

***“Appraisers need support and encouragement. It is widely felt to be a rewarding task, but one with significant responsibilities” Lyons, 2003***

## Agenda

GP Appraisers are from a wide range of backgrounds and with varied experiences who are brought together by their initial training to share some key knowledge, skills and attitudes. If allowed to practice in isolation, it is likely that they would feel unsupported and gradually diverge from one another in their understanding and practice of appraisal.

Appraisers need a hierarchy of ongoing support, from the so-called “hygiene” factors<sup>2</sup> of process, pay and conditions, through peer support, to continued feedback and development of knowledge and skills. Various models are in use across the UK, often reflecting the underlying commitment of the local PCO to the appraisal process.

## Best Practice

### Appraisal Lead

Each PCT should have an appraisal lead to support the appraisers in that PCT, facilitate an appraisers’ support group and be responsible for the continuing professional development of appraisers. The appraisal lead should also act as a “helpline” or first point of contact for appraisers requiring additional support about any aspect of an appraisal.

This individual would normally be best placed to carry out an annual appraisal for each GP Appraiser, specific to this role, giving them anonymised feedback from the evaluation of the appraisals they had undertaken.

The annual appraisal for appraisers’ as GPs should normally be carried out by an appraiser from outside the support group to avoid charges of collusion.

### The Appraisers’ Group

***“Appraisal can be lonely. I need a group to support me and encourage me. An arena for me to bounce ideas, work out whether a problem is a problem. A group of people I trust well enough to ring up and say “I don’t know what to do here”. I would hope the group would be challenging and stimulating.....”***

GP Appraiser, England

### Purposes:

The appraisers’ group should:

- Offer mutual support and guidance under the leadership of the appraisal lead.
- Work as a learner set, using anonymised experiences to inform the development of the group.
- Encourage development of appraisal skills, including communication skills, skilful and professional completion of the paperwork of appraisal, local knowledge of resources available to appraisees and an awareness of the limits of the appraisal process (when to stop an appraisal, when to suggest the appraisee seeks a mentor or GP).
- Offer a forum for keeping up to date with changes in the political background to appraisal and developing best practice further.

### Frequency:

The appraiser group should meet at least quarterly. If quarterly it is suggested that 3 of these meetings per year could last between 2 and 4 hours, although it would be equally acceptable to have meetings more frequently than quarterly, in which case the meetings could be shorter.

However it is good practice but that there should be in addition an annual full-day meeting. This should be funded by the PCO.

Sheet 5  
October 2004

ABC of GP Appraisal  
“Keeping Appraisers up to Date”  
Dr Susanne Caesar

NAPCE  
1<sup>st</sup> Floor, Carne House  
Parsons Lane  
Bury  
Lancashire  
BL9 0JT

Tel: 0161 272 0110  
Fax: 0161 763 9278  
Email:  
napce@btopenworld.com  
Website:  
www.napce.net

© 2004 NAPCE and S Caesar  
All rights reserved

The annual day of updating and training should be led from outside the appraiser support group, to ensure that good practice is shared and the group receives outside stimulus and challenge.

Attendance at these meetings should be compulsory and a condition of remaining an appraiser, although there should, of course, be due recognition of holidays, sickness and maternity leave etc.

### Skills Training

The use of video within the appraisers' group, simulated appraisees (actors) and role play may all be valuable resources to improve the appraisal skills of appraisers<sup>3</sup> There is no consensus on whether it is desirable to video "real" appraisals at this stage.

### Annual Evaluation

The appraisals undertaken by an individual appraiser should be readily identifiable and the evaluations analysed by appraiser as well as across the whole PCO group. Individuals should receive specific anonymised feedback at least annually from the appraisal lead.

There must be a specific complaints procedure for complaints arising from appraisal and a mechanism for addressing the needs of an appraiser who is felt to be struggling. Appraisers who are unable to maintain their knowledge attitude or skills must not have their contracts renewed

## Checklist

<p>1 Practice does not follow standards that should reasonably be expected.</p>	<p>2 Practice in this area is sound, although progress can still be made</p>	<p>3 Practice in this area is excellent</p>
---	--	---

<b>Support and development of appraisers</b>	1	2	3
There is an active appraisers' group with clear leadership by the appraisal lead			
The group offers support to appraisers			
The group encourages development of appraisers' skills			
The group meets at least quarterly including annual refresher training			
Every appraiser has individual feedback from the appraisal lead on their skills			
Appraisers' annual GP appraisal is done by an appraiser outside the group			
The appraisers' group is adequately resourced			
Evaluation forms are used to monitor and improve appraisals			
Evaluation forms demonstrate appraisers are skilled in appraisal			

## References

1. Lyons, N (2003) Quality Standards for GP Appraisal. NAPCE, Bury. [www.gpappraisal.nhs.uk](http://www.gpappraisal.nhs.uk)
2. Herzberg, F (1968) One more time: how do you motivate employees? *Harvard Business Review* (Jan-Feb.) 53-62
3. Mohanna, K and Kelly, S (2004) *Appraisal Video Workbook* [www.gpappraisal.nhs.uk](http://www.gpappraisal.nhs.uk)