

Who can look at my appraisal?

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Information Governance

The security and confidentiality of personal and sensitive information, such as that contained in a doctor's appraisal portfolio, are very important. The principles of Information Governance that apply are well covered in the NHS England Medical Appraisal Policy Annex H: Information Governance.

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/revalidation/wp-content/uploads/sites/10/2015/05/map-annex-h.pdf>

Essentially, this covers the safe storage and transmission of the appraisal portfolio as well as defining and limiting those who have access to the information provided by a doctor.

I find it helpful to think of this portfolio as similar to clinical notes, which are confidential, but which will be accessed by particular people for specific purposes. Like patient notes, it is important not to include third party identifiable information in the portfolio. The appraisal summary in particular must be mutually agreed and you should not sign it off unless you are comfortable with what it says.

So, who can see your portfolio?

Those who have permission to look at your appraisal portfolio include:

- Your appraiser(s)
- Your Responsible Officer (and those designated deputies who are involved in preparing the information that the RO needs to make a revalidation recommendation)
- The Wessex Appraisal Service Leadership Team - who provide quality assurance for the individual appraisers, including the Senior Appraisers (currently Dr Sue Bowen, Dr Samantha Davies, Dr Karen Gregory, Dr Majid Jalil, Dr Shehla Jamil, Dr Ed Sheridan, Dr Andie Siggers), the Deputy Service Lead (currently Dr Stephanie Hughes) and the Regional Director (currently Dr Susi Caesar)
- The Wessex Appraisal Service Quality Assurance Team - who provide quality assurance to the Area Office that the appraiser statements and advice accurately reflect the content of the appraisal portfolio
- The Wessex Appraisal Service Administrative Team – for the purposes of dealing with the administrative support of the appraisal process (currently Gill Watson, Sarah Lang, David Shill, Chris Davis, Jools Mumford and Penny Hockley)
- The GMC (for the purposes of making a revalidation recommendation or investigating a case of failure to engage)
- Anyone that you give permission to see your portfolio – but remember that you are not obliged to share your portfolio with anyone else, although you may choose to do so

As you can see, the purposes for which each group of people have access to your portfolio are clearly defined and relatively restricted. All Health Education England Wessex Appraisal Service employees have very explicit confidentiality clauses in their contracts, and annual training in Information Governance.

When would we need your explicit permission to look at your portfolio?

Our policy clearly states that if we wish to use your appraisal information for any other purpose than the quality assurance and appraisal administration covered above; we need to ask for your explicit permission. We are grateful to those doctors who are prepared to share information so that research can be undertaken but you should never feel under any pressure to do so.