The Corporation of New College Durham – Corporation Members

Stephen King – Chair

Stephen King is an experienced executive, non-executive director, and governance leader, serving as Chair of the Corporation at New College Durham. With a career spanning strategic leadership, commercial growth, and stakeholder engagement, he spent 27 years at Go North East, rising from youth trainee to Commercial Director, where he played a key role in shaping regional transport strategy. He now runs his own strategic business consultancy, advising businesses and organisations on leadership, governance, transport, and sustainable growth. Alongside this, he holds non-executive and trustee roles across multiple sectors and is an experienced educator, working as an External Associate Lecturer at Teesside University Business School and a further education college lecturer in business.

At New College Durham, in addition to Chair of Corporation, he is chair of the Search & Governance Committee and is a member of the Remuneration and Education Quality, Curriculum & Students Committees.

Andy Broadbent

Andy has been a Member since July 2020 following appointment to the role of Principal and Chief Executive of New College Durham. He has worked in the North East area all of his life and has over 28 years' experience working in the public sector including over 26 years' experience working in Further and Higher Education in senior financial roles. He has Board level experience in Academies and Local Government Pension Funds and is a Fellow Chartered Certified Accountant (FCCA).

Andy sits on three Committees: Education Quality, Curriculum & Students, Finance & Resources and Search & Governance.

Ben Fisher – Vice Chair

Ben has been a Member of the Corporation since 2021 and Vice Chair since July 2023. Ben has over 20 years executive and non-executive experience working for public, private and higher education institutions in the North East of England leading research, innovation and commercial functions.

Ben sits on three committees: Search & Governance, Remuneration, and Finance & Resources which he also chairs.

Chris Patterson

Chris has been a Member of Corporation since September 2022. He is a Chartered Public Finance Accountant and has had a number of roles in education finance for over 13 years, including working as a school business manager, as chair of a school finance committee and most recently as the government's lead for financial reporting and audit of FE colleges. He also has a personal connection with NCD as he undertook part of his accountancy training at the college.

Chris sits on the Audit & Risk Committee which he also chairs. He is also the Governor responsible for Safeguarding.

Bethany Robson

Bethany has been a Member since September 2025. Bethany Robson is the Apprenticeship Team Leader at New College Durham, with a background in employer engagement, apprenticeship compliance, and learner support. She has worked in further education for nearly five years, progressing through several roles within the apprenticeship team. Bethany graduated in July 2025 with an FdA in Business Management, which she completed while working full-time. She also brings 7 years of experience from the events and hospitality sector, complementing her skills in team leadership and stakeholder collaboration.

Bethany sits on the Finance & Resources Committee.

Allen Eccles

Allen has been a co-opted Member of the Finance and Resources Committee since September 2026 and was previously also a Member of the Corporation between September 2021-2026. Allen is a Fellow of the Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales. He specialises in risk management and controls, supporting financial services organisations across the UK and North America. Allen lives in Durham and has a keen passion for helping young people to achieve their potential through education.

Allen sits on the Finance and Resources Committee.

Mark Gomersall

Mark Gomersall has been a member of the corporation since 2021, he is the academic staff governor having been employed at New College Durham since 2013. Following undergraduate study and training in Finance, Mark retrained to become a Maths teacher – with experience in Secondary education prior to working in the Further Education sector.

Mark sits on the Education Quality, Curriculum & Students Committee.

Suzanne Slater

Suzanne has been a Member since September 2023. Suzanne has worked as a senior leader within the education sector for the last 16 years working for private training providers, FE colleges and currently as Commercial Director for NCFE, an awarding and end point assessment organisation where she leads all product management, commercial and campaign marketing activity. She has extensive experience across various curriculum areas/sectors, funding streams, recruitment, sales and apprenticeships.
She is passionate and committed to the FE sector, which she sees as an enabler to transform lives through high quality learning and development where learners can reach their potential and ambitions.

Suzanne sits on the Education Quality, Curriculum & Students Committee which she also chairs. She is also the Governor responsible for SEND.

Jonathan Hamill

Jonathan has been a Member since March 2024. Jonathan is an accomplished board-level executive leader. He is the Managing Director of an industrial fire prevention and measuring technology company near Newcastle, which is part of an international group; he is also responsible for global marketing. Jonathan is a Masters graduate (Executive Masters in Enterprise Management) of Durham University, a Chartered Manager, Fellow of the Chartered Management Institute and Member of the Institute of Directors. Jonathan lives in Durham with his Wife (a language teacher and school Governor) and three teenage children.

Jonathan sits on the Education Quality, Curriculum & Students and Remuneration Committees.

Kathryn McCloghrie

Kathryn has been a Member since August 2024. Kathryn has approximately 30 years' experience in the public sector, working in nuclear decommissioning. Her roles included commercial, business, security, risk and programme management. She is currently leading major programmes and projects at Sellafield. She leads Sellafield's crisis management and is a long-standing member of the emergency duty team for the site. In recognition of this, she was awarded a British Empire Medal for her leadership during the Covid pandemic. Kathryn is also a Board Trustee of Hospice at Home West Cumbria.

Kathryn sits on three committees: Audit & Risk Committee, Education, Quality, Curriculum & Students Committee and the Remuneration Committee, which she also chairs. She is also the Governor responsible for Higher Education Partnerships.

Rhiannon Hiles

Rhiannon has been a Member since March 2024. Rhiannon is the CEO of Beamish Museum. With over 30 years' experience in the culture sector, Rhiannon has extensive strategic and operational leadership experience within a major visitor attraction. Rhiannon has a curatorial, design and architectural history background and worked in the antiques business and as an artist, prior to working in museums.

Rhiannon is the Vice President of the Association European Open Air Museums, a Director of the Melrose Learning Trust, council member of North East Chamber of Commerce, the National Museum Directors' Council, member of the Association of Leading Visitor Attractions and Association of Independent Museums.

Rhiannon was brought up on a small holding in County Durham, the eldest of 4 children, Rhiannon's parents and grandparents were teachers and her sisters all work in education. Volunteering in the community is very important to Rhiannon and being involved with grassroots opportunities and being part of a local cricket club committee, where her daughter is a member, as well as helping out with a local primary school. Rhiannon attended New College after sixth form and prior to attending art college and university.

Rhiannon sits on the Education, Quality, Curriculum & Students Committee.

Helen Golightly

Helen has been a member of the Corporation since March 2025. She is the former chief executive of the North East Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP), the economic development agency for the North East of England, where she led and championed the region's economic growth for over a decade. Under her leadership Helen calmly embedded effective regional public, private, education and voluntary sector partnership, working to create more and better jobs across the region, and to improve the quality of life of the residents and opportunities for business. Helen was instrumental in securing over £3bn into the region, and worked with partners to invest it strategically to deliver key projects. In this role, she also worked with partners and businesses regionally and nationally to develop and deliver the evidence-based regional economic strategy, reduce the region's skills gap, increase business start up and scale up performance and support innovation led growth across the North East. Helen started her career as a Town Planner before moving into economic development and leading large scale regeneration schemes. She was awarded an OBE in the 2021 Queen's Birthday Honours for services to business and the economy, and received the Outstanding Contribution Award in the North East Business Awards in 2024.

Helen sits on the Search & Governance Committee and the Education Quality, Curriculum & Students Committee. She is also the governor responsible for Careers Education and Guidance.

Matthew Gamsby

Matthew has been a member since June 2025 and is the Students' Union President. Matthew has been a student at the college for the last 5 years and has completed music programs from level 3 to level 6, most recently receiving his BA (Hons) Popular Music. Matthew has been a course representative throughout his time in the college's University Centre and has demonstrated exceptional skill as a public speaker, performer, and entertainer. He also has extensive experience in event management. In addition, Matthew has considerable expertise working with individuals with special needs, having led workshops and music therapy sessions in residential care homes across County Durham.

Matthew sits on the Education Quality, Curriculum & Students Committee.

Nigel Harrett

Nigel has been a member since September 2025. He is a recently retired college Principal who remains passionate about education and skills development. Nigel is a very experienced former senior leader of post 16 education. He was Principal of Northumberland College and held a range of other senior roles in Further Education.

Nigel's background was Accountancy and Business and this brought him into post 16 Education. He was also an Ofsted Inspector, a Trustee of One Awards, Governor of Hetton School, and Trustee of Ashington Learning Partnership. Nigel also sat on the National Policy Reform Group and the National Teaching, Learning and Assessment Group.

Nigel sits on the Audit & Risk and Education Quality, Curriculum & Students Committees.

Hayley Farrell

Hayley has been a Member since June 2025 and currently serves as the Student Governor. She is an apprentice at Cummins, working as a Project Coordinator within the Product Improvement Team Europe. Alongside her core role, Hayley actively supports the engineering apprenticeship scheme at Cummins and is a passionate advocate for STEM outreach particularly focused on encouraging young people, especially girls to explore and pursue careers in engineering and technical fields.

Hayley has been a student at New College Durham for two years and credits the College's ongoing support as a key factor in her development. She completed her HNC in Mechanical Engineering a year ahead of schedule, which enabled her to progress to Level 5 Operations Management. Following her End Point Assessment for Level 5, she will continue her academic journey by studying for a BA (Hons) in Operations Management.

Married with two children, Hayley brings a wealth of life experience to her role, having previously enjoyed a successful 17-year career in hairdressing before transitioning into engineering. She sits on the Education Quality, Curriculum & Students Committee, where she is committed to amplifying the student voice and promoting inclusive excellence across the College.

Hayley sits on the Education Quality, Curriculum & Students Committee.

Chris Nicholls

Chris has been a Member since December 2025. He has over twenty-five year's successful work history in Further Education, both in public and private sector. Chris is a respected strategic and operational consultant to senior management teams of colleges and private training providers across the country. He is a strong relationship builder, business developer and income generator with an in-depth knowledge of Mayoral Strategic Authorities and DfE policies and strategies. This experience has come from working for Colleges, the LSC/SFA and the Association of Colleges. Chris is a high-quality honours graduate and experienced professional with fifteen years' senior management experience. He is a family man with a passion for sport, in particular Cricket, and also enjoys travel and reading.

Chris sits on the Finance and Resources Committee.

Vacancies

There are currently two vacancies for independent members.

The Chair can be contacted at the College's address:

New College Durham, Framwellgate Moor Campus, Durham, DH1 5ES