

## About *the information authority*

*The information authority* sets data and collection standards for all organisations involved in further education and training in England.

Our work forms an important part of Government reforms to simplify and improve the way information is collected and shared and to reduce the burden of data demands placed upon providers.

Working alongside the Data Service we review data requests made to learning providers with the aim of improving the quality of data collected and reducing the time spent on administration.

This data is used by organisations in the FE system to ensure that public money is being spent in line with government policy. It's used by audit teams to measure financial probity and by Ofsted to monitor performance.

## We are working to:

- Improve the quality and use of information in support of effective choices by learners and stakeholders in the sector.
- Significantly reduce bureaucracy across the FE system to free up time and resources for front-line services.
- Improve accountability to learners, learning providers and data users for data standards, collections and reporting.

## How does our work benefit you?

### By reducing your data burden:

Following an independent study into provider data burden and the publication of an executive summary we have worked with partners and stakeholders to address the issues raised.

Progress includes:

- Reducing unplanned data requests by the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) and its successor organisations, the YPLA and the Skills Funding Agency.
- Reducing the amount of documentation required for each learner.
- Addressing the reasons behind audit inconsistencies.
- Reducing the volume of data collection required for ESF and Train to Gain funding; and
- Improving guidance for frontline staff.

### By setting data standards:

- Maintaining data standards for the Individualised Learner Record (ILR)
- Governance for the review of data definitions, derived variables, and algorithms
- Working in collaboration with the Information Standards Board to align FE, Schools and Higher Education data standards and definitions
- Revisions in line with 2011 Census data standards

## By improving data collection and analysis:

- Working with funding bodies and Ofsted to harmonise success rate reporting.
- Reviewing and agreeing proposed FE data collection and reporting in initiatives such as the National Apprenticeships Vacancy Matching Service, Integrated Employment and Skills, and Framework for Excellence.
- Removing duplicate and low value data.
- Bringing forward the 2009/10 ILR specification publication date to enable more time for providers to make changes to their processes and systems.

## By improving data reporting processes:

- Working with the Data Service and the Department of Business, Innovation, and Science (BIS) to assess key areas for improvement in reporting e.g. Statistical First Releases.

60 requests to change the 2010/11 ILR were received and considered by *the information authority*.

## How we work

*The information authority* board is made up of senior representatives from the further education sector. An operational secretariat ensures that decisions made by the board are acted upon.

The board has an independent chairman and receives its authority from Ministers. It is empowered by organisations involved in further education and training, through the signing of a protocol.

The board's membership includes: the YPLA; the Skills Funding Agency; BIS; DfE; HOLEX; Ofqual; ALP; AoC; HEFCE; OfSTED; GoSkills; LGA and provider practitioners.

## How can you get involved?

We need your help to identify improvements that are needed in data collection and reporting and we encourage system-wide participation and collaboration to identify and resolve data issues.

You can make your views known on proposed changes and join in our consultations either online through our online community, [feconnect](#), or by feeding back through our specialist advisory groups.

For more information see our website at: [www.theia.org.uk/consultations](http://www.theia.org.uk/consultations)

We hope that you will take an active role in our consultation processes. If you are aware of any information-related issues that we should be progressing or raising then please let us know.

Phone us on: 024 7682 5658 or e-mail us at: [cst@theia.org.uk](mailto:cst@theia.org.uk)

In 2009 there were 214,972 visits to *the information authority* website, with an average of 589 visits a day.

## Get in touch

Find out more about *the information authority*'s work at: [www.theia.org.uk](http://www.theia.org.uk)

Phone us on: 024 7682 5658 or e-mail us at: [cst@theia.org.uk](mailto:cst@theia.org.uk)

Subscribe to the monthly newsletter '**Inform**' to find out more about the work of the Data Service, *the information authority* and relevant initiatives that will help to reduce bureaucracy within the FE system by e-mailing: [inform@theia.org.uk](mailto:inform@theia.org.uk)