

News story: Expert panel confirmed to raise education outcomes in North East

School leaders and business executives have been named among the group tasked with raising aspirations and creating more opportunities for young people in the North East of England.

The expert board will help to run the Opportunity North East programme, a £24million initiative launched earlier this year by Education Secretary Damian Hinds to build a coalition of schools, colleges, local authorities, businesses and higher education institutions to tackle the issues holding back young people in the region.

The group, which includes Paul Booth, Chair of the Tees Valley Local Enterprise Partnership, Andrew Hodgson OBE, Chair of North East Local Enterprise Partnership, Edward Twiddy, Chief Innovations Officer and Company Secretary, ATOM Bank and Professor Suzanne Cholerton, Pro Vice-Chancellor, Learning and Teaching at Newcastle University, met for the first time on the 3 December.

Parliamentary Under Secretary of State Lord Agnew said:

Drawing on the expertise of local education and business leaders to develop initiatives that are evidence led and tailored to the particular needs of the North East will help us tap into the talent that so clearly exists in the region and ensure young people have every chance to go on and succeed.

Creating opportunity is a job for all of us and I am pleased to see such a diverse range of organisations determined to work with the Government to create more opportunities for every young person, regardless of background.

In full, the local experts on the Opportunity North East Strategic Board will include:

- Paul Booth OBE, Chair of Tees Valley Local Enterprise Partnership
- Professor Suzanne Cholerton, Pro Vice-Chancellor (Education), Newcastle University
- Professor Robert Coe, Professor of Education and Director of the Centre for Evaluation and Monitoring, Durham University
- Jill Colbert, Director of Children's Services, Sunderland City Council, and Chief Executive of Together for Children
- Andrew Hodgson OBE, Chair of North East Local Enterprise Partnership
- Nick Hurn OBE, Head Teacher Cardinal Hume Catholic School, CEO of the Trinity Catholic MAT, and Chairman of Ascent Special Schools Trust
- Cath McEvoy-Carr, Executive Director of Children and Adult Services, Northumberland County Council

- Martyn Oliver, Chief Executive Officer and Accounting Officer, Outwood Grange Academies Trust
- Mike Parker, Director of Schools North East
- Janet Renou, Regional Schools Commissioner for North of England
- Sally Robinson, Director of Children's and Joint Commissioning Services at Hartlepool Borough Council
- Edward Twiddy, Chief Innovations Officer and Company Secretary, ATOM Bank
- Dr Lindsey Whiterod CBE, Chief Executive of Tyne Coast College

Opportunity North East is part of a government drive to improve education and boost productivity in the North of England, and follows on from investment in the Northern Powerhouse strategy. It will help young people in the North East to reach their potential through secondary education and beyond by:

- Building on good primary school performance to ensure more children continue to achieve at secondary school;
- Unlocking the potential of key secondary schools in the region by encouraging collaboration with schools, high performing academy trusts and local authorities;
- Working with partners such as Teach First to ensure there are more great teachers where they are needed most. The North East will be the first region in England to implement more support for newly-qualified teachers to encourage them to stay in the classroom, with £12 million for early roll-out of the Government's improved offer from September 2020 – and more details set to be announced in the Department for Education's recruitment and retention strategy. This will form part of the Teacher Development Premium, creating an enhanced offer of professional development for teachers in challenging areas throughout their careers.
- Raising aspirations and tackling the barriers that prevent young people in the North East from realising their full potential, including accessing high-quality technical education and attending the best universities; and
- Making the most of young people's skills and talents in the North East – harnessing the pioneering work of local enterprise partnerships – to help them find a rewarding, secure job.