



Governors

Candidate pack

July 2024

www.educationpartnershipne.ac.uk

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Welcome from the Chair and Chief Executive



We're delighted you are interested in joining our team. We are a large Further Education College Group firmly rooted in the North East. This link to place is very important to us and is something we look to see in evidence at every level of our work including our Governance.

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To maintain and deepen our roots we have worked hard to evolve to meet the needs of our communities and the rapidly changing wider environment. Governance is no exception and this round of recruitment

is directly linked to our pursuit of growth and development to ensure we keep supporting and remain relevant to our communities.

We firmly believe, that as hard as navigating change can be, it is our responsibility to respond and to make sure we make the most of change and new opportunity for our communities. To do so we invest time in strategic relationships, we explore and work to influence reform and

change where we can and we invest organizational resources in anticipating opportunity including master planning and pilot activity. The Board plays a notable role in this activity. The work is dynamic, pacy, exciting and highly rewarding.

This recruitment also takes place at the same time as we are working on a new Strategy with refreshed values and extended work on our positive organizational culture. Our new strategy builds on a remarkable platform, which has already drawn two colleges into our group and transformed provision, quality and financial performance. Our next steps will be no less exciting and will see c. £75m of capital projects come to fruition, extension of sector leading collaborations with industry, further steps into Higher Education and the consolidation of our work towards OFSTED outstanding.

It is an exciting time and we are keen to work great people who are committed to the North East. We look forward to hearing more about you through this process.

James Stuart
Chair

Ellen Thinnesen (OBE)
Chief Executive

Overview

Education Partnership North East (EPNE) is a multi-award winning organisation with a track record of supporting communities and changing the lives of those who live and work across the North East.

The largest college group situated entirely in the North East of England, we are a dynamic partnership of three colleges – Sunderland College, Hartlepool Sixth Form and Northumberland College – and collectively we are one of the largest colleges in the country. Through our broad curriculum delivered over our seven campuses (and multiple satellite delivery centres), we offer academic and technical programmes for young people, adult learning programmes (FE and HE), apprenticeships and provision for students with high needs.

Since 2017, we have invested over £90million in world-class facilities and we continue to be led by pioneering experts who develop and deliver curriculums that ensure our students are prepared for their next step, whatever that may be. This investment in our facilities and our staff has been done in a way that ensures our financial health remains positive (DfE confirmed Good financial health in 2024).

We are an organisation that strives to be a standard bearer for the FE sector and to ensure that our local communities are given every possible opportunity to engage in the education and training they need to improve their life chances and live healthy, prosperous lives. Our success here is demonstrated through ever-improving achievement rates which place us in the top three nationally for 16-18 provision.

We are able to achieve this through the hard work and efforts of our determined and talented staff team, led by a group of individuals who each share in our collective vision to put excellence at the heart of everything we do. Our governors are no different: they have high ambition for our students, staff and themselves. We were Beacon Award Commended College for Excellence in Governance in 2022-23.

This clear vision ensures that we embrace both culture and quality in equal measure, driven by our ethos of 'our passion is our strength'. It is this philosophy that drives our collective success.

Our staff are experts in their individual fields, and these fields are aligned to the needs of the labour markets of the North East, from Berwick-upon-Tweed to the Tees Valley. Our relationships with key stakeholders – employers, local authorities, and most importantly, our students, ensures that colleges are able to deliver engaging, high-quality provision which has positive impacts and outcomes in the towns and cities that we serve.

We take pride in the quality and breadth of our provision all of which is delivered by a group of driven, nurturing, and supportive individuals who work tirelessly to evolve and improve our practices, allowing us to excel in the pursuit of excellence, to grow our reputation and to support our students to achieve their aspirations.

Since the success of our Ofsted inspection in May 2022 – where we were found to be Good with Outstanding features – we have continued to take bold and exciting steps to further improve our provision and our facilities, ensuring that we continue to deliver on the commitments made to our students and communities as noted in our strategic vision (2019-2025).

Most recently, these steps have included breaking ground on our Housing Innovation and Construction Skills Academy

(HICSA), our partnership with the local Crown Works Studios development and agreeing on a new strategic partnership linked to our higher education provision.

As we enter the final year of this strategic vision, we are developing what the next chapter will look like for our organisation. Our governors are playing a key part in the developing of our vision, values and strategy which will see us into 2030.

Bullet point overview:

- Education Partnership North East is a substantial multi-award-winning regional college group focused on 'place'.
The group comprises Sunderland College (3 campuses), Hartlepool Sixth Form (1 campus) and Northumberland College (3 campuses) with over 7,000 students and 1,000 apprentices.
- Working in collaboration with over 500 North East employers, VCS organisations, Schools, Colleges, Private Training Providers, Universities and Local / Combined Authorities, we actively contribute to the North East and Tees Valley education, skills and economic strategies.
- Sector specialisms include Advanced Manufacturing, Construction, Digital, Energy, Health & Life Sciences, Transport and Logistics, Land Based and the Visitor Economy.

- We deliver a pioneering career-focused curriculum and invest in world-class facilities so our students meet the skills needs of the current and future workforce.
- We are an Ofsted Good provider (Ofsted, 2022).
- We are the top performing college group in the North East for student achievement (DfE NARTs, 2024).
- 89% of our students progress to further study, university or employment.(EPNE 2021-22, 16-18 completers)
- We have invested over £100 million in new, world-class facilities across our campuses.
- We are a Matrix-accredited provider of Information, Advice and Guidance.
- EPNE is the first college group in the region to become a College of Sanctuary.



Role Description

Recognising that with diversity comes great decision making, we aim to assemble a group of individuals from different backgrounds, sectors/industries and with different skill sets to come together to collectively govern at Education Partnership North East (Sunderland College, Northumberland College and Hartlepool Sixth Form. The legal entity is City of Sunderland College).

When considering whether to appoint a new external governor or to extend the appointment of an existing external governor, the Governing Body will have regard not only to the skills and knowledge of each individual candidate but also to the balance of skills and knowledge available to the Governing Body as a whole, including the extent to which the Governing Body has access to the views of different stakeholder groups.

All of our governors are passionate about the North East and the communities we serve: they are ambitious for all of our students and apprentices and understand how education and skills development impacts the local and regional economy.

Overall responsibilities of the Board of Corporation

The main purpose of the Governing Body is to determine the overall strategic direction and educational character of the College and ensure its overall well-being and financial solvency.

As part of their shared corporate responsibility, governors are responsible as Members of the Corporation to actively contribute to the work of the Corporation in fulfilling its responsibilities as set out in the Instruments and Articles of Government including but not limited to:

- the determination and periodic review of the educational character and mission of the institution and the oversight of its activities. This includes setting and reviewing the College's strategic plan and monitoring the College's performance against strategic objectives;
- review the College's diversity, equity, inclusion and belonging objectives and challenging executive leaders on this work and work to address any gaps in pay, achievement, outcomes for those with protected characteristics;

- approve the quality strategy of the institution. This includes driving the improvement in the quality of teaching, learning and assessment, outcomes for students and apprentices and the development of teaching staff;
- ensure the effective and efficient use of resources, the solvency of the institution and the Corporation and safeguarding of assets;
- approve annual estimates of income and expenditure;
- ensure the College is well managed and complies with all statutory requirements including safeguarding, PREVENT and health and safety;
- the appointment and re-appointment of Governors to the Board and co-optees to committees;
- the appointment and performance of senior post holders; and
- setting a framework for the pay and conditions of service of all other staff.

The Corporation is responsible for acting in accordance with the Instrument and Articles of Government, other external regulatory requirements, the AoC's Code of Good Governance, the OfS Governance Principles, and with the College's own internal policies and procedures.

Individual responsibility

Individually, governors have a responsibility to:

- adhere to the the College's Code of Conduct (including to the seven principles of Public Life as set out in Lord Nolan's Report on Standards in Public Life i.e. selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty, and leadership) and charity law;
- at all times, act collectively or within the limits of any authority delegated to them by the Corporation as a whole. Understand no governor has authority to speak or act on the College's behalf unless specifically delegated to do so;
- at all times, act fairly and impartially in the interests of the Corporation and institution as a whole, using independent judgement and maintaining confidentiality as appropriate;
- attend and contribute effectively to meetings of the Corporation and its Committees as appropriate;
- apply specialist knowledge and expertise in contributing to the decision making processes of the Corporation;
- diligently carry out any additionally agreed roles (eg lead governor, vice-chair);
- act as an ambassador for the College;
- participate in the annual review of the performance of the Corporation and in Strategic Planning events;
- take part in any relevant training and development events or opportunities as arranged from time to time for the benefit of Members;
- provide any additional assistance as will be reasonably requested by the Chair of the Corporation, including representing the Corporation and the College at external meetings, presentations and conferences, as and when necessary;
- make a full and timely personal disclosure in the Register of Interests of Members and declare the nature and extent of any conflict of interest at any meeting of the Corporation or Committee at which a matter which is the subject of the interest is to be discussed and act in accordance with statute and the College's Code of Conduct in respect of such.

Person specification

Whilst we do not expect all members to have all knowledge and skills, we do expect every governor to have:

- the ability to work within a framework of collective decision-making in the best interests of the College, in line with the Nolan Principles and the College's values;
- strong ties to the North East and/or the communities we serve through living or working in the North East;
- a commitment to and interest in education and training in the local area;
- a commitment to the College and its role in the community;
- an ability to respect confidentiality;
- a willingness to take responsibility for promoting and safeguarding the welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults and for raising any concerns;
- willingness to continuously update skills, knowledge and behaviours;
- an understanding how to promote diversity, equity, inclusion and belonging;

- experience of working effectively with people from diverse backgrounds, working collegially, respecting and valuing others' input and opinions;
- an ability to examine evidence and data, triangulate information and constructively support and challenge others;
- an ability to meet the fit and proper person test and a willingness to obtain DBS at enhanced level and to provide evidence of the right to live and work in the UK; and
- a willingness and ability to promote the exceptional reputation of the College through their own behaviours.

Based on a number of factors including skills audits of current members, our succession planning and strategic needs, our membership will need a balance of those members who came from a variety of key priority industries such as:

- Advance manufacturing;
- Automotive;
- Construction and/or Engineering;
- Health and Care;
- Digital;
- Land-based/rural economy;
- Education; or
- Public Service.

and have professional experience in leading, advising, and/or providing oversight on matters relating to any of the following:

- Strategy development;
- Further and Higher Education delivery, quality monitoring, inspection, or policy setting;
- Financial management and reporting (accounting qualification);
- Risk, audit and/or assurance;
- Legal and/or Governance;
- Sustainability;
- People and Organisational Development;
- Estate management;
- Stakeholder engagement;
- Public relations and/or communications; or
- Change management.

Expectations and commitment

If selected, the term of office for governors at EPNE is four years, with the ability to be appointed for one additional term. Under exceptional circumstances necessary to ensure continuity, a second term may be extended for one year.

Our Board meets five times a year with meetings held in person starting at 6:00pm on a Tuesday and two half-day in person strategy sessions. These meetings may be held at anyone of our campuses.

Committees meet between 4-5 times per year starting at 5:30pm via Teams.

We endeavour all meetings last no longer than two hours.

In total, we estimate that our governors commit between 10-12 hours per month to their role.

Development and review

As an education and skills organisation, professional development of our governors is important to us. We do not expect our governors to come to us with all the knowledge, behaviours and skills necessary to be an outstanding governor.

As a new governor, you can expect to have a robust and rich induction to the College, the role and FE and HE. Beyond induction, our governors are offered regular learning opportunities and undertake annual conversations with our chair to ensure expectations are met.



Board and Committee Structure

Board of Corporation

(meets 5x/year plus
2 strategy afternoons)

- **Remuneration Committee**

(1-2x/year)

- **Governance & Search Committee**

(3x/year)

- **Finance, Resources & Projects Committee**

(5x/year)

- **Audit & Risk Committee**

(4x/year)

- **Curriculum, Quality & Student Experience Committee**

(4x/year)

● **Special Topic Groups**

Calendar of Meetings

Body	Meeting dates 2024-25	
Corporation (in person)	Tuesday 01 October 6:00pm Tuesday 17 December 6:00pm Tuesday 18 March 5:30pm	Tuesday 13 May 6:00pm Tuesday 24 June 6:00pm
Audit Committee (via Teams)	Thursday 26 September 5:30pm Thursday 05 December 6:00pm	Thursday 13 March 5:30pm Thursday 19 June 5:30pm
Finance, Resources and Projects Committee (via Teams)	Thursday 17 October 5:30pm Thursday 05 December 6:00pm Tuesday 18 February 5:30pm	Monday 28 April 5:30pm Tuesday 10 June 5:30pm
Curriculum, Quality & Student Experience Committee (via Teams)	Thursday 14 November 5:30pm Thursday 06 February 5:30pm	Thursday 03 April 5:30pm Thursday 05 June 5:30pm
Governance & Remuneration* Committees (via Teams)	Monday 30 September 12:00pm *Monday 03 February 12:00pm Monday 19 May 12:00pm	
Strategic Conversations with the CE (Via Teams)	20 September 2024 12:00pm 14 February 2024 12:00pm 02 May 2024 12:00pm	
Strategic Afternoons (in person)	22 November 2024 23 May 2024	

Useful Links and Downloads

[Meet Our Governors](#) / [Our External Board Review Summary](#) / [Strategic Plan Document](#) / [Strategic Plan Online](#) / [Accountability Statement 2023-24](#) / [Ofsted Report](#) / [UN Sustainability Goals Video](#) / [Interview with our Chair James Stuart on Skills for a Green Economy](#) / [Annual Accounts and Report 2022-23](#)

How to apply

At Education Partnership North East, we like to be inclusive, looking at things from different perspectives to drive innovation. We are constantly looking to improve the diversity of our organisation. We particularly welcome applications from the BAME and LGBTQ communities and those with a disability.

Castle Peak Group is acting as our retained consultancy for Education Partnership North East

on this appointment. Candidates should apply using the Micro-site ([link](#)) Click on the 'apply now' button and follow the instructions by uploading a CV and short cover letter, or by emailing James Carss at james.carss@castlepeak-group.com

The closing date for the application is:
Friday 9th August 2024



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