

Supplementary Information from Employers (SIFE) Guide

Pan-London Best Practice Guide – June 2023

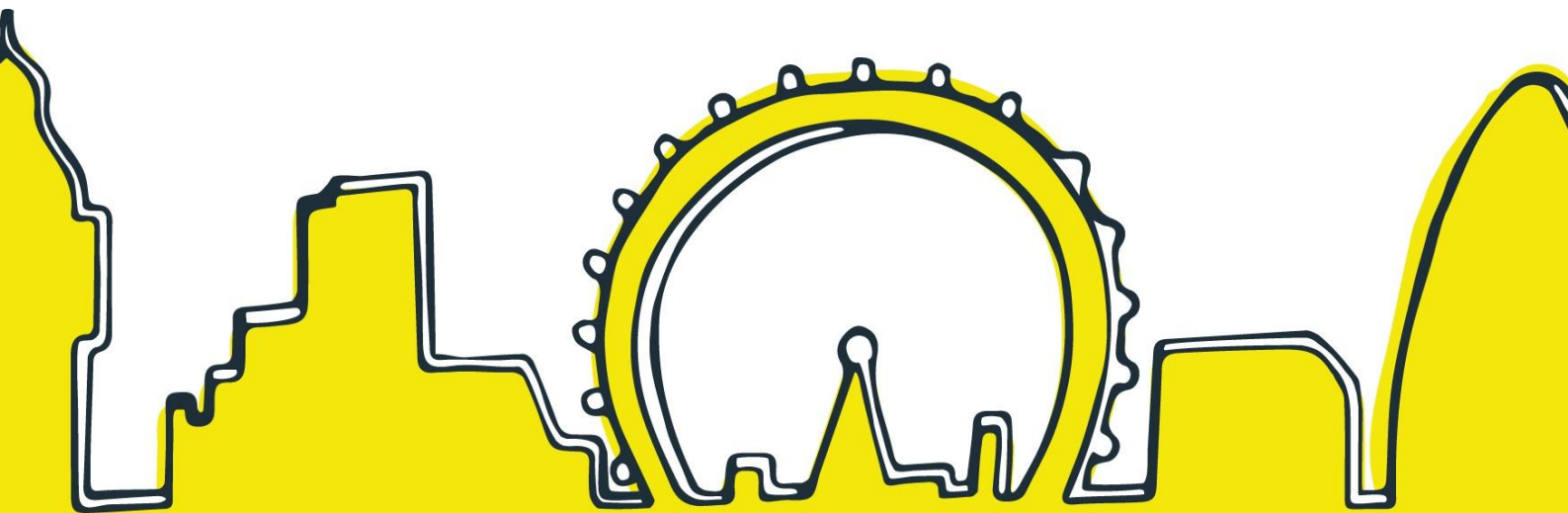


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1. Introduction/Background

This guidebook has been developed to support NHS Trusts with the new NMC English language changes for registration by outlining guidance and best practice approaches/processes to support Trusts with underpinning governance to assure patient safety and that of the individuals progressing to registrant.

We would strongly recommend line managers liaise with their trust International Recruitment Lead and/or ICS London Bureau Project Lead (see Appendix 6) before completing the SIFE for their employee to ensure that the correct approach is followed as the process may differ between trusts.

2. Supplementary Information from Employers (SIFE)

Overview

SIFE (Supplementary Information from Employers) is additional supporting information provided by an applicant's employer that certain applicants to the NMC register can provide as part of their evidence that they meet NMC's English language requirements.

Applicant Eligibility

SIFE can be used as additional supporting evidence of English language competence, for those people who have working for **12 months** (or FTE equivalent if working part-time) in non-registered practice in a health and social care setting in the UK **AND** who either:

- Trained in English but in a country where English is not the majority spoken language, as evidence of their clinical interaction skills. They will still need to provide evidence that their training and assessment was in English. (See list of accepted English speaking countries on Appendix 1).

OR

- Missed the required score by 0.5 (IELTS) or half a grade (OET) on one of the four language domains, provided that they had taken two attempts of either IELTS or OET (must be the same test) and had exhausted all test combining options.

To use additional supporting information from employers, applicants must have:

- worked in a non-registered role in a health or care setting in the UK for at least 12 months full time or full time equivalent if working part time at the point they submit their application
- had an NMC registrant as their line manager. The line manager must provide information that shows how the applicant has demonstrated their English language skills on NMC Online. They must have been in regular contact with the applicant for at least six months during their employment, and they must hold current registration with the NMC.
- had the same line manager for at least 6 months (the NMC will accept supporting information from up to two NMC-registered line managers to cover 12 months or full time equivalent)
- an NMC registrant in a leadership position at the same employer must counter-sign the evidence to provide objectivity



If the applicant is unable to meet any of the requirements above, they will need to provide an alternative type of evidence such as a language test.

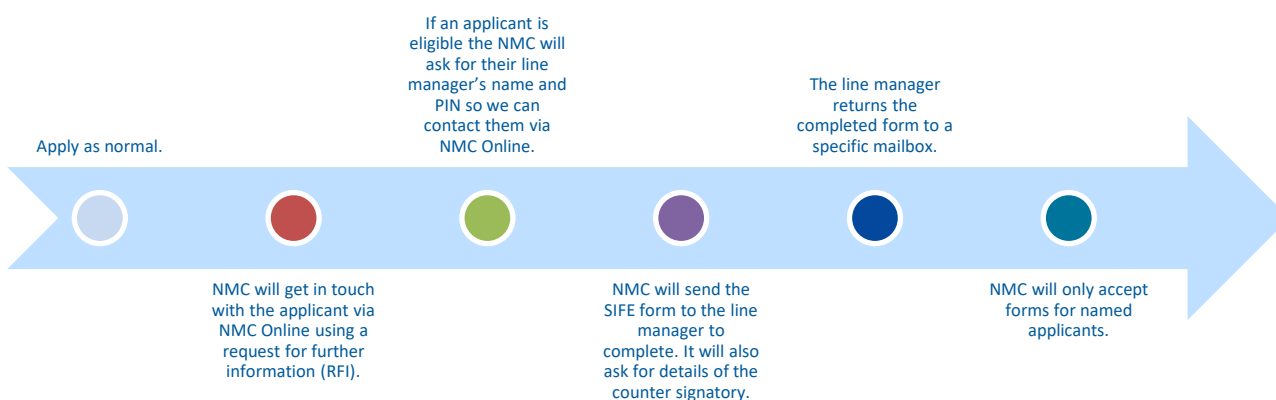
It is intended to support a small cohort of IENs/ HCSW to registration, who have been working in UK for a period. It does not mean applicants should automatically be supported to registration using SIFE.

SIFE Process

Applications before 27th May 2023

Applicants who submitted their registration application before 27th May 2023 will not be able to nominate their manager via NMC Online for SIFE. The NMC will contact applicants directly if they meet the eligibility criteria for using SIFE after their submitted application has been assessed by an officer.

The NMC will also continue to manually process the SIFE form from employers who have already been sent PDF version. You can find a sample of the SIFE form [here](#). The manual SIFE process is outlined in the graph below.



Applications from 27th May 2023

Now the process is fully automated, applicants who submit their registration application after 27th May 2023 will be able to nominate their employer via their NMC Online account. The NMC will automatically send the applicant's line managers and counter-signatories a link to provide SIFE via their NMC Online accounts, based on information the applicant provides.

3. Line managers/ counter signatory role

The line manager (an NMC registrant) will be asked to complete SIFE to confirm direct experience of the applicant's English language competence. This person should be an **NHS Band 6 (or non-NHS equivalent) or above**.

The SIFE needs to be countersigned by an NMC registrant who is an **NHS Band 8A (or non-NHS equivalent) or above**, to confirm the process the line manager has undertaken to complete the SIFE has been fair and consistent. The counter signatory provides assurance that there is a clear and robust process.



If the line manager or counter signatory are unable to provide a band or band equivalent on the SIFE, the NMC will ask them to outline their role and main duties and responsibilities so they can assess whether they have the appropriate level of responsibility.

The NMC will also ask the applicant for evidence that their training and assessment was in English.

If the applicant is unable to meet any of the requirements above, they will need to provide an alternative type of evidence such as a language test.

Confirming the Applicants Speaking and Listening Skills

You will not need to confirm the applicants writing and reading skills as this is covered as part of the applicants nursing training qualification in their own country.

The NMC will ask you to confirm whether the applicant has the required English language competence in speaking and listening. You will need to confirm or deny whether the applicant demonstrates the following skills in practice.

Speaking skills

- Communicates clearly and effectively in English
- Demonstrates clear and compassionate communication that reassures and informs
- Interacts with patients and people who use services
- Shares with people, their families and their carers, as far as the law allows, the information they want or need to know about their health, care and ongoing treatment sensitively and in a way they can understand
- Clearly relays plans of care
- Responds to feedback from patients, people who use services and families
- Shares necessary information with other health and care professionals and agencies (only when the interests of patient safety and public protection override the need for confidentiality)
- Uses terms that people in their care, colleagues and the public can understand

Listening skills

- Clearly understands and implements delegated instructions
- Understand and addresses patient concerns
- Understands feedback from patients and people who use services

You will be able to provide other examples/ evidence of the applicant's speaking and listening skills, however this is not mandatory.

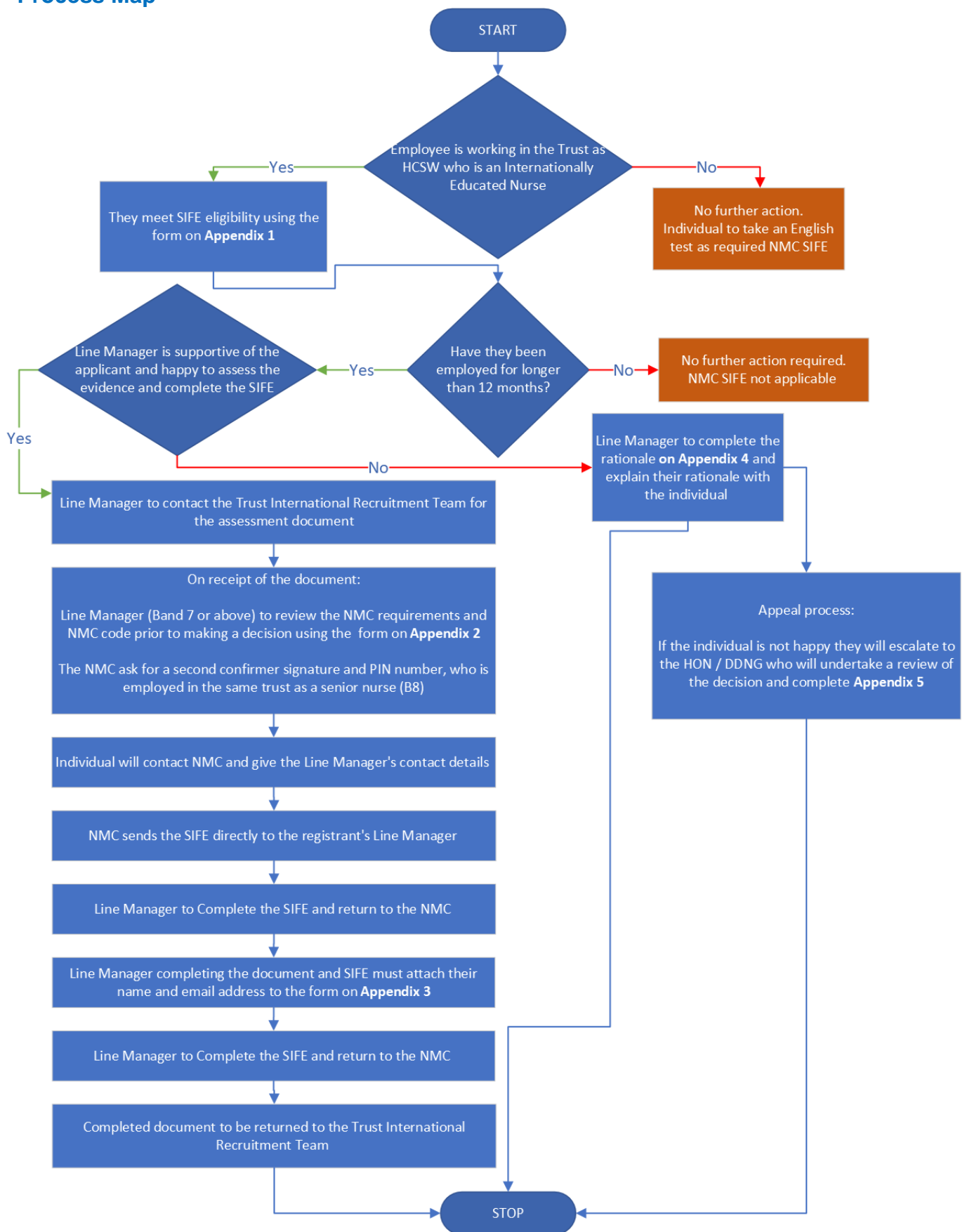
4. Best Practice Example

This section of the document is one example of a best practice approach used by Lewisham and Greenwich NHS Trust to support Trusts with underpinning internal governance to assure patient safety, and that of the HCSW/IEN progressing to registrant. The process map shows the manual SIFE process, however the governance aspect remains relevant.

Please note that this model is not intended to replace pre-existing approaches trusts might have in place but to share as one approach to support Trusts.



Process Map



Applicant Eligibility

The line manager assesses the applicant's eligibility for SIFE using the form on Appendix 2. Part of assessing eligibility are the applicant's English Language test results, the country where they trained as a nurse, and the NMC Code.

Providing Feedback

If the line manager is not convinced that the applicant has the necessary level of English and not comfortable to sign the SIFE form, they must complete the form in Appendix 5 and set out their rationale and evidence for not supporting the individual's application. To ensure fairness and objectivity, the Line Manager Assessment of the NMC Code must also be completed and this can be found in Appendix 3.

Appeals Process

If the line manager declines to support the applicant's SIFE application, the applicant may submit an appeal to the Head of Nursing or Deputy Director of Nursing. They will undertake a review of the decision and the outcome of the meeting/ assessment must be recorded on the form in Appendix 6.

5. FAQs

What evidence do I need to provide when supporting an applicant?

The NMC will send you a link to NMC Online to provide information of the applicant's listening and speaking competence. They will give examples in the SIFE form of what they mean by listening and speaking competence. You need to review the examples and confirm that the applicant has demonstrated these skills in practice.

The applicant will be asked to provide a transcript from the University or Higher Education Institution where they completed their training as evidence of their writing and reading competence.

If the applicant submitted their registration application before 27th May 2023 and are on the manual process, how do I forward the manual SIFE form to the counter-signatory to complete?

There are two options for forwarding the manual SIFE form to the counter signatory for completion:

- a. The line manager can print out the PDF SIFE form, complete Part A and then hand over the hard copy to the counter signatory to complete Part B. The fully completed SIFE form can then be scanned and sent back to the NMC.
- b. The line manager can forward the PDF SIFE form to the counter signatory in an email after completing Part A. The counter signatory can then email this back to the NMC after completing Part B.

All completed SIFE forms need to be sent to SIFE@nmc-org.uk

Why am I being asked by the applicant for my PIN?

The applicant will ask you for your PIN and will pass this on to the NMC. This will allow the NMC to verify that their line manager is a registrant. This also helps NMC to ensure that the line manager is the person completing the SIFE as they will send the link directly to you using the email address linked to your NMC Online account.



Why can't I provide the applicant with my email address instead of my PIN?

Using the PIN enables the NMC to verify the identity of the line manager. It also helps NMC to ensure that the line manager is the person completing the SIFE as they will send the link directly to you using the email address linked to your NMC Online account.

Will there be implications for me if I provide SIFE and then in the future concerns about the applicant are raised with the NMC?

The NMC asks for NMC registered professionals to provide evidence for the SIFE as they want line managers to consider seriously whether the applicant has the necessary level of English to engage in clinical interactions as a nursing or midwifery professional. You will practice in line with the Code that will apply to successful applicants, so you are well placed to make this judgement.

If you do not think that an applicant has the necessary knowledge of English language, you should outline your concerns to the applicant.

The NMC believes that registered professionals will use their knowledge and judgement to make appropriate decisions and answer the SIFE questions truthfully. If, once on the register, future referrals are made against the applicant, these will be investigated thoroughly and in line with the NMC Fitness to Practice procedures. If they are found to be impaired by not having the necessary knowledge of English language, the NMC may need to look at the circumstances of their joining the register. However, the most likely circumstance in which the NMC would have concerns about a line manager and/or counter signatory would be if there were an indication that a SIFE was completed dishonestly or in bad faith.

What should I do if I don't think the applicant has the necessary level of English?

The NMC advises applicants to speak to their line managers about their willingness to provide additional supporting information before they begin their application.

If you have concerns about the applicant's eligibility and level of English language, please liaise with your Trust International Recruitment Lead and/or ICS Bureau Lead. If trusts are in doubt despite eligibility, they may consider using an English Language indicator test (i.e. OET Pulse) to inform their decision.

6. Useful Websites

English Language Requirements

This page on [the NMC website](#) covers the types of evidence they accept to satisfy them that nurses and midwives have the necessary knowledge of English to practice in the UK.

Guidance on Registration Language Requirements

This [guidance](#) sets out the evidence, information and documents nurses and midwives need to provide to satisfy the NMC of their English language competence, and how the NMC will assess this evidence, information and documentation.

Test Combining Calculator

This [test combining calculator](#) allows applicant to input test scores and understand what the results means for them in terms of test combining.

Sample of the manual SIFE form

This [document](#) should give you an idea of what a manual SIFE form looks like.



7. Appendix

Appendix 1: List of accepted English-speaking countries by the NMC

Below is the list of accepted English-speaking countries by the NMC:

- Antigua and Barbuda
- Anguilla
- Australia
- The Bahamas
- Barbados
- Belize
- Bermuda
- British Indian Ocean Territory
- Canada
- Cayman Islands
- Dominica
- Falkland Islands
- Gibraltar
- Grenada
- Guernsey
- Guyana
- Ireland
- Isle of Man
- Jamaica
- Jersey
- Malta
- New Zealand
- Saint Helena, Ascension and Tristan da Cunha
- St Kitts and Nevis
- St Lucia
- St Vincent and the Grenadines
- Trinidad and Tobago
- United Kingdom
- United States of America



Appendix 2: Applicant Eligibility (Best practice example)

Questions ahead of assessment against The Code (NMC)

The individual's English Language IELTS results	Please state score below
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Reading IELTS 7 or above achieved	
Writing IELTS 6.5 or above achieved	
Speaking IELTS 7 or above achieved	
Listening IELTS 7 or above achieved	

OR

The individual's English Language OET results	Please state score below
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Reading OET B (350 to 440) or above achieved	
Writing OET C+ (300 to 340) or above achieved	
Speaking OET B (350 to 440) or above achieved	
Listening OET B (350 to 440) or above achieved	

OR

	Yes / No
If trained as a nurse and assessed in English in a country where English is not a majority spoken language.	University name and country:
A certificate of evidence must be provided by the learning institution has been provided	Embed here:

OR

The individual has received Trust Learning / CPD / Training in English	

Evidence The individual has completed/ attained a university certificate in the UK	



Line Manager Assessment against the following NMC 'The Code' criteria below

	Standard Met Yes/ No	Narrative and summary of evidence	Submitted evidence, please embed
Communicate clearly			
To achieve this, you must:			
7.1 use terms that people in your care, colleagues and the public can understand			
7.2 take reasonable steps to meet people’s language and communication needs, providing, wherever possible, assistance to those who need help to communicate their own or other people’s needs			
7.3 use a range of verbal and non-verbal communication methods, and consider cultural sensitivities, to better understand and respond to people’s personal and health needs			
7.4 check people’s understanding from time to time to keep misunderstanding or mistakes to a minimum			
7.5 be able to communicate clearly and effectively in English			
8 Work with co-operatively			
8.2 maintain effective communication with colleagues			
8.2 maintain effective communication with colleagues			
9 Share your skills, knowledge and experience for the benefit of people receiving care and your colleagues			
9.1 provide honest, accurate and constructive feedback to colleagues			
9.3 deal with differences of professional opinion with colleagues by discussion and informed debate, respecting their views and opinions and behaving in a professional way at all times			
10 Keep clear and accurate records relevant to your practice			
10.1 complete records at the time or as soon as possible after an event, recording if the notes are written sometime after the event			
10.3 complete records accurately and without any falsification, taking immediate and appropriate action if you become aware that someone has not kept to these requirements			
10.4 attribute any entries you make in any paper or electronic records to yourself, making sure they are clearly written, dated and timed, and do not include unnecessary abbreviations, jargon or speculation			
20 Uphold the reputation of your profession at all times			
20.10 use all forms of spoken, written and digital communication (including social media and networking sites) responsibly, respecting the right to privacy of others at all times			



Appendix 3: Details of Applicant, Line Manager, and Confirmer (Best practice example)

Individuals details
Name
Date
Ward/Unit/Neighbourhood
email address

Line Manager SIFE Completer
Name
Date
Ward/Unit/Neighbourhood
email address

Confirmer (level TBC)
Name
Date
Ward/Unit/Neighbourhood
email address

Please send completed documents to lg.overseasnurses@nhs.net

Appeal officer (HoN or DDNG)
Title
Name
Date
Ward/Unit/Neighbourhood
email address



Appendix 4: Rationale for not supporting (Best practice example)

Assessment outcome

Date of meeting / assessment

individual informed of the assessment outcome and given rationale

Please set out your rationale and evidence for not supporting the individuals application

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Appendix 5: Appeals Form (Best practice example)

Appeal Outcome

Date of meeting / assessment

Individual informed of the assessment outcome and given rationale

Please set out your rationale and evidence for not supporting the individuals application
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Appeal officer (HoN or DDNG)

Title

Name

Date

Ward/Unit/Neighbourhood

Email address



Appendix 6: ICS London Bureau Project Leads

When considering your Trust approach for SIFE, it is essential you engage your ICS Bureau leads in these discussions who will be able to provide additional support and advise on the English language process

- NCL – Maggie Pratt maggiepratt@nhs.net
- NEL – Soniya Thomas soniya.thomas@nhs.net
- NWL – Jinju James jinju.james@nhs.net
- SEL – Sandra Mercadal sandra.mercadal@gstt.nhs.uk
- SWL – Nicole Riordan nicole.riordan@nhs.net



8. Acknowledgements

Many thanks to Lewisham and Greenwich NHS Trust for sharing their existing process and for allowing us to share this as best practice example. We would also like to acknowledge the other members of the task and finish group representing the following organisations:

- ICS London Bureau Project Leads
- Barts Health NHS Trust
- Central and North West London NHS Foundation Trust
- Chelsea and Westminster Hospital NHS Foundation Trust
- East London NHS Foundation Trust
- Epsom and St Helier University Hospitals NHS Trust
- Hounslow and Richmond Community Healthcare NHS Trust
- Homerton University Hospital NHS Foundation Trust
- Imperial College Healthcare NHS Trust
- Kingston Hospital NHS Foundation Trust
- NHS England colleagues
- The Royal Marsden NHS Foundation Trust
- University College London Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust
- West London NHS Trust
- Whittington Health NHS Trust

