



DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION, SEND AND SKILLS

Recruitment Pack



Northumberland
County Council

Land of Great Opportunities

Director of Education, SEND and Skills

Location: Northumberland

Salary: £130,906 - 140,656 (Senior officer salaries are appointed to a specific spot point within the salary band, with no automatic incremental progression)

Contract: Permanent

Shape the future of Northumberland as a Land of Great Opportunity.

The role of Director of Education, SEND and Skills as a system leader is pivotal across a large rural county. The role works closely with the Executive Director for Children, Young People and Education and the Director of Children Young People and Families as the Leadership Team for Children's Services.



About the role

Job Purpose

To provide strategic leadership for Education, Skills, Employability and Lifelong Learning services across Northumberland, ensuring children, young people and adults have access to high-quality opportunities that enable them to achieve their potential, aspirations and lifelong ambitions. The role leads the commissioning, delivery and continuous improvement of education and skills services, driving attainment, reducing inequalities, supporting SEND inclusion, and improving outcomes for all communities.

Acting as the Council's lead education professional, the postholder provides expert advice to senior leaders and elected members, represents the Council with the Department for Education and other national agencies, and works in partnership with schools, academies, colleges, universities, health and care partners, and employers to maximise life chances, skills development and employability.

The role oversees school place planning, educational improvement, capital investment and workforce readiness, ensuring provision meets current and future needs. As a member of the Senior Management Team, the postholder provides strategic leadership, resource management, governance and assurance, contributing to the Council's corporate priorities and sustainable growth.

Governance, Culture and Corporate Responsibilities

Foster a positive, inclusive, values-led culture that promotes innovation, collaboration, wellbeing and high performance.

Ensure equality, diversity and inclusion are embedded across services, policies, employment practices and community engagement.

Maintain effective governance, risk management, financial control and assurance arrangements in line with the Council's Constitution, policies and procedures.

Contribute to corporate responsibilities, including reputation management, communications, emergency planning and election-related duties as required.

Job family: Education, SEND & Skills

Level: 5 | Band: 17

Career track: Executive

Date: July 2026

Key Responsibilities

Strategic Leadership, Policy and Advice

- Act as the Council's principal adviser on Education, SEND, Skills and Employability, ensuring compliance with statutory, regulatory and professional requirements.
- Provide expert advice and support to the Chief Executive, Executive Director, Cabinet, Committees, Members and senior officers on education, skills and learning matters.
- Support the development of Council policy, strategy and priorities, ensuring children, young people and learners remain at the centre of service design and delivery.
- Monitor national policy, legislation and sector developments, assessing their impact on local priorities and service provision.
- Manage effective Member-Officer relationships, promoting constructive engagement, informed decision-making and good governance.

Education Improvement, Inclusion and Outcomes

- Lead strategies to improve educational attainment, learning outcomes and participation for all learners, particularly vulnerable groups.
- Support and challenge schools, academies and education providers to drive continuous improvement and raise standards.
- Oversee services and interventions that meet the needs of children looked after, disadvantaged learners, those with SEND and those at risk of exclusion.
- Monitor educational performance, trends and outcomes to inform planning, improvement activity and inclusive service delivery.
- Ensure education, skills and learning provision responds to the diverse and changing needs of Northumberland's communities.

Partnerships, Skills and Employability

- Champion effective partnership working across education, health, care, early years, higher education, training and employment sectors.
- Lead collaboration with local, regional and national partners to improve outcomes and maximise opportunities for learners.
- Ensure education and skills strategies reflect labour market needs, supporting employability, workforce development and sustainable economic growth.
- Represent and negotiate on behalf of the Council at local, regional and national level, promoting Northumberland's interests and priorities.

Service Delivery, Resources and Performance

- Provide strategic leadership and direction to Education and Skills services, ensuring high-quality, cost-effective and outcome-focused delivery.
- Ensure effective performance management arrangements are in place, driving improvement and maintaining readiness for external inspection.
- Lead or sponsor major programmes, projects and transformation initiatives that contribute to the Council's strategic objectives.
- Ensure the effective deployment and management of financial, physical and workforce resources to achieve service priorities and statutory responsibilities.

Our Corporate Plan

Our Corporate Plan sets out what the Council – Members and staff – will do, working with partners and communities to deliver on our Vision and Priorities for all of Northumberland's residents in the coming years. It outlines how we will ensure we are a Best Value Council, delivering value for money services to residents, businesses and visitors to the county.

[You can read the 2026 - 30 Corporate Plan here.](#)



Our priorities

We are a committed and ambitious council, and our priorities for Northumberland remain unchanged. While challenges may be significant, so are the opportunities.

We are proud of what we have achieved together and we know none of this is possible without the dedication of our staff and partners. **Their hard work is making a real difference.**

We continue to **hack local businesses**, including **free parking in our main towns**, and we recognise the vital role of rural areas.

Farming, rural enterprise, and our natural assets are central to Northumberland's success. Our county boasts a **stunning coastline**, one of the UK's largest farming regions, renewable energy sources, woodlands, and diverse wildlife. We take our responsibilities seriously and will keep investing and protecting these resources for future generations.

Health and wellbeing remains a priority. Through our **County Partnership and County Mission**, we are working to transform health outcomes over the next 20 years, creating conditions for everyone to thrive.

Underpinning all this is our commitment to **protect all our everyday services and our natural environment**. From tackling litter and fly-tipping to creating green spaces, we will protect and enhance Northumberland's natural and built environment.

As a council, we remain **fully committed to serving our communities and building a county that is prosperous, welcoming, and supported by high-quality public services.**

6  **Cllr Glen Sanderson
Leader**

 **Dr Helen Paterson
Chief Executive**

This plan outlines how we will build on our achievements, focusing on three priorities:



Value for money



Free parking in town centres



Driving economic growth



Blyth Celebrates event



Tackling inequalities



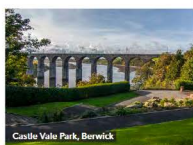
Resident engagement roadshow, Crumlington

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Building on our successes and our ambitions for the future

Our people, businesses and communities are our greatest assets and make Northumberland the place it is – a Land of Great Opportunities.

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Castle Vale Park, Berwick



Northumbrian Line opened

Our vision:

Northumberland: Land of Great Opportunities.

At a time when there are pressures on local government, Northumberland County Council is showing its commitment and ambition to those who live and work here, by investing in the things that matter most to them.

How do we know it matters most to them? Because we are listening, and this Corporate Plan outlines our vision and priorities based on what residents and businesses have told us.

We are investing in the things that matter most – supporting residents, growing the economy, and creating opportunities.

Our ambition remains strong. We've secured Europe's largest data centre deal, bringing £10 billion of investment to Northumberland.

As part of this, we negotiated a £110 million Growth Fund dedicated to hosting skills, jobs, and businesses across the entire county, from rural villages to market towns and urban centres.

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These investments will create thousands of jobs, attract new businesses, and strengthen our position as a **thriving, forward-looking county.**

We have great ambition and commit to this momentum remaining strong as we build our new Northumberland Economic Strategy.

The **Northumbrian Line is now open** and exceeding expectations, with nearly a million passenger journeys on the line. It's connecting residents with other areas more than ever, helping them access jobs and education, as well as making it easier to meet friends and family.

The line has also provided excellent opportunities for visitors to come to Northumberland and discover all we have to offer including in the southeast of the county and we have big ambitions to see the line extended further.

Northumberland is open for growth – and we're just getting started.

 **The new Seaton Delaval High School**

A Land of Great Opportunities

Choose Northumberland

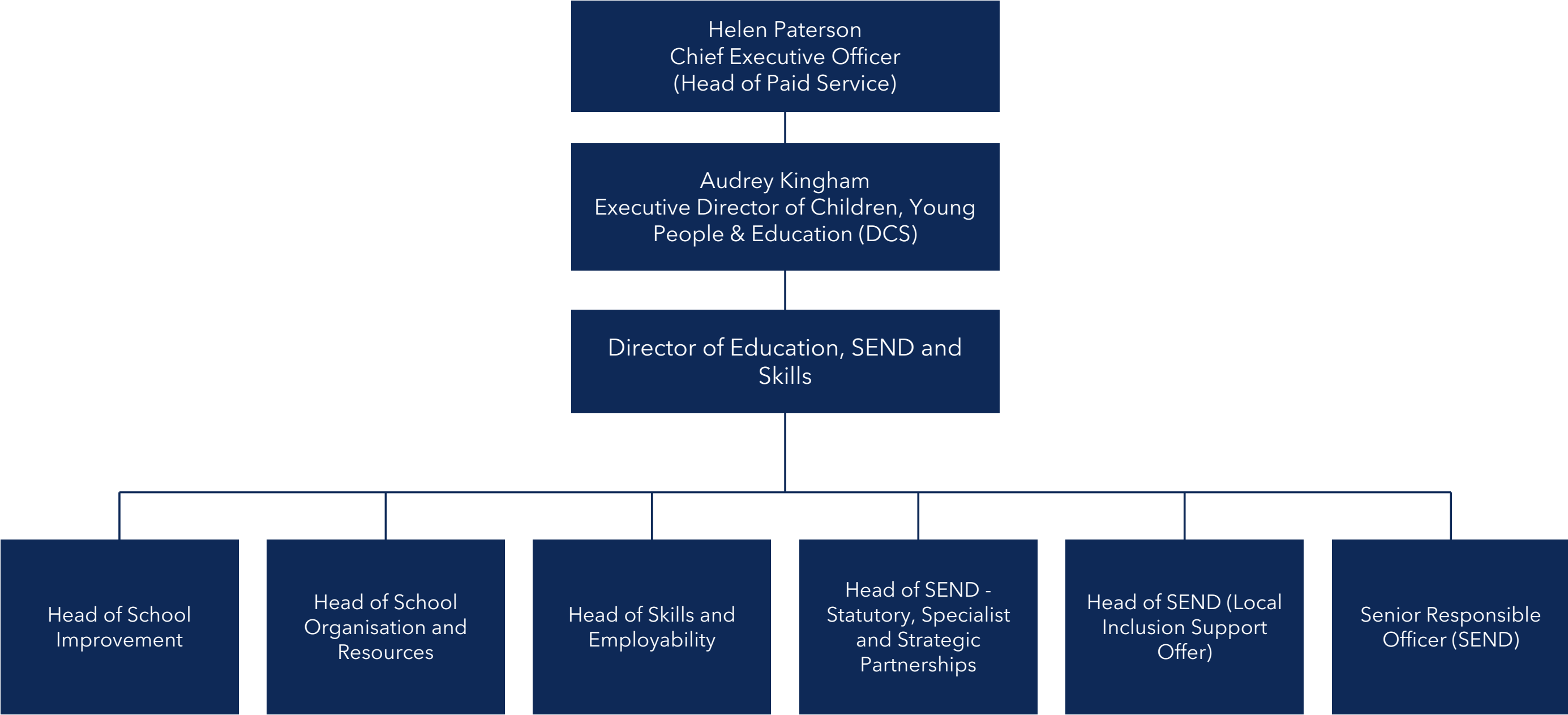
Northumberland is a land of great opportunities. It boasts stunning landscapes, spectacular castles, picturesque market towns and a beautiful coastline.

We are proud to call ourselves the place for prosperity and innovation and we are a county that boasts international leaders in industry, investment-ready locations, welcoming communities, a rich history and proud heritage, and globally significant tourist attractions, culture and landscapes.

Our communities are vibrant and welcoming with distinctive characteristics, culture and heritage, and together we are working towards a cleaner, greener, sustainable environment. Whether you enjoy surfing at the coast, eating at top-rated restaurants or experiencing vibrant nightlife, we believe there's no better place to live and work.



Structure Chart



Person Specification

Professional and Technical Requirements

Qualifications

Educated to degree level (or equivalent), with Qualified Teacher Status and membership of a relevant professional body.

Knowledge, Skills and Experience

Evidence of recent and ongoing professional development, including senior management and professional learning.

Significant senior management experience within education, learning and skills services in organisations of comparable scale and complexity.

Proven track record of developing and implementing education and skills strategies that deliver measurable improvements in attainment, participation and learner outcomes.

Extensive knowledge of national education, skills and employability policy, including curriculum, assessment, school improvement and workforce development.

Strong understanding of statutory, regulatory and governance requirements affecting education, SEND and skills provision.

Experience of driving large-scale organisational transformation and service redesign that improves outcomes and value for money.

Experience of school improvement and securing high standards across a range of educational settings.

Demonstrable success in developing services that improve outcomes for vulnerable learners, including those with additional needs.

Strong analytical skills, with experience of option appraisal, performance evaluation and evidence-based service improvement.

Ability to develop and implement long-term strategic plans that respond to changing educational, economic and demographic needs.

Experience of managing services and resources effectively within a financially challenging environment.

High levels of personal and professional integrity, credibility and resilience.

Commitment to equality, inclusion and the Council's values, with a track record of embedding these principles in service delivery and organisational practice.

Strong corporate focus and commitment to continuous improvement, public service excellence and achieving positive outcomes for Northumberland communities.

Our Senior Management Core Competencies

Core Competency Requirements

Communication: Shapes messaging to support service delivery and stakeholder engagement. Influences decisions and builds shared understanding in complex environments.

Collaboration: Develops strategic partnerships with public, private, voluntary, and community sectors to deliver council priorities.

Service Delivery: Oversees service delivery aligned to council priorities. Leads transformation, manages risk, and applies strategic thinking to maximise outcomes and ensure cost effectiveness.

Decision-Making: Applies strategic judgement to optimise resources and deliver meaningful outcomes.

Digital & Data Literacy: Uses data for strategic planning and innovation. Applies digital solutions to improve services and manage risk. Interprets complex datasets to inform service design and policy.

Adaptability: Anticipates future trends and prepares services for change. Embeds continuous improvement practices and supports teams to adapt and innovate.

Problem-Solving: Solves complex service delivery challenges using evidence and insight to redesign ways of working and drive innovation.

Community & Customer Focus: Aligns services with community priorities and customer expectations, ensure representation and accessibility.

Leadership: Coaches and delegates to drive performance and service delivery. Leads programmes and actively plans for succession and talent development.

Strengths

Analytical: You seek and analyse information to inform your decisions, based on the best available evidence.

Change agent: You are positive and inspirational in leading and supporting others through change.

Inclusive: You recognise everyone as an individual. You accept people for who they are and treat everyone fairly. You actively encourage and provide opportunities for others to share ideas and contributions.

Strategic: You look at the big picture. You consider the wider factors and long-term implications of decisions.

Visionary: You create and share a clear vision of the future.

Additional information can be found under the corresponding section in the Job Description.

Our Values

PACT is our shared set of values and behaviours – shaped by our people across NCC – that guide how we work, make decisions and deliver for our communities every day.

Our Cultural Vision

United by our PACT, we put residents and communities at the heart of everything we do – while building a council where our people are empowered, supported, and proud to work.

Our PACT values - Purpose, Accountability, Agility, Collaboration and Trust - underpin how that vision is achieved through day-to-day behaviours, decisions and ways of working.



Deliver with Purpose

We deliver with purpose by focusing on what matters most - creating outcomes that make a real difference for residents, communities and colleagues.



Take Accountability

We take accountability by owning our actions and outcomes, supporting each other to succeed.

Adapt with Agility

We adapt with agility by staying resilient, embracing change, and learning as we go.



Collaborate openly

We collaborate openly by sharing ideas, listening, and shaping solutions together with colleagues, residents and communities, and partners.



Build Trust together

We build trust together by acting with integrity, keeping our promises, and creating a workplace we're proud of.

Interview arrangements and provisional timetable

The indicative timetable is as follows:

Advert open: 10 September 2026

Closing date for applications: noon, 30 September 2026

Interviews: 14 and 15 October 2026

(including a Lumina Assessment, Stakeholder Panel and Formal Interview with Presentation)

Appointment confirmation will be subject to Staff & Appointments Committee and full Council approval.

If you would like to find out more and would like to arrange an exploratory call with Audrey Kingham, Executive Director of Children, Young People and Education, please contact Anita Bingham on Anita.Bingham@northumberland.gov.uk

Relevant Documentation and Information

Working for Northumberland County Council: nland.cc/WorkingForNCC

Additional Information and Appointment Arrangements

Applications

All candidates should apply via our Careers page at: [Jobs and careers with Northumberland County Council](#)

To be considered for this post, you must use the Supporting Information section of the application form to demonstrate how your skills, knowledge and experience meet the requirements of the role.

Please note that CVs will not be accepted.

Employment References

Please include name, address and telephone number of two referees. Candidates should state their relationship with each referee.

Employment references will be taken up for the successful candidate only. If candidates wish to be advised before we contact their referees, this should be indicated clearly beside their names.

Evidence of qualifications

Candidates will be required to bring evidence of their qualifications to the assessment day if shortlisted.

Occupational Health

The successful applicant will need to satisfy the requirements of the role. Any offer of employment will be subject to passing occupational health clearance.

Disclosure and Barring Service Check

Due to the nature of this post, they are exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 and convictions, whether spent or unspent, must be declared.

Immigration, Asylum and Nationality Act 2006 - Prevention of illegal working

Candidates must be eligible to work in the UK. The successful candidate will be required to provide original evidence of their eligibility to work in the UK. Further guidance will be made available to shortlisted candidates.



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