

inform

Issue 36 – May 2010

Inform is a monthly newsletter from *the information authority* and the Data Service, providing you with regular news and updates on our work. To subscribe to inform email: informnewsletter@theia.org.uk.

Out and about in 2010

Both *the information authority* and the Data Service will be speaking at the following conferences this summer:

- [Summer College Data Conference](#) - This conference is being held on 17 June and follows on from the success of the Spring College Data Conference held in April 2010. College Data Conferences are about data quality and the use of data, such as success rates, to raise education standards. For details on how to book a place at this conference please visit the [conference website](#).
- [AoC Information, Data and Technology Conference](#) – This conference (formerly the NILTA CIS Conference) is being held on 24 June and is a well-established national event focusing on the technical issues associated with the collection of data and on the main challenges confronting College MIS departments. For details on how to book a place at this conference please visit the [conference website](#).

At both of these conferences, John Perks and Peter Ashton from *the information authority* will be providing an insight into the next steps for the FE Learner Data Strategy, and explore what it will mean for data collection and use in the FE Sector. Rich Williams and Ellie Frazier will provide delegates with a useful insight into the work the Data Service is doing to support providers in delivering timely quality data.

'New Horizons Conference 2010' postponed

The information authority, The Data Service and The Learning Records Service (formerly MIAP) is postponing its one-day conference '**A New Horizon - Opportunities and Challenges for Data in the FE Sector**'. This conference will be rescheduled for September 2010. Watch this space for further details.

This month:

- Out and about in 2010
- New Horizons conference postponed

News from *the information authority*:

- 2011/12 ILR change requests
- Data cleansing and changes to the ILR Specification for 2010/11
- Additional data collections for 2010/11
- ILR Online launched

News from the Data Service:

- P9 Employer Responsive Qualification Success Rates available
- Changes to Employer Responsive Qualification Success Rates methodology
- New e-learning modules
- Launch of new Post-16 Data Guide
- March 2010 Statistical First Release revised

About us

- *The information authority*
- The Data Service

News from *the information authority*

2011/12 ILR change requests

As you may be aware, the deadline for 2011/12 ILR change requests is Friday **18 June 2010**. Any proposed changes to the ILR must be agreed by *the information authority* board at its meeting in September, following a period of consultation in the sector. The information, process and form for making a change request can be found in the [Request for Change](#) section of *the information authority* website. We have strengthened the assessment criteria this year and will exclude previously rejected changes unless there is significant new information or a new business need.

Also this year, nominated champions from key government departments and agencies will be asked to present their proposed changes to an ILR Change Request Review Group to assess the implications of the change. We are also holding a stakeholder consultation event on 15 July 2010 and will be publishing the proposed changes on [feconnect](#). Colleagues within the further education system will be able to provide feedback through these channels.

The [full timetable](#) for developing and publishing the 2011/12 ILR specification is on our website. If you would like further information or clarification on the change process, please write to ilrchanges@theia.org.uk or call 024 7682 5658.

Data cleansing and changes to the ILR Specification for 2010/11

The information authority is giving providers early notification of changes which need to be made to 2009/10 [ILR](#) data to ensure that the first ILR return of 2010/11 can be returned without producing too many errors.

The table of changes to the [ILR Specification 2010/11](#) is available on *the information authority* [website](#). This table gives an early indication as to which fields within the ILR return should be investigated by providers in preparation for the first ILR return of 2010/11. It also contains some of the changes which have been made to the ILR Specification 2010/11 which will impact on the migration of Employer Responsive 2009/10 ILR data to 2010/11 data, and includes the addition of new validation rules which could affect the return of valid ILR data.

A number of changes that have been made to the ILR Specification 2010/11 will be taken into account when the ILR data is migrated from 2009/10 to 2010/11 ILR format. This will only apply to Employer Responsive providers, so details have not been included in the table below as they are included in Appendix B to the ILR Specification 2010/11. Batch providers will need to ensure that their own systems have been updated.

For further details of changes to the ILR Specification and validation rules, please refer to the [ILR Specification 2010/11 page](#) of *the information authority* website.

Additional data collections for 2010/11

The information authority board agreed in September 2009 to the collection of two annual data collections in addition to the regular ILR data returns. The two collections are:

- **YPLA-funded learner numbers data collection for 2010/11** - an aggregate return detailing the actual numbers of learners that receive funding from the YPLA (either directly or via their Local Authority), which are enrolled on the 1st October and an estimate of the numbers of learners that will be contained in the LR01 return for 2010/11. This data will be used by Local Authorities and the YPLA to support the 2010/11 allocations process. The return date for this collection is **Friday 8 October 2010**.
- **Employer contributions collection for 2010/11** - an aggregate return detailing the amounts and types of employer contributions received from employers relating to all co-funded ER funded learning aims (19+ apprenticeships and co-funded Train to Gain provision) during 2010/11. This data will be used by the Skills Funding Agency to monitor the types and levels of employer contributions received by providers and to inform future policy and expected contribution levels. The return must be completed by **11 November 2011**.

Full details of the requirements for both of these returns can be found at:
http://www.theia.org.uk/downloads/ilrdocuments/201011_ilrdetail.htm

ILR Online launched

The information authority has launched its [online version of the ILR](#) specification, in a “web-help” format accessible to all providers. The aim of [ILR Online](#) is to make the ILR specification more accessible and easier to navigate. It has been created following requests from learning providers to make the ILR specification easier to search and more intuitive to use.

[ILR Online](#) looks like a normal help facility, similar to the help facility you get with Microsoft Word or Excel. Providers will have the option to choose whether they view the whole of the ILR specification or only the fields that are relevant to the ILR return type.

Key features:

- Smoother navigation
- Ease of access to information required
- Each return type has a search facility
- Option to save your favourite areas or fields for review later
- Option to print a PDF version of an ILR return type.

At present [ILR Online](#) is available for the 2009/10 ILR Specification, version 4, but the information authority are planning to follow soon with the online release for the 2010/11 spec. Watch this space for further details.

News from the Data Service

P9 Employer Responsive Qualification Success Rates available

The Period 9 Employer Responsive Qualification Success Rate reports and Guidance notes are available for providers to download from the Provider Gateway.

The following additions have been made to Period 9 reports since Period 6:

- For colleges that merged prior to the beginning of the 2009/10 academic year, the Period 9 reports will show current and historical data under the identity of the newly merged college. This enables easier comparison across years.
- Providers will receive a Success Rate report if they have leavers either in the current year or in any of the previous three years reported on.
- Breakdowns by Ethnicity, Gender and Learning Difficulty or Disability have been added to the summary report.
- A footer has been added to each page of the report detailing the latest ILR return used for the production of the report.

Most success rate report queries can be resolved by referring to the full methodology documents, guidance notes, FAQs and Quick Reference Guide to Calculation Methods with examples in action. These documents explain the basic principles of the reports, the key differences from last year's reports and how the reports are structured. They can all be viewed on the [Data Dictionary](#) section of the Data Service website.

Providers can also contact the **Service Desk** on **0870 2670001** or email servicedesk@thedata.org.uk quoting the provider UPIN the report relates to and details of the section of the report being queried.

Employer Responsive Qualification Success Rates Methodology

Minor changes have been made to the Apprenticeship and Train to Gain Success Rates Methodologies for 2009/10 since the Period 6 reports were compiled. The changes have been applied to the Period 9 reports, published on the Provider Gateway on 21 May 2010.

Changes are summarised in the tables on the [Data Service website](#), and the full methodology document for Apprenticeship and Train to Gain Qualification Success Rates for 2009/10 are available at the following link:

<http://www.thedata.org.uk/datadictionary/technicaldefinitions/derivedvariables/0910/index+0910.htm>

If you have any queries please contact the **Service Desk** on **0870 2670001**.

New e-learning modules from the Data Service

Building on the success of the ILR e-learning module launched in November 2009 and feedback received from providers, [the Data Service](#) now plans to develop a further two modules in 2010.

The Data Service is currently in the process of scoping requirements for the development of an e-learning module on **Success Rates** and are currently evaluating various sources of information to identify learning requirements.

Your views count

To help us develop this module, the Data Service requires your feedback. Please take a few minutes to complete the online questionnaire, comments from which will feed into the development of this module.

The questionnaire can be accessed at: <http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/7KF2M2K>

Launch of new Post-16 Data Guide

The Data Service and *the information authority* working in partnership with Nick Linford, author of 'The hands-on guide to post-16 funding', have produced a new guide on performance and data, [The hands-on guide to post-16 performance and data](#).



This guide was launched on 13 April at the [Spring College Data Conference](#). The Data Service has now mailed out a copy of this guide to each Employer Responsive and Learner Responsive provider. We recommend this book as a good introduction to the way performance is measured and data are used in the FE sector, so this book will be of interest to many within the sector. Additional copies are now available to buy from the [data guide website](#).

March 2010 Statistical First Release Revised

The [March 2010 Statistical First Release](#) (SFR) was [revised](#) on 22 April to correct a number of technical and methodological errors discovered after the initial publication had been released.

The provisional estimate of Apprenticeship achievements in the first six months of the 2009/10 academic year has been revised upwards. The number of learners participating in Full Level 2 and Full Level 3 provision in 2008/09 has also been revised. The estimate of Entry to Employment achievements has also been revised upwards. A more detailed explanation of the corrections is given in the commentary (see note 2, page 1) of the release and in the footnotes to each revised table.

The supplementary tables to the SFR have also been revised where necessary and additional supplementary tables have also been published, including an extra set of Apprenticeship tables.

The next SFR is expected to be published by the Data Service in June 2010.

About us

The information authority

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

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

The Data Service

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

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