

Annual returns 2024: frequently asked questions

Publication date: December 2024

Publication code: OPS-1124-476

1. Why do I have to submit an annual return?

- By law, under the Public Services Reform (Scotland) Act 2010, section 53(6), all providers registered with the Care Inspectorate must provide us with the information we consider we need to carry out our work.
- It helps keep our care service register accurate.
- The information informs our risk assessments and helps us inspect services in a targeted and proportionate way.

2. When do I have to submit an annual return?

- Your annual return will be available from 6 January 2025.
- You must submit it by 2 March 2025.

3. How do I access my annual return?

- You can access your online forms at <http://eforms.careinspectorate.com>
- If you have problems getting access, call our contact centre on 0345 6009527.
- Remember to check your email spam box or junk mail folder, in case anything has been sent there. You can adjust your spam/junk mail settings to stop this.

4. I do not have a username and password

- Please call our contact centre on 0345 600 9527.
- Never share usernames and passwords.

5. I have a new manager and they do not have a username and password

- The provider or authorised person will need to notify the Care Inspectorate where there has been a change of manager. This can be done through our [digital portal](#).
- Call our contact centre on 0345 600 9527 and ask them, for security reasons, to change the password for the new manager.
- If the contact centre needs more information to confirm the identity of the caller, the caller will need to contact the inspector responsible for inspecting the service. Once the inspector has emailed the contact centre to confirm the caller's identity, the contact centre will issue a username and password.

6. I have a username and password but I cannot log in

- Passwords are case sensitive, for example capital letter P is different from lower case p. If you still have problems, please call the contact centre on 0345 600 9527.

- Check that you are logging in under the correct care service (CS) number - check this against your registration certificate.

7. I cannot access the online form

- Check that all the details you are entering are correct. If you still have problems call our contact centre – 0345 600 9527.

8. How do I remove someone's password to stop them accessing my annual return?

- The provider or manager of the service will need to call our contact centre on 0345 600 9527 as soon as possible.
- It is the service provider's responsibility to inform the contact centre of any changes which could lead to unauthorised access to their annual return.

9. I have not managed to complete my annual return because of technical problems

- Please call our contact centre as soon as possible as you will not be allowed extra time to submit your return.
- Where technical problems prevent you from submitting an annual return on time you should discuss the situation with your inspector as soon as possible.

10. I did not receive communication early enough to allow me to complete my annual return on time

- You will not be given extra time to submit your return. If you are unable to submit an annual return on time, you should discuss the situation with your inspector as soon as possible. You should try to complete as much of the return as possible in the remaining time.

11. I have not managed to complete my annual return due to, for example, serious illness or bereavement

- If you are not able to submit your annual return on time, you should discuss the situation with your inspector as soon as possible.
- Try to complete as much of the return as you can.
- Unfortunately, we cannot give you extra time to submit your return and the inspection report will state whether or not you submitted it on time. However, we will take your reasons for not submitting into account.

12. The service I provide is newly registered. Do I have to submit an annual return this year?

- If your service was registered before 1 October 2024, you must submit an annual return by the deadline. The information provided should cover the period from the date of registration with the Care Inspectorate.

- If your service was registered on or after 1 October 2024, you should try to complete an annual return this year. Although it's not mandatory, any information supplied will be used by the Care Inspectorate, Scottish Government and others. The information you have entered will automatically appear in the January 2026 annual return. You will then only need to enter any information that has changed.
- **Please note that there may be circumstances where we may require you to submit an annual return, regardless of the date your service registered. If we need you to do this, we will contact you directly.**

13. I have bought or taken over a care service – should I submit an annual return this year?

- If a service has been bought or taken over and this involved cancelling and re-registering the service, do not use the cancelled service's annual return form.
- You must complete a new annual return. You will need to use the new care service (CS) number that we gave you when the service was re-registered. This number is on your new registration certificate.
- The requirement to complete an annual return for services that have cancelled and re-registered follows the same rules as new registrations. If the re-registration was completed before 1 October 2024, you must complete an annual return. If the re-registration was completed on or after 1 October 2024, you should try to complete an annual return this year. Although it's not mandatory, any information supplied will be used by the Care Inspectorate, Scottish Government and others. The information entered will automatically appear in the January 2026 annual return. You will then only need to enter any information that has changed.
- **Please note that there may be circumstances where we may require you to submit an annual return, regardless of the date your service re-registered. If we need you to do this, we will contact you directly.**
- We will not give out electronic usernames and passwords to new providers to access electronic forms until they receive a new CS number. You will not be able to log in against a cancelled service to view your previous year's annual return.
- If you need a new username and password to access the electronic forms call our contact centre on 0345 600 9527.
- If you need a username and password for a new manager or contact person, call our contact centre on 0345 600 9527.

14. My service is in the process of cancelling. Do I need to complete an annual return?

- As you are still operating a registered care service, you are required to submit an annual return. The document provides us with important information about

your service. The Scottish Social Services Council and the Scottish Government also use the information for policy and research purposes. It is therefore important that we gather as much information about care services in Scotland as possible.

15. Last year, my partner filled out my annual return. When they called the contact centre, why would they not help them?

- For security reasons, the contact centre will only discuss issues regarding the completion of annual returns and other documents with the provider or manager of the service.

16. What period does the annual return cover?

- We request information for the previous calendar year (1 January 2024 to 31 December 2024).

17. What happens if I do not submit an annual return?

- We do not automatically downgrade services for failing to submit an annual return. This is because we do not believe that non-submission is necessarily a reflection of poor quality of service.
- We also reserve the right to make a formal requirement relating to submission of an annual return, or in cases of serious or persistent non-compliance, to issue an improvement notice under s62 of the Public Services Reform (Scotland) Act 2010, requiring its submission.

18. I am operating an inactive service and did not work in 2024. Do I still have to complete an annual return?

- If a service is registered but inactive, providers must still complete an annual return. If the service cannot answer a question, respond with 'Not applicable', 'No' or '0' (zero).

19. The system keeps 'freezing'

- If you have problems with the annual return form 'freezing', please call our contact centre on 0345 600 9527.

20. I completed an annual return last year. Do I need to enter all the information into the annual return again?

- In general, you will only need to update information provided previously, although some questions may be different to last year.

21. Do I have to complete the annual return 'at one sitting'?

- You can save information in the annual return and go back to specific sections of the form at any time before you finally submit the form.
- A copy of the completed online annual return may be saved on your computer

and can be printed.

22. I am having problems saving information

- Please call our contact centre on 0345 600 9527.

23. I have made a mistake in my annual return. Can I have it corrected?

- A service that has made a mistake in their annual return or wants to change information in it can request release of the form by calling our contact centre on 0345 600 9527. The care service provider must resubmit the form by the deadline.
- We will not accept requests for release of annual returns made after the deadline.

24. I have logged a call with the contact centre but have not received a response.

- Our contact centre will return your call. If we are receiving a high number of calls, there could be a delay in returning your call at these times. We apologise if this happens and will do our best to contact you as quickly as possible.
- Our contact centre is available Monday to Friday, from 09:00-16:00, to deal with any problems throughout the submission period. They will try to help where possible but may need to refer you to the inspector responsible for your service if the question relates to specific advice about the way your service operates.

25. I provide a combined housing support service and care at home service and cannot find my annual return.

- The electronic annual return is only available under one of the services. This should be the housing support service. A message will appear on the screen asking the care service provider to log in to the service that has the electronic annual return underneath it – that will be the housing support service.

26. I would like to give more than one person access to my annual returns so they can help complete the document. Can I arrange this?

- Providers can set up a maximum of 10 additional users for each care service. You might find this useful where different people in your organisation have special knowledge of certain areas, such as staffing.
- Note that only one user can work on a page of an annual return. If another user tries to input data into that page, the data will not be saved.
- It is not possible for care service providers to access all their services using one username and password unless a corporate login facility has been set up.
- If you need help to set up additional users, please call our contact centre on 0345 600 9527.

- If you need a username and password for a new manager or contact person, call our contact centre on 0345 600 9527.
- Where you use the eForms facility to allow access to your account by more than one user, please make sure that a main account holder is identified (such as the service provider or manager) and that they log into the eForms system using the main eForms account for the service. When logging in, the main account holder should enter the service's CS number (which is the registration number) into the username box and use the password that they have allocated to that username. All account holders need to enter a valid email address to make sure that they receive messages from us. If they want to change or update their email address, this can be done at any time by clicking on 'Update Email Address' from the menu option after logging in.
- The main account holder should always use their main account log-in.
- If you have any problems logging into the eForms system or completing the annual return, you can call our contact centre on 0345 600 9527. Our staff will be happy to help you.

27. I have more than one service but the information in each of their annual returns will be the same. Can I submit one annual return to cover all of the services?

- No, you must submit an annual return for each service, unless the services are linked as a combined housing support and care at home service. We register each service separately and must collect information for all services.

28. How do I enter or change the information in the following sections of the annual return?

- Staff details
- Volunteers
- Students/Trainees
- Adoption Panel
- Adoption (Adoption Service Commissioning)
- Fostering Panel
- Fostering (Local Authority Commissioning)
- Housing Support Services (Teams and Projects)
- Childminder Details
- Childminders (Persons Assisting)
- Childminders (Household Members).

We use the staff details section as an example here, however the same principles apply to each of the above sections.

Click on the 'New' button to enter details for each staff member:

Staff Surname	Staff Forename	Created In Error	Emp Start Date	Employer	Date Left Employment	Delete All
Collins						
Bradbury						
Lowrie						
Mcguinness						
Stewart						

Total: 8 records [page 1 of 1]



The following screen will be shown:

Staff Details

Staff Details ✖ > Professional Body Registrations ✖ > Staff Qualifications Day Care of Children

Date left employment

Did they have an exit interview? *

If you know, where was their next job?

You must enter details under each of the sections. You can access these by clicking on the 'Next Details Page' button at the bottom of the screen:

If you need to move back to an earlier section, click on the 'Previous Details Page' button:

On completing a staff member's details, click on the 'Save Page' button at the bottom of the screen:

This will save the record.

To return to the main 'Staff Details' page, click on the 'Exit' button:

Note - if you use the 'Exit' button, before saving the document, you will delete all new data entered in that record.

Where you need to leave a staff member's details partially completed you may save the incomplete record and return to this later.

On clicking the 'Exit' button, the main 'Staff Details' page will show a list of the staff members details entered so far:

Staff Surname	Staff Forename	Created In Error	Emp Start Date	Employer	Date Left Employment	Delete All
Dante						<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Dignan						<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Mudie						<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Smith						<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Total: 4 records [page 1 of 1]

[New](#)

To add another staff member's details, click on the 'New' button. At this point, however, you can also move to another section of the annual return.

If you want to check or change details in any of the saved records, you can access them by clicking the appropriate name, and by using the Quick find search facility.

Quick Find:

Staff Surname	Staff Forename	Created In Error	Emp Start Date	Employer	Date Left Employment
Example	Justin				

[Close search results](#)

If you wish to remove a record (for example if you have accidentally created a duplicate record) then you should open the record, clear any fields that you have entered data in to and check the box for 'Tick ONLY if this record has been created in error' as shown below.

The record will not be visible to the Care Inspectorate once your annual return is submitted.

Staff Details

Staff Details ✕ > Professional Body Registrations ✕ > Staff Qualifications Day Care of Children

Staff Initials:

Staff Surname: *

Staff Forename: *



You must select something from this drop down list

Gender: ▼ *

You must select a date

Date of birth:

If not known, please enter 01/01/1925

If the employee has given a partial date of birth, please give the year and default to the first of the month or the first of January.  * 

Tick ONLY if this record has been created in error Yes

You must select a date

Date their employment started with you:  *

CREATED IN ERROR

If you have created a staff record in error, for example, if you have created a duplicate record or entered information on the wrong person, please tick the checkbox at the top of the staff details page for that record. We will then exclude that record.

Staff Surname	Staff Forename	Created In Error	Emp Start Date	Employer	Date Left Employment	Delete All
Dante	Mary		15-09-2008			<input type="checkbox"/>
Dignan	Ryan		15-04-2013			<input type="checkbox"/>
Mudie	Blair		02-03-2015			<input type="checkbox"/>
Smith	Stephanie		07-09-2015			<input type="checkbox"/>
Example	Record	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>				<input type="checkbox"/>

Total: 5 records [page 1 of 1]

[New](#)

Please remember to enter details of staff members who have left the service during the year and to complete the 'Date left employment' field for each of them.

Information about staff, volunteers etc. must be entered into the annual returns document. We no longer accept attachments.

Whilst we realise that this can create a lot of work for some service providers, it is essential that we receive this information in the correct format, because of its direct importance to our regulatory work. Some of the information is also passed to the Scottish Social Services Council and the Scottish Government to assist in the development of policy and practice within the health and social care sector.

29. How do I know that you have received the annual return?

- When you submit an annual return, you will receive an email confirming we have received it.
- You can also check your 'Submitted Tab'.

30. Who uses the data in the annual return?

- The annual returns contain details of who uses the information in specific sections of the form. We use the information, but the Scottish Social Services Council and the Scottish Government also need particular pieces of information to inform policy and practice. By sharing the information, we collect with these other organisations, we are cutting down the number of requests service providers might get from different organisations for the same information.
- The Scottish Government and the Scottish Social Services Council are particularly interested in collecting details relating to people working in social services through the Core Minimum Dataset. The Core Minimum Dataset is a set of standard data items that allows national analysis, comparison and benchmarking. They look at issues such as:
 - future planning for the social services workforce
 - the diversity of the workforce
 - the impact of 'family friendly' policies on the workforce.
- If you would like more information on the Core Minimum Dataset, go to the Scottish Government website: www.scotland.gov.uk.

- Some local authorities are beginning to use information from our annual returns to reduce their requests for information from the independent care sector. They may ask you for a copy of your annual return. We hope to share more information with local authorities in future to reduce the number of requests you get for the same information.
- We respect the privacy of individuals and will only use personal information fairly and lawfully. To find out how we handle personal information please read the Privacy Notice on our [website](#).

31. Is the online eForms system only used for submitting annual returns?

The eForms system is also used to:

- Notify us of events such as accidents and incidents.
- Read your draft inspection report and return your error response form and action plan.
- Find out what else eForms is used for on our [website](#).

32. Is the Whole Time Equivalent (WTE) calculator available?

- No, the WTE calculator has been decommissioned and is therefore not available.

33. If you are still experiencing problems or have a question after reading the frequently asked question, please contact us.

- by phone: 0345 600 9527 (Open Monday to Friday, 09:00 to 16:00)
- by email: enquiries@careinspectorate.gov.scot

You can also contact us with any comments or complaints you may have about the annual returns by calling the above number or writing to us at:

The Care Inspectorate
Contact Centre
Compass House
11 Riverside Drive
Dundee
DD1 4NY

Headquarters

Care Inspectorate
Compass House
11 Riverside Drive
Dundee
DD1 4NY

web: www.careinspectorate.com
email: enquiries@careinspectorate.gov.scot
telephone: 0345 600 9527

@careinspect

This publication is available in alternative formats on request