

Guidance to appraisers regarding supportive appraisal discussions

We have received feedback from various appraisers and appraisees that doctors are not clear about some aspects of the appraisal meeting. At times it is mainly seen as a functional signing off process required by the GMC; but the intention of appraisals – to be an opportunity to reflect on achievements, challenges and plans for the future – are not apparent.

Giving more prominence to this aspect of appraisals is very helpful to appraisees as feedback shows; and is also in keeping with the CMO guidance to continue to take a wellbeing approach to the appraisal discussion. The current new appraiser and refresher training sessions have been updated and we want to let you know how we support this approach of appraisers to the appraisal meetings in Scotland.

As an appraiser your role is to facilitate a doctor's reflection on their work situation and what impact this has on them and the care they provide for their patients. This leads to some planning of future personal and professional development. What a doctor most benefits from will vary from person to person and will be influenced by the stage of the career they are in. For doctors in the early stages of their career this could include their settling into a new team, in the middle stages a consideration of any additional roles and responsibilities they may wish to take on and in the later stages a discussion about the transition towards retirement, what legacy they wish to leave and their thoughts about passing on some of their current responsibilities to others.

During the pandemic work has looked very different for the majority of doctors and many are still going through change processes, either because the service they are part of works differently or they have set different priorities for themselves or both. The appraisal meeting is an opportunity for doctors to talk through this and clarify in their own mind what their career aspirations are for the future. They may use this time to plan how they want to take their ideas to practice teams in primary care or their team meetings or own job planning sessions in secondary care. Often just talking it through with a peer who is independent of their work situation is all that is required to help doctors clarify their own thoughts and plans and options for the future.

In order to give appraisers a framework for these kind of discussions we now include a module on taking a coaching approach to appraisal discussions in the new appraiser and refresher training which can be found here:

<https://www.appraisal.nes.scot.nhs.uk/appraiser-training/new-appraiser/pre-course-modules/05-coaching-in-appraisals/>

There are also separate sessions being offered on an ad hoc basis that appraisers can register for as part of their PDP in the appraiser role if they wish to explore this further. These are advertised throughout the year as and when the dates become available. Additional resources are also available for self-directed learning including videos you can use to reflect on approaches you could take and recorded webinar and conference sessions. These can be accessed here:

<https://www.appraisal.nes.scot.nhs.uk/appraiser-training/refresher-programme/appraiser-self-directed-learning/>

Please feel free to contact me for any queries or further suggestions.

Christiane.shrimpton@nhs.scot

Christiane Shrimpton

Associate Postgraduate Dean for Appraisal and Revalidation, NES