

# News story: Consultation on awarding organisation controls for centre assessments

Ofqual has today (25 February 2019) published [a consultation on proposed changes to the way awarding organisations manage and oversee centre assessments](#). These changes are intended to ensure that appropriate controls are in place so that standards are consistent, whenever and wherever an assessment is taken.

Our rules allow awarding organisations to devolve some responsibility for assessments to schools, colleges and training centres, including through a practice commonly known as Direct Claims Status. However, we have found evidence to show that the variety of approaches currently in place to manage this provide different levels of oversight. We have also found that the terms 'moderation' and 'verification' are often used interchangeably and inconsistently with our rules.

[This consultation](#) recognises that centre assessment is central to the way many different qualifications function, and does not look to end it. Instead, we propose to:

- clarify our existing definition of moderation, and provide a new, separate definition for verification
- require awarding organisations to produce centre assurance strategies that explain how their centre assessment arrangements work
- set minimum requirements in certain qualifications
- set minimum requirements for awarding organisation verification processes, including a minimum of two monitoring visits and an additional unannounced visit per centre every year

Sally Collier, Chief Regulator, said:

We have conducted a detailed review of the use of centre assessment and believe that there are risks that can be managed better. We know that there are circumstances in which learners and employers can benefit from centre assessment, particularly in terms of the potential speed a qualification can be awarded. But the controls that awarding organisations have in place with centres must be sufficiently robust for the public to have confidence that assessment standards are being maintained between training providers and over time.

Ailin O'Cathain, Head of Policy, Federation of Awarding Bodies, said:

We welcome the opportunity to feed back on the proposals on

Moderation and Verification of centre assessments. We will be working closely with our members in the coming weeks to gather their views and feed back on the proposals. It will be important to view the proposals in relation to the validity of qualifications, which is something our members are committed to.

It will also be important to focus on the manageability of the proposed requirements. We will need to ensure they add value without placing a disproportionate burden on awarding organisations or the centres we work with.

Mark Dawe, Chief Executive, Association of Employment and Learning Providers, said:

While to many it sounds like a technicality, the differences between verification and moderation are critical, particularly in terms of the timely confirmation of apprentices and students achievements. Ofqual have been very clear in their proposed approach and the potential issues.

As well as the regulatory approach, assessment organisations will need to commit to process speeds, whatever form of assessment is used.

We are interested in hearing from anyone concerned with how qualifications are assessed, including awarding organisations, training providers, business groups, colleges, trade bodies, schools organisations, employer partnerships and learners.

Those who are involved in centre assessment will also be an important source of feedback, and we particularly welcome their input.

[The consultation](#) is open until 20 May 2019.

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## **[News story: New standards set out YJB's child first approach](#)**



Colin Allars, YJB Chief Executive, said:

These [standards](#) set out a child first, outcome-focused approach with ambitious expectations for the way children should be treated and supported when they come into contact with the youth justice system. Their publication is a significant milestone for the Youth Justice Board and is the first of seven priorities to be delivered under the current business plan.

We are confident that these standards will provide those working with children with more opportunities to innovate whilst retaining the safeguards children and the system require.

Numerous colleagues and professionals contributed to the development of these standards, which take effect on 1 April 2019. Work to engage the sector included a consultation which closed on 26 November last year. The consultation received 61 responses and these were immensely helpful in shaping the standards.

You can [read our response to the consultation](#) online. We acted on the majority of comments and suggestions and made many improvements as a result. Some have been reflected in the standards themselves and others will be

covered in the 'how to apply' section and case management guidance.

**Further reading:**

Published 25 February 2019

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## **Press release: Peppino Fiori: repeat offender subject to confiscation order**

In August 2018 Fiori was sentenced to 12 months immediate custody for possession with intent to supply fake Viagra. This sentence came just two years after a conviction for the same offence – in 2016 he had been sentenced to 12 months custody.

Fiori has been given 3 months to pay the confiscation order and will be sentenced to 18 months custody if he should default.

Approximately 60,640 doses of unlicensed medicine were seized, following investigation by the Medicine and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA). This included 2,200 doses of generic Tramadol, a powerful class C drug. It is thought that Fiori's hoard was worth more than £60,000.

Tariq Sarwar, MHRA's Head of Operation, said:

This confiscation follows a successful investigation by our Financial Investigation Team.

People who sell medicines illegally online are only interested in one thing – your money, not your health.

We will continue to track down and bring to justice those who are willing to put others' health in jeopardy and pursue them to take away their ill-gotten gains.

If you need advice or treatment for a condition, visit your GP. Make sure you obtain medical products from legitimate high street outlets or online retailers displaying the distance selling logo.

MHRA is currently running the #FakeMeds campaign to warn people against buying potentially dangerous or useless unlicensed medicines sold by illegal online suppliers. Visit [www.gov.uk/fakemeds](http://www.gov.uk/fakemeds) for tips on buying medicines safely online and how to avoid unscrupulous sites.

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## Press release: Church bells to be back-up warning for flooding in Starcross

Church bells will be the back-up warning for flooding in Starcross.

The Environment Agency has worked with Starcross Flood Group, St Paul's Church and flood wardens to create a contingency plan unique to the village if all usual forms of communication fail.

The chances of residents not getting warned by traditional electronic methods via the flood warning service are remote. But every flood plan has a contingency and Megan Debenham, the Flood Group Co-ordinator for Starcross, suggested using the 18th and 19th-century bells in St Paul's Church.

Community fundraisers and funding from the Environment Agency has restored the bells and surrounding masonry to their former glory and the bells returned to their tower on Tuesday 19 February 2019 after an absence of 4 months.

Jane Fletcher-Peters of the Environment Agency said:

As well as building flood defences, we also work with communities to create a flood plans – a set of actions of what to do in the event of flooding.

These plans always have a contingency for warning residents. While flood wardens knocking on doors is the most obvious solution, if flooding is at night, then residents could be asleep or wary of answering the door.

So we work together to find practical solutions like shining car headlights into houses and making people aware if that is accompanied by knocking, it could be a flood warden at the door.

Starcross is very much a boating community so it made sense that if the church bells were sounded to warn of flood, ringers would adopt an SOS peal familiar to residents.

Tim Miles, churchwarden of St Paul's Church, said:

We are very excited to welcome the bells back to the church and will sleep soundly knowing they are ready if needed to warn villagers of flooding.

Starcross' use of the church bells comes 13 months after the Environment Agency began £4million of work to better protect more than 600 properties from coastal flooding in the area. The Environment Agency installed 2 new floodgates at Church Road and Generals Lane slipway and raised the car park levels and extended the slipway at the Fishing and Cruising Club.

In Cockwood the harbour wall was raised along Dawlish Road in line with predicted sea level rises. There are also 2 tidal gates as part of the scheme that the community will operate on the Environment Agency's behalf.

There are 5.2 million homes and businesses in England at risk of flooding. The Environment Agency monitors flood risk and issues alerts and warnings accordingly:

- Flood Alert – Prepare. Flooding is possible
- Flood Warning – Act. Flooding is expected. Immediate action required
- Severe Flood Warning – Survive. Severe flooding. Danger to life

Check your flood risk, know what to do if flooding was expected, and be ready to respond. Check your flood risk and keep up to date with the latest situation at [www.gov.uk/check-if-youre-at-risk-of-flooding](http://www.gov.uk/check-if-youre-at-risk-of-flooding), call Floodline on 0345 988 1188 or follow [@EnvAgencySW](https://twitter.com/EnvAgencySW) on Twitter for the latest flood updates in Devon and Cornwall.

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## [News story: Hizballah to be banned alongside other terrorist organisations](#)

A draft order, laid in Parliament today, will proscribe Hizballah in its entirety alongside Ansaroul Islam and JNIM who operate in the Sahel region in Africa.

Subject to Parliament's approval, from Friday when the order comes into effect, being a member, or inviting support for Hizballah, Ansaroul Islam and JNIM will be a criminal offence, carrying a sentence of up to 10 years' imprisonment.

Home Secretary Sajid Javid said:

My priority as Home Secretary is to protect the British people. As part of this, we identify and ban any terrorist organisation which threatens our safety and security, whatever their motivations or ideology which is why I am taking action against several organisations today.

Hizballah is continuing in its attempts to destabilise the fragile situation in the Middle East – and we are no longer able to distinguish between their already banned military wing and the political party. Because of this, I have taken the decision to proscribe the group in its entirety.

Foreign Secretary Jeremy Hunt said:

We are staunch supporters of a stable and prosperous Lebanon. We cannot however be complacent when it comes to terrorism – it is clear the distinction between Hizballah's military and political wings does not exist, and by proscribing Hizballah in all its forms, the government is sending a clear signal that its destabilising activities in the region are totally unacceptable and detrimental to the UK's national security.

This does not change our ongoing commitment to Lebanon, with whom we have a broad and strong relationship.

All three groups have been assessed as being currently concerned in terrorism.

Hizballah's External Security Organisation and its military wing including the Jihad Council were already proscribed in 2001 and 2008 respectively.

The government has taken the decision to proscribe Hizballah in its entirety on the basis that it is no longer tenable to distinguish between the military and political wings of Hizballah.

Hizballah was established during the Lebanese civil war and is committed to armed resistance to the state of Israel. It continues to amass weapons in direct contravention of UN Security Council Resolutions, putting the security of the region at risk. Its involvement in the Syrian war since 2012 continues to prolong the conflict and the regime's brutal and violent repression of the Syrian people.

Ansarul Islam seeks to impose its own strict Salafist Sharia law in northern Burkina Faso and are known to target other ethnic groups in the region leading to substantial internal displacement of people. In December 2016, the group claimed responsibility for an attack on an army outpost in Burkina Faso which killed at least 12 soldiers.

JNIM was established in March 2017 as a federation of Al Qa'ida aligned groups in Mali and aims to impose a strict Salafist interpretation of Sharia law in the Sahel region and has claimed responsibility for several attacks in the region in which people were killed.

Furthermore, a separate order laid in Parliament today will proscribe:

- the Revolutionary People's Liberation Front (DHKC), the Revolutionary

People's Liberation Party (DHKP) and the Revolutionary People's Liberation Front/Armed Propaganda Units (DHKC/SPB) as aliases of the Revolutionary Peoples' Liberation Party-Front (Devrimci Halk Kurtulus Partisi-Cephesi) (DHKP-C) which is already proscribed

- Jaysh Khalid Bin Walid (JKbW) (JKW), Jaysh Khalid bin al-Walid (KBW) and Khalid ibn-Walid Army (KBWA) as aliases of Daesh

These changes will come into force from tomorrow (Tuesday 26 February).

Decisions about proscribing or extending the proscription of a particular organisation are taken after extensive consideration and in light of a full assessment of available information.

There are currently [74 international terrorist organisations](#) proscribed under the Terrorism Act 2000, alongside 14 organisations connected to Northern Ireland proscribed under separate legislation.