

# ESA Implementation Team Update

Issue 6  
May 2009

## **Appointment process for ESA Chairperson begins**

The Department has invited applications for the position of Chairperson (Designate) to the Board of the Education and Skills Authority (ESA). Full details, including the job advertisement and information pack are available on the DE website – [www.deni.gov.uk](http://www.deni.gov.uk)

Interviews are planned to take place during June and it is anticipated that the appointment will be confirmed by September 2009.

## **Approval received for voluntary severance arrangements**

The Department of Finance and Personnel has approved the extension of discretionary added years enhancements for voluntary severance of up to 6 2/3 years for the duration of the RPA for affected staff in the Education Sector.

£50 million has been secured to support the establishment of ESA and to assist with the change process. The bulk of this will be used to meet the costs of voluntary severance as part of the restructuring process. It is envisaged this will provide sufficient funds to support a reduction of approximately 460 posts across all grades within the management and administration functions of the existing organisations.

The largest reduction in staff (44%) is anticipated at the senior management level, with a reduction in middle management posts of 24%, supervisory management posts of 14% and the smallest reduction of 4% at the clerical and support grades.

Once complete this modernisation of education administration will release £20 million per annum for redirection to frontline services

## **Expressions of interest in voluntary severance – process underway**

The ESA Implementation Team (ESAIT) has issued letters to senior managers across the RPA affected education sector organisations requesting expressions of interest in voluntary severance.

This follows consultation with Trade Unions and existing organisations through the Transition Board, the HR Managers' Forum and the Education Sector Joint Forum.

## ***A phased approach***

As reorganisation will take several years to complete, the voluntary severance process will be managed on a phased, targeted basis, to coincide with the phased population of the new organisation structure through recruitment and redeployment.

*The first phase* of voluntary severance is being made available to "at risk" staff at senior management level within the affected organisations in the education sector.

It is hoped decisions can be taken to enable the first offers of voluntary severance to commence in early July 2009. The majority of voluntary severances will be on a deferred basis and will not take place until well after the establishment of ESA to facilitate

continuity of service provision and business needs.

*The second phase of voluntary severance is expected to commence in early Autumn following the development of proposals for the ESA Assistant Director structure.*

*Further phases of voluntary severance will be implemented until the reorganisation is completed.*

*Given the significant volume of work associated with the voluntary severance process for ESAIT, NILGOSC and HR departments, staff are urged **not** to seek estimates of redundancy benefits on an individual basis.*

### ***Voluntary Severance - Frequently Asked Questions***

In order to assist in answering common questions in relation to voluntary severance some FAQs have been posted on the ESAIT website – [www.esani.org.uk](http://www.esani.org.uk)

### **ESA Director Structure**

The consultation period for the proposals on the ESA Director structure closed on 6 March.

Thank you to all groups and individuals who responded. A summary of the responses received has been posted on the ESAIT website.

A final decision on the Director Structure is expected from the Department of Education in coming days. The finalised structure will also be posted on the ESAIT website.

Work is progressing on the Assistant Director structure and it is hoped that draft proposals will be put out for consultation in June.

### **Recruitment to Director posts**

Consultation on the Recruitment, Redeployment and Voluntary Severance (RRVS) Strategy for Senior Management is now complete and we expect to begin the process of recruitment for ESA Director posts shortly, with appointments made by the Autumn.

### **Building ESA Services**

The ESA Implementation Team has taken account of comments received from the series of workshops held in November and December with staff throughout the education sector, and has incorporated these into the future Service Delivery Models for ESA.

The design process for ESA has now moved into the third and fourth stages of identifying the staff, skills and resources required to deliver each service effectively, and the appropriate organisation design and location of functions to ensure high quality services are delivered effectively and efficiently.

Deloitte has been appointed to assist ESAIT in this work.

### **Location update**

A location audit, identifying the non-school accommodation that will transfer to ESA, has been completed. This will inform the development of the long-term ESA location strategy, taking account of the regional and local functions set out in the future Service Delivery Models.

The location strategy will take into account the PSC Guiding Principles on location, the Bain recommendations on the location of public sector jobs subject

to agreement by the Executive, and equality legislation.

### **ESA Equality Scheme in development**

ESAIT is conducting preparatory work with the Equality Officers of the existing organisations and DE on the development of an Equality Scheme for ESA.

The timing of this work coincides with the major effectiveness review of Section 75 being undertaken by the Equality Commission. ESAIT is working with the Commission to prepare a scheme which will meet the very highest standards in relation to our equality duties.

We are confident that the work undertaken to date and in the near future will underline our determination to address inequalities in education provision and guarantee fairer treatment for pupils in Northern Ireland.

### **Department appoints additional Accounting Officer**

Following its establishment on 1 January 2010 ESA will have operational responsibility for the last three months of the 09/10 financial year. Under merger accounting rules the Accounting Officer of ESA will have to sign off the accounts for the full year.

Therefore, from April 09 the ESA Chief Executive (Designate), Gavin Boyd, will have a key role in overseeing systems of control, corporate governance and the quality of decision making within the existing organisations.

DE will also exercise oversight by convening a monthly meeting of Chief Finance Officers chaired by the Finance Director of DE.

### **Working Groups on Children and Young People's Services and Education Quality – report due**

Comprising a cross section of current providers of education services and practitioners, both working groups were set up to assist in shaping and structuring these services under ESA.

Each group has now completed their series of meetings and a report of their findings will be published later this month.

### **Designing ESA - the Estates Consultative Group (ECG)**

The ECG is proving to be a valuable forum for exploring the similarities and differences in the numbers of staff, skills and resources within current organisations.

The ECG received an informative presentation on the Manhattan Estate Management System which provided details of the system's capabilities and its current use in minor capital projects, planned and response maintenance, and major capital projects. The presentation, together with the Post-implementation Review carried out by CMSU for ESAIT, will inform our decisions on our future Service Delivery Model.

### **Recruitment to ESAIT**

Interviews are currently taking place for the ESAIT posts trawled during March/April. Information on new appointments to the project team will be posted on the ESAIT website later this month.

## **Mark departs for pastures new**

ESAIT Programme Director Mark Browne is to leave the team at the end of May.

Mark will take up his new post as Deputy Permanent Secretary of the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development on 1 June.

Mark has been part of the ESA Implementation Team since it was set up in July 2006. And while his colleagues at Forestview wish him well, his experience, drive and determination will be sorely missed.

## **2<sup>nd</sup> Communications Survey – thank you**

During late March/early April more than 650 of you (around 50% of staff sampled) responded to ESAIT's second communications survey. Thanks to everyone who took the time to complete the online questionnaire.

With the date for ESA confirmed and preparations gathering momentum, it is

more important than ever that we work with the Department and the existing organisations to ensure communications are a priority.

The findings of the survey will be shared on the ESAIT website during May and fed into our communications plans for coming months.

You can share your comments on ESAIT communications at anytime by dropping a line to ESAIT Communications Project Manager, Robert Shilliday – [robert.shilliday@deni.gov.uk](mailto:robert.shilliday@deni.gov.uk)

***Please email any comments and feedback you have about ESAIT Update to [robert.shilliday@deni.gov.uk](mailto:robert.shilliday@deni.gov.uk)***

***Remember - you can keep up to date on all matters relating to the creation of the Education and Skills Authority on the ESA Implementation Team website - [www.esani.org.uk](http://www.esani.org.uk)***