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New Appraisers moving into NHSEI

This is just to reassure you, if you are a new appraiser, who has not yet completed three appraisals, that NHSEI know that you are new and will continue to prioritise your Senior Appraiser support and QA until you are fully up-to-speed and confident in your summaries.

Well, here it is! Our Final Newsletter

This is the final newsletter for all our doctors and appraisers before the **Health Education England (HEE) Wessex Appraisal Service**, as we know it, comes to an end. Most of the employed Administrative and Senior Appraiser team will be TUPE'd over into new roles in NHS England on 1st April while, as the Deputy Service Lead and the Regional Director, Steph and I have been told we will be put on notice of redundancy, although that process still has some time to run.

Our smaller Commissioners wanted to continue commissioning us to facilitate their appraisals, so I have set up a private company [**Wessex Appraisal Service Ltd**] to take on those Service Level Agreements and maintain our website. I hope you will continue to find the resources on there useful. If you'd like to be added to the mailing list going forward, please email susi.caesar@wessexappraisal.org to let me know.

This is a sad moment for me and for the team, but also an incredibly proud moment. It is good to reflect on all that we have achieved together – we've put some highlights together on page 2!



Susi



Steph



Gill



Jools



Chris



Grace

Fifteen years of growth, from the first pilot of Deanery-led appraisal services for Dorset Primary Care Trust in 2007-2008, to facilitating over 2,600 appraisals annually for a wide variety of designated bodies and independent doctors in the UK and overseas in 2021-22.



Facilitating a total of **over 31,000** high-quality, developmental appraisals focused on the needs of the doctor that supported and empowered them to remain in the profession and deliver better patient care.

Always **meeting our key performance indicators**, ensuring our appraisals reached all our doctors, and satisfying our commissioning bodies with our quality and cost-effectiveness.

Innovating with the University of Winchester, since 2012, on innovative medical education qualifications, helping 64 appraisers gain a Postgraduate Certificate, 10 gain a Diploma, and 3 (to date) gain an MA in Medical Education (Appraisal) – with two more submitted and three working towards their Masters.

Presenting at numerous national and international conferences, including RCGP, FMLM, DEMEC, IAMRA 2017 (London, Keynote Speaker) and 2019 (Chicago) and Ottawa ICME 2014 (Ottawa), 2018 (Abu Dhabi) and 2020 (Kuala Lumpur).

Engaging with **continuous quality improvement** such that we have developed resources and contributed to national appraiser training, QA and appraisal assessment tools, most recently the SUPPORTS QA tool for the appraisal 2020 process.

Supporting four amazing GP Appraisal **Fellows** in 2021-22 and watching them grow into their leadership and research roles and present at RCGP, FMLM and The Wounded Healer conferences.

Outstanding regional feedback in the RCGP Appraisal Survey (2019) which showed that appraisals were better received and more highly valued in Wessex than anywhere else in England.

Four valuable **external quality assurance** exercises, and one NHS England internal verification visit, which celebrate the outstanding service we have always provided to our commissioners. The most recent is the one by Miad featured in this Newsletter, which reported in February 2022.

Using our **reputation** for excellence, and skill in innovation and continuous quality improvement, to lead the way in the design and implementation of the medical appraisal 2020 process for the COVID-19 pandemic.



All doctors across the UK are benefitting from your feedback as doctors and as appraisers. We have always tried to live up to our tagline "Keeping it personal, making it real", and your input keeps us grounded. That has never been more important than now, as we continue to try to shape the world of medical regulation and appraisal for beyond the pandemic.



How to avoid Conflict of Interest/Perception of Bias

Please check all your allocations every year for a new Conflict of Interest (Col) - or any inappropriate match. In big federated practices, it will be inevitable that you sometimes work alongside people you will be appraising, but they must not be your employer or line manager or GP (or you theirs) as these carry a clear risk of a Col. Use your professional judgement and, if in doubt, request a reallocation. Remember too that it is perfectly normal to ask for a reallocation for practical reasons. For example, if your day to appraise is their duty day it will be hard to find a mutually agreeable time to meet.

External Quality Assurance Report Complete

This is our fourth external **Quality Assurance Report**. It was delayed in 2020 by the pandemic and finally completed in February 2022. Please do have a look at the full report on the website [HERE](#). We were delighted that our commissioners were so positive about the Service, that an appraisee described one of our appraisals as a '**metaphorical hug**' and, although the portfolios reviews showed that our doctors are as stressed as elsewhere, all the appraisers scored 20/20 on their Excellence tool for the summaries and PDPs.

Appraisal with WAS is like a “metaphorical hug”!

Perhaps the highlight of the report for me is embedded in it, on page 31, and shown here to the right, where the external assessors state that their report indicates that their positive appraisal discussion has fortified them to remain in the profession. This is something to be EXCEPTIONALLY proud about! Well done and thank you to everyone who contributed to the surveys or interviews!

"It is also apparent that, for a few appraisees, their positive appraisal discussion has meant that they have remained in their roles and been able to focus on a revised way forward, rather than leaving the profession."

Continuity of Appraiser

Just a quick reassurance that, throughout the transition of the Appraisal Service, we have continued to prioritise continuity of appraiser. We think this is the best way to support our doctors and minimise the disruption to them. If you have signed up with NHSEI and/or Wessex Appraisal Service Ltd. you should be having the same appraiser/ appraisee if you have not already met three times. Check your allocations and let us know if anyone has been missed. If you have good reason to think a fourth appraisal would be supportive, please let the NHSEI team know.

Improving PDP Goals



Dr Sarah Burns has researched factors that influence the quality and real-world impact of the **PDP goals set in appraisal**. She built on Dr Karen Gregory's work about engagement factors to help us develop a new PDP template with better question prompts to coach the appraisee through creating goals that are both meaningful and useful to them. You can find the new PDP template on our website under **Resources:General** or download it **HERE**.

Our Four Fabulous Fellows

Dr Nkolika Anyabolu looked at whether **Appraiser Diversity Reflects The Population They Serve**. She has shown that doctors in Wessex are considerably more diverse than the patient population in Wessex, but that appraisers are not as diverse as the doctors they appraise. We speculate that this is an age-related effect, that the older doctors, who are more likely to be appraisers, are less diverse than the generations coming through, but this requires further work. Representation matters in leadership and has been shown to enhance feelings of positive self-worth in every society as a whole. Thus we are committed to ensuring that doctors from a diverse range of backgrounds see a diverse range of role models in appraisal, so that they feel comfortable coming forward and applying. We are also committed to ensuring that our selection processes remain open and transparent, and the initial shortlisting is anonymous so that the lay assessor has no idea about age, sex, gender, race, or any other protected characteristic when scoring the applications.

Appraiser Diversity



Wellbeing



Dr Colleen Wylie looked at **wellbeing** in appraisal documentation. Interestingly, the majority of appraisees score themselves 8/10 when asked 'On a scale of 1-10, how are you?' Despite that, 61% of GPs write purely negative comments about their wellbeing. Workload, workforce, juggling childcare, and stress are the most common themes having a negative impact on wellbeing. 50% of GPs mentioned some form of self-care, mostly some kind of exercise. This new question seems to be a good prompt for GPs to consider ways to improve their wellbeing as well as an opportunity for appraisers to signpost GPs to support.

Dr Julia Hempenstall's survey was about **appraiser attitudes to, and confidence with, coaching in appraisals**. Thanks to all who responded! Most of you (c.60%) felt confident in coaching appraisees, and some reported using coaching in every appraisal. As GPs, you use coaching/mentoring/motivational interviewing techniques regularly with patients and appraisees, but not having a formal qualification can inhibit confidence for some appraisers, or prevent them naming what they do as coaching, even around the goal setting in the PDP. Coaching conversations were most reported to happen during periods of transition for appraisees, eg. retirement, career dilemmas, and changing work patterns. Julia has produced an FAQs sheet to provide more tips on how to bring brief interventions into your appraisals – download it **HERE** or find it in our **website resources**.

Coaching in Appraisal



Improving Sustainability

Now that we know how effective remote appraisals by video-conferencing platform can be, we will continue to use them because of their efficiency and the benefits for the planet.

It will be doctor's choice – so if the doctor specifically wishes to meet in person, the appraiser will facilitate that for them. However, Appraisers are entitled to ask for a reallocation if their personal circumstances mean that they feel uncomfortable to meet face to face.



Seed Paper Thank You!

We have again this year decided to send seed papers out to all our Appraisers, to serve as a 'Thank You and Goodbye' card from us all. Jools has designed something eyecatching – a mighty oak tree to represent the Service, and lots of pairs of oak leaves to represent Appraisers with their Appraisees! Just plant your paper in a pot, or directly in your garden, and water in, then watch the seeds grow. We hope the flowers will bring you pleasure and remind you that all your hard work and care for your doctors is much appreciated.



All that remains is for me to say a huge “Thank You” (again) and wish you much joy and happiness in the future. Stay well!

Susi



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