

# inform

Issue 54 – November 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).

## R04 deadline – provider concerns!



Recent discussions on **feconnect**, JISC Mail and email have highlighted that some providers are concerned about the upcoming [2011/12 R04 ILR](#) deadline due to issues with supporting systems, such as the Learner Information Suite and the Provider Data Self-Assessment Toolkit, which allow them to check their data quality before sending it in.

The funding agencies understand that providers are concerned about the impact this may have on funding allocations, reconciliations and performance management, particularly given the current tough financial environment, but are assured that any legitimate provider concerns can be raised with the appropriate funding agency directly.

For the R04 return, providers are required to send data for ALL of their learners so that the YPLA, the Skills Funding Agency and NAS are able to gauge the numbers of learners and learning aims within the system.

The Data Service has republished the [Learner Information Suite \(LIS\) V19.01 Maintenance Release 2 \(19.01.65\)](#). This is now available to download from [the Data Service website](#). The [Provider Data Self-Assessment Toolkit \(PDSAT\) for funding year 2011/12 - Series 12 \(Phase 1\)](#) has also been published on the Data Service website. For any queries on PDSAT please email: [DSATHelpDesk@kpmg.co.uk](mailto:DSATHelpDesk@kpmg.co.uk).

The Data Service would like to apologise for any inconvenience caused to providers having issues with the LIS and the Online Data Collection system.

Full details on this collection are available in the 2011/12 ILR collections timetable (Appendix A) which can be downloaded from the [ILR Specification, Business Rules and Appendices for 2011/12](#) page.

**Reminder:** The Data Service will process all ILR files for **R04** received before **6pm** on **06 December**, however it is advised that providers should try and send their ILR files early so that if any errors are generated, we have sufficient time to assist you with rectifying these and ensuring your file is then processed error free.

### This month:

- R04 deadline – provider concerns

### News from *the information authority*:

- 2012/13 ILR Specification due to be published
- Course directory data specification
- ILR FAQs updated
- Advisory groups update
- Festive hints and tips

### News from the Data Service:

- LIS v19.01 Maintenance Release 2 republished
- 2011/12 PDSAT Series 12 published
- 'How to' guide to sending ILR data for 2011/12
- Reporting of 2010/11 Qualification Success Rates and Minimum Levels of Performance
- 2010/11 Learner Responsive Qualification Success Rate methodology update
- 99 status report failures in OLDC

### News from the sector

- 16-19 Funding Formula Review Consultation

## News from *the information authority*

### 2012/13 ILR Specification due to be published

*The information authority* will be publishing the **ILR Specification for 2012/13** in **early December 2011**.

This will include the changes agreed at the September *information authority* board meeting and also some amendments to the learner support categories that were requested as part of the late change process.

### Course Directory data specification

The Skills Funding Agency has asked *the information authority* to take on responsibility for the Course Directory data specification from 2012/13. We will soon begin consulting with the sector on this.

We want to look at existing standards for course-related information and assess whether any improvements can be made to this data collection without compromising the coverage and quality of course information required to meet the needs of prospective learners.

The Skills Funding Agency has also asked the Data Service to take on responsibility for the collection of this data from learning providers from **01 August 2012**.

### ILR FAQs updated

The ILR FAQs have been reviewed and updated to give answers to the most frequent queries received by *the information authority*.

New FAQs have been added for:

- Recording Sources of Funding and Contracting Organisation
- Recording Adult Skills Classroom Based Learning delivered by Private Training providers
- ILR collection timetable for Independent Specialist Providers (ISP)

If you have any queries relating to the ILR that are not covered in the ILR FAQs section of our website, please contact the **Service Desk** at the Data Service on **0870 2670001** or email: [servicedesk@thedataservice.org.uk](mailto:servicedesk@thedataservice.org.uk).

## Advisory groups update

In November *the information authority* held meetings for its [Software Supplier Advisory group](#) and its [Learner Responsive Advisory group](#).

Discussions at these groups focussed on the [YPLA's funding consultation](#) and the Skills Funding Agency's work on simplifying funding. The hot topic at both of these meetings was the chance to discuss with Rich Williams, Head of the Data Service, the changes to this year's data collection systems and Learner Information Suite software. There is also a meeting of the [Employer Responsive Advisory group](#) on **8 December**, which has been oversubscribed.

Paul Kelman, Stakeholder Engagement Manager for *the information authority* said "We do what we can to talk with the sector through newsletters, emails and feconnect, but there's nothing quite like gathering a room full of MI people to discuss data and funding issues! I think there is tremendous value in these meetings. Colleagues and I certainly find them very useful and the feedback we have from attendees is that it's really beneficial for them to talk to staff from the various organisations based at Cheylesmore House."

## Festive hints and tips



Over December *the information authority* will be publishing a series of hints and tips for data managers that may assist them in their work. These 'festive' tips will be updated daily until Christmas Eve and published in the **Festive Tips** section of the website from **07 December**.

Hints and tips will include:

- How to transmit ILR data in 2011/12
- Issues with transmission numbers
- Links to downloadable e-calendars with returns timetable details
- Other information sources that data managers will find useful

## News from the Data Service

### LIS V19.01 Maintenance Release 2 republished

The Data Service has published the [Learner Information Suite \(LIS\) V19.01 Maintenance Release 2 \(19.01.65\)](#). This is now available to download from [the Data Service website](#).

Changes since Maintenance Release 2 (19.01.61) originally published on 17 November, include:

- Fixes to the Funding Claim Report - the learner number counts on pages one and two of the Funding Claim report have been corrected. Due to performance issues pages three and five of this report have had to be removed. Further details are documented in the [Known Issues Document V1.9](#).

Changes since the Maintenance Release 1 (19.01.53) include fixes to the following issues:

- Apprenticeship achievement is not being generated where main aims are achieved in the previous academic year
- The Large Employer Factor is not being applied in some circumstances
- The Summary of Learner Responsive Report is showing the incorrect Provider Factors. The layout of this report has been altered to ensure it is consistent with the equivalent report in OLDC
- Entitlement funding and corresponding SLN amounts are not included in the period totals used in the LR Learner Export and LR Aim Exports
- Entitlement funding and corresponding SLN amounts are not included in the period totals used in the LR Detailed Learner and Aim Funding report.
- The Command Line functionality doesn't clear ILR files from Batch Import between sessions
- An amendment to the R23 Business rule. This rule is only triggered if the learner has Employer Responsive aims only (i.e. only aims that have funding model = 45). In previous version of LIS 19.01 this rule will have triggered if the learner had aims that were had multiple funding models.
- Other cosmetic fixes to reports.

**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 their ILR file and to ensure that it is error free in good time before the return date for R04 (**06 December**). The Data Service will process all ILR files received before 6pm on the return date, however it is advised that providers should try and send their ILR files early so that if any errors are generated, we have sufficient time to assist you with rectifying these and ensuring your file is then processed error free.

Users are asked to read the [LIS V19.01 release guide](#) and the [known issues document V.19](#) before using the **LIS V19.01 Maintenance Release 2 (19.01.65)**, which outlines the functionality available, known limitations and any key known bugs/defects.

For 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 PDSAT Series 12 published



The [Provider Data Self-assessment Toolkit \(PDSAT\) for funding year 2011/12 - Series 12 \(Phase 1\)](#) has been published on the Data Service website.

The PDSAT has been designed to:

- provide colleges with a toolkit to enable them to perform their own analysis on their ILR data; and
- assist auditors in the audit of providers' ILR data for 2011/12.

The PDSAT v12 software will only process 2011/12 ILR data for full returns. Further details on this release and the known issue are available on [the Data Service website](#). The later phases of PDSAT 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.

For any queries on PDSAT please email: [DSATHelpDesk@kpmg.co.uk](mailto:DSATHelpDesk@kpmg.co.uk).

## 'How to' guide to sending ILR data for 2011/12



Working with *the information authority*, the Data Service has produced a ['How to' guide to sending ILR data for 2011/12](#). This guide has been produced in response to the issues raised by providers with both the Data Service and *the information authority* in understanding how to use the data collection systems and how to send data for 2011/12.

The [2011/12 ILR Specification](#) provides more detail on some of the topics covered in this guide, however this guide will provide users with a quick glance at the following topics:

- How to send ILR files in OLDC
- How to transmit ILR data - A and B file transmissions
- How to use transmission numbers
- How to check your error reports in the learner Information Suite and the Online Data Collections system
- How to request a Provider Funding Report

This guide is available to download from both [the information authority](#) and [the Data Service](#) websites.

## Reporting of 2010/11 Qualification Success Rates and Minimum Levels of Performance

The Data Service will shortly be publishing **Qualification Success Rate (QSR) and Minimum Levels of Performance (MLP) reports for 2010/11**:

- **Learner Responsive End of Year QSR and MLP reports** will be published on **15 December 2011**. These reports will use data from the **2010/11 end of year LR05 ILR return**, which will close on **21 November**.
- **Employer Responsive End of Year QSR and MLP reports for Apprenticeships and Train to Gain** will be published on **12 January 2012**.
  - the **'Overall'** success rate measure for these reports will use data from the 2010/11 end of year **ER15 ILR return**, which closes on **11 November**.
  - the **'Timely'** success rate measure for Apprenticeships and Train to Gain provision will in addition use data from the **2011/12 R04 ILR return**, which will close on **06 December 2011**.

### Coming soon - 2011/12 QSR and MLP reporting!

The Data Service will shortly announce when the schedule for the **2011/12 QSR and MLP reporting**, and the **2011/12 ILR snapshots** that these reports will use, will be published. Watch this space!

## 2010/11 Learner Responsive Qualification Success Rate methodology update

The Data Service will be supplementing the existing publication of the [2010/11 Learner Responsive Success Rates business rules](#) with a full specification for the production of the master-trim dataset, and details of the layout and structure of the data. This will be available on the Data Service website on **Friday 25 November**. Sample SQL code for the production of the master-trim will be published shortly after.

## 99 status report failures in OLDC

The Data Service is currently investigating the issue providers are facing with 99 status report' failures. Currently 99 status reports are being produced each time the file submitted by a provider has a failure / retry and there is no message in the report to state what the issue with the file is e.g.:ILR-A-10000115-1112-0094-01.XML\_99.STATUS.

A temporary fix will be deployed into the Online Data Collections system on **Friday 25 November** that will alert providers to the fact that a technical problem has occurred while the ILR file was being processed, and it is currently being investigated by the administrator.

In order to fully resolve this issue the Data Service would like to monitor the situation and ask providers to log any 99 status report errors with the **Service Desk** on **0870 2670001** or email: [servicedesk@thedata-service.org.uk](mailto:servicedesk@thedata-service.org.uk).

## News from the sector

### 16-19 Funding Formula Review Consultation

The YPLA and Department for Education launched a 12 week consultation [www.education.gov.uk/consultations](http://www.education.gov.uk/consultations) on the 16-19 Funding Formula Review. The review aims to introduce a simpler and more transparent methodology and support our goal of reducing the burden for providers and making funding readily understood by learners as well.

Responses to the consultation are sought from 16-19 providers in general and specialist further education (FE) colleges, sixth form colleges, maintained schools and Academy sixth forms (SSFs), as well as commercial and charitable providers. It includes Apprenticeship providers and the areas of Apprenticeships which are in scope are included in the consultation document.

The closing date for the consultation is **04 January 2012**. Further details can be found on [the YPLA website](#).

## 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.