16 March 2020

File reference: 20200316-RO guidance during COVID-19 FINAL-O

To: All Medical Officers and Civilian Medical Practitioners

APPRAISAL AND REVALIDATION DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

1. It is recognised by the General Medical Council (GMC) and Responsible Officers (RO) that during the COVID-19 pandemic doctors across Defence will need to re-prioritise their outputs, focusing on provision of clinical care. Over the coming weeks and months, it is likely that doctors will not have the necessary time to fully prepare for appraisal and it may be difficult to meet face-to-face with their appraisers.

2. Appraisal is a local process. Responsible Officers can change the process including how many appraisals are required per revalidation period; therefore, doctors approaching revalidation who do not have the opportunity to complete their next appraisal, could still be revalidated rather than be deferred.

3. With immediate effect and until further notice:
   a. Doctors due an appraisal within 6 months may contact their single-Service (sS) or MOD appraisal team and request a 6-month deferral of their appraisal. For those in their last year of their 5-year revalidation period, deferral of their appraisal should not jeopardise their revalidation if they will have completed:
      (1) 4 appraisals;  
      (2) an appraisal within 18 months of their scheduled revalidation date;  
      (3) Multi Source Feedback; and a  
      (4) Patient Satisfaction Survey¹.
   b. All appraisals may now be conducted via video-conferencing or under extreme circumstances by telephone, without the need to seek permission from the RO. The means of appraisal must be recorded on the appraisal record.

4. Deferred appraisals will be recorded as authorised and considered a neutral act. Those wishing to defer their appraisal but who do not fulfil the above criteria should discuss their situation with their sS or MOD appraisal team.

5. The above guidance will remain under regular review.

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RN RO  Army RO  RAF RO  MOD RO

¹ Unless the MO is in a non-clinical role and has been granted a waiver by their RO.