

Simplifying appraisal preparation for General Practitioners – a statement from the NHS England responsible officers

Dear Doctor,

Your annual appraisal should be a rewarding professional event. Preparing for it should take you away from your patients for as little time as possible. Some doctors spend a lot of time preparing, perhaps uncertain about what, or how much, to include. To help you prepare, the responsible officers in NHS England have agreed the following:

- Be selective; think 'reflection'. Your appraiser is primarily interested in your ability to reflect with insight on your practice. Honest reflection on a small number of well-chosen items, in which you demonstrate your learning and actions to improve patient care, is preferable to bland reflection on many.
- Efficient preparation allows your priorities to be the focus of the appraisal meeting.
- Appraisal is a chance to celebrate all your work so include information about things you are proud of in all your roles.
- If uncertain about what to include, your appraiser is your first port of call for advice.
- Information and reflection about your competence in the following specific areas is helpful in demonstrating fitness for purpose as a GP:
 - basic life support competence;
 - children's [safeguarding level 3 competence](#)

For both of these, case reviews, audits and other types of evidence are acceptable; attendance at specific courses is acceptable but not essential.

- For quality improvement, reflection on national, CCG, practice-based or personal data and audit are valuable options, but reflecting on incidents and cases is equally valuable. Primarily, the quality improvement activities you present should relate to your professional context. Equally, if you are involved with any of the NHS England clinical priorities, e.g. diabetes, cancer, mental health and learning disability, these are all relevant topics. Some national initiatives provide [templates](#) to support your reflection at appraisal as well as participation in those initiatives.
- Occasionally your responsible officer might ask you to reflect on something specific to you at appraisal. If so they will make you aware of this in good time to include it.
- The [NHS England Doctor's Medical Appraisal Checklist](#) is a good reference. This is carefully written to match both [GMC](#) requirements and [RCGP](#) guidance.
- As well as the RCGP guidance, the [RCGP Mythbusters](#) are useful for dispelling common misconceptions.

We hope this advice helps you prepare efficiently for a supportive and stimulating appraisal that helps you improve your care for patients.

Yours sincerely

NHS England Responsible Officers

November 2016

This statement has been developed by the responsible officers in NHS England working with the Royal College of General Practitioners and the British Medical Association

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