

# inform

Issue 37 – June 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](mailto:informnewsletter@theia.org.uk).

## Effect of duplicate records on Learner Responsive 08/09 QSR

There has been an issue with the accuracy of data submitted by some providers in F05 returns for 08/09. This has led to anomalies in the data matching (i.e. the creation of 'duplicate records'), which has affected learner responsive success rate reporting, causing a few providers' success rates to be lower than their performance would merit.

Providers are responsible for ensuring that their own data returns are accurate and submitted on time. However, it is accepted that, on this occasion, other circumstances contributed towards the creation of these data anomalies.

Because of these circumstances, one-off action is being taken to amend the success rate calculation and maintain its credibility. Providers can be assured that, whilst there can be no further data submissions now that F05 has closed, the Data Service is taking steps to exclude these duplicate records so that success rates provide what is considered an accurate reflection of performance. This action will ensure that future nationally-published statistics are correct and that all providers' performance will be judged fairly by Ofsted, funding bodies etc.

Amended national success rate results were published in the Statistical First Release on 24 June.

Amended provider QSR reports will then be made available on the Provider Gateway during the week commencing 28 June.

National Success Rate Tables (previously referred to as Benchmarking Reports) will now be available later than originally planned to take account of this release and will be available on the Data Service website on 22 July 2010.

If you have any specific queries about this issue, please refer to the [FAQs on the Data Service website](#).

### This month:

- **Effect of duplicate records on Learner Responsive 08/09 QSR**

### News from *the information authority*:

- **Get it in! Get it right!**
- **Outcomes of June board meeting**
- **2011/12 ILR change requests**
- **2010/11 ILR changes – are you prepared?**
- **Out and about**

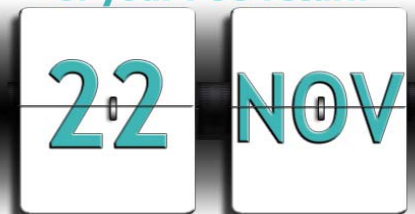
### News from the Data Service:

- **June SFR published**
- **New LIS releases due**
- **Web alerts**
- **Data Warehouse rollout**
- **Data Quality Dashboard reports**
- **Success Rates e-learning**
- **Changes to the LAD**

### News from the sector:

- **Single Equality Scheme Consultation**
- **MIAP renamed**

### Deadline for submission of your F05 return



**Get it in! Get it right!**

## News from *the information authority*

### Get it in! Get it right!

As you may be aware, the deadline for the final 2009/10 learner responsive data return (F05) is **22 November 2010** – **Get it in!** This return date is earlier than ever before. This date is a 'hard close', so no further returns will be accepted after **6.00pm on 22 November 2010**.

A number of free tools are available from the Data Service and *the information authority* to help you ensure your data is accurate, pre and post-submission of your F05 return:

#### **Pre-submission – Get it right!**

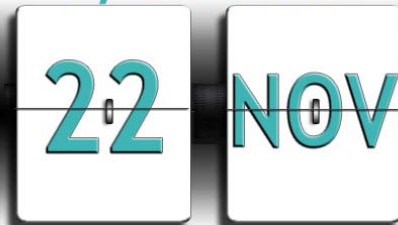
- Available software includes:
  - [the Learner Information Suite](#) (LIS) - this can be used to validate ILR data returns, calculate derived variables, and to generate reports on LR and ER funding.
  - the [Data Self-Assessment Toolkit](#) (DSAT) – this can be used to analyse final funding claims, as well as to perform additional data quality checks, including comparing different data returns for changes.
  - [ILR e-learning module](#) – developed to assist provider understanding of the Individualised Learner Record (ILR).

#### **Post-submission – Get it right!**

- Post-submission of data, providers can download ILR validation reports (rule violation reports) and funding reports from the Data Collections portal. They can also download a credibility report for each submission. These reports provide key summaries on the submitted data against [information authority data quality standards](#), along with key summaries on derived variables calculated by the Data Service.
- Enhancements to credibility reports will be available from November 2010.
- From August 2010, providers will be able to download **Data Quality Dashboard Reports** from the Provider Gateway. The reports, which are aimed at Data/Quality Managers, will provide dashboard views of how well the data meets *the information authority* data quality standards and in comparison to national, regional, local authority, and provider type averages.

For further details you can contact the **Service Desk** on **0870 2670001**, or e-mail [servicedesk@thedataservice.org.uk](mailto:servicedesk@thedataservice.org.uk).

Deadline for submission  
of your F05 return



Get it in! Get it right!

## Outcomes of the June board meeting

*The information authority* board met on 16 June

During the meeting, the board agreed that the secretariat could start formal consultation with the sector on recommendations made by the FE Data Management Group. The group, which is made up of provider, policy and funding representatives from the sector, has drawn up a set of principles to tackle inconsistent data reporting by providers. The group was created in response to data management issues raised by the Chief Executive of the LSC, when he wrote to providers in September last year. Look out for the consultation starting soon through partner websites and newsletters.

The board also agreed that the FE Data Management Group should take forward work to create an additional set of principles that funding bodies could sign up to, which would also assist providers in producing good quality, timely data.

There was agreement among board members that guidelines should be set for the timeliness of employer responsive data – but with an addition that allows individual providers to make a case for mitigating circumstances in the case of genuine errors being made. The board also noted the good progress made so far in work to agree a standard data set and collection timetable for Connexions data. Members were very supportive of this work and keen for it to reach a positive conclusion.

A copy of [the agenda is available to view](#). The draft minutes from this board meeting will be published on this website soon.

Please follow the links to view [minutes](#) and [papers](#) from previous board meetings.

## 2011/12 ILR change requests

The closing date for 2011/12 ILR change requests was Friday 18 June 2010. Paul Kelman said “We received 37 change requests and are now applying our assessment criteria to decide which changes will be taken forward and which will be declined. Those being taken forward will be consulted on over the summer. A brief [summary of the changes](#) is already available on our website. A more detailed list will be available shortly.”

There will be a stakeholder consultation event on 15 July 2010 to begin capturing views on the changes. Following that event, discussion areas will be set up on [feconnect](#) so that anyone in the further education system can contribute their views on the proposed changes.

*The information authority* board will meet in September 2010 to decide what changes will be made to the 2011/12 ILR. 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 email to [ilrchanges@theia.org.uk](mailto:ilrchanges@theia.org.uk) or call 024 7682 5658.

## 2010/11 ILR changes – are you prepared?

[The changes to the ILR Specification for 2010/11](#) will come into effect on 1 August 2010. Full details of all the changes are available on [the information authority website](#).

Some key changes that providers should be aware of are:

- **Hard closes of all returns:**
  - Each LR and ASL return will hard close on the return date (not just LR05/SL05)
- **New LR and ER data collections**
  - The new YPLA funded learner numbers return date is **Friday 8 October**.
  - New collection of data about employer contributions received during 2010/11 from ER funded providers must be sent at the end of 2010/11 (period 13).
- **ULN requirements**
  - All funded learners in the LR and ER returns must have a ULN or the learner record will be rejected (error will be enforced from ER04 and LR02 onwards)
  - Validation rules and checks on the ULN have increased. Validation errors will be enforced 60 days after the learning aim start date. Not all rules apply to very short learning aims.
- **Employer number requirements**
  - All ER funded learning aims must return an employer reference number in field A44 (Employer Identifier). Text entries for continuing learners will not be valid in 2010/11 and must be updated.
- **Identification of funding organisation**
  - The funding organisation must be identified in field A11 (Source of funding) and a contracting organisation code recorded in field A70 for all funded learners in all ILR returns

*The information authority* are in the process of developing an online interactive module with the 2010/11 changes, this module will support the existing [ILR e-learning module](#).

The updated module will be launched early July and available on the [Data Service](#) and [the information authority](#) websites.

## Out and about

Both *the information authority* and the Data Service were out and about in June speaking at a number of conferences that included:

[Summer College Data Conference](#) - College Data Conferences are about data quality and the use of data, such as success rates to raise education standards. Copies of the slides from this conference are available to [view here](#).

[AoC Information, Data and Technology Conference](#) – This conference (formerly the NILTA CIS Conference) was 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.



John Perks



Rich Williams

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

## News from the Data Service

### June Statistical First Release (SFR) published

The Data Service published its latest Statistical First Release (SFR) on Post-16 Education and Skills: learner participation, outcomes and level of highest qualification held on 24 June 2010. The SFR shows the final performance for 2008/09 against the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) Public Service Agreement (PSA) targets. Updates of the provisional performance for 2009/10 published in the Match 2010 SFR are also shown.

This SFR covers the number of people aged 16 and over who are not in school or university in England and who have taken a course funded by the Skills Funding Agency or the YPLA.

The full report and supplementary tables can be found at:

[http://www.thedataservice.org.uk/statistics/statisticalfirstrelease/sfr\\_current/](http://www.thedataservice.org.uk/statistics/statisticalfirstrelease/sfr_current/)

The next SFR is due to be published in October 2010, subject to a review of the timing and presentation of releases.

Previous Statistical First Releases are available on the [Data Service website](#).

### New Learner Information Suite (LIS) releases due

Development and testing on new releases of the Learner Information Suite (LIS 18.01) are in progress. A Beta test version was made available for feedback earlier this month to assist software writers and providers writing their own ILR software. The release of LIS 18.01 will be in two stages, with availability of version 01 planned for 6 July 2010 (incorporating most of the beta test elements), and the full version available on 02 August 2010.

The Beta test version incorporates changes to the ILR validation rules, functionality, and other screens to reflect 2010/11 requirements. It contains an early version of the 2010/11 Employer Responsive calculation module with basic ER funding reports. It also contains a version of the Learner Responsive calculation module and a new report - the Young Person's Learner Numbers form.

### Data Service web alerts

To date over 1900 users have subscribed to the Data Service web alerts service, helping them stay in touch and informed on developments happening at the Data Service.

To sign up for this service, which lets users know when new pages are published, or existing pages are updated, visit the [web alerts page](#).

## Data Warehouse roll out begins

The Data Warehouse Project is a multi-phase project that was initiated with the ultimate objective to provide management information via online, self-service reporting and analysis to Data Service customers including: the Skills Funding Agency, YPLA and BIS.

The Data Warehouse will deliver major benefits to our customers in the form of a consistent, accurate and repeatable analysis and query service that will provide a 'single version of the truth'. The Data Service will also benefit in terms of reducing re-work and duplication of effort.

The initial (prototyping) phase of the project began in January 2010 and an initial information and analysis resource will be made available to the Data Service MI Team by the end of July 2010. The MI team will be using this to produce elements of the SFR and to answer information requests and parliamentary questions.

Future phases will make this information directly available to a wider audience (subject to appropriate security controls) with more extensive data coverage.

Further updates on this project will be available in future issues of inform.

## Data Quality Dashboard Reports – Coming Soon!

From August 2010, providers will be able to download **Data Quality Dashboard Reports** from the Provider Gateway. The reports provide dashboard views of the provider's achievement against [the information authority data quality standards](#) and in comparison to national, regional, local authority, and provider type averages.

Data Managers can use provider-specified fields to present data quality information on organisational subsets (e.g. by department or classroom). Each dashboard view contains navigation tabs to aims level information that can be filtered and exported. Additional details regarding the launch of the reports will be announced in the coming weeks.

The Data Service is continuing to support providers through its **Data Quality Outreach programme**. This Service Desk facility is aimed at raising provider awareness of sector data quality standards and at the dissemination of data quality best practice

The **Service Desk** team is working with providers to resolve any data quality issues and concerns providers may have. For further details you can contact the **Service Desk** on **0870 2670001**, or email [servicedesk@thedata-service.org.uk](mailto:servicedesk@thedata-service.org.uk)

## New Success Rates e-learning module

The Data Service is in the process of developing a new e-learning module on Success Rates. This new training tool will aim to:

- improve understanding of and provide a top-level overview of the importance of Qualification Success Rates (QSR)
- demonstrate the QSR methodology and explain how success rates are calculated
- provide answers to frequently asked questions and QSR enquiries
- highlight where further help and guidance can be found.

This module is aimed at Further Education (FE) and Work-Based Learning (WBL) providers in the main, and will also help providers to train new or inexperienced staff in the fundamentals of Qualification Success Rates.

### Your views count

To ensure that the Data Service develops this module suited to the needs of providers, we would like to invite you to take part in testing the prototype. The prototype will be available on 6 July for testing, all feedback will need to be received by 11 July. For further details on this and to register your interest please email your contact details to [ian.tighe@thedata-service.org.uk](mailto:ian.tighe@thedata-service.org.uk).

## Changes to Learning Aim Database (LAD)

The Data Service made some system changes to the LAD which were released on Tuesday 22 June. This required LAD to be offline for a short period. LAD is now online again however, not all data for 2010/11 is available yet.

The Data Service is aware of this and is working to add this data progressively during week commencing 28 June 2010. [Guidance Documents and FAQs](#) explaining the changes will also be available on the Data Service website for providers to refer to during week commencing 28 June 2010.

## News from the sector

### Single Equality Scheme consultation

A new scheme aimed at ensuring all adult learners have the opportunity to achieve their full potential and contribute to a more productive and skilled economy has gone out for public consultation.

The new draft Single Equality Scheme sets out how the Skills Funding Agency will meet its duties as set out in the Equality Act 2010. Once the consultation is complete on 6 September 2010, the full three-year scheme will be published later this year.

Individuals and organisations are being encouraged to give their views on how learner equality can best be achieved. By visiting <http://skillsfundingagency.bis.gov.uk/funding/consultations> those affected by and interested in the work of the Skills Funding Agency will be able to answer consultations questions and help shape the final scheme.

### MIAP renamed 'The Learning Records Service'



Managing Information Across Partners (MIAP) will soon be introducing its new name to stakeholders, government agencies, opinion formers and all learning providers.

As from September 2010, MIAP will be called the [Learning Records Service](http://www.learningrecordsservice.org.uk). This new name for the service also describes exactly what it does. This service puts learners and providers at the heart of its service and customer experience whilst also helping schools, colleges, universities plus training and learning providers to reduce their own bureaucracy and admin burden. The Learning Records Service also provides a completely free service to all areas of secondary and further education plus work-based learning.

It will also be merging MIAP's existing services, products and applications and introducing enhanced functionality for the Personal Learning Record for the Qualifications Credit Framework during September

The previous name MIAP: *Managing Information Across Partners* was well known across specific parts of the education sector, but did not accurately reflect the nature of the current breadth of free products the service provides that are designed to reduce the bureaucracy and admin burden within the sector.

For more information about all its key products and services including the Unique Learner Number, Personal Learning Record and Learning Provider Register go to [www.learningrecordsservice.org.uk](http://www.learningrecordsservice.org.uk)

The Learning Records Service is free to use and is currently available in England, Wales and Northern Ireland.

## About us

### *The information authority*

*The information authority* was established in October 2006 to set 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.