

inform

Issue 33 – January 2010

Inform is a monthly newsletter from *the information authority* and the Data Service, providing you with regular news and updates on our work. To subscribe to inform email: informnewsletter@theia.org.uk.

New Head for *the information authority*

John Perks has accepted the post of Head of *the information authority*. John is currently working at the Association of Colleges (AoC) as its NILTA Manager (Policy and Practice) and prior to that he was a College MIS manager.

John will start in his new role on 1 February 2010. John has already been taking an active role in *information authority* business, including attending an *information authority* and Data Service briefing to BIS colleagues on 19 January, and attending meetings at LSC national office.

2008/09 F05 closes

The Data Service would like to thank all providers for submitting their 2008/09 ILR returns for the F05 in time for the hard close on 15 January.

The Data Service has been proactive in working with providers to help with their submissions for the F05, by calling providers to offer advice and assistance and follow up on outstanding queries.

The 2008/09 F05 is the final Learner Responsive collection for the academic year 2008/09. This collects all records for the academic year, and is the collection which contains learning aims outcomes, grades and destinations for those learners/ learning aims which have completed in the teaching year.

The F05 ILR data is processed by the Data Service and used as the base data to calculate the Learner Responsive Success Rates for 2008/09, any data which is submitted after the close date, will not be used for this calculation which in turn may have a detrimental impact on a providers' Success Rates, and, therefore, future funding.

This month:

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News from *the information authority*

2011/12 ILR Change process

The Change process for the 2011/12 ILR is now underway. For 2011/12 *the information authority* has reviewed the process and a new criteria and change request form have been developed. These documents are now available to download from [the information authority's website](#). The 2011/12 process will also see the introduction of a stakeholder panel before requests go up for consultation.

Any requests for change will need to be submitted on the new "Request for Change" form between now and 18 June 2010. Later this year, providers and stakeholders will be encouraged to share their comments on the proposed changes, and more information on this process will be communicated through future editions of *Inform*, [feconnect](#) and the *information authority's* website.

Paul Kelman, Stakeholder Engagement Manager for *the information authority* commented "If you are considering submitting a request for change to the 2011/12 ILR please engage with us as early as possible as we are keen to hear ways of reducing complexity."

Further information on the Change Request process, including the full timetable for developing and publishing the 2011/12 ILR specification can be found on [the information authority's website](#).

Introducing the data quality framework

Working with the Data Service, *the information authority* is continuing its efforts supporting providers to improve data quality.

The development of a [data quality framework](#) encourages providers to adopt a common process approach to data quality improvement.

The framework explains and promotes 'best practice' techniques to guide and assist providers in the data quality process.

The data quality framework is made up from a number of components that combine to form the 'best practice' process. These include:

- Adoption and publication of data quality dimensions
- Roles and responsibilities
- Development of aligned business processes
- Data quality metrics, scorecards and reports

The data quality framework is available to download from [the information authority website](#).

Out and about in January 2010

The information authority and the Data Service held a joint workshop for the Department of Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) in Sheffield on 19 January 2010.

The aim of the workshop was to promote the work of the Data Service and *the information authority* and to also highlight the work we are doing in partnership, and how we work with BIS.

The workshop was well attended by policy people and data analysts from across BIS. John Perks, newly appointed Head of *the information authority* presented on the work of *the information authority* and Rich Williams, Head of the Data Service covered the priorities for the Data Service. Peter Ashton provided an update on the 2010/11 ILR Changes and an open forum for questions was held to enable delegates to raise specific queries and issues.



(L-R) Adrian Jones, BIS, John Perks, Peter Ashton, *the information authority*



(Centre) Rich Williams, Head of the Data Service

Employer Contributions Data Collection

The information authority received a change request for 2010/11 from the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) to collect data about the level of employer contributions received by providers towards the cost of Employer Responsive (ER) funded provision. The overall purpose of the collection is to inform the Skills Funding Agency and BIS about the types and levels of contributions made by employers.

The secretariat has been working with the LSC to develop an annual provider level return to collect this information.

The proposal is to use the Training Provider Statement web form on the provider gateway to collect high level information at the end of the academic year concurrent with the W12 and W13 Individualised Learner Record (ILR) returns. All providers transmitting ER returns during the 2010/11 academic year would be required to complete this statement at the end of the year.

Consultation on the proposal is taking place on [feconnect](#), *the information authority's* online community portal, until 2 February 2010.

Advisory Groups - Spring 2010

The information authority will be hosting the next round of its advisory group meetings from this week, through to the end of February.

The agendas for the advisory groups will be available on our website a week before each meeting takes place. Some of the key issues that will be covered at each group in this round of meetings include:

- Consulting learning providers on how to record employer contributions (both financial and in kind)
- A further update on the [Electronic Records Project](#)
- Discussing data management issues raised following [Geoff Russell's letter to providers](#)

Meeting agendas and outputs will be made available on the [advisory group pages](#). [Web alerts](#) will be sent out when these are uploaded.

The dates for the advisory group meetings are:

- [Own Software Writers Group](#) - Wednesday 20 January
- [Software Suppliers Group](#) - Wednesday 27 January
- [College Information Group](#) - Wednesday 3 February
- [Employer Responsive Group](#) – Friday 19 March
- [Data Users Group](#) - Thursday 18 February
- [Adult Safeguarded Learning Group](#) - Monday 22 February

The [Local Authorities Group](#) meeting, which was due to take place on Thursday 25 February, has now been **cancelled**.

If you would like more information on the advisory groups, or are interested in joining, please email cst@theia.org.uk.

Learner Data Strategy

In March 2009 the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS), asked *the information authority* to undertake a broad review of the individualised learner record (ILR) to establish how well the ILR is meeting the current needs of the department. The review report identified; “The forthcoming machinery of Government changes, coupled with the changing nature in the type of data required to be collected by the ILR (and in the use of that data) mean that this is an opportune time to develop a learner data strategy for the FE sector including the data to be collected in the ILR, its structure etc. The strategy would inform not just the development of the ILR but developments such as the settlement system and the MIAP Learner Record.”

The information authority secretariat prepared a project brief and gained approval from BIS to proceed to procurement. On 14 December KPMG were appointed to deliver the Learner Data Strategy project.

KPMG will deliver a draft strategy for agreement by 5 February with a view to delivering a final strategy by 12 March 2010. The draft strategy will make specific recommendations about whether the ILR will be needed in the future and how it could or should be replaced and the final strategy will inform the 2011/12 ILR change process and development of the Single Account Management System.

Further updates on this project will be provided in future issues of *inform*.

News from the Data Service

Final Learner Responsive Qualification Success Rate (QSR) reports now available

The final Learner Responsive QSR reports for 2008/09 are now available on the [Provider Gateway](#). Providers who have made an F05 submission by 15 January 2010 will see this information reflected in their final report.

Any Learner Reference L03 mapping files which have been submitted by 21 January 2010 have been processed and will be reflected in these reports. Fixes have also been applied to the method in which matching ILR records and multiple aims are applied.

Further information on these changes can be viewed by following the link below:

http://www.thedataservice.org.uk/News/20100125_successratereports.htm

Changes have also been applied to the six week rule further details on these changes are available in the FAQs

http://www.thedataservice.org.uk/ContactUs/FAQs/faq_lr_mlp.htm

Providers can download their data from a zipped file (in the Document Exchange, Document list, QSR-FE folder).

The zipped files for QSR-FE contain:-

- the QSR report
- a comma separated (CSV) file of success rates details for all learners (relating to this provider)
- QSR guidance notes
- Important information on Methodology changes

The guidance notes explain the basic principles of the reports and how the reports are structured. These guidance notes and more detailed guidance on how success rates have been calculated can be found in the technical definitions section of the [Data Dictionary](#), on the Data Service website.

If you have any queries on your Success Rates please refer to the [FAQ's](#) and [guidance notes](#) on the Data Service website in the first instance. For any other queries please contact the **Service Desk** on **0870 2670001**.

Changes to methodology for Final Learner Responsive Success Rate Reports

The Final Learner Responsive Success Rate reports and Minimum Level of Performance reports for the Academic Year 2008/09 have been released, see above news item. There are two important changes to the methodology which have been implemented for the first time in these reports.

These are:

1. [Use of learning start date in matching ILR records](#)
2. [Matching records for generic learning aims](#)

Details of these changes, how they affect the latest reports and the impact on future reports, are available on the [Data Service website](#).

Employer Responsive Period 6 Qualification Success Rate reporting for Train to Gain and Apprenticeships

The Period 6 Employer Responsive (ER) Train to Gain and Apprenticeships Qualification Success Rate (QSR) reports for Period 6 will be available in mid February for providers to download from the [Provider Gateway](#).

Redevelopment of the Data Service website

The Data Service is aiming to launch its new look website in April 2010. The objective of the redevelopment is to make the site a 'one stop shop' for providers and their FE data needs by:

- becoming the key channel to access the Data Collection portals
- hosting the new MI library
- promoting the SFR as the key report for the FE sector
- hosting all guidance/training manuals for providers in one area on the site.

Watch this space for further details!

Service Desk handles over 3000 calls

The Service Desk at the Data Service dealt with its highest number of monthly calls in November, since its launch.

Now supporting all providers across the 9 regions, the team dealt with 3,024 calls on a range of technical queries, analysis and data. This represents a 41% increase on the previous month.

The Service Desk customer satisfaction survey results show that almost 75% of respondents graded the quality of service received from the Service Desk as 'good' or 'excellent'.

The **Service Desk** can be contacted on **0870 2670001**.

Supporting providers with their Training Needs

The Data Service is committed to supporting providers with their Training Needs and in November 2009 conducted a Training Needs Analysis to identify provider training requirements.

Recommendations were proposed and approved by the Data Service Steering Group at the January meeting. The Data Service is now working on developing the Provider Training Plan to deliver these.

The recommendations included:

- ❖ Development of e-learning modules on the Learning Aims Database (LAD) and the Learner information Suite (LIS)
- ❖ Review and update of existing training manuals to include the LAD and LIS
- ❖ Development of new training manuals

Further updates will be provided in future issues of inform.

About us

The information authority

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

The authority has a [decision-making board](#) headed by an independent chairman and made up of senior representatives from across the further 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.