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## Welcome

Welcome to the October edition of the Perspective newsletter. In this issue we will be updating you on our current portfolio of products and services available to new and current clients, what's new this month, as well as the most important news from across the industry.

Here at Perspective we base our products and development on the feedback we receive from our clients to help us meet their expectations no matter what they may be.

We are always thinking up new and exciting ideas for different enhancements that our clients would benefit from, but if you have any ideas or desired new features be sure to get in touch!

### A few words from our Sunesis Product Director, Gary Harlock:

*"I would like to welcome you all to the October edition of the Sunesis newsletter. It has been another busy month at Perspective and we would like to thank all of you who entered last month's survey, there was some great feedback.. I would also like to wish a big congratulations to Emma Warren from the Exchange Group who was the lucky winner of an iPad 2!"*

## No Exchange here!

Emma Warren of Exchange Group was the excited winner of our Sunesis Survey give away. When presented with her prize, a brand new iPad2, Emma said:

*"It was a great surprise to receive the iPad 2! The iPad 2 has been on my wish list for some time now, so it couldn't have been better timed."*



Keep a look out for our next big give away and your chance to win more Sunesis goodies!

## WHAT'S NEW WITH SUNESIS?

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### Funding Profiler

Funding Profiler has been created to provide forward financial planning based on learning aims and qualification frameworks. By selecting the required framework combination, Sunesis provides accurate SLN based income calculations for projected learner volumes.

This soon-to-be released feature has so far proven to be a real hit during pilots and has significantly helped to reduce the number of hours spent planning and predicting future income streams.

The dynamic new tool allows our customers to plan for every occasion, whether it is huge enrolments or constant recruitments, all of which can be completed in line with all SFA regulations.

### Changes to Support

Here in the Sunesis team we are changing the way in which you can contact us with system queries. A Support Request Form is now available from the Support menu option. Once sent to us your query will receive an individual reference number to be used in all correspondence with the support team. We kindly request that any Sunesis system queries are raised using this option in order to improve our service to you.

## INDUSTRY NEWS

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### Monitoring Apprenticeships is Critical by Paul Davis

Having committed a further £222 million to vocational training earlier in the year, apprenticeship schemes are undoubtedly high on the Government's agenda. Often beset by high dropout rates, however, education providers need to display that they are a valid ongoing investment. Effectively tracking learners can have a direct impact on apprenticeship success rates while concurrently demonstrating that the funding is well spent.

As reported by *FE Week* between April 2010 and March 2011, the Government targeted that 203,200 19 year olds and above would start an apprenticeship scheme. Figures released in June, however, revealed that the actual figure was 257,000 – an astonishing 54,000 more than expected. Figures like these demonstrate the popularity of apprenticeships. For them to work successfully, however, the alarming dropout rate of around 25 per cent needs to be rectified to ensure success rates become consistently high.

Further education colleges can help to address this issue by effectively tracking every learner's progression and attendance. Historically, this has been a cumbersome and highly inaccurate process that had very little effect on success rates. Yet there are effective ways to manage this.

By having instantaneous access to up-to-date records on all students, colleges have the data they need to not only increase the success of their learners but also the success of the scheme itself. As a result, if either are not delivering to their full potential, colleges would be able to use an accurate flow of information that will directly lead to the point of breakdown, allowing it to be rectified before any serious or long-term damage is caused.

Increasing and maintaining motivation is another important factor that can be heavily influenced by the implementation of online management software. Institutions have reported that their apprentices displayed an increased willingness to learn and determination to improve themselves when they could view their own progress – a simple yet highly effective means of lowering dropout rates while increasing individual and overall success.

Clearly apprenticeships are proving popular in the current climate, but more needs to be done to ensure apprentices learn from their training and look to finish their training and continue to work thereafter. Given the current economic climate, encouraging young people to continue their studies should be vital in helping to reverse the present high number of unemployed young adults.

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### Where are all the Learners?

The reported fall in enrolments throughout the UK has left many asking "Where have all the potential students gone?" One answer, suggested by *FE Week*, argues that there are simply fewer 16 to 18-year-olds within the demographic. Figures released by the Office for National Statistics project a four per cent decrease in the number of 16 to 18-year-olds between 2011 and 2015. This reduction of close to 100,000 individuals is set to have a significant effect on the demand for Further Education learning.

Another explanation being disclosed is the recent scrapping of the EMAs, which has left many students unsure as to whether they can afford to continue their study, thereby leaving them to look towards employment. However, there is also a third possible answer - a barrier to apprenticeships which has been created by an unclear child tax benefit system. As *FE Week* discovered, a family will lose child tax benefits and child tax credits if a young person takes up an apprenticeship.

This makes the decision of whether to forgo further education a huge one, and one in which most young people are finding hard to make. As youth unemployment figures continue to rise, it is important that options for continued education or apprenticeships are made as easy as possible to encourage young people to continue in education.

### Question Time

Keep up to date with the latest desk 'must have' - the all new Perspective mouse mat.

For your chance to get hold of one of these extremely limited edition mats simply tell us:

**In Sunesis which part would you like to see improved?**

Please send all responses to Sophie Davis at:

sophie.davis@perspective-uk.com

T: 0121 506 9548

We endeavour to send prizes before the release of the next Sunesis newsletter.