

Message to all NHS SW appraisers from Dr Sue Frankland

gpappraisalsw (NHS ENGLAND & NHS IMPROVEMENT - X24)

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Cc:BRADSHAW, Lynne (NHS ENGLAND & NHS IMPROVEMENT - X24) <lynne.bradshaw2@nhs.net>; KEW, Lowri (CORNER PLACE SURGERY) <l.kew@nhs.net>;

Dear Appraiser colleagues

I have not wished to bombard you with e mails as you are all so busy and events are changing all the time but there are a few important messages to give about statutory regulatory processes during the current crisis. NHSE and the GMC are clear that the onus is to maintain clinical services and look after staff and thus that the burden of appraisal and revalidation needed to be addressed. This is also aimed at increasing the availability of the entire appraisal and revalidation teams to engage in or support clinical activity.

Suspending Revalidation

You will already have seen that the GMC took the decision last week to suspend Revalidation for 6 months initially. Any doctor due Revalidation between now and the end of September will have the date deferred by the GMC for 12 months. Doctors can be assured that deferral is a neutral act and will not prejudice future Revalidation. Those doctors affected by this decision will be able to pause collecting feedback and cpd evidence for now. This means that the Senior Appraisers can suspend the Revalidation portfolio checks for the time being too.

The note from the front page of the GMC website says:

Coronavirus (COVID-19) - doctors revalidating before September 2020

If you're due to revalidate before the end of September 2020, this will be deferred by one year. We've made this decision to give responsible officers and doctors more time to reschedule and complete appraisals. We hope this will support the health service to prioritise clinical care for patients during the coronavirus pandemic.

Suspending Appraisal

Several of you have been in contact about the decision made at the end of last week suspending the national appraisal processes, also until the end of September.

Any appraisal cancelled during this period will be classed as an Approved Missed Appraisal and the doctor given a new date for 2021. We are not postponing these appraisals until later in the year as we would not have capacity to do a year's worth of appraisals in a six month period. I want to make it clear that there will be no expectation on doctors to gather appraisal evidence during the Covid 19 crisis.

Please can you contact anyone who has booked an appraisal with you in the next 6 months to make this clear and ask them to notify their appraisal toolkit provider so that any evidence gathered so far can be moved into the 2021/22 appraisal year and the 2020/21 appraisal year can be closed off.

I have also been in communication with Susi Caesar and the GMC about the loss of the supportive aspects of appraisal . RCGP considers it even more important during a crisis that a GP has someone to talk to. Please refer to the team or to the LMC any GP who you are worried about so we can provide support. I am sure you will appreciate that appraisers need to stay mindful of everyone's safety and compassionate when it comes to the appraisal process.

Technology assisted appraisals

The RO has indicated that an appraisee can request that their appraisal still goes ahead during this time, if they consider they need the support of their appraiser. I don't anticipate many such requests but please pass them on to me if they ask you. These would be looked at on a case by case basis and any such approved appraisals would need to be completed using technological assistance.

The medical appraisal logistics handbook has a good section on technology assisted appraisal which is worth reading should such a request come your way. Obviously the same rules apply re a confidential setting. Where the appraiser does not already know the GP, I would suggest they request and share some ID before they start.

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/medical-revalidation/ro/ma-handbook/>

The RO is anxious that this remains a response to a crisis rather than it become seen as the norm for the future.

Appraiser meetings and updates

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All small group and regional appraiser meetings have been cancelled for the next 6 months. The expected amount of cpd for appraisers is also going to be pro rata and this will be reviewed as the year progresses. Instead of "mandatory" e learning on Equality and Diversity and Information Governance for our appraisers, we will accept learning on matters pertaining to Covid 19.

Appraisal Leadership

The current Senior Appraisers will finish their roles on 31/3/20 and this is an opportunity to thank them most sincerely for their hard work and dedication over the last few years.

The recruitment to the new Senior Appraiser roles is almost complete and we will provide you with the details of your new group and leader in April but we do not anticipate the groups to re-form until sometime in the summer, tbc.

I will still be leaving my post at Easter and James Quekett will be the Interim Appraisal lead for BGSW from then until the permanent post is filled. The current crisis means that the recruitment to my post will be on hold for now.

Appraisal Consultancy Agreements

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These will apply as usual for 2020/21. I am mindful that the loss of income may be significant for some of you when appraisals are suspended and our concerns about this potential impact have been fed back nationally. I have had several appraisers contact me about this already and am sorry that I don't yet have an answer about any possible financial compensation.

Finally, thank you all for your commitment to appraisals and to supporting our GP colleagues. On behalf of the appraisal admin team, we will be thinking of you and your families and loved ones during this difficult time and send you our very best wishes.

There may be a delay in responding to your correspondence as some of our team are being deployed in response to Covid 19.

**NHSE & NHSI
South West**

Sanger House
5220 Valiant Court
Gloucester Business Park,
Brockworth
Gloucester, GL3 4FE

**Dr Sue Frankland
GP Appraisal Lead
BANES, Gloucestershire, Swindon and
Wiltshire**

07900 715279

sfrankland@nhs.net

Appraisal Project Officer:

Kate Barnes

07730 379685

kate.barnes1@nhs.net

Responsible Officer: Dr Caroline Gamlin

Appraisal Website: <http://www.gpappraisals.uk>

NHSE Website: www.england.nhs.uk

NHSI Website: www.improvement.nhs.uk

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