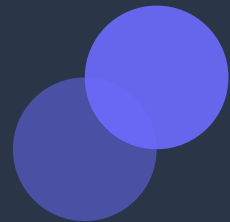


Catalyst

Non-Executive Directors Appointment Brief

June 2026



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Prior to submitting a CV, we recommend that all applicants familiarise themselves with the contents of this information pack.

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Welcome

Dear Applicant

Catalyst – Appointment of Non-Executive Director

Thank you for your interest in joining the Catalyst Board. This pack provides further information about our organisation and our mission.

Catalyst is a non-profit Science and Technology Hub focused on fostering innovation and opportunity in Northern Ireland. We operate campuses across Northern Ireland, including our main hub in Titanic Quarter Belfast, a site on Bedford Street Belfast, and our Innovation Centre in Derry-Londonderry.

Since our establishment in 1999, Catalyst has grown into a leading force for innovation and entrepreneurship led growth. In 2026 the Financial Times ranked us the top startup hub across the island of Ireland and seventh in the UK, the only non-London hub in the UK top ten.

Our Board brings together members from Great Britain, the Republic of Ireland, and Northern Ireland, all deeply committed to enabling a thriving innovation and entrepreneurship community.

As a non-profit, every surplus we generate from a range of income streams is reinvested into inclusive entrepreneurship, innovation support and community impact.

That standing is built on measurable outcomes for example independent research found that 86% of participants left our Hello Possible programme with the ambition to start a business, many having entered with none, and our Open Innovation work is connecting more than 1,000 SMEs to research, development and AI capability.

We are now on the threshold of an exciting next chapter in a fast changing AI world and through these new appointments, we aim to complement the skills of our existing Board as we work together to deliver our vision of opportunity for all from world-leading innovation.

I hope the enclosed information is helpful and encourages you to apply.

Yours sincerely,

Neil Crockett
Chairman, Catalyst Board

Background

Appointment of Non-Executive Directors

Catalyst wishes to invite candidates who share our passion for entrepreneurship, inclusive innovation, and ambition for Northern Ireland to submit applications, in the form of a CV, for the appointment of two Non-Executive Directors to the Board.

As an equal opportunities employer, we prioritise merit-based appointments and are committed to fostering diversity on our Board and throughout our organisation. We welcome applications from individuals from all backgrounds and particularly encourage applications from women, who are currently underrepresented at Board level, as part of our commitment to achieving a more balanced and diverse Board.

The Background

Catalyst is the trading name of the Northern Ireland Science Park Foundation Ltd group of companies and was established as part of the economic initiatives arising from the Good Friday Agreement. The Northern Ireland Science Park, a company limited by guarantee, was then established by the Department of Economic Development (now the Department for the Economy).



Who We Are

Catalyst is an independent, non-profit science and technology hub, driving innovation-led growth in Northern Ireland. We help founders, SMEs, researchers and global organisations turn ideas into real-world impact through space, support and collaboration. Every surplus we generate is reinvested into inclusive entrepreneurship, innovation programmes and community impact, building a more competitive, resilient and inclusive economy.

Across our three Northern Ireland sites, Catalyst provides 2,900 desk spaces alongside dedicated lab facilities, giving founders, researchers and established companies the room to start, grow and scale, supported by a powerful community and international networks.

Inclusivity is at the core of what we do. We work to remove the barriers that prevent people from accessing opportunities in the innovation economy, from access to entrepreneurship to learning the skills to innovate.



Our Strategic Focus

Our strategy is guided by a clear vision and mission, and is delivered through three strategic focuses

Vision

Opportunity for all from world-leading innovation.

We want to help create a society whose economy makes a difference to the world, contributing to solving global challenges, achieved through the breadth of participation and creativity of all people from all backgrounds. This is what 'inclusive innovation' means to us.

Mission

We make it easy for you to innovate.

Innovation is hard, and few companies possess the resources to meet all of their innovation needs internally. It is often made harder by the fragmentation between parties with a role to assist and stimulate innovation, and by the bureaucracy and risk aversion applied to those interventions. Whether the innovator is a multinational corporation, a start-up or scale-up, or a young person farthest from opportunity, Catalyst's role is to make the process of innovating, or collaborating to innovate, easier.

Strategic Focus

Future Workspace

State-of-the-art, flexible workspaces for businesses of all sizes, designed to foster collaboration and creativity. Coupled with the Catalyst community of entrepreneurs, mentors and members, this creates a competitive advantage from where you work.

Open Innovation

Enabling companies that want to become innovation-driven enterprises, alongside academia and government, to accelerate technology-based research and development, helping keep Northern Ireland at the forefront of innovation.

Entrepreneurship & Scaling

A range of entrepreneurial support programmes, including mentorship, networking and access to funding, designed to help entrepreneurs create and scale new innovative businesses.

External Recognition

In 2026, the Financial Times ranked Catalyst the leading start-up hub across the island of Ireland and seventh in the UK, assessed across 180 hubs in 25 countries. We are the only non-London hub in the UK top ten, placing Belfast alongside Munich, Paris and Stockholm. This is independent, European-level validation that Catalyst creates the right conditions to start, grow and scale.

The same research ranked Catalyst first in the UK and fifth in Europe for workspace and labs, up three places from eighth in 2025, reflecting the 2,900 desk spaces and dedicated lab facilities across our three sites. Customisable lab space, co-location with founders, and proximity to industry partners is a combination very few hubs anywhere in Europe can match.



Values

We are a force for good, bold in our approach, with integrity at our core and passionate in everything we do.

Staffing

Catalyst currently operates with a staffing complement of 55 full-time employees. Executives report to the Group Boards of Directors, which currently comprise 9 Non-Executive Directors with a rich blend of skills and experience.

Group Structure

Northern Ireland Science Park Foundation Limited ("the Foundation") is a not-for-profit company limited by guarantee. The Foundation is the parent company of the group. The Group consists of the Foundation, its wholly owned subsidiary, Northern Ireland Science Park (Holdings) Limited ("Holdings"), and three wholly owned subsidiaries of Holdings: Northern Ireland Science Park Property Limited,

Northern Ireland Science Park Trading Company Limited, and North West Regional Science Park Limited.

The Foundation's memorandum and articles are constructed to conform to the UK Science Park Association's definition of a science park, regarding business support and technology transfer.

The Foundation is not structured to undertake trading or other business activities; any profits accruing to the Foundation are reinvested to promote its objectives. Holdings operates with general commercial objectives and holds shareholdings in subsidiary companies, each undertaking specific business activities within the Foundation's remit. The property company owns the Belfast site and manages the estate and its tenants.

A Word from Our CEO

Catalyst exists to make innovation easier, more inclusive, and more impactful, and to prove that a small region can compete with anywhere in the world. The Financial Times now ranks us the number one start-up hub across the island of Ireland and seventh in the UK, the only non-London hub in the top ten. That is a marker of how far Northern Ireland has come, not a finish line.

What comes next is harder. Our ambition is that Northern Ireland leads the way in showing that inclusive entrepreneurship and equality of opportunity can lift a whole region, not just a fortunate few. We cannot do that alone, and we are not trying to. We need people who will challenge us, govern us well, and open doors we cannot open ourselves.

If that sounds like you, I would encourage you to apply. Don't watch from the sidelines, help shape what comes next.



Steve Orr,
CEO, Catalyst

Role Profile

Responsibilities of Non-Executive Directors

The main duties are:

1. Act as an ambassador for the Board, representing and acting impartially in good faith and in the best interests of Catalyst at all times.
2. Undertake the duties of a Company Director and uphold the company's commitment to high standards of corporate governance, ensuring adherence to legal, ethical, and regulatory frameworks.
3. Prepare for and attend Board meetings, Committee meetings and other relevant events.
4. Contribute to the development, implementation and continuous refinement of the company's strategic objectives and vision.
5. Provide independent, informed perspectives to guide long-term planning and reach sound and reasoned decisions.
6. Build and maintain constructive relationships between executive officers and Non-Executive Directors, and foster positive working relationships with other Board Members.
7. Oversee and evaluate the company's risk management framework, ensuring it is robust, effective, and aligned with the company's strategic objectives.
8. Review and challenge financial information and reporting to ensure accuracy, integrity, and transparency.
9. Monitor the company's financial performance and sustainability, ensuring its financial health and alignment with strategic goals.
10. Ensure that the company acts as a responsible employer, fostering a positive and fair workplace culture.
11. Ensure appropriate consideration is given to the interests of key stakeholders, including tenants, employees, entrepreneurs, partners, funders, regulators, and the wider ecosystem.
12. Provide constructive support, challenge, and strategic guidance to the Executive Team, fostering effective leadership while holding management accountable for performance and delivery.
13. Assist in the annual review of Board effectiveness, contributing to continuous improvement in governance practices.
14. Promote and uphold the company's values, ethical standards, and commitment to environmental, social and governance in all Board activities.
15. Though not a public body, the Catalyst Board is committed to and deeply values the Nolan Principles, expecting all members to demonstrate them in their conduct.

NB: The above reflects typical duties for the Non-Executive Directors and are not intended to be a comprehensive list of all tasks.

Person Specification

Non-Executive Director | Essential Criteria

We welcome applications from accomplished leaders with a proven track record of achievement who are motivated to contribute their expertise to a purpose-driven organisation. Successful candidates will bring strategic insight and credibility, helping Catalyst strengthen its governance and advance its vision for innovation-led inclusive growth.

Essential Attributes

- Demonstrable commitment to Catalyst's vision, mission and values.
- Strategic thinker with the ability to contribute to long-term organisational growth and sustainability.
- Strong independent judgement with the confidence to provide constructive challenge and support at Board level.
- High standards of integrity, accountability and adherence to the Nolan Principles of Public Life.
- Ability to operate collaboratively while maintaining independence of thought.
- Excellent communication, influencing and stakeholder engagement skills.

Desired Skills and Experience

Previous Non-Executive Director experience is desirable but not essential for exceptional candidates who can demonstrate significant strategic leadership, governance awareness and commitment to Catalyst's mission.

Applicants should demonstrate, through their experience and achievements, that they bring expertise in one or more of the following areas:

Finance, Audit and Corporate Governance

- Senior financial leadership experience (e.g. CFO, Finance Director, Audit Partner or equivalent).
- Strong understanding of financial oversight, risk management, audit, internal controls and corporate governance.
- Ability to provide robust independent challenge and strategic insight on financial performance, organisational sustainability and risk.
- Experience strengthening governance, accountability and assurance frameworks within complex organisations, building confidence among funders, partners and other key stakeholders.

Entrepreneurial Growth and Emerging Technologies

- Founder, executive or senior leadership experience in a high-growth enterprise.
- Experience scaling organisations through periods of significant growth, transformation or investment.
- Knowledge of AI, digital innovation and emerging technologies, and their potential to drive organisational growth, competitiveness and societal impact.
- Ability to advise on innovation, commercialisation and future-focused growth opportunities.

Inclusive Growth, Place-Based Development and Stakeholder Leadership

- A proven track record of shaping strategy, influencing policy and driving transformational initiatives that have delivered significant and sustainable economic, social or organisational impact.
- Experience building and sustaining high-value partnerships across public, private and community sectors, securing stakeholder alignment to support the successful delivery of strategic objectives.
- Applied expertise in inclusive growth, regeneration or major capital projects, demonstrated through leadership of strategic programmes.
- Ability to provide strategic counsel on stakeholder engagement, reputation, public value and community legitimacy in support of organisational objectives.

Terms of Appointment & Conflict of Interest

Time Commitment and Remuneration

Role	Commitment and Remuneration
Non-Executive Director	Commitment: 15 days per year. Remuneration: currently £10,500 per annum.

Successful applicants will be expected to attend Board meetings, Committee meetings and other events. By applying for the post, it is assumed that you can meet the time commitment; if shortlisted, this will be explored at interview. Most meetings take place during normal working hours.

Term of Appointment: Up to three years (one term), with the option to seek re-appointment. An annual assessment of the performance of Non-Executive Directors is carried out by the Chair of the Board throughout the period of appointment. Reappointment may be considered subject to a satisfactory standard of performance during the initial period of office.

Starting Date: December 2026, or as soon as possible thereafter. Start dates are chosen to align with the natural succession of Board roles and the conclusion of existing terms, ensuring a smooth transition.

Location: Most Board meetings are usually held at Catalyst, Queen's Road, Queen's Island, Belfast.

Expenses: Following appointment, travel and subsistence expenses are payable within reason. All remuneration is subject to deduction of income tax and national insurance.

Conflict of Interest

Board appointments require the highest standards of propriety, involving impartiality, integrity and objectivity in relation to the stewardship of funds and the oversight and management of all related activities. This means that any private, voluntary, charitable or political interest which might be material and relevant to the work of the body concerned should be declared.

There is always the possibility for real or perceived conflicts of interest to arise. Both are a problem, as the perceived inference of a conflict may, on occasions, be as damaging as the existence of a real conflict. It is important, therefore, that candidates consider their own circumstances when applying for these appointments and identify any potential conflicts of interest, whether real or perceived. Information which might be relevant could include, for example, financial interests or share ownership, or membership of some societies or organisations.

Application Process

How to Apply

Professional CV's should be sent to **Shauna McPeake**, Director of People & Culture by email to: **shauna.mcpeake@wearecatalyst.org**.

Please use the subject line, 'NED Application'.

Closing Date

All CV's must be received by **12pm July 6th 2026**.

Time Frame for Process

Interviews will be held in the weeks commencing **July 27th 2026** subject to availability.

Applicants invited for interview are eligible for reimbursement of reasonable travelling expenses.

Information for Shortlisting and Interview Purposes

Applicants should refer to the Role Description and Person Specification and identify the extent to which they satisfy the essential criteria. Applicants will be assessed at shortlisting on the basis of the information provided on their CV; no other information, other than that supplied under the criteria sought, will be taken into account when shortlisting.

Criteria-based Selection Process

Your CV should provide clear and relevant evidence of how your experience demonstrates the criteria being sought.

Catalyst is an Equal Opportunities Employer

Catalyst is committed to promoting equality of opportunity and considers all applications solely based on merit. We welcome applications from all qualified individuals, regardless of religious belief, gender, disability, race, political opinion, age, or marital status.

As an Equal Opportunities employer, we request that applicants complete the Equal Opportunities Monitoring Information form. This information is collected for monitoring purposes only and will not be shared with the selection panel or influence the decision-making process.

References

Applicants are required to provide details of two referees. Referees will only be sought if under consideration for appointment.

Further Information

Should you have any further queries about the appointments process, please contact Shauna McPeake, Director of People & Culture. All discussions will be held in the strictest confidence.

Email:

shauna.mcpeake@wearecatalyst.org

wearecatalyst.org

Catalyst