

## This Month

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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.

#### **Data Service makes first appointments**

Allen Hull and Simon Reynolds have been appointed to establish the customer relationship functions of the new Data Service prior to its planned launch next spring.

Both have considerable service management experience with Allen having worked with organisations including the Ministry of Justice; Cable and Wireless and Axa Insurance; and Simon with corporate clients such as BT and Norwich Union.

“Our first priority is to establish the type and level of support that further education providers will most appreciate and to decide how we can deliver it to them in the most effective way,” said Allen.

As well as establishing key customer service functions prior to its launch, work is also underway in other areas for which the service will become responsible. These include:

- Harmonising LSC and Ofsted success rate reporting
- Identifying and quantifying the bureaucratic burden of data collection
- Identifying requirements for better use of data based upon best practice in other sectors and the wider education community

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

### **information authority plans online communities**

The *information authority* is working to determine what will be the best web-based platform through which people across further education can set up online communities to discuss issues and share best practice.

“We see the development of a single online system that will connect people to people and to information as a very important part of our work,” said Dave Briggs, authority Change Manager. “By establishing online communities across the sector we will give people the ability to work together collaboratively, to share knowledge and to work out problems they may face.

“Management of knowledge across the sector is a big issue and while there are one or two small existing platforms through which some people can share information, there is no one place where everyone can go. We have been told by many people that setting up and managing such a service will be a big help.”

The authority hopes to establish an online pilot service by spring next year and will be inviting people across different parts of the sector to test its effectiveness.

### **ALP delegates discuss data burden**

Graham Jones hosted his first external event as Chairman of *the information authority* when he ran a ‘making data work for you’ seminar at the sixth annual autumn conference of the Association of Learning Providers (ALP) in Newbury last month.

Private training providers and their suppliers were given a brief introduction to the role of the authority and invited to identify and discuss the information and data issues that most affect them and their businesses.

Una Bennett, Head of the *information authority*, said she and Graham were keen to impress upon delegates that the authority had been created to work for them to reduce the burden of unnecessary data demands. The debate, she said, was “extremely constructive and valuable.”

“The contributions we received from the floor during the open discussion gave us an important insight into what is concentrating the minds of providers and their suppliers in this part of the sector,” she added. “We will be looking closely at what they said about issues that most affect them and will take these into account when deciding our future plans for action.

“Graham and I felt it was very encouraging that delegates all recognised the important role the *information authority* has to play in reducing the burden of data demands across the further education system.”

## Board to agree ILR specification

The *information authority* board will meet in Coventry on December 5<sup>th</sup> to agree specifications for the 2008/09 Individualised Learner Record.

Of the 111 requests for change received by the authority secretariat, 46 met the necessary business criteria and eight are still under review. The board is expected to consider 54 requests comprising:

- five changes to data collection arrangements and timetables
- a reduction of data collected specifically for the European Social Fund by eight fields
- four new fields
- four sets of changes to the data collected about adult and community learning and adult safeguarded learning provision.
- nine changes to existing fields
- twenty changes to the Higher Education data set
- four sets of changes currently being developed and under review.

Stakeholders will be informed of the board's decisions and a summary of ILR changes will be posted on the website [www.theinformationauthority.org.uk](http://www.theinformationauthority.org.uk) .

The board is expected to discuss the implementation of Framework for Excellence and the implications of proposed changes to the Staff Individualised Record. Members will also consider consultations over the proposed creation of a new FE representative organisation 'Single Voice' to represent the sector in discussions with the Government and regulatory and support agencies.

## Authority workshop for DIUS

Members of the Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills 'FE Skills Group' attended a workshop this month at which Graham Jones explained the work of the *information authority* and discussed the sector's changing data demands.

## 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.

## Preparing a five year plan

Work has begun to prepare a five-year plan for the MIAP service with a strategy meeting at the Department for Children, Schools and Families' (DCSF) offices in London.

Members of the MIAP team were joined by representatives from DCSF; the Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills; the Higher Education Statistics Agency; BECTA; and suppliers LogicaCMG and PWC.

"The idea of the meeting was to reach a consensus as to where the MIAP programme should be going over the next five years now that the Learner Registration Service is 'live' and we have entered the delivery phase," said Mike Coulson, MIAP Product Strategy Manager.

"There was strong agreement that MIAP now needs to move towards providing 'real time' data in support of various initiatives across the education and skills sector. We also need to encourage adoption of our service in Higher Education as well as fulfilling our commitments to schools and Further Education."

## New ULNs uploaded

More than 6,000 new Unique Learner Numbers (ULNs) were successfully uploaded onto the Learner Registration Service last month. Wilberforce College near Hull uploaded details of more 1,500 learners onto the database while Lewisham College registered around 3,500.

"These will be the first of many uploads in the coming months now that our early adopter organisations are through the extremely busy period of enrolment," said Carole Morley, MIAP Service Manager. "It's really great news to see the numbers of ULNs increasing."

The next issue of Inform will be distributed in January 2008. 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)

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