

# ESFA annual report and accounts demonstrate punctual and accurate budget handling

The ESFA implements a diverse range of programming, from adult skills development to careers advice, from secondary education to delivering apprenticeships, T Levels and other FE opportunities. The [2018 to 2019 annual report](#) sets out how the ESFA delivered on its ambitious aims

During the 2018 to 2019 financial year, the ESFA delivered 100% of expected funding allocations to 25,000 education institutions on time, including the new National Funding Formula allocations, which were delivered to over 8,500 academies.

£60 million was invested into the new technical qualification 'T Levels' – dedicated staff and systems were implemented ahead of industry placements commencing in 2020, and the agency committed a further £74 million to expand the programme in 2019 to 2020.

And the agency remained committed to introducing new oversight measures to ensure best use of public spending. This included:

- requesting a 3-year budget forecast return for the whole academy sector to promote good financial planning.
- funding Ofsted to carry out monitoring visits on all new apprenticeship providers within 24 months of their funding start date.
- challenging excessively high pay, resulting in 50 academy trusts reducing their salaries.

## **Eileen Milner, ESFA Chief Executive said:**

I take great pride in the changes the ESFA has made this past year, resulting in all of our expected funds being issued correctly and on time.

It is our duty to make sure that education providers are using their funds effectively and for the purposes intended by parliament, which is why we have focused our efforts on working with the sector to develop and enhance our assurance frameworks, and to strengthen the control environments in which they operate.

We have made significant improvements in how the agency operates, but we must not be complacent, nor ignorant to the challenges that lay ahead. We must continue to improve our systems and streamline our processes, to make receiving and applying for funding easier for those whose job it is to educate the next generation.

The ESFA, as part of the wider DfE, is responsible for both policy development and operational delivery across a range of sectors and settings – these include working with some 3000 academy trusts to ensure that financial resources are well utilised and good governance is deployed; providing support and challenge to the FE sector; delivering T Level qualifications and leading work on qualifications reviews; delivering apprenticeships policy across England and being the home of both the National Careers Service and the National Apprenticeships Service.

**Irene Lucas, Chair ESFA Management Board said:**

Since starting in post, I have been impressed with the expertise and dedication of people in the agency, who deliver such crucial programmes and services.

To ensure a higher level of scrutiny, oversight and influence, the board has aligned its members with ESFA's strategic objectives to enrich the collective knowledge of the business.

I have confidence that the governance procedures and practices in place are robust enough to overcome the challenge and change that is yet to come.

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## **Government proposes to tighten firearms licensing to protect the public**

The Home Office has today (23 July) launched a [consultation on statutory guidance for police issuing firearms licences](#) – which will ensure officers are consistently checking applicants' medical records in order to better protect the public.

The independent police inspectorate, HMICFRS, previously found there was inconsistent police licensing practice across the country and that medical information was not being shared for firearms applications, creating a potential safety risk.

The draft statutory guidance, which includes the requirement for police to check medical records, will bring more clarity to the process, with the aim of ensuring licences are only issued to suitable applicants.

The department has drafted the guidance following discussions with the police, GPs and shooting organisations, who agreed that greater consistency

was needed. It is now seeking further feedback on the draft guidance.

The Home Office has also signed an agreement with the British Medical Association (BMA) which the department hopes will improve cooperation between the police and GPs.

Nick Hurd, Minister for Policing and the Fire Service, said:

We have some of the toughest firearms controls in the world and we must do everything we can to ensure it stays this way.

We need to bring greater consistency to how firearms licences are issued and I am confident that the police, GPs and shooting groups agree. We have listened to their concerns and are proposing a way forward that tightens up the system without creating unreasonable demands.

The bottom line is public safety. Firearms must only be in the hands of the most safe and responsible people. This is not something we are prepared to compromise on.

The Memorandum of Understanding with the BMA marks a new commitment to safeguard doctors involved in the firearms application and monitoring system. This will allow them to work with the police to strengthen the system for assessing the health information of firearms applicants.

It addresses the long-held concerns of GPs around liability, making it clear that the legal responsibility for judging whether someone is suitable to possess a firearm or shotgun certificate rests solely with the police.

GPs are asked to provide information about whether firearms applicants have a history of relevant mental or physical conditions which could affect their safe possession of guns. They are also asked to put a firearms flag on patient records so that police can be alerted if a person develops a relevant medical condition after their licence has been issued.

The Home Office has worked with the medical profession to encourage doctors' use of the firearms flagging system. Alongside the Department of Health and Social Care, the Home Office is looking into how this system can be supported by a national IT system to make the use of these flags more widespread.

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## **Advancing our health: prevention in the 2020s – statement to Parliament**

Further to the [Prevention Vision](#) published on 5 November 2018, I wish to

inform the House of the publication of the green paper, [Advancing our Health: prevention in the 2020s](#). The consultation will run for 12 weeks.

For the first 70 years of the NHS, we have been successful in helping people live longer. Life expectancy has increased by almost 30 years over the past century. Cancer survival rates are up, mortality rates from heart disease and stroke are down.

Despite this progress, over 20% of our lives are spent in poor health. On average, men born today can expect to live 16 years in poor health and women 19 years. There is also a clear social gradient, with people in deprived areas living shorter lives in poorer health. Now we must move from thinking about life span to health span: the number of years we can expect to live healthy, independent lives.

The NHS is already making good progress, placing prevention at the heart of its Long Term Plan and supported by our record £20.5 billion additional investment. In the years ahead, the challenge is to deliver on these commitments, to move from a national treatment service (focused on illness) to a national wellness service (focused on good health), and to work even more closely with local authorities who have specific responsibilities around prevention and influence many of the determinants of good health.

As well as modernising prevention services, we also need to lay the foundations for good health across society and make healthy choices easier. This is because less than a quarter of our health is shaped by the services we receive.

Our health is our greatest asset. Just as we save for our retirement, we should be investing in our health throughout life. We know that some people find this easier than others. Not because of innate differences in their values or beliefs, but because of differences in their experiences and circumstances. We believe that everybody has the right to a solid foundation on which to build their health. This means giving our children a good start and growing the conditions for good health throughout life.

When it comes to living a healthy life, the modern world presents many challenges. It can feel like the odds are stacked against us. This green paper is not about nannying but making healthier choices easier for people, so they are empowered to make decisions that are right for them and their families. To live a healthy, happier life, evidence suggests our focus should be on: eating a healthy diet, being physically active, being smoke-free and taking care of our mental health.

The commitments in the green paper help us towards our mission of healthy, happier lives. We aim to publish a government response by spring 2020, setting out our proposals in more detail.

Health is a shared responsibility. Only by working together can we achieve our vision of healthier, happier lives for everyone.

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# **DASA Download: Supporting Innovation in small businesses**

The Defence and Security Accelerator (DASA) not only finds and funds UK innovators, but also helps businesses to grow and develop, giving them access to networks of expertise and providing them with technical support. To date, over 50 per cent of our funding has gone to small and medium-sized enterprises.

Alan Scrase, our newly appointed 'Access to Mentoring and Finance' (A2MF) specialist is leading a new DASA service in which we offer potential and existing suppliers access and signposting to a range of business support, guidance and finance. Here, in the latest 'DASA Download', Alan discusses the value he is adding at DASA.

## **Innovation Journey**

I support businesses on their innovation journey, advising them how to achieve a greater commercial impact from their ideas. I often find that some of the most innovative of concepts are lost along the way due to a lack of finance, management skills, impetus, or even effective communication. As a former contender on Dragon's Den, yes really, I know that the lack of any of these areas could simply be down to not having enough hours in the day. However, it could also be that it isn't clear to the innovator where to turn to next to mature their idea and organisation.

Breaking into and sustaining a presence in the Government's defence and security sectors adds its own complexities, but the opportunity for innovating can be endless. Significant steps have been taken to improve accessibility for business into these sectors, the creation of DASA for example. In the financial year 2018/19, DASA funded 226 proposals, with approximately 40 per cent of proposals being 'new to DASA' organisations demonstrating how DASA is reaching out to non-traditional suppliers to find the best ideas. Innovation is vital in defence and security to provide solutions to counter the increasingly technical threats from our adversaries. The government realises that solutions cannot always be found 'in-house' and that by supporting small and medium-sized businesses to bring new ideas to market more quickly could help the UK to stay one step ahead of emerging threats.

DASA connects these businesses to frontline services such as the armed forces and police, as well as aviation security, transport security, and counter-terrorism. Such access has allowed innovations to be tested in real life situations, rapidly accelerating the innovation process.

## **Supporting Business**

Innovation hubs have sprung up across government and I believe this is an opportunity for small and medium sized businesses. The increased availability of funding is also a positive. However, there is still a lack of knowledge across businesses as to how to harness the wide range of funding and support and how to create a sustainable business to become a long term, valued government supplier. And, that is where I come in.

I want to influence our networks and stimulate a more business savvy atmosphere within the innovation ecosystem. I am going to do this by getting out and about, I'm going to be at DASA's launch events, demonstration days and I'm meeting our stakeholders. I am also chatting to decision makers and policy players to ensure we have wider buy-in.

I am currently touring the UK discovering first-hand the challenges that face our current and potential suppliers. I am also spending time with our Innovation Partners, our talent scouts, working with them to share my more general A2MF knowledge across their networks. We have 12 regionally based Innovation Partners who are embedded in their local networks and who are liaising daily with their contacts to gauge and scope the market for suitable solutions. I will be providing our Innovation Partners with extra business nous and experience to advise their contacts.

## **Benefit to Government**

When meeting businesses, what I am interested in is how they present themselves in terms of their value proposition and how this can be translated into a benefit for government and wider customers. I want to help organisations to grow in terms of confidence and maturity; many of them may just need a little advice on raising investment, recruiting key staff, trading laws or export guidance. This knowledge can be particular to the defence and security sectors, such as the International Arms Trade or the Five Eyes agreement. Some small businesses that are funded by DASA are unaware, for example, that they qualify for 'Research and Development Tax Credits' which can easily be claimed against the funding they receive. This is effectively 'cash back' to the company, worth up to 232% of the initial investment.

## **Nurturing people with ideas**

DASA delivers a daily 'wow' experience, where I learn of the most amazing innovations, teams and businesses. To enable impact from such innovation – all the way along the supply chain – we need to nurture these businesses to ensure that innovation creates a wave effect on defence and security capability development.

My priority for the coming months will be to take the time to understand our suppliers and invest in them in terms of finance, management, and support.

For all queries about DASA, contact us via our email:  
[accelerator@dstl.gov.uk](mailto:accelerator@dstl.gov.uk).

## About Alan

Prior to joining DASA, Alan was the Business Incubation Centre Manager at SETsquared at the University of Southampton where he supported and guided members to secure over £7m of grant and equity funding over six years. Alan has worked with senior Innovate UK and HEFCE staff and was responsible for conceiving and managing the award winning Innovation to Commercialisation of University Research (ICURe) programme. Alan has also run his own stereoscopic imaging business knowing first-hand the complexities of running your own business. Alan has been closely associated with a wide range of regional and economic development projects and programmes and will use this experience and knowledge to help DASA support its suppliers.

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## [Academy SW seminar – Contextual Safeguarding: protecting children abused beyond their homes](#)

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