

## Associate Assessors Frequently Asked Questions



### Question 1: What is an associate assessor?

Associate assessors are professionals with significant practice or management experience in services for children, adults or justice. They bring up-to-date knowledge to joint inspections. Associate assessors participate in joint inspections by agreement with their employer for a specific inspection team. We aim to have at least one associate assessor working with us on every joint inspection team.

### Question 2: What is the legal basis for involvement in inspections?

The Public Services Reform (Scotland) Act 2010 ("the Act") S.115 provides the legislative basis for joint inspections. The Care Inspectorate has the authority to deploy teams of inspectors, including Associate Assessors.

### Question 3: Why does the Care Inspectorate use associate assessors?

We believe that the inclusion of associate assessors brings current practice perspectives to our joint inspections. They can help ensure we are partnership-orientated and contribute to our understanding of the contemporary picture of service planning and delivery. Involving associate assessors contributes to transparency in our work and allows greater peer challenge and learning. At the same time, their involvement provides an ideal opportunity to help build capacity for self-evaluation and improvement in their local partnerships. Previous associate assessors have told us that they found their deployment beneficial because it enabled them to contribute to improvement and development within their own work and partnership settings and also enhanced their professional learning and development.

### Question 4: Who can become an associate assessor?

An associate assessor must have significant experience in practice or management relating to services for children, adults or justice. Dependent on the task, they may require to have had experience at a joint level and have had involvement in improvement activities within services. Examples include employees from health, council services including social work and education, police, SCRA and third sector services. There is more information in the person specification on the nomination form which gives details about the skills, knowledge and experience that is required.

### Question 5: What activities does the role entail?

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Associate assessors undertake activities such as: reading and commenting on self-evaluations and supporting evidence; contributing to inspection team meetings; case file reading; undertaking interviews and focus groups with staff and meeting with people who use services.

Associate assessors are responsible for gathering and recording evidence and analysing this to reach balanced conclusions. This is done to agreed timescales at each stage of the inspection.

### Question 6: What training and support is provided?

Associate assessors will be provided with an opportunity to attend an orientation session before commencing involvement in an inspection. There will be opportunities to ask questions and learn about the role. It is important that associate assessors prioritise time to attend the orientation and take time to read documents or study inspection tools before taking part in the inspection. Once the inspection is underway, associate assessors are paired with a member of the inspection team for support and guidance. Feedback from previous associate assessors highlighted that this buddying approach, together with the support of the wider inspection team, had been particularly beneficial.

### Question 7: How much time is needed?

The amount of time needed will depend on the needs of the particular inspection. This may range from 4 days to a maximum of 12 days of inspection activity. More information can be provided on request.

We normally aim to provide the associate assessors with at least three months' notice of any proposal to deploy them giving sufficient time for this to be agreed or declined.

Associate assessors are informed of the location at the time of the formal announcement of the inspection and the inspection lead is then in contact directly to discuss the deployment arrangements and specific requirements.

### Question 8: Who meets the associate assessor's expenses?

We are unable to reimburse any organisation for their employee's salary or backfill to their position for the time they spend on inspection as an associate assessor. We will arrange and meet the costs of travel and accommodation and reimburse the employee for any additional subsistence costs incurred by them in line with the Care Inspectorate's allowances.

### Question 9: How does the application process work?

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If you are interested please email: [ashley.martin@careinspectorate.gov.scot](mailto:ashley.martin@careinspectorate.gov.scot) to request an informal discussion with a Strategic Inspector prior to submitting a nomination form. Applications are made using the nomination form. Consent must be granted from the employer **before** submitting the form and the line manager is required to consent to this on behalf of their organisation in Part B of the form. Once deployment has been agreed, formal confirmation will be sent out to finalise the arrangements. Prior to deployment, associate assessors will be asked to read and agree to the Code of Practice for Associate Assessors.

### Question 10: What does a line manager need to do if a member of their team is expressing interest in the role?

Managers must consider carefully whether a member of staff should apply for the role. In particular they must consider:

- Whether the applicant is suitable for the role as outlined in the person specification on the nomination form.
- Whether the applicant is able to be deployed for the required time period.
- That the applicant is a member of the Protecting Vulnerable Groups scheme and as such are suitable to work with children, young people and vulnerable adults. Once signing the declaration in Part B of the nomination form, the line manager is agreeing to update the Care Inspectorate should any protection concerns arise.

If in agreement, line managers should complete Part B of the nomination form. Nomination forms are not progressed if Part B is incomplete. Prior to becoming involved in any inspection, associate assessors are given a letter confirming the dates of the inspection activity which they are expected to share with their line manager.

### Question 11: What does the Care Inspectorate do with applicant's information?

The Care Inspectorate respects the applicant's privacy and will only use personal information collected to support the process for he/ she to become an associate assessor in accordance with Data Protection legislation. To find out how we handle personal information please read our [privacy notice](http://www.careinspectorate.com/index.php/core-privacy-notice) (available on our website: <http://www.careinspectorate.com/index.php/core-privacy-notice>).

More details can be found on the nomination form.

### Question 12: Is there any opportunity for feedback from associate assessors?

Following the inspection, associate assessors are provided with an opportunity to reflect on their contribution to the inspection and how they might apply any learning gained to their day to day work. We ask that associate assessors complete a short survey in the month following their deployment and again at six months. This will help us identify the ways in which services have benefitted from the learning gained by associate assessors.