

# Update

Issue 95  
15 February 2012

**Skills  
Funding  
Agency**

## Welcome

Welcome to Update, the Agency's weekly round-up of business-critical information and news for colleges, providers and key stakeholders in the further education (FE) learning and skills sector.

Please remember to share Update with your colleagues who might also like to register for [web alerts](#). This will notify them by email each time we communicate a new issue or if we publish any important announcements to the Agency's [website](#). You can also connect with the Agency on [Twitter](#).

We always welcome your feedback so please feel free to contact us by emailing the [Update mailbox](#).

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## **Introduction of the 12 month minimum duration for Apprenticeships Information**

Following the [announcement](#) by John Hayes Minister of State for Further Education, Skills and Lifelong Learning on 19 December 2011, the minimum duration of 12 months for Apprenticeships for those aged 16-18 will start in August 2012. This will be a requirement in the 2012/13 Funding Rules, expected to be published by the Agency by the end of March 2012, and will apply to all new starts from 1 August 2012 onwards.

Whilst the introduction of the new funding rule does not formally apply to those already in learning prior to August, we strongly encourage all training organisations and employers to start implementing, with immediate effect, the offer that all existing apprentices aged 16-18 are on a 12-month minimum programme.

The National Apprenticeship Service is currently reviewing the position with regard to a minimum duration time for those apprentices aged 19 and over and will continue to work with and consult the sector and stakeholders in undertaking this review. Once the review is completed, we will ensure that adequate notice is given should any changes to current funding rules be called for by government ministers.

More information is available on the Agency [website](#).

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## **Discretionary Learner Support 2010/11 over delivery funding Information**

Providers in receipt of a Discretionary Learner Support (dLS) Allocation for the academic year 2010/11 submitted a final year- end return in November 2011. These returns have now been reconciled and we are now able to recycle funds from under delivery to providers who have over delivered against their overall dLS 2010/11 allocation.

Providers will be notified through their February 2012 remittance advice note of their final year-end position. A £1,000 minimum has been applied to any under and/or over delivery.

If you have any queries, please contact your Relationship Team in the first instance.

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## **English and Maths qualifications for adults Information**

BIS have released a background note that provides information on the future content and arrangements for English and Maths Qualifications for the academic year 2012/13 and beyond. This is now available on the Agency [website](#).

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## Communicating the Skills Investment Strategy

### Information

As reported in [Update-Issue 92](#), the Agency has published questions and answers from its recent provider regional briefings across the country regarding the Government's [New Challenges, New Chances: The Skills Investment Statement 2011-2014: Investing in a World Class Skills System](#).

As we continue to hold briefings throughout February we will update our website with new questions and answers and we therefore recommend you visit it on a regular basis.

For your convenience we have categorised questions and answers under generic subject headers and we will highlight any new additions clearly.

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## Learner Equality Research – Religion and Belief

### Information

#### Promotion

The Agency has commissioned Babcock Research to undertake research on learners' views of the relationship between religion and/or belief and their experiences in further education. This important piece of work will provide evidence to inform provider good practice in light of the Equality Act.

Babcock Research will be contacting providers during February and would appreciate providers promoting the [survey](#) amongst their learners.

For information and promotional materials please email [Research@babcock.co.uk](mailto:Research@babcock.co.uk) or call Clare Lambley on 07734 496664.

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## Book now for the 2012 FE Data Conference – 28 March

### Information

#### Promotion

The Data Service, *the information authority* and the Learning Records Service will be hosting the 2012 FE Data Conference on 28 March at the [Welcome Centre](#) in Coventry, in partnership with the Skills Funding Agency and the Young People's Learning Agency (YPLA).

Following the publication of [New Challenges, New Chances: The Skills Investment Statement 2011-2014](#), the theme of the one-day conference is Simplification and what it means for Management Information Managers in the FE and Skills sector. The event will feature keynote speakers Sir Geoff Hall, Chair of *the information authority*, Geoff Daniels, Projects Director from the YPLA, and Keith Smith, Director of Funding Policy from the Agency.

To secure your place [book now](#) or visit the conference [website](#) for more information.

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## **Calling all providers – get involved in the biggest national skills event in the UK: WorldSkills UK – The Skills Show**

**Information**  
**Promotion**

The Skills Show will be held on 15 - 17 November 2012 at the NEC Birmingham. It brings together national skills competition finals, top employers, careers, training and Apprenticeship advice, Have a Go activities and some of the biggest names in skills and education. It will offer unrivalled skills experience to inspire future fashion designers, web developers, engineers and builders amongst others.

The Skills Show is calling all providers with a passion for excellence to get involved by running a Have a Go activity or a Showcase – the perfect platform to raise your profile whilst inspiring thousands! Apply now at [www.theskillsshow.com](http://www.theskillsshow.com).

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## **Showcase the talents of your learners through WorldSkills UK national competitions**

**Information**  
**Promotion**

If you have an exceptionally talented learner, why not put them forward for a WorldSkills UK national skills competition?

The competitions are open for entry for current apprentices and learners, or those who have completed a relevant programme of study within the past 12 months. Taking part in one of around 50 skills across five sectors will offer individuals the opportunity to compete with the best and attain higher levels of achievement.

Competition entries close on 15 March 2012. For more information visit our [website](#).

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## **Free online seminars – Supporting independent training providers in collaborative contracting**

**Information**  
**Promotion**

Learning and Skills Improvement Service (LSIS) is running a series of online events for providers/partnerships to cover the issues regarding Minimum Level Contracting in 2011-12 or planning for 2012-13. The free, one-hour sessions are led by an expert panel including providers, sector membership bodies and LSIS advisers.

- Collaborative Safeguarding: 22 February
- The New Inspection Framework – implications for collaborative partnerships: 24 February
- Managing under-performance in a partnership: 27 February
- How to search for a partner for collaborative working: 28 February
- Collaborative quality improvement: 7 March
- Collaborative Quality Assurance under the New Inspection Framework: 21 March

Further information on the above events and details of how to register are available on the LSIS [website](#).

In addition, LSIS offers one-to-one support from a partnership adviser - appointed to work with a partnership on an agreed development project which will improve the transition to successful MCL collaborative working. For further information, e-mail [mclsp@lisis.org.uk](mailto:mclsp@lisis.org.uk).

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### ***Making skills work for England.***

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