

Supporting the delivery of effective investigations

Guideline for supervisors to support delivery of effective investigations.

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This guideline builds on the Effective supervision guidelines but relates specifically to how supervisors should support, encourage and scrutinise investigation.

For supporting and additional information on supervision, see the [Effective supervision guidelines](#).

Supervisors should support the delivery of effective investigations by:

- being **positive role models** and demonstrating good investigative practice
- providing appropriate and **tailored support** to their staff and creating a supportive team culture
- proactively supervising and undertaking regular quality reviews of their team's investigations and **providing meaningful timely feedback**
- ensuring that their staff have appropriate skills to undertake the investigations they are allocated, as well as **facilitating learning** where they need development
- explaining and recording the **rationale behind their decisions** or advice to staff
- actively managing investigators' workloads, case allocation and **wellbeing**
- encouraging staff to take responsibility for identifying their skills and knowledge gaps, and sharing and **signposting knowledge, contacts and training opportunities**
- identifying, valuing and **giving recognition** for good investigative work
- using reviews to **encourage a learning culture**, innovation and the sharing of good practice within the team
- ensuring that the standards of **victim care and contact** have been achieved

Evidence summary

There is moderate evidence that supervision is an important factor in ensuring effective investigations. In research with experienced investigators, supervision and management were most

frequently cited as the factors that stop investigations failing and were identified as being involved in decision-making tipping points, where investigators move from being open-minded to being more focused on verifying the guilt of a suspect.

Research evidence suggests that supervisors can have an impact on their staff through modelling good practice, fair treatment and praise, scrutiny of actions and work, clarity of orders and setting the direction of the unit. The evidence on modelling behaviour suggests that investigators may replicate behaviours that are modelled by their supervisors, including bad practice.

Research suggests that investigators who are treated fairly by their supervisors are more likely to treat others fairly. Evidence shows that supervisor scrutiny can sometimes lead to stress in officers. Occupational stress, in turn, has an impact on investigators by prompting a laying-low approach, suspiciousness and crime fighter orientation (perceiving their role narrowly as fighting crime and law enforcement, rather than dealing with non-crime service issues) as coping mechanisms.

Empirical evidence

Moderate

Practitioner evidence

Available

Supporting resources

Additional information on supervision, materials and supporting resources that will assist supervisors to deliver effective investigations is found in the Effective supervision guidelines.

- [Investigation authorised professional practice \(APP\)](#)
- [Effective supervision guidelines](#)

Tags

Managing investigations Investigation