategic;
- staff in Personnel or Human Resources teams who are responsible for advising others on supervision and leadership matters; and
- councillors, trustees, directors and others involved in policy development, implementation and review.

The pack will be of value in a wide range of organisations across the private, public and voluntary sectors. It is perhaps inevitable that, at times, the authors' public service background will be apparent, but this should not detract from the fact that supervision and leadership are important issues

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across all organisations, regardless of sector or type.

We envisage the pack being used by two main groups of people. First, there will be those whose duties include organising and running training courses, workshops and seminars. This is likely to be either in-house training and development staff, such as training managers, staff development officers and so on, or those who provide training services on a commercial basis, whether individual freelance trainers or employees or associates of commercial training provider companies.

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# INTRODUCTION

## **How to use this pack**

This pack has three primary purposes: i) to introduce you to what is involved in, on the one hand, the process of staff development in general and supervision in particular and, on the other, the art of leadership; ii) to provide materials on which to base training courses and staff development exercises (for example, as part of team development work); and iii) to act as a reference source that you can consult as and when required in the future. We therefore suggest that you read through it quite quickly the first time, to get an overview of the issues and to begin to familiarise yourself with what is involved in it. Next you should work your way slowly and thoroughly through the pack, step by step, making sure you have got to grips with each section before moving on to the next one. In this way you will steadily develop a solid foundation of understanding on which to base your work relating to developing the role of supervisor and leader. Once you have completed this second, more demanding reading of the pack, your work is still not over! You will still need to refer back to the pack from time to time (perhaps quite frequently at first until you get used to using it) as a point of reference.

The pack is specifically designed to be used in this threefold way:

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1. A general introduction and overview - what for many will be an invaluable boost to confidence before planning and running training events;
  2. A fairly detailed guide to planning and running training courses and staff development sessions on supervision and/or leadership skills; and
  3. A reference resource to be consulted as and when required.

Effective staff development and leadership pay dividends for all concerned in terms of:

- Higher standards of work;
- Higher levels of job satisfaction;
- A better working environment or 'climate';
- Fewer mistakes or difficult situations to deal with;
- Clearer procedures and expectations; and
- More and better opportunities for learning.

This pack can therefore play an important role in helping you develop your knowledge and skills in promoting staff development.

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The pack is divided into five main parts. Following this introductory section, Part Two is entitled 'Setting the context', and that is precisely what it sets out to do. It discusses the importance of staff development in general and of supervision in particular, before broadening out to look at what is involved in leadership and how it can be developed in a wide variety of organisations.

Part Three is entitled 'Training and Development' and, within it, you will find various exercises that can be used as the basis of training sessions or staff development activities (for example, as part of staff meetings or 'awaydays'). The exercises are clearly laid out, with guidelines for how they can be used. While inexperienced trainers are likely to feel most comfortable following the guidelines very closely, more experienced trainers may well prefer to adapt and amend as they see fit.

Part Four is the conclusion and here you will find a summary of the main themes underpinning the pack, together with suggestions for further reading, details of relevant organisations and relevant Internet resources.

Part Five is simply a section headed 'Resources', and provides a convenient place for users of the pack to store newspaper or magazine articles or other such relevant materials that could be drawn upon in running training and development activities related to supervision and leadership skills.