

## Appointment of interim ESFA Chief Executive

John began his new role on Monday 26 July, following ESFA's former Chief Executive Eileen Milner departing to take up the role of Chief Executive at the [Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority](#).

Commenting on John's appointment, the Permanent Secretary, Susan Acland-Hood, said:

I am delighted that John, who is currently the ESFA's Director of Funding, has been appointed as Interim Chief Executive.

John brings a wealth of knowledge and experience to the role from his time in the ESFA; as a Regional Schools Commissioner, and before that, in senior leadership positions across a number of educational settings.

John is a thoughtful and authentic leader and will be an outstanding interim CEO, and member of the DfE's Leadership Team. I know he will do a remarkable job in leading the excellent staff of the ESFA, and in shaping the future of the Department as a whole.

John Edwards commented:

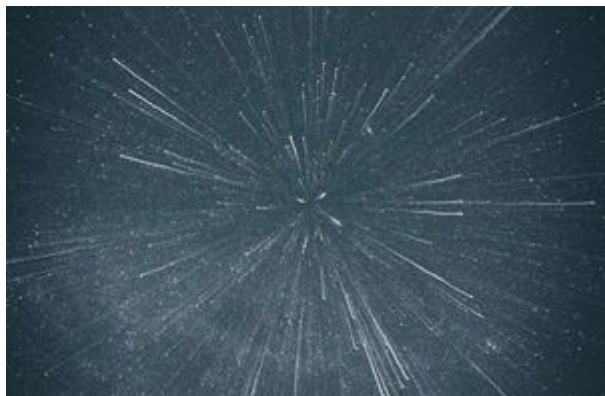
I am delighted and privileged to be appointed as Interim CEO of the ESFA, and am very much looking forward to leading the Agency through the coming months.

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## UK Space industry to benefit from new £1.5 million fund for pioneering space tech

News story

UK Space Agency has announced new funding to support ambitious plans for the exploration of space.



Proposals could include ideas such as the utilisation of resources beyond Earth's atmosphere, the use of nuclear power in space or the exploration the Moon, and Mars.

The funding call, which opens today from the UK Space Agency's Space Exploration programme, invites the space sector to bid for up to £500,000 to boost technology that will support and advance robotic and human exploration of Low Earth Orbit, the Moon, and Mars.

Proposals could include ideas to develop:

- Space based nuclear power
- Technology that supports human and robotic exploration
- Technology to support potential future exploration missions
- Techniques for extracting mineral resources in space

The development of space-based nuclear reactors, for example, could potentially lead to the more efficient use of technology on Earth, such as quickly deployable microreactors to restore power to disaster-hit areas.

Sue Horne, Head of Space Exploration at the UK Space Agency, said:

Exploration of Low Earth Orbit and our surrounding celestial neighbours delivers important breakthroughs that advance our understanding of the universe, opens up economic possibilities and make life better back on Earth.

The UK has provided expertise and equipment to some of the most high-profile space missions of recent times. This funding will help our world-class space sector kickstart new technological successes, allowing us to explore our solar system further.

From supplying components for planetary orbiters to developing game-changing equipment to aid research in space, the UK space sector plays an important part in global space exploration, allowing us to discover more about our solar system and its formation.

The deadline for applications is 5pm on 31 August 2021. Organisations can bid for between £50,000 – £500,000. Details on how to apply for funding can be found [here](#).

## [Read the UK NSC's annual report for April 2020 to March 2021](#)

### News story

This report summarises all the work of the UK National Screening Committee (UK NSC) from 1 April 2020 to 31 March 2021.



The UK National Screening Committee (UK NSC) had another busy year in 2020 to 2021.

The report summarises the committee's work and highlights all the recommendations made over the course of the year. These covered:

- adrenoleukodystrophy (ALD)
- asymptomatic bacteriuria
- bladder cancer
- bowel scope screening in the bowel cancer screening programme
- depression
- fetal presentation
- dyslexia in school age children
- fetomaternal alloimmune thrombocytopenia (FMAIT)
- galactosaemia
- haemochromatosis
- hearing loss in adults
- oral cancer
- pressure reducing carotid stenosis, vascular dementia, regional cerebral hypotension
- preterm birth in low risk women
- prostate cancer
- scoliosis

- stomach cancer
- syphilis in pregnancy
- thrombophilia

The UK NSC also looked at proposals to modify several of the existing screening programmes. These covered:

- abdominal aortic aneurysm screening
- newborn hearing screening
- sickle cell and thalassaemia screening

Professor Bob Steele, UK NSC Chair, said:

Despite the challenges of COVID, which have been faced with such equanimity by everyone over the last year, I'm really pleased that the UK NSC's important work has continued and been largely unaffected. We have made 22 recommendations about population screening to government ministers.

Notwithstanding their significant limitations, online meetings were embraced by all committee members. The evidence team, part of the committee's secretariat function in Public Health England, continued to ably support the committee's work with their usual high quality evidence products.

I would like to thank the committee members, secretariat and everyone from across the UK who has engaged so positively with the committee this year. You have all contributed to the scientific, technical and ethical deliberations which help us to make effective recommendations. I'm sure there will be another busy year ahead, full of opportunities to continue to make a positive contribution to the public health of the UK.

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## [£338 million package to further fuel active travel boom](#)

- government increases cycling and walking budget announced at the Spending Review to £338 million
- package includes funding to build hundreds of miles of high-quality cycle lanes and deliver walking schemes as well as changes to The Highway Code
- package is part of government's commitment to build back greener from

pandemic

The active travel boom seen throughout the pandemic will continue to thrive thanks to a £338 million package to boost cycling and walking across the country, Transport Secretary Grant Shapps announced today (30 July 2021).

Infrastructure upgrades, changes to The Highway Code and new requirements to ensure that active travel schemes' effects are properly assessed are among the raft of measures included in the Summer of Cycling and Walking document published today.

It comes after last year saw cycling rise more than in the previous 20 years put together, with the number of miles cycled on British roads rocketing by 45.7% to 5 billion.

Independent opinion polling and new research also published by the DfT shows that active travel schemes are supported, on average, by a ratio of two-to-one.

As the UK prepares to host COP26 later this year, these initiatives will play a key role in the government's drive to build back greener from the pandemic and achieve net zero emissions by 2050.

Transport Secretary Grant Shapps said:

Millions of us have found over the past year how cycling and walking are great ways to stay fit, ease congestion on the roads and do your bit for the environment. As we build back greener from the pandemic, we're determined to keep that trend going by making active travel easier and safer for everyone.

This £338 million package marks the start of what promises to be a great summer of cycling and walking, enabling more people to make those sustainable travel choices that make our air cleaner and cities greener.

This announcement builds on the Prime Minister's £2 billion Gear Change cycling and walking programme which was announced exactly one year ago.

The £338 million is a 30% increase to the £257 million announced for active travel in last year's spending review. This funding will help see the construction of hundreds of miles of new high-quality cycle lanes and aid the delivery of new schemes to encourage walking. This will include the delivery of improvements across the National Cycle Network.

And to enhance safety for cyclists and pedestrians, a new version of The Highway Code will be published in the autumn, with updates including:

- a hierarchy of road users that ensures road users who can do the greatest harm have the greatest responsibility to reduce the danger they may pose to others

- strengthened pedestrian priority on pavements and when crossing or waiting to cross the road
- guidance on safe passing distances and speeds and ensuring that cyclists have priority at junctions when travelling straight ahead

Sir Dave Brailsford, INEOS Grenadiers Team Principal said:

Cycling has had a real boost during the pandemic as people of all ages have recognised its many benefits and it is a real positive that the government are making cycling such a transport priority for the future. Getting on your bike is great for your health and it's also great for the environment so there has never been a better time to get pedalling.

As well as improving safety for cyclists, the government is also aiming to make cycling easier and more accessible through a new scheme aiming to increase awareness of e-cycles and tackle barriers to their use. An e-cycle support programme will be launched later this year and comes after the government has already provided funding to help 9 local authorities deliver e-cycle initiatives.

Other key measures included in the Summer of Cycling and Walking include plans to publish a new road safety strategic framework and commitments to help train hundreds of new Bikeability instructors and explore how historic railway structures can be converted into cycle routes.

The government has also announced today that the new Active Travel England (ATE) commissioning body, which will hold the national cycling and walking budget, will begin work later this year.

Xavier Brice, Sustrans Chief Executive, said:

This funding will bring major improvements to the National Cycle Network in England by linking communities together and enhancing valued and well-used cycling and walking routes. Most importantly of all, this vital boost will further enable those who want to cycle or walk to do so.

The pandemic has highlighted the huge benefits of active forms of travel to people's personal health and wellbeing, to local communities and to the environment. We've seen a marked increase in numbers using the cycle network and this commitment to funding underlines its importance.

We welcome the government's continued focus on cycling and walking. The time is right to ensure we're able to carry on working with our volunteers and other organisations in our role as a proud custodian of the network, to create and offer a safe, accessible and traffic-free travel environment for everyone's benefit.

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## Combating the risk of arms proliferation and ensuring a pathway to peace in Central African Republic

Thank you, Mr President. I would like to start by thanking France, as penholder, for their sterling efforts to achieve this outcome.

The United Kingdom supports this resolution, which renews the targeted sanctions and the arms embargo for a further 12 months. We would once again like to underline that the objective of the arms embargo is to prevent armed groups, who continue to perpetrate violence in the Central African Republic, from accessing weaponry. However, our support to this resolution does not detract from our continued belief that a technical renewal would have been the appropriate course of action at this time. It is disappointing that one or two Council members insisted on the inclusion of exemptions on mortars.

The accurate use of mortars requires significant levels of training and equipment. We urge the government of the Central African Republic and its partners to ensure this training is in place in order to avoid increased risks to civilians and ensure compliance with international humanitarian law.

These risks are not hypothetical. Reports continue of atrocities against civilians in the Central African Republic, including reports which reached us even as negotiations were ongoing on this resolution. We remain deeply troubled by allegations that such atrocities are being committed not only by armed groups but by members of the national armed forces and indeed by private military contractors.

Mr President, the United Kingdom supports the government of the Central African Republic as it pursues security sector reform and the disarmament, demobilisation, reintegration and repatriation process. We welcome the progress it has made so far towards delivering on the benchmarks this Council set in April 2019.

However, those benchmarks for the lifting of the arms embargo have not yet been met. Until they are met, further proliferation of arms both within the Central African Republic and the wider region risks potentially disastrous consequences for civilians.

We therefore urge the government of the Central African Republic to accelerate its efforts to meet the benchmarks, and to take full responsibility for ensuring effective storage and management of weapons and ammunition. Such progress is vital to improving security for the people of the Central African Republic, combating the risk of arms proliferation, and helping to ensure a pathway to peace and reconciliation.

Thank you, Mr President.