

Responsible Officer and Appraisal Networks Information Sheet 10

When an appraiser is incapacitated before submitting the appraisal outputs: taking a balanced approach

What should happen if the appraiser becomes incapacitated between the appraisal meeting and submitting the appraisal outputs?

This situation should be approached on a case by case basis, striking a balance between what is practical and what is necessary to assure the quality of the outputs. It will often be possible to work with the doctor in a professional way to resolve the matter.

Patient safety is paramount. Hence if in the judgement of the responsible officer there is not sufficient assurance that the appraisal outputs can be completed to an acceptable standard, they should arrange a second appraisal conversation with a fresh appraiser. Given that they have already submitted their portfolio, the unavoidable inconvenience to the doctor is limited to allocating the time to take part in the second meeting.

If the original appraiser is likely to be able to complete the appraisal outputs within an acceptable time frame albeit longer than the expected standard of 28 days, it will usually be preferable to accept this delay. If this is likely to approach or extend beyond 84 days, then it may be sensible to find a different approach.

One such approach is for a senior appraiser or appraisal lead to hold a conversation with the doctor and review the doctor's portfolio and any contemporaneous notes available from either the doctor or appraiser. Bearing in mind that the doctor is an active participant in the drafting of their own PDP, if they can articulate clearly what was discussed and agreed, and this is in keeping with the portfolio, it may be acceptable for the senior appraiser to agree and complete the outputs with the doctor. The responsible officer should be informed of this, and all conversations held should be documented. If the original appraiser does return to service, they should be asked to corroborate the outputs that were agreed.

Whilst 28 days is allowed for completion and submission of all documentation post the appraisal meeting, good organisation on the part of the appraiser usually allows this to be achieved much more quickly. Doing so reduces the risk of either party being unable to sign off the appraisal. Appraisers should aim to submit the summary and outputs as soon as possible and normally within one working week of the meeting.

This information sheet is relevant to all designated bodies in England.

These information sheets are written on an ad hoc basis, on issues of relevance to responsible officers and their teams, medical appraisers and doctors.

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