

Minutes

Date	28 September 2011 - DRAFT
Subject	<i>the information authority</i> board
Location	St Mary's Guildhall, Coventry
Time	10.30am - 3.30pm
Publication intent	PUBLIC DOCUMENT

Present Board members and alternates:

Jon Collis (AELP); Ruth Curry (BIS); Sue Davies (DfE) (alternate); Mario Ferelli (HEFCE); Julian Gravatt (AoC); Geoff Hall (Chair); Caroline Kempner (YPLA); Caroline Miller (HOLEX); Robert Pike (Ofsted); Manjit Galsinh (Alliance of Sector Skills Councils); David Pye (LGA) (alternate); Keith Smith (Skills Funding Agency) (alternate); Alison Fisher (Ofqual) (alternate).

In attendance: Pete Ashton (*the information authority*); Anne Fessi (*the information authority*); John Perks (*the information authority*); Lisa Macdougall (*the information authority*); Rosie Coleman (*the information authority*); Ian Thomson (BIS); Victoria Spinner (*the information authority*).

Apologies

Apologies were received from:

Ian Pryce (Bedford College) and Emma Cochrane (Ofqual).

Item 1. Welcome and introductions

- 1.1 Geoff Hall welcomed everyone to the meeting and confirmed those who had sent their apologies. Geoff also welcomed Manjit Galsinh who replaces Robert Spano as the Alliance of Sector Skills Council representative on the board. Geoff asked that thanks were noted to Robert Spano for his work on the board.

Item 2. Minutes of the last board meeting and action log

- 2.1 There was one amendment to paragraph 4.2d from the minutes of the meeting held on 15 June 2011. The paragraph should read 'Ofsted stated that they would not be using this information to influence their judgement, but that it could be used as evidence for evaluating robustness of college self-assessment reports'.
- 2.2 John Perks provided updates on the action log, which was amended accordingly.

Item 3. Matters arising

- 3.1 There were no further matters arising.

Item 4. Update on the strategic replatforming of data collection systems

- 4.1 Rich Williams provided an update on Phase 1 of the project and advised as follows:
 - 1) Provider Information Management System (PIMS) (internal facing system) was upgraded in April 2011.
 - 2) Learning Aim Reference Application (LARA) went live at the end of July 2011 and feedback so far had been very positive.
 - 3) Learner Information Suite (LIS) was due to go live in July 2011, but was delayed until 16th September 2011. Feedback on the system so far had been positive.
 - 4) Online Data Collection System (OLDC) was due to go live on 26 September 2011, but was delayed until the morning of the 27 September 2011. It was noted that 150 providers had attempted to use the system at that point.
- 4.2 The next steps of the project were identified as follows:
 - 1) LIS – maintenance version to be available from mid-October 2011
 - 2) OLDC – maintenance version to be available from late October 2011
 - 3) LIS Release 2 – to be available prior to Christmas and to include additional functionality of a ULN checker tool. A shadow funding calculator will also be added
 - 4) LARA Release 2 – there will be more Skills Funding Agency/YPLA functionality available in Release 2. The ability to view the status of a learning aim has also been added.
- 4.3 There had also been progress on Phase 2 of the project, which includes:
 - 1) Moving OLDC to a new B2B Portal as a 'one-stop shop' for data submission regardless of which agency a provider was dealing with, and which will also enable new collections to be added as and when needed
 - 2) PIMS to be replatformed
 - 3) LIS will continue to be a desktop tool with the functionality to amalgamate files
 - 4) New version on LARA to be available.

- 4.4 Geoff Hall thanked Rich Williams for the update and the Data Service for its work on Phase 1.

Item 5. Update on the large employer outcome payment pilot

5.1 Keith Smith provided an update to the board on the Skills Funding Agency pilot project to pay large employers delivering apprenticeships on an outcome basis. The key points are as follows:

- 1) The pilot is part of the wider simplification agenda and arose from concerns regarding bureaucracy and governance. There are 24 large employers taking part in the pilot
- 2) The first mandatory return to support payments is expected in November 2011
- 3) The basis of the pilot is outcome-related and an evaluation of the programme is due to be completed in early 2012. As not all of their provision is part of the pilot, the employers are currently running a dual system.

5.2 The board made the following observations:

- 1) The AoC raised concerns regarding eligibility issues and how these will be monitored. Keith Smith advised that the data will be comparable with national statistics. The management information can be collected at high-level
- 2) The AELP queried whether the names of the 24 employers who took part in the pilot and the funding rates awarded to these employers could be made public

Action 09/11-01: Keith Smith to circulate the list of the 24 employers who took part in the pilot to members of *the information authority* board and, if appropriate make this information publicly available.

Action 09/11-02: Keith Smith to circulate the funding model rates to members of *the information authority* board and, if appropriate, make this information publicly available.

- 3) The AELP queried what age group of learners was covered by the pilot project. Keith Smith advised that provision for all ages was covered
- 4) In response to a reference to the Learner Data Strategy, the AoC queried why this document had not been published. The board were advised that the strategy was a BIS-sponsored project and that it was not published as the government was under pre-election communications restrictions at the time it was completed.

Action 09/11-03: Ian Thomson (BIS) to investigate if it is possible for the Learner Data Strategy to be distributed to members of *the information authority* board.

Item 6. YPLA 16-19 Bursary Data Collection

6.1 Caroline Kempner presented the YPLA's proposal to support the new 16-19 Bursary to *the information authority* board and outlined the key points as follows:

- 1) The 16-19 bursary will replace the Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA) and the Discretionary Learner Support (DLS) schemes
- 2) The YPLA is proposing streamlined aggregate returns with a voluntary aggregate return for the new 16-19 bursary fund
- 3) Approval from the DfE Star Chamber Scrutiny Board was given in August 2011
- 4) The YPLA is still in discussions with DfE with regards to what information will be required for the October 2011 return.

6.2 The board made the following observations:

- 1) There was concern around whether the impact on participation would be effectively monitored. The board was advised that the ILR could be issued for this purpose.

Action: 09/11-04: Caroline Kempner to discuss the identification of the 16-19 bursary in the ILR with DfE.

Item 7. Changes to the Specification of the Individualised Learner Record for 2012/13

7.1 John Perks summarised the change process for the Specification of the Individualised Learner Record for 2012/13 as follows:

- 1) The specification will provide a more efficient platform for data collection
- 2) The paper has been prepared in order to rationalise duplicate fields
- 3) Many of the existing fields are inter-dependent and linked to a process
- 4) The challenge for 2013/14 is to look at the processes and information required going forward
- 5) The scope of *the information authority* secretariat may need to be reviewed.

Action: 09/11-05: John Perks to produce recommendations regarding the 2013/14 ILR specification change/review process at the December 2011 *information authority* board meeting.

7.2 Pete Ashton went through the Changes to the Specification of the Individualised Learner Record for 2012/13 paper and the following comments and amendments to the recommendations were made.

Paragraph 22: Change request 21 – Changes to Data Collection Arrangements – Collect records for non-funded apprenticeships

The secretariat recommends the board support the collection of data for apprenticeships that are delivered as part of a NAS contract. It is asked to consider whether it supports collection of data for apprenticeships that are not part of a NAS contract.

The *information authority* board agreed with the recommendations although noted that some of the work will fall outside of the contract and be voluntary.

Paragraph 28: Change request 33 – Review the requirements for a ULN based on the amount of time spent at a provider

The secretariat asked the board to support a reduction of the duration for which a learner can follow a learning aim above which a provider must obtain a ULN from 14 days to seven days.

The *information authority* board raised concerns regarding a 50% reduction over the course of one year due to ongoing issues regarding the Qualifications and Credit Framework (QCF) and the Learning Records System (LRS).

The board stated that the duration should be reduced to 10 days with a ‘statement of intent’ to move to five days in 2013/14.

Paragraph 33: Change request 32 - Improve the handling of not known postcodes

The secretariat asked the board to agree that the secretariat should work with providers and the Data Service to find a solution that is supported by them.

The board agreed with the secretariat’s recommendation.

Paragraph 38: Change request 7 – Requests requiring new data fields or extending the use of existing fields

The secretariat recommended that the board support the continued collection of the identity of the sub-contractor delivering more than 50% of a learning aim to a learner in the existing *Subcontracted or partnership UKPRN* field.

The board agreed with the secretariat’s recommendation.

Paragraph 48: Change request 8 – Improve the availability and collection of data on the economic activity status of FE learners

The secretariat recommended that the board support the proposals in paragraph 47.

The proposals were:

- to continue detailed work to improve the specification and to rationalise data collected about economic activity until 31 October 2011, after which work would cease for 2012/13. The results of that work would be incorporated in version 1 of the specification for publication on 25 November 2011. This would include agreeing with BIS and the Skills Funding Agency any change to the learners for whom a NINO would be requested
- to change the specification of the ILR to collect economic activity by recording the answers to a series of questions, as in a survey, is not taken forward
- to continue to work with BIS and the Skills Funding Agency to improve advice and guidance about collecting economic activity and publish and promote it to providers.

The board agreed the proposals and agreed the outcome should be reported at *the information authority* board meeting in December.

Paragraph 56: Change request 12 – Change Specification to reflect the simplification of the Adult Skills budget funding calculation

The secretariat recommended the board support the proposal for taking this request forward as outlined in paragraph 52.

The board agreed that this should be reported at *the information authority* board meeting in December.

Paragraph 57: Change request 12 – Change Specification to reflect the simplification of the Adult Skills budget funding calculation

The secretariat asked for the board to comment on the change described in paragraphs 53 to 55.

The board supported further work to develop a mechanism for varying rates paid.

Paragraph 62: Change request 22 – Identify Apprenticeship pathways

The secretariat asked the board to support the addition of a new field in which to collect apprenticeship pathways.

The board agreed with the secretariat's recommendation.

Paragraph 73: Change request 31 – Review ILR to remove low value fields

The board was asked to support the removal of the *Learning Delivery/Employer role field* from the ILR.

The DfE confirmed that this field is still required for its analysis and therefore this field will be retained.

Paragraph 81: Change request 25 – Review recording of transfers to remove detrimental impact on success rates

The secretariat asked the board to support the addition of a new code in the *Learning Delivery/Withdrawal reason field* so that a provider would be able to record a transfer from a learning aim that has been made to address a Government Strategy without the transfer affecting the provider's success rate.

The board agreed with the secretariat's recommendation.

Paragraph 82: Change request 25 – Review recording of transfers to remove detrimental impact on success rates

It was proposed that if *the information authority* board intended to support this change request that it was dependent upon NAS publishing guidance on the new code by 31 October 2011.

The board agreed with the exchange subject to NAS providing guidance on the use of the new code by 31 October 2011.

Paragraph 86: Change request 16 – Collect NI numbers for learners on active benefits to allow implementation of Outcome Incentive Payments.

The secretariat asked the board to support the change on collecting NI numbers for learners on active benefits to allow implementation of Outcome Incentive Payments.

The board agreed with the secretariat's recommendations.

Paragraph 90: Change request 34 – Specify the ILR data requirements for 'other funded' and 'non funded' learning

The board was asked to support the clearer specification of the data required for 'other funded' and 'non-funded' learning.

The board agreed with the secretariat's recommendations.

Paragraph 93: Change requests 10,11,14 and 15

At its meeting on 15 June 2011 the board agreed a process and timetable for considering late changes essential to implementing funding in 2012/13. The key dates are included in the timetable at Appendix C to this paper.

The Skills Funding Agency and BIS have helpfully sent four change requests alerting the secretariat to areas of funding that are not yet fully understood where they expect to have sufficient detail for them to be considered through the late change process. These are:

- **Update Adult Safeguarded Learning fields** – change request 10
- **Simplify Additional Learning Support and Disadvantage Uplift data collection** - change request 11
- **Update data collected to support the simplification of Learner Support funds** – change request 14
- **Changes to enable the ILR to drive offender learning payments** – change request 15.
- Consideration of these changes is deferred until the board meeting in December 2011.

The board agreed with the secretariat's recommendation.

Paragraph 99: Change request 4 – Introduce a more precise key to identify learning delivery, making it possible to create a ‘learner lifecycle’

The board was asked to agree that the change request was deferred to 2013/14 or beyond in order to give the secretariat time to establish the feasibility of, cost and a reasonable timescale for this change.

The board agreed with the recommendations, but suggested it was also an item that needed to be discussed at the FE Data Management Group.

Paragraph 104: Change request 6 – Introduce a contract identifier into the ILR

The board was asked to agree that the changes to the ILR categories for LLDD were deferred to 2013/14 or beyond in order to give the secretariat time to establish the feasibility and benefits of this change.

The board agreed with the recommendations, but suggested it was also an item that needed to be discussed at the FE Data Management Group.

Paragraph 109: Change request 17 – Review of ILR categories for LLDD

The board was asked to agree that this request to review and implement revised LLDD categories was further deferred until 2013/14 subject to further discussion with agencies

The board agreed with the secretariat’s recommendation.

Action 09/11-06: Skills Funding Agency/YPLA/*the information authority* to discuss LLDD categories.

Paragraph 123: Recommendations about changes to HE data

The secretariat asked the board to approve changes 26, 27, 28 and 29 to the ILR for 2012/13 on the understanding that implementation would proceed only if the equivalent changes are included in the HESA record for 2012/13.

The board agreed with the secretariat’s recommendations.

Paragraph 124: Recommendations about changes to HE data

The secretariat recommended that change 27, to identify highly qualified candidates, is implemented using a single field rather than as proposed by HEFCE by collecting data about each level 3 qualification held, see paragraphs 113 to 117.

The board agreed with the secretariat's recommendation.

7.3 Pete Ashton then went through the Change Requests that were rejected or withdrawn in Appendix A and the board was asked if it agreed with the outcomes. The results are summarised as follows:

Change request 1: Reinstate field A14 to identify a reason for full/ co-funding of learning aim

The board agreed with the recommendation to reject this request.

Change request 2: Reinstate the 'L' and 'A' codes in the ILR

The board agreed with the recommendation to reject this request.

Change request 3: Bring forward publication/ release of all ILR support systems to ensure provider systems are ready for the coming academic year

The board agreed with the recommendation to note and support this request.

Change request 5: Cross-sector review of the Single ILR to identify opportunities for its simplification

The board noted that this work had been taken forward within other processes.

Change request 9: Identify the learner's reason for learning

The board agreed with the recommendation to reject this request.

Change request 13: Simplify the fields used to collect fees and contributions for Adult Skills

The board noted that the request had been withdrawn.

Change request 18: Record Access to Apprenticeship pathways

The board agreed with the recommendation to reject this request.

Change request 19: Identify Apprenticeship Training Agencies and secondary employers

The board agreed with the recommendation to reject this request.

Change request 20: Identify and monitor learners from a care background

The board agreed with the recommendation to reject this request.

Change request 23: Remove fields no longer required for YPLA data collections

The board agreed with the recommendation to note this request.

Change request 24: Collect data regarding specified protected groups to ensure compliance with the Equality Act and public sector Equality Duty

The board noted that the request had been withdrawn.

Change request 30: Collect data on cashed in Learning Outcomes for all qualifications to align QSRs with schools

The board agreed with the recommendation to reject this request.

Item 8. Update on the New Common Inspection Framework for FE

8.1 Robert Pike presented an update on the new Common Inspection Framework. The key points are as follows:

- 1) The development of the new framework is at an early stage and a consultation document has been published.
- 2) Pilot inspections are taking place in February 2012.
- 3) The final framework will be published in May 2012 and there will be on emphasis on quality of teaching, quality of leadership and management.
- 4) Less emphasis will be placed on subject areas, but there will be sector-specific inspections.
- 5) Groups of learners and the outcomes for the learners will be key.
- 6) Colleges that are graded as exceptional will not be inspected unless any cause for concern is identified.
- 7) The collection and use of pre-inspection data will be developed.

8.2 The Chair indicated that he was willing to meet with Ofsted colleagues at their request to assist in ensuring that the data in the new system is seen as robust.

Item 9. Report on the collection of additional data for HE courses to support the Key Information Set (KIS)

9.1 Mario Ferelli presented the implications for colleges delivering higher education courses and impact on data burden. The key points are as follows:

- 1) The KIS forms a key part of the Quality Assurance Framework.
- 2) The KIS is highlighted in the Higher Education White Paper and originates from the previous government administration.
- 3) The KIS will add some burden to colleges as there are a number of new items of data that they are required to collect. These include: course fees, accommodation costs, professional accreditation, learning and teaching methods and assessment methods.
- 4) Work on the KIS is being undertaken by HEFCE by colleagues in their Bristol office.
- 5) Mario Ferelli talked through the timeline for the KIS and advised that this is a committed timeline.

9.2 The board made the following observations:

- 1) BIS advised that data across all education sectors should be as aligned as possible
- 2) Concerns were expressed about potential differences between these proposals and Framework for Excellence and whether they could be aligned.

Action: 09/11-08: Victoria Spinner to ensure that KIS/FfE is added to the agenda for *the information authority* board meeting in March 2012.

Item 10. Secretariat Report

10.1 John Perks presented the secretariat report and highlighted the following items:

- 1) Dates for 2012 board meetings agreed for 7 March, 13 June, 26 September and 12 December.
- 2) Concerns regarding government plans to rationalise website URLs. It was agreed that if *the information authority* was not able to retain its current URLs (www.theia.org.uk and www.theinformationauthority.org.uk) that the best solution would be to align it with the BIS website. This would avoid any confusion with *the information authority* being perceived as being partial to its host organisation (the Skills Funding Agency) or its host directorate.

Action: 09/11-09: BIS/*the information authority* to discuss moving *the information authority's* website into the BIS domain name.

- 3) The perception survey results are now available and show that *the information authority* is now reaching maturity indicated by a stable level of response and a good understanding of what we do. BIS commented that their recent NAO research indicated that *the information authority* may not be sufficiently visible in the sector, and suggested that the role, scope and visibility of *the information authority* needs to be strengthened.
- 4) *The information authority* currently has two vacancies within the Data Standards and Quality team.

Action: 09/11-10: Secretariat to prepare a paper for *the information authority* board meeting in March 2012 to generate discussion on *the information authority* role in the simplification agenda.

Meeting chair	Geoff Hall
Minute taker	Victoria Spinner
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