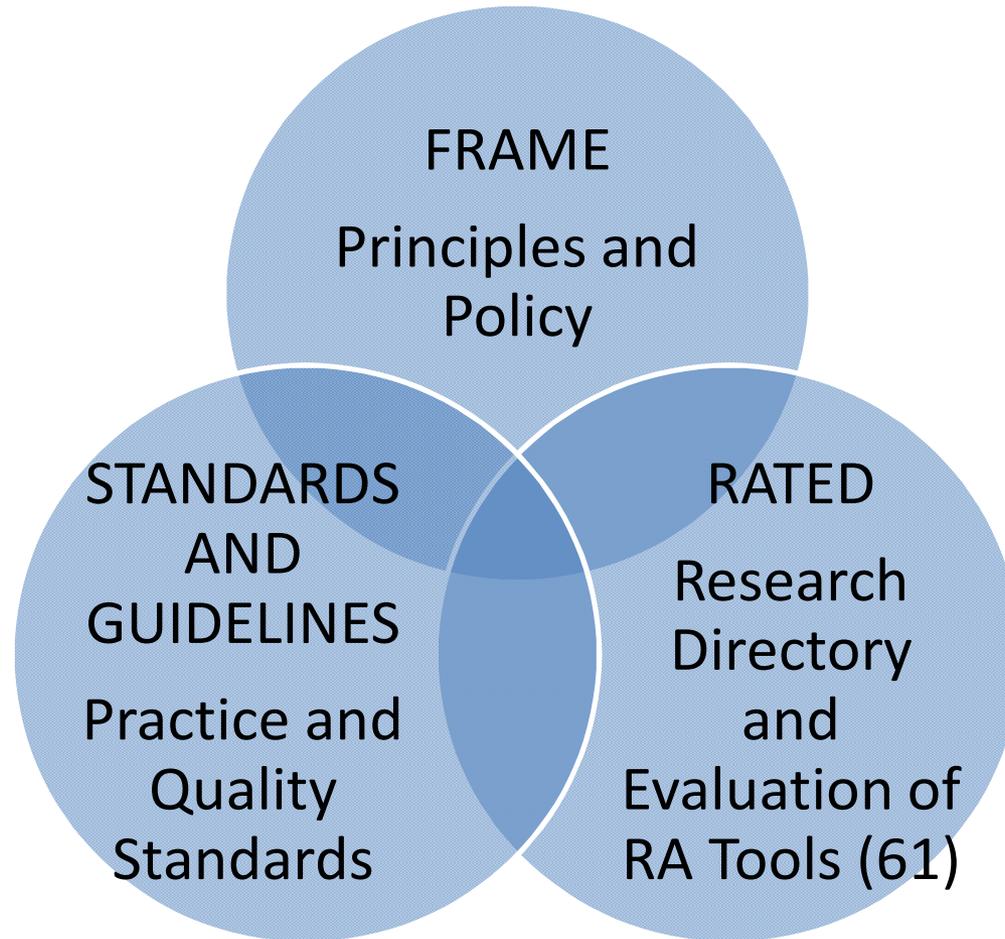


" Standards and Guidance for Risk Assessment."

Professor Hazel Kemshall,
De Montfort University, Leicester, U.K.

(with acknowledgement to the
Risk Management Authority, Scotland; and to
SOMECS Serious Offending by Mobile European Criminals, European Commission
Directorate-General for Home Affairs - HOME/2011/AG/4000002521 30-CE-
0519712/00-87; <http://www.svdv.org.uk/somec-project/>).

Good Risk Assessment is Built on...



Guiding principles

Risk assessment should be:

- Fair, just and proportionate
- Non-discriminatory
- Non-arbitrary
- Ethical in design and application
- Defensible
- Rooted in best available research evidence

For example...

- “Risk assessment will be conducted in an evidence-based, structured manner, incorporating appropriate tools and professional decision making, acknowledging any limitations of the assessment.”

(Framework for Risk Assessment, Management and Evaluation (FRAME) (2011) Risk Management Authority Scotland)

[http://www.rmascotland.gov.uk/files/5713/0943/0052/FRAME Policy Paper - July 2011.pdf](http://www.rmascotland.gov.uk/files/5713/0943/0052/FRAME%20Policy%20Paper%20-%20July%202011.pdf)

Brief Overview of Scottish approach

- Risk assessment tools **MUST** be accredited.
- Agreed criteria to judge quality and performance of RA tool
- Based in current research evidence, this evidence and criteria are presented in **RATED**:
<http://rated.rmascotland.gov.uk/> (61 tools evaluated)
- Empirical grounding, Inter-rater reliability, and validation history. (See checklist 2 in Kemshall, Kelly, Wilkinson, Hilder (2015) *Offender Management User Guidance, SOMECE*.
<http://www.svdv.org.uk/somec-project/>

Checklist 2 – Selecting

Appropriate Risk Assessment Tools

- Is the purpose and function of the RA tool clearly stated?
- Does it have a user manual and an associated training programme?
- Does it include static and dynamic risk and protective factors?
- Is it designed to be used in an individualised way as part of structured professional judgment?
- Has the tool been shown to encourage consistency and reliability of judgments across users? (Inter-rater reliability)

Checklist 2 cont...

- Does it identify those who need a more intensive assessment?
- Does it help to identify important components of risk management and the intensity of any interventi
- Is it relevant to your own offender population?
- Is the tool transferrable to your own legal framework and its decision-making processes?
- Does the tool require additional resources to implement (e.g. time or additional staff) or can it be integrated into existing practice and procedures?

Competent assessors

- Assessors providing risk assessment reports to Court for Orders for Lifelong Restriction MUST be accredited by the RMA
- Other staff must have received sufficient training, usually provided by the RMA. This includes Scottish Prison Service personnel.
- Training is accredited with follow up evaluations of practice.
- An overall system that tries to ensure 'quality standards' in tool development, adoption and use.

Some practical things

- When? Pre court for sentencing; on reception into prison within first few weeks, at least annually thereafter unless circumstances change; if transferred to another prison or regime; for assessment and allocation to treatment programme; for home leave; and at least 6 months before release.
- Risk assessment and management plans for those serving OLRs are independently reviewed by the Risk Management Authority, otherwise
- Risk Management Teams at stated intervals for prisoners serving 4 years or more.

There may be more than one component to assessment

- Risk of reoffending
- Risk of serious harm (commit serious injury, life threatening, or serious psychological trauma)
- Treatment needs
- Social and reintegration needs
- Responsivity to treatment/intervention
- Motivation to change

This may mean...

- A range of risk assessment tools are used, some..
- Generic re-offending tools,
- Some specific
- BUT ALL must meet RATED criteria and..
- Meet standards for information gathering, interviewing, fact checking, and verification

(Standards and Guidelines for Risk Assessment (2006, 2013)

http://www.rmascotland.gov.uk/files/9213/6213/1511/Standards_and_Guidelines_for_risk_assessment.pdf

What the overall system is designed to do...

- Protect the rights of the individual prisoner/person (“I have the right to be assessed using the best available methods by competent, well trained staff; I am entitled to review within stated time periods; I am entitled to know and challenge content of assessments.” etc.)
- Provide well matched interventions/treatment to needs, risks, problems posed

And...

- Enable those who can to achieve progress, change, release and safe reintegration into the community.
- Enhance public safety and reduce crime.

References

- Kemshall, Kelly, Wilkinson, Hilder (2015) *Offender Management User Guidance, SOMEc*. http://www.somec-project.eu/default.asp?page_id=563
- [http://www.rmascotland.gov.uk/files/5713/0943/0052/FAME Policy Paper - July 2011.pdf](http://www.rmascotland.gov.uk/files/5713/0943/0052/FAME_Policy_Paper_-_July_2011.pdf)
- [http://www.rmascotland.gov.uk/files/9213/6213/1511/Standards and Guidelines for risk assessment.pdf](http://www.rmascotland.gov.uk/files/9213/6213/1511/Standards_and_Guidelines_for_risk_assessment.pdf)
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- [Research and Practice in Risk Assessment and Risk Management of Children And Young People Engaging in Offending Behaviours – A Literature Review \(2007\)](#)
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- <http://www.svdv.org.uk/somec-project/>