

Supervision+ – scoring high marks for compliance through supervisor non-technical skills

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Introduction and background

Within the high hazard industries, compliance with process and procedures is a non-negotiable requirement. Supervisors play a key role in fostering and maintaining a compliance culture (the wish to comply), as well as supporting staff in their technical role (the ability to comply). However, supervisors often are selected on the basis of their technical competence alone. There is increasing recognition that supervisors must possess excellent technical skills and be proficient in an array of non-technical skills (NTS), in order to instil the necessary culture for assuring compliant, safe and reliable performance. Technical competence alone will not achieve this.

The role of non-technical skills

Non-technical skills refer to the generic skills that underpin and enhance technical tasks. NTS are consistently shown to underpin the effective delivery of safety-critical roles, especially for supervisors, and hence investment in appropriate training and development of these skills is an important part of the ongoing pursuit of improved compliance – supporting both safety and performance.

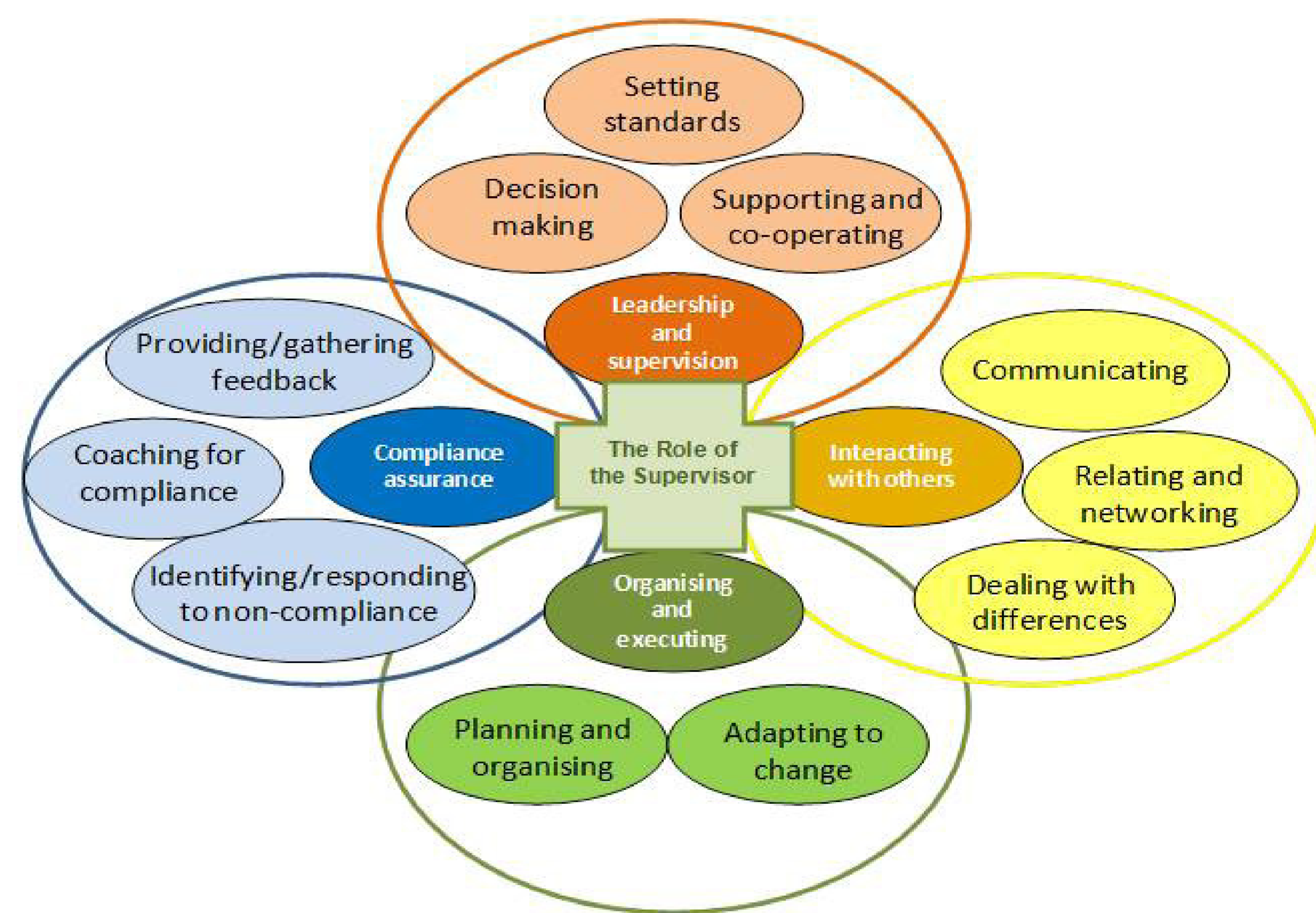
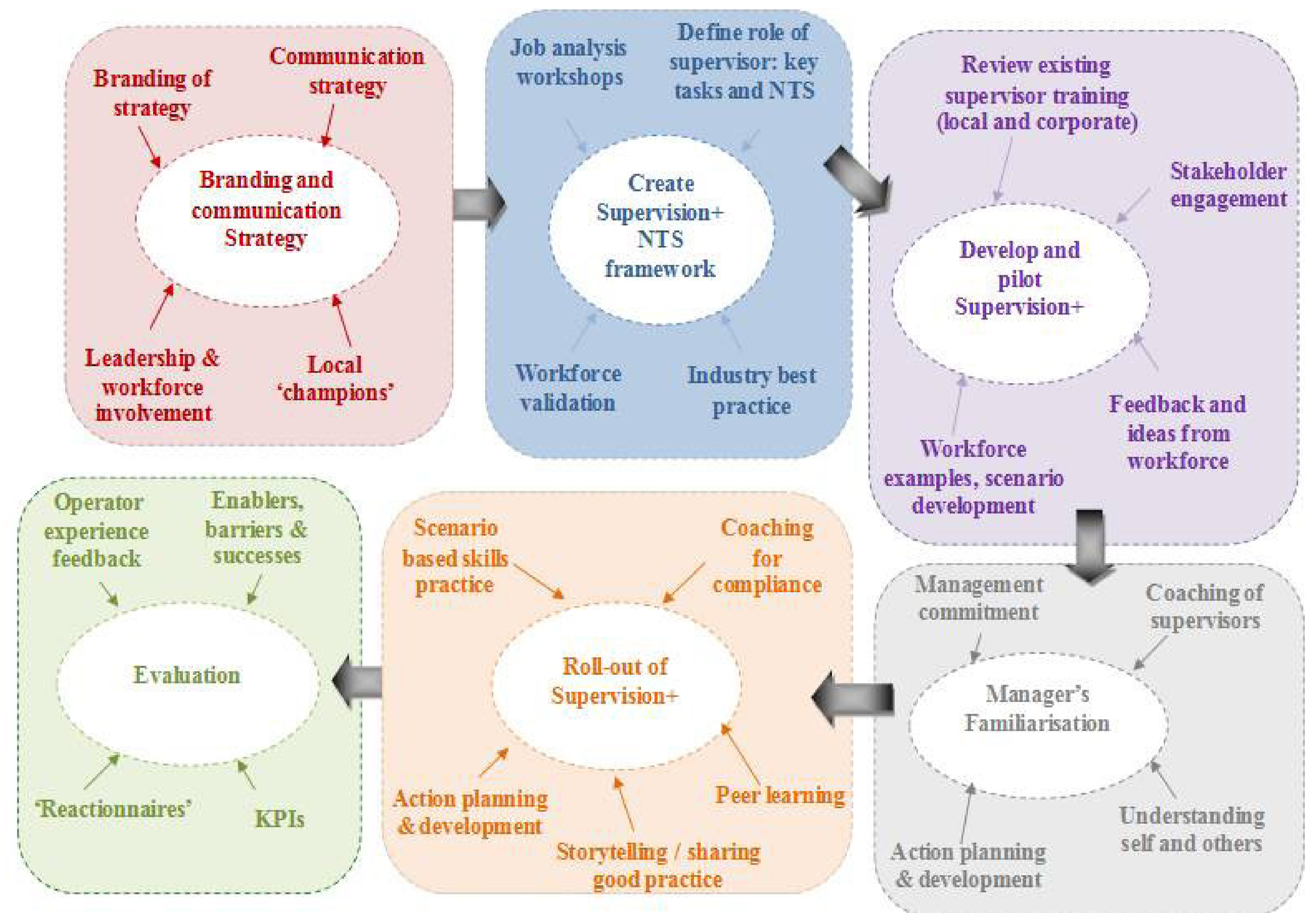
The Licensee's requirements

In recognition of the role supervisors play, and in response to a desire to further improve safety performance within a Licensee Facility, Greenstreet Berman developed a tailored programme called 'Supervision Plus (Supervision+)', to help supervisors develop the required non-technical skills for successful performance and management of procedural compliance.

Developing a non-technical skills programme for supervisors

The programme adopted a phased approach which included:

- Workforce and management engagement, including branding and communication of the programme
- Job analyses to define the role of the supervisor and the core objectives, and identify the key NTS relevant to achieving their objectives
- Development of a bespoke NTS framework that provided a common language to understand and develop key behavioural aspects of supervision for achieving compliant and safe performance (i.e. 'what effective supervision looks like')
- Development, piloting and roll-out of the programme, including a dedicated manager's familiarisation session
- Evaluation of the programme effectiveness, including key success factors



The framework presents the key NTS required for effective supervision upon which the courses were developed and delivered.

Supervision+ framework

The programme recognises that individual supervisors bring their own personal style to the role and hence employ different methods and approaches to compliance assurance, each with varying levels of non-technical skill. Consequently, the focus of the programme was enabling supervisors to identify and recognise their own strengths and areas for development, and supporting this with personal action plans that were developed via dedicated feedback and coaching sessions with their manager.

Benefits

The Supervision+ programme was particularly effective in raising supervisors' self-awareness, especially in relation to their personal working and leadership styles, and how they may be perceived by staff, managers and other colleagues. By having this understanding, supervisors felt more confident in their ability to deal with different personalities and to adapt their communication to motivate and influence, not only for compliance, but for task achievement also.

Supervisors also commented that the course equipped them with the key skills needed to tackle non-compliance more confidently and to identify the reasons for non-compliance, so as to be able to identify solutions to prevent further recurrence. A surprise for a lot of supervisors was the realisation that they do have a role in influencing compliance of those in their team. Interestingly, task-based supervisors often considered issues with non-compliance the responsibility of the line manager, without considering the impact they could have, especially as a first point of contact for such individuals. These supervisors recognising the pivotal role they play is a step in the right direction towards improving compliance rates and even staff's attitudes towards compliance.

