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To: All responsible officers of acute sector NHS hospital trusts and foundation trusts  
All Responsible Officers of NHS England

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**RE: Organisational Readiness Self-Assessment (ORSA) 2012/13  
Appraisal Rates**

Dear Responsible Officer

You will be aware that the NHS Revalidation Support Team (RST) has recently concluded the above exercise and individual reports, showing designated bodies' responses with sector and national comparators have been sent to all organisations that took part.

In overall terms, substantial progress has been made in improving the quality of the organisational processes of clinical governance and appraisal that underpin revalidation. These same processes are integral to improving the quality and safety of care and to service development. The improvements have involved considerable effort from senior medical and managerial staff and are to be commended.

However, we are concerned that appraisal rates for consultants, staff grade, associate specialist and doctors on short term contracts in the acute hospital sector remain significantly lower than their NHS counterparts in primary care and mental health sectors.

The results show that only 75.1% of consultants and 60.7% of staff grade and associate specialist doctors in the acute hospital sector had an appraisal in 2012/13. This compares with 84.3% and 80.7% respectively in mental health and 90.3% of GPs. Appraisal rates for doctors on short term contracts in NHS hospital trusts were 32.9%.

These appraisal rates are worrying and I am keen to understand the underlying factors behind these rates. I am also sure that boards of provider organisations would wish to understand the reasons behind such low rates and what actions are being taken to improve the situation.

Annual appraisal is both a contractual and a professional obligation for all NHS doctors and all trusts are expected to have plans which demonstrate how they will ensure that all of their doctors are in a system of annual appraisal.

It is clear that the large numbers of doctors on short-term or temporary contracts provide special challenges due to their movement through the health system and hospital trusts will need to significantly improve arrangements to ensure these doctors are included in appraisal systems and their appraisals are completed when they are due.

It is important that trust boards are fully aware of their statutory responsibilities in relation to the revalidation of doctors. The board should be informed of any weakness in these organisational systems as identified through the ORSA exercise, and the actions which are being put in place to address them.

Yours sincerely



Sir Bruce Keogh  
Medical Director NHS England

Cc: David Behan, Chief Executive of the Care Quality Commission  
Professor Sir Mike Richards, Chief inspector of hospitals, Care Quality Commission  
Chief executives of acute sector NHS hospital trusts and foundation trusts  
Accountable Officers, Clinical Commissioning Groups (via CCG bulletin)  
Una Lane, Director, Registration and Revalidation, General Medical Council  
Dr David Bennett, Chief Executive, Monitor  
David Flory CBE, Chief Executive, NHS Trust Development Authority  
Dame Barbara Hakin, Interim Chief Operating Officer & Deputy Chief Executive, NHS England  
Jo-Anne Wass, National Director: HR, NHS England  
Rosamond Roughton, National Director: Commissioning Development, NHS England  
Allan Coffey, Chief Executive, Revalidation Support Team

