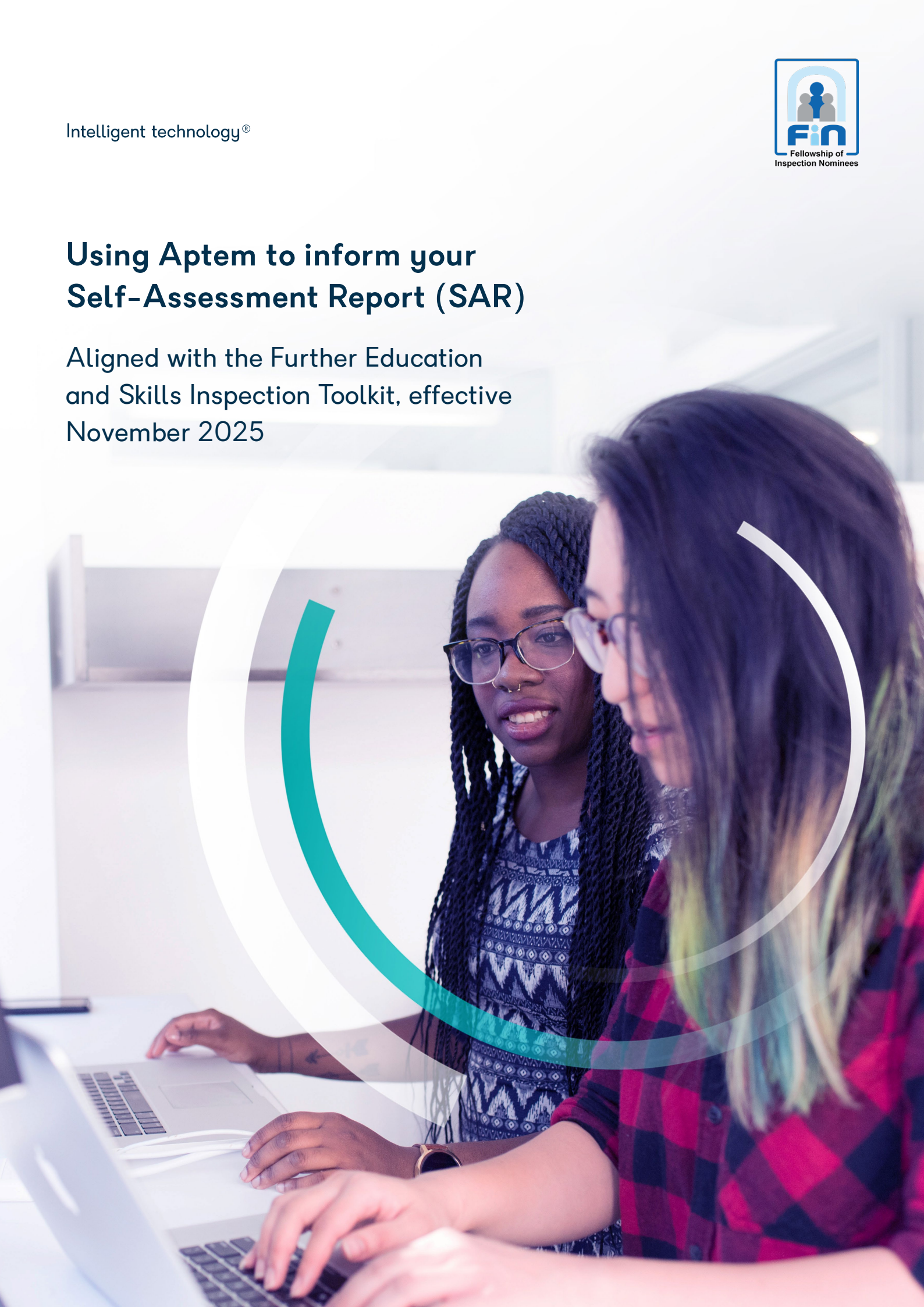
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Fellowship of Inspection Nominees

Using Aptem to inform your Self-Assessment Report (SAR)

Aligned with the Further Education and Skills Inspection Toolkit, effective November 2025



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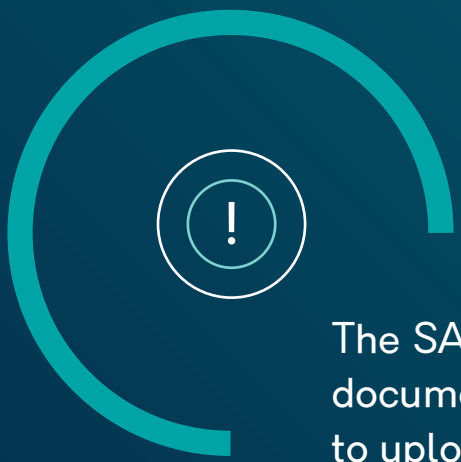
What is the Self-Assessment Report (SAR)?

Regular self-assessment forms a crucial part of the quality cycle for apprenticeship providers. Ofsted expects providers to be able to demonstrate that they are rigorously self-assessing and working to a quality improvement plan.

Although Ofsted no longer requires a SAR document to be uploaded for inspection under the latest Education Inspection Framework (EIF), completing one remains the most effective way to carry out thorough self-assessment and ensure sustained quality improvement.

The Fellowship of Inspection Nominees (FIN) describes the SAR as a 'shop window into the provider's understanding of their own provision.' It should explore your strengths and areas for improvement, and evidence how you have addressed quality improvement activities over the previous year.

Now, more than ever, it should be robust, honest, and not simply a story about what a provider does. Aligned to the criteria in the inspection toolkit, it will help you stay constructively critical of the strategic leadership and operational management of your provision and keep you on track for continuous improvement between Ofsted visits.



The SAR is now intended as an internal document, and FIN advises providers not to upload it to the inspection portal unless specifically requested.

What your SAR might include

Your SAR should describe the impact of your provision, rather than simply detailing what you have done.

The SAR is most valuable to providers when it is succinct, judgement-rich, and supported by robust data. It enables you to clearly identify strengths and areas for improvement, and to drive meaningful change within your organisation.

Consider structuring your SAR as follows:

- **Organisational background** – including geographical area served, demographics, areas of deprivation, delivery sites, major strategic issues impacting the organisation.
- **Summary of the number of learners** in each sector for the current academic year.
- **Summary of stakeholder views** – a few examples of stakeholder views from your learners and apprentices.
- **Key strengths in provision** – demonstrating a real and positive impact on learners, not something that would normally be expected. Identify the strengths, add an evaluation, and add the impact.
- **Key areas for improvement (AFI)** – identify the AFI, add an evaluation, and add the impact.
- **Address each aspect of the inspection toolkit in turn.** Clearly explain how your provision meets the criteria for a secure fit, providing evidence of impact for each:
  - Safeguarding
  - Inclusion
  - Leadership and governance
  - Meeting skills need (if applicable)
  - Curriculum, teaching and training
  - Achievement
  - Participation and development

The Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) is an essential document that supports the SAR. This is your action plan, and when reviewed regularly, will act as a continual update to the SAR.

Position statement: bringing your findings up to date

A 'position statement' updates the narrative from where the SAR concluded, outlining progress and updates since 31 July.

Although the SAR document is not required by Ofsted, a 'position' is still expected. On the pre-inspection planning call, providers are expected to explain how they evaluate their own effectiveness, where they believe they sit on the 5-point grading scale for relevant evaluation areas, identify key strengths and priority areas for improvement and reference evidence and impact. Providers are advised to develop a position statement that supports an active in-year Quality Improvement Plan.

Tip for University providers

Within an HEI setting, if apprenticeships are delivered in isolation, the apprentices won't see the full benefit of what your institution can offer. From careers hubs and IAG to healthy living and financial support, Universities often have valuable resources that apprentices can benefit from. Make sure you evidence the impact of access to shared services within your SAR.

The importance of data in a SAR

Your narrative must be supported by data outcomes. A good starting point is therefore a thorough analysis of management data. Complete the data table appendix before you think about writing text.

Kerry Boffey, FIN

Information that will be helpful

- Learner numbers by age, gender, ethnicity, SEND status, and programme.
- Learner progress data, which can be segmented by disadvantaged learner status.
- Any learner destination data that you have available.
- Qualification Achievement Rates (QAR) & attendance data, with three-year trend.
- Strengths and Areas for Improvement (AFIs) from programme teams.
- Withdrawals, Breaks in Learning (BIL), early leavers and what happened to them.
- Impact of progress tracking and learner destinations.
- Information and Guidance (IAG), and what difference the support made.
- Observations of Teaching and Learning (OTL) outcomes and impact of CPD.
- Safeguarding referrals and improvements made as a result.
- Stakeholder feedback.

Tip

Check out the Guide to Ofsted's House Style – a document that suggests suitable text to describe data. Using this will ensure your description of 'a very small minority', for example, is in line with Ofsted's interpretation.

Your SAR data pack

Compiling the SAR is a process that, if done well, will take several months and involve a number of people.

The data pack should represent and demonstrate evidence of the journey since the last inspection and provide quantitative data on progress. Where progress is not clearly evidenced it would be expected that this would form an area for development within the QIP.

You may include the following:

Qualitative data that is rich in feedback from learners, employers and tutors. You may also include case studies which clearly demonstrate areas of improvement.

- IAG at all stages of the learner journey
- Destination / progress data
- Results of any deep dive activities
- Records of effective governance

Quantitative data that showcases your journey. Much of this data will ideally be exported from your apprenticeship management system.

The next section of this guide will explore the ways in which data from Aptem feeds into your SAR, playing an important role in evidencing your organisation's performance over time.

Using Aptem to evidence the performance of your provision



Report on learner numbers split by age, ethnicity, gender, SEND status, and standards

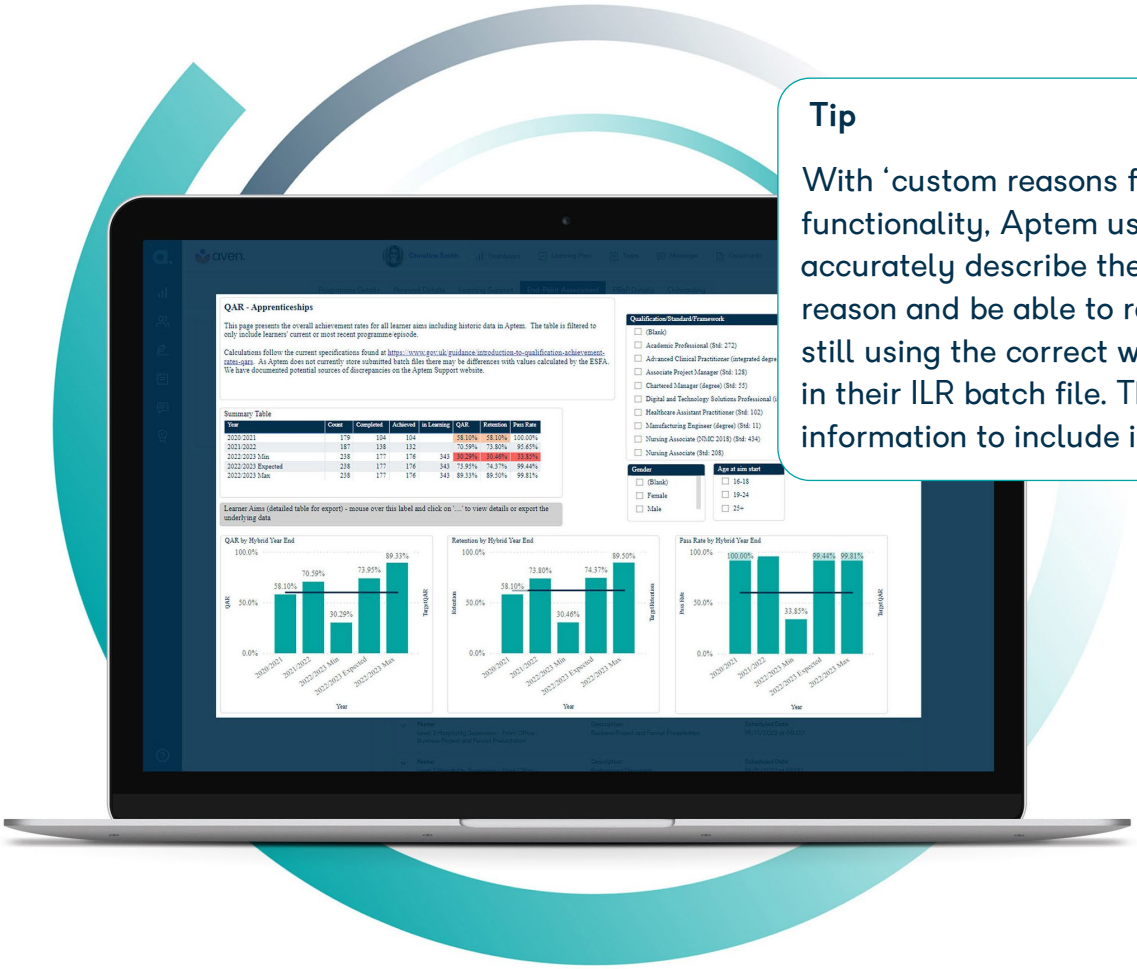
Include 3-year historical data for demographic trends.

- Learner starts and achievement rates.
- Learner workshop attendance rates and engagement with online resources and workshops.
- Learner withdrawals, breaks in learning, and early leavers.
- Learner progress and destinations.
- Past planned end date (PPED) learners.

Aptem's Quality Dashboard ▾

Where to find this data in Aptem

- Through extensive OData field availability, you can create a range of reports tailored to your organisation's specific needs. You can save historical reports for future reference.
- Aptem's Power BI Quality Dashboard shows a wealth of data points – from learner starts and ILR destination data to achievement rates by ethnicity and qualification.
- Built-in dashboards show learner, tutor and organisational performance at a glance. Generic reporting allows the creation of bespoke reports on progress, for example, compliance and learning plan status, additional learning needs support identifications, and export for further analysis.



Tip

With 'custom reasons for withdrawal' functionality, Aptem users can more accurately describe the withdrawal reason and be able to report on it, while still using the correct withdrawal reason in their ILR batch file. This is powerful information to include in your SAR.

Show the performance of individual tutors, teams, business areas and the organisation as a whole

Data might include caseload summaries showing where in the journey learners are, off-the-job hours summary against target, and RAG status of the learners, as defined by your organisation.

Where to find this data in Aptem

- Aptem's built-in dashboards, including the Performance Dashboard, enable users at all levels across an organisation to effectively learn, track and manage their programmes.
- Aptem's single-page dashboards provide an instant snapshot of key analytics and reports of user programmes. You also have the ability to drill down for more detailed insights.

Performance Dashboard in Aptem ▾

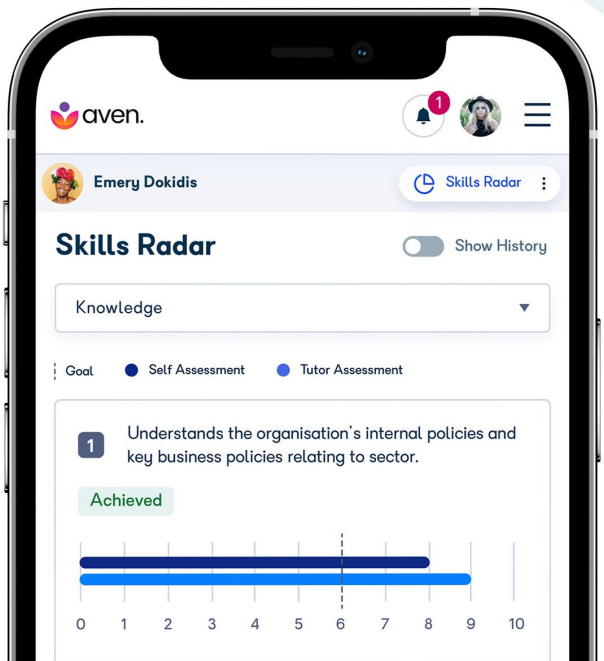


Evaluate learner progress from starting points

If providers don't get the starting points right, how can they expect to measure progress? This is an essential prologue to the whole programme, and you will need to draw on robust starting point and progress data in your SAR.

Starting point data is broader than many providers may think:

- Occupational Knowledge, Skills and Behaviours (KSBs)
- English and Maths, including how they are applied
- Safeguarding
- Prevent
- Fundamental British Values
- Personal development
- Identifying and overcoming personal barriers



Aptem Skills Radar

Where to find this data in Aptem

Aptem's Skills Radar can be set up for a tutor, a learner and an employer to complete. Each of the scores is recorded individually, with one not overwriting the other. By default, Aptem tracks the historical assessment of all three parties. This means progression against the competency levels is easy to track throughout the programme.

The Skills Radar is fully customisable. The onboarding wizard will guide learners through each self-assessment assigned to them. Learners can upload evidence to justify their self-assessment grade. Learner self-assessments and tutor assessments are conveniently displayed in the Skills Radar view.

Aptem's 'checkpoint' progress monitoring tool is an ideal way to boost learner confidence and deliver instant insight into starting points and ongoing understanding of KSBs. Through timely questions and realistic, work-based scenarios, it helps apprentices apply theory to practice, deepen understanding, and track progress with ease.

Aptem Assess is a built-in tool that uses eight interactive games to quickly identify potential learning support needs.

Analyse the progress and completion of Functional Skills

You will want to keep track of how your Functional Skills provision is performing and identify any areas for concern. It's important to be able to ensure Functional Skills assessments are covered at the start of the programme, where required, and that evidence of GCSE Maths and English is correctly captured. You will want to be able to track and report on Functional Skills progress.

How it works in Aptem

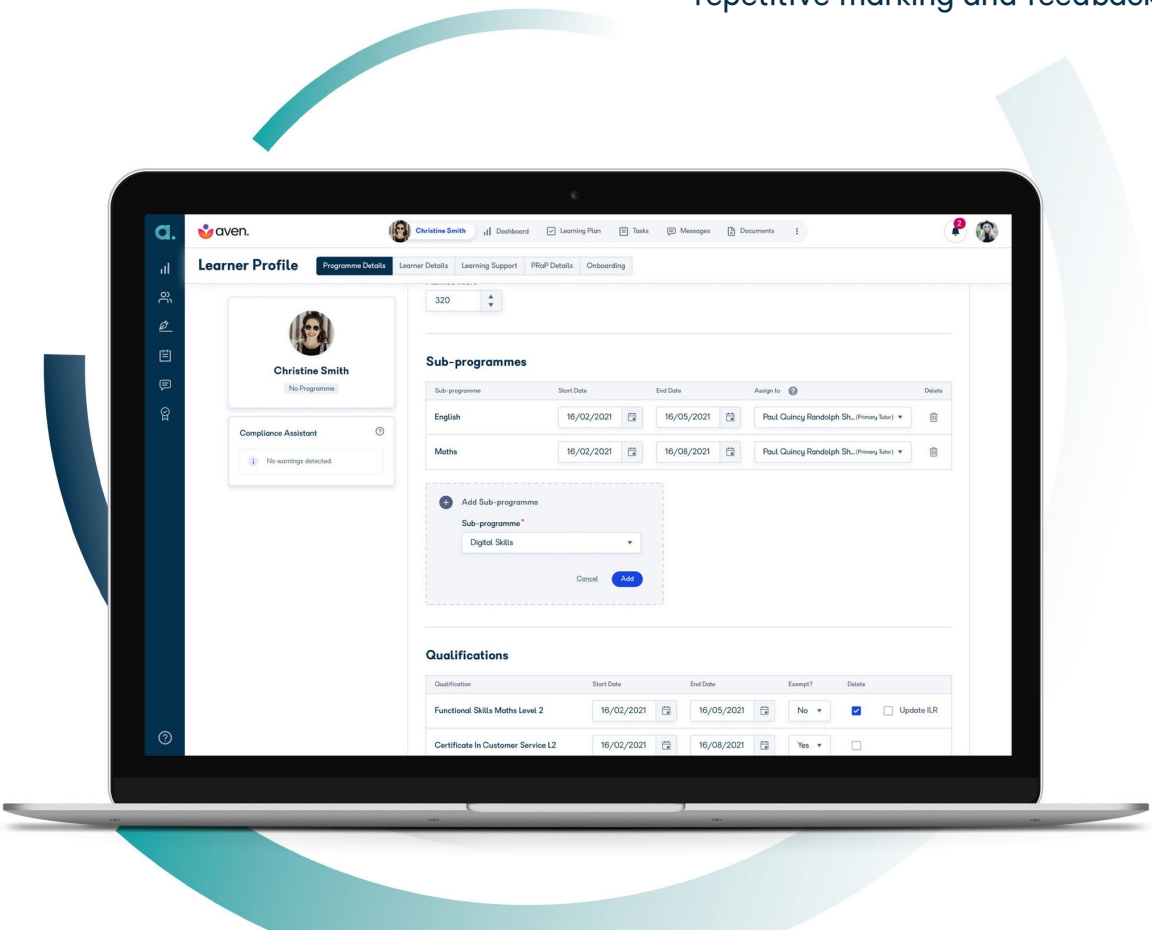
Aptem offers fully integrated initial learner assessments and diagnostics, with BKSB, Century and Skills Forward.

Most Aptem users take advantage of 'sub-programme' functionality to efficiently manage Functional Skills learning, while ensuring a smooth learner experience.

Sub-programme functionality in Aptem ▾

You can add as many additional sub-programmes as needed. Learners will see a single Learning Plan that contains all the elements of both their main apprenticeship standard and any additional learning programmes. As it's all tracked, you will be able to use this information in your SAR.

Aptem's powerful AI-driven marking aid and inline feedback functionality is especially effective for Functional Skills, helping tutors save time on repetitive marking and feedback tasks.



Demonstrate the impact of how you stretch and challenge learners

The ultimate goal of individualised learning, including the setting of ambitious learning targets, is rarely achieved without supporting technology to help you identify needs and manage programme variations. How you support those who are excelling in their programmes, to ensure continuous progress, is worth recording in your SAR.

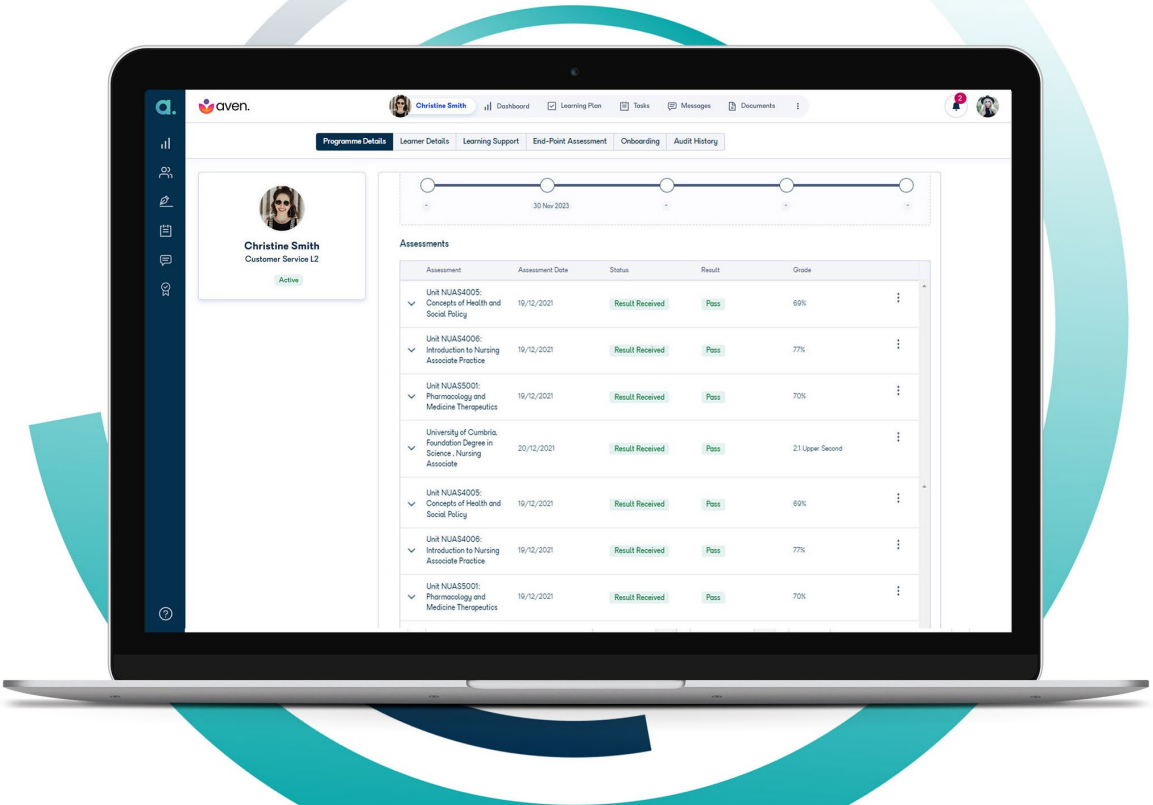
How it works in Aptem

Through Aptem's Registration and Certification functionality, you can record assessment results and refer to this when talking about final outcomes and impact of your provision. For example, you might show how many of your learners taking a qualification within the Apprenticeship Standard went on to get a distinction, or maybe an 80% pass mark, and show how you are stretching those that consistently get high marks in their assessments.

Using Aptem's sub-programme functionality, further reading, stretch challenges, reflective pieces etc can be embedded in individuals' Learning Plans, even mid-way through a programme. This information can then be extracted to demonstrate evidence and impact for the SAR.

The Aptem virtual assistant (AVA) is designed to help stretch and challenge learners, as well as offer 24/7 support. It enables learners to dig deeper into topics, and the conversation history is tracked within the system to help identify further coaching opportunities.

Assessment results in Registration and Certification ▾



Demonstrate that you meet Safeguarding requirements

With a clear responsibility to help keep apprentices safe, providers will want to show an agile approach and to evidence their effectiveness in the SAR. Depending on what is happening at a macro level, it may be beneficial for tutors to focus on a particular area, such as promoting sexual health or raising awareness of county lines. Aptem supports a robust safeguarding system.

How to manage this in Aptem



Clear roles and permissions mean that designated safeguarding teams have appropriate visibility.



Group-specific dashboards for 'at risk' learners will allow leaders to utilise data to improve practice and demonstrate impact.



Custom trackers support an effective safeguarding concern reporting process where tutors can raise these to specific safeguarding teams and a clear audit trail will support reporting.



Customisable onboarding steps allow providers to collect any programme-specific data needed, which can be efficiently managed through the extended ILR feature.



Preventative safeguarding is well supported through the tracking of learner engagement, attendance and progress, enabling staff to identify signs of risk and intervene at an early stage.



Where regular and repeatable information is shared, such as Prevent and Safeguarding, and Information and Guidance (IAG), British Values, Personal Development and Identifying/Overcoming Personal Barriers, Aptem SCORM assets can be used. Apprentices will have to tick that they have read something or taken an action, thereby creating an audit trail.



Resources and discussions around learning content can also be built into reviews. This is the best place to identify a starting point for knowledge of these subjects and how a learner's understanding improves over time. Providers can edit Aptem reviews to accommodate new areas of focus. The beauty of the system is that you can then roll out the changes across the cohort, so that when a tutor next starts a review, they will be prompted to ask the right questions and share relevant content. This data is tracked in the system and can help identify trends and areas for improvement.

Gather and record feedback

Help to uncover any misalignment of perception by proactively scheduling feedback questioning. Employer and learner perception matters. The reported impact of perception is seen across inspections. This is a challenge for providers who tend to feel that this data is beyond their control, directly at least.

There are actually a number of approaches a provider can take to not only mitigate the risk of unexpected poor feedback from learners and employers, but to genuinely improve quality of provision for the long-term. It's about being proactive. Providers will want to gauge what responses learners and employers might give if called upon during an inspection, and when sharing their experiences and ratings in the public domain.

Where to find this data in Aptem

- With Aptem, providers can build in Learning Plan components that proactively seek feedback. These components are not mapped to the progress of the apprenticeship.
- This might look like an 'external training' component that links to a survey such as Qualtrics or Survey Monkey. This means you can demonstrate to inspectors that you have asked the right questions and collated the feedback ready to be acted upon.

How Aptem provides data to evidence improvements

Where providers have identified programme improvements, they can clone their previous programme in Aptem and apply changes to that clone. This way, they have version control and can demonstrate to Ofsted the changes they have made over time and the impact of those changes. Applying changes to an existing programme doesn't enable the provider to evidence this impact.

Providers can also create their own reporting views through User Generated Reports (UGR), tracking data points that matter to them. These views can be saved to track continuous improvement to key areas over time.

Tip

Some Aptem customers with large data teams and/or bespoke reporting requirements, have their OData feed into an Excel dashboard that automatically refreshes, ready to be pasted into the SAR.

Please note that certain features and functionality highlighted here are exclusive to specific Aptem packages. Please speak to your Business Development Manager, or Customer Success Manager if you are already an Aptem customer, for further information.

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For more support

Aptem is purpose-built for compliant and efficient apprenticeship management. Implemented and used correctly, it can put you in control of your Ofsted preparedness and identify opportunities to drive quality across your provision.

- Aptem customers can talk to their Customer Success Manager about using the system to support the SAR.
- For consultative support on compiling an effective SAR and position statement, the Fellowship of Inspection Nominees (FIN) has a highly specialised team that will provide you with invaluable insights on the planning, processes, and purposeful use of self-assessment.

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If you are an organisation that helps deliver further education and employment programmes and would like to transform the way you deliver in a cost-effective, efficient and compliant way, get in touch:

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- **Aptem Enrol**, remote onboarding of apprenticeship students, for colleges.
- **Aptem Employ**, a unique, flexible, award-winning employability system that helps to get people back into the workplace quickly and for the long term.
- **Aptem Skills**, our award-winning end-to-end delivery platform that enables fully compliant ASF course delivery and accelerates re-employment.
- **Aptem Assess**, a cognitive assessment tool that enables you to seamlessly identify and respond to learning needs.

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