

What?

NSAR continuously monitors the effectiveness of the Assurance Regime and adapts to progress of Providers quality of provision identified through Assurance Visits.

After two years of undertaking assurance visits, the improvements witnessed identify that now is the time to revise the regime to align with Providers rate of improvement.

Why?

Most training providers have demonstrated ambitious visions to attain high standards of quality and performance. Rigorous policies and procedures have been put into place to improve training, learning and assessment. Self-assessment is being monitored and used to evaluate the quality of the provision and targets are being effectively set using the Quality Improvement Plan.

Compliance has also demonstrated significant progress from previous awarded grades.

Gold awards have increased slightly, with some improvements in Silver awards, resulting in a more equal split across grades for providers.

However, CPD continues to be a significant concern. There is a correlation between providers that are awarded Gold standard and the delivery and quality of their team's CPD. During 2019 NSAR listened to the industry and made improvements to Skills Backbone to provide additional support in this area to trainers, assessors and employers. During 2020-21 we will be promoting this aspect of the provider in the quality report.

When?

The Regime change takes effect **from the end of April 2020**.

The Changes

- Programme of visits start from April 2020 and extends to end December 2021
- The previous year's development and grades will determine the visit frequency
- Increase focus on Compliance and Delivery with separate reports on each discipline
- The training premises will be reviewed and receive a grade recorded in the Compliance Report
- Compliance and Delivery assurance visits will be made to Satellite Centres
- CPD will form part of the grades of Compliance and Delivery
- Defined circumstances that will result in a change of approach
- Additional visit provision by Desktop

The visits align to the Quality Assurance Framework in the following way.

Compliance Visits will **include Premises compliance** checks and measure:

1. Leadership & Management:
 - Level of training administration compliance to the RTAS Rules, Network Rail standards [applicable to the delivery] and mandated lesson plans.
 - Level of quality management system compliance driving the Leadership & Management of the Assured Provider to RTAS Rules.
 - Level of Assured Providers premises compliance to the Premises Specification and Network Rail mandated environment requirements contained in Lesson Plans.

Delivery Visits will **include trainer delivery observations** and measure:

1. Quality of Leadership & Management activities including effectiveness of Self-Assessment Reports & Quality Improvement Plans
2. Quality of Provision
3. Outcomes for Learners
4. Personal Development, Behaviour & Welfare

From April 2020, all Providers will have two Assurance Visits that will be graded. Two reports will be provided for Compliance and Delivery.

1. Compliance & Premises [each graded separately]; and
2. Delivery.

All three are graded and will be visible on Skills Backbone and the Training Directory.

The 2020-2021 assurance visit programme is structured on the following principles:

Gold	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visits will take place 15-18 months since the last visit • 1x Compliance visit including premises checks and verification • 1x Delivery visit including trainer observation • Unannounced Compliance Visit(s) • Unannounced trainer observation(s) • Additional satellite centre compliance and/or trainer observation visits [notified & unannounced]
Silver	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visits will take place within 12 months since the last visit • 1x Compliance visit including premises checks and verification • 1x Delivery visit including trainer observation • Unannounced Compliance Visit(s) • Unannounced trainer observation(s) • Additional satellite centre compliance and/or trainer observation visits [notified & unannounced] • Additional Unannounced visits as required

Bronze	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visit will take place within 9-12 months since the last visit • 1x Compliance visit including premises checks and verification • 1x Delivery visit including trainer observation • Increased Unannounced Compliance Visit(s) • Increased Unannounced trainer observation(s) • Additional satellite centre compliance and/or trainer observation visits [notified & unannounced] • Additional unannounced visits as required
Inadequate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Immediate suspension of all delivery capabilities • 1x Reassurance Visit to measure readiness to recommence provision. Where this is failed, the provider will not be eligible for a further Reassurance visit for 6 months. Suspension will remain in force. • Unlimited Unannounced Visits defined by the volume and nature of findings [Compliance & Delivery] • Referral to Formal Review if required

Due to the length of the programme there may be changes that impact the providers approach. The circumstances that would lead to a change are:

1. Change of guiding mind
2. Change of Training Manager to one not already known and proven at another provider
3. Different trainers with history of concern/allegation over past 12 months
4. High and/or increasing turnover of training/assessment staff
5. Increase of scope into new higher risk discipline i.e. Track Safety, OTP, OLE, Welding etc
6. Feedback from learners contained in either data or observed during Delivery visits
7. Feedback from Delivery Observers
8. Whistle-blower reports not proven malicious
9. Reports from Network Rail Assurance Programme, BTP, ORR or other standard owners
10. Any other reason defined as giving cause for concern by NSAR throughout the programme

Action?

Review and understand the changes and how they apply to you as an Assured Provider sharing the information with your training teams.

Additional Help?:

<https://nsar.freshdesk.com/a/dashboard/default>