



**information  
standards board**  
for education, skills  
and children's services

# Information Standards Board for the Education Skills and Children's Services 2011-2012 Annual Report

Sponsored by:

**BIS** | Department for Business  
Innovation & Skills

Department for  
**Education**

## Contents

Independent Chair's Report .....	3
Looking Ahead .....	4
Projects and Timelines .....	4
ISB Process for standards development .....	4
Collaboration.....	6
Performance against the ISB's Delivery Plan 2011-12 .....	7
Standards Approved by the ISB 2011-12.....	10
ISB Board members.....	11

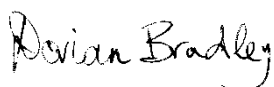
## Independent Chair's Report

For me, this past year has been characterised by significant progress in encouraging organisations to adopt and implement some key ISB standards. First, the Data and Statistics Division within the Department for Education, one of our sponsoring departments, has launched a Schools Performance Data Project which will create a DfE data warehouse with ISB standards at its core and will work towards adopting ISB standards into many of its data collections over the next few years. Second, the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ), through its A2C Data Exchange Project, is aligning to ISB standards key aspects of the operational data exchanges between awarding organisations and schools, colleges and training providers. Third, we have established a new Special Interest Group for suppliers of Management Information Software. I am pleased to say that there is increasing interest amongst these organisations in using ISB standards. And fourth, I have written to these suppliers and to the JCQ to provide an update on the ISB's recent actions on the Unique Learner Number and Unique Pupil Number and to encourage discussion on how data collection and transfer can be improved.

The Board's Technical Support Service (TSS) has been involved in all these developments and I would like to take this opportunity of recording how grateful I am for their unstinting efforts.

Although much of this work necessarily takes place behind the scenes, as it were, the results need to be widely communicated and we have been working on getting our communications right. We have put back in place our quarterly newsletters. We continue to upgrade the ISB website to make sure we provide you with timely information on our work. Additionally, we have established a Huddle collaboration space which you can find out more about this later in this report.

While I am pleased to be able to report this progress, I am clear that much remains to be done in our aim of improving outcomes for children and learners and improving operational efficiency through the provision and re-use of better quality information and data. There's a lot to do and so I urge you therefore to continue to work with us, and with our sponsoring Departments for Education and Business, Innovation and Skills. "We all get maximum benefit from standards when all our partners also use the same standards."



Dorian Bradley

## Looking Ahead

The work of the ISB is aligned to the Government's strategic direction on the use of open standards as outlined in the [Government's ICT Strategy](#) and [the Government ICT Strategy - Strategic Implementation Plan](#).

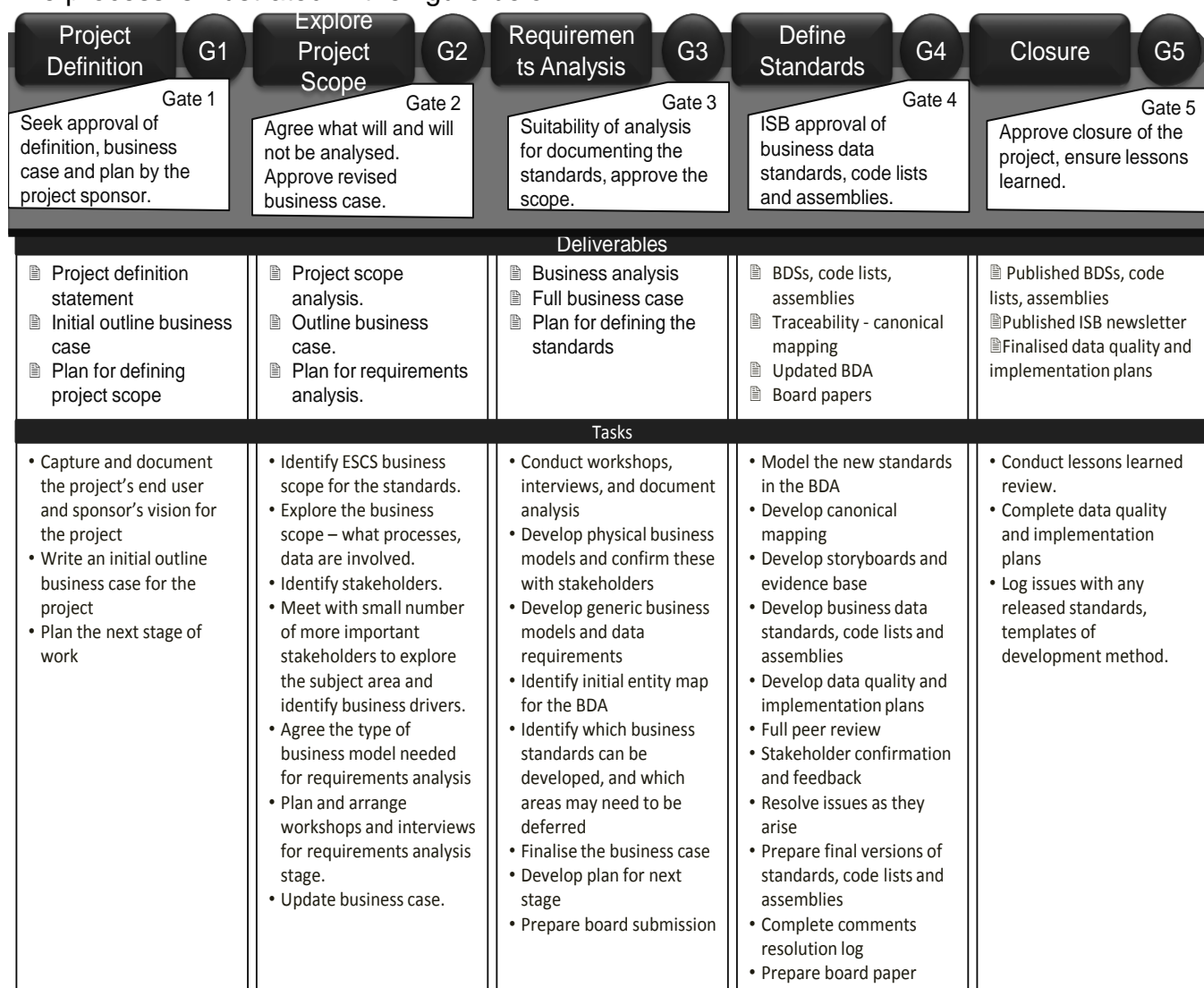
## Projects and Timelines

### ISB Process for standards development

In 2011 the ISB standards development and maintenance process was refined in the light of previous years' experience. The process is designed to:

- Ensure widespread stakeholder engagement across Education, Skills and Children's Services
- Ensure that standards are informed by:
  - *What* data is needed
  - *When* data is used
  - *How* data is used
- Ensure that the standards align to a single architecture so that maximum re-use and future-proofing is delivered.
- Clarify standards maintenance and update process.

The process is illustrated in the figure below:



## ISB Standards Pipeline 2012-14

The following areas for the development of new information standards have been identified in order to meet the plans of projects and programmes known to the ISB. Others may emerge as policies are formulated and move towards realisation:

Activity	Description
Leavers destinations	This has to do with where a Learner goes on to after completing a Learning Opportunity. Mostly this is covered by existing standards where the Learner goes on to more education or is employed within ESCS; however there are some situations (unemployed, voluntary work, etc.) that are not covered.
Contact	The association between a Stakeholder and an address/telephone number, etc. We have a standard, but the code list describing the recognised relationship types (home, work, vacation, etc.) is not defined.
Qualifications	These two items are the standards that will result from working with JCQ, plus extended to fit the wider needs of ESCS e.g. Key Stages and HE.
Results/Awards/Outcomes	
Ethnicity (learner, workforce)	Approved work item, in progress.
Disability (learner, workforce)	Approved work item, in progress.
Information Object,	Used to hold a record of evidence (e.g. passport, birth certificate etc.) inspected and verified. This has come out of the work on Immigration and Vetting and Barring.
Workforce	As needed by Data and Statistics Division, HESA and employers
Party relationships	We have a general data structure and approved standards, but need to define code lists and give guidance on usage. Additional forms of relationship requiring new standards may also be found.
Service update	Some updates to the approved ISB standards have been found to be necessary following the Immigration and Vetting and Barring work.
LP Category Types	Approved work item, in progress
Code Lists	Code lists, other than mentioned above, are needed to complete the foundation standards we already have. This work was recognised as needed when standards were developed to support the 14 – 19 policies, but has been overtaken by other standards-creation priorities.
SPD data	An approved work item, this includes many new items of data needed to underpin the Schools Performance Data arrangements from 2013.
Address	Approved work item, in progress.
Data and Statistics Division Migration	The DfE Data and Statistics Division has announced its intention to migrate schools collections to become compliant with ISB standards. ISB and the TSS will work closely with Data and Statistics Division to support this migration.
Engage Policy Teams	ISB will proactively seek engagement with BIS and DfE Policy Teams to ensure that potential demands for new standards in support of new policies are identified in sufficient time to develop the standards before they are needed.
HE Landscape	Following the HE White Paper, the ISB and TSS will be available to provide support to the Information Landscape transformation programme of work.

## Collaboration

The ISB, and its Technical Support Service, has extensively collaborated with stakeholders on:

- Development of open information standards to support a more seamless transfer of data throughout the Education, Skills and Children's Services system, and beyond.
- Engagement to drive adoption of ISB information standards with:
  - JCQ awarding bodies, as they develop their new A2C data exchange specifications,
  - DfE's Data and Statistics Division,
  - The information authority,
  - Learning Records Service,
  - Higher Education Statistics Agency,
  - University and Colleges Admissions Service, and
  - Management Information Systems (MIS) vendors
- Exploitation of these standards to reduce front line delivery costs, facilitate the publication of 'transparent data'.
- The requirement to use ISB standards within procurement frameworks and in remit letters for DfE's new executive agencies.

## Special Interest Groups

The ISB is currently working with the following Special Interest Groups (SIGs):

- The Data Management SIG, whose focus is on vertical data collections, and the operational data that underpins collections;
- The Vocabularies SIG, looking at controlled vocabularies and metadata for search and discovery as part of knowledge management;
- The Identity Management SIG, concerned with identification of people and organisations and on access authentication and control;
- The Digital Content SIG, whose focus is on eLearning platforms and content; and
- Suppliers working on Understood and Emergent data standards.

## Four Nations meetings

Members of the Four Nations Group are working together to align the development of standards in England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales. The Group aims to provide strategic direction to the collaborative work of the Information Standards Board for England and the equivalent bodies in the other nations, recognising the policy and organisational constraints that exist across the UK countries.

## Standard Implementers Working Group

This group has been set up to work with key stakeholders to move towards the adoption and migration of the ISB standards – aims for the next 24 months are to continue to:

- Focus on implementation
- Share experiences
- Share/harmonise adoption solutions
- Shared services for common issues
- Harmonise plans.

## **ISB Website**

The ISB's website moved onto the Government domain in June 2011, and enhancements will be added to the site during 2012. Amongst other changes there will be search filters to allow for browsing the list of standards. ISB website: <http://www.education.gov.uk/escs-isb>

## **ISB's Collaboration Space**

The ISB is using Huddle collaboration software to help in developing information standards. Users of the standards and subject matter experts can contribute to this important work via Huddle. There are two ways to join in:

- via a Special Interest Group; or
- through a specific working group.

Huddle software provides the opportunity to collaborate on future standards via an electronic discussion forum, share documents and keep up to date with the latest news via an announcements area.

Users are invited to join in via a Special Interest Group or specific working group, please get in touch via [itgovernance.secretariat@education.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:itgovernance.secretariat@education.gsi.gov.uk) if you would like to be involved.

## **Performance against the ISB's Delivery Plan 2011-12**

### **ESCS Metadata Framework**

The Metadata Framework provides guidelines for the use, governance and management of metadata across the Education, Skills, and Children's Services (ESCS) system and has potential for adaptation and use (in conjunction with the e-Government Metadata Standard (e-GMS)) across Government. Its purpose is to provide the semantic foundation for a consistent approach to the creation, management and use of information objects, in order to support findability, compliance and interoperability. It is intended for use by all ESCS staff involved in the creation or management of content repositories, or in developing strategies and systems for exploitation of content. The benefits to be gained will be in improved system upgrades (because the data will be in easily mapped fields) and better sharing of information amongst systems in the sector.

Having developed the draft framework, and carried out an initial review with ISB Board Members, the emphasis of this work has shifted to look at the controlled vocabularies to support the relevant metadata elements. Work has progressed on the ESCS Thesaurus, ensuring that it continues to underpin the DfE's website and will become accessible to other developers during 2012. By sharing and re-using existing Thesauri wherever possible, we can reduce duplication and improve interoperability across the system. For

example, we are at the early stages of sharing the ESCS Thesaurus with the Institute of Education (IOE) to give them a “starter for ten” on work they are doing to improve and update the IOE Library’s existing thesaurus.

## **Joint Council for Qualifications**

The Joint Council for Qualifications A2C Data Exchange Project is devising a set of standards for the electronic exchange of data for registering and entering learners for qualifications assessment and notifications of results. In doing so it has decided to aim to align its operational data exchanges to ISB standards where they meet the business needs of awarding organisations.

## **Standards under Development**

**School Performance Data Project (SPDP):** This new work item is to support the migration of the Department for Education’s Data and Statistics Division to compliance with ISB standards. It was added to the ISB’s work plan in November 2011. Data and Statistics Division are the sponsors for the development of standards in support of their plans to migrate to compliance with ISB within their many data collections. The immediate drivers for this are the projects to replace existing arrangements supporting schools performance SPDP, Raise Online and Schools Financial Benchmark website through development of a DfE data warehouse.

**Person Identity:** The ISB is working towards practical measures to move towards use of a single common, well-managed identifier, by reducing over time the number of identifiers used for special purposes.

**Workforce Data Standards:** to meet system-wide needs with the impetus coming from DfE data collection needs.

**Vetting and Barring:** to develop the definition of a single set of ISB standards that can support and ensure alignment of vetting activities. It covers Criminal Records Disclosure, the Vetting and Barring Scheme (with the caveat that the scheme is not currently operational) and National Security Vetting.

**Foreign Workers:** to develop the definition of a single set of ISB standards that can support and ensure alignment of immigration activities. It covers a range of processes to establish sponsor status, to sponsor workers, to sponsor students, and to monitor performance.

**Standards to define workforce data needed to provide contextual data for SPDP**

**Learner Records:** to define data standards to support learner data, including those required to repurpose the Individualised Learner Record (ILR).

**Registration, Assessment, Results and Awards Notification Data Standards:** to approve data standards for exam registration and results notifications for awarding bodies. This derives from working with Awarding Organisations through JCQ and will take that learning out to confirm or adapt to the needs of other ESCS stakeholders, particularly HE.

## **Working Groups**

Working groups have been put in place as required to help with the development of ISB standards:



**Disability and learning difficulty:** defining standards to record a learner's disabilities and/or learning difficulties in a way that enables organisations to comply with the discrimination legislation and supports the sensitive delivery of services to those with difficulties.

**Learning Provider Categories:** specifically looking at how organisations within ESCS are categorised for funding, regulation, administrative and statistical purposes.

**Ethnicity:** completing the work to modify the ISB Ethnicity standard to define ethnic categories aligned to the ONS 2011 census.

**Assessment:** assessing for eligibility to receive a service; assessing needs; assessing for disability (what is the ability of the individual); assessing for learning outcomes; and assessment for employment.

**Attendance:** employee attendance (monitoring actual attendance against expected attendance e.g. to determine absence); learner attendance (attendance registration within schools, FE lecture attendance, HE participation monitoring, etc.); and service take up (attending appointments).

**Qualifications and Awards Results:** scheduling exams, directed assessments, projects or assignments; administration of the above (entry, attendance, submission of papers to markers); marking or assessment, deciding on grades, any normalisation; and communicating results (to learner, learning provider, central collections). Out of scope - developing exams or tests.

**Children's Services Delivery:** covers planning for, and scheduling the delivery of, an individual service, for example, any special support needed for disabled people. Areas under consideration include: service planning (in an individual delivery sense); contracting (signing up for a service), including payment or funding agreement, assigning case worker; case management (tracking evolution and delivery of an extended service delivery); service delivery (actual delivery of the service, may include coordination of multiple components); and closure (agreeing the service is completed, closing out and handover).

**Financial Management:** purchase order to payment, receiving credit notes, refunds and discounts; expenses processing; bank account management (reconciliation; invoice to receipt, issuing credit notes, refunds and discounts; payroll, pension and benefits processing), PAYE, National Insurance and other deductions; issuing loans, managing repayments; taking loans, managing repayments; financial reporting; budget management; asset management (capitalisation, depreciation, maintenance, and disposal); general accounting entries; error correction (reversals and adjustments); VAT processing; Corporation Tax processing; annual close; audit; cash management; stock management; issuing shares, share capital and paying dividends; consolidation of group accounts; and foreign currency management.

**Funding:** covers funding of learning providers and service providers (different funding models) headcount, attendance, learning outcomes, capital projects, grants, performance, operating cost, charities; funding model planning (looking out 3-5 years) and budgeting for funding spend; funding model execution (for each funding model type); payments, claw back and adjustments; and quality audit, funding audit and controls.

**Learning Aims Management:** agreeing learning aims when a learner enrolls with a learning provider; monitoring achievement against learning aims; reporting learning aims delivery to funding bodies; and supporting audit by inspecting bodies.

**Learning Application, Assessment and Enrolment:** applying for a learning opportunity; learner selection and offer, confirmation of place; and enrolment on a learning opportunity.

**Learning Provider (LP) Life-cycle:** covering the life-cycle of learning providers and the major events involved in: planning (for the creation of a new learning provider); creating a learning provider (bringing the LP into official existence), registration with appropriate regulatory bodies, assigning identifiers, etc.; changes to the learning provider (name changes, changes to admissions policy), provision of additional places, other descriptive change, etc.; closure of a learning provider - which may be a running down period (notice to close) and actual closure; and any life-cycle a learning provider may have after closure.

**Running a Course Offering:** timetabling the course offering, linking the timetable to classes of students/learners; and delivery of the offering (lesson content, attendance, assignments, non-high stake assessments).

**Service Management:** entitlement assessment; service planning - in general capacity sense and individual delivery sense; contracting (signing up for a service, including payment or funding agreement, assigning case worker); case management (tracking evolution and delivery of an extended service delivery); service delivery (actual delivery of the service, may include coordination of multiple components); and closure (agreeing the service is completed, closing out and handover).

**Workforce Employment:** covering the employment life-cycle: recruitment of staff (permanent, temporary and contract); promotions, salary raises; assignment/post management; disciplinary and dismissing staff; staff resignation; and staff retirement.

## Standards Approved by the ISB 2011-12

Business Data Standards	
The Information Standards Board has recently approved the following code lists:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Country Type</li> <li>• Currency Type</li> <li>• Gender Type</li> <li>• Learning Event Status Type</li> <li>• Postal Address Type</li> <li>• Stakeholder Name Component Type</li> </ul>
Stakeholder	Entity name changed to Party
Award	Entity name changed to Outcome

## ISB Board members

We would like to thank the Board members for their contributions during the year. In particular, we warmly welcome some new members who have recently joined the Board: Andrew Thomson, Project Director for the JCQ's A2C Project; Greg Hill, Director of the South East Grid for Learning and Karen Crowston, Head of Professional Services for Link2ICT, Service Birmingham and Bobbie McClelland, Deputy Director at the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS).

We would also like to record our thanks for the work of Alan Bowling and Stuart Edwards whose membership of the Board came to an end during 2011-12.

## Profiles

### Dorian Bradley – Independent Chair



Dorian Bradley is the first independent chairman of the Information Standards Board (ISB), a post he has held since September 2007. Until 2010, he also advised the Secretary of State for Education on exemptions from the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) and subsequently was a member of the Expert Panel that worked with Dame Clare Tickell on her 2011 review of the EYFS. Outside the UK, Dorian has been a consultant for the Chief Inspector of Social Services in Eire and for the World Bank in Russia.

“Since its formation, the Board has approved a set of data and information standards that are widely accepted across the education, skills and children’s services system in England. More recently, our work has been more focussed on encouraging all organisations working in this system to increase the speed and range of their take up of these standards to deliver more quickly, better outcomes for children and learners. I am delighted that many organisations have now committed to the adoption of our standards over the next two years. This will bring cost savings for the taxpayer, through the use of better quality information based on our standards.

We have also established close working relationships with the other countries of the UK, to bring even greater benefits. Using common information standards wherever possible will benefit all countries, as our people and information relating to them cross borders daily.”

### Adam Cooper – Board Member



Adam Cooper has worked with the ISB since joining JISC CETIS (Centre for Educational Technology and Interoperability Standards) in 2006. Here he oversees the technology work of CETIS on behalf of UK higher and further education. He also chairs the British Standards Institute Committee IST/43 – ICT Standards for Learning Education and Training.

“I bring ten years of experience in standardisation work, gained from working in further and higher education – in both the public and private sectors. I aim to combine my practical experience of teaching and managing educational technology development, with my experience in designing and implementing interoperability standards.”

### **Alison Allden – Board Member**



Alison Allden is Chief Executive of the Higher Education Statistics Agency, which collects data from all of the higher education institutions in the UK and makes information and intelligence on the provision of higher education available to interested parties.

"I have been involved in the collection and provision of information through much of my career in higher education (as a University Director of IS and senior executive) and appreciate the importance of identifying standards that allow for information sharing and the collection of meaningful administrative and management

information. The need for good quality information that both supports individual learners and the planning and provision of education is vital for the whole sector and I am glad that I am able to contribute to this through the Information Standards Board."

### **Andrew Thomson – Board Member**



Representing Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ); Andrew Thomson is Project Director for the JCQ's A2C Project which is working with the ISB to redefine and modernise the operational data exchanges between awarding organisations and schools, colleges and training providers. In his day job, Andrew is OCR's Head of Cross-Industry.

"I have been helping awarding organisations to develop effective data standards for more than twenty years but it is becoming increasingly important to think about sharing data efficiently within

the wider context of education, skills and children's services. JCQ representation will help to broaden the scope and reach of the Board."

### **Clare Gilligan – Board Member**



Clare Gilligan is Head of Awarding Organisation Performance at Ofqual the independent regulator of qualifications, examinations and assessment in England, and of vocational qualifications in Northern Ireland. Clare is responsible for the recognition of Awarding Organisations, accreditation of their qualifications, the monitoring of Awarding Organisations and working with them and other stakeholders to ensure the successful delivery of examinations and results.

Clare is leading on the development of a new risk assessment and evidence model for Ofqual and has been involved in the development and delivery of the Regulatory Information Technology System (RITS).

"The ability to share and understand information is critical to any evidence based regulator so the work of the ISB is an enabler for Ofqual and the whole of the education and skills sectors."

### **Greg Hill - Board Member**



Greg is Director of the South East Grid for Learning, a member of the Education Network Governing Council and a member of the Association of Directors of Children's Services. His association with ISB includes membership of the Special Interest Group for Identity Management.

Greg has been involved in information management in schools and local authorities for some years and in his previous role was responsible for information strategy in a local authority. The South East Grid for Learning is a consortium of seventeen local authorities that work together to provide broadband related services to over

3,000 schools. With this experience, Greg would expect to bring some practical perspectives to the work of the Board.

### **John Perks – Board Member**



John Perks is Head of the information authority, which sets and regulates data standards for further education and training provision in England. Its goals are to improve the quality of data collections and reduce the time spent on administration.

The information authority recognises that further education and training is a fundamental part of the wider education and skills sector and increasingly is working with colleagues in the schools and higher education sectors to develop common standards and approaches to data collection and analysis. The role of the ISB in defining and

setting data standards is important to all those involved in the education sector and I'm pleased to be supporting its aims and taking an active role in this area of work."

### **Jude Hillary – Board Member**



Jude Hillary is Head of DfE, Data and Statistics Division (DSD). Jude is responsible for the collection, management and dissemination of a wide range of statistics which provide an evidence base for important policy and delivery challenges and funding decisions as well as support public choice and accountability. The Division operates within an environment of evolving policy requirements and it provides a portfolio of information, statistics and data which underpin funding decisions and the development and monitoring of policy right across the Department's strategic objectives. Jude joined DfE as a

Government Statistician with over 20 years' experience across a number of Whitehall Departments including HM Treasury, HM Revenue and Customs, and latterly Department for Work and Pensions.

### **Karen Crowston - Board Member**

Karen Crowston works for Birmingham City Council within Service Birmingham. Karen is Head of Professional Services for Link2ICT, the division of Service Birmingham that supports ICT and Information Management for Schools and Adult Education. An important part of her role is to provide support and services to schools for Information Management, Data Collection and Interoperability. Karen is a member of the Star Chamber Scrutiny Board, one of the main vehicles in the Department for Education's drive to reduce bureaucracy impacting on LA children's services (including education) and schools. Karen is also Co-Chair of the Systems Interoperability Framework (SIF) UK Management Board.



"I have supported Birmingham schools and LA with Information Management and the collection of information locally and nationally for the last 25 years. I appreciate the challenges of collect once, use many times and ensuring the right information is with the right people at the right time. I believe that data and interoperability standards play a critical role in meeting these challenges. I look forward to contributing to the work of the Information Standards Board."

### **Peter Duffy – Board Member**



Peter is Head of IS at Ofsted. His IS career stretches back over 30 years and has included programme management, project management, infrastructure management and systems development and support. He also has management experience of customer facing contact centres and websites. He is a High Risk Gateway Review Team Leader.

### **Una Bennett – Board Member**



Una Bennett is Head of the Learning Records Service which provides information services for learners and learning providers across the UK with the aim of enabling information sharing and reducing administration. The Learning Records Service includes the Unique Learner Number for learners aged 14 plus and the Personal Learning Record which holds achievement data on behalf of individuals. These services support a range of educational initiatives such as Lifelong Learning Accounts, the Qualifications and Credit Framework, and more streamlined enrolment and awarding processes.

"In providing services to schools, further education and skills providers, higher education institutions and their learners, I have become even more convinced of the need for common data standards so that information can be easily accessed and transferred when appropriate. The ISB's work in developing and promoting common data standards is central to continued progress and realising the benefits for learners and all involved in education."

## Members Representing Organisations

**David Riley** – ISB Health and Social Care (HaSC)



David is the National Lead for Social Care for the ISB for HaSC and is their representative for the ISB for ESCS. He also worked for the London Borough of Greenwich as Information Governance Manager and Caldicott Guardian until March 2012.

“I bring with me the knowledge and experience from a similar board. Experience such as appraising and approving information standards that are fit-for-purpose, safe, interoperable and implementable.

I also bring more than 30 years’ experience working in local government. That includes several years in the youth service, more than 15 years in social care – including children’s social care – and significant experience in Information Governance.”

## Representatives of the Sponsoring Departments

**Bobbie McClelland** - Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS)



Bobbie McClelland is a Deputy Director at the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS). She leads on sponsorship of the Further Education sector which includes work to simplify and reduce bureaucracy for large employers and the FE sector more generally by streamlining the organisational landscape for FE and skills, simplify systems and processes, and deregulate. Bobbie has worked for BIS since its creation. Prior to her current post, she led the work to create the Skills Funding Agency.

“Standards are important for the efficient flow of data and its effective utilisation to support improved learner experience and progression. I really welcome the opportunity to contribute to the work of the ISB, which has a critical bearing on my current role in BIS.”

**Ken Anderson** – Department for Education (DfE)



Ken Anderson is a Deputy Director in the DfE's Chief Information Officer Group - responsible for Strategy and Architecture and the Department of Education senior sponsor for the Information Standards Board.

As the Department's Chief Technology Officer, Ken has considerable experience in the development of information systems, ICT programme management, enterprise architecture and shared service creation.

“ISB standards will ensure that information is stored in common, consistent formats which will aid front line delivery, reduce bureaucracy and enable a more joined up service.”