

Update on the Review of the Statistical First Release on Post-16 Further Education and Skills

Background

This note provides an update on the review of the Statistical First Release (SFR) on Post-16 Further Education and Skills.

The review began in August 2010. Since then, Government Statistical Service statisticians have met with a number of users, to discuss the format, content and timing of the SFR. Additionally, other users and members of the public have had an opportunity to feed comments into the review via the Data Service website, or through contact with the lead statistician in the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS).

Changes from the Review

Following this consultation, we have agreed a number of changes which will feed into the SFR. Listed below are some of the more substantial changes coming out of the review, which will be implemented in time for the next edition of the SFR.

- Adding a table in the main release that shows the key demographics of learners in further education;
- Adding a table in the main release that shows participation on Adult Safeguarded Learning courses, split by learning type;
- Adding a new table to the main release on vocational qualification awards, and updating this on a quarterly basis;
- Adding some supplementary tables on people Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET), and updating these on a quarterly basis;
- Adding some supplementary tables which show participation and achievement at a sectoral level;
- Removing reference in the SFR to Public Service Agreement targets, relevant to the previous Government.

We have published a full set of SFR table templates on the Data Service website at:

http://www.thedataservice.org.uk/statistics/statisticalfirstrelease/sfr_next/

These templates include all of the changes made to the SFR.

Additionally, there is also a supplementary table list available. This shows all of the supplementary breakdowns that will be released as part of a cascade

from the SFR. Some of these supplementary tables contain new data, or new breakdowns of data compared to what has previously been released.

There are a number of further changes coming out of the SFR review that will not be able to be implemented in time for the next release of the SFR. These changes will be carried over, and fed into future editions of the Release, as and when they are ready. These changes include:

- Adding more information into the Release on the delivery of Level 4 provision across both Further and Higher Education;
- Adding some international comparison tables to the Release, to give an idea of how England compares to other countries;
- Publishing information alongside the Release from the Apprenticeships Vacancy matching Service;
- Adding more information on employers into the Release.

Timing of the SFR

One of the key focuses of this review was on the publication dates of the quarterly SFR, and how this aligned with the availability of data. As a result of this review, we have re-aligned two of the SFR publication dates, to improve the balance between the timeliness and completeness of data.

The original annual publication cycle involved SFRs being released in March, June, October and December. Following the review, we are changing the publication cycle so that SFRs will be released in March, June, **November** and **January**. The new publication cycle will come in with immediate effect, and means that the next edition of the SFR will be published on the **16th November 2010**.

Next Steps for the Review

We are working through the changes coming out of the review. Some of these will be implemented in the November Release, but others will require further work, and will appear in subsequent Releases.

The SFR aims to provide transparency of performance in the FE sector. There are likely to be changes in the FE sector following the publication of the Government's new investment strategy. This strategy will not have been published in time for us to reflect any changes in the November SFR. We will therefore feed in any new requirements stemming from the investment document into subsequent publications of the SFR. We will publish more information on further changes to the SFR in mid-December following the next Release. This will include both changes stemming from the new investment strategy, and changes carried over from this review.

Further Information

If you would like any further information on the review of the Post-16 Further Education and Skills SFR, please contact the lead statistician in BIS at James.Brennan@bis.gsi.gov.uk or telephone 0207 215 1868.

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