

Advisory Groups – Terms of Reference

Background

The information authority sets and regulates data standards for further education (FE) and training providers in England.

The authority encourages system-wide participation and collaboration to improve the sector information systems and avoid, identify and resolve information and data issues. One of the methods that we use to do this is by running advisory groups, which enable us to seek expert and informed opinion and advice from colleagues involved in data collection and transformation.

Membership of the advisory groups

The group is for representatives from similar organisations, as specified in each group's name, who return and/or use individualised learner record (ILR) data. Membership of the group is most suited to staff who are responsible for providing or using data and/ or management information (MI).

Meetings

Group members are eligible to attend group meetings to discuss information and data related topics with *the information authority*. Typically each group meets around three times a year. The meetings take place in Coventry.

The number of places offered at each meeting may vary depending on accommodation available and the format of the meeting. However, every effort will be made to accommodate as many attendees as possible and if there is a great deal of interest in a particular agenda, additional meetings can be held.

Meeting invitations will be emailed to all group members and posted on **feconnect**. Group members will email *the information authority* if they wish to attend. If the meeting is oversubscribed then places will be allocated to ensure that:

- There is representation from a core of regular advisory group members.
- There is a good mix of type and size of organisation represented.
- Representatives are from a variety of regions.

Places at the meeting will be confirmed at least seven days before the meeting date to enable group members to arrange travel.

Purpose of the advisory groups

The purpose of the group is to assist *the information authority* and the Data Service in making improvements by:

- i. Providing feedback on current data collections and reporting (including collection content, data use and processes), software used in preparation, audit issues, and the impact of all of these processes those involved.
- ii. Suggesting ways that current data collection and reporting arrangements can be improved.
- iii. Giving advice on proposals for new data collections, as well as changes in data collection arrangements and/ or software.
- iv. Providing advice about how MI systems and data collections relate to one another in practice.
- v. Sharing and publicising best practice.
- vi. Contributing to projects that aim to reduce bureaucracy and improve the quality and use of data.
- vii. Proactively identifying other areas of interest.
- viii. Considering and advising on the implications of proposed changes to the use and interpretation of data.

Administration of the advisory groups

Membership of each group is managed by *the information authority* secretariat's Community and Stakeholder Team. Those interested in joining a group should email details to cst@theia.org.uk. Group members will receive emails from *the information authority* regarding meetings, consultation documents, and be eligible to join their relevant online group on **feconnect** (<http://forums.theia.org.uk>).

Where necessary and appropriate, colleagues from other agencies, such as the Learning and Skills Council (and its successor bodies, the Young People's Learning Agency and the Skills Funding Agency), the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills, the Department for Children, Schools and Families, MIAP, and Ofsted, will be asked to join in discussions where their input is needed, or to present to the group on matters that are in its interest.