

# inform

Issue 53 – October 2011

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](mailto:informnewsletter@theia.org.uk).

## 2011/12 ILR returns due soon – R03 and R04

The return date for the **2011/12 R03 ILR return** is fast approaching and providers are reminded to submit their ILR file by **6.00pm on 04 November 2011**. The R03 is the first return for 2011/12 that the Skills Funding Agency will be paying on actuals and they will be using this return to reconcile payments previously made.

The **2011/12 R04 ILR return** is due in on **06 December 2011**. The data collected in the **R04** return will be used to:

- inform the Young People's Learning Agency (YPLA) 2012/13 allocations process. This return will be used by the YPLA in conjunction with information from 2010/11 on the profile of recruitment throughout the year to determine the lagged learner numbers that will be a key element of the 2012/13 allocation
- inform the Skills Funding Agency's reconciliations, having paid R01 and R02 on profile
- inform quarterly national statistics in a [Statistical First Release](#).

**R04** is also the first return for which:

- colleges need to submit data for ALL of their learners
- providers will need to send data for provision funded from Adult Safeguarded Learning (ASL) and 16-18 Learner Responsive budgets.

Full details of both these collections are available in the [2011/12 ILR collections timetable \(Appendix A\)](#), which can be downloaded from *the information authority* website.

**Reminder:** It is important that **ALL** providers start using the new data collection systems for 2011/12 (the [Learner Information Suite v19.01](#) and the [Online Data Collections](#) system) as soon as possible to enable them to resolve any problems identified by the data collection systems and to ensure that their ILR files are error free in good time before the return dates.

Providers should review the [2011/12 ILR Specification](#) and [supporting guidance](#) for details of the ILR data requirements and to help resolve any validation errors. For any queries on the single ILR, please refer to the [FAQs](#) on *the information authority* website in the first instance.

### This month:

- 2011/12 ILR returns due soon – R03 and R04

#### News from *the information authority*:

- **Reminder: deadlines for the 2010/11 ER13/LR05 ILR returns**
- **Summary of changes to the 2012/13 ILR Specification**
- **Rolling learners over to the next academic year – importance of start dates**
- **Advisory groups update**
- **ILR online – coming soon!**
- **Out and about – Autumn College Data Conference**

#### News from the Data Service:

- **OLDC maintenance release goes live**
- **LIS maintenance release goes live**
- **Strategic Replatforming of data collection systems – phase 2**
- **Publication dates for 2010/11 End of Year Qualification Success Rate reports**
- **2011/12 DSAT Series 12 – coming soon!**
- **Latest Statistical First Release published**

#### News from the sector

- **Collection of data for the 16-19 Bursary Fund**



## News from *the information authority*



### Reminder: deadlines for 2010/11 ER13 and LR05 ILR returns



Providers are reminded that the deadline for the **final 2010/11 Employer Responsive ILR return (ER13)** is **11 November 2011**. This date is a 'hard close', so no further returns will be accepted after **6.00pm on 11 November 2011**, when the data collection portal will close for this return.

The deadline for the **final Learner Responsive ILR return (LR05)** is **21 November 2011**. This date is also a 'hard close', so no further returns will be accepted after **6.00pm on 21 November 2011**.

**2010/11 Employer Contributions collection** - All providers who receive funding for Employer Responsive (ER) provision during 2010/11 are required to send an annual aggregate return detailing the amounts and types of employer contributions received during 2010/11. The return date for this collection is **Friday 11 November 2011** when the final Employer Responsive ILR return for 2010/11 will close. Further details on this collection can be found on [the information authority website](#).

**Use of proxy aims** - The use of the proxy aim code in field A46 of the ILR will **not** be valid at the end of the 2010/11 academic year, and any learners with learning aims that are still recorded using code 118 in field A46 will be rejected by the validation rules.

## Summary of changes to the 2012/13 ILR specification

*The information authority* board met on 28 September to consider requests for change to the **2012/13 ILR specification**.

The majority of the secretariat's recommendations were agreed and a summary of those decisions is now available:

- Download a [summary of decisions](#) made by the board
- Download a [short presentation of the changes](#) agreed

If you would like more detail about the recommendations made by the secretariat, then please see the [2012/13 ILR change request paper](#) that was presented to the board.

## Rolling learners over to next academic year – importance of start dates

Providers are reminded that *the information authority's* [ILR specification](#) states that the start date for an aim must not change between academic years. This has been in place since at least the 2004/05 ILR Specification. *The information authority's* [Data Management FAQs](#) reiterate this point and the success rate methodology is very clear that changed start dates will generate duplicate enrolments in the Qualification Success Rates (QSRs) data.

The Data Service is unable to re-calculate QSRs as the success rate methodology is based on the ILR data supplied by providers. Unless there is a specific fault with the success rate calculations and/or methodology we do not re-calculate providers' success rates. In some cases a learner undertakes the same learning aim on more than one occasion. Consequently the validation rules applied to ILR data allow for this. This is why data sent that includes the same learning aim with different start dates is not rejected.

When *the information authority* board made its decision on the 4 June 2008 that a provider would not be able to revise its data after the close date, it also agreed that; "In a case where a provider sends incomplete information by that date (the close date) then an agency or body, for example Ofsted or the LSC, would be at liberty to take this into account when making decisions, but no further data would be received or processed."

For any queries please contact the **Service Desk** on **0870 2670001** or email [servicedesk@thedata-service.org.uk](mailto:servicedesk@thedata-service.org.uk).

## Advisory groups update

The **Own Software Writers** Advisory Group met on **13 October** and the **Adult Safeguarded Learning** Advisory Group met on **27 October** where discussions revolved around the single ILR, ILR changes for 2012/13 and the replatforming of data collection systems, in particular the Learner Information Suite (LIS)V19.01.

The **Own Software Writers Change Management Group** met for its planned final meeting on **18 October** and attendees were pleased with progress. This group was set up as a task and finish group to ensure own software writers are equipped for the move to a single ILR. *The information authority* has encouraged the group's members to support each other through the move to the single ILR in XML, enabling the sharing of technical expertise, knowledge and code to reduce the burden on each individual provider and to ensure consistency in development. The group has decided to meet again in February to discuss follow-up and progress to ensure that other software writers are prepared for the 2012/13 academic year.

Other advisory group meetings scheduled for autumn include:

- [Software Suppliers Group](#) - 03 November
- [Data Users Group](#) -15 November
- [Learner Responsive Group](#) - 24 November
- [Employer Responsive Group](#) - 08 December.

If you are interested in joining any of these groups, please email: [cst@theia.org.uk](mailto:cst@theia.org.uk).



## ILR online – coming soon!

The 2011/12 single ILR specification will be made available in an interactive online version by end November 2011. This will be built to accommodate the full specification only.

In addition to key functionality as seen in previous years, the 2011/12 online tool will also include a full expandable schema model with links to each of the fields, making searches easier and providing a pictorial view of the schema structure.

## Out and about - Autumn College Data Conference

*The information authority* and the Data Service were key speakers at this year's [Autumn College Data Conference](#) held by LSECT on 10 October at Morley College, London.

John Perks, Head of *the information authority*, kicked off the conference with an update on the 2011/12 ILR and preparations for 2012/13, including the latest ILR changes. John also reiterated that there would be no conversion facility in the Learner Information Suite for 2012/13 and that providers will need to submit ILR files in XML only.

Rich Williams, Head of the Data Service, followed with an update on the Strategic Replatforming of data collection systems. In particular, what the Data Service has delivered in the first phase of this project i.e. [LIS V.19.01](#) and the 2011/12 [Online Data Collection](#) system as well as the [Learning Aim Reference Application](#). Rich also informed the audience of plans for phase 2 of the Strategic Replatforming project, i.e. replatforming of OLDC using a portal approach based on Sharepoint 2010.

John Perks and Rich Williams also headed up the question and answer panel, with over 120 college MIS staff in attendance.



## News from the Data Service

### OLDC maintenance release goes live

The Data Service released an updated version of the Online Data Collection (OLDC) system, a maintenance release, on **26 October**.

The OLDC maintenance release includes:

- a new version of the Skills Funding Agency funding calculation module. The module has been updated to correctly classify JIP (Joint Investment Programme) Apprenticeship Component aims. No further updates/changes have been made to the module
- all Provider Funding Reports - these will be available to generate from OLDC on **03 November 2011**
- an enhanced SUBCON collection – improved user operability
- general bug fixes

**Reminder:** It is important that ALL providers start to use the new data collection systems for 2011/12 (the [Learner Information Suite \(LIS\) V19.01](#) and the [Online Data Collections \(OLDC\) system](#)) as soon as possible to enable them to resolve any problems with the data collection systems and to ensure that their ILR files are error free in good time before the return dates for **R03 (04 November)** and **R04 (06 December)**.

### Important notice: transmitting ILR data for 2011/12

In a [recent news item](#), the Data Service reminded providers that when transmitting ILR data for 2011/12, they should take care to ensure that the transmission type of the file (either **A** or **B**) is correct. We are still observing high numbers of providers transmitting 'A' files with changes to learner records instead of a 'B' file, thereby overwriting all data previously transmitted and deleting data for learners that were not in this 'A' file.

An 'A' file is a year to date transmission that should contain all learner records for the provider for all funding streams for the year to date. This type of submission will **completely delete** all entries in the ILR database and then insert only the contents of the new 'A' file.

'B' files contain only learner records that have changed since the last transmission. This type of submission will only update records for the learners contained within the 'B' file. All other learner records will remain unchanged in the ILR database.

Providers need to ensure that by each return date, the data held by the Data Service is up to date and complete for the purposes described in the [2011/12 ILR collections timetable](#).

*The information authority* has published guidance on **A and B file transmission** which can be found on **page 12 and 13** of the [2011/12 ILR Specification](#). **Frequently asked questions** on file transmission for 2011/12 have also been published that are also available on [the information authority website](#).

If you have any further queries on file transmission please contact the **Service Desk** on **0870 2670001** or email: [servicedesk@thedataservice.org.uk](mailto:servicedesk@thedataservice.org.uk).

## LIS V19.01 maintenance release goes live

The Data Service has published the [Learner Information Suite \(LIS\) V19.01 maintenance release](#), which is available to download from the Data Service website.

The LIS maintenance release includes:

- ILR 2011/12 Business Rules version 6 - this includes some changes to the Learning Delivery rules, including the removal of one rule and changing an error to a warning, an Employment status rule, a Derived data rule which will allow the correct implementation of rules using DD03 and the addition of a new Cross record rule
- an updated list of valid contracting organisation codes. Providers should note that all YPLA provision must be recorded with a valid YPLA regional code from [Appendix E](#). Local Authority codes are not valid for 2011/12
- performance enhancements
- fixes to funding reports
- an additional report - YPLA Funding: Data Credibility report
- enhancements to the amalgamation functionality and the amalgamation summary report
- a new version of the Skills Funding Agency funding calculation module. The module has been updated to correctly classify JIP (Joint Investment Programme) Apprenticeship Component aims. No further updates/changes have been made to the module
- other general bug fixes.

Users are asked to read the [LIS V19.01 release guide](#) and the [known issues](#) document before using the LIS V19.01 maintenance release, which outlines the functionality available, known limitations and any key known bugs/defects.

For any further queries please contact the **Service Desk** on **0870 2670001** or email: [servicedesk@thedata-service.org.uk](mailto:servicedesk@thedata-service.org.uk).



## Strategic Replatforming Project Phase 2

As part of its plans to [replatform data collection systems](#), the Data Service is now scoping plans for phase 2 of this project. Phase 2 will include changes to:

- **Online Data Collection (OLDC)** system – portal approach based on Sharepoint 2010
- **Provider Information Management System** - Change to a Microsoft platform for easier interfacing with other collections systems
- **Learner Information Suite (LIS)** - Re-architecture; possible change of application environment to a more maintainable version; introduction of migration facility so providers can do this themselves; integrate POL with LIS; remove flat file conversion, maintaining and retaining XML file amalgamation functionality.
- **Learning Aim Reference Application (LARA)** – product evolution and upgrade to Microsoft Dynamics 2011

Further updates on this project will be published in future issues of inform and on [the Data Service website](#).

## Publication dates for 2010/11 End of Year Qualification Success Rate reports

The Data Service is pleased to announce that the **2010/11 End of Year Qualification Success Rate reports** and **Minimum Levels of Performance** will be available on the following dates:

- Learner Responsive End of Year Qualification Success Rate reports and Minimum Levels of Performance – to be published on **15 December 2011**
- Employer Responsive End of Year Qualification Success Rate reports and Minimum Levels of Performance – to be published on **12 January 2012**

These reports will be available to access from the [Provider Gateway](#). If you have any queries please contact the **Service Desk** on **0870 2670001** or email: [servicedesk@thedata-service.org.uk](mailto:servicedesk@thedata-service.org.uk).

## 2011/12 DSAT Series 12 - coming soon!

The Data Self-assessment Toolkit (DSAT) for funding year 2011/12 Series 12 will be released in a phased approach, with phase I planned to go live at the end of **October 2011**. This will be available to download from [the Data Service website](#).

The phase 1 release will include:

- rollover of single ILR reporting
- change to field names to reflect 2011/12 ILR
- ability to create user defined favourite groups of reports

Subsequent phased release details will be published with time scales once these have been agreed. The later phases will include the rollover of the 2010/11 Cross Reporting allowing comparison of two returns and the Sampling and Working Papers in support of the 2011/12 Audit Approach. Further information will be published on the Data Service website as it becomes available. For any queries please contact the DSAT support desk by email: [DSATHelpDesk@kpmg.co.uk](mailto:DSATHelpDesk@kpmg.co.uk).

## Latest Statistical First Release published

The Data Service published the latest Statistical First Release (SFR) on its [website](#) on **Thursday 27 October**. This latest release has final data for 2009/10 across all funding streams, and provisional full year data for 2010/11.

The templates for the main tables and the list of supplementary tables for this release are also available, and the Apprenticeship and Workplace Learning supplementary tables have been refreshed and are also available on [the Data Service website](#).

## News from the sector

### Collection of data for the 16-19 Bursary Fund

The [Young People's Learning Agency \(YPLA\)](#) has confirmed that data about the 16-19 Bursary Fund will not be collected in the ILR for 2011/12. Providers are advised that they do not need to complete the Discretionary Support Funds (DSF) data in the Learner Funding and Monitoring section of the ILR (field L49 in the flat file ILR) for 16-18 year old learners in 2011/12.

Providers completing the flat file ILR should use code 99 in field L49, and providers completing the single ILR should not return DSF codes 4, 8, 9 or 10. If a provider has already completed this data for any of their learners this does not need to be amended prior to submission. The ILR specification for 2011/12 has been updated and re-published to reflect these changes and can be found at [http://www.theia.org.uk/ilr/ilrdocuments/201112\\_ilrdetail.htm](http://www.theia.org.uk/ilr/ilrdocuments/201112_ilrdetail.htm).

This does not affect data about discretionary support funds for Skills Funding Agency-funded learners, which should continue to be recorded in the ILR.

Further information about the 16-19 Bursary Fund is available at <http://www.ypla.gov.uk/learnersupport/16-19-bursary/>.

## About us

### *The information authority*

**The information authority** was established in October 2006 to set data standards and govern data collection and use 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 Data Service is a fully operational service provider, and acts as a single, central point of information for further education.