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Guidance

Risk assessment methodology: good and outstanding further education and skills providers

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This is the risk assessment process that Ofsted uses to assist in scheduling full and short inspections of good further education and skills (FES) providers and to help identify concerns about performance at outstanding FES providers.

Introduction

We use risk assessment to ensure that our approach to inspection is proportionate and to focus our efforts where they can have the greatest impact. We use risk assessment to determine if a good provider needs a full inspection rather than a short inspection and when the inspection should take place within the

inspection window. Risk assessment is also used to identify any outstanding providers whose performance has declined.

Risk assessment process

Risk assessment has 2 stages:

- stage 1 involves an assessment of each FES provider based on analysis of published data
- stage 2 involves a more in-depth desk-based review of a wider range of available information

Stage 1: analysis of published and non-published performance data

Several measures of a provider's performance, including that of any subcontractors, are included in the risk-assessment process, including:

- achievement rate data
- value-added score
- English and mathematics GCSE and functional skills data

The most appropriate qualifications and measures for each provider are agreed with policy colleagues, and providers are only compared against those of a similar type. For instance, independent learning providers are not compared with sixth form colleges.

The risk assessment involves creating a red, amber or green flag for each provider based on all applicable measures.

Additional risk information

Additional information is incorporated into the risk assessment process, and taken account of in making decisions.

The information, based on historic data, includes:

- views of learners and employers, gathered through online questionnaires
- funding agency information such as minimum standards of performance and any interventions

- findings of monitoring visits

Inspectors also take the following into account:

- size and complexity of the provider, including the number and range of provision types
- complaints about provision
- local intelligence such as change to leaders or structures
- the geographical spread of education or training centres
- any recent changes

Stage 2: desk-based review

Senior Her Majesty's Inspectors (SHMI) within each region review the information provided by stage 1 of the risk assessment process. They also make use of regional intelligence in order to support the risk assessment.

The findings from both stages of the risk assessment are then considered by the data and policy teams, to finalise the selection of providers to receive a risk-based inspection in the following academic year.

Timing of inspections

For further information on the use of risk assessment and the timing of inspections, please refer to the [Inspecting further education and skills: guide for providers](#)

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