

Paper

Paper 4 - Changes to the Specification of the Individualised Learner Record for 2010/11

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Audience	<i>The information authority</i> board
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Purpose

- 1 This paper is prepared for *the information authority board* (“the board”) meeting on 30 September 2009 to:
 - provide a summary of the requests received by *the information authority* secretariat (“the secretariat”) to change the specification of the individualised learner record (ILR) for 2010/11.
 - outline the work undertaken on these requests and their current status.
 - provide a description of the changes that the secretariat is recommending for implementation in 2010/11, the reasons for this recommendation and seek the board’s authority for these changes.
 - list the requests that are not recommended for implementation in 2010/11, the reason for this and seek the board’s approval of these recommendations, at Appendix C
 - draw the board’s attention to specific requests, in bold text, and ask for its approval.

Background and introduction

- 2 A summary of the structure and content of the ILR based on the 2009/10 specification is attached at Appendix A. This is provided for information as some requests refer to the ILR specification for 2009/10.
- 3 The timetable for the development and publication of the ILR specification for 2010/11 was agreed at the board meeting in December 2008. This is attached at Appendix B.
- 4 Change requests that are not being implemented in the ILR for 2010/11 are described in Appendix C.
- 5 Requests for change were evaluated against published criteria. Providers and other stakeholders were consulted using the **feconnect** collaboration site as well as through existing consultative groups. This gave all stakeholders the opportunity to comment on changes. The Data Service were also consulted about the impact of changes on the systems receiving, transforming and producing management information (MI) from ILR data.
- 6 Throughout the paper and in Appendix C change request identity numbers are included so that the secretariat will be able to provide fuller information about particular changes when requested to do so at the board meeting. The ID number act as a reference to detailed information in other documents.
- 7 The secretariat is grateful to the large number of provider representatives and data users that have advised it through this process.

Summary of Requests Received

- 8 The secretariat received 60 requests for changes to the ILR for 2010/11.
- 9 The table below summarises the number of requests received from each organisation:

Department for Children Schools and Families (DCSF)	2
Department for Business Innovation and Skills (BIS)	6
Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE)	1
Learning and Skills Council (LSC)	43
<i>The information authority</i>	8
Total	60

Progress Report

- 10 Providers and data users were informed of the timetable and process, and asked to send requests for change by 26 June 2009. The secretariat worked with requestors to clarify requirements and to obtain sufficient information to evaluate the request against the criteria. In some cases new solutions to achieve the requestor's objectives were developed and evaluated.
- 11 Where a change failed to meet the criteria requestors were informed of the reason for not taking it forward.

Current Status

- 12 The 60 requests received by the secretariat can be classified as follows:
 - one request was approved at the previous board meeting in June 2009.
 - two requests are for changes to validation
 - five requests were withdrawn. These are detailed in Appendix C.
 - 20 requests did not meet the criteria after being put through the challenge process and were rejected. The secretariat has written to these requestors advising them of the result of applying the criteria. These are detailed in Appendix C.
 - 23 requests meet the criteria and have been taken forward by the secretariat.
 - 9 requests require further work and either require a feasibility study to be undertaken or are being taken forward as part of a larger piece of work by the secretariat
- 13 In summary the requests result in the following recommended changes:
 - removal of four fields
 - addition of two new fields
 - two requests to collect data more extensively
 - changes to codes in six fields
 - changes in one higher education (HE) data field to meet the needs of HEFCE
 - introduction of two new aggregate provider level collections
 - increased validation for two fields

- 14 The secretariat recommends that the board supports most of these changes given that they have met the criteria. In some cases it recommends more work be done, postponement or rejection. The following sections provide more detail about these changes to enable the board to make decisions about them.
- 15 The board is particularly asked to look at the recommendations for change requests 2b at paragraph 16 , 13 at paragraph 47 and 18 at paragraph 100 in the paper to ensure it is content with the secretariat's recommendations.

Changes to Data Collection Arrangements

Bringing forward the date of F01 returns to November

Change Request 2b

- 16 The Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) has requested that learner numbers for YPLA funded learner responsive provision, predominantly 16-18 year old learners, are made available earlier than can be achieved using the current F01 return date of the first Monday in December. This is to facilitate the operation of the Young People's Learning Agency (YPLA) National Commissioning Framework and aid planning, so that allocations to local authorities and providers can be made earlier. DCSF proposed three options as to how this could be achieved.
 1. Introducing a new aggregate return, with only part and full-time YPLA funded learner numbers to be returned in mid-November, to aid local planning. No change would be made to the current F01 return date;
 2. Bringing forward the F01 return date to the third Monday in November from 2010/11 and leaving the reference date at 1 November;
 3. Introducing a concept of two learner returns - one for 16-18 provision, which will aid local planning to be returned by mid-November, and another for adult provision to be returned at a later date.
- 17 The secretariat accepts that DCSF needs learner data by mid-November to meet its timetable to deliver baseline allocations, and that early availability of allocations is helpful to providers and beneficial to the overall smooth running of the National Commissioning Framework. As a consequence, it has sought to find a way which delivers the data DCSF needs whilst minimising the burden on providers.
- 18 Following consultation with the sector, the preferred option amongst providers is to submit an earlier aggregate return to indicate overall numbers of YPLA funded learners. Providers have raised the issue of

the expected data quality of numbers obtained at this point in the academic year. Learner numbers are likely to still be fluctuating and the data returned in an earlier aggregate return may differ significantly from that finalised in the F01 return. Any return of data or learner numbers by mid November is likely to count learners that fail to return after half term as continuing and so will only give an indicative figure of actual learner numbers. DCSF has indicated that they are content to proceed despite this risk.

- 19 The secretariat considers that the first option may be the least burdensome for the sector and takes account of both the learning providers and data users' needs.
- 20 The secretariat considers that asking providers to submit a full ILR return by mid-November would be unlikely to give a full picture of all enrolments, as providers will not have had sufficient time to validate all the details required for a full ILR. The data received may be incomplete, particularly for part-time adult provision and this would lead to a reduction in the overall data quality and usefulness of the F01 return. The number of new enrolments that need to be processed within the FE system is very high compared to schools and the teaching year generally does not start until the middle to end of September, later than in schools.
- 21 An earlier F01 date would also exacerbate further the workload for providers during November. Providers which deliver all types of LSC funded provision would be required to submit both end of year returns for one year (W13 and F05) as well as the W03 and F01 returns for the following year within a three week period.
- 22 The secretariat is concerned that the third option of having separate returns for YPLA and Skills Funding Agency (SFA) funded learners, would add to the data burden and complexity and would prefer an option that maintains the same arrangements for the SFA and the YPLA.
- 23 On the basis of the above information, the secretariat judges that option one will both meet the needs of data users and consumers and support the commissioning and allocations process, without increasing the burden on providers significantly by asking for a full ILR return to be made earlier. The secretariat will need to continue to work with DCSF, shadow YPLA colleagues and the Data Service over the coming weeks to develop a detailed proposal of how this data would be collected.
- 24 **The secretariat asks the board to approve a proposal for providers to make an aggregate learner numbers return on the third Monday in November from 2010 onwards, which would indicate the number of full and part time YPLA funded enrolments.**

Alignment of ASL collection dates with the Learner Responsive timetable

Change Request 53

- 25 *The information authority* is proposing that Adult Safeguarded Learning (ASL) return dates are broadly aligned with Learner Responsive (LR) return dates from 2010/11. Historically, ASL ILR collection (C0) dates have been broadly in line with the LR ILR (F0) data collections. Given the recent changes to F05, which will be returned in 2010 on 22 November 2010, there may be a need for C0 collection dates to be similarly revised. This particularly affects the date for the final return of the year, which will be collected for 2009/10 on 7 February 2011. Such a change would enable MI reporting for the whole FE and training system to be achieved earlier.
- 26 The Department for Business Innovation and Skills (BIS) are supportive of this change in order to be able to present the final, complete picture on the whole FE system as soon as possible after the end of the academic year
- 27 The secretariat consulted with ASL providers in the sector about such a change and although only a small number of responses were received, they are felt to be representative of the sector. Overall the respondents were not supportive of this change and identified the following particular areas of difficulty and concern.
- ASL provision delivered by local authorities is frequently sub-contracted to a large number of other providers. Consequently local authorities need to collate all the data from these partners before submitting a single ILR return. Meeting a November deadline would be difficult for those providers importing full ILR returns from sub-contracted providers due the length of time it takes to import, check and cleanse the data. Sub-contracted providers would need to submit their returns in early/mid October in order to allow enough time for the data to be processed before submitting through OLDC.
 - This is an already busy time of year for MIS staff due to the number of other ILR returns that need to be made, so bringing forward the ASL return would further increase the pressure on providers' resources. At present staff can focus solely on the ASL return enabling better quality of data. If the return was brought forward, providers would be likely to focus on their LR and ER returns and the data quality of the ASL return would be likely to suffer.
 - Providers were concerned that the final data returns could be incomplete if there were delays in receiving results from awarding bodies. If the return was hard closed, it would not be possible to amend this data. ASL provision is similar to learner responsive provision and this risk was addressed when bringing forward the F05 return date to the fourth Monday in November.
 - The needs and funding of ASL provision is different to that for other learners so consequently the reporting issues could be resolved in other ways rather than increasing the burden on providers.

- 28 As a result of the concerns raised by providers, the secretariat does not propose that an immediate change is made to the final ASL return date of the year. A staged approach has been taken with the learner responsive returns and the secretariat recommends that a similar approach is taken with the final ASL return. This would give the sector time to adjust to the change of date and also enable the secretariat to review the impact of an earlier F05 close for 2008/09 and 2009/10 and to apply any lessons learned to the ASL sector.
- 29 **The secretariat recommends that the board do not move immediately to a final ASL return date of mid November for 2010/11. The board is asked to agree an interim date of mid January for the C05 return for 2010/11, with a view to an earlier close in the future.**

Shorter Data Collection Windows

Change Request 55

- 30 Both the Data Service and *the information authority* secretariat propose to change the opening and closing arrangements for all Learner Responsive (LR) and Adult Safeguarded Learning (ASL) ILR returns. The Employer Responsive and ESF Short Record collections already have a defined monthly collection window and are not included in these proposals.
- 31 Each ILR return has a published reference date and return date. The reference date is the date up to which the return must be complete and accurate. Providers may return data for activities and events after this date, but must not omit data that relates to activities and events that took place on or before this date. The return date is the date by which all providers should make a complete and accurate return with respect to the reference date.
- 32 Current practice is for the online data collection system to open to providers immediately following the reference date and to remain open until immediately before the reference date for the next return. This means that each collection is 'open' for several months. The dates when a return is opened and closed have been published for the first time for 2009/10. During the period a return is open, a copy of the collection database, updated with derived variables, is taken every few weeks for use by analysts in FE sector organisations. Each copy is known as a freeze. The historic reason for leaving returns open so long is to allow those providers that fail to make a return by the return date to do so after that date. Increasingly few providers fail to send data by the return date.
- 33 The current arrangements in which providers are able to make LR returns for some weeks after the return lead to:
- Confusion for data consumers and providers about which particular transmission of a providers return has been used for a particular purpose, where a provider sends more than one for a return.

- Pressure from the LSC, sometimes driven by misunderstanding within their local teams, for providers to send extra returns after they have already sent one with which they are content. Such returns as well as being extra to the specification are of dubious value given the reference date for a return is fixed. In some cases this results in an extra 'virtual' return for all providers.
 - Use of data within consuming organisations that is inconsistent with statistical first releases.
 - Increased processing and support costs for the Data Service.
- 34 For the reasons described above, the Data Service and *the information authority* secretariat wish to move to a situation, starting for 2010/11, in which every Learner Responsive and Adult Safeguarded Learning ILR return is:
- open from the day following the reference date until the end of the day on the return date
 - is hard closed at the end of the day on the return date
 - the dates for opening and closing the data collections systems are published along with the reference date and return date
- 35 The open and close dates for 2009/10 for each LR collection are given in the table below together with the proposed new hard close date for 2010/11.

Return Number (file extension)	Reference date	Open date for 09/10 and 10/11	Return date	Close date for 09/10	Proposed close date for 10/11
ILR - .F01	01 November 2009	02 November 2009	07 December 2009	31 January 2010	06 December 2010
ILR - .F02	01 February 2010	02 February 2010	15 February 2010	30 April 2010	14 February 2009
ILR - .F03	01 May 2010	02 May 2010	17 May 2010	30 July 2010	16 May 2011
ILR - .F04	31 July 2010	01 August 2010	06 September 2010	31 October 2010	05 September 2011
ILR - .F05	from 01 November 2010	02 November 2010	22 November 2010	22 November 2010	28 November 2011

- 36 If the proposed close dates are implemented, the number of freezes for each return can be minimised, ideally to one, thereby:
- allowing consistent alignment of data used by data consumers and that used in the statistical first release (SFR)
 - avoiding confusion for data consumers and providers caused by having multiple freezes

- avoiding the burden of extra virtual returns for providers
 - avoiding the cost of producing multiple freezes and processing them through to MI.
- 37 All of the consultation respondents on **feconnect** agreed that a shorter collection window was acceptable and that it was also important to publish a time for the hard close of the return. The risk of hard closing was raised particularly where unforeseen circumstances such as staff illness, software problems or inclement weather may prevent a provider making a return. This is particularly an issue for the first and last returns of the year. If a provider missed the F01 hard close, they would be unable to send any data until the second return opened. This would mean for such a provider, that no current year data would be available to funding organisations to inform the planning process until late February.
- 38 The secretariat recognises that there may also be some risk that data consumers may find it difficult to manage their business without the extra virtual returns. However during the consultation, no objections have been raised with the secretariat by data consumers about any such future problems. If there was a strong business case for doing so, additional data required for a specific purpose could be addressed by changing the timings of some existing returns or introducing extra returns to meet specific needs, subject to board approval.
- 39 Despite the issues identified above, the secretariat considers that the benefits to the sector of having a shorter collection period and a single data output for use by the sector for each collection, outweigh the possible risks. The secretariat recommends that the time periods outlined in the table above, indicating when ILR returns can be transmitted, is adopted for all LR and ASL data returns from 2010/11 onwards.
- 40 The secretariat recommends the board approve the proposals outlined above for shorter data collection windows for LR and ASL ILR returns.**

Re-naming of Learner and Employer Responsive Collections

Change Request 57

- 41 *The information authority* have been asked by the LSC and the Data Service to rename the ILR returns to reflect the Learner Responsive and Employer Responsive terminology. The suggestion was made that 'F' collections would become 'L' and 'W' collections would become 'E'.
- 42 The secretariat have proposed that the Learner responsive ILR returns are re-named "LR" rather than "L" because the L prefix is already used in the ILR specification to indicate Learner data set fields and could cause confusion to use the same naming convention for L01 to L05. For consistency the Employer collections would be re-named with an "ER" prefix.

- 43 This change would affect all systems that process ILR data, as the file names would be changed. Systems would need to be able to accommodate different formats during the overlap between the end of 2009/10 and the start of 2010/11. The header and footer specifications of ILR files would also need to be amended.
- 44 The Data Service strongly support this change.
- 45 One possible risk is that this change may be short lived, dependent on whether a proposal for a single ILR specification, is agreed by the board for 2011/12. Despite this the secretariat consider that it would be helpful to the sector to change the filename prefixes to match the names of the collections that were introduced in 2008/09 and recommends that this change is implemented.
- 46 The secretariat asks the board to approve this change to the naming of ILR returns from 2010/11 onwards.**

Collection of employer responsive contributions in an annual provider level collection

Change Request 13

- 47 The Learning and Skills Council (LSC) submitted a change request, to collect data in the ILR about the level of employer contributions received by providers towards the cost of Employer Responsive funded provision. This is similar to a change it requested for 2009/10.
- 48 The overall purpose of the change is to develop a consistent, transparent approach to the measurement and monitoring of fees and contributions across all LSC funding models, in order to respond to the government policy on fees and contributions. The government 'shared responsibility' agenda requires employers and learners to contribute to their learning but currently only learner contributions are evidenced and monitored (employer contributions are implied through a reduction to the national rates paid but no evidence is gathered). The changes proposed respond directly to the policy agenda and findings of external research carried out in 2009.
- 49 The government policy on fees and contributions is as follows:
- The Skills Strategy White Paper published in July 2003 committed the LSC to develop 'a new national framework for the setting of fees in further education' that will involve setting 'an aggregate income target for each college' (21st Century Skills Realising our Potential).
 - The FE White Paper (Further Education: Raising Skills, Improving Life Chances, DfES, March 2006, paragraphs 6.21 and 6.28) confirmed that the national fee assumption for adult learners will rise to around 50% in the 2010/11 academic year. "Our approach will be guided by our wider strategy to raise the level of contributions from employers"
 - The LSC's grant letter and Statement of Priorities for 2009/10 state that the Council must continue to support colleges and other

providers to be more efficient in the way they generate and collect fee income from learners and employers who are expected to contribute towards the costs of learning.

- 50 Following consultation with providers, it became clear that this data was not appropriate to collect within the ILR. Contributions made by providers towards the cost of ER provision cannot be specifically linked to a particular learner or learning aim but are, in most cases, an overall amount for all learning carried out for that provider. Consequently collection of data about employer contributions should be carried out at provider level rather than individual learner or learning aim level.
- 51 The secretariat proposes to work with the LSC in the coming months and consult stakeholders about the development of an annual provider level return detailing employer contributions.
- 52 The secretariat asks the board to approve this approach. If the board agrees, the secretariat and LSC would present details of an annual provider level data collection of employer contributions at the next board meeting in December.**

Collecting ILR Returns from Independent Specialist Colleges

Change Request 47

- 53 *The information authority* board approved in October 2008, a request from the LSC to pilot the collection of ILR data from independent specialist colleges (ISCs) for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities in 2009/10. This request extends the ILR collection to all ISCs from 2010/11 onwards.
- 54 This change would enable the LSC to bring ISCs within the mainstream LR funding mechanism and also within scope for the Framework for Excellence (FfE). The change would also provide LSC and BIS with data for learners with learning difficulties and disabilities at ISCs on the same basis as that for similar learners at other institutions. It would allow the LSC to include the contribution of ISCs to the achievement of national targets.
- 55 The LSC has worked extensively with the ISCs taking part in the pilot over the past year to ensure that they have the systems and staff capabilities in place in order to be able to complete ILR returns. Although they have not yet made an ILR return for 2009/10, as these are not due in until 7 December 2009, the LSC has asked the pilot providers to validate their ILR data through the Learner Information Suite (LIS) to ensure that they are able to produce valid ILR returns. The results of this indicate that there are two outstanding data issues still to be resolved, but overall the ISCs have been able to gather the data required for and produce a valid ILR return.
- 56 The secretariat consulted with the Association of National Specialist Colleges (NATSPEC) about the extension of the pilot to all ISCs for 2010/11 and they were supportive of the proposal.

- 57 Further details about the work undertaken by the LSC with pilot providers and their proposals to ensure that the pilot can be smoothly extended to all ISCs is given in the document at Appendix D. The secretariat strongly advises the LSC of the need to provide significant additional support to ISCs from now until the end of the 2010/11 data collection cycle to ensure they return timely, complete and accurate data.
- 58 The change for 2010/11 would apply to approximately 60 providers delivering education and training to around 3500 learners.
- 59 The secretariat asks the board to approve the collection of ILR data from all Independent Specialist Colleges from 2010/11 onwards.**

Removing Low Value Fields

Change Request 56

- 60 The secretariat in its workplan committed to review the ILR on a rolling year by year basis to remove low value fields.
- 61 Through a process of consultation with providers and data users, six fields were considered for removal. These were:
- Contract/ Allocation type field, field L02 – the current codes are out of date and no longer used;
 - Contract/ Allocation type field, field A02 – may still be required to distinguish Ministry of Defence contracts from other provision.
 - Franchised out and partnership arrangement field, field A21 – this data may be able to be obtained from the UK Register of Learning Providers (UKRLP);
 - Broker contractor number field, field A54 – Train to Gain brokerage is now carried out by Regional Development Agencies and this number is no longer used;
 - Local monitoring fields, L41 and A47 – locally defined data is not governed by *the information authority* and does not go through our rigorous change process. It is currently a loophole for additional data requests that may not meet our criteria. In some cases, it has been used to collect new data where *the information authority* board has rejected the request.
- 62 By using the standard process for evaluating requests to change the ILR the secretariat identified:
- the case for retaining three of the fields is weak. These fields are L02 (Contract/ Allocation type), A54 (Broker contractor number), A21 (Franchised out and partnership arrangement);

- the case for retaining the Franchised out and partnership arrangement field, field A21 is weak. It is unclear if the data collected in this field is used by any stakeholders and no objections have been raised to its removal during the consultation period. It was suggested that similar data to that collected in field A21 could be obtained from UKRLP. Further investigation has revealed that this data is not currently held in UKRLP. However MIAP has been asked by the Data Service to consider holding details of the organisation type in UKRLP, similar to that data currently held in the Provider Information Management System (PIMS). This would provide details of the type of provider, similar to that currently collected in field A21. The secretariat would support the addition of provider type information to UKRLP, so that all organisations can be checked and categorised at registration with UKRLP. This would ensure that each organisation was categorised in a consistent grouping irrespective of which contractor listed them as a franchise/partner. The current practice of asking providers to categorise their partners by type in the ILR is likely to yield very inconsistent results nationally. As a result of these investigations, the secretariat recommends that the Franchised out and partnership arrangement field, field A21 is removed from the ILR from 2010/11 onwards.
- the local monitoring fields are currently used extensively by some local LSCs to collect additional local data about learning provision. Providers were supportive of their removal and identified that the use of these fields can cause difficulties for them, especially when they are introduced mid year. The secretariat is concerned at the lack of governance around the use of these fields but recognises that they are in currently in use. If they were removed for 2010/11, this may lead to an increase in ad hoc data requests to providers. In view of this, the secretariat propose to remove them from the ILR in 2011/12 and will publicise this to local data users so that they are able to request ILR changes for 2011/12 to meet any additional local monitoring requirements.
- there is a strong case for retaining the Contract/Allocation type field, field A02. This field is required to identify Ministry of Defence Contracts and enables them to be funded differently from other employer responsive provision. The other codes in this field are no longer required and will be removed.

63 The board is asked to agree to the removal of the Contract/ Allocation type field, field L02; Broker contract number field, field A54 and the Franchised out and partnership arrangement field, field A21; and remove all codes from the Contract/ Allocation type field, field A02 except the MOD code.

64 The board is also asked to approve the approach to be taken for the local monitoring fields, fields L41 and A47, which is to remove them

from the ILR from 2011/12 onwards having given data users an opportunity to request a change to the ILR for 2011/12.

Collection of University for Industry (Ufi) Returns within the Learner Responsive ILR collection

Change Request 59

- 65 University for Industry (Ufi) has previously had its own set of data collections and has been funded outside of the main Learner Responsive methodology. From 2010/11 Ufi will be brought into the Learner Responsive funding methodology and so it is proposed that they should submit ILR data with other Learner Responsive providers on the Learner Responsive ILR return for 2010/11.
- 66 As well as making a separate return, Ufi also currently send separate files under different provider numbers (UPINS), which represent their delivery in 9 separate regions. This was done because of the high numbers of learners that Ufi supports. At the time it was known that the data collections system could not support this volume of learners in a single file. The total number of learners submitted by Ufi at the last return was 195,380. This compares to the largest provider in the LR return with 69,379 learners.
- 67 The Data Service has expressed concerns about the processing times of a single Ufi LR return and the impact on the file size of the learner responsive data freezes of adding Ufi to the LR collection. There are also some definitions and derived data fields that are currently used for Ufi that are different to those used for other LR provision. These may need to change anyway as a result of bringing Ufi under the LR funding methodology. Further consultation is also needed with Ufi to assess whether their systems are capable of implementing the proposed changes.
- 68 The secretariat recognises that the issues identified above are not insignificant and that further work is required with the Data Service to impact fully and test the proposals. The secretariat recommends that this is carried out over the coming months, so that a final decision can be made about Ufi data returns prior to publishing the ILR specification in November.
- 69 **The secretariat asks the board to approve this approach and give the secretariat the authority to make a final decision about whether or not to include all Ufi data within the LR ILR return following further work with the Data Service and Ufi.**

Requests Requiring New Data Fields or Extending the Use of Existing Fields

- 70 This section describes recommendations for changes in use of two fields and requests for the inclusion of three new fields.

Changes to support funding of learners via the new agencies post MOG

Change requests 19 (duplicated by ID 48) 36 and 41

- 71 From April 2010, the LSC will be replaced by two new agencies; the Skills Funding Agency (SFA) and the Young Peoples Learning Agency (YPLA). Young people up to the age of 18 will be funded by Local Authorities on behalf of the YPLA. Adults aged 19+ will be funded directly by the SFA.
- 72 The secretariat received four requests from the LSC to make changes to the ILR to support funding and budget management under these new arrangements.
- 73 Data is currently captured in the ILR about the LSC funding model which is used to fund learners in the LSC funding stream field, field A10. Data is also recorded about the local or regional LSC that the provider is contracted with and against which funding and delivery is monitored. This is captured in the LSC number of funding LSC field, field L25.
- 74 From 2010/11 there will still be a requirement to know which funding model will be used to calculate and allocate funding and in addition to this, it will be necessary to know from which organisation the funding has been received – the source of funding. The source of funding is defined as the organisation which passes the funds to the provider, the one with which it has a contract or funding agreement.
- 75 It is proposed that the LSC funding stream field, field A10 will be re-named as "Funding Model" and that providers will continue to record in this field the funding mechanism by which the learners are funded, either: 16-18 Learner Responsive; Adult Learner Responsive; Employer Responsive; Adult Safeguarded Learning or ESF Funded (co-financed by the SFA).
- 76 The existing "Other LSC funding" category (code 80) would be replaced by two new options, one for, "Other SFA funding model" and a second for "Other YPLA funding model". The "No LSC funding for this learning aim" category (code 99) would be replaced by "None of the above".
- 77 Providers would also be required to record from which organisation the funding payments were directly received from, in the Sources of Funding field, field A11. Recording the organisation from which the funds are directly received will be important following the MoG changes to ensure

that funding can be reconciled against the correct agency and budget. New categories for field A11 are proposed to record “Local authority (YPLA funds)”; “Local authority (not YPLA funds); YPLA directly; SFA and Government Office.

- 78 The LSC has requested that a new field is added in the learning aim data set to record which SFA region or local authority is responsible for managing the provider’s contract and against which funding, delivery and performance are reported. This is needed to monitor delivery against local budgets and would replace the use of the LSC number of funding LSC field, field L25 which would be removed from the ILR.
- 79 Providers would be asked to record a code in this new learning aim field to identify either the SFA region or local authority by which the provision is funded and contracted. The proposed codes to be used for Local Authorities are the numbers contained in Edubase for LEAs, currently used in relation to education provision in schools. There is currently not an agreed set of codes for SFA regions although this may follow the current coding structure used for regional LSCs.
- 80 The board are asked to approve the change of name and codes used in the LSC funding stream field, field A10 and the extended use of the Sources of Funding field, field A11 to enable the funding model and funding organisation to be identified.**
- 81 The board is also asked to agree to the inclusion of a new field at learning aim level to capture the SFA funding region or local authority and for the secretariat to work with LSC and SFA colleagues to agree a coding system for SFA contract identification prior to the publication of the ILR Specification for 2010/11 in November 2009.**

New field to record entitlement to 16-18 funding for Employer Responsive funded apprenticeships

Change Requests 34 and 40

- 82 The LSC funding policy team and LSC West Midlands regional team have requested that changes are made to the way that Entitlement to 16-18 funding is captured for ER funded apprenticeship learners. These are learners who are aged 19+, but who are in some circumstances eligible to be fully funded in the same way as 16-18 year old learners. This is usually because they have started the programme aged 16-18 but have had a break in learning or moved to a new provider, or due to exceptional circumstances were unable to start learning aged 16-18.
- 83 The current position is that eligibility for entitlement funding for both LR and ER provision is recorded in the same field, the Eligibility for enhanced funding field, field L28. Because this field is held at learner level within the ILR, it cannot be changed during the academic year

when a learner progresses from an apprenticeship to an advanced apprenticeship without affecting the funding for both programmes. This means that currently the second programme is funded incorrectly for the remainder of the academic year. This issue does not affect LR provision as the learner receives entitlement for the whole year regardless of in-year changes in learning provision and this is recorded at learner level.

- 84 It is proposed that a new field is added to the ILR at learning aim level to record eligibility for entitlement to 16-18 ER apprenticeship funding. LR entitlement funding would continue to be recorded in field L28.
- 85 This change would enable providers to record a change in entitlement status for a learner when they move from one apprenticeship programme to another. It will ensure that the correct funding is paid for each programme undertaken.
- 86 The secretariat asks the board to agree to a new field in the learning aim data set in which to record eligibility for 16-18 employer responsive funding.**

Collection of National Insurance Number for all adults

Change Request 8

- 87 The Department of Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) has requested that National Insurance (NI) numbers are collected more widely in the ILR for all adult Learner Responsive learners. This data would be used to improve the linking of ILR data to HM Revenue & Customs (HMRC) and Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) data, resulting in more complete data in a database that is being developed to understand the relationships between skills and employment and hence a better evidence base for policies in this area.
- 88 The linking of ILR, HMRC and DWP data is currently being trialled by BIS and DWP, with the expectation that it will provide a powerful new information source to:
- monitor performance against Integrated Employment & Skills (IES) targets
 - develop new measures of employment outcomes, with the potential for robust analysis at an unprecedented level of detail.
 - reward providers for employment outcomes and progression as well as learning outcomes.
- 89 There is no common unique identifier between ILR and DWP/HMRC data, other than the NI number, which is currently only collected for ER learners. If the change is not implemented, heavy reliance would need to be placed on fuzzy matching (using Name, Date of Birth, Postcode and Sex variables) to link the data sources together. Initial results show that

a 10% increase of matching could be achieved (from 80% to 90%) if the NI number were used as the primary matching key.

- 90 Consultation within the sector was broadly not supportive of mandating the collection of NI number across all learners.
- The view was expressed by several providers that such a change would place an extra burden on providers in having to collect an additional 'unique' number when there is already the ULN. MIAP should be looking at ways to link to this information.
 - Learners may be reluctant to provide their NI number or may not know it. Having to supply an NI number may become a barrier to entry. This data is currently difficult to collect from ER learners and would be even harder from a larger number of LR students. Students in the past have been unhappy about disclosing their NI numbers and may be suspicious of the use to which it will be put.
- 91 The NI number is not a unique identifier, eg a learner may have more than one NI number.
- 92 The Information Commissioner may not support the use of the NINO for purposes other than were originally intended ie benefits and taxation.
- 93 The secretariat considers that asking for NI numbers for all or most learners would be inconsistent with requesting ULNs, since providers originally favoured collecting NI numbers over ULNs but were told that it was not an option for legal reasons.
- 94 Consultation with the LSC's Head of Records and Rights has confirmed there is currently no legal authority for National Insurance Numbers to be collected for the outlined purpose of data matching. BIS is working with the LSC to obtain permission from DWP and HMRC to obtain NI Numbers from more learners for the purpose of using it to connect data on training, tax and benefits. At the time of writing this permission has not been obtained.
- 95 As a result of the feedback received on **feconnect** detailed above and the fact that the LSC is still seeking approval to collect NI numbers for the data matching purposes described, the secretariat recommends that the collection of NI numbers is not extended further for 2010/11.

The board is asked to agree to the secretariat's recommendation that the collection of the NI number is not extended further in 2010/11.

Changes to the main delivery method field, field A18

Change Request 22

- 96 The LSC funding policy team has requested that the use of the Main delivery method field, field A18 is extended to allow information to be collected for the first time about different modes of delivery in Employer Responsive (ER) provision, such as distance and blended learning. This information is currently collected for LR data returns. In the years prior to 2009/10, this field was used by Train to Gain learners to record whether or not a higher or lower rate of funding was being claimed. This use was discontinued for 2009/10. The collection of additional data about ER delivery methods would be used in conjunction with other ILR data to help inform the setting of appropriate funding rates. For 2009/10 the board approved the additional collection of data about group based teaching hours and one to one assessment time for ER provision. This data would be used in conjunction with information about the delivery method to give a full picture of the way in which different types of learning are delivered across the ER sector.
- 97 The proposal is to ask providers to record the delivery method for ER provision against the existing categories of class contact, open learning, distance learning, e-learning, and accreditation of prior learning. A new code would be added for learning in the workplace. The change request also asked that an additional code was added for blended learning. The term 'blended learning' describes a mix of learning delivery methods, which includes some traditional learning, combined with distance, open and/or e-learning in a variety of proportions. From a funding perspective, blended learning is treated as distance learning, so this method of delivery would be incorporated within code 03 used for distance learning.
- 98 No concerns have been raised during consultation about this proposed change and so the secretariat recommends that it is implemented for 2010/11 to support the setting of funding rates by future funding policy teams.
- 99 The secretariat asks the board to agree to the collection of data about the delivery method for employer responsive provision in the ILR from 2010/11 onwards.**

Recording of carers in the ILR

Change Request 18

- 100 The Learning and Skills Council (LSC) has requested that the ILR is changed to enable learners who are 'carers' to be identified.
- 101 A carer is defined as a person who looks after or gives help or support to family members, friends, neighbours or others, who are subject to long-term physical or mental ill health or disability, or relating to old age. This definition is currently used by the Department of Health (DoH) for

applicants to Caring with Confidence (the DoH-funded programme for carers).

- 102 The information collected would enable the LSC and successor bodies to analyse participation, retention and achievement data for carers as a separate cohort, and therefore identify gaps in achieving LSC targets and barriers to carer participation. Under the Carers Equal Opportunities Act (2004), “carers have a right to have their learning and work needs assessed as part of the carers’ assessment procedure”. This data would be used to monitor that providers are meeting these legal requirements and to monitor which providers are successfully removing barriers for these learners and meeting the needs of carers flexibly so they are not disadvantaged. The information would also enable strategies and policies to be developed in relation to the needs of particular cohorts, such as those not in education, employment or training (NEET) and learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities (LLDD). In addition, the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) has specifically asked that consideration be given to possible additional fee remission for carers that may be made available for 2010/11.
- 103 The proposal is that Learners will self-declare their carer status on enrolment using the agreed definition.
- 104 Consultation with the sector was broadly supportive and some providers already record this information for their own purposes. Any self-declaration would need to be clear on enrolment forms so that it was not overlooked. The use of the DoH definition of a carer was thought to be the most inclusive and one that should be used. Providers who responded on **feconnect** recognised the importance of responding to the needs of carers and gathering information and evidence about this.
- 105 The secretariat agrees that providers have a legal duty to provide equal and fair access to learning provision for carers and to ensure that they are not disadvantaged. This is for providers to manage locally themselves and the secretariat is doubtful as to whether national reporting would improve this situation or not. The secretariat understand the rationale for obtaining this data nationally for performance monitoring and policy development purposes. With regard to the ILR assessment criteria, there are currently no key sector targets or goals which need to be measured in this area and therefore this request does not meet this criterion. The data collected is likely to be as robust as any other self-declared data from learners. Learners are unlikely to object to the declaration of this information as it may well benefit them both in terms of funding in the future and flexibility of learning delivery. The additional collection burden for providers is assessed to be minimal as they should be collecting this to inform their own management and many are already doing so.
- 106 There is no existing field in which to collect this information and a new field would need to be added to the ILR to record this additional information about the learner.

- 107 The secretariat recognises that there is some benefit in collecting this data nationally but the case is not a strong one. Therefore the board's advice is sought on this request.
- 108 The board is asked to consider whether there is a strong enough case to collect data on carers in the ILR.**

Requests Requiring Changed Codes in Existing Data Fields

Changes to recording of Learner Support Reasons in field L34

Change Requests 10, 11 and 12

- 109 The LSC learner support directorate submitted three change requests for consideration for 2010/11. One of these, change request 11, was withdrawn as it had already been implemented in 2009/10.
- 110 Change Request 10 was a request to change the terminology used for code 32 in the Learner support reasons field, field L34 from career development loans to Professional and Career Development Loan.
- 111 Change Request 12 was a request that a new code be added to the Learner Support Reasons field, field L34 to allow the adult education bursary to be recorded on the ILR. This information will be used to assess participation, retention, achievement and progression of supported learners as well as to provide evidence of value for money.
- 112 No concerns have been raised during consultation about these proposed changes. They are in the main "housekeeping" changes and for these reasons the secretariat recommends that they are implemented for 2010/11.
- 113 The board is asked to agree to the change in terminology for Professional and Career Development loans and to the addition of a new code in field L34 to record the adult education bursary.**

Record Ministry of Defence Level 3 Entitlement

Change Request 21

- 114 The LSC funding policy team has requested that an additional code is added to the Source of Tuition fees field, field A57 to record learners whose tuition fees are paid by the Ministry of Defence (MoD). An MoD Command Paper in July 2008 announced that from 2009/10 all service leavers with over six years' service would have the opportunity to achieve their first full Level 3 qualification free from tuition fees. The funding for this is paid to providers through MoD and then reimbursed by the LSC.

- 115 The change will enable the identification of take-up of this entitlement and increased levels of accuracy for monitoring and audit purposes. It will also allow for the correct recharging of funds between the LSC and the MoD without developing a second reporting mechanism for MoD learners.
- 116 This identification would also enable any queries regarding the cross-funding of learners to be resolved with greater speed and accuracy.
- 117 No concerns have been raised during consultation about this proposed change and so the secretariat recommends that it is implemented for 2010/11.
- 118 The secretariat asks the board to agree to add a new code to the Source of Tuition fees field, field A57 to record those fees paid by the MoD in the circumstances given above.**

Recording of learners who have an S139A Learning Difficulty Assessment in the Additional Learning Support field, field L29

Change Request 45

- 119 The Learning and Skills Council (LSC) has requested that the ILR is changed to enable individuals with an S139A Learning Difficulty Assessment (LDA) to be identified. Following the MoG changes, all learners who have an S139A Learning Difficulty Assessment will be funded for their additional learning needs by the YPLA. This includes learners aged 19+ who have an S139A LDA. Other learners over the age of 19 who are assessed by the provider as needing additional learning support but do not have an S139A LDA will be funded by the SFA. An indicator is needed in the ILR to ensure that the learner is funded by the correct agency from 2010/11 onwards.
- 120 The secretariat propose to add a new category to the Additional Learning Support field, field L29 to identify those learners who have undertaken an L139A LDA, so that their additional learning support costs can be funded by the correct agency.
- 121 The secretariat asks the board to agree to the addition of a new code in the Additional learning support field, field L29 to identify learners with an S139A Learning Difficulty Assessment.**

Allocation of unassigned codes in some ILR fields

Change Request 32

- 122 The LSC funding team has requested an increased number of unassigned codes in certain fields to collect information about as yet unannounced new funding arrangements.
- 123 An identical request was considered last year by *the information authority* board and agreement given to the use of unassigned codes in the Reason for full funding/co-funding of learning aim field, field A14, and the Special projects and pilots field, field A49. These codes are used to identify conditions in management information which can be changed inexpensively or affect calculations in a pre-assigned way, and is already a standard arrangement.
- 124 The LSC has asked *the information authority* to re-consider allowing the use of unassigned codes in three other fields: the Eligibility for enhanced funding field, field L28; the Programme type field, field A15, and the Main delivery method field, field A18. The code values in these fields are used extensively in the validation of other fields and determine how LSC funding is calculated in the automated calculation processes integrated with the data collection system. The inclusion of any new code in these fields results in changes to algorithms in systems at the Data Service and providers.
- 125 Late allocation of codes would mean that the ILR specification would effectively not be finalised at the end of November and MIS software suppliers and the Data Service would not be able to begin work on their systems development. It would introduce a high level of uncertainty in the sector about the data requirements for the following year.
- 126 When the board considered this request last year it recorded that: “Although the board understood the pressures on the LSC from late advice of its statement of priorities, it stood by its original decision to provide more notice to the FE system of changes in the ILR in the interests of well planned change, improved data quality and most efficient use of resources. On an exception basis the board would look at specific requests for change outside the agreed timetable if there were a sufficiently strong case.”
- 127 No additional business case has been received by the secretariat to support any further change or to bring into doubt the decision made last year.
- 128 The secretariat recommends that unassigned codes are not made available in these fields.
- 129 The board is asked to confirm the decision made last year, to not include the use of unassigned codes in the Eligibility for enhanced funding field, field L28; the Programme type field, field A15, and the Main delivery method field, field A18.**

Introduction of a process to allocate unassigned codes in ILR fields

Change Request 33

- 130 The Learning and Skills Council (LSC) has requested the introduction of a process to assign values to unassigned codes in data systems, and for in year validation rule changes to enable this. Unassigned codes are available for use in fields such as the Special projects and pilots field, field A49 and the National learning aim monitoring field, field A46. They are mainly used to identify participation in new initiatives or programmes that are introduced in year. They are introduced without changing systems and at no extra cost.
- 131 At present all unassigned codes are enabled at the start of the academic year for use at any point during that year. They pass validation and are accepted by the data collection system. This means that any code can be used at any time by a provider, regardless of whether it has an assigned value. If a data user wishes to use one of the unassigned codes during the year, it must make a request to *the information authority* and provide details of the programme to be monitored. *The information authority* will then re-issue the specification to publicise that the code has been assigned to a particular initiative. Data collections systems are not updated during the year to indicate that the code has been assigned for use. There is currently no timetable for issuing unassigned codes and this could happen several times a year, at any stage in the year. It can often happen that new requests to use unassigned codes will be received the week following the publication of an updated specification.
- 132 The suggested proposal would introduce a timetable for release and publication of unassigned codes at regular intervals during the year. It also proposes that unassigned codes would remain inactive and unavailable to use until they have been unassigned. This would require the Data Service to introduce a process for switching on unassigned codes during the year within the data collections systems.
- 133 This change would enable the controlled release of previously unassigned codes. An agreed process for requesting the assignment of unassigned codes would increase transparency. A repeatable process and timetabled releases would allow changes to be published in a controlled manner, which would enable stakeholders to plan system changes more effectively. Unassigned codes would not be used incorrectly before they had been activated or without authorisation, as sometimes happens now.
- 134 The introduction of a process to enable in year authorisation and validation of additional monitoring codes would require significant changes to current systems. The Data Service were reluctant to commit themselves to make this kind of change to data collection systems without further information and an idea of how the 2010/11 systems will

be structured. The secretariat proposes to carry out further work with the Data Service to examine how this change could be best implemented and make a decision about whether this is a feasible option for 2010/11.

135 The board is asked to agree to further work being carried out on this proposal and for the secretariat to make a final decision about this request later in the year.

Identify learner breaks

Change Request 31

- 136 The Learning and Skills Council (LSC) would like to identify and map learner breaks in all learning provision. At present it is only possible to record learner breaks that occur within Employer Responsive provision despite the fact that these are equally likely to occur within any type of learning. A learner may take an agreed break in learning due to illness, maternity leave or other changes in personal circumstances. The development of the Qualifications and Credit Framework (QCF) encourages more flexible learning patterns as learners can store and accumulate credits, which can then be used at a later date to complete qualifications.
- 137 The ILR is currently inconsistent in the options available to record the Completion status field, field A34 and makes it impossible for providers to record the reality of a learner's situation when they are taking an agreed break in learning. One of the principles underlying data recording in the ILR is that providers should always record accurately what the learner is doing. This is not currently possible.
- 138 Unlike the employer responsive system, which funds learners monthly, based on their actual attendance, the other funding systems are not linked so dynamically to the learner. Therefore recording a break in learning would not currently change the way in which funding is paid to a provider under the learner responsive model. However the recording of this information could be used in such a way in the future if other funding streams were to follow the employer responsive model.
- 139 No concerns have been raised on **feconnect** during consultation about this proposed change. The Data Service indicated that this would require changes to current derived variables and MI views during the annual review and change process for these. The secretariat recommend that this change is made to the ILR from 2010/11 onwards.
- 140 The secretariat asks the board to approve the recommendation that the Completion Status field, field A34 is amended to allow the recording of learner breaks for all types of learning provision.**

Identify uncashed AS levels

Change Request 35

- 141 The Learning and Skills Council (LSC) and Ofsted would like to record AS Levels that are achieved but uncashed. Uncashed AS levels are those which have been sufficiently completed by the learner for a certificate to be issued but where the learner does not claim a certificate from the awarding body. This could occur for a number of reasons, such as the learner is hoping to improve their grade by re-sitting one or more units, or to avoid a low grade appearing on their UCAS application. Some providers have a policy of cashing in all AS levels for all students and in others the decision is left up to the learner.
- 142 One reason for this request is to align as closely as possible the methodology for success rates between School Sixth Forms (SSFs) and FE colleges. FE Colleges currently report all AS level achievements, both cashed and uncashed but these are not distinguished. If uncashed AS levels could be separately identified then the LSC could exclude them from their success rate methodology and this would enable the figures to be comparable with those from school sixth forms where they are not included. The LSC and Ofsted would like to exclude uncashed AS Levels from success rates from 2010/11 onwards. This is likely to have a significant impact (a rise) in the success rates for AS levels for many providers.
- 143 Additionally uncashed AS Levels are currently incorrectly being counted as achievements towards Level 3 PSA targets. This change would assist in improving the accuracy of PSA targets.
- 144 Consultation with providers indicates that they should be able to provide this data without too many problems as they already have to determine manually from individual module results whether or not a learner has passed or failed. However the general feeling amongst providers that responded (five in total) was that the FE sector should not have to change the way that it records AS levels to fit in with school sixth forms. There were concerns raised about the possible effect on the provider factor and possible software implications for those providers that automatically load results into their MI systems.
- 145 The secretariat is supportive of the aim to align the success rate methodologies between FE colleges and school sixth forms. It recognises that this requires a significant change in either the FE system or the schools system. In addition to this change request the LSC has been pursuing the option of making changes to the reporting of achievements from school sixth forms and there is a possibility that this may also take place. There is a risk therefore that a change made to the ILR to separate cashed and uncashed achievements may not be used for success rate purposes in the future and this is currently uncertain. Despite this uncertainty, this data would still be required in order to report accurately against PSA targets and for this reason the secretariat

recommends that achieved but uncashed AS levels are recorded in the Learning Outcome field, field A35.

- 146 The secretariat asks the board to approve the inclusion of a separate category of uncashed AS level recording in the ILR from 2010/11.**

Other Changes

Code amendment in field A14

Change Request 42

- 147 The West Midlands Regional Learning and Skills Council (LSC) has requested that code 12 (tax relief for vocational programmes) is removed from the Reason for full funding/co-funding of learning aim field, field A14 as it is no longer a valid category. The LSC funding team has confirmed that they do not use this code. No objections have been raised to the removal of this code during consultation on **feconnect**.

- 148 The board is asked to agree to the removal of code 12 from the Reason for full funding/co-funding of learning aim field, field A14.**

Increased validation of the Unique Learner Number

Change Request 23

- 149 The Learning and Skills Council (LSC) has requested that the Unique Learner Number (ULN) becomes mandatory and is validated against the Learner Registration Service. There are currently in excess of 55,000 invalid ULNs within the ILR returns, and this number is increasing as providers continue to return invalid data.
- 150 The ULN is currently required in the learner responsive and employer responsive ILR returns. If a provider is experiencing difficulties obtaining a ULN for a learner, they are not prevented from sending in their ILR record and can temporarily use the value of 9999999999. There is currently no time limit on how long this temporary number can be used. Providers returning data in the European Social Fund (ESF) Short Record, Adult Safeguarded Learning (ASL) and University for Industry (Ufi) ILR returns are encouraged rather than required to obtain a ULN for learners and can also use the temporary 9999999999 number.
- 151 Any ULNs returned in the ILR are validated for format against a modulus 11 check sum calculation. No further checks are carried out at the time of ILR submissions.

- 152 Stronger validation of the ULN in the ILR will result in more reliable matching of the ILR to other data sources, such as the Apprenticeship Vacancy Matching System and Skills Accounts. Where such matching is reliable it will enable better tracking of learners thereby opening up the potential to remove or reduce the use of data items in the ILR such as prior attainment or destination.
- 153 The secretariat notes that good progress is being made in issuing ULNs and increasing the number of learner records returned containing valid ULNs. Some issues have been identified with the data quality of the returns and this proposal is intended to put checks in place to help providers increase the validity and value of this data.
- 154 Following discussions and consultation with the LSC, Data Service and MIAP, it is proposed that the ULN validation is increased in the following ways:
- If the ULN returned on the ILR does not exist within the MIAP system (validated against a nightly download taken from the Learner Registration Service) and the learner started more than a specified period prior to the return date, for example 8 weeks, then the learner record would be rejected. If the learner started more recently and the ULN returned on the ILR does not exist on the MIAP system then a validation warning would be produced to inform the provider that the number needs to be checked.
 - Produce a warning message if the same ULN is used on more than one ILR record within the same ILR return from a provider.
 - Accept ULNs with 9999999999 and produce a warning to prompt the provider to obtain a ULN within a limited timeframe, for example, 8 weeks otherwise the learner record would be rejected.
- 155 The secretariat is therefore supportive of these changes and believes that they will increase the benefit of the ULN to the sector, allowing it to start to be used to its full potential in enabling systems to be joined together and reducing the data burden on providers. The secretariat has already been able to recommend that the board rejects two requests to change the ILR for 2010/11, because the ULN can be used to link systems together.
- 156 The secretariat asks the board to approve the increased validation of the ULN for 2010/11 as outlined above.**

Increased validation of the Employer Reference Number

Change Request 46

- 157 The National Apprenticeship Service (NAS) wishes to ensure that the Employer Data Service (EDS) number entered in the Employer identifier field, field A44 is valid. Increased validation will ensure the accuracy of the data entered. This will enable NAS to gain improved data about the types of employers currently being worked with and also help identify areas of business where Apprenticeships may be lacking. NAS has requested that the number entered in field A44 should be validated against the data held in EDS with invalid numbers causing a rejection of the learning aim record.
- 158 It is mandatory to include an EDS number in field A44 from 2009/10 for all employer responsive funded provision. The number entered is currently validated for format against a modulus 11 check sum calculation. There is also a check against an extract of the EDS database to ensure that the number entered exists on the database. If the number does not exist on the database extract then a validation warning is returned to providers. This currently does not reject the ILR record and providers can still send the learner record without amending the invalid number and it will be accepted.
- 159 The secretariat is supportive of increasing the validation of this data. By 2010/11 providers will have been recording the EDS number for all of their ER provision for a year and will have received warnings about any invalid numbers currently recorded. This will have given providers plenty of opportunity to cleanse and correct these errors.
- 160 To help providers easily obtain employer numbers from EDS, *the information authority* would like the LSC to enhance the EDS system to make a web service interface available to providers. This could then be integrated with their own MIS and enable employer data to be looked up easily and accurately. The secretariat is working with the LSC to encourage such developments and is a member of the EDS steering group.
- 161 The Data Service has already built an interface to EDS for 2009/10, which is refreshed on an overnight basis. It raised concerns about validation of inactive employers, which may for example have gone out of business where the employer number is legitimately still being returned in the ILR against completed learners. The secretariat would want to ensure that the processes in place for de-activating or removing employer data on EDS would not cause problems for future data returns, for example, when a provider sends in a final return for a year in November validly containing an employer number for an employer which ceased trading in January. The secretariat will work with LSC Train to Gain colleagues, who are the business owners of EDS, to ensure that the operational processes around inactive employers do not cause incorrect validation errors.

162 The secretariat asks the board to agree to the recommendation of increased validation of employer numbers against the EDS database for 2010/11, subject to adequate operational processes being in place for validation of inactive employers.

Changes to HE Data Set

Change Request 4

163 HEFCE has requested one change to the ILR for 2010/11, to update the coding frame used in the Highest qualification on entry field, field H11 to better monitor the qualifications on entry of students.

164 The ILR is aligned with the HESA Student Record on an annual basis to reflect any changes made to the Student Record. This change has already been implemented in the HESA specification for 2009/10.

165 In order for the HE and FE systems to share readily data about provision taking place in the other sector, it is important that the alignment of the FE and HE data collections is maintained. The secretariat therefore recommends that this change is implemented in the ILR for 2010/11.

166 The secretariat asks the board to approve the updating of the HE data set in line with the HESA specification.

Next Steps

167 Once the board has confirmed at this meeting which changes are to be implemented for 2010/11 the secretariat will confirm them to FE system stakeholders and incorporate them into the full specification by the 27 November 2009 as published in the timetable.

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Appendix A

ILR Specification for 2009/10

1. This Appendix summarises the structure and content of the ILR and is based on the ILR for 2009/10.

Formats of ILR data

2. There are four formats for ILR data, these are:
 - Learner Responsive (LR);
 - Employer Responsive (ER);
 - Adult Safeguarded Learning (ASL) and;
 - European Social Fund short record (ESF SR).
3. Each format of return is sent in a separate file and has its own set of required fields and return timetable.

Structure of the ILR

4. An ILR file comprises of up to three data sets for each learner. The three types of data set are:
 - a learner data set
 - a learning aim data set
 - HE data set
5. The ILR is made up of 148 fields, arranged into the three data sets. The full definition of the ILR and all the fields required for the three data sets can be found in the ILR Specification document which is available on the ILR documents section of the *information authority's* website at: http://www.theia.org.uk/downloads/ilrdocuments/ilrdetail2009_10.htm
6. A fourth data set, the ESF co-financing data set, was removed as part of the changes to the ILR for 2009/10.

Learner data set

7. In each return there is only one learner data set, for each learner on a programme of learning at a provider. The learner data set contains basic information specific to the learner such as their name, date of birth, sex and ethnicity.
8. Each learner data set has associated with it one or more learning aim data sets and these may have HE data sets associated with them, as shown in figure 1. These other data sets are linked to the learner data set. That is, the learner data set 'owns' these other data sets.
9. Providers should report all learning aims being followed by the learner.

Learning Aim data set

10. There is one learning aim data set for each learning aim that a learner is studying. A learning aim data set contains learning aim related information such as start date, end date, fee information and outcome. In addition for certain types of programme, a learning aim data set is

required to describe the programme being followed. This learning aim is known as the 'programme aim'. The programme aim contains information about the overall learning programme being followed and comprises a sub-set of data fields in a learning aim data set. The information in a learning aim data set relates specifically to the learner data set that owns the learning aim data set.

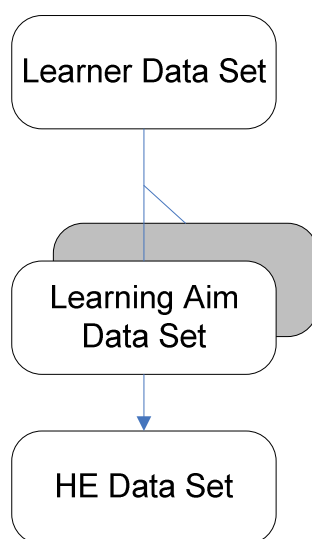
For example

- where a learner is studying three GCE A levels; there would be three learning aim data sets
- where a learner is studying on an NVQ and a key skill under Train to Gain; there would be two learning aim data sets
- where a learner is studying on an Apprenticeship programme comprising of an NVQ, three key skills and a technical certificate; there would be one programme aim data set and five learning aim data sets.

HE data set

11. For LR – if a learning aim data set for a learner is recorded as HEFCE funded and/or indicated as Level 4, Level 5 or HE level on the learning aim database (LAD), an HE data set is requested. An HE data set would need to be completed for each of the learner's learning aims where they were recorded as HEFCE funded and/or indicated as Level 4, Level 5 or HE level. These HE data sets are requested by HEFCE and HESA.
12. For ER, ASL and ESF SR – HE data sets are not returned.

Figure 1. Individualised Learner Record structure.



LEARNER DATA SET LAYOUT

No.	Field Name	Field Length	Field Start Posn	Field End Posn	Field type	Status (required for)
L01	Provider Number	6	1	6	Numeric	ALL
L02	Contract/Allocation type	2	7	8	Numeric	LR
L03	Learner reference number	12	9	20	alphanumeric	ALL
L04	Data set identifier code	2	21	22	Numeric	ALL
L05	Learning aim data sets	2	23	24	Numeric	ALL
L07	HE data sets	2	25	26	Numeric	ALL
L08	Deletion flag	1	27	27	Alphabetic	ER/ESF SR
L09	Learner surname/family name	20	28	47	Alphabetic	ALL*
L10	Learner forenames	40	48	87	Alphabetic	ALL*
L11	Date of birth	8	88	95	Date	ALL
L12	Ethnicity	2	96	97	Numeric	ALL
L13	Sex	1	98	98	Alphabetic	ALL
L14	Learning difficulties and/or disabilities and/or health problems	1	99	99	Numeric	ALL

LEARNER DATA SET LAYOUT

No.	Field Name	Field Length	Field Start Posn	Field End Posn	Field type	Status (required for)
L15	Disability	2	100	101	numeric	ALL*
L16	Learning difficulty	2	102	103	numeric	ALL*
L17	Home postcode	8	104	111	alphanumeric	ALL
L18	Address line 1	30	112	141	alphanumeric	ALL*
L19	Address line 2	30	142	171	alphanumeric	ALL*
L20	Address line 3	30	172	201	alphanumeric	ALL*
L21	Address line 4 (optional)	30	202	231	alphanumeric	ALL*
L22	Current postcode (optional)	8	232	239	alphanumeric	LR/ER/ASL
L23	Telephone number (optional)	15	240	254	alphanumeric	ALL*
L24	Country of domicile	2	255	256	alphabetic	LR/ER
L25	LSC number of funding LSC	3	257	259	numeric	ALL
L26	National insurance number	9	260	268	alphanumeric	ER/LR†
L27	Restricted use indicator	1	269	269	numeric	ALL*
L28	Eligibility for enhanced funding (occurs 2)	2	270	273	numeric	LR/ER
L29	Additional learning support	2	274	275	numeric	LR
L31	Additional learning support cost	6	276	281	numeric	LR
L32	Eligibility for disadvantage uplift	2	282	283	numeric	LR
L33	Disadvantage uplift factor	6	284	289	numeric	LR
L34	Learner support reason - other (occurs 4)	2	290	297	numeric	LR/ER
L35	Prior attainment level	2	298	299	numeric	LR/ER/ESF SR
L36	Learner status on last working day before learning	2	300	301	numeric	ER

LEARNER DATA SET LAYOUT

No.	Field Name	Field Length	Field Start Posn	Field End Posn	Field type	Status (required for)
L37	Employment status on first day of learning	2	302	303	numeric	ER/LR
L39	Destination	2	304	305	numeric	LR*/ER/ESF SR
L40	National learner monitoring (occurs 2)	2	306	309	numeric	LR/ER/ASL
L41	Local learner monitoring (occurs 2) (optional)	12	310	333	numeric	LR/ER/ESF SR
L42	Provider specified learner data (occurs 2) (optional)	12	334	357	alphanumeric	ALL
L44	NES/NAS delivery LSC number	3	358	360	numeric	ER#
L45	Unique Learner Number	10	361	370	numeric	ALL
L46	UK provider reference number	8	371	378	numeric	ALL
L47	Current employment status	2	379	380	numeric	ER
L48	Date employment status changed	8	381	388	date	ER
L49	Discretionary support funds (occurs 4)	2	389	396	numeric	LR

LR* - required for ESF co-financed or ESF matched projects only

LR† - only required for specific pilot projects

ER# - only for NES/NAS contracts

ASL*, ALL* - required for ASL only if learning aims total more than 10 GLH and started on or after 1 August 2009, required for continuing learners where aims total more than 30 GLH

LEARNING AIM DATA SET LAYOUT

No.	Field Name	Field Length	Field Start Posn	Field End Posn	Field type	Status (required for)
A01	Provider Number	6	1	6	numeric	ALL
A02	Contract/Allocation type	2	7	8	numeric	LR/ER

LEARNING AIM DATA SET LAYOUT

No.	Field Name	Field Length	Field Start Posn	Field End Posn	Field type	Status (required for)
A03	Learner reference number	12	9	20	alphanumeric	ALL
A04	Data set identifier code	2	21	22	numeric	ALL
A05	Learning aim data set sequence	2	23	24	numeric	ALL
A07	HE data sets	2	25	26	numeric	ALL
A08	Data set format	1	27	27	numeric	ALL
A09	Learning aim reference	8	28	35	alphanumeric	ALL
A10	LSC funding stream	2	36	37	numeric	ALL
A11	Source of funding (occurs 2)	3	38	43	numeric	LR/ASL
A13	Tuition fee received for year	5	44	48	numeric	LR/ASL
A14	Reason for full funding/co-funding of learning aim	2	49	50	numeric	LR/ER/ASL
A15	Programme type	2	51	52	numeric	LR/ER
A16	Programme entry route	2	53	54	numeric	ER
A17	Delivery mode	1	55	55	numeric	LR
A18	Main delivery method	2	56	57	numeric	LR/ER
A19	Employer role	1	58	58	numeric	LR
A20	Re-take	1	59	59	numeric	LR
A21	Franchised out and partnership arrangement	2	60	61	numeric	LR/ER
A22	Franchise and partnership delivery provider number	8	62	69	alphanumeric	LR/ER
A23	Delivery location postcode	8	70	77	alphanumeric	ALL
A26	Framework code	3	78	80	numeric	LR/ER
A27	Learning start date	8	81	88	date	ALL
A28	Learning planned end date	8	89	96	date	ALL
A31	Learning actual end date	8	97	104	date	ALL

LEARNING AIM DATA SET LAYOUT

No.	Field Name	Field Length	Field Start Posn	Field End Posn	Field type	Status (required for)
A32	Guided learning hours	5	105	109	numeric	LR/ASL
A34	Completion status	1	110	110	numeric	ALL
A35	Learning outcome	1	111	111	numeric	ALL
A36	Learning outcome grade	3	112	117	alphanumeric	ALL
A40	Achievement date	8	118	125	date	ER
A44	Employer identifier	30	126	155	alphanumeric	LR/ER
A45	Workplace location postcode	8	156	163	alphanumeric	LR (E2E)/ER
A46	National learning aim monitoring (occurs 2)	3	164	169	numeric	ALL
A47	Local learning aim monitoring (occurs 2) (optional)	12	170	193	numeric	LR/ER/ESF SR
A48	Provider specified learning aim data (occurs 2) (optional)	12	194	217	alphanumeric	ALL
A49	Special projects and pilots	5	218	222	alphanumeric	LR/ER/ESF SR
A50	Reason learning ended	2	223	224	numeric	LR/ER/ESF SR
A51a	Proportion of funding remaining	3	225	227	numeric	LR/ER
A52	Distance learning SLN	5	228	232	numeric	LR
A53	Additional learning needs	2	233	234	numeric	ER
A54	Broker contract number	10	235	244	alphanumeric	LR/ER
A55	Unique Learner Number	10	245	254	numeric	ALL
A56	UK provider reference number	8	255	262	numeric	ALL
A57	Source of tuition fees	2	263	264	numeric	LR
A58	ASL provision type	2	265	266	numeric	LR/ASL/ESF SR
A59	Planned credit value	3	267	269	numeric	ALL
A60	Credits achieved	3	270	272	numeric	ALL

LEARNING AIM DATA SET LAYOUT

No.	Field Name	Field Length	Field Start Posn	Field End Posn	Field type	Status (required for)
A61	Project dossier number	9	273	281	alphanumeric	LR/ER/ESF SR
A62	ESF local project number	3	282	284	numeric	LR/ER/ESF SR
A63	National Skills Academy	2	285	286	numeric	ALL
A64	Planned group-based hours	5	287	291	numeric	ER
A65	Planned one-to-one contact hours	5	292	296	numeric	ER
A66	Employment status on day before starting learning aim	2	297	298	numeric	LR/ER/ESF SR
A67	Length of unemployment before starting ESF project	2	299	300	numeric	LR/ER/ESF SR
A68	Employment outcome	2	301	302	numeric	LR/ER/ESF SR
			303	396	Space filled	

HIGHER EDUCATION DATA SET LAYOUT

No.	Field Name	Field Length	Field Start Pos.	Field End Pos.	Field type	Status (required for)
H01	Provider Number	6	1	6	numeric	HE
H02	Contract/Allocation type	2	7	8	numeric	HE
H03	Learner reference number	12	9	20	alphanumeric	HE
H04	Data set identifier code	2	21	22	numeric	HE
H05	Learning aim data set sequence	2	23	24	numeric	HE
H07	HE data set sequence	2	25	26	numeric	HE
H09	Student instance identifier	20	27	46	alphanumeric	HE
H10	Nationality	2	47	48	alphabetic	HE
H11	Highest qualification on entry	2	49	50	numeric	HE

HIGHER EDUCATION DATA SET LAYOUT

No.	Field Name	Field Length	Field Start Pos.	Field End Pos.	Field type	Status (required for)
H12	New entrant to higher education	1	51	51	alphanumeric	HE
H13	Type of instance year	1	52	52	numeric	HE
H14	Mode of study	2	53	54	numeric	HE
H15	Level applicable to Funding Council HESES	2	55	56	numeric	HE
H16	Completion of year of instance	1	57	57	numeric	HE
H17	Student instance FTE	5	58	62	numeric	HE
H18	Year of student on this instance	2	63	64	numeric	HE
H20	Major source of tuition fees	2	65	66	numeric	HE
H21	Term time accommodation	1	67	67	numeric	HE*
H23	Occupation code	4	68	71	numeric	HE*
H24	Last institution attended	8	72	79	alphanumeric	HE*
H31	Reason for ending instance	2	80	81	numeric	HE*
H32	Percentage not taught by this institution	5	82	86	numeric	HE*
H33	Percentage taught in first LDCS subject	5	87	91	numeric	HE
H34	Percentage taught in second LDCS subject	5	92	96	numeric	HE
H35	Percentage taught in third LDCS subject	5	97	101	numeric	HE
H36	Socio-economic indicator	1	102	102	numeric	HE
H37	Unique Learner Number	10	103	112	numeric	HE
H38	UK provider reference number	8	113	120	numeric	HE
H39	UCAS tariff points	3	121	123	numeric	HE*
H40	UCAS personal identifier	10	124	133	numeric	HE*
H41	UCAS application code	9	134	142	alphanumeric	HE*

HIGHER EDUCATION DATA SET LAYOUT

No.	Field Name	Field Length	Field Start Pos.	Field End Pos.	Field type	Status (required for)
H42	Special fee indicator	1	143	143	numeric	HE
H43	Learner FTE completed	5	144	148	numeric	HE
H44	NHS Bursary	1	149	149	numeric	HE
			150	396	Space filled	

* see individual fields for details

Appendix B

Timetable for Publishing the ILR Specification for 2010/11

Date	Event	Description
February 2009	Communicate change process	Communicate the timetable, process and criteria to the FE system. Invite requests for new or changed data and MI requirements.
March to June 2009	Initial requirements gathering.	Meet with FE system data and MI users to discuss their requirements. Start discussion through online community and stakeholder data advisory groups.
May to mid September 2009	Consult with providers and stakeholders on possible changes.	Meet with stakeholders. Discuss changes requested and options developed with; stakeholders; providers; and software suppliers. Change requests published on 2010/11 ILR Change Discussion forum for comment.
26 June 2009	Closing date for requests for change to the specification.	Stakeholders are encouraged to send requests as soon as possible and by 29 May 2009 where a change is known to be required. Sending requests as soon as possible increases the likelihood that a quality solution will be developed and implemented. The 26 June 2009 is the last possible day for sending a request for 2010/11.
4 September 2009	All changes full defined and authorised by appropriate governance groups.	Final date by which all changes must be confirmed in detail so that the paper to the board can be prepared and sent to it by 18 September 2009. All changes need to be authorised by the appropriate stakeholder governance groups.
30 September 2009	Obtain sign off from <i>the information authority</i> board.	<i>The information authority</i> board meets to confirm changes to the specification.
October 2009	Confirm 2010/11 ILR specification.	Publish summary of confirmed changes. Primary audience is software suppliers and providers that write their own software for returning ILR data.
27 November 2009	Publish 2010/11 ILR Specification	Publish on web site for use by stakeholders
29 January 2010	Publish 2010/11 ILR Validation Rules	Publish validation rules on web site for use by stakeholders. Validation rules may be incorporated into the specification published in November 2009.
March 2010	Publish provider support manuals.	Publish support manuals on web site for use by providers
August 2010	2010/11 ILR specification in use.	

Appendix C

Changes that are recommended for rejection, have been withdrawn or are not recommended for implementation in 2010/11

The following requests that were received for changes to the ILR specification for 2010/11 have not been recommended for approval. Twenty requests are recommended for rejection for the reasons listed below each request. Five requests have been withdrawn. Nine requests require further consideration or feasibility studies so will not be implemented in 2010/11.

ID 2a: Bringing forward the F01 collection date – requested by DCSF

- Initial discussion took place on this change request on **feconnect**, which led to the request being withdrawn for amendment. The change request was resubmitted with ID 2b and is being recommended for approval.

ID 3: Improving data collection on the education of young people in custody – requested by DCSF

A request was received from DCSF to record young offenders in the ILR to link ILR data for young offenders to the National Pupil Database (NPD) to enable the educational achievements of learners in Young Offender Institutions to be profiled and tracked.

The secretariat recommends the board rejects this change for the following reason:

- Learners in Young Offender Institutions (YOIs) can be and already are identified using the offender learning indicator in the National learning aim monitoring field, field A46 together with the Delivery location postcode field, field A23, in the ILR. This allows young offenders detained in a separate YOI to be identified. When the YOI is a unit within another prison, the learner's date of birth and age are also used to distinguish between other learners in the prison. No further identification is needed.
- The ULN should be used to link data from the NPD with ILR data for learner tracking.

ID 5: Monitoring all learners, rather than only LSC-funded learners – requested by BIS

A request was received from BIS to monitor all learners, including adult learners who pay the full cost of their learning undertaking education and training at LSC-funded providers, rather than only LSC-funded learners. This would provide a

more complete picture of the number of adult learners participating in FE and Skills.

- This change request requires a major change to the scope of the ILR collection.
- This data is already collected for learning that takes place in FE colleges.
- BIS agreed that the change was not needed in its current form, and partially overlapped with request ID 6.
- Further work is to be undertaken on this request during the coming year.

The board is asked to support further investigation of the request to monitor all learners for 2011/12.

ID 6: Fee waivers – requested by BIS

A request was received from BIS to change the ILR to improve data collected on the reasons why fees are waived, specifically to identify unemployed people in learning.

The secretariat recommends the board rejects this change for the following reasons:

- Fee waiver data is not designed to be used to inform details of employment status, nor is it reliable to do so.
- The secretariat is exploring with BIS how it may obtain the data it needs, and will consider this request further as part of request ID 7.

ID 9: Coding for ESOL courses – requested by BIS

A request was received from BIS to change the ILR to collect data on qualification level for ESOL courses, specifically entry level, to allow monitoring and reporting on the numbers and characteristics of ESOL learners across all levels.

- The entry level for ESOL qualifications is identified on the Learning Aims Database (LAD) therefore there is no need to collect additional data in the ILR.
- The secretariat has recommended that BIS request a change to reports from the Data Service. The Data Service has been alerted to this change request.

For those reasons the secretariat recommends the board rejects this change.

ID 11: Free Childcare for Learning and Training for Work – requested by LSC

- The LSC requested the current arrangements for recording 'Free Childcare for Learning and Training for Work' introduced in 2008/09 be extended to 2009/10 collections.
- This change request was subsequently **withdrawn** as the change was approved last year.

ID 15: Recording and generating payments for job outcomes via the ILR and associated funding and payment systems

The LSC requested changes to the ILR to record and generate payments for job outcomes via the ILR and associated funding and payment systems. Job outcome payments are currently made for some programmes, such as the Employability Skills Programme and other Skills for Jobs funded provision, this could be extended to mainstream funded provision by 2010.

- The exceptional requests for the 2009/10 ILR agreed by *the information authority* board in March 2009 introduced a new job outcome field (A68), which will capture the information required.
- Included in this list only for completeness.

ID 16: New field to collect 'relevant contributing credit' information – requested by LSC

The LSC requested the addition of a new field in the ILR to collect 'relevant contributing credit' to inform funding and performance measures. This would apply to all Qualification and Credit Framework qualifications.

- This change request was subsequently **withdrawn**.
- The change request will be revisited for the 2011/12 ILR, when more fundamental changes to support the Qualification and Credit Framework (QCF) are being planned.

ID 17: Identifying volunteers within Employer Responsive provision – requested by LSC

The LSC requested that providers delivering Train to Gain learning identify those learners who are eligible because they are volunteers.

The secretariat recommends the board rejects this change for the following reason:

- Eligibility for specific programmes is not collected on the ILR. It is the provider's responsibility to obtain and evidence this.
- The business case for this change request provided insufficient detail and the change would affect only 3000 learners nationally.

ID 20: Identify Embedded Skills for Life – requested by LSC

The LSC requested a change to the ILR to enable monitoring of embedded Skills for Life to inform future decisions on funding for this provision.

- This change request was subsequently **withdrawn** as there is no agreed definition of embedded Skills for Life.

ID 24: Identify partial achievement in L35 – requested by LSC

The LSC proposed the addition of two values in ILR field L35 (prior attainment level) to identify partial achievement at learner level for entitlement and funding purposes. The proposed values were 'Some credit at Level 2' and 'Some credit at Level 3'.

The secretariat recommends the board rejects this change for the following reasons:

- The change is not consistent with the purpose of the field, which is to monitor the level of prior attainment.
- The change is not consistent with the monitoring of government targets for full Level 2 and Level 3 qualifications and is not supported by BIS.

ID 25: Monitoring and tracking of Apprenticeship probation periods – requested by LSC

The National Apprenticeship Service (NAS) proposed that data should be collected to identify employees who undertook a probationary period when starting an Apprenticeship, and also the length of the probationary period.

The secretariat recommends the board rejects this change for the following reasons:

- It is not clear from the request what additional benefit would be obtained from knowing that a learner had undertaken a probationary period prior to starting the Apprenticeship.
- There is no clear definition of what would constitute a probationary period.
- The change request does not fulfil the criteria of supporting a key sector target or goal.

ID 26: Identification of Public Sector Apprenticeships – requested by LSC

The National Apprenticeship Service (NAS) requested a new field to identify whether the employer is public sector, private sector and charity/third sector, and therefore identify Public Sector Apprenticeships. This would enable NAS to monitor progression of two key government commitments:

1. The publicly-stated ambition to achieve parity between private and public sector Apprenticeships
2. To help meet the January 2009 announcement for extra Apprenticeships in the public sector.

The secretariat recommends the board rejects this change for the following reason:

- This information can be obtained from the Employer Data Service (EDS), which can be linked to the ILR using the employer reference, therefore there is no need to collect additional data in the ILR.

ID 27: Identification of Vacancy Matching Service (VMS) learners – requested by LSC

The National Apprenticeship Service (NAS) requested a new field to identify Vacancy Matching System (VMS) Learners.

The secretariat recommends the board rejects this change for the following reason:

- Data from the VMS can be matched with ILR data using the Unique Learner Number.

ID 28: Recording of entry level qualification – requested by LSC

A request was received from the LSC to change the ILR to collect data on entry levels for ESOL courses. This is similar to the request received from BIS regarding ESOL entry levels, request ID 9.

The secretariat recommends the board rejects this change for the following reason:

- The entry level for ESOL qualifications is identified on the Learning Aims Database (LAD) therefore there is no need to collect additional data in the ILR.
- The secretariat has recommended that BIS request a change to reports from the Data Service. The Data Service has been alerted to this change request.

ID 29: Taking account of nextsteps referrals – requested by LSC

The LSC requested a new field in the ILR to capture data on learners who have taken advice and been referred by nextsteps to undertake learning. This would enable tracking of learners through an Integrated Employment and Skills (IES) customer journey.

The secretariat recommends the board rejects this change for the following reasons:

- The ILR is not the best collection method, as it is not designed to record events prior to learning.
- The Unique Learner Number should be used wherever possible to track learners' journeys through the FE system.

ID 30: Mechanism to identify Apprenticeship framework pathways

The LSC requested that different pathways within an Apprenticeship framework were recorded on the ILR. This would enable different pathways within the same framework to be funded at different rates.

- There is no LSC commitment to implementing any funding changes based on such a change for 2010/11.
- There is no consistent national approach amongst sector skills councils (SSC) to identify pathways. At least one SSC has chosen to implement separate frameworks instead.
- The National Apprenticeship Service has not been consulted about these changes and their input and involvement would be central to ensuring a co-ordinated approach. They are broadly supportive in principle but would want to undertake further work with SSCs to ensure that a structure is put in place for agreement and publication of pathway information.
- This change request needs further work to be undertaken between the SFA and National Apprenticeship Service with the support of the secretariat.

The secretariat recommends the board rejects this change.

ID 37: Linking destination field to bonus payments based on employment status

The LSC requested a change to the ILR to link the Destination field (field L39) to bonus payments based on employment status. This would enable bonus payments to be triggered via the ILR rather than the Training Provider Statement.

The secretariat recommends the board rejects this change for the following reasons:

- The data collected in field L39 (destination) is not sufficiently reliable or complete to use it for any purpose with any confidence. Several attempts have been made to improve the quality of the data but none has been successful.
- The ILR is a poor vehicle for collecting destination data because:
 - It collects a single destination value
 - It collects this single destination value at a single point in time which is sometimes as little as three months after the learner leaves a provider. This contrasts with the Higher Education Destinations of Leavers From Higher Education Longitudinal Survey which collects about 14 variables relating to destination at up to three points after the learning is complete, that is at approximately 6, 18 and 30 months after the academic year ends.
- Collecting destination data is extremely expensive and likely to result in data of limited completeness and accuracy. This was identified in a study undertaken by the Responsive College Unit.
- It is already possible to identify employment outcomes through the ILR where there is a need to fund them.
- The LSC with help from providers is already collecting destination data through its Framework for Excellence learner destinations survey.
- Increasingly it is possible to identify learning destinations from data collected from providers using the Unique Learner Number.
- The Department for Work and Pensions, HM Revenues and Customs, and BIS are working together to develop a longitudinal database of learning and employment to better understand the relationship between learning and employment outcomes.

ID 38: Identifying learners who are on Young Apprenticeships or School Engagement Programmes – requested by LSC

The LSC has a requirement to identify learners on either 'young apprenticeships' or 'school engagement programmes' to improve the tracking and recording of these learners' destinations and progression. This information would be used to calculate whether the programmes represent 'value for money'.

The secretariat recommends the board rejects this change for the following reason:

- The learners engaging in these programmes will be enrolled at schools, and therefore their data is returned on the school census and not in the ILR.

ID 39: Identifying Employment Business employees – requested by LSC

The LSC requested a change to the ILR to identify learners who are eligible for Train to Gain (TtG), specifically to identify learners employed by an employment business who are working temporarily in a government organisation who would be eligible for TtG.

The secretariat recommends the board rejects this change for the following reasons:

- Eligibility for specific programmes is not collected on the ILR. It is the provider's responsibility to obtain and evidence this.
- The EDRS number of the employer business is already recorded in field A44 (employer identifier), which can be used to identify the nature of the employment business using the EDRS system.

ID 43: Additional code in field A15 (programme type) to identify programme-led Apprenticeships – requested by LSC

The LSC requested an additional code in ILR field A15 (programme type) to identify programme-led Apprenticeships.

The secretariat recommends the board rejects this change for the following reasons:

- There is no requirement for an additional programme type as programme-led Apprenticeships delivered in Learner Responsive provision are recorded using field A46 (national learning aim monitoring), and in Employer Responsive provision are identified via a derived variable.
- The use of field A15 to record programme-led Apprenticeships would not be consistent with the other programme type options available in this field.

ID 44: Mandatory use of UKPRN in field A22

The Learning and Skills Council (LSC) has requested that a UK Provider Reference Number (UKPRN) from the UK Register of Learning Providers (UKRLP) should be mandatory for ILR field A22 (franchise and partnership delivery provider number).

This request has already been approved by the board in 2008 for implementation in the 2010/11 specification. The request has therefore been **withdrawn**.

ID 54: Review of 2009/10 deferrals

The changes deferred from last year have been reviewed and there is nothing outstanding that has not been investigated in the development of the 2010/11 ILR.

ID 60: Increase learner name field length

The secretariat proposed to increase the length of field L09 (learner name) as there have been instances where the current 20 character length has not been sufficient.

The secretariat recommends the board rejects this change for the following reasons:

- The field length standard for Person Family Name used by MIAP and the UK Government Data Standards Catalogue is 35 characters. This is not consistent with the Information Standards Board (ISB) Aligned Data Definitions standard of 100 characters, which is the standard to which the secretariat has agreed to work.
- Increasing the learner name field length to 100 characters in the current fixed length text return would result in redundant space for the majority of learners. The proposed move to XML format returns will resolve this issue.
- The secretariat will work with other agencies to agree a consistent standard for the learner name field length.

The secretariat received a number of requests relating to collection of employment data and linkage to the benefits system to support the wider Integrated Employment Skills agenda. The collection of employment data in the current ILR structure is both limited and bureaucratic so further investigation work is required to establish the best collection method.

The board is asked to support further investigation of the following requests for 2011/12:

ID 7: Collection of wider employment data – requested by BIS

A request was received from BIS proposing data on employment status to be collected on a wider basis. This would enable the Department to monitor its policies aimed at key target groups in the labour market, particularly those who are unemployed or economically inactive.

ID 14: Identifying economically inactive learners who are not in receipt of benefits – requested by LSC

The LSC requested changes to the ILR to enable the identification of economically inactive learners who are not in receipt of benefits as Skills for Jobs funded provision that specifically targets this group will apply from 1 August 2009.

ID 49: Identifying learners claiming benefits, and type of benefit – requested by LSC

The LSC proposed changes to the ILR to identify learners who are in receipt of benefits, and the type of benefit, in a learner level field.

The LSC's commitment to the delivery of an Integrated Employment and Skills (IES) Service in partnership with the BIS, DWP and JobCentre Plus (JCP) is at the top of the Government's agenda from now to 2020. Those out of work, whether or not they are in receipt of benefit, are a key target group for the IES Service that aims to move people from welfare into work. It will be crucial to be able to identify benefit claimants who undertake LSC-funded provision under any funding stream, in order to determine impact measures and returns on investment for particular programmes.

The following requests will require further investigation and possible feasibility studies and cannot be resolved for 2010/11:

ID 50: Linking redundancy fields/ values to meet intervention programme changes and to limit the impact to the current Apprenticeship service – requested by LSC

The National Apprenticeship Service (NAS) proposed a change to the ILR which would link the redundancy fields/ values to meet changes to the intervention programme.

The exceptional changes to the 2009/10 ILR agreed by *the information* authority board in March 2009 were to expand "reasons for leaving" and current employment. As the NAS has matured some of its programmes over the past year,

it is now asking if the 2009/10 changes are fit for purpose and correct to meet future requests and directions, and as such a review is requested.

ID 51: Identification of Group Training Associations – requested by LSC

The National Apprenticeship Service (NAS) requested a change to the ILR to identify Group Training Associations (GTAs) and overtraining.

GTAs are groups made up of employers who join together to form an association (usually small businesses) to allow people to do Apprenticeships. The change request poses the question of whether is it feasible to monitor these groups at a cohort / organisational level, rather than at learner level.

ID 52: Removal of UPIN – requested by LSC

The LSC requested the removal of the UPIN from the ILR (fields L01 and A01, provider number) and move to the use of UKPRN.

ID 58: Review learner dataset – requested by the secretariat

The secretariat would like to review the ILR learner dataset to ensure that information requested from learners is necessary and relevant.

Appendix D

Independent Specialist Providers ILR Pilot – Submission to the Information Authority

Issue

The pilot project to test the feasibility of Independent Specialist Providers (ISP) submitting Individual Learner Records (ILR) is reaching a conclusion with all 13 of the pilot colleges successfully validating ILRs for some or all of their learners through the Data Service LIS verification tool. The IA previously directed that the results of the trial should be reported back before they took a decision to approve the expansion of the pilot to include all 56 ISPs in the sector.

Recommendation

It is recommended that as a result of the successful compilation of ILRs by all 13 of the colleges in the pilot project, the IA approve the expansion of the pilot into full implementation for all 56 ISPs

Background

The ILR is the principal metric for the calculation and allocation of funding to FE learning providers in England. ISPs service a complex and demanding section of the FE population; providing education and residential care to Learners with Learning Difficulties and/or Disabilities (LLDD) with the most complex of challenges. Currently, ISPs do not submit the ILR and their funding is calculated through a 'Matrix' which is entered into the LLDD database that sits outside of the main AMPS funding systems in the LSC.

There are currently 56 LSC funded ISPs and their information systems range from bespoke applications through in-house developed solutions to spreadsheets and hard copy manual forms. The ILR comprises 117 data fields and the cost and complexity for all ISPs to submit ILR was considered to merit central support. Consequently, a pilot group of providers was selected from a pool of volunteers to receive support from the LSC via consultants. The providers were selected to give a representative cross section of systems, size and geographic spread.

Aim

The aim of the pilot project was to determine if the ILR was an appropriate mechanism for ISPs to submit learner data to inform funding and other central decisions on the management of this section of FE provision.

Critical Success Factors

The pilot project had the following critical success factors:

Critical Success Factor
Demonstrate that ISPs can cost effectively submit an ILR.
Develop clear guidance and toolkit for all ISPs.
Demonstrate that ILR for ISPs can be integrated into LSC systems and processes.
Demonstrate that the ILR is an appropriate mechanism for submitting learner data for ISPs.

Key Problems Encountered

ISP Concerns on Funding

The ISPs have expressed strong concerns that the ILR does not reflect the full complexity of their learner needs and may result in a reduction in funding. LSC policy staff are aware of the limitations in this regard and are actively seeking to understand these and their effect on funding. However, a full submission of ISP ILRs will be required before the impact can be fully assessed.

Maintaining Momentum

ISP (and other stakeholder support) could be damaged if the momentum of the pilot is not maintained and ILRs from the pilot colleges are not collected in 2009/10. LSC policy staff and the project consultants have been working with the Data Service to understand and minimise the risks of pilot data corrupting other returns. It will also be necessary to feedback any results of ILR analysis to the ISPs to demonstrate that valuable and insightful information will result from submission.

Accreditation of Programme and Learning Aims

Not all ISPs have gained accreditation of their courses' learning and programme aims. Although this does not prohibit submission of the ILR, any subsequent analysis is devalued and the ISP data does not demonstrate the full value it is delivering to its learners.

Training and Further Support

At the beginning of the pilot the consultants held one to one meetings with each of the Pilot ISPs senior managers. The aim of these meetings was to set the context of the pilot and to identify the approach and support levels to be offered. Key to this was the principle of working with the ISPs to develop a critical friend approach. This consultative approach enabled the ISPs to identify their own challenges and develop their own solutions, with the support of the LSC and its consultants, which meant that the ISPs were far more engaged with the pilot progress.

Consultants in the project team have visited all of the pilot colleges at least 5 times and those with the greatest challenges were visited more often. Each visit included an element of skills transfer and informal training. Moreover, presentations to larger groups have been developed for an audience with no prior knowledge, such as the workshop for non-pilot ISPs held at the NATSPEC Conference. The consultants have also developed and tested a toolkit of documents and self assessment questionnaires that will be used with non-pilot ISPs to reduce the need for on-site support to the better developed ISPs.

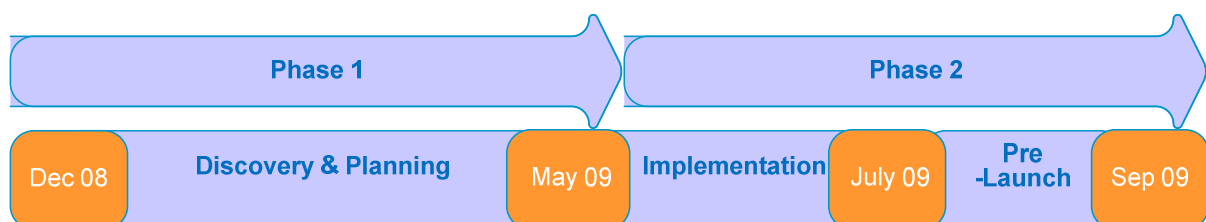
Stakeholder Support

Throughout the pilot the project team have received excellent support from the Chief Executive of the ISP central body, NATSPEC. Presentations on the ILR pilot have also been delivered to those ISPs not in the pilot cohort at the NATSPEC Annual Conference. The Data Service have provided valuable advice and support on the central collection of ILR data and LSC policy staff have responded positively and promptly to requests for guidance on the integration of ISP ILR data into the central decision making process.

We have no reason to believe that support for ILR submissions across all 56 ISPs will not be forthcoming, particularly as we have demonstrated that by using centrally funded consultancy support the costs are manageable within current ISP budgets.

Pilot Project Plan

The ILR Pilot Project has been delivered in 2 phases



Discovery and Planning

This Phase involved fact finding visits to each of the pilot ISPs followed by the development and completion of a comprehensive readiness questionnaire. The ISPs were then grouped according to need and plans for implementation were developed with each of the ISPs.

Implementation and Pre-launch

The project team worked closely with each of the pilot ISPs; the Information Communication and Technology (ICT) suppliers, the Data Service and LSC central and regional teams. A toolkit was developed for each provider that included:

- Project Initiation Document.
- Outline Business Case.
- Project Plan identifying key milestones.
- Risk and Issues Log.
- Selection of Learning Aims.

A central helpdesk was also provided and each ISP has had at least 5 on-site visits. Extensive use was made of the LIS application to verify that the integrity of the submissions created by the provider systems was sufficiently robust to be accepted by the Data Service. The key ICT providers, Databridge, Spectra (Hereward) and Tribal Maytas have all responded positively to requests and have upgraded their systems and/or provided additional services to ISPs at no additional charge.

Achievements

Critical Success Factors

Critical Success Factor	Achieved	Comments
Demonstrate that ISPs can cost effectively submit an ILR.	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The use of a centrally funded team to support ISPs and engage with suppliers and central agencies has supported the implementation of systems and processes that will enable ISPs to cost effectively submit ILRs
Develop clear guidance and toolkit for all ISPs.	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Throughout the Pilot a toolkit and guidance documents have been developed to assist the potential rollout of ILRs to all ISPs.
Demonstrate that ILR for ISPs can be integrated into LSC systems and processes.	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Pilot team have engaged with the LSC, Information Authority and the Data Service to ensure that the submission of an ILR by ISPs can be integrated into the current LSC systems and processes.• ILR pilot submissions will commence in October 2009 and will further demonstrate that

Critical Success Factor	Achieved	Comments
		ISPs can submit data in line with current LSC systems and processes.
Demonstrate that the ILR is an appropriate mechanism for submitting learner data for ISPs.	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The ILR provides a tried and tested model for submitting learner data by ISPs. However, in order to meet the distinct needs of Learners with Learning Difficulties and/or Disabilities, both within the ISPs and the FE wider community, the value of the data for all stakeholders would benefit from minor changes to the ILR.

Additional Added Value

In addition to the Critical Success Factors above, the methodology adopted by the project team examined the end to end process of ILR data collection and reporting, including; Capture, Verification, Storage, and Reporting. Most of the ISPs involved in the pilot have introduced more efficient and effective business processes that range from improved admission procedures to capturing data once and using it many times. Data integrity has also been improved through reduced manual collection, more effective verification and new validation processes.

For those ISPs with no MIS systems, a template business case has been developed to inform their decisions to purchase a system or use the services of another provider.