



Appraisal Matters

Autumn

Hello!

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*Appraisal is a funny word
The misinterpretation, can be quite absurd
A performance hurdle, you have to jump?
Or a pile of paperwork, you want to thump?*

*But that is all wrong, it really is, for you.
Appraisal is helpful, should fit you like a comfy shoe*
A supportive session, to help you along
Especially if you work...*

**Let's start with the
*And plan a way
*What are the options
You know you can

See both winning
entries on our
website [HERE!](#)



Well, there's no denying that we continue to live in strange times. Appraisal re-started across the whole Wessex region on 1st April 2021 and business is returning to (and exceeding) normal levels, albeit within the post-COVID operating model of more virtual contact and less in-person meeting. We have a few important things to share in this issue, so please do take a few minutes to have a look. Take care of yourselves.

2021 CONFERENCES: Another successful year

Once again, our annual Conferences have been a big success, which is even more meaningful given that they were held so soon after receiving the news about the planned changes for the Service and for the team we employ/support.

We did a large amount of last minute hard work to re-jig the programme in order to integrate discussion about these changes (read more on page 2) and their implications into the two events, and are proud of ourselves for that.

Most of our appraisers were able to attend one of the two sessions, and will have found it useful and interesting. It was lovely to see so many of you! The slide-sets are available to view on our website now at [Conference 2021](#).

'Appraisal Inspires...' Competition Winners

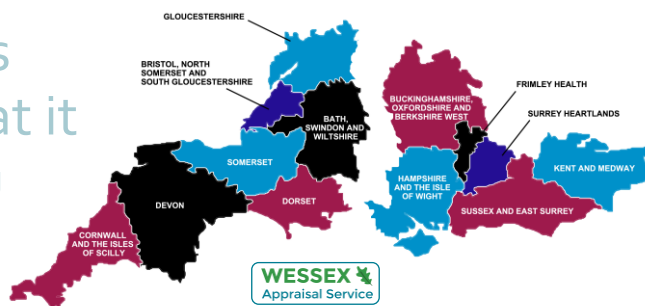
You may recall that in the last Appraisal Matters newsletter, we asked for entries to our 'Appraisal Inspires' competition, with the winners to be shared at the conferences. If you attended a conference, you will already know that the very memorable winning entries were from the fantastic 'Super Poet' **Dr Mark Rickenbach** and the hilarious 'Sue Perappraiser' **Dr Alison Gardiner**. Both have been published to the conference page of our website, to be enjoyed again (and again) at your leisure. This lighthearted segment brought some welcome cheer to our conference and was very much appreciated. They each win £100 of Amazon vouchers for their efforts. Well done to both of you and thank you for taking the time to enter!





NHSEI decommissioning of Wessex Appraisal Service:

What it means for us and what it means for you



Quality Assurance: Revised 'SUPPORTS' for 2021/22

We have re-arranged the order and allocation of points slightly in our **SUPPORTS** QA tool to follow the order that the assessed skills appear in the appraisal summary. On our website, you'll find a revised pdf version for information. In order to achieve 'mastery', it helps to know what you are aiming for, so please re-acquaint yourselves with the tool [HERE](#).

Please Follow Us

It's often easier for us to get messages out to our audience via social media. It means we don't have to fill up your inboxes and saves you having to trawl your emails. We have an amazing [website](#) full of useful information and resources, and we are now on [LinkedIn](#). As ever, we can also be found on [Twitter](#). If you regularly use any of these platforms, please do follow us!



As all of you should now be aware, NHS England and NHS Improvement (NHSEI) has decided to bring all **Wessex NHS GP appraisals** (for GPs in Hampshire and the Isle of Wight (HloW), and Dorset) in-house as of April 2022 as part of its drive to achieve consistency and to align NHS GP appraisals in the South East and South West regions with NHS GP appraisals nationally.

This means that, after fourteen years of exemplary service, of which we are extremely proud, Wessex Appraisal Service will no longer be involved in facilitating NHS GP appraisals beyond the 31st March 2022.

We have been reassured by NHSEI that this is not any reflection on Wessex Appraisal Service - which they acknowledge has worked to the very highest of standards in appraisal. Elsewhere in England, the vast majority of NHS GP appraisals are already managed by in-house NHS teams. Wessex Appraisal Service is the only externally commissioned service – and with the restructuring that split NHSE Wessex, Dorset became only a small part of the South West region, with HloW a slightly bigger part of the South East.

Naturally, we are disappointed by the decision but our priority has to be the doctors that we serve. We will continue to operate as a gold-standard appraisal service to the very last day, as well as for all of the other valued non-NHS contracts that we retain.

It is especially sad that our employed team, who have worked so hard for the Service in support of our appraisers and appraisees,

will all be personally affected by this decision. But don't say goodbye just yet! There will be a formal HR process in due course and some may become part of the new NHSEI teams you'll be dealing with.

For you as appraisers, this transfer means that you will receive new Terms of Engagement, from the separate NHSEI teams in the South East (for HloW), and the South West (for Dorset). Those of you attended either of our two 2021 Conferences in September will have had the opportunity to 'virtually' meet with representatives of those teams, to put your questions to them in person, and hopefully receive some useful answers.

We need to understand your plans as appraisers urgently to take the next steps, so please complete [the EoI survey](#).

This newsletter is not the place to set out every detail of the new arrangement, so instead we will be gathering together a list of FAQs and hope to publish them to our website, and perhaps as a further information sheet/newsletter, as soon as we can. We would encourage all Appraisers to get in touch with any queries, using our [generic email address](#) please, and we will do our best to answer these in due course. Please do bear in mind that we really don't have all the answers ourselves yet and can only share what we know at this time. Thank you all for your support.





CPD remains important, indeed **essential**, to every doctor's growth and development throughout their entire career, but you should be clearly signalling that we have stopped counting credits. The GMC requirement is for all doctors to keep up to date at what they do. A reflective doctor is continually engaged in learning, mainly through realtime interactions with patients and colleagues.

Doctors are trusted to keep up-to-date with learning in their own speciality and fields of interest and to be able to reflect verbally on what they have learned during their appraisal discussion. The expectation is that demonstrating keeping up to date will take a variety of forms. If an appraisee wishes to demonstrate a log of learning, that is absolutely fine but a specific number of hours, modules or topics is not expected and should never be insisted on. Remember – 'First, do no harm!'

Appraisal Meetings: Venue Protocol

Remote meeting is currently the default preference for appraisals as it poses the least infection risk to both parties, and is good for our carbon footprint so it is likely to remain so for the duration of this appraisal year. However, the location and mode of appraisal should be the APPRAISEE'S choice, as long as whatever they suggest is practical and safe, and accommodates both parties in terms of observing COVID safety. Appraiser home settings for in-person appraisals are not recommended by the Service, unless you have an appropriate office and business premises indemnity insurance in place.

Appraisals that may not be suitable for QA: Let us know if you carry one out

We recently had a Significant Event where a very difficult appraisal, which was randomly chosen to be QA'd, unsurprisingly scored well below acceptable levels. Subsequent investigation revealed that it would have been better if this appraisal had not been selected for QA, and the score has now been removed from the record of the appraiser involved.

We learned that some difficult appraisals are unsuitable for QA and some should trigger additional support for the appraiser and appraisee. In future, if you carry out an appraisal which, for whatever reason, seems to be a bit of a challenge and/or less than 'typical', especially if it has affected your ability to write it up appropriately, please notify your Senior Appraiser of your concern **as soon as possible afterwards**. They will take appropriate action from there. We'll review the circumstances and potentially mark the appraisal on our system as being unsuitable for QA. This will prevent you getting a lower-than-ideal score and comments that are not helpful. We will also have advance notice and context to enable us to put appropriate support in place and understand any appraisee feedback we may receive..

Appraisal Fee Uplift

Reminder to invoice us for monies owing

You should be aware of the 3% uplift to appraisal fees, backdated to the 1st April 2021. Please remember to work out what you are owed in arrears and add it to your next invoice as a separate itemised amount. We are currently negotiating with our non-NHS commissioners and hope to pass on the same increase in due course.



Miad QA

Please complete the [appraiser survey](#)!

We have commissioned independent consultants **Miad** to complete an external QA exercise for us, to review our policies, processes and systems. This is underway now. As this is your last chance to give feedback about your experience of being part of the Wessex Appraisal Service, please do so.

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AND THE FELLOWS!

Nkoli, Sarah, Julia and Colleen



For all our doctors, as always, the Appraisal Service can be a safe place to talk to someone in confidence. If you are feeling at all in need of help, please get in touch at appraisal.wx@hee.nhs.uk marking it CONFIDENTIAL, and we will get back to you.

What Have Our Fellows Been Up To?

Our four Fellows have completed their joint project into missing feedback on appraisal in the SW/Dorset for the 2020/21 appraisal year. When the data was analysed by Jools and the Fellows, it was clear that the appraisee ratings for appraiser skills had shifted away from the extremely positive 'Very Good' and were grouped far more in the categories of 'Good' and 'Satisfactory' than the original responders. Does this perhaps mean that those who don't give feedback are more neutral? Does it show the impact of faded recollections and therefore further emphasise the importance of gathering feedback as soon as possible after an appraisal meeting? The Fellows presented their main findings at our Conference, and the slide-set is saved to our website. Click on the link [What Do The Hidden Half Think?](#) to view the key findings of the project and decide for yourself.



A personal 'Thank You' from Susi

"I would like to take this chance to thank everyone who has been involved in Wessex Appraisal Service over the last 14 years, from the appraisers out in the field and the Senior Appraisers who mentor them, to the fantastic core office team who are the glue that keeps everything together and running as smoothly as it can. We need your support now more than ever to ensure that we maintain the very high standards of the Service while we negotiate this period of change.

We are seen externally as outstanding because your hard work and dedication to your doctors as appraisers has changed lives for the better.

I am so proud of you all, and of the Service we have provided, and wish you the very best for the future, with all the opportunities that will bring."

... Susi

Appraiser Professional Support Unit

We understand that anyone can feel overwhelmed at any time. If you would like support, advice, or guidance and/or need someone to just listen in confidence, don't struggle alone - please contact our APSU via email at Appraisal.WX@hee.nhs.uk and we will get back to you as soon as we can. You'll also find lots of resources on our [website](#).



Useful Contacts for NHS
England South Wessex:

Responsible Officer SE (Hants/IOW): Shahed Ahmad englandwessexpcp@nhs.net
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