

2 February 2009

Dear Colleague

Framework for Excellence

I am writing to provide you with an update about changes to the arrangements for the Framework for Excellence.

In the main these changes relate to the roll-out of the Framework in 2009/10. However, there are some implications for the production and dissemination of Framework outputs in spring 2009.

Framework for Excellence: Putting the Framework into Practice, published in June 2008, set out our intentions for the implementation of the Framework in 2008/09 and for the further development of the Framework. The Framework for Excellence Provider Guide 2008/09, updated in September 2008, explained in detail how the arrangements would work and our intentions for the calculation and publication of Framework outputs in spring 2009 and beyond.

Since then stakeholder consultations and independent evaluation have confirmed general support for the Framework. However in this changing landscape the LSC is working closely with providers, provider organisations, DIUS, DCSF and other stakeholders to ensure that the Framework is fit for purpose, and is flexible enough to stay fit for purpose, for the future, taking account of the new arrangements for 16-18 and adult learning, the national economic situation and other factors.

The prime purpose of the Framework is to provide information for learners and employers to make informed choices and to ensure a consistent approach to commissioning arrangements for all post-16 providers. There is an opportunity before the next version of the Framework is introduced in September 2009 and the

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first full set of data is published in 2010 to make a number of design changes to the Framework model.

We believe that the steps we are taking now will be beneficial and will pay dividends in the long run. The implementation of the next version of the Framework will go ahead as scheduled in September 2009. The Framework will apply to all post-16 providers, including school sixth forms, from September 2010 (subject to pilot).

We envisage a future Framework model having a flatter, simpler structure than the current version, more sensitive to the diverse nature of the sector. The focus will be on individual performance indicators (PIs), which are fit for purpose, with a core that is accepted as applying to all providers and marginal components applying to particular provider types. We want to distinguish the elements of the Framework which are important for learner and employer choice and for high profile publication, and those elements which are more suitable for commissioners, funders and inspectors. As a result of extensive consultation we are already undertaking a review of the finance indicators. There will be further consultation as the future Framework arrangements are developed and firmed up over the coming months.

Implications for the 2008/09 version of the Framework

We propose to stand down any work during the next 3-5 months which is not consistent with proposals for the future model. This means that we:

- **will not** calculate an Overall Performance Rating (OPR) for each provider covered by the 2008/09 version of the Framework (although we have not ruled out the need for an OPR or some other summary rating for future versions)
- **will not** calculate scores/grades for Dimensions or Key Performance Areas (KPAs)
- **will not** calculate a score/grade for the Amount of Training PI
- **will not** calculate a score or grade for the proportion of LSC funding applied to priority provision within the Use of Resources KPA (UoR1)
- **will not** calculate a score or grade for the Capital PI within Use of Resources (UoR5)
- are considering the calculation of the other UoR measures in line with the outcome of the finance review

- will not publish the grades for Financial Health and Financial Management and Control in 2009

The LSC **will** calculate scores and grades for all other PIs for each provider, where appropriate. For information the other PIs are:

- Learner Views
- Learner Destinations
- Employer Views (or Training Quality Standard (TQS))
- Qualification Success Rate (QSR)
- Inspection Grade for Overall Effectiveness
- Financial Health
- Financial Management and Control
- Resource Efficiency

This information will be disseminated to individual providers in the form of a report with supporting information and data in spring 2009.

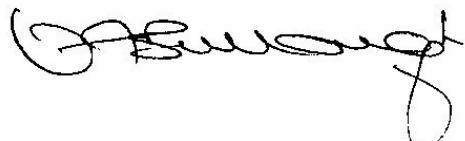
I would like to assure you that all your Framework data relating to the 2008/09 version will still be relevant. None of the data collection activity that you have carried out in recent months has been wasted. The revisions to the Framework model will be mainly structural, although we intend to consider new indicators, as planned, as well as reviewing some of the existing indicators. Many of the indicators used for the 2008/09 version will be used in future versions and there will be a need for similar, although streamlined, data collection activity. Any remaining data collection activity undertaken as part of the implementation of the 2008/09 version, for example, the administration of the Learner Views survey, should continue and remains vital to the calculation of the range of PIs.

We appreciate the work your organisation has done in the past year to implement the Framework. We hope that you will welcome this news and continue to provide input and support to the development of the Framework. However, we do recognise that some providers may feel that the fact that the LSC will not be producing OPRs this year, or calculating scores for the Framework Dimensions and KPAs, means that efforts applied to some modelling and integration work has been wasted. I apologise if that is the case for your organisation.

I will write to you again in early March to set out the detailed arrangements for the dissemination of the Framework scores and grades for 2008/09 which will take place later in spring.

More information about the Framework is available on the FfE website (<http://ffe.lsc.gov.uk>) or through your LSC local partnership team, should you have any queries.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'V Bullough', written in a cursive style.

Verity Bullough
National Director of Funding, Planning and Performance