

# News story: ESFA marks its 1st birthday

Eileen Milner marks ESFA's first birthday:

"As we joined together, a year ago today, to form one agency, the organisation has embraced many changes.

We have implemented apprenticeship reforms including the apprenticeship levy, we have also begun the implementation of the National Funding Formula for schools.

We have continued improvements to our school estate, in the last financial year our free schools capital team have opened 41 new free schools, UTCs and studio schools.

Meanwhile, over the last 12 months, our Priority School Building Programme has seen 48 schools open in their rebuilt and refurbished buildings. In addition, 4 national college buildings were opened providing specialist training facilities for high speed rail and nuclear industries.

Resulting from area reviews in the FE sector, this year we have supported the implementation of a further 31 merger recommendations and the conversion of 18 sixth form colleges to academies.

We have so far supported over 482,000 people through the National Careers Service, giving impartial information, advice and guidance to ensure direction on career paths when not knowing where to turn.

National Apprenticeship Week 2018 was a huge success, on the first day we trended number 1 on social media, getting higher mentions than the Oscars.

The Apprenticeship Support and Knowledge for Schools project has engaged 1,617 schools this academic year, surpassing its targets on numbers of teachers and parents engaged.

We have issued 2018 to 2019 funding allocations to around 1,100 colleges and providers and 2017 to 2018 allocations to 7,614 academies and 152 local authorities and we continue to increase scrutiny and oversight of the sector to ensure assurance of how public money is used.

This year has seen the development and roll out of our financial prevention strategy and the move to better joint working with the Regional Schools Commissioners. We continue to work on the implementation of T Levels and with Mayoral Combined Authorities and our providers on the devolution of the adult skills budget in 2019.

I have now been in post 5 months and am certain that ESFA is ideally placed to tackle the challenges and opportunities ahead. We look forward to continuing to work closely with all our partners across the sector.

Collaboration will be key in ensuring future improvements to the education and skills agenda.

In the coming months, we will publish our inaugural annual report which will show further progress and the impact we are making.”