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| Our Ref: 140228 ltr all appraisers re national appraisal policy v3  5 March 2014  **To: All Appraisers for the Bristol, North Somerset, Somerset, South Gloucestershire (BNSSSG) Area Team** | **Bristol, North Somerset, Somerset, South**  **Gloucestershire Area Team (BNSSSG)**  **South Plaza**  **Marlborough Street**  **Bristol BS1 3NX** |

Dear Appraisers

**New National Appraisal Policy and Consultancy Agreement**

Thank you all for your helpful comments following our letter dated 2 January 2014.

We can now update you with further information concerning the changes to the appraisal process in BNSSSG as a result of the new NHS England Appraisal Policy and Consultancy Agreement.

After the publication of the final version of the policy there has also been much discussion nationally about some of the changes that are proposed and these were discussed at a meeting of the NHS England Appraisal Stakeholder Group which Peter Saunders attended on 15 January 2014.

The following list encapsulates some of the issues you and others raised, which are now being reviewed.

**Consultancy Agreement**

This is the preferred model of NHS England for the engagement of appraisers, rather than an “employed” model which we have had in the past in some areas. However, there are a number of issues relating to HMRC (the “tax office”) that need to be clarified, including whether the role constitutes regular work rather than consultancy (which would then change the status of the appraiser from self-employed to employed). Further discussions are taking place between NHS England and HMRC over the next 6-8 weeks.

It is hoped that the final version will be available before April 2014, but it may be necessary to continue with the current interim system for a few weeks into 2014-15. Please be assured you will continue to be allocated appraisals should the agreement not be finalised.

If the consultant status is maintained, then NHS England will not indemnify appraisers but discussions have taken place with the MDU and MPS around how appraisers will be indemnified. These discussions are continuing to ensure the wording in the agreement is acceptable to all. NHS England has been reassured that those appraisers currently indemnified for clinical work will not have to pay an extra premium for appraisal work. However, if you do no clinical work and continue appraising, you will need to arrange indemnity and this will be provided at a relatively small cost (approximately £300).

**Payments for Services**

It would seem it is no longer necessary for appraisers to be part of another organisation in order to be paid. If principals and salaried doctors prefer not to be paid through their practices this can be accommodated and they and self-employed appraisers can be paid direct.

Quarterly payments will remain if the consultancy agreement stands, as this is more acceptable (with HMRC) in a self-employed consultant role.

Discussions with NHS Pensions Agency are also on going as to whether the current regulations can be revised to allow self-employed appraisers to be part of the superannuation scheme after April. These discussions may also take about 6-8 weeks.

Travel expenses will remain as exceptional payments; currently for appraisers who travel more than 50 miles in total for the return trip for an appraisal.

**Numbers of Appraisals per year per appraiser**

In BNSSSG we are currently starting to allocate next year’s appraisals and those appraisers who have appraised more than 30 GPs in 2013-4 will be allocated 30 next year. However, if you have been appraising in excess of this number and wish to continue, please get in touch with either Peter or Ian to discuss whether it may be possible to continue during this year. If other appraisers (who currently do less than 20 a year) have extra capacity and wish to increase their allocated numbers please also get in touch.

**Local Issues in BNSSSG**

The Severn Appraisal Toolkit (SAT) is now available to all GPs to use as their preferred toolkit at no cost. We have arranged training for appraisers in using SAT. This will be held

**2.00pm on Wednesday 30 April 2014**

**in the Board Room, NHS England Area Team,**

**4th Floor, South Plaza, Bristol BS1 3NX**

All appraisers who are not currently registered with SAT should now do so. You can do this on the website at:

<https://gpappraisal.severndeanery.nhs.uk>

You must then contact the Deanery to be registered as an appraiser also.

Additionally, there is now a national management tool for RO’s to be able to manage the revalidation process which will incorporate some of the other administration functions, such as allocation and booking of appraisals, payment for appraisers. This is being rolled out nationally early in the appraisal year 2014-15 and we will give further details shortly.

Finally, we are very fortunate in BNSSSG to have a group of experienced and professional appraisers who are committed to carrying out high quality appraisals and we would like to thank you for your continued support and forbearance during this period of change. It is important to stress that we feel that doctors are best placed as appraisers for other doctors and there are **no** plans to move appraising away from doctors to other groups (for example, nurses or administrators) in the BNSSSG area team. If any of you would like to speak to your Lead Appraiser personally please do not hesitate to get in touch with either Ian or Peter.

We are currently recruiting additional Patch Leads for appraisal. We included details of the role in our last letter. If any of you are interested in taking on this additional role we would be very pleased to discuss this with you.

As a reminder, the **BNSSSG Appraiser Group Meeting** will take place:

**12.30pm on Wednesday 12March 2014**

**at Best Western Walton Park Hotel**

**Wellington Terrace, Clevedon**

**Somerset BS21 7BL**

Yours sincerely

Dr Peter Saunders

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