



Shield of Honour 2025

Chief Adjudicator's Report

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In 2025, 3 submissions were received for the Shield of Honour awards and 3 (100%) of these were adjudged to have reached the pass standard.

There is no quota for Shields to be awarded and nor will there be in future years. If every applicant meets the minimum criteria, every applicant will be awarded a Shield of Honour.

General Comments

A maximum of 60 marks are available for the written aspect of the Shield of Honour application. With the pass mark set high, it is crucial to perform well on every question. Even one or two weak responses can make it difficult to meet the required standard. As in previous years, the highest-scoring candidates addressed all parts of each question and closely followed the marking scheme. It was clear that they had heeded the advice to review the prior year's Chief Adjudicator's Report, which helped them provide more complete answers and reach the top scoring range for each question. Despite these improvements, applicants are again encouraged to thoroughly review the Chief Adjudicator's Report from the previous year before completing their applications, as it offers valuable insights, comments, and guidance on what is expected. Additionally, the webinar hosted earlier this year, which remains available online, serves as another useful resource.

This year all applicants who submitted a Shield of Honour application demonstrated that they met the required assessment criteria. In summary, all the applicants consistently made relevant and effective reference to the outcomes of their recent Five Star Wellbeing Audit ('the audit') across all four questions.

These top-performing applicants demonstrated a mature, embedded approach to wellbeing management, providing evidence that was both operationally and culturally aligned to their audit findings.

Specifically, the highest scoring applicants:

- Made appropriate and explicit reference to the outcomes of their audit within every response.
- Answered the questions in full, addressing both health and safety aspects as required.
- Provided a range of suitable methods, demonstrating structured and deliberate approaches to participation, leadership, and improvement.
- Supplied a range of relevant, well-chosen examples that demonstrated tangible impact and outcomes.
- Gave rounded explanations and descriptions, showing a clear line of sight between audit findings, actions taken, and the results achieved.

The highest performing applicants distinguished themselves through their ability to explicitly integrate audit findings into their answers, demonstrating a clear understanding of how wellbeing performance is both operationally delivered and culturally embedded. Their responses were structured, evidence-based, and outcome-focused.

This year's assessment reinforces the importance of meaningful engagement with the audit as a cornerstone of successful applications. Where applicants fully leveraged their audit findings — using them as a platform for action, leadership, and cultural change — they achieved higher scores and demonstrated best practice.

The adjudication panel commends those organisations that showcased clear strategic alignment, evidence-based action, and cultural leadership. Their responses set a strong benchmark for future applicants.

Main Business Activities

Whilst marks are not awarded for this section, it is important that applicants clearly describe the main business activities, the personnel involved and the most significant health and safety risks and issues. Indeed, this section underpins the whole application as it helps to put the rest of the submission into context and provides the adjudicator with a valuable insight into the organisation, its operation and risk profile. The applicant provided a comprehensive summary of the main business activities, employee profile, key risks, and operational aspects.

Q1: With relevant reference to the outcomes from your recent Five Star Wellbeing Audit: Explain how the site ensures the participation of all employee groups in the establishment and/or continual improvement of any health and wellbeing programme.

- High scoring applicants (11–15) – Demonstrated comprehensive understanding of employee engagement. Explicitly linked to audit outcomes. Described clear structures (e.g. RACI, job family analysis), a wide range of participation methods (forums, surveys, suggestion schemes), and gave concrete examples showing measurable impact on improvement and culture.
- Mid scoring applicants (6–10) – Made some reference to the audit but with less depth. Identified limited engagement methods and gave generalised examples. Showed partial linkage to outcomes and improvement.
- Low scoring applicants (0–5) – Little or no reference to the audit. Limited or vague participation methods, few or no examples, and no clear connection to improvement.

Q2: With relevant reference to the outcomes from your recent Five Star Wellbeing Audit: Describe how the senior management team lead and manage so as to improve the health and wellbeing culture of the organisation.

- High scoring applicants (11–15) – Clearly defined senior leadership roles and their strategic contribution to wellbeing. Demonstrated how leaders actively influence compliance, culture, and engagement. Gave specific examples of forums, initiatives, and leadership actions linked directly to audit outcomes. Highlighted both current and future plans.
- Mid scoring applicants (6–10) – Identified senior management but gave limited detail on their leadership role. Focused more on compliance than culture. Examples were present but not fully linked to audit outcomes or strategy.
- Low scoring applicants (0–5) – Provided only basic or vague leadership descriptions. No clear cultural element. Few or no examples. No meaningful link to the audit.

Q3: With relevant reference to the outcomes from your recent Five Star Wellbeing Audit: Explain how you intend to use the output of the recent Five Star Wellbeing Audit to positively impact and improve health and wellbeing performance and associated organisational culture in the next year.

- High scoring applicants (11–15) – Presented a structured forward plan clearly built on audit findings. Described a range of initiatives, campaigns, and improvement programmes, including metrics and measures (e.g. engagement surveys, absence data, feedback loops). Demonstrated strong alignment between planned activity, audit recommendations, and cultural improvement.
- Mid scoring applicants (6–10) – Outlined some planned initiatives but with limited detail, narrow focus, or weak linkage to audit outcomes. Examples were adequate but less developed.
- Low scoring applicants (0–5) – Responses were vague or backward-looking, with little to no reference to audit outputs. Lacked measures, examples, or a clear plan for impact.

Q4: With relevant reference to the outcomes from your recent Five Star Wellbeing Audit: Identify the most significant Five Star Wellbeing Audit outcomes for your organisation and explain how relevant recommendations will be used in ensuring longer term continual improvement of your health and wellbeing performance.

- High scoring applicants (11–15) – Clearly identified and prioritised key audit outcomes. Explained their significance, how recommendations would be implemented, and how they fit into broader continuous improvement cycles. Provided strong, relevant examples showing both short- and long-term impact.
- Mid scoring applicants (6–10) – Identified outcomes but did not prioritise or fully explain their significance. Some actions were referenced but lacked depth or strategic framing.
- Low scoring applicants (0–5) – Little or no reference to key outcomes or recommendations. Superficial or absent description of methods or actions. Few or no examples, and no clear link to long-term improvement.

Conclusion

This year's assessment reinforces the importance of meaningful engagement with the audit as a cornerstone of successful applications. Where applicants fully leveraged their audit findings — using them as a platform for action, leadership, performance improvement and cultural change — they achieved higher scores and demonstrated best practice.

The adjudication panel commends those organisations that showcased clear strategic alignment, evidence-based action, and cultural leadership. Their responses set a strong benchmark for future applicants.