

Minutes

Paper (MB 09-12) 1a

Date 15 September 2021

Subject ESFA Management Board Meeting

Security classification OFFICIAL SENSITIVE

Present Dame Irene Lucas (IL - Chair)

Stuart McMinnies (SM)
Hunada Nouss OBE (HN)
Martin Spencer (MS)
John Edwards (JE)
Warwick Sharp (WS)
Matt Atkinson (MA)
Owen Jenkins (OJ)
Charlotte Briscall (CB)
Susan Lovelock (SL)
Stephen Bagley (SB)
Stuart Proud (SP)
Peter Mucklow (PM)
Emily Simons (ES)
Lindsey Henning (LH)

Tim James (TJ)

Aimée-Leigh Musgrave (AM) Bal Toor (BT - item 7 only)

Claire Montgomery (CM) George Chachou (GC)

Jane Taylor (Deloitte JT - item 8 only)
Morag Childs (Deloitte MC - item 8 only)

Ian Coates (IC - item 9 only)
Mark James (MJ - item 9 only)
Debbie White (DW - Secretariat)

Observer Vaishalli Patel

Apologies Kirsty Evans

Sarah Whitehead

1. Welcome, minutes and actions from last meeting

- 1.1. IL welcomed all attendees to the meeting, noted apologies and reminded everyone of the need for confidentiality.
- 1.2. There were no new declarations of interest to note.

- 1.3. The minutes of the Management Board meeting on 30 June 2021 were agreed as an accurate record, with one small amendment to the title of item 6.
- 1.4. The board agreed that 15/04/21: Action 1 should remain on hold.

2. Interim Chief Executive's Update

- 2.1. JE confirmed the Department for Education's Spending Review proposals (incorporating those for the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA)) were submitted to the Treasury on 13 September. JE thanked all staff for their input into the submission and noted that the Investment Committee had credited the strong business cases from the ESFA.
- 2.2. The Arm's Length Body (ALB) Review of the agency is progressing with interim findings due to be reported in mid-October and a final report due in January 2022.
- 2.3. The ESFA is continuing to support staff on returning to the office and developing new hybrid working patterns.

3. Audit and Risk Committee Update

- 3.1. HN updated the board on activity at the Audit and Risk Committee (ARC) meeting and workshop on 1 September.
- 3.2. The focus of the ARC meeting was around the Annual Report and Accounts (ARA) and the challenges of completing the regulatory assurance work amid delays due to the Covid pandemic.

4. Performance Update

- 4.1. GC summarised highlights from the Performance and Risk Committee (PaRC) meetings since the Management Board on 30 June.
- 4.2. Discussion took place around the ratings of specific risks, milestones and key performance indicators (KPIs). Non-executive directors asked for an update on Local Skills Improvement Plans at the next meeting.

ACTION 1: Further Education Directorate to provide an update to Management Board at the December meeting on the progress of Local Skills Improvement Plans guidance and the timeline for completion.

5. People Update

- 5.1. BT gave an update on the work of the People Team, including workforce planning, the launch of new training for line managers of apprentices, and wellbeing initiatives across the agency.
- 5.2. IL was encouraged by deputy directors' sharing of best practice and asked for an update on the levels of support given to apprentices working in ESFA.

ACTION 2: BT to provide an update to Management Board at the December meeting on the level of support given to apprentices in the ESFA and how best practice is shared amongst ESFA senior leaders.

5.3. Support and communications are continuing to encourage staff to transition to hybrid working between home and office.

6. Professional Technical Education (PTE) Update

- 6.1. SL gave an update on the T-Level programme. There are now 10 T-Level courses available to students across the country, with the long-term aim being to enrol around 100,000 T-Level students by 2024-25.
- 6.2. The Apprenticeships and PTE directorates continue to work together on the joint marketing and promotion of apprenticeships and T-Levels.
- 6.3. Non-executive directors offered to assist with securing industry placements for T-Level students.

ACTION 3: SL to provide to NEDs by correspondence information about the regions and sectors in which there are challenges with industry placements.

7. External Board Effectiveness Review

- 7.1. JT and MC outlined the scope of the Board Effectiveness Review and summarised the findings.
- 7.2. Specific recommendations will be detailed in the final report due at the end of September.

8. Arm's Length Body Review Update

- 8.1. IC expressed his appreciation for the way in which ESFA have shared knowledge and provided input for the Review.
- 8.2. IL has met with the lead reviewer, Sir David Bell, and further meetings with the Management Board non-executives are scheduled.
- 8.3. IC detailed the methodology used to conduct the review; interim findings will be reported by mid-October.

9. Directorate Updates

9.1. ESFA directors summarised the key challenges and achievements of their respective directorates since the last Management Board meeting on 15 April.

10. Any Other Business

- 10.1. IL and the board thanked Stuart Proud for his support and contribution to the ESFA over the past 18 months and wished him well in his retirement.
- 10.2. The next Management Board meeting will be held on 9 December.

Meeting closed.