

The Corporation of New College Durham

**Minutes of the Corporation meeting
held on 3 August 2026
Online via MS Teams**

Present:

Stephen King (Chair) -
part
Andy Broadbent
Matthew Gamsby
Jonathan Hamill - *part*
Nigel Harrett

Rhiannon Hiles
Kathryn McCloghrie
Chris Nicholls
Chris Patterson
Philip Pollard

Apologies:

Allen Eccles
Ben Fisher
Helen Golightly
Mark Gomersall
Bethany Robson
Suzanne Slater

In attendance:

Karl Fairley (Deputy Chief Executive)
Elaine Bonham (Executive Director, HR and Corporate Services)
Caroline Winter (Head of Governance and Corporation Secretary)
Chloe Freeman (Governance Support Officer)

Action

26/87 Chair's introduction

The Head of Governance advised that the quorum for the meeting was seven Corporation members and with eight members in attendance, the quorum requirements were met. In the absence of the Corporation Chair, Stephen King, members agreed to appoint Kathryn McCloghrie to chair the meeting.

Members were reminded to declare their interests in any item of business to be discussed at the meeting. No interests were declared.

26/88 Apologies for absence were received from Allen Eccles, Ben Fisher, Helen Golightly, Mark Gomersall, Bethany Robson and Suzanne Slater.

26/89 Review of Cost of Living Pay Award Process and Proposed Revised Approach (Paper A)

This item was recorded confidentially under confidential minute 26/89a.

Stephen King joined the meeting at 4.19pm.

Jonathan Hamill joined the meeting at 4.20pm.

Following consideration of the item, Kathryn McCloghrie handed the chair back to Stephen King for the remainder of the meeting.

26/90 Policy & Procedure on Safeguarding Young People and Adults at Risk (Paper B1)

Members considered Paper B1, the Policy and Procedure on Safeguarding Young People and Adults at Risk, presented by Karl Fairley.

The Chair explained that any policy updates that followed the annual update of the government's Keeping Children Safe in Education Guidance (KCSIE) were usually approved over the summer by written resolution. Whilst many of the changes proposed were updated language and expanded descriptions rather than substantive policy changes, given the large number of amendments and the volume of documentation circulated for this item and the following Paper B2, it was considered to be more appropriate for Corporation to review the documents at a meeting.

Karl advised that there were no fundamental changes to the policy. The amendments were highlighted in the document and primarily reflected minor updates, with greater emphasis on safeguarding culture, governance oversight and existing practice. Members' attention was drawn to the prominent safeguarding statement added to the front of the policy at the request of the Open University as part of its validation requirements.

Karl explained that the changes largely reinforced practices already in place rather than introducing new requirements. Definitions had been updated to reflect current guidance, and the policy had been compared against the latest KCSIE guidance using AI, which indicated that it was approximately 99% compliant. The area of non-compliance related to training teachers, which the College did not undertake, however it was noted that this was addressed in the HR policies to be considered under the next item. Karl emphasised that although the document contained many amendments, they were not fundamental changes to the College's safeguarding approach or the way safeguarding arrangements operated.

Members commented that the revisions made sense, and noting the increased emphasis on artificial intelligence queried whether this created any additional obligations for the College. Karl explained that the College's AI Working Group was already considering these issues and had prepared a report for a future Corporation meeting. Karl confirmed that safeguarding risks associated with AI were central to the College's approach to AI implementation and that the College was already ahead of the curve in considering how best to protect both students and the organisation as new AI technologies were adopted.

The Safeguarding Governor reiterated the stronger emphasis on governance oversight and suggested that future termly safeguarding reports to the Corporation could be structured around the key themes and responsibilities highlighted within the revised

policy. This approach would provide further assurance that these areas were being effectively addressed. Karl confirmed that future reports would reflect the implementation of the revised policy and report back to the Board on the key changes.

KF/CP

Corporation agreed to:

- **Note that the Designated Safeguarding Lead is satisfied that the revised Policy fully reflects the requirements of Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026 and continues to represent recognised safeguarding best practice within the further education sector.**
- **Approve the revised Safeguarding Young People and Adults at Risk Policy and Procedure (Annex A).**
- **Approve implementation of the revised Policy from 1 September 2026.**

26/91 HR Related Safeguarding Policy Reviews (Paper B2)

Elaine Bonham presented Paper B2, which proposed revisions to four Human Resources policies in accordance with the updated KCSIE and Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) guidance.

The updates had been developed in conjunction with the Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSLs) to ensure a consistent approach across the College and, as a result, there was some overlap between the policies and the accompanying report.

The principal changes related to safeguarding vulnerable groups, including updated terminology, specific guidance for trainee teachers, greater emphasis on professional curiosity, the inclusion of work placements, updates to the Staff Code of Conduct relating to technology and interactions with students, and strengthened procedures for managing criminal convictions and the associated risk assessment process. Elaine emphasised that, although the volume of amendments appeared significant, the changes largely reflected existing practice, with the guidance on trainee teachers being the only substantive new requirement.

Members sought assurance on the wider impact of safeguarding issues on other students, on how the proposed approach to obtaining references before interview would work in practice, and whether the College had appropriate processes for identifying safeguarding concerns where an applicant was subject to an ongoing police investigation but had no convictions to declare. Members also asked how the policy changes would be communicated to students and staff. It was confirmed that the College considered the wellbeing of the wider student body when providing support in respect of safeguarding issues, references would continue to be sought before interview wherever possible while continuing to respect applicants' wishes, the revised policies would be incorporated into student induction processes, there was a requirement for staff to declare they had read the relevant documents, and that self-declarations in recruitment processes

were supplemented by online checks and close liaison with the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO), who would notify the College of relevant safeguarding concerns where appropriate.

Corporation approved the revised policies and procedures for implementation from 1 September 2026, thereby ensuring the College's safeguarding framework remains aligned with current statutory guidance and recognised safeguarding best practice.

26/92 Date of next meeting: 24 September 2026