

Dates for your diary

The Market Reform Forum sessions are designed to provide an update on the progress of the reform programme and give more detailed information on particular projects or aspects of the process.

Upcoming dates are provided below. Full details on the topics, locations and time for each one will be published prior to the session.

Thursday 28th June - 9.15am Tower Room, LUC

Thursday 26th July
Thursday 30th August

Places can be booked by emailing mrpo@marketreform.co.uk. Places are reserved on a first come first served basis.

New beginners forums

We also run a series of seminars and presentations for those who need to get up to speed with the reform agenda. If you are interested in attending one of these – or would like a MRPO representative to make a “market reform – from the top” presentation to your firm, please email chris.croft@marketreform.co.uk

IT Club dates:

Thursday 28th June - 11.00am Balls Brothers, Minster Court

Thursday 26th July
Thursday 30th August

Suppliers Forum dates:

Thursday 2nd August - 10.00am ACORD Conference Centre, LUC

Thursday 4th October
Thursday 13th December

To book a place on either of the above please contact Mel Harding, ACORD, by emailing mharding@acord.org

Taking the direct approach—how to get up and running on A&S

Willis have been among the pioneers of electronic processing for accounting and settlement. In this article, John Muir, Chief Operating Officer: Fine Art, Jewellery & Specie at Willis, takes us through their experiences in getting up and running with the Direct Load method of submitting premiums...

Willis has been piloting Direct Load and the Market Repository for Stage 1 and Stage 2 signings since August last year, with a wholesale rollout across all divisions since October. The mechanism allows brokers to upload LPANS, slips, endorsements and drafted policies directly into the Market Repository so they can be accessed and allocated instantly by XIS. This has resulted in an average reduction of over 8 days in end to end signing times and facilitated significant increases in the numbers of policies achieving the FSA Holy Grail of issuance in 30 days. Direct Load is now used for over 80% of all Willis' current submissions.

As Direct Load is simply a delivery mechanism, presentation content of Stage 1 and Stage 2 does not change. For brokers with legacy systems not capable of ACORD-messaging, it provides a low-cost alternative that dramatically reduces the frictional issues of posting premium and policy entries. It also facilitates a full audit trail that allows the progress of items to be tracked throughout their lifecycle. Where a policy is required, submissions can be made S&A (Stage 1 and 2 together) allowing XIS to work on both items in parallel, speeding up the end to end signing times. Signing numbers and dates are posted electronically and hard copy signed policies are mailed back by 'snail mail' (in fact, via the Willis delivery van!).

Whilst electronic processing is the way forward, the implementation of Direct Load has not been completely problem free. Initially, query rates rose as users on both sides got to grips with the new system, but over time and with perseverance, these teething problems have been overcome. With increasing time pressures in policy signing, we rely more and more on status information within the Xchanging Tracker system which has highlighted the importance of data integrity and our own understanding of the system. We have worked closely with XIS to address these issues. Most significantly, there is still some work to be done in respect of automatic uploading of signing numbers and dates into the repository, to ease what is currently quite a cumbersome, manual process.

The implementation of Direct Load provided instant benefits:

- As XIS use the data supplied in the Direct Load Work Order to automatically generate the Tracker record, there are no gaps in tracking throughout the signing process.
- There is less risk of data errors (particularly on the UMR) caused by rekeying.
- The new process does away with physical signing slips so we are already reaping the benefits of the reduced storage requirements and instant access to signing information at any location.

From a policy perspective, the weakest link in the Direct Load process has been the hard copy return of policy documents. Two things should help here - the changes to contract checking and documentation should mean there is less need for a policy document separate from the new Market Reform Contract; and, where a policy is still required, XIS have developed an electronic solution. Willis will be piloting this from July.

Additionally, Willis is implementing new systems to move us much nearer to full electronic processing but in the meantime, Direct Load has given us a valuable mechanism to achieve our FSA policy issuance and control mandates.

We would commend its wider take up.