



Safer Recruitment

A Self-evaluation Tool

June 2026

Introduction

“Providing care and support is highly skilled work, which demands high levels of trust and responsibility, with some people being more suitable than others. Staff can hold considerable power over people experiencing care and need to be able to be trusted to use this authority and responsibility well. Best practice recruitment approaches are crucial to ensure that the right people, with suitable skills and values, are recruited. Ensuring that the skills, values and attitudes of potential employees match the post being recruited to is an important element of building a strong, stable staff team which supports better outcomes for people.” [Safer Recruitment Through Better Recruitment](#)

Safer recruitment involves different agencies and pieces of legislation. Although it is one of our ‘core assurances’ that we check on every inspection, there are areas that we do not regulate ourselves. This self-evaluation tool is designed to help in your commitment to keep people safe, by ensuring staff are recruited appropriately and in line with current guidance. It will help you to evaluate how well you are doing to support all areas of safer recruitment in your service(s) and identify any areas where you want to improve. Appendix 1 includes a selection of web links designed to support you in accessing the most current guidance across key areas of practice. Please note that these links are illustrative rather than exhaustive, and additional resources may be available.

In social care there is a broad range of employer types and various staff roles with differing responsibilities. Safer recruitment practice is just as vital to ensuring people’s safety regardless of the type of employer, service or job role. Each completed self-evaluation will look different depending on these factors and some areas of the tool will be more relevant to some employers than to others.

Some of the principles and standards in the [Health and Social Care Standards](#) and the [SSSC Codes of Practice](#) for Employers outline the recruitment expectations across social care and have been used to support the creation of this self-evaluation. The Care Inspectorate [Quality Improvement Frameworks](#) have also been used. We suggest you refer to these documents as well as the other areas of guidance when completing your self-evaluation.

Health and Social Care Principles and Standards

- **Compassion:** “My care is provided by people who understand and are sensitive to my needs and my wishes.”
- **Responsive Care and Support:** “I experience consistency in who provides my care and support and in how it is provided.”
- **Wellbeing:** “I feel safe and I am protected from neglect, abuse or avoidable harm.”
- **4.24** I am confident that people who support and care for me have been appropriately and safely recruited.
- **4.9** I can take part in recruiting and training people if possible.

SSSC Codes of Practice for Employers of Social Service Workers

- **1.2** Follow relevant safe recruitment guidance to check criminal records, registers and gaps in employment as part of assessing whether a person can carry out the duties of the job.
- **1.3** Request and provide accurate and appropriate information or references relating to a person’s suitability to work in a specified role.
- **1.4** Give workers clear information about their roles and responsibilities, relevant legislation and the policies and procedures they must follow in their work.

The Self-evaluation process

Self-evaluation is a continuous process that can lead to improvements over time. It is best done by those who know the service well. You should therefore find ways to include people experiencing care, their families, staff, or other stakeholders/professionals as appropriate. Successful self-evaluation does not mean showing you are getting everything right all of the time, it is about recognising the impact of your service, identifying where it can be better and acting on this. The Care Inspectorate [self-evaluation toolkit](#) can provide further guidance and ideas.

The self-evaluation process is made up of three key questions:

- 1 How are we doing?** This helps you to evaluate and understand the impact of your service on the lives of people experiencing care.
- 2 How do we know?** This helps you consider what evidence you have to show how good you are. You should use the best ways to gather this evidence for each section. This could include:
 - quality assurance and oversight activities
 - reviewing documentation that evidences how decisions are made
 - benchmarking against best practice guidance
 - the views of people experiencing care and their families
 - the views of other stakeholders or professionals that interact with your service.
- 3 What are we going to do now?**
This helps you to make specific plans to improve based on the first two questions, including changes you plan to test out and specific actions you are going to take.

You are not completing this self-evaluation tool for the Care Inspectorate, and we do not expect you to return it to us. This is part of your wider evaluation and improvement plan for your service and how you support improved outcomes for people. Acting on the results of this self-evaluation tool will contribute to ensuring the ongoing safety of people experiencing care.

We hope this tool will help you to identify key areas of your recruitment practice that can be improved.

The Self-evaluation Tool

The ability to identify what is working well, what is not working well and how improvements can be made is a strength. Using this information to develop and carry through an improvement plan demonstrates good leadership and management and is characteristic of an organisation that continues to develop to support the best outcomes for people.

The self-evaluation table gives you space to rate how you are doing against different statements, list and evaluate the evidence you have to back up the rating, and the next steps to take. This is the rating scale to choose from:

1. Major weaknesses - urgent remedial action required
2. Important weaknesses - priority action required
3. Strengths just outweigh weaknesses
4. Important strengths, with some areas for improvement
5. Major strengths
6. Outstanding or sector leading

You do not need to complete the whole self-evaluation tool at one time. It may be helpful to select a section to focus on initially.

By the end of the questions, you will be ready to complete an improvement plan with specific dates and people responsible for carrying through each step. The [self-evaluation toolkit](#) provides an improvement plan template, but you should use whatever works best for your service.

Date of this self-evaluation _____

Who led this self-evaluation? _____

Who else was involved? (Should include people experiencing care, family carers, staff, and external stakeholders.)

This image shows a blank sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

Our recruitment practice is reliable; the process is well organised, clearly documented and consistently followed.	1	2	3	4	5	6	How do we know? What is our evidence for choosing this number? Think about: What people tell you, what staff tell you, relevant documents and processes, quality assurance and oversight activities.	What would we like to focus on to make this even better? What areas do you need to improve? What could you do to increase your evaluation?
Recruitment policies and procedures follow best practice guidance.								
Our recruitment processes are fair, uphold equality and avoid discrimination.								
If applicable, we have an appropriate sponsorship license in place and maintain our responsibilities under this.								
Quality assurance processes evaluate safer recruitment practice.								

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Staff responsible for recruitment confidently implement safer recruitment guidance and standards.								
Safer recruitment documents are well organised and appropriately stored in compliance with GDPR.								
Recruitment documents are retained in accordance with our retention and deletion policies.								
Full records can be easily made available upon legitimate request including on inspection.								

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People are supported and cared for by staff who have been safely recruited.	1	2	3	4	5	6	How do we know? What is our evidence for choosing this number? Think about: What people tell you, what staff tell you, relevant documents and processes, quality assurance and oversight activities.	What would we like to focus on to make this even better? What areas do you need to improve? What could you do to increase your evaluation?
Appropriate right to work checks are completed.								
Appropriate criminal records checks are completed.								
We have clear policies and procedures on recruiting people with previous convictions in line with relevant guidance.								
Appropriate identity checks are in place.								
Professional registrations are in place where needed.								

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Appropriate number and types of references have been received.								
Appropriate qualification documents have been provided.								
Application forms/CVs contain full employment history.								
Any concerns raised during the recruitment process are managed sensitively and proportionately.								
Reasonable adjustments to support applicants are offered/considered.								

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People are supported by staff who are clear about their roles and responsibilities and conditions of employment.	1	2	3	4	5	6	How do we know? What is our evidence for choosing this number? Think about: What people tell you, what staff tell you, relevant documents and processes, quality assurance and oversight activities.	What would we like to focus on to make this even better? What areas do you need to improve? What could you do to increase your evaluation?
Contracts and conditions of employment are clear.								
Appropriate systems are in place for monitoring visa conditions including term-time working for overseas students.								
Staff are aware of their responsibilities under any relevant professional codes and standards.								
The employer is aware of their responsibilities under any relevant codes.								

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The needs of people using our service are considered when determining the skills and experience of staff being recruited.	1	2	3	4	5	6	How do we know? What is our evidence for choosing this number? Think about: What people tell you, what staff tell you, relevant documents and processes, quality assurance and oversight activities.	What would we like to focus on to make this even better? What areas do you need to improve? What could you do to increase your evaluation?
We are aware of the skill mix of current staff and target our recruitment activities to address any gaps in our staff team.								
A comprehensive recruitment plan is in place.								
The needs of the people using the service are kept under review and used to inform our recruitment and induction process.								
Feedback from people/families about their support needs is used to inform our recruitment and induction process.								

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People are supported by staff that have the right values, relevant skills and experience to carry out the role they have been appointed to.	1	2	3	4	5	6	How do we know? What is our evidence for choosing this number? Think about: What people tell you, what staff tell you, relevant documents and processes, quality assurance and oversight activities.	What would we like to focus on to make this even better? What areas do you need to improve? What could you do to increase your evaluation?
Job description and person specifications are available and individual to each role.								
Where references are not sufficiently detailed, we have processes in place to effectively assess the suitability of applicants.								
When candidates are new to the care sector, robust values-based recruitment techniques are implemented.								
Our interview process is accessible and inclusive. Further supports are provided when required.								

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Where people have less experience, values-based interviews are used to demonstrate they are the right person for the role.								
Our interview process includes competency-based elements relevant to each role.								

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People are supported by staff who are right for them.	1	2	3	4	5	6	How do we know? What is our evidence for choosing this number? Think about: What people tell you, what staff tell you, relevant documents and processes, quality assurance and oversight activities.	What would we like to focus on to make this even better? What areas do you need to improve? What could you do to increase your evaluation?
People using the service, their families and other stakeholders have opportunities to be involved in recruitment and selection.								
People have the necessary support to be involved in the recruitment and selection process in a meaningful way.								

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Recruiting young people (including 16-17-year-olds) and volunteers (including parent/family helpers).	1	2	3	4	5	6	How do we know? What is our evidence for choosing this number? Think about: What people tell you, what staff tell you, relevant documents and processes, quality assurance and oversight activities.	What would we like to focus on to make this even better? What areas do you need to improve? What could you do to increase your evaluation?
We make appropriate adaptations to our recruitment procedures for the recruitment of young people including when checking references, undertaking interviews, providing support and mentoring.								
Volunteers are aware of their specific roles and responsibilities.								
All staff are aware of the roles, responsibilities and purpose of volunteers.								
People using our service are aware of the role of volunteers.								

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Risk assessments and policies for the use of volunteers are in place.								
Relevant fitness checks are undertaken for people who volunteer with us.								

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Urgent/emergency recruitment contingencies.	1	2	3	4	5	6	How do we know? What is our evidence for choosing this number? Think about: What people tell you, what staff tell you, relevant documents and processes, quality assurance and oversight activities.	What would we like to focus on to make this even better? What areas do you need to improve? What could you do to increase your evaluation?
We have systems in place to check that any agency staff we employ have been safely recruited in line with best practice and legal guidelines and have relevant training and skills for the role.								
Our contingency plans for emergency staffing situations adhere to safer recruitment processes, as do the agencies we use in these circumstances.								

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Appendix1 - links to relevant guidance:

- [Safer Recruitment Through Better Recruitment](#)
Joint SSSC and Care Inspectorate guidance to support employers to safely recruit suitable staff for a range of roles involved in providing care and support.
- [International Recruitment toolkit – Adult Social Care](#)
Gov.UK guidance developed to help adult social care providers decide whether to recruit care workers and senior care workers from overseas, with guidance on how to do so in an ethical and responsible manner.
- [Disclosure Scotland](#)
Gov.Scot website for information and guidance on the PVG scheme and applying for disclosure checks.
- [Code of Practice for International Recruitment-Health and Social Care](#)
Gov.Scot publication - organisations must adhere to the 'Code of Practice' when undertaking international recruitment activity to appoint health and social care personnel.
- [Right to Work Checks – An Employer's Guide](#)
Gov.UK guidance explaining what employers must do to prevent illegal working in the UK by carrying out right to work checks before employing people to make sure they are allowed to work.
- [Sponsorship information for employers and educators](#)
Gov.UK guidance for student and worker sponsors, including full policy guidance, using the sponsorship management system and how to get help.
- [Right Values, Right People Toolkit](#)
This toolkit from SSSC helps employers identify and embed their values in the recruitment and selection process, with links to a range of tools produced by 'Skills for Care'.
- [A Guide for employers of 16–17-year-olds in social care \(Scotland\)](#)
Partnership between the SSSC, Care Inspectorate, Skills Development Scotland, Scottish Care and Coalition of Care and Support Providers in Scotland (CCPS). Case studies and testimonies both for employers and individuals experiencing care. Practical advice and suggestions for the recruitment and onboarding of young people into social care roles. This includes the application process, interviews, pre-employment communication, mentoring, ethical and legal considerations.

- [Volunteer Scotland](#)
Website of the national centre for volunteering with guidance including best practice, PVGs/Disclosure checks, inclusive practice.
- [Release Scotland](#)
Guidance on employing people with criminal convictions.
- [Scotland Works for You](#)
Government website with advice on employing people with convictions.
- [Disclosure Scotland Code of Practice](#)
Code of practice for all Accredited Bodies.

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