



To:

NHS Board Chief Executives
NHS Board Directors of Human Resources
NHS Boards Directors of Finance
NHS Scotland Counter Fraud
SSSC Chief Executive
Care Inspectorate Chief Executive

DL(2023) 31

6 December 2023

For information

Medical & Nursing
Directors
NSS Intelligence Team
NHS Counter Fraud
Services

Dear Colleague,

**INTERNATIONAL ENGLISH LANGUAGE TESTING SYSTEM
(IELTS) CERTIFICATES – POTENTIAL FRAUD RISK – ACTION
FOR BOARDS**

1. A potential fraud risk has been highlighted following the identification of fraudulently acquired International English Language Testing (IELTS) certificates presented by a small number of internationally trained healthcare professionals to a number of Trusts in England and Wales.
2. **Boards are therefore requested to take immediate action to ensure registration with the appropriate IELTS verification service to provide assurance and support effective governance.**
3. **In order to reduce the risk of sponsoring or employing internationally trained staff who provide fraudulent certificates, Boards should register with the verification service here ([IELTS | Verifying IELTS results](#)) to check the veracity of documents. This check applies to all international staff seeking employment across the registered workforce, and also to those who may be seeking more general employment, as roles such as healthcare support workers may be undertaken whilst awaiting registration with the appropriate statutory regulatory body. Employers should not rely solely on checks undertaken by third parties such as recruitment agencies.**
4. Any instances of fraudulent activity should be reported to NHS Counter Fraud liaison contacts, any statutory regulatory body such as [HCPC](#), [GMC](#), [NMC](#) and to UK Visas and Immigration ([UKVI](#)).

Enquiries to:

Health Workforce
Directorate Support Unit
Scottish Government
Health Workforce
Ground Floor Rear
St Andrew's House
Regent Road
Edinburgh EH1 3DG

E-mail:
sharon.wilson@gov.scot

5. The Care Inspectorate is requested to disseminate this letter to all registered services.
6. Further information is available to you at [Identifying fraudulent pre-employment documentation: recruitment from outside the UK | NHS Employers](#).

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'G Russell', with a horizontal line extending to the right.

Gillian Russell
Director of Health Workforce

Annex – For Information

A person applying for a UK visa to work, study or live in the UK, will be required to prove knowledge of by passing a Secure English Language Test (SELT). The NMC, HCPC and GMC all require language tests as evidence that candidates have ability to communicate effectively in English and upon passing at the required level will obtain a certificate for UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI) purposes. The IELTS, therefore, allows a person to enter the country to work in the UK in a sponsored role and to register with regulatory body.

