



Education & Skills  
Funding Agency

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[Customer help portal](#)

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## To accounting officers in academy trusts and colleges

Dear colleagues

As you may have seen, we have today announced that [the current functions of the ESFA will transfer into the Department for Education](#).

This means that the ESFA as an executive agency will close on 31 March 2025.

### Why are we changing?

The ESFA has been an important part of the education landscape since 2017. Delivering and assuring £75 billion of funding to 25,000 providers means we are one of the biggest funding operations anywhere in government. In parallel we have played an important role in the regulatory and accountability arrangements for providers.

I am very proud of the achievements of the ESFA during this time. Our most recent [annual report](#) pointed to some of the successes we have had in supporting the 25,000 schools, colleges and independent training providers who we work with. These include:

- ensuring all key financial management and government advice could be found in one place in the financial handbooks for academies, colleges and independent training providers (ITPs)
- achieving a 99.9% success rate on the accuracy and timeliness of over half a million individual payments to providers
- preventing and detecting £91 million of fraud

Over that period, we have seen a number of changes to our role and functions, most recently following Sir David Bell's [Review of the ESFA in 2022](#). Since those changes were implemented, we have continued to reflect on the interface between us and the department. One of the messages that we have regularly heard from our providers during this time, is that they have found central government challenging to navigate.

The changes announced today will help build on some of those concerns. Moving the agency's functions into the department will allow for a more

cohesive regulatory interface, and more joined up delivery of the services we, and the department, offer to individuals and organisations we aim to support.

### **What will this mean for you as accounting officers?**

The ESFA is already an executive agency of the department, so we are aiming to ensure that this change feels as low-impact as possible for you as accounting officers. The functions of the ESFA will continue, though some will now be delivered by the department rather than us. The intent is for this to feel more joined up, without you having to change what you do.

That impact will differ between sectors.

**Academy trust accounting officers** will see some changes from **1 October 2024** when our functions relating to financial oversight for academy trusts transfer to the department. This means Schools Financial Support and Oversight (SFSO) teams will transfer to Regions Group. You will continue to engage with the teams as you do now.

**College and ITP accounting officers** will see an impact from **1 April 2025** when our functions relating to the delivery and assurance of funding transfer to the department.

For all accounting officers, existing relationships and framework documents will continue to work in the same way:

- you will continue to engage and work with the same teams if you have any financial issues or question - the way these teams work with you and the services they offer will not change immediately
- you should continue to raise any enquiries you may have through the DfE [customer help portal](#)
- you will continue to receive all updates about funding related information through [ESFA Update](#) until 1 April 2025 - we will provide further information before then about any changes to communication channels after that date
- you will continue to access information about allocations and payments in the same ways you do now
- you will continue to use our existing mechanisms to submit data or other information when required, such as about [related party transactions](#)
- all our financial frameworks - including the [Academy trust handbook](#), the [College financial handbook](#) and the [Financial handbook for independent training providers](#) - and other guidance on GOV.UK will continue to apply

To support us in making the most of the new, more joined up arrangements, we will want to work with you to make things even better. If there are any changes to how you can expect to receive information or interact with our

services we will inform you in due course, with the aim of continued smooth service.

Please do share this letter with your board of trustees, chief financial officer, and executives.

If you have questions or feedback, you can contact the agency using the [customer help portal](#).

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