Welcome to the latest issue of Responsible Officers' News. We hope that these updates will keep you informed of progress and developments across the RST, GMC and DH and the plans for implementation of medical revalidation. There are a number of responsible officer training events across England in the next couple of months, so we hope you will take the opportunity to network with colleagues and to raise issues with staff from the RST, DH and GMC attending these events.

Core information - a reminder

All responsible officers, appraisers and doctors should now be aware of three core documents which will enable them to prepare for their own revalidation. These are:

1. **Good Medical Practice** - core ethical guidance for doctors, which sets out the principles and values on which good practice is founded.

2. **The Good Medical Practice Framework** for appraisal and revalidation - this sets out the broad areas which should be covered in medical appraisal and on which recommendations to revalidate doctors will be based.

3. **Supporting Information guidance** - this sets out the supporting information that doctors will need to provide at annual appraisal and the frequency with which it should be provided.

The draft Medical Appraisal Guide is still open for feedback. The guide describes the essential elements of appraisal for doctors and the process appraisers will undertake to assess the doctor's supporting information against the GMP framework.

Latest GMC update

The GMC Continued Practice Board met in September and the papers are now available on their website. In particular, there are papers on the revalidation of trainees and on the rollout of the Employer Liaison Service planned for later this year.

Read the papers [http://www.gmc-uk.org/about/10438.asp](http://www.gmc-uk.org/about/10438.asp)
ORSA report and interim ORSA coming soon
The review of the ORSA exercise carried out in the spring is now complete and we are expecting publication of the report in mid October.

Testing is now underway for the interim ORSA report which will look at a small set of key metrics at 30 September 2011. The electronic submission tool will be sent out to responsible officers later this month.

Revised revalidation guide for GPs published
The Royal College of General Practitioners has now published version 6 of their Guide to Revalidation. This is a useful document for primary care doctors and is available on the RCGP website:
http://www.rcgp.org.uk/revalidation/revalidation_guide.aspx

Draft information management guidance published
The RST has now published three pieces of draft information management guidance:

- Information flows for medical appraisal and revalidation in England
- Management and quality assurance information
- Essential functionality of computerised support systems for medical appraisal and revalidation in England

We would welcome any feedback on these documents and suggestions for any further issues where clarification is needed. A fourth document covering information sharing and governance will be made available later this year.

Read and comment on the documents.

Appraiser training and support guidance under development
The RST is developing a range of sample materials, guidance and advice on training and support for medical appraisers, covering four main areas:

1. Recruitment: guidance on recruitment and selection including the following:
   - role description - the core content of the role of medical appraiser
   - person specification - the core content of the attributes required for the role of medical appraiser.
2. Training: guidance on the following:
   - competency framework - a description of the core knowledge, skills and competencies required for the role of medical appraiser
   - specification and curriculum for a training programme for new medical appraisers including programme and sample materials
   - specification and curriculum for a training programme for existing medical appraisers to ensure they are able to undertake appraisal for revalidation including programme and sample materials.
3. Support: guidance on the following:
   - principles and methods of ongoing support for medical appraisers.
   - peer review and support
- obtaining and managing feedback from appraisees
- continuing development in the role
- how the role of appraiser might be considered in the appraiser's own appraisal.

4. Review: guidance on the following:
- principles and methods of reviewing the performance of appraisers to ensure quality and consistency of appraisal.
- managing the performance of appraisers and emerging methodologies for evaluation and assessment of appraiser performance.

The suite will be available at the end of December 2011 but may need to be amended in March 2012 in the light of the content of the Medical Appraisal Guide (MAG).

Language checks to be strengthened

All doctors who want to practise in the NHS in England will have to prove they can speak a good standard of English before they are allowed to work, under new rules announced by Health Secretary Andrew Lansley on Tuesday 4 October.

Whilst it is a key role for employers to ensure the doctors they employ are fit for purpose, sustained media coverage involving high profile cases has demonstrated that local checks are not always of themselves sufficient, resulting in risks to patient safety.

Overseas trained doctors have and do make an important contribution to the NHS and safe care. However, persistent concerns about the skills and competencies of some foreign doctors, particularly in respect of language skills have demonstrated a need for legislation on language checks to be strengthened. This is likely to be through amendment to the Responsible Officer Regulations to build on the existing statutory duties that responsible officers have to ensure that there are adequate systems in place for recruitment to medical posts.

The Department of Health will be exploring options for amendment to the Medical Act to provide the GMC with more explicit powers to take action where concerns arise about a doctor's communication skills. It will be consulting on the revised Responsible Officer Regulations in due course.

Have your say on the new RST website

The NHS Revalidation Support Team (RST) is currently redeveloping its website and would welcome feedback during October from responsible officers, appraisers, or those involved in the administration of revalidation within designated bodies. This would simply involve reviewing a few pages of the website and providing some brief feedback via email or phone. This valuable feedback will help to shape the design and layout of the website and ensure the website is a useful and relevant resource for all.

If you know colleagues who may be interested in providing some feedback, please ask them to contact joanna.quayle@rst.nhs.uk. Thank you for your consideration.

We hope you have enjoyed reading this issue. If you have any feedback or questions, please contact Nigel Woods, Senior Project Manager, Organisational Readiness at nigel.woods@rst.nhs.uk