

Acting as a role model

How supervisors can demonstrate high standards of professional behaviour and be a role model for staff.

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Supervisors must consistently demonstrate high standards of professional behaviour and should understand the importance of their position in being a role model for their staff.

This includes:

- demonstrating reflective thinking, an openness to personal feedback, and a willingness to learn and develop, including a commitment to self-development
- demonstrating an openness to new ideas and ways of working
- actively promoting and demonstrating an inclusive approach to diversity
- challenging colleagues whose behaviour falls below the public's and the service's expectations

Evidence summary

Role modelling involves a supervisor demonstrating the behaviour that they would like their team members to display.

There is good evidence that suggests there is an association between role modelling and positive team member behaviours, across a range of areas.

These areas include:

- ethics and integrity
- conducting proactive crime investigations
- challenging mental health stereotypes
- helping officers understand the specific skills and attitudes required for effective policing in particular settings

There is also evidence that a supervisor's influence and role-modelled behaviour can make a difference to whether specific groups of staff feel included and valued in the police workplace. Role

modelling has also been identified as a component of transformational leadership (see [Introduction](#)), which evidence suggests is associated with positive outcomes relating to job satisfaction and motivation.

There is some evidence that role modelling may be more effective at influencing behaviour than relying too heavily on other transformational leadership approaches, such as inspirational motivation. Evidence from one study suggested that supervisor role modelling (in the form of well-timed visibility, providing an exemplary model and dealing with problem behaviour in a timely way) could help officers understand the specific skills and attitudes required for effective policing.

The evidence reviewed on role modelling did not specifically focus on demonstrating reflective thinking or openness to new ideas, although limited evidence suggests that these are perceived to be qualities and behaviours demonstrated by good sergeants.

Empirical evidence

Good

Practitioner evidence

Available

Supervisors should demonstrate the behaviours set out in the [competency and values framework](#), which is summarised in the diagram below. This framework is underpinned by the [Code of Ethics](#) and emphasises the importance of supervisors acting as role models to others.

Diagram of behaviours set out in the College of Policing Competencies and Values Framework for policing

Behaviours set out in the College of Policing competencies and values framework for policing

Supporting resources

- [Competency and values framework](#)
- [Code of Ethics](#)

- [Police \(Conduct\) Regulations 2020](#)
- [Police Staff Council joint circular no. 54](#)
- [Continuing professional development \(CPD\)](#)

Tags

Supervision Evidence-based policing Leadership development