

PELLCOMP USER GROUP

This has been a year of huge change in the world of work-based learning, and we at Pellcomp are making sure that we stay abreast of it all. At this year's summer user group we'll be discussing many aspects of this new world, from Foundation Learning and QCF through to the SFA and Local Authorities. As usual, we're trying in **PICS** to make these changes as simple as possible for our users: in the meeting, we'll be showing how they are being implemented in **PICS**, remembering that there is still time for any of your suggestions to be incorporated into the system that we deliver in August.

As well as all this, we'll be presenting recent additions and enhancements to **PICS**, and we have Lisa Macdougall from *theia* telling us about the final shape of the ILR for 2010-11. Add to this the opportunities for networking with other providers in the sumptuous surroundings of the ICC in Birmingham, and the event becomes unmissable. Free, too! Book your place now on our [website](#).

INDUSTRY NEWS

Software Suppliers' meeting

The recent software suppliers' meeting, hosted by *theia* and the Data Service, was as usual full of useful information for us. Some points of particular interest to **PICS** users are covered in separate sections below; others worth mentioning are:

- **LAD Changes for 2010-11:** The main changes for the new year will allow the SFA to change SLN rates for individual aims mid-year, so that a given aim may be paid at one rate for a few months, and at another for the rest of the year. In fact, they can change the rate every day of the year if they want to. **PICS** will of course deal with this new funding regime for you, but it does make profiling rather interesting.
- **LAD Replacement Project:** The whole LAD is being completely rethought for 2011-12: it may have all sorts of interesting features like units, but we'll know more later in the year. We'll keep you posted.
- **Software for 2010-11:** As I write, we're trying to get hold of a beta version of the LIS for next year: there are to be some new features, and we'll let you know about them when we know more.

PREPARE NOW FOR THE NEW YEAR

SFA Course Directory

We've tried very hard to get a format for batch uploads to the directory, so that **PICS** can give you some help in loading data into the directory. The format is not yet available, but we'll keep trying on their website at <http://www.coursedirectoryproviderportal.org.uk/>. In the mean time, we suggest that you use the portal to enter at least some information manually: if you haven't got at least some entries there by August 1st, your funding is likely to be slashed.

ILR Changes

Most of the ILR changes are fairly straightforward, and will be handled in the new year's version of **PICS**. Issues like source of funding (A11) changes in the year that a learner reaches the age of 19, and the move of the enhanced funding indicator to the aim record from the learner record, will be handled by us. We understand that the new LIS will allow us to validate UKPRNs before you submit your ILRs.

You should, however, be aware of some increased validation, in particular for ULNs. We have, of course, been warning you about missing ULNs in our LIS validation simulator for some time now. A valid ULN will be required for Employer Responsive from the ER04 submission, and for Learner Responsive from LR02; you will have 60 days from the learner's start date to enter the ULN, which will be validated by the Data Service against a list from the LRS (formerly MIAP). We strongly recommend that you get ULNs for your learners well in advance of the ILR submission, since there could be a lag between your registering a learner with the LRS and their sending a list to the Data Service. Note that local validation, either in **PICS** or the LIS, will not be able to check ULN values, since we won't have this list locally.

Employer reference numbers must be entered into A44 for all aims, and must be a valid EDS number. We're hoping that the LIS may include a list of all valid employer numbers, which will allow you – and us – to validate these before submission to the LSC, but there seems to be some doubt about this. There will, however, be a list of large employers so that the LIS can deduct 25% for learners who work there.

Data Migration

As usual, we'll need to keep 2009-10 values in place for all carry-over learners so that you can continue with Period 13 submissions, as well as holding 2010-11 values for the new year. For most of you, we will be able to work out the new contracting organisation (SFA region or LA) automatically; we'll be in touch with those of you that contract with more than one LA to make certain of the migration rules here.

Those of you that deliver Train to Gain will be aware that the SFA requires you to change the A14 value of a number of aims at the start of the year. Here again, we'll hold separate A14 values for the two years, so please don't go changing them manually in the current version of **PICS** (you'll lose 2009-10 funding if you do). We will probably change the 2010-11 A14 values for you, but we want to consult about this at the Pellcomp User Group.

All migration will take place automatically in **PICS** when the 2010-11 version is issued in the middle of August. As usual, we strongly urge you to make sure that all 2009-10 starters have been entered into **PICS** before the migration, so that you won't have to enter historic information.

PELLCOMP PRODUCT SPOTLIGHT**MIAP/LRS Web registration service**

Among the many changes for next contract year is the requirement for all funded learning aims to include a valid ULN in the ILR; this will be mandatory from export periods 04 (ER) and 02 (LR).

We like to make life as easy as possible for you, and of course many of you are already using the batch export for learner registration; but we'd like to remind you that we also offer a MIAP Web search facility. This allows ULN searches, updates and registrations to be made instantaneously, without the need of batch files or the MIAP portal. At the touch of a button on the ILR/enrolment form, **PICS** attempts to find the learner on the MIAP system, using either the ULN (if entered to **PICS**) or the learner's address and other demographic details (if ULN not entered). If there is no match, the learner can be registered immediately; if need be, an existing record can be amended and updated. So as you enter a new learner in **PICS**, you can register them with MIAP/LRS immediately.

MIAP Web services functionality is a separately licensed product. If you do not have a suitable **PICS** licence number please contact Pellcomp Support who will be happy to supply an evaluation licence and provide current pricing.

PELLCOMP PRODUCT UPDATES**New look Organisation and CRM module**

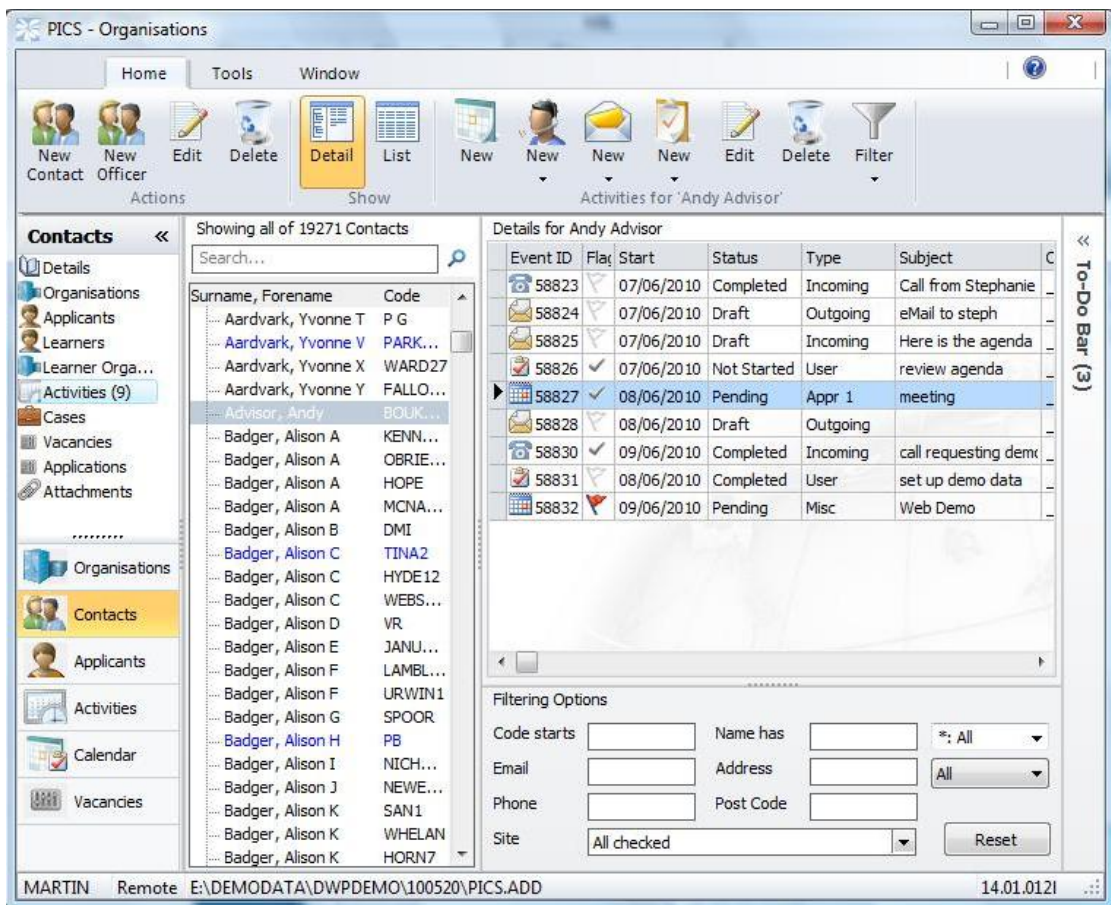
You'll soon be seeing our improved Organisation and CRM modules. These popular facilities are being upgraded to the latest 'Windows 7' style and redesigned in common with the Microsoft Outlook format familiar to many. The 'Ribbon*' feature, now used throughout Microsoft products, also makes its debut in **PICS** bringing easier access than the menus of old.

We hope that this free upgrade makes the modules easier and more consistent to use; other facilities in **PICS** will gradually migrate to the new look later in the year. As software design moves on and our feature list increases we always aim to improve the look and usability of our products.

We are planning to release this around the 6th of July, so this is to give you plenty of warning of the change. An updated training guide will be available shortly.

** A ribbon is a command bar that organizes a program's features into a series of tabs at the top of a window. Using a ribbon increases discoverability of features and functions, enables quicker learning of the program as a whole, and makes users feel more in control of their experience with the program. A ribbon can replace both the traditional menu bar and toolbars. (Source: Microsoft)*

A screen shot of the new design for Organisations:



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Pellcomp Web Forums:

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