

**INDUSTRY NEWS****PICS and the brave new world**

We're all aware by now of the complete separation of employer responsive (ER) and learner responsive (LR) contracting and data submission for 2010-11. This makes sense in lots of ways, and much of our development effort at present is targeted at making sure that **PICS** is ready for these changes.

A number of the changes are either changes in terminology, or are well defined by the Information Authority. Others are more fundamental, like the definition of the YPLA Local Authority or SFA Region you contract with: these have largely been issued, and we should be able to migrate your data automatically. There are a few areas of the specifications that at present appear to be contradictory, but we hope to clarify all of them in time for the August changes.

Since, as always, we will need to continue to submit data in the LSC mode for three months after the end of the year, we will again be keeping two sets of values for some fields, allowing us to submit both 2009-10 and 2010-11 values. In a few cases - mostly very late-notified starts - this will require you to keep historic as well as current information up to date. To minimise the volume of this problem, we will as usual issue the 2010-11 version of **PICS** around the middle of August: this will allow you to enter the vast majority of your 2009-10 starts under the old capture rules, and therefore allow the system to migrate these learners with no effort on your part.

One simplification that will certainly be present for your period-end process is that there will be one single funding calculation for all SFA regions, and one for all YPLA SRGs to which you submit data.

There are a few 'known unknowns' in the area of funding: large employer rates have been defined, but we don't know exactly how they are to be implemented; we know that an increased number of Train to Gain aims are to be treated as co-funded, but we're a little nervous about trying to change these for you automatically because there are so many exceptions. Other funding issues will doubtless emerge when the LIS and the funding specification are released by the Data Service.

**Foundation Learning in PICS**

As we all know, there will be no new starts on E2E from August 1st 2010: eligible learners will instead be registered on FL (variously referred to as the FL Curriculum, FL Programme, FL Training, or just FL).

The data capture implications aren't 100% clear, since some of the documentation seems to contradict the ILR specification; but these are relatively minor, and we'll try to clear them up when things have settled down more. The ILR for FL will, of course, be sent to YPLA rather than the SFA, since contracting will be through local authorities.

The rest of this note will concentrate on FL funding in **PICS**. There are two distinct types in LR for FL: weekly funding (which will be the minority of FL offerings for most providers, and seems to replicate E2E weekly funding) for learners who really aren't ready for any sort of qualification programme; and standard LR funding for functional skills and other aims. Additionally, it seems that FL can be administered as part of ER: my guess would be that these will be funded according to the ER formula, and needn't concern us further.

LR funding in the LIS is quite different to ER: the whole value of the aim is credited in the start period (or the first period of the year for carry-over learners), and actual funding to providers is paid totally on profile, with reconciliation at the end of the year. The calculation of the value of the aim is also totally unlike ER: we now have a calculator for **PICS** which largely agrees with the 2009-10 LIS

Profile-based funding gives providers no idea of how much money they've actually earned in a given month. We are therefore planning to turn LR funding into monthly payments, by splitting the value of the aim across the planned periods and adjusting for early achievers in addition to showing funding in LIS style. Users will realise that neither of these will tell them what their actual quarterly income is, since this will be based on profile; but **PICS** will be able to tell them both an approximation of the amount of income their effort has generated each month, and how they're doing against their profile for each quarter. We will also be able to reconcile aim earnings against the LIS.

There is an additional funding element based on entitlement funding, which kicks in at the learner level once a threshold based on total GLH has been passed.

Some users are particularly worried about GLH. All FL payments are based on GLH. For the majority of LR funding, this is based on the SLN GLH listed for the aim. For functional skills, however, SLN GLH is not listed, and funding will depend on the GLH value entered in A32. The LAD allows us to see which to use. We then apply a formula to the GLH to turn it into the SLN,

Full details of the LIS LR calculation method can be found, as ever, from the [Data Service specification](#). We will also be presenting a digestible summary of it at the [PICS Financial Management seminar](#) on June 16th.

Continued...

**PELLCOMP PRODUCT SPOTLIGHT****PDF importer**

Do you want to save time entering learners into **PICS**? Do you want to ensure you collect the right information when face to face with the learner? Then the PDF importer is built for you.

This great time-saving product allows staff to be out of the office and complete a PDF version of the ILR form on a laptop. The PDF can then be sent immediately to your main office via email ready to be imported straight into **PICS**.

This ensures the information can be collected at interview time giving you massive data input time savings and an electronic copy of the learners ILR form straight away.

Also included free of charge with this product is a CSV learner import facility. This gives you even more flexibility as you can use your existing forms, convert them into a CSV file and then import each learner into **PICS**.

For more details on this product, including a free trial, please do contact the Pellcomp Support Desk on 01603 492620 or email [support@pellcomp.co.uk](mailto:support@pellcomp.co.uk).

**PELLCOMP PRODUCT UPDATES****A new project will allow providers to transfer data from pen to PICS in seconds**

The project, using the latest digital pen technology from Destiny, means that you can complete a paper form, plug the pen into your computer and transfer the data to **PICS**. The forms used are also designed by Destiny to the users requirements.

The pen integration is still in early development but we'll keep you informed about this exciting new technology; it could be ideal for recording reports, reviews and assessments, give great savings of time and effort while keeping both paper and electronic records.

**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****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](mailto:support@pellcomp.co.uk)  
[www.pellcomp.co.uk](http://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