



Helen Fairfoul OBE

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## **Northumbria University Board member awarded OBE for services to higher education**

Helen Fairfoul, a member of Northumbria University's Board of Governors, has been awarded an OBE for her services to higher education in the New Year Honours 2023.

Helen has been on the University's Board of Governors since March 2020 and is Chair of its Employment and Finance Committee.

She is the former Chief Executive of the Universities and Colleges Employers Association (UCEA), having been in that role from 2012 until February 2020.

During her time at UCEA, Helen's commitment and dedication was instrumental in the success of multi-employer pay bargaining in higher education alongside joint working with trade union colleagues on several important issues. Helen built good working relationships with sector stakeholders during periods of significant uncertainty and economic challenge. She also developed important international influence during her time at UCEA, establishing international links on higher education employment relations with partners in Europe, Australia and Canada.

Upon receiving her OBE, Helen said: "It has been a privilege to spend much of my career working in the UK's outstanding university sector. This recognition is of course as much about the talented and committed colleagues I have had the opportunity to work with over many years."

Prior to working at UCEA Helen has held various lead roles as a Human Resources specialist. She was HR Director at the University of Roehampton, where she also spent three years as Clerk to the University Council, and Director of Personnel at the London Borough of Greenwich.

Professor Andy Long, Vice-Chancellor and Chief Executive at Northumbria University, said: "I offer my warmest congratulations to Helen on this honour. Helen holds a leading position as Chair of our Employment and Finance committee and is a key member of our Board of Governors.

"Since joining the University in 2020, Helen has been instrumental in helping to progress the University's distinctive approach to research, education, and innovation. I know all colleagues will be delighted to hear she has received this royal recognition for her work."

Helen began her career in local government, joining the Inner London Education Authority and undertaking roles there ranging from teacher recruitment to school governance. She now works as an independent consultant on organisational, employment and governance matters.

Helen has a first degree in History from the University of Birmingham and completed her MBA with the Open University. She is also a Chartered Fellow

of the Chartered Institute of Personnel & Development and an Honorary Fellow of the Institute for Employment Studies.

Dr Roberta Blackman-Woods, Chair of the Board of Governors at Northumbria University, congratulated Helen on receiving the OBE.

“I am absolutely delighted that Helen has been given this much deserved award,” she said. “It rightly acknowledges her many years of excellent service to the Higher Education sector including as Chief Executive of UCEA.

“At Northumbria the Board of Governors benefits hugely from her extensive experience and deep commitment to the University and wider HE sector.

“The whole Board hugely congratulates her on this great achievement.”

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