

Message from ESA Chief Executive (Designate) Gavin Boyd

Hello, I'm Gavin Boyd. Welcome to the first in a series of online messages providing more information in the run up to the creation of the Education and Skills Authority.

Our recent communications survey highlighted the importance of using all the channels at our disposal to get across the information that's important to you on the coming changes to education administration.

And while I'll be making every effort to meet face to face with staff in the weeks and months ahead, this format provides another way to speak directly to you.

In this webcast I'll be providing information on key areas such as job security, future ESA locations and the opportunities and challenges we all face in the coming years.

But first I'd like to start with a question I'm often asked by staff – **what will they be doing on Day One of ESA?**

Well, for the vast majority of staff – you'll be doing the same job at the same location.

One of the things schools and youth service providers have told us is that service continuity is essential. Therefore I'm aiming to ensure that January 2010 is a soft launch, certainly with some essential changes, but in the main – business as usual.

And, if you're currently acting up in to another position - then that work will also continue as long as there's need for that work to be done.

Any reorganisation of posts will take place in a carefully planned manner over a number of months and the emerging ESA senior management team will keep you fully informed as change is planned and implemented.

Another concern for many of you is job security.

Under TUPE, **all staff** will automatically transfer into ESA with their substantive terms and conditions.

Later this year, in October, we will publish the Staff Transfer Scheme. This will set out all the relevant information on who transfers and where they will be based. This will be supplied to you well in advance of January by your existing employer.

I'm also aware that part of the concern over job security is caused by the figures produced in the outline business case. The OBC showed that 463 posts will go overall during the initial phase of reorganisation.

However, through the combined effects of 3 years of vacancy control and voluntary severance, I believe there will be jobs for those who want to stay and be part of the new organisation.

Closely related to job security is the future location of posts.

The first thing to make clear is that despite any speculation you may have heard, no decisions have been made on future ESA locations.

And the decisions that will be made – will be made by our political leaders.

My role is to provide information and advice that will help inform the Minister and her Executive colleagues in coming to those decisions.

We have already completed work that shows us where each of you works and furthermore – where you live!

We're also working with the help of consultants to look at how the design of the future organisation might affect the location of posts.

In November we'll publish a location strategy. This document will set out where future functions and posts will be located, and the timetable for that work.

Some staff have asked me what options they will have if their post moves from its current location and they don't want to travel to the new one?

The option is to stay at your current location and retrain for a post that is available there. I'm making a clear commitment that ESA will provide training and support those of you who wish to take this option.

For those staff whose posts are at risk or who feel they would like to leave the organisation another option is voluntary severance.

£50 million has been secured from the 'Invest to Save' budget to help manage the change process and the bulk of this will be used to fund voluntary severances

For those members of senior management teams whose posts are at risk, this process is already underway. It is hoped decisions can be taken to enable the first offers of voluntary severance to be made in July.

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 majority of voluntary severances will be on a deferred basis and will not take place until after the establishment of ESA to ensure continuity of service provision and meet business needs.

As we approach the autumn more information will become available on all of these areas, but already momentum is starting to build.

Earlier this month we started the process of appointing ESA's Directors, with emails sent to your organisations and trawl notices placed on the ESAIT website. We hope to have our first Directors in post by September.

Draft Assistant Director Structures will be released for consultation in the coming weeks and we hope to begin filling those posts in October.

The Department of Education has been carrying the appointments process for ESA's first Chairman and we expect someone to be in place by the end of the summer.

And here at the ESA Implementation Team I'm working with your colleagues to for example design and build single financial and ICT systems in time for the new organisation.

There is considerable work to be done within this team and in all of the existing organisations to make ready for 1 January. However I'm confident we will achieve our goal and I'm thankful for all the support and assistance we continue to receive from many staff in the existing organisations.

As the date for the creation of ESA nears we will increase the level of communication and engagement we have with you.

I know that many of your organisations have already set dates for face to face meetings with staff in the summer and early autumn and I look forward to meeting you then.

In the meantime you can keep up to date with all that's happening via the ESA Implementation Team website – www.esani.org.uk

Also please take the opportunity send us your ideas for future content for these broadcasts or for areas you feel require further attention.

Thank you for listening and thank you also to our friends at NEELBTv and CCEA Multimedia who've given their time and expertise in producing and broadcasting this webcast.