



Department
for Education



Department for
Business, Energy
& Industrial Strategy

The Lord Sharkey
House of Lords
London
SW1A 0PW

Sam Gyimah MP
Minister of State for Universities, Science,
Research and Innovation.

1 Victoria Street
London
SW1H 0ET

+44 (0) 20 7215 5000
www.education.gov.uk/help/contactus
enquiries@beis.gov.uk

www.gov.uk

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Dear Lord Sharkey,

I would like to update you on the progress that we have made on Alternative Student Finance (ASF), following my appearance before the House of Lords Economic Affairs Select Committee in March.

I am pleased to be able to inform you that we have now received the final advice from our specialist advisers, the Islamic Finance Council UK. Good progress is being made and we now are working through the complex range of policy, legal and system issues that will need to be resolved in order for us to develop and eventually launch an alternative student finance product.

You will also be aware of the ongoing Review of Post-18 Education and Funding. The work that we are undertaking on ASF has strong links to the review, not least because we need to ensure that students in receipt of an eventual ASF package are not disadvantaged compared to their peers in receipt of mainstream student support.

The post-18 review will conclude in early 2019, and it therefore makes sense for us to aim to present plans for the implementation of ASF on the same timescale. Implementation timetables themselves will depend on the Government's response to the review's findings and recommendations and I will update you further when the review has reported its findings. We remain committed to ensuring that access to finance is not a barrier to anyone who is eligible to study in higher or further education.

I am copying this letter to Lord Forsyth in his capacity as Chair of the Lords Economic Affairs Committee, Nicky Morgan MP, Chair of the Treasury Select Committee, and Robert Halfon MP, Chair of the Education Committee. I have arranged for a copy to be placed in the House library.

Yours sincerely,

SAM GYIMAH MP