

SSIP: Simplifying Pre-qualification and Strengthening Health & Safety Across UK Procurement

2 hours ago



For many organisations involved in facilities management, construction and property services, health and safety pre-qualification can feel like an administrative layer that is both unavoidable and increasingly complex. Multiple certification schemes, overlapping requirements and repeated assessments across different clients often create the impression of duplication rather than progress.

That perception is one of the long-standing challenges faced by [SSIP](#). On the surface, it can appear to be a multi-layered network of assessment bodies and standards. In practice, however, its purpose is the opposite: to reduce complexity, remove duplication and make it easier for buyers and suppliers to engage confidently in safe, compliant procurement.

The recent addition of a short explainer video on the SSIP homepage is a timely step in helping the industry understand that distinction more clearly.

Why SSIP can appear complex

The UK construction and facilities management supply chain is highly fragmented. Contractors often work across multiple client organisations, each with their own procurement processes and risk expectations. Historically, this has led to a situation where suppliers are required to demonstrate their health and safety capability repeatedly, often using slightly different formats or criteria.

SSIP was established in 2009 to address that issue through mutual recognition between assessment schemes. The existence of multiple member schemes and verification routes can still, however, make the overall structure difficult to interpret at first glance - particularly for those encountering it for the first time.

This is where misunderstanding can arise: what is designed as a simplification mechanism can, when viewed externally, appear like another layer of process.

What SSIP is designed to do

At its core, SSIP exists to streamline health and safety pre-qualification. It does this through a principle often summarised as “assess once, recognised by many”: or “Deem to Satisfy”.

In practical terms, this means that a supplier who has been assessed by an SSIP member scheme does not need to repeat the same core health and safety assessment for every client that recognises SSIP. Instead, their original assessment is mutually recognised across the network of SSIP member schemes and supporting organisations.

This approach is intended to achieve three key outcomes:

- Reduce duplication of pre-qualification assessments
- Improve consistency in how health and safety capability is evaluated
- Allow procurement teams to focus more on project-specific risk rather than administrative repetition

For contractors and service providers, this reduces the time and cost associated with repeated submissions. For clients and buyers, it helps provide a consistent baseline of assurance when engaging new suppliers.

Relevance for facilities management and procurement

Within facilities management in particular, supply chains are often broad and multi-tiered, covering everything from hard services and maintenance to cleaning, security, and specialist works. Many of these services involve regular contractor onboarding, often across multiple sites or portfolios.

In this context, SSIP recognition can play a practical role in improving procurement efficiency. Rather than repeatedly reviewing the same underlying health and safety documentation in different formats, procurement teams can rely on a recognised assessment standard (the SSIP Core Criteria) and focus their efforts on contract-specific requirements, site risks and performance expectations.

This does not replace due diligence; rather, it provides a consistent foundation on which further project-level assessment can be built.

The link between simplification and safety

A key misconception is that simplification in procurement might come at the expense of rigour. SSIP has comprehensively challenged that assumption.

By standardising the assessment of core health and safety competence through a single threshold standard, SSIP aims to support higher consistency across the supply chain. This reduces the likelihood of fragmented or duplicated assessments and helps ensure that suppliers are being measured against the exact same baseline.

In theory and practice, clearer procurement processes can also support better safety outcomes. When administrative burden is reduced, both clients and contractors can allocate more time to managing actual operational risk, such as site-specific hazards, method statements and ongoing performance monitoring – rather than repeatedly evidencing the same baseline information.

Why the explainer video matters

Despite its intended simplicity, SSIP's structure has not always been easy to communicate quickly. This is particularly true for new entrants to the system or organisations outside the core construction sector who engage with SSIP as part of broader procurement activities.

The new explainer video on the SSIP homepage aims to address this by presenting the scheme in a more accessible format. In under two minutes, it outlines:

- How the SSIP framework operates
- The role of mutual recognition between schemes
- The benefits for contractors and clients
- How duplication in pre-qualification is reduced

For organisations trying to understand whether SSIP certification is relevant to them, this provides a straightforward entry point without the need to navigate technical documentation upfront. The video is available on the SSIP website homepage.

A simpler system than it first appears

In sectors such as facilities management, where procurement efficiency and safety performance are closely linked, that principle has clear relevance. The more consistently baseline standards are recognised, the more time organisations can devote to managing the factors that genuinely differ from site to site and contract to contract.

The introduction of clearer communications tools, such as the new explainer video, is a useful step in reinforcing that message: SSIP is not an additional layer of complexity, but an attempt to remove it.

“SSIP was established to remove unnecessary duplication and make health and safety pre-qualification simpler for everyone involved in procurement. Our new explainer video clearly demonstrates how the ‘assess once, recognised by many’ approach benefits both suppliers and clients, helping organisations save time, reduce administrative burden and focus on managing real health and safety risks.” – Eleanor Eaton, Chair, SSIP