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**News from the FE System Data Programme**

The FE System Data Programme involves the creation of an independent *information authority* and a national Data Service. The authority will set and regulate data standards for all organisations involved in further education and training in England. A full Data Service is expected to collect, handle and disseminate information across the further education system. Working in tandem, the two organisations will streamline and improve the way information is collected and shared.

**Delivering the new Data Service**

Work is now underway to deliver key components of a national Data Service prior to its planned launch in April next year.

Projects in progress include:

- Creating a sector-wide customer service function that includes a central contact point for data queries and named contacts for data consultations
- Specification of benchmark reports based upon provider requirements and covering data content and timing

Following requests from providers, work will soon begin to investigate how LSC and OfSTED reports can be harmonised; how comparative performance reports can be improved; and how the burden on providers can be reduced.

“The new Data Service will be up and running by the spring and we expect all the major LSC internal rearrangements required will be completed before then,” said Reg Basimi, Programme Manager. “It is an evolutionary process because we do not want to disrupt

current services and are determined to learn as we go and deliver a service that the sector wants.”

The new national Data Service will be established in April 2008 to take responsibility for collecting and disseminating further education information in England.

## **ILR 08/09 – latest progress**

New and carried forward requests for change to the 08/09 Individualised Learner Record (ILR) have gone through preliminary sifting by *the information authority* to determine their benefit and practicality.

As a result, 63 requests are being taken forward for detailed analysis and likely implementation; 25 will undergo further review; and 21 have been rejected.

Consultations on the likely changes are now taking place with representatives from Further Education colleges, Work Based Learning and other provider groups, software vendors and *information authority* board members to further assess their practicality and potential burden.

Members of the authority board will be consulted on all potential changes and will advise on the impact they will have in their sectors. The board will agree the final ILR specification at its meeting in December.

If you have any queries about the process, please email [ILR2008-09Specification@theia.org.uk](mailto:ILR2008-09Specification@theia.org.uk) to request further information.

## ***information authority* at ALP conference**

Graham Jones will host his first external event as Chairman of *the information authority* when he speaks to delegates at the sixth annual autumn conference of the Association of Learning Providers (ALP) later this month.

The authority is running a ‘making data work for you’ seminar at which delegates will be asked to identify and discuss the information and data issues that most affect them and their businesses.

Graham, who will be supported by Una Bennett, new Head of *the information authority*, at the event in Newbury, is keen that providers are made aware that the authority exists to work for them by reducing the burden of unnecessary data demands.

“Private training providers are a key part of government plans to improve the nation’s skill base and the ALP conference represents a golden opportunity for the *information authority* to set out its stall to this increasingly important group.

“We shall want to tell them not just what we are all about and where we are heading, but point out that we are always in listening mode. Part of our task is to give a voice to individual providers who find themselves at odds with, or confused by, rising regulatory data demands.

“Private providers often have fewer resources to help them cope with the burdens of data collection and analysis and it is a key task of the authority to show that we really can make

a difference to their workload in this area. We can do this by simplifying and rationalising the demands on them and by providing a straightforward point of contact where they can voice their opinions, lodge their protests, ask their questions and, if we get it right, offer their thanks for a job well done.”

## **News from MIAP**

Managing Information Across Partners (MIAP) is about streamlining how information on learning and achievement is collected, handled and shared across the education sector so that excellent services are made available to individuals, employers and communities.

MIAP will be capable of issuing every person in education and training with a Unique Learner Number and enable the collation of a lifelong record of their participation and achievements that can be accessed through the internet. It will support this by delivering Common Data Definitions that can be used by everyone in the sector; and giving access to the UK Register of Learning Providers, containing details of individual training organisations and the services they provide.

## **Ministerial launch for MIAP service**

The MIAP service will be given a Ministerial launch at an event at Central Hall, Westminster on February 14<sup>th</sup> 2008.

Ministerial involvement at the event underlines the strong support for the initiative to streamline the collection and sharing of information across education and training shown by both the Department for Children, Schools and Families and the Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills.

“This a very exciting time for MIAP with the Learner Registration Service going live for early adopter organisations last month and the roll out of the service across the sector from next year,” said Bobbie McClelland, Senior Responsible Owner of the MIAP programme of work.

“Our launch event has been timed to coincide with the next phase of development, which will enable any provider of learning or careers advice to become a registering body so they can assign or confirm Unique Learner Numbers. We are delighted to have Ministerial support.”

## **Learner Registration Bodies sign up**

Forty six of the 60 organisations that will be early adopters of MIAP have signed up to be Learner Registration Bodies within the first six weeks of the service going live.

“It has been a really great response,” said Tim Barrett, MIAP Sector Change Manager for the Learning and Skills Council. “Stratford upon Avon College was the first to register within hours of the live service being launched and we are well on track to meeting our target to have all the early adopters registered by the end of October.”

MIAP is also receiving an increasing number of enquiries from colleges and schools involved in trials of the Qualifications and Credit Framework wishing to incorporate the Unique Learner Number into the delivery of qualifications for the academic year 07/08.

## UKRLP links to Edubase

The UK Register of Learning Providers (UKRLP) has established links with Edubase, the Department for Children Schools and Families' database of schools information for England and Wales.

UKRLP is integrating Edubase as a data verification source. This means that when a school is created by statute, the register is automatically notified through a web service and the school is allocated a UK Provider Reference Number (UKPRN).

All school status changes, including closure or change of Head Teacher, are notified in the same way. At present, schools are manually imported to the UKRLP and visible through the UKRLP portal. It is anticipated that the automated link will go live at the end of this month.

The UKRLP was launched in August 2005 and now holds information on more than 17,000 education and training providers. To find out more, visit its website at [www.ukrlp.co.uk](http://www.ukrlp.co.uk) .

## New website area for early adopters

The 60 organisations that have become early adopters of the MIAP Learner Registration Service can now access and download communications support materials; application forms; user and organisational agreements through a new 'Early Adopters' area of the website [www.miap.gov.uk](http://www.miap.gov.uk) .

We will be adding new documents to this area as they are developed, and we would welcome suggestions about what early adopters would find helpful. If you have any ideas, please e-mail [Anna.Mannion@lsc.gov.uk](mailto:Anna.Mannion@lsc.gov.uk) .

If you would like to subscribe to this newsletter, register your contact details at [fesystemdataprog@lsc.gov.uk](mailto:fesystemdataprog@lsc.gov.uk)

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

[www.theinformationauthority.org.uk](http://www.theinformationauthority.org.uk)

[www.miap.gov.uk](http://www.miap.gov.uk)