

INDUSTRY NEWS**Preparation for 2010-11 processing in PICS**

As you'll have seen from the glossary in our last newsletter, we've been concentrating recently on making sure that all the changes that come about on August 1st are in place in PICS. The main changes are the move of all Employer-Responsive contracting from the LSC to the SFA and its regions, and of all Learner-Responsive contracting (including E2E and its successors) to the YPLA and to Local Authorities within sub-regional groups. We're also trying to make sure that you, the users of our systems, are fully aware of the implications of these changes.

You may have noticed, in build 011 of PICS, that the system updates a number of table structures within PICS: these reflect the changes that are needed to support the new regime, and are now in place. Essentially, you will see the familiar structure of funding organisations, but now they will represent SFA regions and Local Authorities within sub-regional groups. All LA codes are now in PICS, and will become available to you when you need them. The new and amended fields in the ILR will all be completed automatically in the PICS data export. We're also aware that the LAD will be changed considerably, but not until 2011-12. We will of course be taking part in the discussions that define this new structure.

As far as the look of PICS is concerned, we've decided to minimise disruption to you by keeping the LSC-based terminology largely in place until August 1st, when the real changes happen in terms of data submission and funding. We are trying to make sure that everything remains as familiar as possible for as long as possible, and that the changes of August 1st disrupt your way of working as little as possible. Our training guides are already being updated to reflect the new government departments and organisations.

Stronger checks on ILR submissions

Providers are being encouraged by the SFA to submit Individualised Learner Record (ILR) returns within set time limits for certain events. The Information Authority is looking into standards to ensure data is recorded and submitted in good time, and the Data Service is being asked to produce audit checks of this if it goes ahead. These checks will not directly affect funding, but are part of the SFA planned performance monitoring.

For more information see the following Word document: [Timeliness of Employer Responsive Data](#)

PELLCOMP PRODUCT SPOTLIGHT**City and Guilds Results Files**

We've now extended our City and Guilds interface to allow for production of Results files in addition to Registration files. This will allow you to submit the grades for any in-house assessed City and Guilds Units directly from PICS, saving hours of manual data entry time on the Walled Garden. For more information or to request an evaluation licence for the City and Guilds interface please contact

support@pellcomp.co.uk

CONTRACTS & FUNDING

ILR E-Learning

The Data Service has recently produced an e-learning module introducing users to the ILR, covering not just the basic information it holds, but also going through the submission process. You can access it [here](#).

ILR and the Period End Process

For a general overview of the period-end process in PICS, and ways in which we can help you to send error-free ILRs and thus maximize your funding, see our document [here](#). A full user guide can be found at [LSC training](#). We're not sure though how long it will be before this website is renamed to reflect its ownership by the Data Service.

PICS

Even better reporting facilities in PICS

We do, of course, continually update PICS facilities in response to requests from you, our users, and you will always find details of this in the release notes available from the welcome screen in PICS. But we know that not everyone has time to read these notes, so here is a flavour of some of the changes we've made to the reports available through the Switchboard.

An increasing number of you are using Sites to control data availability to users, many of you are involved in consortia, either as members or consortium heads, and some of you analyse your learners by their current school. All of these have been supported more strongly in reports: see, for instance, the new analysis by organisation in the Diary report, and the increasing number of optional output fields in reports like Occupancy and Claim History. Subcontractor codes are also shown, where relevant, in the claims late-notified report. The Adhoc reporter has had many new fields added - remember that the Find button will give you a list of the fields that you might want to use for selection and output.

The Success Rates report, in particular, has seen many changes recently. Not only are there many more analysis categories, but we've also introduced and refined the reconciler, so that you can check the PICS values against those produced by the Data Service. The related Ofsted report also offers different ways of analysing E2E success. This is just a flavour of what we've been adding; click on the Release Notes button in PICS to see the full range of our changes. A monthly summary of the enhancements is also available in the PICS help file section 'Changes to PICS'.

Portfolios

PICS now has support for several e-Portfolio options including our own offering, eAssessor. This web-based system links directly to your live PICS dataset for easy access to up-to-date information. It can access learners on any programme and focuses mainly on qualification and evidence tracking, learner assessments and recording reviews. Reports can be produced for staff, learners and employers.

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PICS also has support for two of the market leading e-Portfolio systems:

VQ Manager from Skillwise Ltd. <http://www.skillwise.net/>

OneFile from Citrus Lounge Ltd. <http://www1.onefile.co.uk/>

For further information about your e-Portfolio options with PICS, please contact the Pellcomp support team on 01603 492620.

PICS source code escrow agreement

We'd like to remind all of our customers that we have a software escrow service in place should your business continuity plans require this. Such a facility would ensure that you have access to the PICS source code if Pellcomp were to cease trading or be unable to meet its commitment under the software licence agreement. We're currently experiencing excellent growth within our sector so such an event is highly unlikely but we take such responsibility seriously and have chosen NCC Group, the leading provider of software escrow services, as our chosen partner.

This facility is open to all currently licensed customers by way of an annual payment to NCC Group. For further details, please email your interest to Gareth Johnson Gareth.Johnson@nccgroup.com quoting reference 41217.

EVENTS & EXHIBITIONS

Pellcomp User Group

A reminder that our very popular Pellcomp User Group event will be held on Tuesday July 20th at the ICC in Birmingham. A full agenda for the User Group will be published nearer the time, however you can expect a mix of exciting new developments, external speakers, and an insight into upcoming changes for the 2010 contract year, as well as the chance to network with your fellow PICS users.

As always, places are free and you can book now on our [website](#).

PICS TRAINING DAYS

Laptop – Learner Tracking and Progression

Truro, Cornwall - 25/05/2010

Enhanced recording of additional data, tracking and reporting of learner progress.

PICS has the ability to record and report on so much more than the basic data requirements of government departments. This course explains the various learner-tracking facilities available in **PICS**, covering both data entry and reporting. Designed for data entry staff and **PICS** administrators.

PICS SFA/YPLA Financial Management

London - 16/06/2010

Gain a greater appreciation of how **PICS** can help you keep track of your SFA funding, and predict your income in future periods.

This event discusses in detail all aspects of SFA funding and how it is represented in **PICS**.

This course is aimed at financial administrators and managers, and is delivered by a senior member of the **PICS** development team.

Bespoke Training

The Pellcomp Training Team is happy to visit your premises and provide tailor-made training and advice to suit your requirements concerning any of the Pellcomp Software products. This training could be one of our standard agendas, a customised version of our standard agendas or, if required, a completely bespoke training agenda designed specifically for your organisation.

Contact and information links:

Pellcomp Software Ltd
2 Trinity Street, Norwich
NR2 2BQ

01603 492620

support@pellcomp.co.uk
www.pellcomp.co.uk

Pellcomp Web Forums:

Click [here](#) for a range of queries, issues and general topics related to PICS and other industry issues