

JANUARY USER GROUP

The next winter user group will be on January 20th at [Austin Court](#) in central Birmingham. As usual at this time of the year, we'll be trying to give you some indication of the external changes in the year ahead – rather a lot this time – as well as telling you about all the recent enhancements to PICS. But, most importantly, it gives you a chance to discuss with both the PICS team and our outside speakers any concerns that you have, and to network with other PICS users.

Austin Court is our favourite venue for smaller meetings: we have just 150 places, a third of which have been snapped up already. Click [here](#) to reserve your place: there is, of course, no charge.

CHRISTMAS CLOSURE

As usual, we're closing the office over the Christmas period: we shut up shop at noon on Christmas Eve, and open again for your calls on Monday January 4th.

As we've mentioned in several recent newsletters, we're closing at noon on December 4th for our Christmas



lunch. We know that all of you submit your ER ILR by the third working day of the next month, so we're not – as we would usually do – holding our weekly team meeting on the Thursday; instead, phones will be open until 17:30 on this last 'good' submission day. We're also postponing our last team meeting of the year until Thursday 10th.

C&G WALLED GARDEN INTERFACE

The PICS data exchange with City and Guilds has been released this month. This new module creates batch export files with the registration data from PICS for loading onto the C&G 'Walled Garden'; it then imports the enrolment numbers from a file created by C&G into PICS to view and report. If you currently enter all City and Guilds registrations manually on the Walled Garden, then this facility will be a tremendous timesaver as all the data is already present in PICS.

For more information or to request an evaluation licence and training guide, please contact the support team.

POSTCODE LOOKUP FEATURES

In addition to our existing postcode lookup functionality, we've now added the facility to complete automatic address lookups via an Internet connection to our partner, [Allies Computing](#). This means that complete addresses can be found automatically by simply entering the house number and postcode into PICS. Not only is this a tremendous timesaver, but will also greatly improve the accuracy of your PICS data for learners, applicants and organisations.

Not only does the web interface provide UK-wide searches at a much cheaper price than the existing local data options, but also means that there is no need to install any extra software - PICS simply uses your internet connection to perform the search. Allies have been providing postcode data for more than 23 years, and maintain an up-to-date, UK-wide Royal Mail postcode database on their servers.

For more information or to request a 21 day trial, please contact Pellcomp support.

MIAP UPDATE

You may remember in our July newsletter that we discussed improvements to the MIAP interface to allow direct linking between PICS and the MIAP Learner Registration Service. The new features have now been developed, however MIAP require any new interface to undergo various tests to ensure that the submitted data is accurate and that the system is processing responses correctly. While we submitted the required tests to MIAP in October, we are still awaiting confirmation that these tests have been successful.



MIAP have promised a response real soon now, and we will of course let all our customers know when this has been received and the new features are available.

TRAINING EVENTS

We are always looking at ways of improving our training. How we deliver it, where we deliver it, when we deliver it, how often we deliver it and what we deliver. With this in mind we would be grateful if you would please take a little time and complete our on line survey. The results of the survey should tell us what you like and more importantly

what you don't like and from the results we should be able to tailor future events the way you want them. Please click on this link to access our [training survey](#).

Have you considered hosting an event? If there's a training event you would like us to deliver using your facilities, please get in touch. Further details on event hosting are [available here](#). If you host an event we will give you one free place per day, in lieu of payment for using your facilities, including catering.

ILR E-LEARNING

In case you missed the announcement, the Data Service has recently launched a [new e-Learning module](#), which they describe as follows:

"This module provides an overview of the ILR; the importance of submitting good quality data; and 2009/10 ILR changes. This tool has been developed to support providers with their understanding of the ILR, to assist with staff development, to help train new staff on the ILR and to update providers/staff on the 2009/10 ILR changes. If you have any queries contact the Data Service on 0870 2670001".

Pellcomp welcome this initiative and look forward to future developments in this area.



CHANGES IN VAT RATE

Following a few queries when the rate of VAT changed last year, we'd like to clarify our position with the forthcoming rate change.

On 1st January 2010 the standard rate of VAT is rising to 17.5 %. All invoices we issue from that date will be charged at the new higher rate unless they are covered below.

Special optional rules apply for products and services that are delivered across the 1st January (for example your annual PICS licence). These are available here [<http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/vat/forms-rates/rates/rate-changes.htm#2>]. Where we have discretion under these optional rules, we will apply the lower rate of VAT.

All invoices for PICS Support and Maintenance issued before 01/01/2010 will stand at the old rate of 15% VAT even if you are paying these off by instalments.

All invoices for purchases of PICS or modules for PICS or for training where the software or training was delivered before 01/01/2010 will be charged at the old rate of 15% - even if they are invoiced after 01/01/2010 and even if you are paying by instalments.

We hope this is clear but if you do have queries, please email <mailto:accounts@pellcomp.co.uk>

Contact and information links:

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PICS Training events:
Click [here](#) for the latest on Training Events.

Pellcomp Web Forums:
Click [here](#) for a range of queries, issues and general topics related to PICS, LSC, JCP etc.