



Issue 112 – October 2016

Inform is a monthly newsletter from the Funding and Programmes division of the Skills Funding Agency (SFA). **Inform** focuses on funding systems and data management in further education and skills.

Apprenticeship reform

After extensive discussions with employers and training providers the Department for Education (DfE) and SFA have now published the final funding policy for 2017-2018 and details of the new register of apprenticeship training providers.

- [Apprenticeship funding in England from May 2017](#). This document sets out our final policy on how apprenticeship training will be funded from May 2017. This includes the final funding bands for existing apprenticeship frameworks and standards. The SFA has also published the detailed funding rules that underpin the policy ([link](#)).
- [A revised apprenticeship funding calculator](#). We have produced a revised version of this popular tool to help employers understand what levy they will pay and how they could use the new digital service to plan and fund training.
- Updated guidance on the [apprenticeship levy: how it will work](#). We have also updated the existing online guidance, which gives employers a clear explanation of how they will pay the levy, manage and use their funds in the new system.
- [The approach to the Register of Apprenticeship Training Providers](#). This document sets out our final policy on the register, following feedback. The SFA has now launched applications for the register and associated procurement which will close at 5pm on Friday, 25 November 2016.

Over the next few months, the SFA and DfE will continue to work with employers and training providers to ensure that you are aware of the reforms and how you can prepare for them. We will also provide further online guidance, events and webinars.

Individualised learner record (ILR): R03 data return

The ILR R03 data collection for the 2016 to 2017 funding year is now open and will close at 6pm on Friday, 4 November. As always we recommend that you submit your data as early as possible.

If you need to submit an Earnings Adjustment Statement (EAS) and you do not have access to this on the Data Returns tab in the Hub, please [email our Service Desk](#) or call us on 0370 267 0001 to request this.

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fconnect is an online community for data professionals to discuss data issues and assist others to resolve data queries.

Follow [@sfadata](#) for all SFA data-related information on Twitter.

For web alerts, please go to <http://gov.uk/sfa> to sign up and stay in touch with the latest news.

To register for **Update**, the weekly newsletter from the SFA for colleges, training organisations and key stakeholders, email: Update@sfa.bis.gov.uk

For action

Fees and charges 2015 to 2016

If you have subcontracted provision during the academic year 2015/16, we require you to publish the actual level of funding paid and retained for each of your subcontractors on your website by 21 November 2016.

For further information, please refer to paragraphs 60 to 63 in the [Funding Rules 2015 – 2016](#).

For information

Apprenticeship end-point assessment: deciding on your organisation's involvement

A new programme has been launched within *Future Apprenticeships*, funded by the Department for Education and commissioned by the Education and Training Foundation, to help organisations explore options, prepare for and deliver end-point assessment for apprenticeship standards.

The programme starts in November with [15 workshop packages](#) to help organisations understand the options and opportunities, and decide on their role in end-point assessment. The package is made up of a 1-day workshop, and a follow-up call with action planning.

All packages are part-subsidised. You can find further information on the [Future Apprenticeships website](#).

Find apprenticeship training service now live

Employers searching for apprenticeships and approved training organisations can use the [find apprenticeship training](#) function, which is now live on the digital apprenticeship service.

The new, easy-to-use tool enables employers to quickly search for all currently available apprenticeship training and training providers across England. Employers can view key information on their chosen apprenticeship, as well as information about training providers that can deliver the qualification.

Over 16,000 apprenticeship training offers are already listed. We have worked with training providers to ensure that the upload facility is simple and offers the opportunity for them to demonstrate the range and quality of their training. We will continue to support providers and update the information so that employers can see the full apprenticeship training offer when the digital apprenticeship service launches in 2017.

[Find apprenticeship training](#) is a major part of the digital apprenticeship service. As part of the design process, around 400 employers and 200 training providers have already tested the system, playing an integral part in shaping its design.

Data collection: subcontracting in 2016 to 2017

In November, we will collect your subcontracting commitments for the academic year 2016 to 2017. In a similar process to previous years, you will need to complete and return the Subcontractor Declaration form. Once we have validated your data, this information will be used as part of the publication of the list of declared subcontractors (LoDS).

It is important that if your subcontracting arrangements change during the year, you should inform the Skills Funding Agency at the earliest opportunity, as laid out in the [Skills Funding Agency: common and performance management funding rules for the funding year 2016 to 2017](#) (reference A70).

We will issue further information on this collection by email during November.

Software suppliers group

Representatives of the major companies who develop data and management information system (MIS) for providers, along with those providers who develop their own systems, joined in an SFA webinar for an update on the digital apprenticeship service.

The webinar focussed on the digital apprenticeship service's data requirements and how the MIS systems might support providers with the management of data. An employer who pays the apprenticeship levy and who selects a provider to deliver training will need to ensure that that basic details of apprentices and their apprenticeships are loaded into the service. The SFA plans to develop a bulk upload facility that will allow providers to undertake this task on behalf of an employer. The SFA team sought feedback from the suppliers on this option.

Further meetings are planned to discuss technical specifications and to support testing of the system.

In December there will be a software writer group meeting where we will talk to MI suppliers and own software writers about system development, the 2016 to 2017 ILR and the digital apprenticeship service. If you write software and are interested in joining the group, please email dataqueries@sfa.bis.gov.uk

Feconnect facts and figures

Since the last issue of Inform, **feconnect** has had 5,000 users who between them realised 36,000 page views.

So far this month, we have registered 30 new **feconnect** members.

If you have any new members of staff or existing staff that you think might find **feconnect** useful, please ask them to register. You can email any feedback on **feconnect** to feconnect@sfa.bis.gov.uk.

Technical user group meeting

The technical user group met on 25 October. The meeting agenda focussed mainly on the new apprenticeship funding methodology and the digital apprenticeship service.

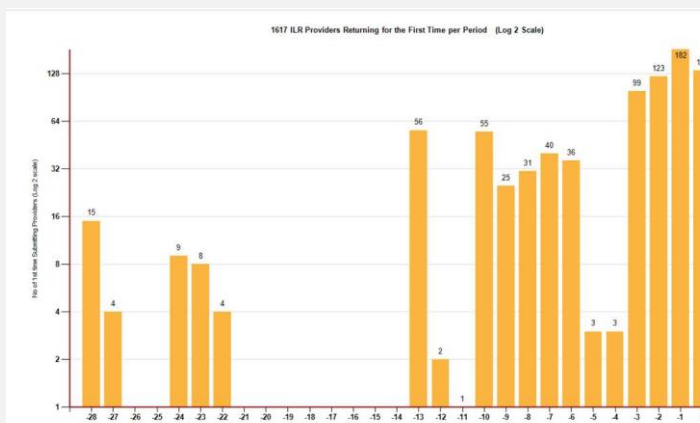
The group provided feedback about their experiences with uploading data to the 'Find apprenticeship training' search facility, which lets employers choose a specific apprenticeship standard or framework pathway and then see contact details for providers that can offer that provision.

As part of the meeting, the group were walked through the employer and provider processes to 'Add an apprentice' on the digital apprenticeship service, and provided feedback to support this and other ongoing development work.

The group also briefly discussed 2017 to 2018 ILR changes, providing input on the potential impact and data burden of possible changes. Version 1 of the 2017 to 2018 ILR specification will be published in January 2017.

Hub stats

In R02 we processed 2,692 files from 830 providers. Over 430 providers submitted their first R02 file in the last 3 days of the collection window.



About us

The Skills Funding Agency

The Skills Funding Agency exists to fund and promote adult further education (FE) and skills training in England.

SFA staff are responsible for developing and publishing the annual specification for the Individualised Learner Record and for supporting the governance processes for the collection of data from the FE and Skills sector.

The SFA provides a single, central point of data collection and information for FE and Skills. It also provides services to the Education Funding Agency and the wider education sector.