

L - R: Professor Andy Long (Vice-Chancellor and Chief Executive, Northumbria University), Bridget Phillipson (Shadow Secretary of State for Education), Dr Roberta Blackman-Woods (Chair of the Board of Governors, Northumbria University)

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Northumbria welcomes Shadow Secretary of State for Education

The Shadow Secretary of State for Education, Bridget Phillipson, visited Northumbria University, Newcastle to hear about world leading research that is having an impact regionally, nationally and globally and the way in which it is breaking down barriers to create more opportunities for people in the North East.

Northumbria is committed to working in partnership with students and

graduates to provide greater equity of access to, and success in, Higher Education. Almost 40% of Northumbria's undergraduate students come from backgrounds with low participation in Higher Education and the University aims to empower all students to identify and create more opportunities for success in their further study, career, and life ambitions.

During the visit, Ms Phillipson met with several students who shared their experiences of studying at Northumbria, many of whom are first in their family to attend university. They talked about the academic, financial and wellbeing support offered to them that has enabled them to excel in their studies. Several of the students have since gone on to use their own experiences to support other students or advise the University through paid roles alongside their studies. For example, Northumbria is one of the first universities to introduce Student Inclusion Consultants - a team of current students who use their own personal experience of the barriers underrepresented students can face at university to advise on ways in which Northumbria can ensure all students are supported with their wellbeing and learning.

The Shadow Secretary went on to meet with some of Northumbria's graduate entrepreneurs who have set up their own businesses with support from the University's student and graduate enterprise team – one of many services the University offers to students to help ensure their future success after they graduate.

Northumbria is in the top 30 for the number of full-time UK graduates who go into skilled jobs and has placed in the top five in 10 of the last 13 years for graduate enterprise.

While on campus, Ms Phillipson visited some of the University's research facilities and talked to academics in the Faculty of Health and Life Sciences about the vital role the University plays in providing a pipeline of qualified and skilled individuals entering – and staying in – key professions such as nursing and social care.

The University recently announced a new Centre for Health and Social Equity which is dedicated to tackling health and social inequalities. Academics will work on breakthrough solutions to issues across health, social care, education, wellbeing and equity from a single central base in the heart of Newcastle.

She also visited the development site for the North East Space Skills and Technology Centre (NESST), a £50m space skills, research and development centre set to transform the UK space industry, create over 350 jobs and inject over £260 million into the North East economy over the next 30 years.

As part of the visit, Ms Phillipson attended a roundtable event alongside university, civic and business leaders in the region to discuss how they can work together to help create more opportunities for people in the North East.

Commenting on her visit, the Shadow Secretary of State for Education, Bridget Phillipson MP, said: “It was brilliant to see what’s going on at Northumbria University – everything from world leading research, space physics and the work that’s going on to support young people from disadvantaged backgrounds into university.

“The work that Northumbria is doing around investment, support for students and how that’s connected to jobs, industry and growth and our regional economy is fantastic. Our regional universities are absolutely central to the economy of the region, to creating jobs and prosperity. They are anchor institutions that drive so much of our growth.”

“For too long, the Conservatives have treated universities as a political battleground. With Labour, our universities will be championed as engines of growth and opportunity.”

Professor Andy Long, Vice-Chancellor and Chief Executive of Northumbria University said, “It was a pleasure to host Bridget Phillipson at Northumbria to discuss some of the opportunities and challenges facing the sector and to meet some of our fantastic students and researchers.

“Over the last ten years, the university has been significantly increasing its research capabilities and this was a great opportunity to showcase both our real-world impact and the way it feeds into our education to make sure that our graduates are highly skilled and even more employable.

“Almost 40% of our students are from low participation backgrounds and we’re determined to make sure all students are not only just as likely to get into Northumbria, but they’re just as likely succeed when they graduate.

“We very much look forward to continuing to work with organisations from around the North East so that we can achieve even more and break down barriers to make sure that people from all backgrounds can benefit from a Northumbria education.”

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Notes to editors

About Northumbria University

Northumbria is a research-intensive university with a proud heritage of making a difference to individuals and to society. We work in partnership in the North East and London, the UK and globally.

www.northumbria.ac.uk

Northumbria University recently confirmed a total of £50 million investment to create a world-leading space skills research and technology centre in the North East of England. The [North East Space Skills and Technology Centre](#), which will be known as NESST, will be a “game-changer” for the UK space economy. NESST is expected to directly support the creation of over 350 jobs. The project will inject over £260 million into the North East economy over the next 30 years, playing a critical role in the government’s levelling-up agenda and becoming a catalyst for the wider development of the UK space sector in the North East region.

Northumbria University is dedicated to reducing health and social inequalities and improving social, economic and health outcomes for the most marginalised in society. Through its new [Centre for Health and Social Equity](#)

(CHASE), researchers will be delivering world-leading health and social equity research and creating innovative, evidence-based policies and data-driven solutions to bring impactful change across the region, the UK and globally.

Northumbria is a research-intensive university that unlocks potential for all, changing lives regionally, nationally and internationally. Find out more about us at www.northumbria.ac.uk

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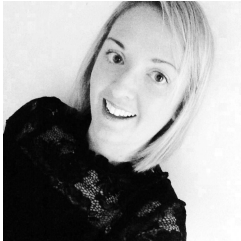
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