

This Month:

News from *the information authority*

- ILR change request consultation goes live
- Outcomes of first meeting with local authorities
- Feconnect hot seats
- Annual awareness and perception survey set to close
- ILR 2009/10 data quality – we need your case studies
- Changes to the arrangements for Collecting Final Learner Responsive ILR returns for 2008/09 and 2009/10
- EDS Number Input for 2009/10 ILR

News from the Data Service

- e-learning for providers – training update
- Latest Statistical First Release and supplementary tables published

News from the Data Harmonisation Group

- Changes to the Learner Responsive Qualification Success Rates (QSRs) methodology for 08/09

News from the further education sector

- DCSF announces new learning routes for 14-19 year olds

About us

- *The information authority*
- The Data Service

News from *the information authority*

ILR change request consultation goes live

The closing date for requesting changes to the 2010/11 Individualised Learner Record was Friday 26 June 2009 and we received 60 change requests in total. Those that met our criteria are being taken forward for consultation over the summer.

Please keep an eye out for these change requests, which will soon be published on *the information authority* website and on [feconnect](#) – our online community portal – where we will collect comments from colleagues in FE and training. These comments will help to shape the decisions made by *the information authority's board* when it considers the change requests in September. To keep in touch with the development of the 2010/11 ILR please subscribe to our [web alerts](#).

For full information on the process please see <http://www.theia.org.uk/ilr/RequestforChange>. If you have any queries, please email cst@theia.org.uk or telephone 024 7682 5658.

Outcomes of first meeting with local authorities

The information authority hosted its first meeting for local authority representatives with an interest in further education (FE) and training system data. The meeting took place in Coventry on Friday 24 July 2009 and was well attended, with over 30 local authority representatives coming along.

The main aim of the meeting was to give attendees the opportunity to discuss their data requirements and concerns ahead of the Machinery of Government changes, which will see local authorities taking on responsibility for the administration of funding arrangements for 16-19 provision. The group were also updated on MIAP, Framework for Excellence and the work of *the information authority* and the Data Service.

The key discussions of the meeting were around:

- Understanding of relationships between the various organisations and local authorities.
- Preparation for the Machinery of Government changes from April 2010.
- Comparing different approaches to the new process.

The meeting also provided an opportunity for colleagues from various local authorities to network and discuss the implications of the forthcoming changes. Initial feedback has been positive, with attendees finding it a useful day, and an opportunity to meet like-minded colleagues to exchange information

Copies of the presentations and minutes from the meeting will soon be available at: <http://www.theia.org.uk/meetings-events/advisory-stakeholder/localauthorities.htm>

Interested in attending?

If you would like to come along, or would like to be kept informed of the group's work, please email cst@theia.org.uk or call 024 7682 5658.

Feconnect 'hot seats'

Over the past couple of months, *the information authority* has put three key decision makers from the further education and training system into the Hot Seat. Our first guest was the authority's own chairman, [Graham Jones](#), followed by [Mike Davis](#), HMI, from Ofsted. Our trio of Hot Seat guests concluded recently with the LSC's Head of Information Planning, [Caroline Kempner](#).

Contributors on *the information authority's* online community portal, [feconnect](#), submitted questions for our guests to answer during the course of a week.

We are currently inviting guests for future Hot Seat events, which are due to start again after the summer break. Look out for updates in future issues of the Inform newsletter. In the meantime, if you have any further queries regarding the Hot Seat, or would like to suggest a future guest, please email cst@theia.org.uk.

Annual awareness and perception survey set to close

Have you had your say on *the information authority*?

We are about to finish conducting our second Perception and Awareness Survey and have had a good response so far from learning providers, data users and policy makers within FE and training to help us become more effective in setting and regulating data standards and collections – but there's still time for you to have your say.

The online survey will close on **Friday 7th August**, so please take the time to complete it and to forward it on to other colleagues who may find it relevant. The link to the survey is:

http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=ME_2fxeR_2fzT_2bUwpeTlcHh1pQ_3d_3d

ILR 2009/10 data quality – we need your case studies

In last month's issue of *inform*, we asked providers to volunteer as case studies to share examples of good practice in [individualised learner record \(ILR\)](#) data capture and collection with the rest of the sector.

There is still time to volunteer. So if your organisation has made notable improvements in particular aspects of your ILR returns then we'd like to share them with other providers to encourage improved quality and better practice.

Studies should ideally be no more than 1,000 words in length and will be credited to your organisation. We will provide a suitable format, and *the information authority* will pay your organisation reasonable expenses incurred in the production of the study up to a maximum of £250.

To register your interest in producing a case study for us, please send us the following information:

Name

Role

Organisation

Phone number

email address

And include details of the focus of your proposed case study.

Please send this information to [Nicholas Graham](#) at *the information authority* (tel: 024 7682 5855)

➤ Changes to the arrangements for Collecting Final Learner Responsive ILR returns for 2008/09 and 2009/10

We have written to learner responsive providers and awarding organisations to inform them of the changes to the timetable for collecting final learner responsive ILR returns for 2008/09 and 2009/10.

At its meeting on 10 June 2009 *the information authority* board decided:

- to confirm the hard close date for the final ILR for 2008/09 as 15 January 2010
- set the hard close date for the final ILR for 2009/10 as the fourth Monday in November 2010, that is 22 November 2010

Copies of letters to **learning providers** and **awarding organisations** are available to download on our website at: <http://www.theia.org.uk/News/LatestNews/f05letter.htm>

Recording the Employer Number for Apprenticeships in the ILR for 2009/10

For new Apprenticeship programmes that start from 1 August 2009, providers will need to record an employer number in field A44 of the ILR instead of the employer name. Existing data held in this field for Apprenticeships that started before 1 August 2009 does not need to be changed. The employer number can be obtained from the Employer Data Service (EDS) and the documents below provide information on how to access this service. If the employer is not registered with EDS then providers will need to register them in order to obtain an employer number.

 [Overview of Gaining Access to the EDS System](#) (448Kb)

 [EDS Registration](#) (137Kb)

From 2009/10 the ILR validation rules will check the number recorded in field A44 against the data held by the employer data service and a warning message will be produced if an invalid number is used in the ILR. This validation rule will only be implemented when ILR data is submitted to the data collection portal and not in the LIS.

Assistance and support about the registration of employers on EDS or obtaining employer numbers can be obtained via phone: 01242 545 346 (available 9am-5pm weekdays) and email: eds@bluesheep.com

News from the Data Service

e-learning for providers – training update

As part of the Data Quality initiatives, work on the Computer Based Training (CBT) package for Providers is now underway.

Following meetings and discussions with providers, which included representation from the LSC, FE Colleges and Training Providers, the first CBT module will focus on the ILR, the importance of submitting good quality data and the 2009/10 ILR changes. The CBT will act as a support tool to the ILR guidance manuals.

This module will also be road-tested by providers before it is launched, to gauge feedback. Working with key stakeholders, the Data Service will aim to launch this training module mid-September.

Further updates will follow in future issues of Inform.

Latest Statistical First Release and supplementary tables published

The Data Service has published its latest Statistical First Release (SFR) on Post-16 Education and Skills: learner participation, outcomes and level of highest qualification held.

The SFR shows the latest performance against the Department for Business, Skills and Innovation (BIS) Public Service Agreement (PSA) targets on adult attainment and apprenticeships.

It includes 2007/08 estimates of LSC funded participation, achievement and success rates for post-16 education in England. It also includes a part-year data for 2008/09 participation and achievement under the new demand-led funding system. This includes FE and Skills participation for the six months, skills for life participation and achievement data for the first six months and apprenticeship and Train to Gain starts and achievements for the first three quarters. It includes key statistics on the level of highest qualification held by adults in England from 2001 to 2008, taken from the Labour Force Survey.

Following the publication of the latest Statistical First Release (SFR) on Post-16 Education and Skills the Data Service has also published the supplementary tables.

The supplementary tables include equality and diversity breakdowns, as well as breakdowns by the Government Office Region, Parliamentary Constituency and Local Authority, these are available for:

- Overall FE and Skills participation and achievement - Train to Gain starts and achievements
- FE and Skills participation by level and provision type - Apprenticeship starts and achievements

To read the full commentary and access the Microsoft Excel tables please refer to the [Statistics section](#) of the Data Service website.

News from the Data Harmonisation Group

Changes to the Learner Responsive Qualification Success Rates (QSRs) methodology for 2008/09

The calculation method for Learner Responsive success rates is being changed for 2008/09 – as agreed at the recent meeting of the Data Harmonisation Group.

One of the key drivers for the change in the calculation of success rates arises from the introduction of demand-led funding in 2008/09. A key element of the changes, which has an impact on success rates, is the definition of a start date for learners for funding purposes.

For 2008/09 this means a change from the traditional approach based on specified census dates, to one based on the amount of time a learner must remain on programme (six weeks for programmes of at least 24 weeks, and lower periods for shorter courses).

Chair of the Data Harmonisation Group, Lesley Davies (LSC), said: "We're pleased to be able to provide this advice to providers. The change will simplify the process, ensuring consistency between the definition of learner 'start' dates used for funding, and those used for assessing quality of provision."

The expectation is that the success rate results in 08/09 will be broadly comparable with previous years, taking all factors into account. The Harmonisation Group expects the quality of provision to continue to increase as per the trend over previous years and it also expects some change from the introduction of demand-led funding. However, the full impact of any changes nationally and locally (at provider and subject area level) won't exactly be known until the 08/09 data has been analysed following submission of full year data (F05).

Careful consideration is currently being given to producing detailed guidance for Ofsted inspectors and others, so that they take the change in methodology into account when assessing performance. This will assist with the process of monitoring performance over time and ensure that informed judgements are made on a 'like for like' basis.

To find out more visit <http://www.theia.org.uk/harmonisingsuccessrates/methodologies/>

News from the further education sector

DCSF announces new learning routes for 14-19 year olds

Employers and universities have been calling for some time for better prepared recruits with the right type of skills, knowledge and experience. In addition, many people have been confused by the sheer range of different qualifications available to young people and have often been unclear about their educational value.

Recognising that the education system needed updating, the Government has started to introduce a clear set of learning routes for 14-19 year olds, which will incorporate a mixture of revised and new qualifications and ensure that all young people leave this stage of their learning with the skills and knowledge essential for future success.

From 2013 a new set of entitlements will be in place for learners from age 14 up. This includes the Diploma, a new qualification which combines classroom learning with practical hands-on experience.

Apprenticeships are increasing in number to cover more sectors and the Foundation Learning Tier, which provides a comprehensive range of progression pathways for students who are not yet ready for Level 2 qualifications, is now being piloted.

Finally, A levels and GCSEs have been made more robust and challenging. Flexibility is built in, with programmes sufficiently broad for learners to change at key points, moving from GCSEs onto a Diploma or an Apprenticeship, for example, or from a Diploma onto A levels.

The new choices for learners will support the first increase in the age at which young people leave compulsory education for many years; from 2013 learners will stay in education or training until the age of 17 and from 2015, until 18. FE institutions can expect to see a significant increase in the number of students enrolling, as they transfer from schools to complete their study

Further details on the 14-19 reform can be found at the [DCSF website](#).

About us

The information authority

The information authority was established in October 2006 to set and regulate data standards for all organisations involved in further education and training in England.

The authority has a decision-making board headed by an independent chairman and made up of senior representatives from across the education and training system in England. This is supported by a small operational secretariat.

The Data Service

The Data Service was established in April 2008 to collect and disseminate information as the first single source of data for the further education system in England. It will work closely with *the information authority* to streamline and improve the way information is collected and shared. Key principles of the service are to eradicate duplication; improve collection and sharing; increase efficiency; assure quality and; provide new levels of customer service.

Funded primarily by the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) and supported by the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) at its inception, the new separately managed organisation will have developed by 2011 into a fully operational service provider working in the interests of the sector as a whole.



To find out more about *the information authority* and the Data Service, visit:

www.theinformationauthority.org.uk
www.thedataservice.org.uk