Medical Appraisal Scotland

Annual Report (2022/2023)

**Graphical version:**  
<http://www.appraisal.nes.scot.nhs.uk/resources/AnnualReport-22-23/index.html>

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# Foreword

It is an absolute pleasure to introduce this year’s annual report particularly as I am writing this on my final day as Postgraduate GP Dean at NHS Education for Scotland. The team have made tremendous advances in the way that we train and update our appraisers throughout Scotland. I would like to pay tribute to the team at NES led by Christiane Shrimpton and William Liu for the dedication, hard work and professionalism with which they have continued to undertake the work in very challenging circumstances. Our courses could not have been delivered without the huge input of our experienced and knowledgeable tutors to whom I am extremely grateful and thank them for their continued input. Finally, I would like to thank our colleagues at Scottish Government under the leadership of Professor Ian Finlay (who retired in December 2022), who have always provided support and guidance when needed.

The report highlights the quantity and quality of our courses and the input we have had into the development not only of the appraisal guidance and but also SOAR and its successor in the near future. We continue to emphasise the importance of well-being during appraisal discussions not only because this is probably the only forum for a one-to-one confidential meeting between professionals, but also because our colleagues continue to face challenging circumstances in the health and social care arenas.

I have great confidence in the team here at NES to continue the fantastic work outlined in the report over the coming years.

**Professor Amjad Khan**  
*Postgraduate GP Dean, NES Revalidation Lead*

# Overview of Medical Appraisal in Scotland

The time has come to use the annual report to reflect on another busy year for the Appraisal and Revalidation team at NES. As our working lives have gradually returned to more opportunities for interactions in person, we have been mindful not to lose the positive changes we have had to make as a result of the pandemic. So much of the virtual working we would never have envisaged as possible previously has worked well and will remain part of what we do now.

As you can see from the report the virtual New Appraiser training continues to receive good feedback and many doctors have commented that it makes it much more accessible and feasible to attend. We also appreciate that this mode of delivery does not suit everybody, and we have been able to offer some face-to-face training as well. Our different sessions for current appraisers to develop and stay up to date in their role have been well received. The NES delivered Refresher sessions are now part of the regular programme again and they are supplemented by topic-based sessions that have covered coaching and mentoring skills that can be used in appraisal discussions as well as a Recognition of Trainer session. We will continue to use feedback to improve the current offer as well as looking at additional sessions to develop in future.

The remote delivery of the annual NES conference over the last few years has allowed the recording of sessions so that anyone not available or free to attend can use these for their own development at a later time. The links for the appraiser sessions over the last two years are now supplemented by access to some of this year’s annual conference as one option for self-directed learning and reflection on the content. We will have a stand-alone separate appraisal conference in September that I am very much looking forward to.

The Revalidation Delivery Board Scotland (RDBS) has been busy over this period with the publication of updated guidance on appraisal for revalidation purposes and the commissioning of a review of SOAR. This will lead to an updating of the SOAR platform to make it more user friendly and also take into account the updated Good Medical Practice guidance once this will be published by the General Medical Council later this year. I want to thank the team from the Scottish Government for bringing together all relevant stakeholders in Scotland and leading the regular review and development of appraisal and revalidation in Scotland. My special thanks go to Professor Ian Finlay who we will miss as chair of the RDBS following his retirement at the end of 2022. I look forward to working with Professor Marion Bain who has now taken over from him.

We have a strong appraiser team in Scotland with excellent support from the RDBS, NES and local appraisal leads and Responsible Officers. It continues to be a pleasure to work with appraisal leads and course tutors and I want to thank all of them as well as the NES team who have been outstanding in their support once again. Our new team members have settled in well. As we say farewell to Professor Amjad Khan, whose guidance and support I will miss, I want to thank him and wish him all the best for his retirement. Without all of you and our appraisers who have embraced their role and provided much needed support to doctors at a time that remains very challenging in the NHS appraisal in Scotland would not be as well received as it is.

I look forward to the continuation of my work with you all. Look out for the invites to the appraisal conference later in the year.

**Dr Christiane Shrimpton***Associate Postgraduate Dean for Appraisal and Revalidation*

# Medical Appraisers Training and Recruitment

## Appraiser training courses in 2022/2023

This year the Medical Appraisal team delivered a complete programme of New Appraiser and Refresher Training courses remotely, with three of the New Appraiser courses delivered in-person in NES offices. The feedback has shown that these courses were successful and positive overall. The number of Refresher courses scheduled exceeded expectations and an additional eight courses were added due to demand. Furthermore, the Medical Appraisal team introduced five Coaching/Mentoring Webinars to support existing appraisers that ran throughout 2022/2023 with the incentive for participants to explore the application of coaching skills within an appraisal setting.

## New Medical Appraiser Training

The current New Appraiser Training courses are delivered by the team over two half-days, with a maximum of 8 participants and a minimum of 5 per course. All course participants are required to complete coursework, which includes seven online modules as a compulsory requirement. You can access these modules and pre-course materials from the [Medical Appraisal Scotland website](https://www.appraisal.nes.scot.nhs.uk/appraiser-training/new-appraiser/pre-course-modules/).

The Medical Appraisal team ran 14 New Appraiser courses from April to November 2022. A further 7 New Appraiser courses were delivered in January to March 2023, 3 of which were In-Person courses. All New Appraiser courses throughout the year were a success and the feedback was positive.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Course** | **Course capacity** | **Attendance** | | | | **Unfilled slots** |
| **Primary Care** | **Secondary Care** | **Total** | *DNAs* |
| **N89A - 19 & 26 April 2022** | **8** | **0** | **4** | 4 | *1* | **4** |
| **N89P – 19 & 26 April 2022** | **8** | **1** | **3** | 4 | *0* | **4** |
| **N90A - 04 & 11 May 2022** | **8** | **2** | **6** | 8 | *0* | **0** |
| **N90P – 04 & 11 May 2022** | **8** | **2** | **5** | 7 | *0* | **1** |
| **N91A - 24 & 31 May 2022** | **8** | **3** | **5** | 8 | *0* | **0** |
| **N91P - 24 & 31 May 2022** | **8** | **1** | **5** | 6 | *1* | **2** |
| **N92A - 24 & 31 August 2022** | **8** | **0** | **7** | 7 | *0* | **1** |
| **N92P - 24 & 31 August 2022** | **8** | **1** | **6** | 7 | *0* | **1** |
| **N93A - 05 & 12 October 2022** | **8** | **2** | **6** | 8 | *0* | **0** |
| **N93P - 05 & 12 October 2022** | **8** | **2** | **5** | 7 | *1* | **1** |
| **N94A - 02 & 09 November 2022** | **8** | **1** | **6** | 7 | *0* | **1** |
| **N94P - 02 & 09 November 2022** | **8** | **3** | **4** | 7 | *0* | **1** |
| **N95A - 16 & 23 November 2022** | **8** | **1** | **6** | 7 | *0* | **1** |
| **N95P - 16 & 23 November 2022** | **8** | **4** | **4** | 8 | *0* | **0** |
| **N96A - 24 &31 January 2023** | **8** | **2** | **5** | 7 | *1* | **1** |
| **N96P - 24 & 31 January 2023** | **8** | **1** | **5** | 6 | *0* | **2** |
| **N97A - 21 & 28 February 2023** | **8** | **3** | **5** | 8 | *0* | **0** |
| **N97P - 21 & 28 February 2023** | **8** | **3** | **5** | 8 | *0* | **0** |
| **N98 - 08 March 2023** | **8** | **2** | **6** | 8 | *0* | **0** |
| **N99 – 15 March 2023** | **8** | **0** | **7** | 7 | *1* | **1** |
| **N100 – 21 March 2023** | **8** | **2** | **6** | 8 | *0* | **0** |
| **TOTAL** | **168** | **36** | **111** | **147** | **5** | **21** |

147 participants attended the 21 New Appraiser training courses held, with 145 recommended by the tutor panels as ready to take up the role of medical appraiser. There were 5 participants who either did not attend on the day or opted out after partially attending their course. Overall, 21 out of 168 spaces were not taken up.

Throughout the year, we asked all our participants for feedback following each course. Out of the 147 participants, 109 provided their feedback (74.1%). When asked to rate their level of overall satisfaction with the training 59 replied “extremely satisfied” (54%) and 49 replied “very satisfied” (45%).

*“I feel more confident that I can make the process a positive and rewarding experience and also I am aware of the steps to take if problems occur.”* **N89A Participant**

*“All tutors were exceptionally helpful and gave constructive and detailed feedback.”* **N89P Participant**

***“****Remote training**worked incredibly well. Just as well as face to face training.”* **N91A Participant**

**“***Well organised, well delivered by obviously experienced tutors from both primary and secondary care backgrounds.”* **N91P Participant**

***“****I really enjoyed the face to face element - having not been to any face to face events in over 4 years, this was great!”* **N98 Participant**

## Refresher Medical Appraiser Training

The Refresher Appraiser Training courses were reviewed throughout 2021/2022 and the new structure was introduced in April 2022. The Medical Appraisal team ran 27 Refresher Appraiser courses throughout 2022/2023, with only one cancellation over the course of the year.

Similar to the New Appraiser Training courses, participants on the Refresher courses are required to complete online pre-coursework, which includes a PowerPoint module and review of videos in advance of attendance. The session is run over a half-day; a total of three and a half hours and participants can choose between a morning or an afternoon course. Similar to the New Appraiser course, the Refresher course began with a maximum of 8 participants, but soon increased to 10 following feedback.

Furthermore, self-directed modules are now accessible for appraisers to work through in their own time. Throughout 2022/2023 webinars have been introduced as an addition to the training programme. Information on the Refresher Appraiser programme of activities can be found [on our website](https://www.appraisal.nes.scot.nhs.uk/appraiser-training/refresher-programme/).

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Course** | **Course capacity** | **Attendance** | | | | **Unfilled slots** |
| **Primary Care** | **Secondary Care** | **Total** | *DNAs* |
| **RA00P - 05 April 2022** | **8** | **1** | **7** | 8 | *0* | **0** |
| **RA01A - 07 June 2022** | **8** | **1** | **7** | 8 | *0* | **0** |
| **RA01P - 07 June 2022** | **8** | **2** | **4** | 6 | *0* | **2** |
| **RA02A - 15 June 2022** | **8** | **2** | **6** | 8 | *0* | **0** |
| **RA02P - 15 June 2022** | **8** | **1** | **6** | 7 | *1* | **1** |
| **RA03A - 23 June 2022** | **10** | **1** | **7** | 8 | *1* | **2** |
| **RA03P - 23 June 2022** | **10** | **2** | **8** | 10 | *0* | **0** |
| **RA04A - 07 September 2022** | **10** | **0** | **9** | 9 | *0* | **1** |
| **RA04P - 07 September 2022** | **10** | **4** | **6** | 10 | *0* | **0** |
| **RA10A - 14 October 2022** | **10** | **3** | **5** | 8 | *0* | **2** |
| **RA10P - 14 October 2022** | **10** | **5** | **5** | 10 | *0* | **0** |
| **RA05A - 27 October 2022** | **10** | **1** | **8** | 9 | *0* | **1** |
| **RA05P - 27 October 2022** | **10** | **1** | **8** | 9 | *1* | **1** |
| **RA06A - 29 November 2022** | **10** | **1** | **6** | 7 | *2* | **3** |
| **RA06P - 29 November 2022** | **10** | **2** | **5** | 7 | *1* | **3** |
| **RA07A - 06 December 2022** | **10** | **3** | **5** | 8 | *0* | **2** |
| **RA07P - 06 December 2022** | **10** | **0** | **10** | 10 | *0* | **0** |
| **RA11A - 07 December 2022** | **10** | **3** | **7** | 10 | *0* | **0** |
| **RA11P - 07 December 2022** | **10** | **4** | **5** | 9 | *0* | **1** |
| **RA08A - 07 February 2023** | **10** | **1** | **6** | 7 | *1* | **3** |
| **RA08P - 07 February 2023** | **10** | **1** | **9** | 10 | *0* | **0** |
| **RA12A - 09 February 2023** | **10** | **2** | **7** | 9 | *1* | **1** |
| **RA12P - 09 February 2023 – CANCELLED** | **10** | **0** | **0** | 0 | *0* | **10** |
| **RA13A - 10 March 2023** | **10** | **2** | **6** | 8 | *2* | **2** |
| **RA13P - 10 March 2023** | **10** | **2** | **2** | 4 | *1* | **6** |
| **RA09A - 28 March 2023** | **10** | **4** | **4** | 8 | *1* | **2** |
| **RA09P - 28 March 2023** | **10** | **1** | **6** | 7 | *0* | **3** |
| **TOTAL** | **260** | **50** | **164** | **214** | **12** | **46** |

214 participants attended the 26 Refresher training courses held (1 cancelled due to undersubscription). There were 12 participants who did not attend on the day. Overall, 46 out of 260 spaces (including the cancelled course) were not taken up.

Feedback was also invited from Refresher training course participants. Out of the 214 participants, 184 provided their feedback (86%). When asked to rate their level of overall satisfaction with the training 70 replied “extremely satisfied” (38%) and 103 replied “very satisfied” (56%).

*“I found that the pre course material was perfect and encouraged self-reflection regarding my own techniques”* **RA01A Participant**

***“****All the tutors were excellent. The preparation and course planning was outstanding. The whole course was enjoyable and helped me as an appraiser and will help me going forward to handle any challenging appraisal situations.”* **RA04A Participant**

***“****Great networking, really good chats, great to do once experienced Appraiser with experiences to discuss. Good resources shared.”* **RA07A Participant**

## “Improving Appraisal Conversation” workshops

As part of the Refresher programme of activities, a series of workshops were organised by the team entitled “Improving Appraisal Conversations”, looking at the use of coaching and mentoring skills in an appraisal setting.

Delivered by our external partners (Academy of Executive Coaching), the team organised five one-day introductory sessions exploring the use of coaching skills in an appraisal setting. Appraisers were introduced to the GROW model and were offered an opportunity to practice its applications in a safe and protected setting.

Developed Dr Barbara Chandler (NHS Highland Secondary Care Appraisal Lead) and NES, four half-day taster sessions were delivered in the latter half 2022/2023 focussing on the Egan Skilled Helper model used in mentoring. Similar to the coaching sessions, the purpose of this workshop is to offer experienced appraisers the opportunity to practice mentoring skills in small, facilitated groups based on the Egan Skilled Helper model.

The GROW model sessions had a max capacity of 12 participants, and the Egan Skilled Helper sessions had 9. Overall, 54 appraisers attended the five coaching workshops; and 35 appraisers attended the four Egan Skilled Helper sessions.

***“****The size of the group worked well, it was a very interactive day. Enjoyed the opportunities to talk in pairs/small groups and to practice the coaching skills.”*

*“I think that it was a useful day overall and I will re-think how I will structure further appraisal interviews. I now have a scheme to use to try to take the appraisal interview beyond just being a review of evidence taken at face value and going to a deeper level.”*

**October 2022 Coaching session participants**

*“I have been reminded of the immense power of offering a listening ear to colleagues and the power of being listened to.”*

*“I really valued learning about GROW which I had thought was a linear model but learning about how to use it and move between elements to allow the individual to explore their issue in greater depth was really exciting”*

**November 2022 Coaching session participants**

*“I think the format was very good. It was informal, relaxed and interactive. Everyone feels uncomfortable about role-play but it is probably the most valuable thing.............'tell, show, do' always has a greater impact on the learner no matter how awkward they might feel.”* **December 2022 Mentoring session participant**

*“The direct " teaching” and initial discussions were excellent and very well facilitated - and I felt I learned a lot… Remote session worked well overall. I liked that there was someone there to make sure things were running smoothly all the time”* **February 2023 Mentoring session participant**

Following positive user feedback from participating appraisers, further sessions on the use of both models has been scheduled for 2023/2024. Please [visit our website](https://www.appraisal.nes.scot.nhs.uk/appraiser-training/refresher-programme/appraiser-webinars/) for more information.

## Tutors/Facilitators recruitment

In February 2023, the Medical Appraisal team recruited 6 appraisers to our cohort of course tutors and facilitators, increasing the faculty to 50.

This has allowed for a fairer spread of allocation amongst the cohort so that we are not over reliant on any one individual’s availability.

## Training Course Participants attendance across Health Boards

Below is a breakdown of the training course participants, by their appraising health boards, on our training events.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Health Board** | **New Appraisers** | | | **Refreshers** | | |
| **Primary Care** | **Secondary Care** | **Total** | **Primary Care** | **Secondary Care** | **Total** |
| **Argyll & Bute** | **2** | **0** | **2** | **1** | **0** | **1** |
| **Ayrshire & Arran** | **6** | **3** | **9** | **4** | **4** | **8** |
| **Borders** | **0** | **4** | **4** | **1** | **5** | **6** |
| **D&G** | **2** | **0** | **2** | **1** | **5** | **6** |
| **Fife** | **0** | **2** | **2** | **1** | **11** | **12** |
| **Forth Valley** | **1** | **1** | **2** | **2** | **2** | **4** |
| **GGC** | **5** | **32** | **37** | **5** | **35** | **40** |
| **NWTC** | **0** | **3** | **3** | **0** | **2** | **2** |
| **Grampian** | **5** | **4** | **9** | **8** | **14** | **22** |
| **Highland** | **2** | **10** | **12** | **2** | **12** | **14** |
| **Lanarkshire** | **4** | **9** | **13** | **3** | **10** | **13** |
| **Lothian** | **9** | **31** | **40** | **13** | **44** | **57** |
| **MWC** | **0** | **1** | **1** | **0** | **0** | **0** |
| **NES** | **0** | **0** | **0** | **0** | **1** | **1** |
| **NSS** | **0** | **0** | **0** | **0** | **4** | **4** |
| **Orkney** | **0** | **0** | **0** | **1** | **0** | **1** |
| **PHS** | **0** | **0** | **0** | **0** | **2** | **2** |
| **Shetland** | **0** | **0** | **0** | **1** | **0** | **1** |
| **Tayside** | **0** | **8** | **8** | **6** | **13** | **19** |
| **Western Isles** | **0** | **0** | **0** | **0** | **1** | **1** |
| **The State Hospital** | **0** | **1** | **1** | **0** | **0** | **0** |
| **TOTAL** | **36** | **109** | **145** | **49** | **165** | **214** |

## Becoming an Appraiser

The need for medical appraisal – a safe and protected environment for colleagues to discuss and reflect on their work and wellbeing – will continue to play a vital role to support the workforce recovery post pandemic.

If you are interested in becoming an appraiser, you can find further details via the Medical Appraisal Scotland website: <https://www.appraisal.nes.scot.nhs.uk/> (training course details available under the “Appraiser Training” link in the menu).

Please discuss further with your local Appraisal Lead as the first port of call. Appraisal management processes (and vacancies) vary across the health boards in Scotland, and it is important that you understand the requirements of your health board, and that they can guide and support you in the appraiser role.

**Stacey Lucas, Hannah Asrih & Mandie Thrippleton**  
*Administrative Officers (Medical Appraisal)*

**Eilidh Henderson**  
*Senior Officer (Medical Appraisal)*

# 2023 Scottish Medical Appraisers Annual Conference

Following feedback from appraisers in previous conferences, a decision was made to run the 2023 Scottish Medical Appraisers Conference independently from the NES Annual Conference to allow those appraisers with educational roles to fully engage with the medical education sessions.

The NES conference took place on 27 & 28 April 2023 and whilst the Medical Appraisal team wasn’t part of the setup, there were several cross-disciplinary sessions that appraisers might find interesting. We have saved the recordings of these sessions on the Medical Appraisal Scotland website: <https://www.appraisal.nes.scot.nhs.uk/appraiser-training/refresher-programme/appraiser-self-directed-learning/nes-conference-2023-videos/>

**The Scottish Medical Appraisers Conference will take place on 13 September 2023.** It will be delivered remotely via MS Teams and recordings of sessions will be made available afterwards.

Doctors are coming from increasingly diverse backgrounds, and we will have several sessions exploring what this means for the interactions between appraisers and appraisees. Topics include unconscious bias, active bystander, cultural competency and neurodiversity. We have also invited the General Medical Council (GMC) to speak to us about the recent review into the Good Medical Practice. Further sessions will cover practical aspects of appraisal, such as the writing up of appraisal summary Form 4s. There will be a presentation from NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde and NHS Lothian colleagues to discuss their journey and progress into electronic approaches to Patient Survey Questionnaires (PSQ).

Registration will open in July and will close at the beginning of September. For more information please visit: <https://www.appraisal.nes.scot.nhs.uk/events/2023-smac/>

# Revalidation Delivery Board Scotland

*A background introduction to the national appraisal and revalidation stakeholder group in Scotland.*

In order to practice medicine in the UK, doctors must be registered with the General Medical Council (GMC) and hold a licence to practice that must be renewed every 5 years, via a process known as Revalidation.

Revalidation is intended to give reassurance and confidence to patients and other stakeholders who have an interest in the delivery of safe medical treatment that doctors are performing to the required standards and are aware of the latest developments around the areas in which they practice. Medical appraisal remains one of the GMC key requirements for doctors’ revalidation. It allows doctors to reflect on their achievements and challenges over each year and to discuss their development with a colleague who is a trained appraiser.  Wellbeing is now an established central element to this discussion.

**The Revalidation Delivery Board for Scotland (RDBS) was set up to oversee the operational implementation and delivery of medical revalidation.**  It has remained as the main advisory group within Scotland.  The Board meet twice per annum, or more if required, to consider any current medical appraisal or revalidation issues that may impact on the process of revalidation.  The Board is a collaborative workspace which is run on a consensus basis which provides each stakeholder with the opportunity to contribute their group’s views.

At times, the Board may convene small working groups to fulfil a specific function, such as the 2022 Short Life Working Group which published [*Preparing for Appraisal for Revalidation Purposes, Updated Guidance for Doctors Undergoing Appraisal*](https://www.appraisal.nes.scot.nhs.uk/news/preparing-for-appraisal-for-revalidation-purposes/)*.*

The Board has recently commissioned an independent contractor to work on an upgrade to SOAR, the national IT system used by doctors working in NHS Scotland for managing their appraisal processes. This will focus on the software rather than the appraisal process and is expected to report to the Board by the end of 2023.  *(See section on SOAR for more details.)*

In previous years the Board has commissioned an annual Medical Appraisal and Revalidation Quality Assurance (MARQA) review which would be presented to the Board prior to publication. During Covid this was paused, however consideration is being given to it restarting in 2024.

The chairperson of RDBS is a Deputy Chief Medical Officer for Scotland. Board membership includes representation from a wide range of stakeholders including the General Medical Council (GMC), NHS Education for Scotland (NES), British Medical Association (BMA), Scottish Association of NHS Medical Directors (SAMD), Health Improvement Scotland (HIS) and Independent Hospitals.

# News and Events

The Scottish Government sponsored MARQA (Medical Appraisal and Revalidation Quality Assurance) review was postponed allowing for workforce recovery. Similarly, there were no Responsible Officers development days organised this year.

There continues to be an emphasis on Health and Wellbeing with the introduction of resources for stress and burnout as we are still navigating post pandemic ways of working. You can find information and links on the Medical Appraisal Scotland site: <https://www.appraisal.nes.scot.nhs.uk/resources/health-and-wellbeing/burnout/>

## Updated Medical Appraisal Scotland website

In April 2022 we rolled out the updated Medical Appraisal website, with the aim of reducing duplication in both the guides and the information that we provide, thereby (hopefully) making the site easier to navigate. We are also continuing to add to our growing [Resources](https://www.appraisal.nes.scot.nhs.uk/resources/) to help support both new and existing Appraisers.

## Recognition of Trainers support

One of the regular requests for additional refresher sessions we received was for the Recognition of Trainer (RoT) element of appraisals and in response to this we ran a webinar on 22 March 2023. This session was delivered by Drs Lesley Dawson (Director of Medical Education NHS Lothian) and Ben Ulyatt (Associate Director of Medical Education NHS Tayside), facilitated by Dr Christiane Shrimpton (Associate Postgraduate Dean NES). You can find the recorded session and Summary points at <https://www.appraisal.nes.scot.nhs.uk/appraiser-training/refresher-programme/appraiser-self-directed-learning/webinar-recordings/rot-webinar-for-medical-appraisers-march-2023/>

There is also now a module that covers the appraisal requirements for RoT that we have developed for the new appraiser training. It can be accessed here:

<https://www.appraisal.nes.scot.nhs.uk/appraiser-training/new-appraiser/pre-course-modules/07a-appraisal-in-trainer-role-secondary-care-university/>

This would also be useful for established appraisers as a refresher session.

## Review of GMC Good Medical Practice

As you may be aware, the GMC’s Good Medical Practice review has been taking place for a while and if you haven’t seen it yet, you can find the details at <https://www.gmc-uk.org/ethical-guidance/good-medical-practice-review>

The draft version is due out in June, with the full version due later in the autumn.

The publication of this will be used to inform the further development of SOAR.

## Support for Appraisal Leads and Appraisal Admins

NES organised two National Appraisal Leads meeting via MS Teams on 30 August 2022 and 07 March 2023 respectively. Both meetings were very well attended and received.

The meeting in August covered several topics, most notably issues that emerged during Covid where doctors are increasingly working remotely and challenges undertaking PSQ. The March meeting included discussion of electronic methods of PSQ.

For the National Appraisal Admin teams' group, NES organised four “coffee morning” style catch up meetings on 01 June 2022, 01 September 2022, 30 November 2022 and 22 February 2023. These informal meetings proved a useful platform for both new and existing members to network with one another and allowed us to explain NES’ role in supporting the group.

## Team Changes

Known as the “Richard Gere of West Port” as some from the Edinburgh office will fondly remember, **Professor Amjad Khan’s** calm personality and unwavering support for medical appraisal has been instrumental in steering us through the pandemic. Sadly, Professor Khan has called time on his illustrious 37-year dedication to the NHS and will be retiring at the end of June 2023. When Professor Khan joined NES back in 2015, he brought with him a wealth of experience that we were able to draw upon. His welcoming manner and positive approach will be greatly missed.

*Amjad, thank you for everything and from all of us, we wish you a long, healthy and happy retirement.*

We are delighted to welcome **Mandie Thrippleton** to the team, who joined us on a one-year contract from 1st November 2022, taking up the role of Medical Appraisal Administrator. Her role has recently been extended until end of March 2024 and we are thrilled she is able to continue to support us in the delivery of appraiser training and SOAR helpdesk.

**Stacey Lucas** (Medical Appraisal Administrator) returned to the Medical Appraisal team in April 2023 after 1-year secondment as Senior Officer in NMAHP. We are delighted to have Stacey back in the team - w*elcome back Stacey!*

**Pamela Curran** (Medical Senior Officer) has now been with us for almost a year on secondment. Pamela has settled in well and has been a great asset to the team, bringing her vast knowledge and experience from her previous role as Appraisal Administrator in NHS Ayrshire and Arran. We are delighted to announce that Pamela’s role with the team has been made permanent and her appointment will provide us with much needed stability in training and service provision.

## Meet the Team

**Professor Amjad Khan**  
NES Revalidation Lead

**Dr Christiane Shrimpton**Associate Postgraduate Dean for Appraisal and Revalidation

**William Liu**Training Manager (Medical Appraisal)

**Eilidh Henderson**Senior Officer (Medical Appraisal)

**Pamela Curran**Senior Officer (Medical Appraisal)

**Stacey Lucas**Administrative Officer (Medical Appraisal)

**Hannah Asrih**Administrative Officer (Medical Appraisal)

**Mandie Thrippleton**Administrative Officer (Medical Appraisal)

# SOAR Update

## What is SOAR?

Scottish Online Appraisal & Revalidation (SOAR) is the national IT system used by medics working in NHS Scotland for managing their appraisal processes. SOAR plays an integral role in Scottish Government’s common pathway approach to medical appraisal and revalidation; and is developed and maintained by NES in collaboration with health board teams.

## Supporting SOAR Users

Last year we had resolved 6127 tickets on the JIRA Helpdesk and of these, the data shows that 48% of which came from secondary care users and 32% from primary care. A considerable difference between primary and secondary care users requiring assistance from the helpdesk. Other users who got in touch included trainees, admin teams, clinical development fellows, Directors of Medical Education (DMEs) and others.

When analysing the ‘Query type’ data it was found that the highest number of queries were still around MSF (42%). This was followed by log in queries which were substantially lower at 25%. The other query types that logged a considerable number of tickets were related to incorrect details which needed updating (remains the same as last year at 12%) and appraisal form queries (submission, uploading, Form 4 etc) tallied at 7%. Other ticket types that were logged with far lower numbers included trainee queries, Continuing Professional Development (CPD) log/ Personal Development Plan (PDP), performance issues, PSQ and RoT log queries. This data provided the central SOAR team with a detailed insight into the most common query types and indeed how we can continue to improve our service to accommodate all users.

We will continue to support our users via the helpdesk, accessible either via the website directly or via email to [SOAR@nes.scot.nhs.uk](mailto:SOAR@nes.scot.nhs.uk).

## SOAR helpdesk outage

In April 2022 there was an unexpected and extremely rare SOAR Helpdesk outage for the duration of 1-week. During this time, the Medical Appraisal team had no access to the SOAR Helpdesk to view or resolve any SOAR Help Desk ticket queries.

A workaround was created to mitigate the system downtime, by constructing a temporary helpdesk solution via MS Forms. The Microsoft application form enabled users to contact us and send their SOAR system issues for us to action. This temporary process, in conjunction with logging all their details on Excel, meant that we could keep an accurate record and resolve all queries in a timely manner.

The solution was successful and functioned well, within a situation that was out with our control.

## SOAR development

There has been very little development on SOAR in the past year as staff remain under pressure to prioritise various post-Covid related projects. However…

## SOAR Options Review

Following feedback from national stakeholders, the Scottish Government commissioned a review of SOAR to understand what is currently working well and identify what needs to be improved or changed to meet user needs now and into the future.

The focus of this review (conducted by external partners, not NES) was on medical appraisal and how well SOAR supports this.

All SOAR users were invited to contribute via an online survey which ran from late July until the end of September. Survey respondents were invited to volunteer for focus-group workshops to help our external provider understand how SOAR is currently used and how it could be improved.

Groups of users were then invited to participate in several SOAR User Engagement workshops held throughout September. Each workshop brought users of the same type together such as Appraisees, Appraisers, Administrators etc, and enabled the discussion to focus on their experience using SOAR in their role.

A report of recommendations was presented to the RDBS in November 2022. The group then commissioned our external partners to develop an initial wireframe to visualise the proposed changes to the SOAR user interface, focusing on the Appraisee user experience. This was completed in March 2023 and discussions regarding next steps and development resources are ongoing.

## Continued Review of MSF Options

SOAR continues the provision of MSF via our 3rd party provider, WASP Software. Following review of SOAR helpdesk trends, a discussion was held with WASP to improve the service which has resulted in its further development scheduled for the first quarter of 2023/24. Once updated, users will no longer have to contact the helpdesk for assistance with repeating their MSF.

## Future projects

Depending on the outcome from the SOAR Options Review, we hope to further develop SOAR (in conjunction with the publication of the new GMC Good Medical Practice) to improve the functionality for both the team and users to ultimately make the system more user friendly.

**Pamela Curran**  
*Senior Officer (Medical Appraisal)*

**Mandie Thrippleton & Hannah Asrih**  
*Administrative Officers (Medical Appraisal)*

# Plans for 2023/2024

## Thank you

2022/2023 was a tremendously busy year for the team. It was the first time since the pandemic began that we had run a full schedule of Refresher appraiser training. Our capacity was stretched to the fullest and my personal thanks to everyone on the team and all the tutors and facilitators for their efforts into making last year such a success.

My thanks also to all our course participants for providing us with your post-training feedback. We were able to analyse your comments and have made adjustments to improve our training delivery.

Sincerest gratitude also to everyone who participated and contributed to the Scottish Government funded review of SOAR which took place last summer. More than 700 of you took part in the national survey as well as the follow-up focus-group workshops. Thank you for all your input and contributions.

## Year ahead

2023/2024 promises to be a busy year with similar level of training courses scheduled. We targeted invitations to appraisers who last attended a NES medical appraiser training pre-2019 and within the space of a few weeks, we have managed to fully book 8 of the 16 scheduled Refresher courses.

Following appraiser feedback from various events and training courses, we have also organised additional workshops as part of the Refresher programme of activities looking at Improving Appraisal Conversations using Coaching and Mentoring skills, specifically the GROW model and the Egan Skilled Helper model respectively. More information about these courses is available on our website: <https://www.appraisal.nes.scot.nhs.uk/appraiser-training/refresher-programme/>

Rather excitingly, for the first time since 2015/16, we will be running our own Medical Appraisers Conference again in September this year. Much like the coaching and mentoring workshops, this too stemmed from user feedback. It allows those with dual roles to fully engage with the NES Conference medical education sessions as well as those from the Appraisers conference. Details available at: <https://www.appraisal.nes.scot.nhs.uk/events/2023-smac/>

A report was presented to RDBS following last summer’s review of SOAR and 6 key recommendations were made:

1. Improve the SOAR user experience and implement user- centred design methods
2. Implement modern web front end technologies and development practices
3. Improve the design of content so that users find the information they need quickly and easily
4. Improve the CPD Log to enable more formative collection of CPD
5. Implement modern access and authentication mechanisms (log-in)
6. Implement a document viewing facility internal to SOAR

A set of wireframes (IT equivalent of building blueprints) was developed to illustrate the new user experience. This will be presented to RDBS in July and pending available resources, we will then liaise with developers to work on the proposed improvements.

We also have the publication of the GMC’s updated Good Medical Practice to look forward to, which will also impact and inform the work to further develop SOAR.

## Increased capacity

Whilst technology has enabled us to achieve a lot in terms of training delivery and cost savings – which has been a challenge in the current climate – none of the above is achievable without sustained administrative planning and support. We increased our team capacity last year as we welcomed Pamela Curran (Senior Officer) and Mandie Thrippleton (Administrative Officer) to the team on 1-year contracts (which have since been extended) and both have settled in well and made significant contributions to the team’s success. Our capacity this year has increased further with the return of Stacey Lucas (Administrative Officer) from her secondment.

This increased capacity has allowed us to explore in greater detail the feedback from the training courses and how we can improve on our service as well as our resources. Plans are already in place to review and improve the New Appraiser pre-course modules; and we are also looking at organising further sessions to help appraisers gain a better understanding of the Recognition of Trainer's processes and expectations.

## Refresher webinars: Coaching and Egan sessions

Following on from the successful piloting of the taster sessions on the Coaching GROW model and Mentoring Egan Skilled Helper model respectively, we intend to organise more of these webinars in the year ahead. The increased team capacity will certainly allow us to organise these as part of the Refresher Appraiser programme of activities.

The goal is not to re-train appraisers to coaches or mentors, but rather to introduce them to a different framework of discussion to use in appraisals.

## Moving on from the pandemic

Wellbeing approach to appraisal conversations has been a big theme since the pandemic began and it has brought people’s focus back to the original purpose of appraisal – supporting doctors and their development. Yes, it informs the revalidation decision making process, but **the purpose of giving doctors a confidential protected space and time to discuss and reflect on their experiences and development has not, and will not, change.**

As we move on from the pandemic, let’s not lose sight of the supportive nature of appraisal. Many attendees of the New Appraiser courses have fed back to us that their inspiration for wanting to become an appraiser is down to the supportive and reflective discussions they had at their own appraisals. We have equally heard back from appraisers at the Refresher training how they valued the opportunity to discuss their experience with fellow peers out with their health board and specialty. I am pleased and privileged – as a team – to have played a small part in this and invite you to keep the appraisal **conversations** going.

**William Liu***Training Manager (Medical Appraisal)*