



Education & Skills  
Funding Agency

Education and Skills Funding Agency  
3 Glass Wharf  
Avon Street  
Bristol  
BS2 0EL

Tel: 0370 000 2288

[Customer Help Portal](#)

29 May 2024

## To accounting officers in academy trusts

Dear colleagues

As you know, the Prime Minister has announced there will be a general election on Thursday 4 July 2024. Over the next six weeks, in the run up to the election, we are in the 'pre-election' period. During this period essential business to ensure the smooth functioning of government and public services will continue. The ESFA will therefore continue to deliver the majority of our operational activity as normal. However, we must pause on communicating anything new or novel, and on most of our external engagement activities.

Additionally, I wanted to take this opportunity to update you on upcoming headline activities for the agency.

### 2024 budget forecast return (BFR)

The guidance for the [2024 budget forecast return](#) is now published on GOV.UK and the BFR went live on [28 May 2024](#). Last year we extended the return deadline to the end of August to give trusts the maximum time to respond. In keeping with that approach – and to allow trusts the opportunity to factor any post-election announcements into their return – the deadline for this year will be 29 August 2024.

Guidance to support you in completing the BFR, alongside contact information for any queries, is on the BFR GOV.UK page. As always, our aim is to give you as much information and certainty as we can, and therefore we will continue to provide you with any further updates at the earliest available opportunity.

### 2024 Academy Trust Handbook

The ESFA aims to publish an updated Academy Trust Handbook for the new academic year at the earliest opportunity in order to provide the sector with certainty about our requirements around financial oversight and compliance. Given the election announcement, the publication of the handbook will now be delayed until after the election. As you will appreciate, any updates to the handbook will require ministerial approval and therefore, as with the BFR, we will provide you with an update at the earliest opportunity.

## **Academy trust funding**

We will continue to deliver funding that we have previously allocated during this period, but there will not be any new announcements on funding levels. We will also continue with business as usual work, such as processing business cases and collecting data.

If you have any concerns or urgent queries, you can contact the agency through the usual channels.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'David Withey', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

**David Withey**

Chief Executive

Education and Skills Funding Agency