Education & Skills Funding Agency

Minutes

Date 10 December 2020

Subject ESFA Management Board Meeting
Security OFFICIAL – FOR PUBLICATION
classification

Present Non-Executive Members

Irene Lucas (IL) (Chair) Hunada Nouss (HN) Martin Spencer (MS) Stuart McMinnies (SM)

Members

Eileen Milner (EM) (CEO)

Portia Bailey (PB)
Warwick Sharp (WS)
Matt Atkinson (MA)
Stuart Proud (SP)
Charlotte Briscall (CB)
Kirsty Evans (KE)
Sue Lovelock (SL)
John Edwards (JE)
Peter Mucklow (PM)

Tika Khan (TK) (item 5&6)
Bal Toor (BT) (item 7)
George Chachou (GC)
Simon White (SW)
Debbie White (notes)

Apologies Jenny Garamszegi (JG)

Claire Montgomery (CM)

1. Welcome, minutes and actions from last meeting

- 1.1. IL welcomed everyone to the meeting and reminded all about confidentiality.
- 1.2. MS declared that he has been appointed as a non-executive member of the Audit and Risk Committee of the London Fire Brigade.
- 1.3. Minutes of the meeting on 10 September 2020 were agreed and approved.
- 1.4. Action 10-09 (2) remains open. All other remaining actions were closed.

2. Chief Executive's Update

- 2.1. EM acknowledged the impact that rising Covid rates of infection might have upon a range of educational settings.
- 2.2. Work is now underway on apportionment of budgets in light of the recent Spending Review outcome.
- 2.3. EM expressed her gratitude to the executive team for their continued efforts and the non-executives for their continued support throughout what has been an especially challenging year.

3. Feedback from Audit and Risk Committee 3 December 2020

3.1. HN provided feedback from the ESFA Audit and Risk Committee (ARC) meeting held on 3 December.

4. Performance and Risk Updates

- 4.1. GC outlined the highlights from Performance and Risk Committee (PaRC) meetings held in September, October, and November.
- 4.2. GC updated the board on the work being carried out across the agency to improve the management of performance and risk.
- 4.3. GC acknowledged the helpful feedback from ARC, which will be used to help improve risk reporting.

5. Finance Update on Annual Report and Accounts (ARA)

5.1. SP updated the board on lessons learned from the 2019-20 ARA, the points from the National Audit Office Management Letter and ESFA responses and audit planning for 2020-21. There were no issues to report on this work.

ACTION 1: SP to share the internal plan for audit work by correspondence or as a below the line paper at the next meeting.

5.2. SP presented the update on the Spending Review results and informed the board that ESFA have commenced an internal exercise on prioritisation ahead of confirmation of budgets in each directorate.

6. Deep Dive on Further Education (FE) Reform

6.1. All directors involved in the Further Education and skills landscape updated the board on progress within their individual directorates on FE reform.

7. Our People Update

- 7.1. The ESFA People Plan (launched in June 2020) has been revised in response to Covid.
- 7.2. BT gave an overview of the progress against each priority.
- 7.3. The board commended the people team on their achievements and progress against the plan and asked for a further discussion on wellbeing.

ACTION 2: Wellbeing of staff post Covid to be added to agenda for next meeting.

8. Update on Covid Interventions and Performance Reporting

- 8.1. KE presented the highlights from the Covid interventions report. Additional assurance information has been added to the report as requested by the board. Progress against that assurance work is also now included.
- 8.2. SM asked about spend on the National Tutoring Fund. JE will answer in correspondence.

ACTION 3: JE to provide to NEDs via correspondence information on the spend for the National Tutoring Fund.

9. Directorate Updates

9.1. All directors gave an update on the work of their directorates, detailing the key challenges faced and achievements from the last quarter.

10. AOB

10.1. The next meeting will be 4 February 2021.