

Safety Climate Tool (SCT) – Key information

Update 1, issued 18 May 2026

This bulletin outlines the Safety Climate Tool (SCT) and how members can access the service. It explains how the survey works, what participation involves, and how the resulting data will be used.

The SCT forms part of PSS's wider approach to strengthening health and safety culture across the ports sector. Participation will enable organisations to gain insight into their own safety culture, benchmark against the wider sector, and contribute to a shared understanding of port sector performance.

The questions below address the key points raised by members to date and will continue to be updated as the programme develops.

1. What is the Safety Climate Tool and what is it used for?

The Safety Climate Tool (SCT) is a structured survey designed to measure health and safety culture within an organisation. It provides insight into how employees perceive safety, helping organisations identify strengths, areas for improvement, and track progress over time.

2. Are PSS designing their own Safety Climate Tool?

No, after extensive research and discussion, it was agreed that creating a new tool would not allow the port sector to ensure results were comparable with other sectors or provide the depth and range of questioning required to ensure robust results.

Therefore, PSS will be working with The Stationary Office (TSO) who produce the Health and Safety Executive Safety Climate Tool, to create a separate instance for ports. This will enable PSS to ensure all terminology used in the survey works for ports, add additional questions which address the specific needs of the sector, and provide analysis of the port sector and provide targeted resources; without losing the ability to compare across sectors. It also enables PSS and members to take full advantage of TSO's expertise in this area.

3. Can we benchmark against other organisations?

Yes. Benchmarking is a key feature of the tool.

Organisations can compare their results against overall benchmark data (for other industry sectors), and a port-specific benchmark will be developed as participation grows.

4. Will the survey be customised for ports?

Yes. While the core survey questions are fixed, the survey will be tailored through:

- Demographic fields aligned to port operations and roles.
- Open questions reflecting sector priorities.

A working group will support this customisation. There will still be (limited) ability for ports to add questions specific to their organisation.

5. How much will the survey cost?

The HSE has a tiered charging scale, with lower per-person costs for higher volumes of licences purchased. Therefore, over time PSS will be able to help members reduce the costs of conducting the survey, compared to undertaking it independently.

During the initial roll-out the licence fee for members will be £4.99 + VAT per employee. Costs are based on the number of employees invited to take part, not the number of responses received.

The licence fee reduces as overall licence numbers increase. Any reduction in the per-employee licence cost will be passed on to participating members. £4.99 per employee is the maximum cost, reducing to £3.49 when over 4000 employee licences are registered.

The licence fee is payable per annum to maintain access to the tool and results, irrespective of how frequently a member completes the survey during that period. Therefore, when members sign up, they will need to commit to an **annual charge**, which will be added to the membership subscription charge in January. This is as per the payment structure from The Stationary Office.

There is also an initial one-off set up fee. Each member organisation will require at least one administrator licence to access the survey data. Each administrator licence costs £199 and is charged as a one-off fee at set-up (not annually). Members can purchase as many administrator licences as required.

6. How will payment work for members?

The survey will be delivered under a PSS umbrella model.

This means:

- PSS will purchase licences from The Stationery Office (TSO).
- Members will access the tool via PSS.
- Costs will be allocated to members based on their workforce size.

This approach enables economies of scale, reducing the cost per employee compared to individual procurement. This survey will form part of the PSS full membership benefit, meaning any licence cost savings will be passed on to members with no additional administration fees.

Members will be invoiced for the number of user and administrator licences when access to the tool begins. In subsequent years, the annual fee will be invoiced alongside PSS membership fees in January.

7. How will access be set up?

The system will be set up under a PSS master account, with:

- Individual member organisations created as separate surveys or projects.
- Dedicated administrator access provided to each member.

PSS will support initial onboarding and setup.

8. What level of access will PSS have to member data?

Under the umbrella model, PSS will have access to survey data across participating members. This is necessary to enable:

- Development of sector-wide insights.
- Identification of common themes, risks, and good practice.
- Benchmarking across the ports sector.

Individual member organisations will retain responsibility for reviewing, interpreting, and acting on their own results.

9. How will PSS use member survey data?

PSS will use survey data to support collaboration and improvement across the sector, in the same way it currently uses member-submitted incident data. This means:

- Data will be used to identify trends, themes, and emerging risks.
- Outputs will focus on aggregated, anonymised insights, not individual organisations.
- PSS will not routinely interrogate or analyse individual member datasets unless invited to do so.

The intention is to support members, not to monitor or assess individual performance.

10. Will our data be confidential?

Yes. Data will be handled in line with General Data Protection Regulations.

Members should expect that:

- Individual organisation data will not be shared with other members.
- Any sector-level reporting will be anonymised.
- PSS will not use survey data for enforcement, comparison, or judgement of individual members.

This approach reflects existing arrangements for incident data sharing, where information is provided in the spirit of collaboration to support learning and continuous improvement.

11. How often should the survey be carried out?

Most organisations run the HSE SCT survey on an annual basis, although there is flexibility depending on operational needs.

Running the survey annually allows organisations to:

- Establish a baseline (“line in the sand”).
- Implement improvements.
- Measure whether those improvements have been effective.

12. What response rate should members aim for?

There is no single response rate that guarantees accuracy. A high response rate helps provide a more representative picture, but organisations also need to consider whether responses reflect all parts of the workforce.

As a broad benchmark, a response rate of 75% or above is generally considered strong. Lower response rates can still provide useful insight, but should be considered in context. For example, low participation, or low participation from particular teams, roles, shifts, or locations, may itself provide important insight into engagement, trust, communication, and safety culture.

Members should focus on:

- Achieving the highest practical response rate across all workforce groups.
- Understanding which groups are underrepresented.
- Improving response rates over time.
- Treating response rate trends as one measure of confidence in the survey process.
- Sharing findings and follow-up actions clearly, so workers can see that their feedback is valued.

13. How is the survey structured and what kind of questions does it ask?

The survey is structured around a set of key themes (or factors) that explore different aspects of health and safety culture.

It primarily consists of:

- A series of standardised statements, where employees rate their level of agreement (e.g. strongly agree to strongly disagree).
- A set of demographic questions (e.g. role, department, location), which allow results to be analysed across different parts of the organisation.
- The option to include open-text questions, where employees can provide additional comments or highlight specific issues.

The core questions are fixed within the Safety Climate Tool to ensure consistency and enable benchmarking across organisations. Demographic and other fields will be tailored by PSS to reflect the sector, but these can be further refined by individual members. Two additional sector-specific questions will be set by PSS and members will have the ability to add two more.

14. Will individual responses be identifiable from the demographic information collected?

The survey is not intended to identify individuals. Its purpose is to understand workforce views, highlight themes, and support improvement.

Demographic fields will be agreed at sector level to support meaningful comparison across participating organisations. This will help ensure that the information collected is useful, proportionate, and consistent across the port sector.

However, as with any workforce survey, very small groups can sometimes make responses more recognisable, particularly where several demographic fields are combined. For example, this could apply to a small team, specialist role, or location with only a few workers.

Demographic information should be used to understand patterns across the organisation, not to trace responses back to individuals. The value of the survey comes from identifying themes and differences in experience, rather than focusing on who may have said what.

For sector-level analysis, PSS will use aggregated data to identify common themes, trends, and opportunities for shared learning. The analysis will not seek to identify individuals, and individual responses are not the focus of this work.

15. How long will the survey take to complete?

On average, the survey takes around 15 minutes to complete. The exact time may vary slightly depending on how much detail individuals provide in open-text responses.

16. How long should the survey be open for?

Typically, organisations keep the survey open for two to four weeks, depending on their approach.

Shorter timeframes can help maintain focus and urgency, while longer windows allow for leave and operational constraints.

17. How do we avoid survey fatigue?

The HSE and TSO are experts in the field of safety culture surveys and have designed the Safety Climate Tool to be concise (approximately 15 minutes to complete) and focused specifically on health and safety, providing meaningful insight that supports improvement.

PSS will be aware of when members are conducting the survey and will support with any promotion as well as ensuring that other sector-wide survey (such as the port happiness survey) are not promoted at the same time (as far as possible).

To maximise engagement and minimise survey fatigue, members are encouraged to:

- Clearly communicate the purpose of the survey and why it is being carried out.
- Share outcomes and demonstrate how feedback is being acted upon.
- Avoid running multiple surveys covering similar topics at the same time.

The HSE and PSS will provide guidance and resources to support effective communication and promote participation.

18. When are survey results available?

Results are available immediately once responses are received.

Live data can also be viewed while the survey is still open (once a minimum response threshold is reached), allowing members to monitor participation and target communications where needed.

19. Can results be broken down by site or department?

Yes. The survey includes customisable demographic fields (e.g. location, department, role), allowing organisations to:

- Compare different sites.
- Identify variation within their workforce.

20. Can the survey be completed in different languages?

Yes. The survey can be offered in multiple languages. However:

- Reporting outputs are provided in English.
- Open-text responses in other languages may require translation.

21. What support will be available?

PSS will:

- Provide guidance and onboarding support.
- Develop sector-specific materials.
- Act as the first point of contact for queries.

TSO will provide additional technical support where required.

22. How do we get started?

Members will be asked to:

- Confirm participation.
- Provide workforce numbers.
- Engage in initial setup and configuration.

A working group meeting will be held on Wednesday 27 May 15:00 – 16:30 to provide more information to members. Please email info@portskillsandsafety.co.uk to register and receive the Teams link.

Further detail on the structure of the survey and available options can be found here:

Safety Climate Tool overview: <https://books.hse.gov.uk/safety-climate-tool-sct>

Supporting resources: <https://books.hse.gov.uk/safety-climate-tool-supporting-resources>