**STAFF APPRAISAL POLICY**

**Introduction**

Research shows that effective staff appraisal is positively linked to the delivery of effective patient services. When done well, appraisals help to strengthen relationships and improve team work.

**What is an Appraisal?**

An appraisal is a process to review how work is carried out and to plan future activity. It involves reviewing performance against objectives over the last twelve months, and agreeing new objectives (both organisational and personal) for the coming year. It also allows a suitable means to assess strengths and determine training needs to meet the ever changing demands of the work in General Practice.

Appraisals are a two-way agreement, with a focus on the future, and how to work effectively. It can be a useful conduit for staff ideas and suggestions for improvements in current processes, if the practice fosters an ethos of encouragement.

**How is an Appraisal Conducted?**

Appraisals should be done annually, although interim reviews are sometimes a useful means to ensure progress. There are various things to consider when planning an appraisal. These include: when, where and how

* **When?**

In General Practice, it is preferable to complete them at the beginning of the new financial year. This is still an opportune time, as targets and objectives will be very meaningful at the onset of the new year.

* **Where?**

The appraisal should be conducted in as informal a location as possible, but without risk of interruption.

* **How?**

Documentation should be sent to the employee in advance of the appraisal interview, and they should be asked to complete as much as they can beforehand. You may wish to ask for this completed version before the meeting, but this can sometimes be misconstrued as the manager wanting to be forewarned (and therefore armed against) any issues or problems.

* **By Whom?**

It is usually the line manager who will complete and appraisal, however if a 360 degree is used, then comments should be obtained beforehand from all levels of staff who work with the employee and may have valid input to the appraisal.

**Appraisal Format**

The actual appraisal interview should be as relaxed as possible. It should not be used to discipline someone – the disciplinary process sits well outside the appraisal process.

* **Documentation**

Go through all documentation at the outset, referring to targets set the previous year, and progress made against these. If targets have not been met to the level expected, then they should be discussed in more detail, with plans put in place to help overcome any shortfall.

* **SMART actions**

Any actions need to be set against SMART principles (i.e. Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Time-bound). If progress against targets has not been as hoped, then care must be taken to set several short-term goals, and set aside time to review these during the following months.

* **Signatures**

It is essential that the employee is in agreement with all comments made and recorded, and all actions agreed and planned. The appraiser should make sure that all documentation is signed by both the Appraiser and the Appraisee.

**Governance Arrangements**

The Practice Manager will be responsible for the maintenance and implementation of this policy. The policy will be reviewed 2 years from the date of publication. Any substantial changes will be approved by the Senior Management Team before implementation.