

**Department for Innovation Universities and Skills and Department for Children Schools
and Families**

**Final Report
Review of Post-16 Learner Statistical First Releases**

May 2008

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1. Introduction

- 1.1. In September 2007, PricewaterhouseCoopers was commissioned by Department for Innovation Universities and Skills (DIUS) and Department for Children Schools and Families (DCSF) to review ten Statistical First Releases (SFRs) relating to post-16 learning. The review was instigated in response to:
- Frustration with the slow rate at which SFR's (those published by the LSC in particular) had historically responded to changes in strategic policy direction
 - Concerns that the early participation numbers SFR published by the LSC did not accurately reflect the final rate of change in learner volumes, although it was sometimes used as if it did.
 - A general sense that a more holistic picture of 16+ learning and achievement could and should be presented in the suite of SFR's (in particular those produced by DIUS and LSC) than is currently the case.
- 1.2. In addition, it is good practice to review National Statistics products at least once every five years.
- 1.3. The review involved some thirty qualitative interviews, mainly with experienced users of the data inside and outside government, supplemented with interviews conducted by the LSC amongst those of their own staff who were key users of SFRs. In addition, a detailed desk review was conducted of each of the ten SFRs, the October 2007 Public Service Agreements published by HM Treasury, the November 2007 LSC Grant Letter, relevant policy documents such as the Leitch review of skills, and other material such as the National Statistics Code of Practice and the proposed new Code of Practice published by the Statistics Commission¹.
- 1.4. The eight objectives for the study were:
- Objective 1: Identify any overall gaps in the SFR suite, as well as areas where there are concerns about consistency of reporting similar material in different publications;
 - Objective 2: Consider the timeliness of publications and how well the content and presentation of publications matches departmental objectives and reflects new policy developments such as the introduction to Train to Gain;
 - Objective 3: Consider how government targets are reported on in the publications;
 - Objective 4: Meet the needs of the wider statistical community and users, not just the needs of the Department/LSC;
 - Objective 5: Give consideration to dropping or replacing existing publications, bringing together some existing publications to tell a coherent story on a specific issue as well as changing the content of existing publications;
 - Objective 6: Take account of recent Machinery of Government changes;
 - Objective 7: Take account of the need for independence; and

¹ HM Treasury (2007) *Meeting the aspirations of the British people: 2007 pre-budget report and Comprehensive Spending Review*, Cm 7227, London: The Stationery Office; LSC Grant Letter: 2008-09, 16th November 2007; Leitch (2006) *Prosperity for all in the global economy – world class skills, final report*, Leitch Review of Skills, December 2006; Statistics Commission (2007), *Proposals for a Code of Practice for Official Statistics*, report no. 35, October 2007.

- Objective 8: Translate the results of the user consultations into a series of recommendations on the changes needed.

1.5. The ten post-16 SFRs under review (numbered from 1 to 10 for ease of reference) were:

The post-16 Statistical First Releases

Number	Title	Producer
SFR1	Participation in Education, Training and Employment by 16-18 year olds in England: 2005 and 2006 and Participation in Education and Training by 16 and 17 year olds in each Local Area in England 2004 and 2005.	DCSF
SFR2	Level 2 and 3 Attainment by Young People in England Measured Using Matched Administrative Data: Attainment by Age 19 in 2006 (Provisional).	DCSF
SFR3	Vocational Qualifications in the UK: 2005/06.	DCSF
SFR4	Awards of Key Skills Qualifications: 2005/06.	DCSF
SFR5	The Level of Highest Qualifications held by Adults: England 2006.	DIUS
SFR6	GCE/VCE A/AS and Equivalent Examinations Results in England 2005/06 (Revised).	DCSF
SFR7	Further education, work based learning for young people, train to gain and adult and community learning – learner numbers in England – October 2006.	LSC
SFR8	Further education, work based learning and adult and community learning – learner numbers in England 2005/06.	LSC
SFR9	Further Education and Work Based Learning – Learner Outcomes in England: 2005/06.	LSC
SFR10	The Activities and Experiences of 18 Year Olds: England and Wales 2006.	DCSF

1.6. This Report is structured as follows:

- Section 2 sets out a summary, the main themes from our work;
- Section 3 sets out a summary, our 26 recommendations, grouped under 9 heads; and
- Section 4 sets out the recommendations once more, but with supporting arguments and evidence for each.

1.7. In addition, the Report contains a number of Appendices:

- Appendix A: Methodology;
- Appendix B: Understanding the SFR customer base;
- Appendix C: Appraisal of Post-16 SFR suite;
- Appendix D: Policy context, and mapping of targets and indicators relevant to post-16 learning;
- Appendix E: Statistics and the Code of Practice; and
- Appendix F: LSC Review.

2. Themes - Executive Summary

- 2.1. The consultations and desk research/analysis of the Statistical First Releases (SFRs) highlighted the following general themes, issues and problems which, given the concerns with LSC/DIUS SFRS that prompted the review, tend to focus more heavily on the SFRs produced by these two organisations :
- 2.1.1. There is scope to increase the policy focus, relevance and context of SFRs, better aligning them to PSA targets and delivery plans, as the current suite of SFRs could be more effective in this area.
 - 2.1.2. There are gaps in the current LSC SFRs, such as reporting on key PSA targets (Skills for Life and Apprenticeships) and more explicitly reporting on LSC Delivery Plan commitments which need to be addressed.
 - 2.1.3. The current suite of DIUS/LSC SFRs could be enhanced and complemented by other products (such as compendium publications) to tell a more coherent and holistic story about the Further Education Sector
 - 2.1.4. Steps need to be taken to ensure that new policy initiatives and measurement frameworks (such as Train to Gain, or the recommendation by the Apprenticeship review to measure performance primarily in terms of starts and completions) are included in the suite of SFRs at the earliest opportunity, in order that they remain policy relevant.
 - 2.1.5. A key feature of SFRs is to place statistics on the public record in order to inform debate and allow Parliament and the wider Public to hold the Government to account for the delivery of policy and expenditure of public funds. The frequency, content and presentation of the DIUS/LSC SFRs could be improved to better support this function.
 - 2.1.6. SFRs have not yet fully taken account of Machinery of Government changes.
 - 2.1.7. There is inconsistent presentation of statistics across SFRs – different geographies, age groups, ethnic groupings etc. Availability of lower level disaggregation of the statistics is patchy, and can be difficult to find. This needs to be addressed.
 - 2.1.8. Accessibility could be improved - generally, the SFRs are both difficult to find, and to understand given their complex nature.

3. Recommendations – Executive Summary

3.1. Improve the policy focus, relevance and context of SFRs, better aligning them to PSA targets and delivery plans.

3.1.1. **Recommendation 1:** SFRs should clearly and more explicitly report progress against Public Service Agreement (PSA) Targets and Delivery Plans (notably LSC Grant Letter plans). Reporting in this way will give a stronger link to policy context. But targets and plans change from year-to-year so a balance is needed between reporting on current targets/plans and retaining consistent time series.

3.1.2. **Recommendation 2:** Despite the need for an increased policy and target focus, it is important to maintain the integrity and independence of the SFRs, in line with the National Statistics code of practice and protocols, and to ensure that they continue to present a more general statistical overview of the sector.

3.2. Addressing key gaps

3.2.1. **Recommendation 3:** Fundamental gaps - where PSA Targets and Delivery Plans are not covered at all in any of the SFRs - should be addressed. In particular, to measure progress the Skills for Life PSA target.

3.3. Telling a more coherent and holistic story about the Further Education Sector

3.3.1. **Recommendation 4:** Consideration should be given to collating and publishing all post-16 SFRs in one place. This should include consideration being given to the new FE Data Service producing a post-16 annual compendium containing data from all the SFRs, or the development of a post-16 section in the existing 'Education and Training Statistics for the UK.'

3.3.2. **Recommendation 5:** SFRs should take figures from multiple data sources to present a more coherent story of 'flows' of learners and qualifications adding to the 'stock' of qualifications and skills. This particularly applies to SFR5 (The Level of Highest Qualifications held by Adults).

3.3.3. **Recommendation 6:** However, whilst SFRs should strive to combine multiple data sources, a balance must be achieved between timeliness and coherence. That is to say that SFR timetables will continue to be driven predominantly by the availability of key datasets, and that publication timetables should wait no more than a few weeks for up-to-date figures from other supporting sources, where it is judged that the benefit that their inclusion brings to the user justifies such a delay.

3.3.4. **Recommendation 7:** LSC SFRs should paint a holistic and coherent picture of the wider Further Education Sector. This should be widening the focus from Government funded learning to include other forms of learning where appropriate, and data is available. To this end, consideration should be given to making more use of data sourced from awarding bodies as a way of including qualifications funded from other sources.

3.4. Earlier inclusion of new policy initiatives and measures

3.4.1. **Recommendation 8:** SFRs should quickly take account of, and include, both new policy initiatives and new measuring conventions (recent examples being Train to Gain, Diplomas and Apprenticeship starts and completions agreed through the Apprenticeship Review). Mechanisms (such as formal Memoranda of Understanding) should be put into place to ensure that this happens.

3.4.2. **Recommendation 9:** Analysts producing SFRs and their policy/delivery colleagues should commit to working more closely so that there is a wider understanding of, and engagement with, new policies, initiatives and measures.

3.5. Better informing debate, and enabling Parliament and the wider public to hold the Government to account for delivery of policy in a more timely fashion

3.5.1. **Recommendation 10:** Whilst the structure and frequency of the DCSF SFRs were, in the main, felt to be fit for purpose by the user community, we recommend that DIUS and LSC should build on existing quarterly internal MI reports to develop quarterly SFRs, each covering the range of LSC funded learning (FE, WBL, TTG, etc) and both participation and achievement – including LFS data where possible.

3.5.2. **Recommendation 11:** Where possible, the LSC SFRs should not be so firmly linked to the FE collection timetable and should include participation and achievement data side by side rather than across different SFRs.

3.5.3. **Recommendation 12:** With more frequent LSC SFRs, there should be a clearer distinction between provisional and final data. If quality criteria are met, provisional data can be used but should be clearly marked as such– with final data being released at a subsequent and timely juncture thereafter where it is deemed appropriate and beneficial to do so

3.5.4. **Recommendation 13:** SFRs should continue to be produced in as timely a fashion as is possible. Whilst the time taken for the compiler to produce the SFR on receiving data is generally no more than a few weeks, consideration could be given shortening the time it takes to the SFR compiler where it is possible and appropriate to do so. In support of this, DIUS, DCSF and LSC should initiate a review of collection, quality assurance and production processes of LSC SFRs to identify and implement improvements in timeliness (in particular, in relation to qualification attainment data).

3.6. Further review of particular SFRs, in particular to take better account of Machinery of Government changes.

3.6.1. **Recommendation 14:** DIUS, DCSF and LSC should initiate work on options for more radical changes to the way that data on 14-19 year olds is covered in SFRs in light of recent Machinery of Government changes.

3.6.2. **Recommendation 15:** In recognition of the Machinery of Government changes, SFRs should include Young People/19+ splits throughout.

3.6.3. **Recommendation 16:** As SFRs become more focussed on PSA Targets and Delivery plans, and less single sourced, consideration should be given to dropping Key Skills and Vocational Qualifications SFRs, with information from them (particularly on non-government funded learning and achievements) being incorporated elsewhere in the suite of SFRs.

3.7. Improvement of consistency and presentation.

3.7.1. **Recommendation 17:** Improvements should be made to SFR titles, text and tables across the entire suite to make them clearer - plain English should be used throughout.

3.7.2. **Recommendation 18:** Consistent demographic and learning breakdowns should be used across the SFRs where possible across the entire suite. Also, where possible, time series contained in the SFRs should be consistent in terms of length

and years.

- 3.7.3. **Recommendation 19:** Greater use should be made of maps and charts to aid understanding.
- 3.7.4. **Recommendation 20:** Every SFR should provide text and data for England. Where there is a policy reason and the data are available, text and data can be provided for the other UK countries, GB and UK. Where an SFR does not cover UK, links should be provided to sites where information on other nations and on the UK can be found.
- 3.7.5. **Recommendation 21:** Local data should be provided for each of the SFRs wherever possible (allowing for factors such as data robustness due to sampling variation). The likely volume of such local data if made available would normally require that the tables are provided as Additional Information rather than in the SFRs themselves.

3.8. Improved accessibility

- 3.8.1. **Recommendation 22:** The SFRs should primarily focus on the publication of headline statistics, with detailed breakdowns (e.g. demographic and geographic) being updated less frequently, and presented as a supplement to the SFRs as Additional Information, via a tabulation tool/dissemination portal or in a compendium publication. Spreadsheet versions of all tables within SFRs should also be made available.
- 3.8.2. **Recommendation 23:** When publishing SFRs and additional information, full use should be made of the new National Statistics publication hub.
- 3.8.3. **Recommendation 24:** DIUS should ensure that plans for the new FE Data Service include dissemination and publication of SFRs.

4. Recommendations – Evidence and Rationale

4.1. Recommendations to improve the policy focus, relevance and context of SFRs, better aligning them to PSA targets and delivery plans.

Recommendation 1: SFRs should clearly and more explicitly report progress against Public Service Agreement (PSA) Targets and Delivery Plans (notably LSC Grant Letter plans). Reporting in this way will give a stronger link to policy context. But targets and plans change from year-to-year so a balance is needed between reporting on current targets/plans and retaining consistent time series.

Evidence from desk research

4.1.1. There are significant gaps in the existing suite of SFRs. In particular, they do not provide all of the data required to assess progress against Public Service Agreement (PSA) indicators relating to post-16 learning, and the associated indicators outlined in the Leitch review and the LSC Grant Letter. In our judgment, progress can be assessed against just 17 of the indicators out of a total of 46 through the ten SFRs. Most of the gaps relate to new PSA targets, such as those for reducing inequality. While SFRs can scarcely be criticised for failing to report against targets that have only recently been announced, there is nonetheless a case for bringing the SFRs in line with the new PSAs.

Coverage of targets and indicators in the current suite of SFRs

Target or indicator	Covered effectively in current SFRs		
	Number	Number	Percentage
<u>Planned learner numbers from Annex C to the LSC Grant Letter</u> Analysed into 22 overlapping groups (excluding Academies)	22	4	18%
<u>Official PSA indicators and similar:</u> 15 PSA indicators (including the key Leitch targets), supplemented by four quantitative indicators from the text of the LSC Grant Letter and by five 'Key PSA Related Outputs' from Annex C to the Grant Letter, <u>24 in all comprising:</u>			
<u>14</u> indicators on which reporting might reasonably be expected within the current suite of SFRs	14	10	71%
Sub-Total	36	14	39%
<u>10</u> indicators on which there is no compelling reason to expect reporting within the current suite of post-16 SFRs: those relating to HE (but to which LSC must contribute), to new measures, principally aimed at reducing inequality, and to 14-16 learning.	10	3	30%
Total	46	17	37%

Evidence from consultation

4.1.2. A number of senior departmental stakeholders felt particularly strongly that alignment to PSA and other delivery targets was important from the point of view of monitoring delivery against policy priorities. PSA targets clearly focus the activities of departments, Ministers and senior officials and there was clear evidence of frustration amongst senior stakeholders that the necessary data to monitor progress was not always available in SFRs.

Argument

4.1.3. In our view the SFRs should offer a clear reporting structure against PSA and other important targets. For every target figure, there should in principle be an outcome figure available within the SFRs. Each SFR should identify early in its text section the specific PSA and other indicators on which it is reporting. SFRs are, of course, reporting on past activity and achievements, whereas PSA and other delivery plans are setting targets for the future. It will therefore often be the case that past data are not available in the same format, categories and breakdowns as new and future targets are described. Given this, many stakeholders (particularly the steering group) agreed that a balance is required.

Recommendation 2: Despite the need for an increased policy and target focus, it is important to maintain the integrity and independence of the SFRs, in line with the National Statistics code of practice and protocols, and to ensure that they continue to present a more general statistical overview of the sector.

Evidence from consultation

4.1.4. The National Statistics status of SFRs was widely regarded as important. There was (recalling that our interviewees were primarily people closely acquainted with statistics) a recognition that the National Statistics label does not guarantee perfect accuracy - because of factors such as sampling variation or because of poor data accuracy or incompleteness of collection. Similarly, it was recognised that management information might be very accurate even though not having National Statistics status. However, the point is that those quoting or relying on National Statistics see themselves as using the best and most authoritative data available and as being less vulnerable to criticism than if they had used less authoritative sources.

Argument

4.1.5. The separate recommendation to report against targets and delivery plans should not in any way be interpreted as compromising the independence of National Statistics. Reporting should continue to be purely objective and should not comment on the suitability and appropriateness of the targets themselves. We have no reason to doubt that the existing SFRs comply with the National Statistics Code of Practice, including the integrity principle within the Code.

4.1.6. Similarly, our recommendations or any suggestions from consultees do not threaten independence or integrity, or indeed on compliance with any other principle within the current or proposed codes of practice. It is, however, important to avoid any accidental infringement. For this reason we feel that it is especially important to maintain the current SFR approach of factual commentary on data and to ensure that they continue to present a more general statistical overview of the sector, rather than an approach that, for instance, incorporates judgments about the success or failure of individual policies.

4.2. Addressing key gaps in existing SFRs.

Recommendation 3: Fundamental gaps - where PSA Targets and Delivery Plans are not

covered at all in any of the SFRs - should be addressed. In particular, to measure progress the Skills for Life PSA target.

Evidence and argument

4.2.1. A number of senior departmental stakeholders and other SFR users identified particular PSA areas that are not covered by SFRs. Additionally, this was a strong theme from the detailed mapping exercise which set SFRs alongside PSA targets. The main PSA gap is for Skills for Life. The first of the Leitch Review targets is for 95% of adults to achieve the basic skills of functional literacy and numeracy by 2020. As part of its plan to achieve this, Government (through PSA2, Indicator 1) intends that 597,000 people of working age should achieve a first level 1 or above literacy qualification and 390,000 should achieve a first entry level 3 or above numeracy qualification within the next three academic years. There is at the moment no method of monitoring progress against this Skills for Life target through the SFRs.

4.3. Telling a more coherent and holistic story about the Further Education Sector.

Recommendation 4: Consideration should be given to collating and publishing all post-16 SFRs in one place. This should include consideration being given to the new FE Data Service producing a post-16 annual compendium containing data from all the SFRs, or the development of a post-16 section in the existing 'Education and Training Statistics for the UK.'

Evidence from consultation

4.3.1. The review has shown that some users find it difficult to track down the SFRs on the internet, even if they are aware of their existence. In addition, some users say that it is difficult to assemble a full suite and difficult to obtain a comprehensive picture of post-16 learning in England. Although we spoke to only a few experienced users of SFRs outside the Departments/LSC, they strongly supported views of this kind. A single volume of information along the lines of Regional Trends or Social Trends is an attractive idea, though it would need to be in addition to continuing publication of SFRs.

4.3.2. Our consultees regretted that there was no holistic and easily accessible picture of the sector. This conclusion was sometimes qualified by comments to the effect that SFRs have to be released as soon as practicable and if this requirement means that there must be ten SFRs each covering a different aspect of the sector, then it would be unreasonable to expect any one to offer a holistic picture. But consultees making this point emphasised that an annual summary picture would be a helpful addition to the SFR analysis (provided that benefits to users could be shown to outweigh any extra cost) and that the ten SFRs should, collectively, also be able to provide a holistic picture, implying that wherever possible inconsistencies of presentation from one to another should be eliminated.

4.3.3. In the view of our consultees, which we share, a comprehensive overview of post-16 learning in England would be a valuable resource and although the costs of provision might be significant, they would by no means be disproportionate given the economic importance of the sector and the enormous scale of public expenditure on it.

Evidence from desk research

4.3.4. It is difficult to paint a holistic picture of post-16 learning in England using the SFRs; not only are there ten SFRs, but some do not distinguish England from larger geographies. It is difficult, for instance, to paint a picture of post-16 learning

in the Eastern region, or for men compared with women, because some SFRs analyse by variables such as region, gender, ethnicity, whilst others do not. Even where analysis is available across SFRs, the exact basis frequently differs - for instance, the age bands used for analysis by age differ from one SFR to another.

Argument

- 4.3.5. It might be suggested that the SFRs already provide an overview, or would do so following the detailed amendments proposed elsewhere in this report. We do not believe that this is so, given the difficulties for users of knowing where to find the SFRs and of collating all ten together. To overcome these difficulties, we believe that a new overview is required – either a single post-16 volume, or a more light touch approach of all the SFRs appearing together.
- 4.3.6. Publication of an annual summary volume, electronically and/or in hard copy would help to meet the needs of the wider community of users, and the little-publicised biennial publication ‘*Statistics of Education: education and training statistics for the UK*’ might be developed for that purpose. In addition, many users turn to NOMIS for information of this kind, and placing all of the SFR data on NOMIS would complement publication of an annual volume. It might be appropriate to do this as a development of ‘*Statistics of Education: education and training statistics for the United Kingdom*’ rather than starting afresh.

Recommendation 5: SFRs should take figures from multiple data sources to present a more coherent story of ‘flows’ of learners and qualifications adding to the ‘stock’ of qualifications and skills. This particularly applies to SFR5 (The Level of Highest Qualifications held by Adults).

Recommendation 6: However, whilst SFRs should strive to combine multiple data sources, a balance must be achieved between timeliness and coherence. That is to say that SFR timetables will continue to be driven predominantly by the availability of key datasets, and that publication timetables should wait no more than a few weeks for up-to-date figures from other supporting sources, where it is judged that the benefit that their inclusion brings to the user justifies such a delay.

Recommendation 7: LSC SFRs should paint a holistic and coherent picture of the wider Further Education Sector. This should be widening the focus from Government funded learning to include other forms of learning where appropriate, and data is available. To this end, consideration should be given to making more use of data sourced from awarding bodies as a way of including qualifications funded from other sources.

Evidence from desk research

- 4.3.7. Many of the SFRs are single data source driven and specific. Those single data sources will tend to be about either a) learners participating, b) learners achieving or c) the existing and historic qualification and skills of the population at large. We consider that telling a coherent story about post-16 learning is an important objective. SFRs are National Statistics prepared to high standards, but they do not present the whole story about post-16 learning in England, in particular learning in FE colleges that is not funded by the LSC. Some of the PSA and other targets relate to ‘stocks’, and specifically to the percentage of (a) 19 year-olds and (b) working-age adults as a whole, who have achieved particular qualification levels by a particular date. SFR2 (‘Attainment by Age 19’) and SFR5 (‘Highest Qualification Held by Adults’) are prime examples.
- 4.3.8. The achievement of ‘stock’ targets depends partly on the ‘flow’ of people into learning and on the qualifications they achieve, and these are shown across

different SFRs. It is acknowledged that the relationship between flows and stocks is complex for various reasons. First, qualifications attained by people already holding qualifications at that level do not necessarily raise the stock - it is only 'first' qualifications at a particular level that does. Secondly, younger people join the workforce with qualifications from school and college, etc, while older people retire and leave the workforce. Thirdly, people move into and out of England (migration) including to and from other UK countries.

Evidence from consultation

4.3.9. The point about stocks and flows of learners and qualifications was discussed in some detail during an interview with a senior departmental official with a detailed understanding of tracking and monitoring progress towards targets. Indeed, the point came out so strongly that the interview almost exclusively focused on that point. Given the strength of those views, it is worth noting, for comparison, that we consider that "stock and flow" difficulties arise in other fields as well for instance with unemployment statistics.

Argument

4.3.10. It would help users to understand changes if stock and flow data were brought together – particularly if they could be reconciled, and if SFRs painted a fuller picture of post-16 learning, including non-LSA funded where the data permits. However, we suggest that although stock and flow data are indeed brought together within SFRs to add to context and help understanding, the complexities of reconciliation should be explained simply in the accompanying text. However, in doing so, it should be recognised that there is a balance to be struck between timeliness and coherence.

4.4. Earlier inclusion of new policy initiatives and measures

Recommendation 8: SFRs should quickly take account of, and include, both new policy initiatives and new measuring conventions (recent examples being Train to Gain, Diplomas and Apprenticeship starts and completions agreed through the Apprenticeship Review). Mechanisms (such as formal Memoranda of Understanding) should be put into place to ensure that this happens.

Recommendation 9: Analysts producing SFRs and their policy/delivery colleagues should commit to working more closely so that there is a wider understanding of, and engagement with, new policies, initiatives and measures.

Evidence from consultation

4.4.1. Our consultations discovered a number of delays, or at least perceived delays, in effective reporting of new policy initiatives and measures. These included the build-up of learner numbers on the new vocational initiative 'Train to Gain'. SFR8 (December 2007) does now report numbers on a basis, as far as we can tell, consistent with that used in the LSC Grant Letter.

Argument

4.4.2. The point was emphasised by senior departmental officials who were interviewed. Ultimately, this ties back to policy and delivery priorities and the associated PSA targets. More generally, policy inevitably changes over time and we recommend that the arrangements for incorporating such changes into the suite of SFRs should be formalised.

4.5. Better informing debate, and enabling Parliament and the wider public to hold the Government to account for delivery of policy in a more timely fashion.

Recommendation 10: Whilst the structure and frequency of the DCSF SFRs were, in the main, felt to be fit for purpose by the user community, we recommend that DIUS and LSC should build on existing quarterly internal MI reports to develop quarterly SFRs, each covering the range of LSC funded learning (FE, WBL, TTG, etc) and both participation and achievement – including LFS data where possible.

Recommendation 11: Where possible, the LSC SFRs should not be so firmly linked to the FE collection timetable and should include participation and achievement data side by side rather than across different SFRs.

Recommendation 12: With more frequent LSC SFRs, there should be a clearer distinction between provisional and final data. If quality criteria are met, provisional data can be used but should be clearly marked as such – with final data being released at a subsequent and timely juncture thereafter where it is deemed appropriate and beneficial to do so

Recommendation 13: SFRs should continue to be produced in as timely a fashion as is possible. Whilst the time taken for the compiler to produce the SFR on receiving data is generally no more than a few weeks, consideration could be given shortening the time it takes to the SFR compiler where it is possible and appropriate to do so. In support of this, DIUS, DCSF and LSC should initiate a review of collection, quality assurance and production processes of LSC SFRs to identify and implement improvements in timeliness (in particular, in relation to qualification attainment data).

Evidence from consultation

- 4.5.1. Users felt that the timetable for the SFRs produced by the LSC was dominated by the availability of data from FE colleges and providers. This meant that more up-to-date data (notably on WBL and TTG) – often collected and available monthly – was not available in SFRs until some time after the period to which it relates. Additionally, data from those sources was often available as management information and not synchronised with SFR releases.
- 4.5.2. Some users pointed to planned improvements in the frequency of FE data, and the opportunity that gives to review basic timetables.
- 4.5.3. Generally on timeliness, users felt the timeliness of an SFR has two elements, namely:
 - The time taken from data actually being available (e.g. the date at which a student registers for a course) to the information being supplied to the compiler of an SFR; and
 - The time taken by the SFR compiler to prepare the SFR from the data.
- 4.5.4. Our consultations and research suggest that the second element is as short as practicable – around two to three weeks.
- 4.5.5. The first element is much longer and more variable in length, as indicated by total periods (including the two to three weeks for the second element) averaging 23 weeks but with a range from 10 weeks to 32 weeks. Some data, eg those requiring matching of various administrative sources, are more difficult to compile than others, but we can see no obvious explanation for total periods exceeding the median figure of 26 weeks. At present, SFR4 (Key Skills) and SFR9 (Success

rates) take somewhat longer than this, and steps should be put into place to shorten this time.

Argument

4.5.6. There is a clear argument for more frequent release of data – possibly on the same basis as current MI releases. If those SFRs could successfully include LFS data, that would meet the spirit of many of the other recommendations around multiple sources and holistic pictures in SFRs. There is also an argument for more clarity over whether data are provisional or final; and, of course, a definitive final set of data should always be published. As soon as data are available, the SFRs should be compiled and published with the minimum delay – where an SFR relies on multiple data sources (as recommended elsewhere in this review) compilers should not wait until all the data are available, and should release the latest data available from the supporting sources, unless the wait for new data is short.

4.6. Further review of particular SFRs, in particular to take better account of Machinery of Government changes.

Recommendation 14: DIUS, DCSF and LSC should initiate work on options for more radical changes to the way that data on 14-19 year olds is covered in SFRs in light of recent Machinery of Government changes.

Recommendation 15: In recognition of the Machinery of Government changes, SFRs should include Young People/19+ splits throughout.

Recommendation 16: As SFRs become more focussed on PSA Targets and Delivery plans, and less single sourced, consideration should be given to dropping Key Skills and Vocational Qualifications SFRs, with information from them (particularly on non-government funded learning and achievements) being incorporated elsewhere in the suite of SFRs.

Evidence from desk research

4.6.1. The most relevant MoG changes are the establishment of DCSF and of DIUS. Some changes are reflected in the new PSA targets. For instance, there is a clear distinction between DIUS responsibility for PSA2 and PSA4, and DCSF responsibility for PSA10, PSA11 and PSA14². Our proposals for change associated with the requirement to be able to assess progress against these targets *will* therefore reflect MoG change. In general (MoG changes aside), we believe that analysis within SFRs by variables such as gender, disability status and age should be more consistent than at present. It is, however, especially important given the MoG changes that every SFR distinguishes where relevant between people aged 19 or over and younger people.

Evidence from consultation and Argument

4.6.2. The Key Skills and Vocational Qualifications SFRs are reportedly little used by users within the Departments. If other recommendations are adopted to make SFRs more holistic, there will be less and less demand for single sourced SFRs. However, it is important that these data sources are used intelligently and informatively in SFRs, alongside other data.

4.6.3. Much of the work on Machinery of Government was taking place at the same time as this review. For that reason, it has not been possible to take full account of new and developing 14-19 policy. The spirit of much of this review is clear – SFRs

² These are the five Public Service Agreements containing targets bearing on post-16 learning (see Annex 2)

should focus on targets, include the policy context and paint a more holistic picture of learning, using multiple data sources where appropriate. We believe that DCSF can build on those principles to reshape their SFRs in the light of developing policy.

- 4.6.4. It was, however, put to us by a small number of consultees that the MoG changes require consideration of a radical alteration to the SFR system. For instance, DCSF is responsible for children from 'early years' onwards, and for their health, well-being and safety as well as for education; and DIUS is responsible for universities and innovation as well as for 'post-16 learning' in the generally accepted sense of that term. Perhaps a new SFR system should integrate across all of the respective responsibilities of the two departments. We have considerable sympathy with this view as a long-term aspiration but our task here was to review a defined list of ten post-16 SFRs and radical alteration of this kind requires extensive analysis going far beyond the scope of the current project.

4.7. Improvement of consistency and presentation.

Recommendation 17: Improvements should be made to SFR titles, text and tables across the entire suite to make them clearer - plain English should be used throughout.

Evidence from desk research

- 4.7.1. The titles of the SFRs range in length from six words to thirty-six. The purpose of the title is to indicate content rather than to describe it and we recommend that no SFR title should exceed 12 words in length.

Argument

- 4.7.2. The text is generally well-written and appropriate. We appreciate that SFRs differ from one to another and that text must be prepared quickly. Over-rigid standardisation would be undesirable. We do, however, feel that greater consistency of approach would be beneficial. Accordingly we recommend that:

- Text should be divided between a) introduction, b) key points and c) technical notes (often called, at present, 'Notes to Editors') and should conclude with a list of the tables to be presented. Where necessary sub-heads should be used, but the header structure should always be clear. Text length should not normally exceed ten pages;
- The key points should refer explicitly to each table, though grouped where appropriate (eg 'Tables 1 to 3 inclusive show...');
- The technical notes should not be essential to an understanding of content for most users; and
- The tables should not normally exceed ten pages in length. Further material should be included through links to Additional Information.

Recommendation 18: Consistent demographic and learning breakdowns should be used across the SFRs where possible across the entire suite. Also, where possible, time series contained in the SFRs should be consistent in terms of length and years.

Evidence from desk research

- 4.7.3. The current SFRs analyse data by some or all of the following variables:

- Age;

- Gender;
- Ethnicity;
- Disability status;
- Qualification level (target or attained);
- Labour market status;
- Mode of learning (part or full time); and
- Learning setting (e.g. Work-Based Learning or FE College).

Argument

4.7.4. In our view each SFR should analyse by all of the variables where possible. There are certain obvious qualifications to this view:

- Data may not be available (nor collected) from the source – our suggestion is simply that data should be provided if available;
- Data may not be very relevant – for instance learning setting when considering adults as a whole (only a small percentage of whom will actually be in any learning setting);
- Where multiple cross-tabulations would lead to excessive length – here we suggest that one variable summary tables should be used;
- Data may be unreliable due to sampling error or to deficiencies in data collection; and
- All SFRs in the suite should include time series data, and the variables included in these time series should be consistent across the suite. For example, all time series should go back at least to an agreed set year (say 2001) and demographic splits within (for example age bands) should be consistent.

Recommendation 19: Greater use should be made of maps and charts to aid understanding.

Argument

4.7.5. The current standard format of SFRs is text followed by tables. Charts and maps are occasionally used, sometimes incorporated within the text sometimes within the tables. Sometimes the text includes summary or ad hoc tables separate from the main run of tables. In our view, these methods make SFRs more useful for users and greater use should be made of them wherever this is possible without delaying production of the SFR and without making the SFR of excessive size as an electronic document.

Recommendation 20: Every SFR should provide text and data for England. Where there is a policy reason and the data are available, text and data can be provided for the other UK countries, GB and UK. Where an SFR does not cover UK, links should be provided to sites where information on other nations and on the UK can be found.

Evidence from desk research

4.7.6. Seven SFRs relate to England only, one covers England and Wales, one covers England, Wales and Northern Ireland, and one covers the whole of the UK. Clearly, therefore, the SFRs include – without always revealing - comprehensive data on England but only partial data on the other nations.

Argument

4.7.7. An objective is to ensure that a comprehensive picture is available for England, whilst improving the data currently available on the other nations. The challenge of providing a comprehensive picture for each of those nations would depend on a review of the other data sources available there, something that is outside the scope of this review.

Recommendation 21: Local data should be provided for each of the SFRs wherever possible (allowing for factors such as data robustness due to sampling variation). The likely volume of such local data if made available would normally require that the tables are provided as Additional Information rather than in the SFRs themselves.

Evidence from consultation

4.7.8. We have interviewed during this study only small numbers of users, but in our wider experience, there is a strong interest in analysis at sub-national level. We are confining our comments here to England. The chief levels for spatial analysis are Local Education Authority and region. In areas - 'shire counties' - where there are two tiers of local government, there is also interest in data at the lower-tier level; and there is also an interest in data at local LSC level, though as local LSCs either coincide with LEAs or are assemblages of small numbers of LEAs this is not an entirely separate requirement. There is a further interest in neighbourhood statistics for very small areas but this is not explored here, since presentation of neighbourhood level data would clearly be impractical in publications such as SFRs.

Evidence from desk research

4.7.9. Three SFRs provide regional data within the SFR with local data in the Additional Information and this seems a reasonable compromise between not over-loading the SFR itself whilst meeting users' reasonable needs. This could be adopted as a standard approach, subject to the availability of data. The following principal changes would seem to be needed:

- SFR4 (Key Skills) would need to include regional data (currently in Additional Information) and provide a link to local data;
- SFR5 (Highest Qualification of Adults) would need to provide a link to local data (if appropriate – these are LFS data subject to wide margins of error at local level);
- SFR6 ('GCE/VCE A/AS and Equivalent Examination Results') is anomalous at the moment in including local data within the SFR, a practice that makes it much longer than the other SFRs. Consistency within the post-16 SFRs would suggest that the local data should be transferred to the Additional Information. There may, however, be reasons such as desired consistency with GCSE results presentation that make it desirable to retain local data within this SFR;
- The three LSC SFRs (SFR7 SFR8 and SFR9) contain no regional or local data or overt links to them (though some links that are provided lead ultimately to further data on www.lsc.gov.uk); and
- SFR10 (YCS) contains no regional or local data or links, though it may be that local or even regional data are not reliably available from the source (Youth Cohort Study).

4.8. Recommendations to improve accessibility

Recommendation 22: The SFRs should primarily focus on the publication of headline statistics, with detailed breakdowns (e.g. demographic and geographic) being updated less frequently, and presented as a supplement to the SFRs as Additional Information, via a tabulation tool/dissemination portal or in a compendium publication. Spreadsheet versions of all tables within SFRs should also be made available.

Evidence from consultation

- 4.8.1. The size of SFRs measured in megabytes is important for some users. Large files may take an unacceptably long time to download, and download of files exceeding a certain size (at the moment, this is often five or ten megabytes) is prohibited by the networks operated by many large organisations. Eight SFRs are less than 0.25MB in size, generally much less, and this is fully acceptable. SFR1, however, is 10MB, its great size resulting from the inclusion of a map. Whilst maps and other graphic forms of presentation are desirable, they should not be included in SFRs where this would result in excessive size - rather, they should be included in the Additional Information.
- 4.8.2. We recommend that SFR Additional Information should include Excel versions of all tables - and, indeed, many tables are already provided in Excel. This is a pragmatic suggestion as Excel is itself, of course, proprietary software (though a free Excel reader is available from Microsoft), though very many users will have access to it.

Recommendation 23: When publishing SFRs and additional information, full use should be made of the new National Statistics publication hub.

Recommendation 24: DIUS should ensure that plans for the new FE Data Service include dissemination and publication of SFRs.

Argument

- 4.8.3. Mechanisms for collating and disseminating statistics are developing rapidly at the moment. The National Statistics Hub, the DCSF Data Warehouse and the Research and Statistics Gateway may all have a role. Moreover the FE Data Service would seem to be a natural 'home' for post-16 data, perhaps on a parallel with the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA).

Appendices:

Appendix A: Methodology

Appendix B: Understanding the SFR customer base

Appendix C: Appraisal of Post-16 SFR suite

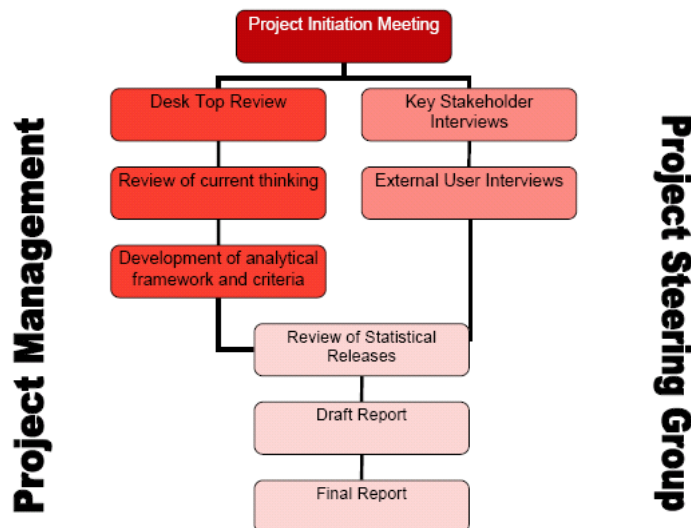
Appendix D: Policy context, and mapping of targets and indicators relevant to post-16 learning

Appendix E: Statistics and the Code of Practice

Appendix F: LSC Review

Appendix A: Methodology

- A1. In this Appendix we outline the methodology used in the review. A key part of this methodology has been speaking with stakeholders within DIUS and DCSF, and to external users of the information. Through this consultation we have assembled a body of evidence relating to how the SFRs are currently used and what could be done to improve them. The views of users within the LSC have also been taken into account through our use of a LSC report³, prepared in parallel with our own work.
- A2. The diagram below shows the approach we adopted to the review. To ensure we took into account both the views of stakeholders and also the wider developments taking place within the Government our approach was two pronged. One part of our approach was to review all the material available relating to the SFRs and the guidance relating to official statistics. This was balanced with direct consultation with those who use the SFRs to inform the work they do. Through the project we regularly met with the project steering group to discuss the emerging issues and to ensure we were testing the right options with a range of stakeholders and users.



- A3. In more detail, our methodology was as follows:

Project Initiation Meeting

To commence the project we held a project initiation meeting involving all members of the project steering group and representatives from PricewaterhouseCoopers. The purpose of this meeting was to clarify the project objectives and to understand the desired outcomes. At this meeting the recently completed LSC research was discussed to ensure the information gathered was incorporated as part of our study. Following this meeting a detailed project plan was developed along with a list of the internal stakeholders and external users to be interviewed. Approval of these documents was sought from the Steering Group.

Desk Top Review

Prior to starting our interviews the ten post-16 SFRs were reviewed. This review was to ensure that the latest SFRs could be discussed and to start identifying the potential areas that require addressing such as consistency of presentation and sector

³ 'Review of Statistical First Releases (Final)', 14 November 2007

coverage. As well as reviewing the content of the documents, the publication schedule was reviewed to understand how SFRs fit with the wider education data.

Review of current thinking

Following our desk review, and informed by the early interviews with stakeholders, we considered current thinking around statistics and the publication of the data. We looked at the work of the Statistics Commission and specifically their proposed Code of Practice (Annex 3), a Code that is consistent in its essentials with existing National Statistics Code of Practice⁴. This provided us with the context from which an analytical framework could be developed.

Development of analytical framework and criteria

In developing an analytical framework against which to assess each SFR we brought together the terms of reference of this study and the codes of practice on official statistics. This provided us with criteria for assessment, as discussed below.

Key Stakeholder Interviews

Central to our methodology was speaking to the key stakeholders who use SFRs in their work. The stakeholders interviewed were those in DIUS and DCSF who have responsibility for briefing ministers, performance management and measuring progress against Public Service Agreement targets. They were selected by the project steering group and conducted by PwC. Thirteen stakeholders were interviewed during the course of the study. A complete list of stakeholders together with the discussion guide is provided below. The areas of discussion with these stakeholders focused on how the data is currently used, whether it meets stakeholder requirements and whether the right data are provided. In addition to meeting stakeholders we also discussed with the LSC the detailed findings from their research and the key issues from the users within the LSC. This provided us with an understanding of the information they require and how they use SFRs to inform their work. The findings from the LSC research have been incorporated into our study.

External User Interviews

Following our discussion with internal stakeholders we spoke to a wider group of users to seek their views on the content and presentation of the SFRs. A range of lobby groups, research organisations, public bodies and consultants were identified as potential users of SFRs. In the course of putting this list together we also contacted the chair of the Education and Statistics user group but found that this discussion group no longer met. A full list of those contacted through the course of this study is provided below. The interviews focused on the key issues highlighted in the stakeholder interviews, the codes of practice and the terms of reference of the study. Where those contacted did not use SFRs in their work we discussed the information they did use and how this differed from what is available in the SFRs.

Review of Statistical Releases

Following our interviews and the collation of the feedback we undertook a detailed review of each SFR. This review identified

⁴ See http://www.statistics.gov.uk/about_ns/cop/default.asp

their strengths and weaknesses, and identified where future improvements could be made. At this stage we also looked at the suite of post-16 SFRs together to review their coverage of the sector.

Final Report

An interim report (November 2007) was compiled and a workshop was run with the project steering group to discuss the recommendations that were emerging. Following this workshop further discussions were held, leading to this final report.

Consultation List and Topic Guide

Key stakeholder interviews

Interviewee	Organisation
Susan Pember	DIUS
Philip Edmeades	DIUS
Bob Butcher	DIUS
Malcolm Britton	DCSF
Neil Robertson	DIUS
Ann Wass	DCSF
Laurie Thompson	DCSF
Linda Rose	DCSF
Jo Thomas	DCSF
Ellen Scott	DCSF
Darren Bassett	LSC
Colin Piper	LSC
Jill Bodey	DIUS

User interviews

Interviewee	Organisation
Jayne Worthington	North West Regional Development Agency (Skills Lead)
Jeff Hunt	Government Office (Education Lead)
Alastair Thomson	NIACE
Daniel Mason	Local Government Analysis and Research
Paul Warner	Association of Learning Providers
Sue Dutton Acting CE	Association of Colleges
Carol Standfield	SSDA
Peter Tinson	HEFCE / HESA
Nicola Edwards	OfSTED
Julian Gravatt	NIACE
David Drew	DWP
Ann Green	University of Warwick
Paul Bolton	House of Commons Librarian
Jo Finney	DCSF
Jo Morrison	National Federation of Educational Research
James Halse	Youth Cohort Study

Topic guide

- In the course of conducting interviews with stakeholders and users a topic guide was used to shape discussion. This topic guide was not circulated to interviewees and a wider range of questions would have been asked to seek clarification on points of discussion.
- The interviews aim to gain access to the knowledge and opinions of a heterogeneous group of interviewees. As a result the questions are general; and, to allow for in-depth discussion, the number of topics to be covered is small. The final question is of special importance, offering access to information or opinions that may not have occurred to the Review team.
 - How extensive is your personal knowledge of the ten Post-16 SFRs? And how easy or difficult do you find them to use in your own work? What specific suggestions would you make for improving the use you make of them?
 - What information (content and level) do you think should be included in the SFRs?
 - How well do the SFRs meet your needs in terms of (a) data content and (b) ease of access and use of that content?
 - Are there gaps, or overlaps, in the coverage by the SFRs of the Post-16 sector? What are they and how would you address them?
 - Are there particular SFRs that you consider to be unnecessary, or that you consider to need substantial change?
 - The SFRs aim to provide data quickly, at the 'cost' of spreading the data across ten separate documents. What is the relative importance of speed of publication and integration into a smaller number of documents? Would you alter the timing of publication and/or the coverage of each publication?
 - Do you have other comments or views that our Review should take into account?

Appendix B: Understanding the SFR customer base

Introduction

B1. The emphasis of this review is on customers – users of the data in the SFRs – and the former Statistics Commission’s Code of Practice contains pervasive reference to users and their needs. In this review we have conducted a interviews with a comprehensive, but by no means exhaustive, spread of users. Our comments below are based on our consultations and wider experience but further research is needed with users. We have identified the customer groups listed below:

- Decision makers: Government ministers and others;
- Policy analysts: within relevant government departments and non-departmental public bodies;
- LSC users:– we consider separately because we have used a separate report on their views prepared internally by the LSC; and

B2. Other users:

- Providers of education who are operating within this sector including local authorities;
- Researchers; and
- The general public.

The decision makers: Government ministers and others

B3. By policy makers at national level we mean ministers and others with independent or quasi-independent responsibility for policy such as the chairs and chief executives of major non-departmental public bodies. Their primary need, as we understand it, is for up-to-date, authoritative and detailed information that allows them to modulate policy as required and to respond to queries or criticism from their political opponents or from other sources such as think-tanks or the general public.

B4. The modulation of policy is important, especially in relation to Public Service Agreement (PSA) targets. If during the course of a year it becomes clear that the year’s contribution to a PSA target is likely to fall short of the requirement, new initiatives, increased funding, personnel changes or other methods might be used to get things back on track. Plainly though this is possible only if timely data are available.

Policy analysts

B5. Policy makers are supported by a sophisticated but relatively small community of policy analysts in government departments and non-departmental public bodies. They often know one another well; and when, for instance, ministers have some special or unusual requirement for data they collaborate to meet that requirement in an *ad hoc* way. Some very experienced analysts that we consulted seldom used SFRs because it was their practice to turn directly to the ‘custodians’ of the source data for the information they required. Plainly, however, this is an option for only a privileged few - or at any rate the small analytical community would rapidly be overwhelmed if (for instance) local authorities began making ad hoc requests on a regular basis.

B6. It seems clear to us that if the weaknesses of SFRs that we discuss elsewhere were remedied, the burden of meeting these requirements would be considerably lessened.

Other users

B7. Other users such as members of the public, charities, universities, local authorities and individual providers, differ substantially from the groups so far considered. Whilst some individuals - for instance researchers at NIACE or in universities - may be very knowledgeable and experienced, the average user in this group is not well informed about SFRs or about statistical methods. They may misinterpret data that are, perhaps, accurately but not clearly presented; and they will almost certainly lack the time and/or knowledge required to piece together the materials in the SFRs, in the SFR Additional Information and in related sources (such as those on www.lsc.gov.uk) not explicitly linked to the SFRs that enable a comprehensive picture to be prepared of post-16 learning. They will moreover, in many cases, need more local or regional information than is usually required by people with a national perspective.

Appendix C: Appraisal of Post-16 SFR suite

1. Participation in Education, Training and Employment by 16-18 Year Olds in England: 2005 and 2006 and Participation in Education and Training by 16 and 17 Year Olds in each Local Area in England: 2004 and 2005	
PwC Code	SFR1
Official Code	SFR22/2007
Date of example used by PwC	26 June 2007
Length of introduction and key points (pages)	2
Length of other text material (pages)	9
Length of tables (pages)	10
Total size on disk (KB)	9447
Geographical coverage	England (regional and local data in Additional Information)
Timing: weeks from data becoming available to date of SFR publication	26 weeks (from end of calendar 2006)
Comments	Includes two figures and one map

Table No	Analysis of:	Analysis by (columns):	Analysis by (rows):
1	•All people 16-18	•Gender •Year (2005&2006)	•Age •Education and labour market status
2	•People 16-18 in education	•Gender •Year (2005&2006)	•Age •Learning setting •Full/part time
3	•All people 16-18	•Labour market status •Year (2005&2006)	•Age •Education status
4	•People 16-18 in full-time education	•Gender •Year (2005&2006)	•Age •Highest qualification aim
5	•All people 16-18	•Year (1994-2006)	•Age •Education status
6	•People 16-17 at end-2005	•Age •Learning setting	•Gender •Region
Additional information	Format	Title	
	Excel	More detailed participation rates including tables back to 1985	
	Excel	More detailed participation numbers including tables back to 1985	
	Excel	More regional information including tables back to 1994	
	Excel	More LSC information including tables back to 1994	
	Excel	More local authority information including tables back to 1994	
	Pdf	Figure: participation of 16 year olds in full time education by LA end 2005	
	Pdf	Figure: participation of 16 year olds in education and Work-Based Learning by LA end 2005	
	pdf	Figure: participation of 17 year olds in full time education by LA end 2005	

2. Level 2 and 3 Attainment by Young People in England Measured Using Matched Administrative Data: Attainment by Age 19 in 2006 (Provisional)

PwC Code	SFR2
Official Code	SFR06/2007
Date of example used by PwC	27 Feb 2007
Length of introduction and key points (pages)	2.5
Length of other text material (pages)	3
Length of tables (pages)	2.5
Total size on disk (KB)	52
Geographical coverage	England (regional and local data in Additional Information)
Timing: weeks from data becoming available to date of SFR publication	26 weeks (from end-August 2006)
Comments	Text and tables are interspersed

Table No	Analysis of:	Analysis by (columns):	Analysis by (rows):
1	•People aged 19	•Proportion qualified to L2 •Age	•People aged (or to be aged) 19 in each of the years 2004-2009
2	•People aged 19	•Proportion qualified to L3 •Age	•People aged (or to be aged) 19 in each of the years 2004-2009
3	•People aged 19	•Proportion qualified to L2 •Age (16 or 16+) of L2 attainment •Type of L2 qualification	•People aged 19 in each of the years 2004-2006
4	•People aged 19	•Proportion qualified to L3 •Type of L3 qualification	•People aged 19 in each of the years 2004-2006
5	•People aged 19	•Proportion qualified to L2 •Age (16 or 16+) of L2 attainment •Learning setting	•People aged 19 in each of the years 2004-2006
6	•People aged 19	•Proportion qualified to L3 •Learning setting	•People aged 19 in each of the years 2004-2006
7	•People aged 19	•Proportion qualified to L2 •Region	•People aged 19 in each of the years 2004-2006
8	•People aged 19	•Proportion qualified to L3 •Region	•People aged 19 in each of the years 2004-2006
Additional information	Format	Title	
	Excel	L2 and L3 attainment by region	
	Link to lsc.gov.uk	'Figures at local LSC and local authority level are available on the LSC website'	
	Pdf	Level 2 at age 16	
	Pdf	Level 2 at age 19	
	Pdf	Improvement in Level 2 from 16 to 19	
	Pdf	Level 3 at age 19	
	Excel	L2 and L3 attainment by gender	

	Excel	L2 and L3 attainment by eligibility for free school meals
	Excel	L2 and L3 attainment by IDACI quartiles

3. Vocational Qualifications in the UK: 2005/06	
PwC Code	SFR3
Official Code	SFR05/2007
Date of example used by PwC	22 Feb 2007
Length of introduction and key points (pages)	5
Length of other text material (pages)	6
Length of tables (pages)	11
Total size on disk (KB)	136
Geographical coverage	UK (Tables 1-7); England (Tables 8-12) (regional and local data in Additional Information)
Timing: weeks from data becoming available to date of SFR publication	25 weeks (from end-August 2006)
Comments	One chart embedded in the text

Table No	Analysis of:	Analysis by (columns):	Analysis by (rows):
1	•Awards	•Type of qualification (NVQs/SVQs & VRQs)	•Years 1994/95 to 2005/06
2	•Awards of NVQs	•Levels 1-5	•Years 1997/98 to 2005/06
3	•Awards of NVQs	•Years 1997/98 to 2005/06	•Framework area
4	•Awards of NVQs/SVQs in 2005/06	•Levels 1-5	•Gender •Age •Occupation •Learning setting •Region/Nation
5	•Awards of NVQs/SVQs in 2005/06	•Levels 1-4/5 •Gender	•Sector subject area
6	•Awards of VRQs in 2005/06	•Levels 1-3	•Gender •Age •Occupation •Learning setting •Region/Nation
7	•Awards of VRQs in 2005/06	•Levels 1-3 •Gender	•Sector subject area
8	•Awards of GNVQs/VCEs in England in 2005/06	•Type (GNVQ or VCE) •Level	•Gender •Age •Learning setting •Region
9	•Awards of GNVQs/VCEs in England in 2005/06	•Type (GNVQ or VCE) •Level	•Subject code
10	•Awards	•Year (1998/99-2005/06)	•Levels 1-3 •Type (eg 5 GCSE passes)
11	•Awards at Level 2	•Year (2004/05-2005/06) •Type	•Age
12	•Awards at Level 3	•Year (2004/05-2005/06) •Type	•Age
Additional information	Format	Title	

	Excel (added March 2007)	Awards of N(S) VQs/VRQs by LEA
	Excel (added March 2007)	Awards of N(S) VQs/VRQs by LSC
	Excel (added March 2007)	Awards of N(S) VQs/VRQs by Learning Partnership

4. Awards of Key Skills Qualifications: 2005/06	
PwC Code	SFR4
Official Code	SFR14/2007
Date of example used by PwC	19 Apr 2007
Length of introduction and key points (pages)	3
Length of other text material (pages)	3
Length of tables (pages)	7
Total size on disk (KB)	163
Geographical coverage	England, Wales and Northern Ireland (total only) (regional data in Additional Information)
Timing: weeks from data becoming available to date of SFR publication	29 weeks (from end-September 2006)
Comments	Two charts embedded in text

Table No	Analysis of:	Analysis by (columns):	Analysis by (rows):
1	•Awards	•Year (2000/01-2005/06)	•Subject •Level •Age •Gender
2	•Awards in Communications	•Year (2000/01-2005/06)	•Level •Age •Gender
3	•Awards in Application of Number	•Year (2000/01-2005/06)	•Level •Age •Gender
4	•Awards in ICT	•Year (2000/01-2005/06)	•Level •Age •Gender
5	•Awards in Wider Key Skills	•Year (2000/01-2005/06)	•Level •Age •Gender
6	•Awards in 2005/06	•Age	•Subject •Level
7	•Awards in 2005/06	•Age	•Subject •Learning setting
Additional information	Format	Title	
	Excel	Awards of wider skills qualifications by level, age and gender 2004/05	
	Excel	Awards of Key Skills qualifications by type, age and level 2000/01-2004/05	
	Excel	Awards of Key Skills qualifications by type, learning setting and level 2000/01-2004/05	
	Excel	Awards of Key Skills qualifications by type, region and level 2000/01-2005/06	

5. The Level of Highest Qualification held by Adults: England 2006

PwC Code	SFR5
Official Code	SFR09/2007
Date of example used by PwC	15 Mar 2007
Length of introduction and key points (pages)	5
Length of other text material (pages)	3
Length of tables (pages)	8
Total size on disk (KB)	216
Geographical coverage	England (Table 2 provides basic data for all four nations); regions
Timing: weeks from data becoming available to date of SFR publication	10 weeks (from end of calendar 2006)
Comments	Three charts appear at the end of the SFR

Table No	Analysis of:	Analysis by (columns):	Analysis by (rows):
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Highest qualification in 2006 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Level 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gender • Age • Ethnicity • Disability • Region • Occupation or other labour market status • Year (2001-2006)
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Highest qualification in 2006 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Level 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nation
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Highest qualification of economically active adults 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Level 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gender • Year (2001-2006)
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Average hourly earnings of working-age employees 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Level 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gender • Year (2001-2006)
Additional information	None, except that the tables listed above are made available in Excel		

6. GCE/VCE A/AS and Equivalent Examination Results in England, 2005/06 (Revised)	
PwC Code	SFR6
Official Code	SFR02/2007
Date of example used by PwC	10 Jan 2007
Length of introduction and key points (pages)	2
Length of other text material (pages)	3
Length of tables (pages)	32
Total size on disk (KB)	136
Geographical coverage	England, regions, local authorities
Timing: weeks from data becoming available to date of SFR publication	19 weeks (from end-August 2006)
Comments	

Table No	Analysis of:	Analysis by (columns):	Analysis by (rows):
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Level 3 achievement by people 16-18 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •QCA point score and other attainment measures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Learning setting •Gender •[Some time series]
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •GCE/VCE A/AS and Key Skills at L3 results of people 16-18 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •QCA point score and other attainment measures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Learning setting •Gender •[Some time series]
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •A level examination results in schools and colleges of people 16-18 (Tables 3m and 3f analyse by gender) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Grade 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Subject
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •AS level examination results in schools and colleges of people 16-18 (Tables 4m and 4f analyse by gender) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Grade 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Subject
5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •VCE A level examination results in schools and colleges of people 16-18 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Grade •Gender 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Subject
6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •VCE AS level examination results in schools and colleges of people 16-18 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Grade •Gender 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Subject
7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •VCE Double Award examination results in schools and colleges of people 16-18 (Tables 7m and 7f analyse by gender) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Grade 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Subject
8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Level 3 QCA point scores for people 16-18 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Gender 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Region •Local authority
9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •GCE/VCE A/AS and Key Skills QCA point scores for people 16-18 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Gender 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Region •Local authority
10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •GCE/VCE A/AS and Key Skills UCAS point scores for people 16-18 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Gender 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Region •Local authority
11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Level 3 QCA point scores for people 16-18 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Gender 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Region •Local LSC
12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •GCE/VCE A/AS and Key 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Gender 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Region

	Skills QCA point scores for people 16-18		•Local LSC
13	•GCE/VCE A/AS and Key Skills UCAS point scores for people 16-18	•Gender	•Region •Local LSC
14	•Level 3 QCA point scores for people 16-18	•QCA point score •Gender	•Qualification route (eg A level, baccalaureate)
Additional information	Format	Title	
	Excel	[This is a single Excel Workbook containing all of the tables in the SFR]	
	Excel	GCE A level achievement 1996-2006	

7. Further education, work based learning for young people, train to gain and adult and community learning – learner numbers in England – October 2006

PwC Code	SFR7
Official Code	ILR/SFR12
Date of example used by PwC	27 Mar 2007
Length of introduction and key points (pages)	3
Length of other text material (pages)	2
Length of tables (pages)	9
Total size on disk (KB)	107
Geographical coverage	England
Timing: weeks from data becoming available to date of SFR publication	26 weeks from 1 October 2006
Comments	One of the three LSC SFRs

Table No	Analysis of:	Analysis by (columns):	Analysis by (rows):
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Learner numbers at 1 October 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Year (2005, 2006) •Setting (WBL FE ACL) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Age (<19, 19+) •Level
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Learner numbers at 1 October 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Year (2005, 2006) •Setting (WBL FE ACL) •Gender 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Sector subject area
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Learner numbers at 1 October 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Year (2005, 2006) •Setting (WBL FE ACL) •Gender 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Ethnicity
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Learner numbers at 1 October 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Year (2005, 2006) •Setting (WBL FE ACL) •Gender 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Age in five-year groups
5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Learner numbers in WBL at the end of each quarter 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Type (eg advanced apprenticeship) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Quarters (Oct 2000 to Jan 2007)
6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Learner starts in WBL at the end of each quarter 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Type (eg advanced apprenticeship) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Quarters (Oct 2000 to Jan 2007)
7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Learner numbers in FE at 1 October 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Year (2005, 2006) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Type of college •Full-time/Part-time •Age (in four age-bands)
8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Learner numbers on Priority Programmes in FE at 1 October 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Year (2005, 2006) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Type of programme (Skills for Life Full L2 Full L3) •Age (<19, 19+)
9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Learner numbers in FE at 1 October 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •1996-2006 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Gender •Full-time/Part-time •Age (in three age-bands)
Additional information	None		

8. Further education, work based learning and adult and community learning – learner numbers in England 2005/06

PwC Code	SFR8
Official Code	ILR/SFR11
Date of example used by PwC	12 Dec 2006
Length of introduction and key points (pages)	3
Length of other text material (pages)	2
Length of tables (pages)	9
Total size on disk (KB)	951
Geographical coverage	England
Timing: weeks from data becoming available to date of SFR publication	15 weeks from 31 August 2006
Comments	One of the three LSC SFRs

Table No	Analysis of:	Analysis by (columns):	Analysis by (rows):
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All year numbers in FE and WBL 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Year (2004/05 and 2005/06) Setting (FE WBL) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Age (<19, 19+) Level
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All year numbers in FE ACL and WBL 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Year (2004/05 and 2005/06) Setting (FE WBL ACL) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sector subject area
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All year numbers in FE ACL and WBL 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Year (2004/05 and 2005/06) Setting (FE WBL ACL) Gender 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ethnicity
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All year numbers in FE ACL and WBL 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Year (2004/05 and 2005/06) Setting (FE WBL ACL) Gender 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Age in five-year groups
5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> End-of-quarter numbers in WBL 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Type (eg advanced apprenticeship) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quarters (Oct 2000 to Jul 2006)
6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Starts by quarter on WBL 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Type (eg advanced apprenticeship) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quarters (Oct 2000 to Jul 2006)
7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All year numbers in FE 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Years (2004/05 and 2005/06) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Type of college Full-time/Part-time Age (in four age-groups)
8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All year numbers on Priority Programmes in FE 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Year (2004/05, 2005/06) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Type of programme (Skills for Life Full L2 Full L3) Age (<19, 19+)
9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All year numbers in FE 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Years (1996/97-2005/06) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Age in three age-groups Full-time/Part-time Gender
Additional information	None		

9. Further Education and Work Based Learning - Learner Outcomes in England: 2005/06

PwC Code	SFR9
Official Code	ILR/SFR13
Date of example used by PwC	17 Apr 2007
Length of introduction and key points (pages)	4
Length of other text material (pages)	5
Length of tables (pages)	15
Total size on disk (KB)	170
Geographical coverage	England
Timing: weeks from data becoming available to date of SFR publication	32 weeks from 31 August 2006
Comments	One of the three LSC SFRs

Table No	Analysis of:	Analysis by (columns):	Analysis by (rows):
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Success (Table 1a), retention (Table 1b) and achievement (Table 1c) rates in FE 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Year (2003/04 2004/05 2005/06) • Programme length (Long Short) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Type of college
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Success (Table 2a), retention (Table 2b) and achievement (Table 2c) rates in FE 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Year (2003/04 2004/05 2005/06) • Age (<19 19+) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Level • Programme length (long short)
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Success rates in FE 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Year (2003/04 2004/05 2005/06) • Programme length (long short) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sector subject area
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Success rates in FE 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Year (2003/04 2004/05 2005/06) • Gender 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sector subject area
5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Success rates in FE 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Year (2003/04 2004/05 2005/06) • Gender 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ethnicity
6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Success rates in FE 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Year (2003/04 2004/05 2005/06) • Gender 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disability status
7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Success rates in WBL 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Year (2004/05 2005/06) • Whether complete or partial programme 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Type (eg advanced apprenticeship)
8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Success rates in WBL 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Year (2004/05 2005/06) • Whether complete or partial programme 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sector subject area
9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Success rates in WBL 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Year (2004/05 2005/06) • Whether complete or partial programme 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ethnicity
Additional information	None		

10. The Activities and Experiences of 18 Year-Olds: England and Wales 2006	
PwC Code	SFR10
Official Code	SFR47/2006
Date of example used by PwC	28 Nov 2006
Length of introduction and key points (pages)	3
Length of other text material (pages)	2
Length of tables (pages)	9
Total size on disk (KB)	64
Geographical coverage	
Timing: weeks from data becoming available to date of SFR publication	Approximately 26 weeks from 'Spring' 2006
Comments	Based on the Youth Cohort Survey Two supplementary tables embedded in text

Table No	Analysis of:	Analysis by (columns):	Analysis by (rows):
A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Main activity of all people at age 18 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Year (1993-2006) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Education/labour market status
B	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Main activity of all people at age 18 in 2006 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Education/labour market status 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •'Characteristics' •Gender •Ethnicity •Parents' occupation/education •Year 11 qualifications •Education/labour market status at age 16 •Disability •Highest qualification at age 16 •Truancy status in Year 11 •School exclusion status in Year 11
C	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Main activity of all people at age 18 in 2006 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Education/NEET status 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Characteristics (see list above)
D	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Highest qualification attained by 18 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Years 1993-2006 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Level (2 or more; 3 or more) •Whether by academic or vocational route
E	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Highest qualification attained by 18 in 2006 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Level (<L2, L2 or more, L3 or more) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Characteristics (see list above)
F	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Qualifications attained by 18 in 2006 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Level (2 or 3) •Type (eg GCSE) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Characteristics (see list above)
G	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Main study aim of 18 year-olds in 2006 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Type (eg degree) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Characteristics (see list above)
H	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Main activity of 2002/03 school leavers at (a) 18 cross-tabulated with 16 (b) 17 cross-tabulated with 16 (c) 18 cross-tabulated with 17 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Main activity at 18 •Education/labour market status 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Education/labour market status
I	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Main activity of 2002/03 school leavers at 18 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Main activity at 18 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Main activity at 16

	cross-tabulated with 16 (a) for those with five good GCSEs) (b) for those without five good GCSEs		
Additional information	Format	Title	
	Excel	[This is a single Excel Workbook containing all of the tables in the SFR]	
	PDF	Copy of YCS Questionnaire	

Appendix D: Policy context, and mapping of targets and indicators relevant to post-16 learning

Policy context

D1. The Review has been conducted against a background of change:

- Change in government policy for post-16 learning following the Foster⁵ and Leitch⁶ reviews, the Further Education White Paper⁷ and related work;
- Change in the arrangements for preparation and dissemination of National Statistics, and especially the prospective formation from 2008 of the Statistics Board;
- Change in the machinery of government, notably the formation of DIUS and the Department for Children Schools and Families (DCSF), and the prospective formation from 2008 of the UK Commission for Employment and Skills; and
- Change in the funding arrangements for post-16 learning, in particular the prospective transfer of responsibility for funding almost all learning for 16-18 year-olds away from the Learning and Skills Council (LSC).

D2. The Leitch Review suggested the very demanding ambition of the UK being a world leader in skills by 2020, as measured by five key targets. The government accepted the essence of the Leitch recommendations, but the government's immediate focus for target setting is the period associated with the Comprehensive Spending Review 2007, i.e. the three financial years 2008/09 to 2010/11. Government Public Service Agreement (PSA) targets⁹ for skills for 2010/11 are intended to place England on a trajectory leading to achievement of the Leitch targets by 2020. There is one PSA target for each Leitch target, except that there are two PSA targets for the fifth (Higher Education) Leitch target. The two sets of targets are tabulated below.

D3. The changes outlined above, and substantial increases in government funding, are intended to enable these very demanding targets to be attained.

D4. The first four targets below relate primarily to post-16 learning other than Higher Education, though the feed-through into adulthood of young people who are well-qualified as a result of school learning prior to age 16 also contributes. The post-16 SFRs thus have a decisive role in monitoring progress towards the targets, and any changes to the SFR system would - in addition to meeting other user needs - have to ensure that progress towards the PSA targets could be monitored effectively.

⁵ 'Realising the Potential: a review of the future role of further education colleges by Sir Andrew Foster', DfES, November 2005.

⁶ 'Leitch Review of Skills Final Report: prosperity for all in the global economy – world class skills' HM Treasury, December 2006. Also the government's response: 'World Class Skills: implementing the Leitch review of skills in England', July 2007.

⁷ 'Further Education: raising skills, improving life chances', 2006. Also the government's update 'Further Education: raising skills, improving life chances – update, July 2007'.

⁸ For practical measurement purposes, some variables are measured using the academic years to 2010/11 inclusive.

⁹ 'PSA Delivery Agreement 2: improve the skills of the population on the way to ensuring a world-class skills base by 2020' HM Treasury, October 2007 (available at www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/media/9/B/pbr_csr07_psa2.pdf).

Leitch targets for England by 2020	PSA2 targets for England by 2011
95 per cent of adults to achieve the basic skills of functional literacy and numeracy.	1. 597,000 people of working age to achieve a first level 1 or above literacy qualification and 390000 to achieve a first entry level 3 or above numeracy qualification (totals over three academic years). [Annual reporting by April following academic year end, i.e. +8 months] [Regional analysis required]
Exceeding 90 per cent of adults qualified to at least level 2, with a commitment to achieve 95 per cent as soon as possible.	2. 79% of working age adults qualified to at least level 2. [Annual reporting in SFR (current lag in Labour Force Survey reporting is +2 months)] [Regional analysis required]
68 per cent of the adult population qualified to level 3.	3. 56% of working age adults qualified to at least level 2. [Annual reporting in SFR (current lag in Labour Force Survey reporting is +2 months)] [Regional analysis required]
Increasing apprenticeships to 500,000 a year.	4. 130,000 apprentices to complete the full apprenticeship framework. [Annual reporting in SFR] [Regional analysis required ¹⁰]
Over 40 per cent of the adult population qualified to level 4 and above.	5. 36% of working age adults qualified to level 4 and above by 2014 with an interim milestone of 34% by 2011. [Annual reporting in SFR] [Regional analysis required] Increase participation in HE towards 50% of those aged 18-30 with growth of at least a percentage point every two years to the academic year 2010/11. [Annual reporting in SFR]

D5. The Leitch/PSA2 targets are the most obviously relevant to post-16 learning, but numerous targets from PSA4, PSA10, PSA11 and PSA14 are also relevant, as are, to varying degrees, the target numbers in the LSC Grant Letter. We describe the position in detail below.

Targets and indicators relevant to post-16 learning – detailed mapping

D6. As outlined above, an important part of this review has involved assimilating a series of indicators on post-16 learning from three key sources, namely:

- The Public Service Agreement (PSA) indicators outlined in the October 2007 Comprehensive Spending Review;
- The Leitch review of skills; and
- LSC Grant letter.

D7. This Appendix presents the detailed findings from this assimilation exercise.

PSAs and Leitch

D8. There are 5 key PSAs relevant for post-16 learning, underpinning which there are a total of 15 indicators. The PSAs, along with the number of key indicators associated with each, are outlined in the Table below.

Lead	Relevant	Title of PSA	Number of
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¹⁰ At one point the PSA Delivery Agreement says that regional analysis is not required for this indicator.

department	PSA		associated indicators
DIUS	PSA2	'Improve the skills of the population, on the way to ensuring a world class skills base by 2020'	6
	PSA4	Promote world-class science and innovation in the UK	1
DCSF	PSA10	Raise the educational achievement of all children and young people	3
	PSA11	Narrow the gap in achievement between children from lower income and disadvantaged backgrounds and their peers	4
	PSA14	Increase the number of children and young people on the path to success	1

LSC Grant Letter

D9. The LSC Grant Letter is an important supplement to the PSA targets. Annex A to the Grant Letter lists:

- The PSA targets and indicators on which LSC is expected to lead or to contribute;
- Four supplementary quantitative targets, which are shown and clearly marked in the table below; and
- A small number of qualitative or 'to be developed' supplementary targets that we have not shown in the table.

D10. Annex C to the Grant Letter also indicates by academic year the number of learners expected to be attained by LSC analysed into 22 overlapping groups, and also sets out five 'Key PSA Related Outputs'. These five supplement PSA indicators 2.1, 2.2, 2.3 and 2.4 by showing what outputs LSC is expected to achieve as a contribution to the achievement of the PSA indicator.

D11. Annex C to the Grant Letter also sets out planned learner numbers for the LSC for each of the three academic years 2008/09 to 2010/11, using the three main categories of 'Youth Participation', 'Adult Learner Responsive' and 'Employer Responsive' learning. Planned numbers in each category are analysed by type of learning programme. For instance, Employer Responsive learning is analysed between employer-based NVQs (185,000 in 2008/09), apprenticeships/work-based learning (114,000) and Train to Gain (600,000) yielding 899,000 in all. But the Adult Learner Responsive and Employer Responsive categories are analysed further, broadly by level of learning. Because a learner may be working at more than one level (Skills for Life as well as Level 2, for instance) total numbers on this analysis are considerably greater than the actual number of learners.

D12. The planned learner numbers in Annex C to the Grant Letter are intended to underpin delivery of the PSA targets. But PSA targets are mainly about learner achievements, not learner numbers, though plainly the two are related via the success rate. Annex C, as well as showing planned learner numbers also shows five 'Key PSA related outputs', for instance, 346,000 'first full Level 2 Adult Achievements' in 2008/09 - a figure that contrasts with the total target across 'Adult Learner Responsive' and 'Employer Responsive' categories of 736,000 adult level 2 learners. The difference is explained, of course, by the fact that not all will succeed and not all will be taking a 'first' full level 2.

D13. In total, Annex C to the Grant Letter presents 22 figures for planned learner numbers and the five 'Key PSA related outputs', 27 targets in all. This number excludes totals of those targets and also learner numbers in academies, shown in Annex C as a memorandum item but for which the LSC is not funded.

- D14. Twenty-seven targets may seem a considerable number but must be judged against an annual investment of some £10bn of taxpayers' money to 'purchase' the achievement of those targets.
- D15. The three SFRs currently produced by LSC report on the 'territory' covered by the PSA indicators and Grant Letter targets, but there is by no means an exact match. It would not be reasonable to expect such a match because two of the SFRs were published before the indicators and targets were available and the third shortly afterwards. We do, however, recommend that in future the SFRs are adapted to correspond exactly to the PSA indicators and targets. The LSC's proposal to replace their three SFRs with a single annual SFR supplemented by quarterly management information does not alter the principle: that SFR and the management information should likewise information on the same definitional basis as the indicators and targets. The principle should apply moreover both to cases where achievement against the indicator or target is substantially within the LSC's remit and to those where the connection is less direct, for instance PSA2.2, which aims to have 79% of working age adults qualified to at least full Level 2 and where the LSC's sphere of influence is part of the flow of first full Level 2 qualifications that is in turn one of the flows influencing the target variable.
- D16. To give an example, Table 1 in SFR8 (published December 2007) shows historical data for broadly the same variables as in the planned Learner Numbers table of Annex C to the Grant Letter, but there are some differences in content, layout and degree of analysis; and even where it seems clear that Annex C and Table 1 are referring to the same variable - for instance with total 16-19 learner numbers in FE - it is not easily possible to be certain that this is indeed the case. There should instead be a clear 'one cell to one cell' correspondence between the two documents, so that progress can be assessed. At the moment, only four (16-19 FE; 16-18 Apprenticeships; FE 19+; and Train-to-Gain) of the 22 substantive¹¹ rows in Annex C appear to us to have an exact counterpart in Table 1 of SFR8. Similar reasoning applies to the table of five 'Key PSA Related Outputs' also within Annex C, though in this case the corresponding SFR (SFR9 was published before the Annex C targets became available.
- D17. To make a rather obvious point, there is no suggestion that the extensive and helpful further analysis included within the three LSC SFRs should be dropped, but merely that all of the indicators and targets should have a clear counterpart within the SFRs.

¹¹ i.e. rows excluding totals and the Academies row, which is presented as a memorandum item.

Official PSA Indicators	Comment on measurement	Relationship to SFRs ¹²
PSA2 'Improve the skills of the population, on the way to ensuring a world class skills base by 2020'		
1. 597,000 people of working age to achieve a first level 1 or above literacy qualification, and 390,000 to achieve a first entry level 3 or above numeracy qualification	LSC ILR record supplemented by a specialist survey	SFR9 currently offers some analysis by age and level but not enough to show progress against the two numerical indicators. SFR9 should show the LSC contribution explicitly
2. 79% of working age adults qualified to at least full Level 2	LFS	SFR5 provides 'snapshot' data on both indicators from Labour Force Survey, though sampling variation impairs ¹³ the usefulness of the data for assessing short term progress. Modelling future progress depends on demographic and migration flows as well as on the achievement of qualifications. The SFR system should provide explicit data on enrolment for, and achievement of, qualifications contributing to the indicators and in particular the achievement of a 'first' ¹⁴ L2 or L3 since plainly someone gaining a second L2/L3 will not contribute to attainment of the indicators. All three of the current LSC SFRs (SFR7 SFR8 SFR9) should provide this information
3. 56% of working age adults qualified to at least full Level 3	LFS	
4. 130,000 apprentices to complete the full apprenticeship framework	LSC ILR	The data can be obtained from SFR9 by multiplying the 'complete framework' success rate by the number of leavers. But this type of multiplication can be subject to definitional error and it would be better to show the number of completions explicitly
5. 36% of working age adults qualified to Level 4 and above by 2014, with an interim milestone of 34% by 2011	LFS	Attainment 'post-16' is a precursor for HE; and the LSC Grant Letter requires the Council to support the

¹² This table relates to the new suite of indicators published by HM Treasury in October 2007. With one exception, the SFRs that we have reviewed were published before that date. In commenting on what SFRs should now show in the light of the changes to the indicators, no criticism is intended of the existing SFRs prepared at a time when the indicators were different

¹³ The confidence interval is around 0.4 percentage points, i.e. a real underlying improvement from (say) 75% to 75.8% (representing about 250,000 individuals) could plausibly appear in the statistics as 'no change' - or, of course, as a change twice as large as the actual change.

¹⁴ We do not underestimate the practical difficulty of assessing whether a particular enrolment/achievement is for a 'first' qualification, but the attempt must be made.

Official PSA Indicators	Comment on measurement	Relationship to SFRs ¹²
6. Increase participation in HE towards 50% of those aged 18-30 with growth of at least a percentage point every two years to the academic year 2010/11.	HESA; LSC ILR; Govt Actuaries Dept (for population estimates)	attainment of these indicators. LSC also funds some provision at Level 4 (see SFR9). The measurement issues are complex and we do not see further data within the system of post-16 SFRs as a priority. In the very long term, however, there is potential to merge the HE and post-16 data recording systems, especially given the growing volume of 'cross-overs' between the FE and HE sectors.
Supplementary Grant Letter target: An FE Learner Success Rate of 80% for FE Colleges by 2010/11		Appears in SFR9
PSA4: Promote world-class science and innovation in the UK		
5. Number of young people taking A-levels in Mathematics, Physics, Chemistry and Biological sciences		SFR1 shows numbers of young people taking A-levels. Given that only this group of subjects has a PSA indicator, further analysis should show the 'numbers taking'. Numbers of young people attaining these A-levels are available from the examining bodies
PSA10 'Raise the educational achievement of all children and young people'		
4. Increase the proportion achieving 5A*-C GCSEs (and equivalent) including GCSEs in both English and Maths, at Key Stage 4 to 53% by 2011	National Pupil Database	Not shown within this suite of ten SFRs because not a post-16 target. We would comment in general that with the development of the 14-19 agenda, these data should be shown within the wider SFR system.
5. Increase the proportion of young people achieving Level 2 at age 19 to 82% by 2011 Supplementary Grant Letter target: Reducing the inequality gap in attainment at Level 2 so that by 2010/11 61% of those in receipt of free school meals at age 16 achieve Level 2 by age 19	Matched administrative data drawing together data from the Schools Census database, Awarding Bodies, the national Information System for Vocational Qualifications,	Indicators 10.5 and 10.6 are reported on explicitly in SFR2, which is prepared from various data sources as will also be the case for the two supplementary Grant Letter targets. We assume that SFR2 will be amended to report against the supplementary targets in due course.
6. Increase the proportion of young people achieving Level 3 at age 19 to 54% by 2011		As with the counterpart indicators for adults, to support

Official PSA Indicators	Comment on measurement	Relationship to SFRs ¹²
<p><u>Supplementary Grant Letter target:</u> Reducing the inequality gap in attainment at Level 3 so that by 2010/11 29% of those in receipt of free school meals at age 16 achieve Level 3 by age 19</p>	and the LSC ILR	modelling of future progress against the indicators the SFR system should provide explicit data on enrolment for, and achievement of, qualifications contributing to the indicators. All three of the current LSC SFRs (SFR7 SFR8 SFR9) should provide this information
PSA11 'Narrow the gap in achievement between children from lower income and disadvantaged backgrounds and their peers'		
2. Achievement gap between pupils eligible for free school meals and their peers achieving the expected level at Key Stages 2 and 4	Data to be collated by DCSF	Not shown within this suite of ten SFRs because not a post-16 target. We would comment in general that with the development of the 14-19 agenda, these data should be shown within the wider SFR system.
3. increase the proportion of pupils progressing by two levels in English and maths at each of Key Stages 2, 3 and 4	Data to be collated by DCSF	
5. Increase the proportion of children in care achieving 5A*-C GCSEs (and equivalent) at Key Stage 4 to 53% by 2011	DCSF arrangements for measurement are being developed	
6.(Reduce) the gap between the initial participation in full time higher education gaps for young people aged 18, 19 and 20 from the top three and the bottom four socio-economic classes	A complex range of data from HESA, LSC, UCAS, ONS, GAD and HEFCE	SFR10 (from the Youth Cohort Study) provides some relevant information, but uses relatively small sample sizes and relates to activity at age 18 (rather than at 18, 19 or 20 as in the PSA indicator)
PSA14 'Increase the number of children and young people on the path to success'		
1. Reduce the proportion of 16 to 18 year-olds who are not in education, employment or training (NEET) by two percentage points by 2010.		SFR1 reports on NEET and on NET (Not in any Education or Training), NET being required for the Supplementary Grant Letter target. SFR1 already analyses by age so separate data for 17 year-olds are available
<p><u>Supplementary Grant Letter target:</u> Increasing the numbers of 17 year-olds in education or training so that 86% are participating in 2010/11.</p>		

Appendix E: Statistics and the Code of Practice

- E1. Following Royal Assent in July 2007 to the Statistics and Registration Service Act, a new, independent Statistics Board is due to begin operations in April 2008, by which time the existing Statistics Commission is expected to have been wound up¹⁵.
- E2. We have relied heavily on the Statistics Commission's proposed Code of Practice¹⁶ and also on the Allsopp Review¹⁷ and on other documents. Although the Code's status is that of 'proposal', it is plain that the Statistics Commission would have implemented it but for its pending replacement by the Statistics Board, and it forms a legacy recommendation to the Board. It is the closest we have to an authoritative set of principles for the production and dissemination of government statistics. At the level of generality used in this review the proposed Code is similar to the existing National Statistics Code of Practice
- E3. At the heart of the proposed Code are ten Principles, each of which is underpinned by between five and nine Practices. The aim should be, of course, for SFRs to comply with the Code in its entirety, but the Principles differ considerably in their relevance to this review. They are listed below using the same numbering as in the Code with a brief comment:

Integrity – we have found no reason to doubt the statistical integrity of the current SFRs and none of our proposals imperils statistical integrity.

Relevance (to users) – central to this review.

Sound methodology and assured quality – we have found no substantial reasons to doubt SFR methodology and quality, though some of our interviewees did express concerns about some elements of the data. It is, however, outside the scope of our work to assess whether these concerns are valid.

Value for money ('the resources allocated to statistical work should be used optimally to deliver outputs that meet the needs of users inside and outside government') – a detailed assessment of value for money is beyond the scope of this review, but we have indeed aimed to explain how to meet the 'needs of users inside and outside government'.

Communication – Principle 5 relates to communication of statistics to users and is of considerable importance for this Review.

Presenting statistics – concerned with the 'style and content of statistical reports' and directly relevant to this review.

Accessibility ('Official statistics should be equally and readily accessible to all users') – raises several points relevant to our review.

Confidentiality – obviously of the utmost importance, but our proposals would not affect the maintenance of confidentiality.

Proportionate burden ('on data providers') – we do not propose any new burdens.

¹⁵ See Statistics Commission Annual Report, 2006/07 of July 2007.

¹⁶ Statistics Commission 'Proposals for a Code of Practice for Official Statistics' (Report No 35), October 2007.

¹⁷ Allsopp, C 'Review of statistics for economic policymaking: final report to the Chancellor of the Exchequer, the Governor of the Bank of England and the National Statistician', HMSO, March, 2004 ISBN 1-84532-013-1

Adequate resources – we have not been asked to assess whether the resources currently available to prepare SFRs are adequate. Our proposals do not in general require a material increase in resources compared with the burden currently borne by data providers.

- E4. From the brief analysis above, it is apparent that Principles 2, 5, 6 and 7 are most relevant to this review.
- E5. In the body of this report, we have referred to the importance of the Statistics Commission's proposed Code of Practice, which has informed the criteria that we have used to assess the SFRs. This Appendix lists the four Principles within the Code that, in our view, are most relevant to this Review and highlights in bold the most relevant Practices underpinning each Principle (the Principles and Practices form the core of the Code).

Principle 2: Relevance

The production and dissemination of official statistics should be planned so as to meet the requirements of informed decision-making in government, public services, business and the wider community. As far as possible, official statistics should be internally consistent, consistent over time, and compatible between producers.

Practices

2.1 Under the guidance of the National Statistician, adopt systematic statistical planning arrangements, including transparent priority-setting, that reflect the obligation to support all uses that serve the public interest.

2.2 **Investigate and document the needs of users of official statistics, the use made of existing statistics and the types of decision they inform, and the key areas of emerging demand and unmet need. Take these into account in the planning process and report the results.**

2.3 **When changes are contemplated to official statistics, consult users effectively. Consultation should follow the Guidance on consultation (Annex B).**

2.4 Adopt common statistical sampling frames, questions, definitions, statistical units and classifications (including common geographic referencing and coding standards) to promote comparability across official statistics. Make the reasons for deviations from standard models publicly available.

2.5 Adopt international standard concepts, definitions and classifications to promote international comparability wherever practicable and support the development of those standards through effective engagement with international organisations.

2.6 Where time series data are revised, or changes are made in methodology or coverage, consistent historical data should be produced wherever possible, taking into account user requirements.

Principle 5: Communication

Official statistics, and information about statistical processes, should be published in a form convenient to users and in as much detail as is practicable and allowed by confidentiality constraints.

Practices

5.1 **Make statistics available in as much detail as is reliable and practicable, subject to legal and confidentiality constraints, offering choice and flexibility in the format according to the level of detail required by the user.**

- 5.2 Publish documentation on procedures followed in the production and dissemination of official statistics – in sufficient technical detail to allow calculations to be reproduced.
- 5.3 Announce substantial methodological changes well in advance of the release of statistics based on the new methods.
- 5.4 Provide a statement explaining the nature and extent of revisions at the same time that they are released.
- 5.5 Release statistical work in progress, in whole or in part, where justified and approved by the National Statistician. For example, ‘experimental statistics’ may be published in order to involve users and other stakeholders in their development. They must be clearly marked as such and explained in both technical and lay terms.

Principle 6: Presenting statistics

The style and content of statistical reports should be balanced and impartial, and meet the needs of user communities.

Practices

- 6.1 Present statistics impartially and in ways that users find helpful.**
- 6.2 Provide full and helpful commentary on the relevance and reliability of statistics in relation to the range of potential uses.**
- 6.3 Prepare and disseminate analyses which aid interpretation and provide context, including analysis of the main findings.**
- 6.4 Where it will help users, include factual information about the policy context of official statistics. However, statistical text and interpretation should not be subject to approval by anyone other than those responsible for the statistical product.**
- 6.5 Release datasets and reference databases in formats that are convenient to the widest range of users.**
- 6.6 Adopt formats for the presentation of statistics in graphs, tables and maps that provide clarity and consistency.**

Principle 7: Accessibility

Official statistics should be equally and readily accessible to all users.

Practices

- 7.1 Make official statistics equally available to all and at the same time, subject to any rights to pre-release access established under the Statistics and Registration Service Act.
- 7.2 Make access to official statistics as straightforward as possible by providing easy-to-use entry points and exploiting all appropriate means of dissemination, working with other producers and with organisations outside government as appropriate.**
- 7.3 Release all regular statistical reports on the internet without charge to the user.**
- 7.4 For any supplementary statistical services for which a charge is made, adopt clear pricing policies that comply with legislation and government policy.
- 7.5 Ensure that official statistics are disseminated in forms which enable those with disabilities to access them.**
- 7.6 Publicise official statistics in ways that enable users to identify and**

access information relevant to their needs.

- 7.7 **Assess user satisfaction with the form and timing of official statistics outputs and the publicity provided for them – following the Guidance on consultation (Annex B).**
- 7.8 **Ensure that official statistics are made publicly available in forms that enable and encourage re-use.**
- 7.9 Deposit official statistics with the relevant national archive in accordance with relevant legislation. Deposits should be accompanied by information about their purposes, design and methodology to aid their re-use.

Appendix F: LSC Review

F1. In parallel with our work on this project, the LSC has conducted a review of the three SFRs that it produces including a review of users of the SFRs within the LSC. The Executive Summary of the Review is reproduced below. Its key conclusion is as follows:

- *'v) The key proposal in this paper is that the LSC moves away from SFRs and publishes instead an Annual Volume of Statistics (under the National Statistics banner) which will deliver the definitive and complete statement of the LSC's activity in a year. The data to be published will maintain key time series - and include the year end position on progress towards PSA targets.*
- *vi) The proposal also includes putting into the public domain, on a quarterly basis, MI for a range of performance measures - details of the data to be shown in these publications are shown in Annexes 6 and 7.'*

F2. We have no fundamental disagreement with this proposal, but have the following comments:

- The LSC review indicates that 'data for the Quarterly MI reports and the Statistical Volume will rely heavily on the Strategic Reporting Platform, key elements of which are not yet fully operational'. It would seem unwise to change the current system until data availability can be guaranteed;
- From the user perspective, it might be better to have a single volume for the whole of the material covered by the current suite of SFRs than to have an LSC volume and then either a continuation of the remaining seven SFRs or some alternative arrangement in respect of them. We accept, however, that an LSC volume might be a useful interim step;
- The review also states that 'Given the potential size of the statistical volume, the data will show the national picture but not sub-national geographies'. Given that Public Service Agreement Delivery Agreement 2 requires regional analysis, we suggest that summary regional analysis should indeed be provided. Moreover, given that the LSC already makes available via its website (e.g. at www.lsc.gov.uk/providers/Data/statistics/) extensive information at greater levels of detail, we suggest that access to local information should be available via links to appropriate pages within the website;
- The review indicates that the proposed annual volume will maintain and in some ways enhance the data available in the current SFRs. We assume that this will include the analysis by factors such as age, ethnicity, disability status and so on as at present;
- The review of users within the LSC found little support for the current 'October' figures (SFR7). Doubtless users had in mind the variability of these early figures when compared with the (eventual) final figures for learner numbers. We found, in contrast, a considerable appetite for these early figures and a view that the data should be made more reliable if they are - at the moment - insufficiently comprehensive or otherwise uncertain. In our view, this latter judgment is correct and we recommend that the data continue to be made available through the proposed new system; and

- The LSC's remit is England. But as a courtesy to users LSC might usefully provide links to information sources in the devolved administrations and, if practicable without significant cost, might provide some basic information for each nation and for the UK as a whole.

Review of Statistical First Releases



Leading learning and skills

Final

14 November 2007

Management Summary

- i) This paper assesses the benefits and issues associated with the three Statistical First Releases (SFRs) produced by the LSC and will contribute to the review of SFRs currently being conducted by DIUS.
- ii) SFRs form part of National Statistics. The Office of National Statistics (ONS) require publications to be an authoritative source, with strict guidelines being applied to data production processes. SFRs are the means by which the most recently available data on public sector activity is put into the public domain.
- iii) LSC users have a high regard for SFRs and confidently use them as a definitive source of information. However, there is no evidence that either LSC users or the media view the topics covered in LSC produced SFRs as being particularly newsworthy or time sensitive.
- iv) Whilst LSC produced SFRs show headline figures and maintain a consistent time series, they do not say anything about the Public Service Agreement (PSA) or other Government targets against which the LSC's performance will be measured.
- v) The key proposal in this paper is that the LSC moves away from SFRs and publishes instead an Annual Volume of Statistics (under the National Statistics banner) which will deliver the definitive and complete statement of the LSC's activity in a year. The data to be published will maintain key time series - and include the year end position on progress towards PSA targets.
- vi) The proposal also includes putting into the public domain, on a quarterly basis, MI for a range of performance measures - details of the data to be shown in these publications are shown in annexes 6 and 7.

vii) **The benefits of this approach can be summarised as being:**

- the assurance readers take from using a National Statistics publication is retained
- LSC's claims of performance against PSA targets will be shown in National Statistics and gain strength from the associated credibility
- external audiences will frequently have access to newly available MI earlier than was the case with SFRs; and if not earlier, then MI will be available at the same time
- MI placed in the public domain will be operational measures. Whilst these do not define whether a PSA target has been met, they are highly effective leading indicators for whether a target is likely to be met. See Annex 1 for an example.

- viii) There is no intention to show financial data in either the Annual Statistical Volume or the Quarterly MI publication. This approach follows the precedent of not showing financial data in LSC produced SFRs.
- ix) The proposed approach contains a limited level of risk, the key elements being:
- ensuring that the Quarterly MI publication links effectively to other performance reports currently being developed, namely: the LSC
 - performance framework, a new quarterly briefing on adult attainment based on the Labour Force Survey; and Framework for Excellence.
 - DIUS might not support our proposal in the proposition that goes to ONS for approval.
 - Our proposal is included in DIUS's submission to ONS but ONS might not accept the LSC component of the proposal
 - data for the Quarterly MI reports and the Statistical Volume will rely heavily on the Strategic Reporting Platform, key elements of which are not yet fully operational.