



Londonwide LMCs advice on appraisal toolkit for GPs.

The GMC's requirements for Revalidation mean that if you wish to keep your Licence to Practise you must take part in local mechanisms for appraisal run by your Responsible Officer at the London Regional Office of the NHS England (NCB). You will need to organise and present your supporting information to your appraiser and to maintain records of your appraisals throughout each revalidation cycle. The GMC calls this a portfolio of supporting information which should demonstrate your maintenance of your clinical and professional standards and specialist skills.

The Responsible Officers (ROs) for Revalidation (the Medical Directors of the NCB London Regional Office Local Area Teams) are required by the GMC and by the RO Regulations to run an effective appraisal system, and to maintain records of appraisals undergone by GPs on the Performers List and of all their recommendations made to the GMC on doctors' fitness to practise. In order to make their recommendations on revalidation to the GMC in respect of all GPs on their Performers list, ROs must receive recommendations from appraisers based on the information seen and discussed at appraisal which covers all roles each doctor has which require being a registered medical practitioner with a licence to practise.

Most GPs have been using the NHS appraisal toolkit and more recently the Clarity toolkit. There are now a number of toolkits available for doctors to use to organise their appraisal information for revalidation. The RCGP provides a toolkit free of charge to members. Clarity and the RCGP toolkits (and some others) can incorporate tools to collect and collate patient and colleague feedback. There are several other toolkits, most are web based, some are currently free to use, but may not have been robustly tested and assured in terms of information security. Additional drawbacks include that they do not have administrative function for the appraisal co-ordinators to keep track of appraisals, or one to deal with the appraiser's recommendations to the RO.

With the demise of PCTs, NHS England London Regional Office has extended arrangements to provide the Clarity Toolkit free to London GPs for a further year. The ROs have told us they will also accept appraisals carried out using the RCGP toolkit, but non-members will have to bear the cost themselves if they choose to use that one. The NCB London office assures us that in each area there are GP appraisers who have been trained to use the RCGP toolkit.

LLMC has received an assurance that if GPs are unable to use either of these electronic toolkits, despite support from their appraisal team, the ROs would accept submission on paper, but they have informed us that the standard of the information submitted in relation to the post appraisal recommendations and supporting information related to the GMC's framework must be the same as that provided by their two chosen toolkits. GPC policy is that supporting evidence does not have to be scanned or otherwise loaded onto the toolkit, but may be presented on paper.

The advantages of a toolkit provided by the NCB is that a GP's appraisal documents will be securely held, communication with the appraisal co-ordinators, is electronically linked and recording of appraisals is likely to be accurate. The appraisers will be familiar with the operation of the toolkit and the London Area Team appraisal administrators and the providers of the toolkit provide GPs with technical help lines and administrative support. However not all toolkits are equally user friendly or meet the requirements of appraisees, appraisers and Responsible Officers.

Our advice is based on the following principles:

Participation in appraisal should be cost neutral to GPs.

The NCB is charged by the Responsible Officer Regulations to provide responsible officers with adequate resources to support their role in making revalidation recommendations.

Support for appraisals should be available equally to all GPs in the Performers list in London.

ROs should keep accurate records of appraisals and post appraisal recommendations.

Appraisal documentation should be securely kept by the NCB and treated as confidential.

In procuring any appraisal and revalidation toolkit, the needs and opinions of all GP users should be taken into account.

Our recommendations:

To the NCB London Regional Office

A choice of appraisal toolkit should be funded for all GPs on London Performers Lists and all provided should be administered by the NCB appraisal

co-ordinators.

LMC as representative of GPs should be consulted on the procurement any further toolkit.

GPs should be offered training to use the toolkits effectively and provided with on-going support for technical issues.

All GPs should be offered a choice of toolkit and must be able to submit their documentation and evidence for appraisal on paper if necessary.

To GPs

You should keep your appraisal documentation and supporting information in a safe place, and securely backed up. You should keep at least five years documentation.

You should ensure that any system you use allows you to meet the GMC's requirements

You should assure yourself that any system you use has help line support and keeps your information secure.

If an electronic toolkit is provided free of charge to you by your RO, you should consider using it.

You should expect that the RO provides support to you so that you can make best use of any toolkit they recommend.