

inform

Issue 30 – November 2009

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.

Data in the wider FE and Training system Conference 2009

The information authority and the Data Service are hosting a one day conference in Birmingham on 3 December 2009. Due to popular demand, this event is now fully booked with a reserve list in place should a delegate place become available.

A website for the conference has been set up (www.data09.org.uk) that will be updated regularly throughout the day with news feeds on the keynote speakers, updates on the breakout sessions, photos, and presentation slides and tweets.

ILR specification for 2010/11

The specification for the Individualised Learner Record (ILR) for 2010/11 will be available to download from the [2010/11 ILR Specification](#) page on *the information authority* website from Friday 27 November 2009.

The specification will include the changes approved by *the information authority* board at its meeting on 30 September 2009, and subsequent amendments that were agreed following further discussions.

For a complete list of the changes, please review the summary of changes section of the ILR Specification.

The ILR validation rules for 2010/11 will be published on 29th January 2010.

This month:

Data in the wider FE and Training system Conference 2009

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News from *the information authority*

Progress made on harmonising success rates

The cross-organisation Data Harmonisation Group* is continuing to make significant progress on the harmonisation of success rate methodology and in making the processes involved more transparent for both learning providers and data users.

Three upcoming initiatives to watch out for are:

- The publication of a success rates timetable showing when the different methodologies for each funding stream (Learner Responsive, Train to Gain etc.) This covers academic years 2008/09 and 2009/10.
- Changes to the calculation method of the Train to Gain success rate for 2009/10, which take into account the 'roll-on, roll-off' nature of the provision. This will replace any existing methodologies currently used by the LSC and other FE partner organisations.
- The extension of the window for recording apprenticeship timely success rates from one month to three, with the aim of creating an indicator that is more effective in monitoring and improving the learner experience. (Overall qualification success rates remain the primary measure used in performance and funding decisions for apprenticeships.)

A newsletter will be sent out to FE and training providers in the next couple of weeks to highlight some the areas of work that have progressed and where further details can be found.

For more information see the Data Harmonisation pages on *the information authority* website at: <http://www.theia.org.uk/harmonisingsuccessrates/>.

If you have any queries about the work being carried out to harmonise success rates please log your call with the Service Desk on 08702 670001 or email servicedesk@thedataservice.org.uk

*The Data Harmonisation Group is made up of partner representatives from BIS, DCSF, the LSC, *the information authority*, the Data Service, Ofqual and QCA and is supported by Ofsted. Its main aim is to develop and modify success rate reporting with a view that by simplifying the underlying calculation methods processes will become both transparent and rigorous.

December board meeting – what's on the agenda

The next *information authority* board meeting will be held on 02 December 2009.

Items on the agenda include an update on recent work that *the information authority* secretariat has been leading supported by LSC, the Data Service and Ofsted to resolve provider queries resulting from a letter sent out to providers by the LSC's Chief Executive. The letter raised issues about data management and the secretariat has also been working with the LSC to address the underlying issues identified.

The board will also be asked to comment on the collection and reporting impacts of the Qualifications and Credit Framework (QCF), data collection options for the Single Account Management System (previously known as the settlement system), the new data quality framework, and progress on developing a learner data strategy for further education and training. Board members will also be asked to agree a new Connexions data set.

The outcomes and minutes from this board meeting will be available on our website shortly after this meeting.

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

In the Hot Seat

The main activity on [feconnect](#) this month has been the hot seat discussion with Rich Williams, Head of the Data Service. The questions covered a range of issues including the Learning Aims Database, the ILR form, the DSAT tool and success rate methodology. You can see all of the questions and Rich's responses in [the hot seat forum](#).

John Landeryou, Director of Learning, Quality and Systems at [the Department for Business, Innovation, and Skills \(BIS\)](#) will be our next hot seat guest. It is likely to take place early in 2010. The dates are being finalised and will be published in due course.

Feconnect update

In early December the software used to run [feconnect](#) is being changed. This will enable much more flexibility in how feconnect is structured. All registered users will be emailed to inform them of any significant changes. The site's url will continue to be: <http://forums.theia.org.uk/>

Feconnect is the online network for those working with data in the further education and training system. It is managed by [the information authority](#) secretariat to provide a platform that can bring data users together. This will enable better consultation and the development of a community through which shared data problems can be solved

Stay in touch with *the information authority* and the Data Service

Are you sure that you are being kept up-to-date with all the latest news and information from [the information authority](#) and the [Data Service](#)? We often send updates out via email and post - but we need your help to make sure that we have the correct details for your organisation. If we have incorrect information, you could be missing out on important announcements.

Fazia Saleem, Communications Manager for *the information authority* and the Data Service, says: "We use the [UK Register of Learning Providers \(UKRLP\)](#) to communicate with providers directly about a wide range of data issues, and it's important that we know the messages are getting out to the right people. I would urge anyone who is affected by, or interested in, the work of *the information authority* and the Data Service to log on to the UKRLP website and check that their details are correct."

If you want to verify, update or amend the contact details held about you or your organisation on the UKRLP* then please visit <http://www.ukrlp.co.uk>, where you can update your details online.

If you do not provide data to the Data Service but want to be kept informed of the work of *the information authority* and the Data Service, then please register your details at <http://www.thedataservice.org.uk/contactus>.

Please be assured that we are committed to upholding the privacy of our providers, and the personal data that we hold about you is held securely.

*The UK Register of Learning Providers is a 'one-stop' portal to be used by government departments, agencies, learners, and employers to share key information about learning providers.

Out and about

The information authority and the Data Service were at this years AoC annual conference, held at the ICC in Birmingham on 17-19 November.

The theme of this years conference was 'new realities, new solutions' and is the largest event across the further education sector. There were over 50 breakout sessions including one held by the Data Service on 'How to deliver data requirements'.

The information authority was also exhibiting at this event where we received a number of visitors to the stand and dealt with queries as well as promote the work of the Data Service and *the information authority*.

News from the Data Service

End Year Success Rate Reports for Apprenticeships and Train to Gain

The year end Employer Responsive (ER) Qualification Success Rates (QSR) reports for 2008/09 Apprenticeships and Train to Gain, along with Minimum Level of Performance (MLP) reports are due to be published on the Provider Gateway in early December.

Each provider will be able to download their own data from zipped files:

- For ER QSR the zipped files will contain:
 - a summary report covering success rates for England and for each Region and Local Authority in which the provider has a delivery centre
 - 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)
 - QSR guidance information.

- For ER MLP the zipped files will contain:
 - ER MLP report (per provider)
 - ER MLP guidance information.
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If you have a query about these reports please contact the Service Desk on 0870 267 0001.

Learner Responsive Qualification Success Rate reports to be published

The 2008/09 Learner Responsive (LR) QSR reports and the Learner Responsive MLP reports are due to be published on the Provider Gateway as follows:

1st Interim Report - Mid December

2nd Interim Report - Mid January

Final Report - Late January

- For LR QSR the zipped files will contain:
 - a QSR report for the provider
 - a comma separated file (CSV) file of success rates details for all learners (relating to this provider)
 - QSR guidance information.

- For LR MLP the zipped files will contain:
 - LR MLP report for the provider
 - LR MLP guidance information.

If you have a query about these reports please contact the Service Desk on 0870 267 0001.

Launch of the ILR e-learning module

The Data Service launched its first [e-learning module](#) for providers on 6 November. This [module](#) provides an overview of the ILR; the importance of submitting good quality data; and 2009/10 ILR changes. This tool has been developed to support providers with their understanding of the ILR, to assist with staff development, to help train new staff on the ILR and to update providers/staff on the 2009/10 ILR changes.

Feedback

Early feedback highlights a positive reaction to the module. Feedback from 47 respondents has been received to date, which includes 22 from FE college/6th forms, 10 from independent providers and 7 from local authorities.

- 53% of respondents rated themselves as having a high/very high level of subject confidence before taking the module, this rose to 66% after completing the module
- 47% of respondents rated themselves as having an acceptable/low/very low level of subject confidence before taking the module, this dropped to 34% after completing the module
- 79% of respondents rated the module as very good/good, with 11% rating it as excellent

To access the ILR e-learning module please visit the [Data Service website](#). If you have any queries please contact the Service Desk on 0870 2670001 or email servicedesk@thedata-service.org.uk

Understanding provider training needs

The Data Service is committed to delivering a first class service to its providers. We are in the process of evaluating existing training materials for providers and working to identify provider training needs and how to deliver these.

We have developed a short [questionnaire](#) aimed at providers to try and understand your training requirements.

To access the questionnaire please click on the [‘training questionnaire’](#) link below:

[Training questionnaire](#)

Please take a few minutes to complete this [questionnaire](#) as your feedback is important in developing the 2010/11 Provider Training Plan as well as to help shape learning programmes.

Keeping OLDC up to date

As part of its security measures, the Data Service is in the process of refreshing its contacts database within Online Data Collections (OLDC). The Data Service has identified a significant number of inactive and incorrect contact details for Superusers and users. As part of the clean up process we have sent out a communication requesting that providers login to OLDC and where appropriate update their user details on the 'My Profile' page. If they are a Superuser we ask that they review all users they have registered and update their details accordingly.

We will start to deactivate these inactive accounts (accounts that have not logged into OLDC in the last 12 months) and those accounts with incorrect contact details with effect from week commencing 14 December 2009. If providers have not updated their details on OLDC by this date and should their account be deactivated, they have been asked to contact the [Service Desk](#) to update their details so that it can be reactivated.

If you have any queries please contact the Service Desk on 0870 2670001 or email servicedesk@thedataservice.org.uk.

Provider Gateway update

With effect from 1 December 2009, the Data Service will take full responsibility for maintaining the Provider Gateway, as part of the Machinery of Government transition process.

There will be no changes relating to the existing functionality, however there will be a change in the support routes for the Provider Gateway as well as a review of the LSC Regional Approver process..

New points of contact:

From 1 December 2009 the email address provider.gateway@lsc.gov.uk will no longer be valid and the new contact points for support are as follows:

Provider/Partner organisations:

Email address servicedesk@thedataservice.org.uk

Telephone number 0870 2670001

LSC employees:

Incident to be logged on BMC Self Service application, selecting Central Services.

Access to BMC Self Service is via the LSC applications portal:

<https://applications.lsc.gov.uk/default.aspx>

About us

The information authority

The information authority was established in October 2006 to set and regulate data standards for organisations involved in 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.