

# Paper

## Paper 6: *the information authority's* communication strategy for 2009/10

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Audience	<i>The information authority</i> board
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### Background and introduction

- 1 The Communications Strategy 2009/10 outlines how *the information authority* is going to manage its communication activities over the coming year in order to:
  - Develop our communication channels with new stakeholder audiences (e.g. the YPLA and SFA).
  - Develop further our reputation as an independent organisation working in a balanced and fair way on behalf of the FE system to reduce data burden and improve data standards.
  - Ensure that stakeholder communications are consistent, synchronised, and appropriate for building and maintaining stakeholder commitment to the intended *information authority* outcomes.
  - Engage the right stakeholders at the right time (objective-based stakeholder engagement), so they can contribute to the development and implementation of *the information authority's* plans and work.
  - Continue to build on our network of contacts so that reciprocal relationships are built between *the information authority* and key stakeholder colleagues and to ensure that we are all dealing with the most relevant people.

### Purpose

- 2 This paper provides a brief summary of key communication activities for 2009/10 for the board to agree, and a summary of progress against communication activities and specific measures for 2008/09.

## Key points / issues

### Areas for development for 2009/10:

- 3 In the paragraphs below are a summary of proposed key areas for development for the coming year that have been extracted from the Communications Strategy. The board is invited to note and agree these proposals, all of which are related closely to the actions in the Communications Action Plan (attached at *Appendix A*).
- 4 **Area for development:** the promotion of *the information authority's* wider remit around setting data standards and regulating collections.
- 5 **Area for development:** the need to engage with new audiences and identify new working partners across the YPLA and the SFA.
- 6 **Area for development:** the promotion of the new 'shared services' unit and our role within it.
- 7 To reflect the Machinery of Government changes, Target 3 (To engage effectively with local authorities) and Target 5 (To raise awareness and engage with colleagues at the LSC) have been replaced with the new Target 2 (Engagement with new organisations, such as the YPLA and the SFA).
- 8 Target 6 (To ensure that data users and providers are able to engage with relevant teams effectively - i.e. *the information authority*, Data Service, MIAP and LSC Funding Policy Team), has now been replaced with the new Target 5 (To take an active role in the development and promotion of communication activities within the new Shared Services function).

### Targets in order of priority for 2009/10:

- 9 In brief, the Communications Action Plan contains the following targets in order of priority:
  - **Target 1:** To increase awareness of *the information authority* and our work within the FE and training system.
  - **Target 2:** To engage effectively with new organisations, such as the YPLA and the SFA.
  - **Target 3:** To increase stakeholder engagement in our activities and gather useful feedback.
  - **Target 4:** To engage effectively with BIS and DCSF policy makers.
  - **Target 5:** To take an active role in the development and promotion of communication activities within the new Shared Services function.
  - **Target 6:** To ensure that *the information authority's* employees are kept informed and consulted.

- **Target 7:** To increase brand recognition of *the information authority* and Data Service at a regional and national level.
- **Target 8:** To increase our media coverage / general profile.

### Progress on targets for 2008/09:

- 10 A number of targets and measures were set for 2008/09. Progress has been made against the majority of these, and, in the case where specific measures were set, the majority of these have been met. (See Appendices B and C for more details.)
- 11 Our success in raising awareness of *the information authority* and its work amongst our stakeholders (including both data users and providers) was reflected in our 2009 perception survey. The survey attracted 200 responses in total, 90.2% of whom said that they were aware of *the information authority*. From that group, 93.6% of had some understanding of our work and 86.4% 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. Just over 68% of respondents felt that we'd had a beneficial impact on their organisation in relation to data issues.

### Recommendation

- 12 If the board is in agreement with the 'direction of travel' proposed in the Communications Strategy for managing *the information authority's* communications over the coming year then it is recommended to endorse the strategy, which will be implemented forthwith. Progress and key achievements will be reported to board members and other key stakeholders. The strategy is a working document and will be reviewed regularly and amended as appropriate.
- 13 The board is invited to:
- comment on the areas for development that have been outlined for 2009/10;
  - agree the key communication activities identified for 2009/10 (see Appendix A), subject to any comments or amendments that board members wish to make; and
  - note progress against the key communication activities identified in the 2008/09 Communications Strategy (Appendix B) and specific measures (Appendix C).

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