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News from *the information authority*

Changes to the 2010/11 ILR – consultation draws to a close

The information authority secretariat's consultation with the FE and training system on the requests to change the 2010/11 ILR is drawing to a close.

Since last month, the secretariat has been asking for comments on 19 proposals (out of the 60 originally received) through its online community portal, [feconnect](#). All of the proposals are available to read in full in the 'Change Requests for the 2010/11 ILR' document on the [ILR Request for Change](#) webpage. These comments will help to shape the recommendations made to [the information authority board](#) when it considers the proposals at its meeting on Wednesday 30 September.

The consultation will close on **Friday 4 September 2009**.

The outcomes of the board's decisions will be published on *the information authority's* [website](#) shortly after the meeting. You can subscribe to [web alerts](#) to receive notifications directly to your inbox.

If you have any queries about the consultation, or would like more information about the Request for Change process, please email *the information authority's* Community and Stakeholder Team at cst@theia.org.uk.

Working with the DCSF Star Chamber Scrutiny Board

The information authority has been forming a closer relationship with the DCSF [Star Chamber Scrutiny Board](#) (SCSB), which assesses proposals for new data and research collections relating to children and young people. The SCSB aims to ensure that all new collections are feasible, necessary, provide value for money and are timed to add as small a burden to the front line as possible.

The two bodies have a common interest in promoting the use of data standards and in controlling data collections and have been jointly developing a Memorandum of Understanding that will help to foster closer working.

Community and Stakeholder Manager, Anne Fessi, said: "Both *the information authority* and the SCSB are keen to share knowledge, to avoid duplication when assessing data collection requests and to support the development of a common or comparable data collection timetable, so this agreement is very welcome."

September board meeting – what's on the agenda

The next *information authority* board meeting will be held on 30 September 2009. The main purpose of this meeting is to discuss the ILR changes and agree the ILR specification for 2010/11. The board will also be discussing the ILR specification for 2011/12.

The outcomes and minutes from this board meeting will be available on [the information authority website](#) shortly after this meeting.

Please follow the links to view [minutes](#) and [papers](#) from previous board meetings.

The *information authority* hosts a meeting for HOLEX members

The *information authority* is working with HOLEX to arrange a networking meeting for its members. The aim of the meeting is to introduce the work of *the information authority* and partner organisations such as the [Data Service](#), [MIAP](#) and the [Framework for Excellence](#) team.

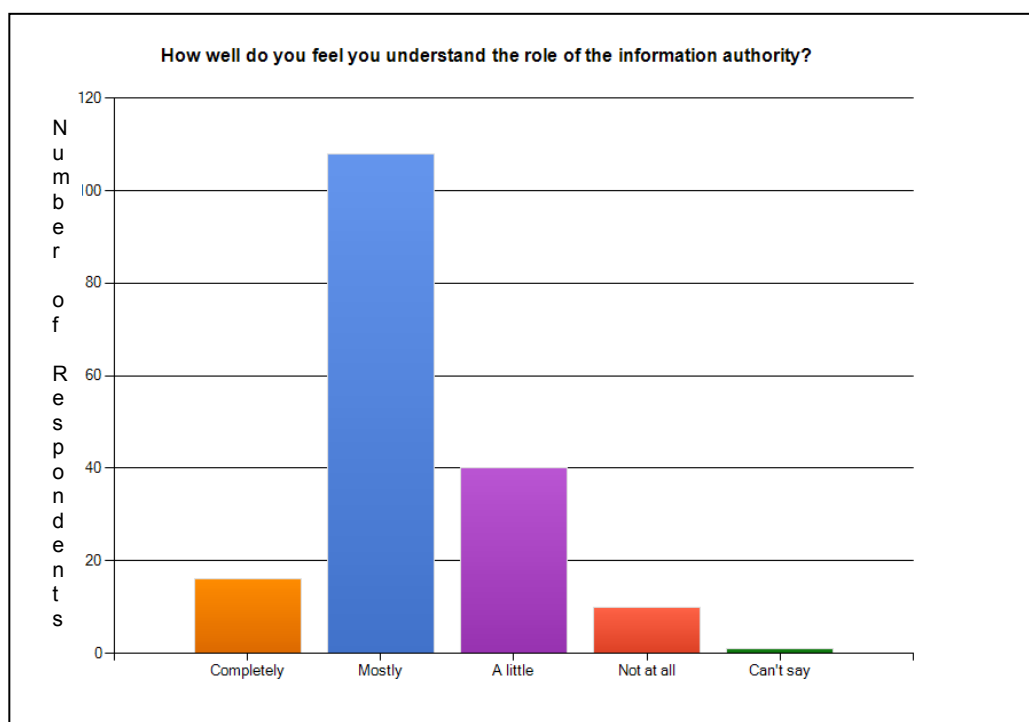
The meeting is taking place on 19 October 2009 in Coventry. HOLEX members will also be given an update on the The Skills Funding Agency (SFA) and the Young Peoples Learning Agency (YPLA), the two bodies that will replace the LSC in 2010.

Bob Powell, Chief Officer of HOLEX, will be contacting HOLEX members in September to invite them to this meeting.

Awareness and perception survey results 2009

The information authority has conducted an awareness and perception survey for the second year running and is pleased to have received a wide response from learning providers, data users and policy makers within FE and training.

Of the 200 respondents that completed the survey, **90.2%** were aware of *the information authority*, with **93.6%** of respondents having some understanding of our work (see graph below).



Encouragingly, **86.4%** of respondents felt that *the information authority* had to some degree been successful in introducing changes to the sector regarding the setting and regulating of data standards.

Head of *the information authority* secretariat, Una Bennett, said: "Last year our survey showed that at least half of respondents were aware of our work and that they had a good understanding of our role. This year we have a clearer picture of how effective our stakeholders think we have been both in setting data standards, and improving data quality."

News from the Data Service

In-year success rate reporting for Train to Gain and Apprenticeships

The Train to Gain and Apprenticeships Qualification Success Rate reports for Period 12 are now available for providers to download from the Provider Gateway.

The reports use 2008/09 data up to and including period 12.

Each provider can download their own data from the Provider Gateway in a zipped file which contains:

- QSR reports
 - a summary report covering success rates for England, Regions and Local Authorities (where applicable, relating to this provider)
 - detailed separate reports for England, Regions and Local Authorities (where applicable, relating to this provider)
- a Microsoft Excel file of success rates details for all learners (relating to this provider)
- guidance information

If you have a query about these reports please contact the [Service Desk](#) on **0870 2670001**.

ILR e-learning for providers

The Data Service has been working with *the information authority* to deliver improved data quality processes across all data reporting.

Training of the provider community has been identified as an important means of securing improved quality data. Because of the size of that community (many thousand organisations) and its diversity (large FE colleges, national training companies, small local voluntary organisations, among others), **e-learning** has been identified as the preferred method for delivering such training.

The first e-learning module from the Data Service, for Providers, will focus on the ILR, the importance of submitting good quality data and 2009/10 ILR changes. This first module will act as a support tool to the ILR guidance manuals.

The ILR e-learning project is now entering the testing phase. This will consist of two key phases, testing of an Alpha and a Beta version.

Testing of this module, which includes a final review, will be completed by 15th September 2009.

A number of launch events have been planned which includes launching this module with the Association of Colleges (AoC) on 25th September 2009 and the Association of Learning Providers (ALP) on 1st October 2009.

When live, this module will be hosted on the [Data Service's website](#) for providers to access.

If you have any queries please contact the [Service Desk](#), at the Data Service, on 0870 2670001.

Data Quality initiatives

As part of its commitment to improving the quality of data for the FE sector, the Data Service is introducing a number of data quality initiatives. Among these are [quality statements](#) for reports and ILR datasets (ILR standard files). The statements refer to known issues with datasets, and to quality assessments of the data. The statements further include information on the data assurance processes carried out in the collection and production of the dataset or report.

Quality statements have been available since 1st June 2009 for a range of ILR-based MI reports, and from 17th September 2009 onwards will be extended to the following LSC scheduled Standard Files:

- Employer Responsiveness
- Learner Responsiveness
- Adult Safeguarded Learning
- University for Industry
- ESF Short Record

ILR Quality Assessments

From 17th September 2009 the Data Service will be introducing [quality assessments](#) for LSC scheduled ILR Standard Files. Initially, the assessments will centre on the results of field completeness checks based on data quality standards for providers published by *the information authority* (ILR 2009/10 Appendix P).

The Data Service will be working with *the information authority* to increase the range and sophistication of ILR quality assessments. However, it is strongly recommended that users undertake any further quality assessments that may be required for their reporting or financial requirements. Should the user identify any issue with data, the Service Desk should be notified at: servicedesk@thedata-service.org.uk

The first quality assessment will be available on Sept 17th 2009 (Employer Responsiveness, E01 collection).

News from the further education sector

ALP invites applications for £3m workplace e-learning funding

Work-based learning providers are being encouraged to bid for £3 million of funding to help the sector adopt new technology and explore innovative ways of applying ICT solutions.

The Association of Learning Providers (ALP), which is managing the Government's Learning Innovation Grant (LIG) project, is inviting applications from providers "that have not bid before as well as consortia bids".

Bidders will be able to apply for the new funding, the fifth tranche in a £13 million scheme, from Friday 4 September.

About us

The information authority

The information authority was established in October 2006 to set and regulate data standards for all organisations involved in further education and training in England.

The authority has a decision-making board headed by an independent chairman and made up of senior representatives from across the education and training system in England. This is supported by a small operational secretariat.

The Data Service

The Data Service was established in April 2008 to collect and disseminate information as the first single source of data for the further education system in England. It will work closely with *the information authority* to streamline and improve the way information is collected and shared. Key principles of the service are to eradicate duplication; improve collection and sharing; increase efficiency; assure quality and; provide new levels of customer service.

Funded primarily by the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) and supported by the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) at its inception, the new separately managed organisation will have developed by 2011 into a fully operational service provider working in the interests of the sector as a whole.



To find out more about *the information authority* and the Data Service, visit:

www.theia.org.uk
www.thedataservice.org.uk