Ever thought of becoming a GP Appraiser?

It is always a real privilege, and occasionally a real challenge, to support our colleagues in looking at their work and discussing their priorities for their professional development. The appraisal discussion uses the same skills as a good consultation: good active listening, questioning, feedback, agenda setting, rapport and empathy, appropriate challenge, and time management. In addition you need to be organized with suitable IT and written communication skills.

Revalidation is just around the corner and will introduce additional elements of professional judgments about the quality of the documentation that the doctor produces at appraisal and supporting doctors in their progress towards revalidation. Wessex Deanery Appraisal and Revalidation Service offer new appraiser training courses throughout the year.

Training is offered free to NHS GPs, in the Wessex Deanery area, although there is no locum backfill for your time. It is also available to potential new appraisers from other sectors e.g. secondary care, non NHS or outside Wessex, at cost. Mixing with others during new appraiser training is a source of valuable insights.

In Wessex, you would need to be able to offer enough time to carry out between 6 and 24 appraisals each year and undertake at least 6 hours of appraiser related CPD a year. Applicants must be doctors who have been practicing for at least 5 years and who have local credibility. You will be asked to submit 500 words as to why you would like to become an appraiser and the skills you feel you can offer.

The training course runs on 2 days. The course covers all the core competencies defined by the Revalidation Support Team for appraisers, in particular the key knowledge and understanding around appraisal and revalidation and the core communication skills and professional judgments.

There is ample opportunity to rehearse the core skills, with observation by a course facilitator, and both verbal and written feedback on your performance. Your competency is assessed by the course facilitators, and you must demonstrate a satisfactory level of skill to become an appraiser.

At present, attendance on the new appraiser training course is part of the process by which you determine whether this role is for you. Successful completion of the training is not a guarantee that there will be appraisal work available in your locality, but you will be informed of any vacancies and invited to interview.

If you are interested in finding out more please contact gill.watson@wessex.hee.nhs.uk