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Assessing current capabilities and identifying areas of improvement to flood risk guidance information provided by the Flood Guidance Statement.

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The ability to assess the performance of flood risk forecasts is important to ensure key targets are being met, to identify areas of improvement and to demonstrate improvements resulting from a particular action. Such actions may include increased funding or scientific or technological advances. However, obtaining quantitative performance information remains challenging.
Customer feedback and satisfaction surveys can provide outline quantitative information from a customer's perspective. However, such feedback may often be focussed on a single event or a non-event due to the low probabilities that flood guidance is often issued with. To compliment our customer based information, the Flood Forecasting Centre has implemented an improved verification system to quantitatively assess the performance of its flood guidance information.

The Flood Forecasting Centre (FFC) is a working partnership between the Met Office and Environment Agency and based in the Met Office Operations Centre in Exeter, UK. A combination of hydrometeorological information is used to produce the Flood Guidance Statement (FGS); a daily forecast of flood risk for England and Wales to a variety of flood responders. Flood risk (very low, low, medium or high) is presented daily at a county (sub regional) resolution, for each natural source of flooding for each day and for the following four days. A purpose built verification system has been recently implemented to analyse FGS performance in detail and holds data from June 2013.

After introducing the FFC, FGS and its verification system, an analysis of current FGS performance will be presented with examples provided of how this information has been used to assess current performance and identify areas of improvement. Potential development activities to achieve such improvements will also be discussed. An assessment of the usefulness of such a verification system will be presented along with suggested improvements to the verification system itself.