

APPLYING FOR APPROVED CLINICIAN APPROVAL

National Reference Group, June 2010

THE ROLE OF THE APPROVED AND RESPONSIBLE CLINICIAN

This document has been prepared by the National Reference Group on Section 12 and Approved Clinician approval with the aim of providing clear and consistent national guidance on the approval process for Approved Clinicians in England.

The Mental Health Act 2007 introduced the new roles of Approved Clinician and Responsible Clinician that can be filled by a range of mental health professionals.

An Approved Clinician is “a person approved by the appropriate national authority to act as an Approved Clinician for the purposes of the Mental Health Act 1983”.

A Responsible Clinician is the Approved Clinician who has been given overall responsibility for a patient’s case. Approved Clinicians who are allocated as Responsible Clinicians will undertake the majority of the functions previously performed by Responsible Medical Officers.

WHO CAN BECOME AN APPROVED CLINICIAN?

The Mental Health Act 1983 Approved Clinician (General) Directions 2008 allow Strategic Health Authorities to approve a range of registered and professionally qualified practitioners to act as Approved Clinicians. These are:

- Registered medical practitioners
- Registered psychologists
- First level nurses whose field of practice is mental health or learning disability
- Registered occupational therapists
- Registered social workers

WHAT ARE THE REQUIREMENTS FOR APPROVAL?

All potential applicants will need to apply under the General Approval Arrangements. The requirements for approval are:

1. That you fulfil one of the professional requirements.
2. That you have undertaken the appropriate training.
3. That you possess the necessary competencies.

HOW DO I APPLY FOR APPROVAL?

As part of the application process you will need to:

- Complete an application form.
- Attend a two-day initial training course for Approved Clinicians.
- Demonstrate that you meet the competencies as outlined in Schedule 2 of the Approved Clinician Directions and the associated guidance *Mental Health Act 2007 New Roles* (www.its-services.org.uk/silo/files/mental-health-act-2007--new-roles.pdf)

For medical practitioners on the specialist register:

The National Reference Group has adopted the position outlined in *New Roles* that doctors' accreditation to the Specialist Register is considered to constitute evidence of the competencies required to become an Approved Clinician, providing that this is supported by a completed application form, appropriate references, and a Curriculum Vitae demonstrating relevant experience. Applicants must also demonstrate that they are up to date with their professional Continuing Professional Development requirements.

Applications from doctors nearing completion of higher specialist training:

Doctors within 12 months of their expected date of Certificate of Completion of Training, who have been offered an acting-up locum consultant post which requires Approved Clinician approval, should be eligible providing that they:

- Complete the application form.
- Attend the two-day introductory course.
- Provide evidence from their programme director of satisfactory progress and anticipated completion date.
- Provide confirmation from their clinical or medical director that they have been offered an acting-up post with this degree of responsibility and are competent to take it up.

Approval in these circumstances would be made conditional upon successful accreditation to the Specialist Register within a specific timeframe.

Other doctors approaching Certificate of Completion of Training, who are not intending to take up a locum post, may also apply in advance. This will allow time for references to be obtained and for the application to be considered in advance of the date of obtaining the Certificate of Completion of Training. Applicants will need to inform the Administrators of the anticipated date of their Certificate of Completion of Training. Approval in these circumstances will normally start on the date of accreditation to the Specialist Register.

For professionals not on the specialist register:

For those professionals, in any professional group, who are NOT on the Specialist Register a portfolio must be submitted with their application to demonstrate that they meet the competencies required to become an Approved Clinician. Applicants should

seek the support and nomination of their employing organisation, which should be registered with the Care Quality Commission.

Registered Psychologists are referred to the advice prepared by The British Psychological Society (*Guidance for registered Psychologists in Making Applications to the British Psychological Society Approved Clinician Peer Review panel, Bruce T. Gillmer & John L Taylor, January 2010*). In accordance with these guidelines, Registered Psychologists are strongly advised to submit their portfolio to the British Psychological Society Approved Clinician Peer Review Panel for scrutiny before submitting their application for approval. Once they have received the Review Panel's report this should be included in the portfolio which should then be forwarded to the relevant Regional Approval Panel.

Other professional groups have not, to date, developed such guidelines and at present are requested to submit their portfolio directly to the Regional Approval Panel. Where Regional Clinician Pre-Approval Scrutiny Panels have been developed, it is recommended that these be used prior to submission.

WHAT DOCUMENTS SHOULD I INCLUDE IN MY PORTFOLIO?

As a minimum, your portfolio will need to provide evidence that you meet the competencies as outlined in *New Roles* which are:

- Understanding the role of the Approved Clinician and Responsible Clinician
- Legal and Policy Framework
- Assessment
- Treatment
- Care planning
- Leadership and multi-disciplinary team working
- Equality and cultural diversity
- Communication

Your portfolio should also contain:

- Documentary evidence of professional qualification.
- Evidence of current registration with the appropriate registration body.
- An up to date Curriculum Vitae.
- A summary of your experience as relevant to the role of Approved Clinician.
- Two anonymised case commentaries relating to your involvement in the care of a detained patient, which should demonstrate awareness, understanding and reflection on key areas of Approved Clinician competence and the guiding principles of the Code of Practice. They should be appended to examples of at least two relevant, anonymised, statutory reports (eg. Tribunal or Section renewal reports) which you have also prepared. The statutory reports may be hypothetical (ie. they may have been prepared solely for the purposes of your AC application but as though for a statutory purpose), but must be based on your personal contact with a patient.
- Two testimonies from suitably qualified professionals in a senior role who can validate your aptitude for the Approved Clinician role, one of whom must be an Approved Clinician.
- A 360 degree appraisal or equivalent that should include your immediate line manager/supervisor and multi-disciplinary team colleagues.

- A citation from the Medical Director or the Chief Executive of a Care Quality Commission registered organisation confirming that you meet the competencies as outlined above and supporting your application.
- A copy of your certificate of attendance from a two-day initial training course.
- Any other information you feel may be relevant. However, please bear in mind that any information relating to cases which you may decide to include **MUST** be completely anonymised and contain no detail that may be patient identifiable.

Detailed guidance can be found in Annex E 1 of the *New Roles* Guidance.

WHAT HAPPENS TO MY APPLICATION?

Once your application is received by the S12/AC office the AC Administrators will check that:

- You have correctly completed your application form (you will be advised if this is not the case).
- Carry out a check of your professional registration.
- Carry out a check against the Regional “Doctors Alerts” system.
- Take up references.

Once these checks have been completed and your references received, your application will be reviewed by the Regional Approval Panel. Exceptional circumstances will be considered by the panel where relevant, and the panel reserves the right to request applicants to attend interview. The decision of the panel will be communicated in writing to you once it is known.

WHERE AND FOR HOW LONG IS MY APPROVAL VALID?

Approval is granted for a period of five years and is valid throughout England. It is essential that you notify the Approved Clinician Administrators of any change in your home, work addresses or telephone numbers.

WHAT ELSE WILL MY APPROVED CLINICIAN APPROVAL ALLOW ME TO DO?

For **medical practitioners only**, Approved Clinician status will also allow you to exercise the functions reserved to doctors approved under Section 12(2) of the Mental Health Act. If you have not been previously approved as a Section 12(2) doctor, the National Reference Group and the Regional Approval Panel strongly recommend that you attend a two-day Section 12(2) induction course to familiarise yourself with this part of the Mental Health Act.

ARE THERE ANY CONDITIONS OF APPROVAL?

All Approved Clinician applicants must comply with the conditions of approval which are required by Direction 6 of the Approved Clinician Directions. These are:

- (a) That you notify the Section 12/Approved Clinician office if the requirements of approval are no longer met.
- (b) That you stop working as an Approved Clinician and notify the Section 12 / Approved Clinician office if you should be suspended from any of the registers or listings referred to in the professional requirements.
- (c) That you agree to any other condition that the Regional Approval Panel thinks appropriate. This will always include a requirement to remain up to date with Continuing Professional Development, and to undertake update training in the year before renewal, but may also include other conditions as may be relevant.

RE-APPROVAL

The statutory requirements for re-approval are the same as those for approval, apart from the requirement to attend an initial training course. Applicants must fulfil the professional requirements and possess the relevant competencies. Applicants for re-approval are expected to have attended an appropriate update course and to have kept up to date with professional Continuing Professional Development requirements. Appropriate references and an up-to-date Curriculum Vitae should be included with the application, but re-submission of a portfolio will not normally be required. These requirements also apply to practitioners previously approved under the transitional arrangements.

FURTHER ADVICE

Further advice or guidance can be obtained from the Section 12 / Approved Clinician Administrators who are:

NHS East of England	geraldine.bushell@eoe.nhs.uk jennie.papa@eoe.nhs.uk	01223 596953 01223 597744
NHS London	bertha.knott@nhs.net	020 8869 3515
NHS North East	neerap@tewv.nhs.uk	01642 837392
NHS North West	roberta.constantine@northwest.nhs.uk	0161 625 7253
NHS South Central	section12@southcentral.nhs.uk	01635 275663
NHS South East	Victoria.Wickenden@southeastcoast.nhs.uk	01293 778857
NHS South West	Hilary.eagles@southwest.nhs.uk janice.goodway@southwest.nhs.uk	01249 468351
NHS West Midlands	heather.walltham@bsmht.nhs.uk	0121 678 4650
NHS Yorkshire & Humber	elizabeth.morgan@rdash.nhs.uk	01302 327355