

Guidance for Trainers attending Approval & Re-approval Visits

Training practices are selected on the basis of 2 key factors:

- a keen, motivated and skilled Trainer, and
- a supportive, well organised and high quality training practice.

In the Bristol area, the standard is as high, if not higher, than anywhere else in the UK. We like to see the practices that we use for training in the top 10% nationally, both clinically and educationally.

To ensure that this is the case in Severn, there is a system of regular review by Deanery visiting teams.

Each team is led by the local Associate Director, and includes a Trainer, a GP Registrar and, on occasion, a lay member of GPEC (General Practice Educational Committee). Most practices are re-inspected every 3 years.

What happens at the visit?

See the AD's webpage for a typical timetable.

There are 6 main components of the visit:

1. A confidential planning session amongst the visiting team for the rest of the visit.
2. A review of the practice, and those of its staff involved in teaching.
3. A discussion with the Trainer(s) of issues arising from previous visits and the (anonymised) 3-month reviews with their most recent GP Registrars.
4. A discussion between the current GPR at the practice and usually the visiting Registrar.
5. A review of a video of a recent tutorial prepared by the Trainer.
6. A confidential discussion amongst the visiting team to develop a recommendation for re-approval or otherwise, followed by feedback to the practice by the AD.

What is my role on the visit?

As a jobbing Trainer you are well aware of, on one hand, the challenges and reality of training, and on the other, the standards and expertise required. What we are looking for is the pragmatic "view from the street" on the practice and its trainer(s).

Often, it is quickly obvious that the practice exceeds the Deanery requirements by such a huge margin that it is challenging to find anything useful to say in terms of suggestions for further development. In this situation you can relax, enjoy a good snoop, learn some new ideas, and hopefully steal a few to try out in your own practice.

Occasionally there may be one or more issues that bring into question the practice's future training status. This is usually anticipated from previous feedback or visits, and is typically dealt with by recruiting a highly experienced (and forewarned) Trainer, Course Organiser or another Associate Director to accompany the team.

Don't worry if you haven't done a visit like this before. I'll guide you through the process.

The visit, and the discussions you have with the other visitors, are entirely confidential and must remain so following the visit.

What do I actually do?

Most Trainers take part by:

1. Reviewing the application forms and other documentation, and listing key issues (positive or negative) that are worth exploring further. This must be done **before** the visit – there won't be time to do it on the day. Paula or Siobhan will email you the documentation about a week before the visit.
2. Deciding on question areas to explore with the Trainer and other staff engaged in teaching. We usually give the less controversial areas to the visiting GPR.
3. Looking around the practice, the Registrar's room, and chatting to the administrative and clinical staff. There is an element of overtly recognising their training role and thanking them for it on behalf of the Deanery.
4. Discussing (pre-agreed) key areas with the Trainer. Open questions seem to work well. Gentle challenge is the order of the day. We don't want to antagonise, but the exploration needs to be in some depth to be useful. "Why?" is a useful question to use if you get stuck!
5. Contributing to the discussion on the Trainer's video – how would you have done it? How would you have preferred that it were structured, etc? How could it have been "even better.." We sometimes use mapping tools for this, otherwise we'll use Pendleton's rules.
6. Deciding, together with the rest of the visiting team, recommendations to the Deanery about the practice. New Trainers are usually approved for one year; established Trainers are usually approved for 3 years, unless there is a need to synchronise future re-approval visits with another Trainer at the practice. Occasionally the approval period is for less, or even withheld if there is a significant problem.

What's in it for me?

You'll be contributing to the maintenance of high quality GP training in our area. One of the reasons that the Bristol schemes are as good as they are is because your colleagues and predecessors have contributed to this quality control process.

Most Trainers find the experience enjoyable and informative. The chance to have a detailed look around another training practice is always useful and educational. Certainly the Registrars are always very positive about attending such visits. Exploring how other Trainers actually set about teaching is always interesting and most of us have picked up really useful tips and ideas from our re-approval visits.

The Deanery appreciates your contribution to a re-approval visit, and hopes that you will see it as a valuable educational experience in itself – not to mention that it is actually one of the criteria of being a Trainer! It is entirely reasonable to include it as an educational event in your PDP.

If you have any questions in advance of the visit, please email me or Mandy Price, the GP Education Co-ordinator: mandy.price@sewwesdeanery.nhs.uk

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