

Minutes

Date Subject	21 April 2020 Microsoft Teams video conference ESFA Management Board Meeting
Security classification	OFFICIAL - FOR PUBLICATION
Present	Irene Lucas (Chair) (IL) Stuart McMinnies (SM) Martin Spencer (MS) Hunada Nouss (HN) Eileen Milner (EM) Sarah Whitehead (SW) Matt Atkinson (MA) Peter Mucklow (PM) Keith Smith (KS) Kate Josephs (KJ) Charlotte Briscall (CB) Mike Pettifer (MP) Sue Lovelock (SL) Kirsty Evans (KE) Bal Toor (BT, <i>item 6 only</i>) Charlotte De Val (CDV, <i>item 3 only</i>) George Chachou (GC) Claire Montgomery (CM) Portia Bailey (PB)
Apologies	None

1. Welcome, minutes and actions from last meeting

- 1.1. IL welcomed everyone to the meeting, noted no new declarations of interest since the last meeting, and reminded all about confidentiality.
- 1.2. The minutes of the last meeting were agreed as an accurate record.
- 1.3. Outstanding actions from the last meeting (which were predominantly related to discussion points planned for April) have not been chased because of the current exceptional circumstances which had meant that the board meeting had been condensed to two hours, which much of a focus on the ESFA's response to COVID-19. All members agreed with this.

1.4. IL thanked KS for his contribution to the ESFA, as he will shortly be leaving the agency although continuing to work very closely with it and leading a reform programme under Eileen Milner's joint leadership. IL welcomed KE who takes up the position of Director of Further Education (FE). PM (current Director of FE) will become Director of Apprenticeships.

2. ESFA sub-committee update

- 2.1. HN reported that at the time of the last Audit and Risk Committee (ARC) on 5 March 2020, members had focussed on business as usual whilst acknowledging that the emerging Covid-19 situation would change the current landscape.
- 2.2. The ARC meetings in May and June will focus on the Annual Report and Accounts (ARA), assurances, and response to COVID-19.

3. ESFA Business Plan 2020-21

- 3.1. CDV presented the final draft of the ESFA Business Plan 2020-21 **for sign off.**
- 3.2. The board agreed that the plan was very well presented, but that it should include a caveat that explains that the plan was drafted before COVID-19.

ACTION 1: CDV to add narrative to the Business Plan to reflect that it was drafted before Covid-19 became a national emergency.

4. ESFA's COVID-19 Strategic Overview

- 4.1. EM gave a strategic overview of what the next 12-18 months might look like for ESFA and said that significant work was already going into the work of planning for recovery phases and challenges.
- 4.2. Staff absence levels are currently low in ESFA although a lot of working patterns have changed. The ESFA is getting on with business as usual where it can but COVID-19 affects all areas and EM thanked all staff in ESFA for the work they are doing.

5. COVID-19 Summary of Interventions and ESFA response

- 5.1. KJ updated the board on the ESFA's response to COVID-19. A central COVID team has been established to support the agency to maintain critical services, develop and implement new or revised policies, and maintain support for existing strategic programmes.
- 5.2. The immediate focus was on supporting our people to work remotely and pleasingly this has been going well. Robust contingency plans are being developed and tested.
- 5.3. The ESFA's recovery plan will take into account what the new 'business as normal' will be, as well as being reactive to the changing COVID-19 landscape.

ACTION 2: KJ to share data on the key interventions and the financial implications when available by correspondence.

6. Our People

- 6.1. BT said the focus of the people team has been to support ESFA with staff resourcing in response to COVID-19, as well as business as usual. Across the ESFA there has been significant emphasis on the importance of wellbeing.
- 6.2. The board discussed the immediate plans for developing the skills of its own apprentices; reward; leadership training and what we can learn from the current situation from an organisational perspective.

7. Risk Updates

- 7.1. GC gave an overview of the agency's top tier risks; the COVID-19 risk summary; and the risk appetite amendment.
- 7.2. The board asked that the amended risk appetite statement be further amended and brought to ARC on 18 May.

ACTION 3: GC to provide updated risk appetite statement to ARC on 18 May 2020. Statement to be shared via correspondence to NEDs after ARC.

8. Financial and Assurance Update

- 8.1. SW flagged that whilst there are currently no concerns, with changes to the operating model it is highly likely there will be an impact on assurances and controls particularly on finance and provider market oversight.
- 8.2. There is an expectation that COVID-19 will not impact heavily on the audit and accounts in 2019-20 but may show a significant impact in 2020-21. This item will be discussed on more detail at ARC on 18 May 2020.

9. AOB

9.1. The date of the next meeting is 30 June 2020, details to be confirmed.

Meeting closed.