

Why Are We Still Assessing the Same Contractors Over and Over Again?

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In an industry where efficiency, cost control and safety performance are all under constant scrutiny, one question deserves to be asked more often: why are contractors still being asked to complete the same occupational health and safety assessments multiple times?

Across the construction and facilities management supply chain, pre-qualification is a routine part of procurement. Clients need assurance that contractors understand their legal responsibilities, have appropriate policies and systems in place and are competent to carry out work safely.

Few would dispute the importance of that - but the industry already has a system specifically designed to eliminate duplication in these assessments. The system in question is [Safety Schemes in Procurement](#) - better known as SSIP.

SSIP was created to reduce duplication in occupational health and safety pre-qualification across the construction and facilities management sectors. Its principle is simple: if a contractor has already passed a recognised health and safety assessment carried out by an SSIP member scheme, that assessment should be accepted across the wider SSIP network.

In short, one credible assessment should be enough. Yet across many procurement processes, contractors still find themselves repeating essentially the same assessment multiple times.

The hidden cost of duplicate assessments

For large contractors, repeated pre-qualification may be little more than an administrative nuisance. For SMEs, however, it can represent a significant burden.

Every new assessment requires:

- time spent collating policies and documentation;
- staff hours completing forms and responding to queries;
- fees paid to certification bodies or assessment schemes; and
- ongoing management of multiple certificates and renewal cycles.

Multiply this across numerous clients, frameworks, and supply chains and the cost quickly escalates.

These costs rarely disappear. Instead, they move through the supply chain. Contractors absorb them initially, but ultimately they appear in project pricing, service contracts and operational overheads. In other words, duplicated safety assessments cost the industry as a whole.

More importantly, they divert time and attention away from the real objective: improving safety performance in the workplace. SSIP exists precisely to address this issue.

A problem the industry already solved

Working within the SSIP framework, member schemes assess suppliers against a set of core criteria aligned with UK health and safety legislation and recognised industry standards. When a supplier achieves certification through one SSIP member scheme, that assessment can be recognised by others through the SSIP mutual recognition process.

This means suppliers do not need to start from scratch every time they encounter a new scheme or procurement requirement.

The process maintains rigorous safety standards while avoiding unnecessary repetition. In practice, it should significantly reduce the need for duplicate assessments.

Assurance or administrative habit?

Pre-qualification plays an important role in procurement. No responsible client wants to appoint suppliers without verifying their competence and safety management systems. But when multiple organisations assess the same suppliers against essentially identical criteria, the value of repetition becomes questionable.

If a contractor has already demonstrated compliance with health and safety legislation and industry expectations through a robust, independent SSIP assessment, what additional safety benefit is achieved by asking them to complete another similar process?

Often, the answer is very little. What persists instead is a mixture of legacy procurement requirements, organisational preferences, and historical processes – each adding another layer of paperwork.

Why it matters for FM procurement

Facilities management organisations operate within some of the most complex supply chains in the built environment.

FM teams rely on a wide range of suppliers – from maintenance contractors and specialist access providers to cleaning, engineering and refurbishment services. Many of these suppliers carry out work in occupied buildings, interact with critical infrastructure or work at height where safety is paramount.

Ensuring those suppliers are competent and compliant is essential. But procurement processes must also be proportionate and efficient.

Recognising SSIP certification within procurement requirements allows FM organisations to:

- avoid unnecessary duplication of health and safety assessments;
- reduce onboarding time for suppliers;
- lower administrative costs across the supply chain;
- improve access for SMEs and specialist suppliers; and
- maintain confidence that suppliers have been independently assessed.

So, buyers retain the assurance they need without creating additional bureaucracy for suppliers.

A simpler, smarter approach

The construction and facilities management sectors has made significant progress in improving safety standards over the past two decades. But procurement processes have sometimes evolved in ways that unintentionally create duplication and inefficiency.

SSIP was designed to simplify this landscape without lowering standards.

For buyers, it provides confidence that suppliers have been assessed against recognised health and safety criteria. For suppliers, it offers a route to demonstrate competence without repeating the same process multiple times. For the wider industry, it represents a more efficient way of maintaining safety assurance across complex supply chains.

Which brings us back to the original question: If a contractor has already passed a credible SSIP assessment, why ask them to prove the same thing again?

For FM leaders seeking to streamline procurement while maintaining strong safety oversight, the answer may lie not in creating new systems – but in making better use of the one that already exists.