



Welcome to Supporting Communities 227th Edition of E-Zine, bringing you Best Practice from the Community Sector; Funding and Training Updates and Policy Developments in Northern Ireland, Great Britain and Republic of Ireland

Communities Minister hears concerns of voluntary and community sector leaders

Communities Minister Gordon Lyons is pictured with Celine McStravick, Chief Executive, NICVA at a recent meeting where he met with representatives from voluntary and community groups in Northern Ireland to discuss the ongoing issues facing the sector.

Department for Communities Minister Gordon Lyons has met with representatives from voluntary and community groups in Northern Ireland to discuss the ongoing issues facing the sector.

At the meeting, hosted by the Northern Ireland Council for Voluntary Action (NICVA) the Minister heard about the challenges facing the Sector, including funding uncertainties, increased demand for services, and the ongoing pressures caused by increased costs.

Minister Lyons said, "Voluntary and community groups play a vital role in supporting communities across Northern Ireland. I have heard from leaders right across sector about the challenges of delivery at a time of increased costs and a rising demand for services.

"I want to pay tribute to the hundreds of organisations, their staff and volunteers who work tirelessly to deliver real and lasting change for people. I will continue to engage with the sector to ensure continued delivery of services to those who most need them in our communities across Northern Ireland."

Welcoming the Minister to NICVA, Chief Executive Celine McStravick said: I'm delighted to host discussions with the Minister for Communities Gordon Lyons and NICVA on the significant role the voluntary and community sector plays in underpinning economic and social well-being.



Communities Minister Gordon Lyons is pictured with Celine McStravick, Chief Executive, NICVA at a recent meeting where he met with representatives from voluntary and community groups in Northern Ireland to discuss the ongoing issues facing the sector.

"Our sector faces immense pressures yet continues to step up through every crisis, providing a range of support and services to ensure that communities thrive and flourish. We look forward to working in partnership to move today's dialogue into actionable solutions."

The Department for Communities provides around £905,000 annually to NICVA and its partners through its Regional Infrastructure Support Programme to support organisations who play a supporting, co-ordinating or development role in relation to the voluntary and community sector through training, co-ordination, and guidance.

Economy Minister Conor Murphy sets out his vision for the future of our economy.

Speaking in the Assembly the Minister set out four key priorities as part of a new Economic Mission. He said:

“One objective is to create Good Jobs. Many workers and their families are denied a decent standard of living. We must change this by investing in affordable childcare and by strengthening trade unions, particularly in low-paid industries.

“A second objective is to promote Regional Balance. Everyone, no matter where they live, should have the same opportunity to earn a living. To achieve this I will fund local economic strategies and prioritise projects that promote regional balance, such as the expansion of the Magee campus.”

Another objective is to raise Productivity, and the Minister explained:

“Productivity is a fundamental driver of overall living standards. We can improve our productivity by using dual market access to grow domestic exports and attract highly productive investment. Investment in skills, research and development, and innovation will also drive better productivity.

“My final, critical, objective is to reduce carbon emissions. Reaching Net Zero by 2050 is a legal requirement and a moral obligation to the wellbeing of future generations. Done right, the transition can also generate prosperity for all.”



Economy Minister Conor Murphy

Concluding, the Minister stressed the need to move quickly to realise his vision and said:

“My Department will move at pace to put this vision into action. Its focus will be on delivery. We have a lot of work to do to turn this economy around and that work starts now.”

Investment to support conversations on the future sustainability of voluntary youth work in Northern Ireland.

Investment to support conversations on the future sustainability of voluntary youth work in Northern Ireland

Leeann Kelly of NICVA reports

Youth work in Northern Ireland has always made a positive impact on the lives of children and young people, supporting thousands of young people through a range of organisations. Moving into the next decade the voluntary youth work sector is working to collaborate and secure the sustainability of the sector.

Over the past decade, the voluntary youth work sector in Northern Ireland has faced a myriad of challenges. Issues cited include declining structures for communication and coordination, over-reliance on limited funding streams, diminished workforce capacity, and frayed relationships between different stakeholders.

Since April 2021, a small group from across uniformed, regional and local community youth and play work organisations have been meeting to explore these issues and consider ways to repair, reconnect and transform the sector. We expressed hopes to rebuild trust, celebrate the diversity of provision, and develop a shared vision for voluntary youth work. In 2023 we started to refer to this group as a coordinating committee. Throughout 2022/2023 the group focused their energies on a proposal to the Dormant Account Fund (TNL Community Fund) to advance wider engagement across the sector.



A series of inclusive sector-wide conversations will take place during March 2024, facilitated by NICVA, the independent convenors. All those involved in voluntary youth provision are encouraged to engage and make their voices heard as part of this process. The Department of Education and Education Authority will be invited to join us in an observatory capacity as we progress on a pathway to transformative change.

The dates and locations for these events are:

- 13 March 2024 from 7.15pm-9.15pm at The Jethro Centre, Lurgan.
- 19 March 2024 from 11am-1pm at Omagh Enterprise Centre
- 20 March 2024 from 7pm-9pm at The Braid, Ballymena
- 26 March 2024 from 11am-1pm at The Canal Court, Newry

For more information and to book a place at any of the workshops, go to; [Join the conversation on the future sustainability of voluntary youth work in Northern Ireland | NICVA](#)

Charity Commission's Annual Public Meeting - presentation

The Commission held a very successful public meeting at Riddel Hall, Belfast, on 31 January 2024. Given the growing prevalence of online crime, this year's event had a focus on cyber-crime and information security.

Commission Chair, Gerard McCurdy, and Chief Executive, Frances McCandless, provided updates and insights into the Commission's work. Speakers from the Northern Ireland Cyber Security Centre (NICSC) and Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) also addressed the meeting and spoke about the latest trends, with advice on how to protect your charity.

Responding to the meeting some of those who attended said:

- *Good speakers and very topical.*
- *All presentations were very good and relevant.*
- *The information on cyber security was very useful.*
- *Feel informed about changes and plans re Commission and key issues around data protection and cyber security.*
- *I feel that the information and insights were very useful and relevant and shared in an easily understandable way.*



You can see the [presentation slides used at the meeting here](#).

Contacting the Commission.

Requesting a call back from the Commission

If you have a query, we urge charities and Helper groups to review the online guidance on our website as the guidance usually can help resolve issues in the first instance. However, if you still require assistance, we encourage you to contact the Commission with any queries or requests by sending an email to admin@charitycommissionni.org.uk.

If you would prefer your query to be answered by phone call, please add a contact number to your email and request a call back. You can also request a call back by contacting the Commission on 028 3832 0220. We aim to call back within five working days.



Please see the list of following jobs currently available at the Housing Executive:

- | | |
|------------------------------------|---|
| 2024-56 - Quality Inspector | 2024-55 - Project Manager (Heating/Mechanical & Electrical) |
| 2024-52 - Team Leader - Accounts | 2024-25 - Heating/Mechanical Inspector |
| 2024-60 - Senior Admin Officer | 2024-61 - IT Project Manager |
| 2024-24 - Senior Quality Inspector | 2024-34 - Assistant Area Housing Manager (North Region) |
| 2024-53 - Quantity Surveyor | 2023-215 - Housing Advisor |
| 2024-54 - Project Manager | |
| 2024-57 - Electrical Inspector | |

Further information on these jobs can be found at the GetGot website which can be accessed by clicking this [link](#) and typing 'Housing Executive' into the search bar.

Consultations

Offshore Renewable Energy Installation Policy Options for NI

Department for the Economy
[Consultation on OREI policy options](#)
Closing Date; 8th March 2024

Water and Sewerage Charges - options for revenue raising

Department for Infrastructure
[Public Water and sewerage charges - options for revenue raising](#)
Closing Date; 13th March 2024

New Consultation on the Consumer Council for NI Draft 2024-25 Forward Work Programme

Consumer Council for Northern Ireland
<https://www.consumercouncil.org.uk/forward-work-programme-consultation>
Closing Date; 18th March 2024

New Strategy for Victims and Survivors

The Executive Office
[Public Consultation on the New Strategy for Victims and Survivors - NI Direct - Citizen Space](#)
Closing Date; 29th March 2024

Public Consultation on the Arts Council NI new 10 year Strategy (2024 to 2034)

Arts Council of Northern Ireland
[Strategy Consultation 2024-34 | Arts Council NI \(artscouncil-ni.org\)](#)
Closing Date; 5th April 2024

Assembly Update

Assembly Round up shares news, photos, and resources with you about what's happening at the Northern Ireland Assembly and how you can get involved.

You can go directly to the Assembly Round-up page at; <https://blog.niassembly.gov.uk/>



Assembly Business

The most recent plenary sessions of the Assembly considered a number of issues including [Executive Committee Business](#) comprising the [Budget Bill: Consideration Stage](#) and [Private Members Business](#) including [Waiting Lists: Action Plan](#) and [Speech and Language Therapy: Criminal Justice System](#). [Oral Answers to Questions](#) were provided by the [Communities](#) Minister, Mr Lyons.

The report of the plenary sessions of the Assembly are available at; <http://aims.niassembly.gov.uk/officialreport/officialreport.aspx>

Committee for Communities

The minutes of meetings of the Communities Committee are available at; [Committee for Communities: 2022 - 2027 Mandate \(niassembly.gov.uk\)](#)

Policy and Practice Focus

Environmental Priorities for the NI Assembly 2024

Northern Ireland Environment Link (NIEL) is the networking and forum body for non-statutory organisations concerned with the natural and built environment of Northern Ireland. Its 69 Full Members represent 190,000 individuals and 262 subsidiary groups who have a combined annual turnover of £70 million and responsibility for over 314,000 acres of land.

During the suspension of the Assembly, important environmental strategies and policies were delayed and some legal obligations were not met. NIEL welcomes the return of the NI Assembly and recommends it considers our collective view on the first steps guide to action on the following priorities.

Our priorities for a new Assembly include:

- Establishing an independent Environmental Protection Agency properly resourced and accountable to the Executive as a whole and not to an individual Minister.
- Establishing an independent Climate Commissioner's Office.
- Publication of overdue strategies. Most urgent are the Environment Strategy/EIP (legal requirement to publish by 25th July 2023) and Nutrient Action Programme (legal requirement to publish by 11th October 2023). Other overdue strategies include: a Biodiversity Strategy (previous Strategy ended in 2020); a Waste Management Strategy (previous strategy ended in 2020); a Programme for

Government (previous PfG ended in 2021); a Marine Plan (last consulted on in 2018); a Sustainable Development Strategy; a Land Use Strategy and a Food Strategy.

- Introduction of a new Agriculture Act, which prioritises public money for public goods and expedites the rollout and funding for the Farming with Nature scheme.
- Developing a new long-term strategy to tackle the freshwater pollution that blighted Lough Neagh and other freshwater bodies in summer 2023.
- Delivery of a Nature Restoration Act, which will establish targets in law for nature's restoration.

NIEL believes there is considerable advantage in co-designing strategies and policies that affect the environment and economy to ensure better outcomes. NIEL remains committed to playing our part in assisting the Assembly to act to protect nature and climate and enable economic growth for present and future generations. As part of this, the Assembly needs to work with all forms and levels of government to help inform, educate and inspire people to change their behaviour to reduce our impact on the planet. If you would like to discuss this document further, we would be happy to do so and would welcome the opportunity to address you, your party colleagues and relevant committees at the earliest possible convenience.



Cost-of-living crisis may force more charities to merge and close, conference hears



Léa Legraien writes in [Civil Society Media](#)

Chief executives of major UK charities have shared their thoughts on how the ongoing cost-of-living crisis could affect organisations deciding to merge or close down.

At Civil Society's ESG Imperative event yesterday, Paul Farmer, Enver Solomon and Farah Nazeer, the respective CEOs of Age UK, the Refugee Council and Women's Aid, discussed how to lead a charity responsibly in an era of permacrises. Asked whether charities could be forced toward mergers or something similar in the coming years, Farmer said some of Age UK's network of over 120 local organisations were facing "real pressure".

"We have to acknowledge the extraordinary contribution the British public made to the charity sector during Covid-19. In effect, that led to organisations feeling that they were okay, they didn't need to merge because as a whole the sector did better than most people were fearing. I'm a bit worried about where we are at the moment, in particular for local organisations. I think we may well see a little bit more mergers and sadly more closures than we've seen previously."

'More willingness' to collaborate

Nazeer from Women's Aid, a federation of over 170 domestic abuse services across England, said that

the recent spate of local authorities issuing [section 114 notices](#) “has meant that lots of services that we run on the ground had to halve their services within a month, eight weeks or sometimes close down. It’s been pretty dire on the ground [...] This isn’t a happy tale, you shouldn’t have to be in this position. But what has come from that is more willingness to do things like shared back office. When I joined, the membership wasn’t interested at all in doing that. Even though they’re geographically sensible arrangements you wouldn’t have organisations that might be competing for the same set of donors or funders sharing fundraising or HR support”.

“But I think the pressures have helped make organisations rapidly reconsider and we’re certainly exploring it as well as an organisation. We will see more of that and that’s absolutely right.”

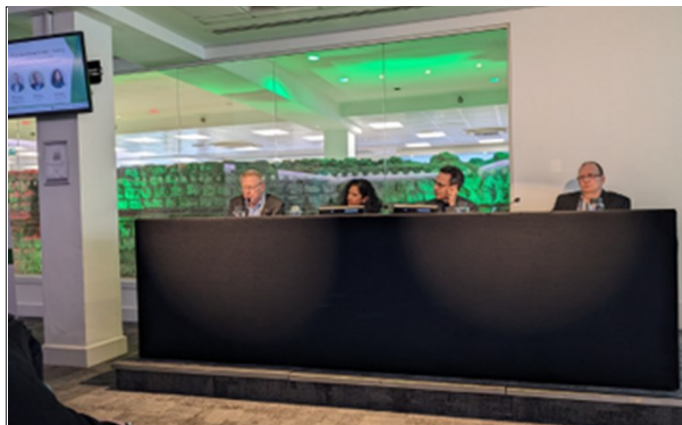
Solomon from the Refugee Council said that despite some charities combining services, there was “an instinctive lack of desire to merge in our sector. “What is behind it is we all see ourselves as uniquely important, unique and valuable,” he said. “I always find myself looking back and then looking forward. When Covid-19 happened, everyone was saying: ‘Everyone is going to merge.’ There have been some, but there haven’t been mass mergers. And when austerity kicked in a decade ago, [everyone was saying]: ‘All those charities are going to merge.’ It hasn’t happened. I think it will be pretty much the same place.”

Too many charities?

The panellists were also asked whether there were too many charities doing the same work. Solomon said that although he sees the logic of some organisations combining, it does not necessarily make sense for those who run small charities. At the local level, particularly in my sector, some of the smallest organisations are run by volunteers. Their overheads are absolutely miniscule and merging is just not on their radar and never will be”.

“If they were to end, those people might go and create something else in the future or go and volunteer with another organisation. They wouldn’t necessarily see mergers as a viable option and I think it’s important to hold on to that.” Farmer cited the private sector, where “there are probably thousands of new companies being formed every single day, some of whom are going to be the biggest companies in the world in 20 or 30 years’ time”.

“I don’t think we want to stifle that degree of innovation but at the same time, we do need to look and make sure that we’re not just there simply because we’ve always been there,” he said. “The way in which we think about our current role and purpose is going to be key going forward. If we can find ways to collaborate more effectively, not just within our individual sector silos but also across the whole sector, which is really hard, then we might find there are other ways of doing things.”



From left to right: Paul Farmer, chief executive of Age UK; Farah Nazeer, chief executive of Women's Aid; Enver Solomon, chief executive of Refugee Council and Ian Allsop, contributing editor of Charity Finance

He added that one lesson from Age UK’s formation, from the merger of Age Concern and Help the Aged in 2009, is that it took a “huge” amount of time, effort and energy to make it happen. If you don’t have the headspace to do that or have a limited amount of bandwidth to think about something, is that necessarily going to be the first thing you’re going to think about at this particular moment? I’m not sure it will be.”

‘Charities need to look at whether or not they still need to exist’

Nazeer pointed out that the women’s services sector has “the opposite problem”. We don’t have enough provision and that provision is already closing,” she said. “With a 70% first refusal rate into refuge, I don’t think there’s much duplication and overlap when it comes to provision. Often in one area, particularly when we’re talking about local charities, there’s one charity or two that are providing for a vast number of people.

“But there are other sectors and specific parts where we can see, particularly at the national level, more clear duplication.” She added that as a federated charity, it would be “very difficult” for Women’s Aid to merge unless it was done with another membership body. “It would be very difficult, for example, to merge with an organisation that provided services because that would immediately create competition with the membership base. We have looked at that but there isn’t another membership body.

“I think all charities do need to look at it and examine whether or not they still need to exist. And certainly, if they need to exist in the form that they’re currently existing.”

- See more at: https://www.civilsociety.co.uk/news/cost-of-living-crisis-may-force-more-charities-to-merge-and-close-conference-hears.html?utm_source=New+Main+List+From+Live+CIVIL+Site&utm_campaign=987317b980-EMAIL_CAMPAIGN_2024_02_22_12_50&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_-987317b980-%5B%5D#sthash.B69DDaHL.dpuf

Publications

Northern Ireland Labour Force Survey – Young People Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET)

Statistics on young people who are not in education, employment or training (NEET) were published today by the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency.

Young people not in education, employment or training (NEET)

Young people who were NEET

- There were an estimated 15,000 young people aged 16 to 24 years in Northern Ireland who were not in education, employment or training (NEET) in October to December 2023. This was equivalent to 7.6% of all those aged 16 to 24 years in NI.
- The NEET rate among males aged 16 to 24 was 7.0% and among females was 8.2% in October to December 2023.
- The number who were NEET decreased from the previous quarter and over the year; the quarterly change was statistically significant.
- In October to December 2023 there were an estimated 12,000 young people aged 16 to 24 years



who were not in education, employment or training and who were not looking for work and/or not available to start work (economically inactive). The remainder of those who were not in education, employment or training were looking for work in the previous four weeks and available to start within the next two weeks (unemployed).

The latest LFS reweighting was introduced in February 2024, affecting data from July-September 2022 to September-November 2023, to incorporate the latest estimates of the size and composition of the UK population. More information on this reweighting can be accessed through the [Impact of reweighting on Labour Force Survey key indicators: 2024](#)



Catch up on what's been happening with the Chief Constable's Report to the Board at [chief-constables-report-northern-ireland-policing-board.pdf \(nipolicingboard.org.uk\)](#) and the Human Rights Review of Privacy and Policing at [Human Rights Review of Privacy and Policing \(nipolicingboard.org.uk\)](#)

In addition the November edition of Policing Matters is available at; [Policing Matters February 2024 | Northern Ireland Policing Board \(nipolicingboard.org.uk\)](#)



The Report "Linking the Irish Environment" is available at [Linking-the-Irish-Environment-Executive-Summary-June-2023.pdf \(nienvironmentlink.org\)](#). For the latest environmental news, go to [ENRA January 2024 \(nienvironmentlink.org\)](#) For other NIEL publications and events, go to; [www.nienvironmentlink.org](#)



Please click the link below to access the latest newsletter for PCSPs which highlights local events and initiatives; [PCSP Projects coming to Life | Policing and Community Safety Partnerships \(pcsp.org\)](#)



Following a consultation process in 2023, The Executive Office is pleased to inform you that "The Executive Office Equality Scheme 2024-2029" has now been published on our website at the following address <https://www.executiveoffice-ni.gov.uk/publications/equality-scheme-executive-office>



Please see our latest [NIFHA News - Feb 24](#), your monthly newsletter for NIFHA members and associates.

Events

Join the effort to keep Northern Ireland beautiful with The BIG Spring Clean!



Looking for a fantastic opportunity to give back to your community? Look no further than Live Here Love Here's flagship volunteering programme, the BIG Spring Clean. The BIG Spring Clean, Northern Ireland's largest volunteer clean-up campaign, is designed to support local community action through clean-up support.

The campaign takes place annually from 1st March to 30th April and is open to everyone, including individuals, schools, community groups, and businesses from all backgrounds. Together, let's work towards a cleaner environment by eliminating litter this spring!

Get involved...

The Live Here Love Here team are hosting lots of events across the country in our partner council areas. Why not get involved in an event happening in your local area? Everyone is welcome! Simply register using the link below and turn up on the day:



List of Events

Track the amazing difference your litter picking efforts make!

The Litter Log form was created to keep track of all the litter collected by communities and individuals nationwide during the BIG Spring Clean campaign. The more data we accumulate, the more effectively we can sway government and public opinion.

If you participate in a litter pick during March and April, please complete the form below:

Litter Log Form

National Lottery Heritage Grants: Information session (Northern Ireland)

Do you have an idea for a heritage project that could benefit your community and want to find out more about our grants programme?

National Lottery Heritage Grants is our open programme for all types of heritage projects in the UK. Under our new strategy, Heritage 2033, grants fall under two categories: **£10,000 to £250,000**, and **£250,000 to £10 million**. Whether you apply for £10,000 or £10 million, we want the projects we support to value, care for and sustain our heritage for everyone, now and in the future.

If you want to learn about our funding, then our **free online information sessions** are for you. Hosted by the Engagement team in Northern Ireland, each session will cover:

- What heritage is and our definition
- The types of organisations we can fund
- What makes a fundable heritage project
- The four investment principles which will guide our

- funding decisions
- Our new application process under Heritage 2033 and deadlines for each grant programme.

There will also be time for a Q&A at the end of each session.

Sessions which will take place on the following dates:

- **11 March 2024, 7.00 – 8.30pm:** <https://www.ticketsource.co.uk/booking/t-rpgrova>
- **8 April 2024, 6.00 – 7.30pm:** <https://www.ticketsource.co.uk/booking/t-dvxprzp>

If you would like to attend, it is essential that you **sign up in advance** via **Ticketsource** to secure your place. **Each session is limited to 25 people. To sign up, please use the above links for your chosen date.**



Heritage Fund

Digital Drop-In Session at Murphy's on Main Street Community Hub Ederney

Date: Thursday 14th March 2024

Time: 10:00 am to 3:00 pm

**Location: Murphy's on Main Street Community Hub,
15 Main Street, Enniskillen, NI BT93 0DH**

Do you need help to access online services?

Whether it's sending an email, getting onto Facebook, shopping online for the best deals, accessing your Universal Credit account....or simply learning how to turn your tablet on, we can help!

Anita Doonan from Supporting Communities will be at [Murphy's on Main Street](#) for a free digital skills support day on Thursday, 29 February. Bring your tablet, laptop, or smartphone and get one-to-one support on whatever has you stumped!

Book Your Place

For more information and to book in for one-to-one help, please contact Neil at the Community Hub at 028 6625 1068.



FREE DIGITAL SKILLS SUPPORT

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To book, contact:

Neil at the Community Hub
on 028 6625 1068



**Supporting
Communities**
Empowering Society



Training

Volunteer Now Training Sessions in February and March 2024

Keeping Children Safe: Designated Officer Refresher Training

DATE: Tuesday 12th March 2024 at 10.00 am - 1.00 pm
ONLINE Standard Course from £30 +VAT



This is a half day's refresher training for Designated Officers who have already attended a full day's training. It covers:

- The role and responsibilities of the Designated Officer
- Health and Social Care Trusts structures and processes
- Issues and experiences around referrals and sharing information
- Recent developments in safeguarding children and young people.

Participants should ensure their basic awareness training is also refreshed every three years (or earlier if required).

Places are allocated on a first come, first served basis and are limited to a maximum of 5 per organisation.

Joining information will be sent out the day before the session.

[Click here for instructions on how to create a Training Account.](#)

Find out more and book your places here – <https://www.volunteernow.co.uk/training/courses-scheduled/>

Housing Rights Training Supporting people with mortgage debts



Voluntary and Community from £64 / £77; Public and Statutory from £115 / £138

Book now

Location; Online, Via Zoom

Date; 20th March 2024

Time; 10:00 am to 1:00 pm

Sustaining Tenancies in the Private Rented Sector; Help your clients address problems they face in sustaining their private rented tenancy.

What we will cover;

- support and protections available to private renters
- renters rights and responsibilities
- rent arrears and affordability
- changes in legislation affecting tenants
- Disrepair

Who should attend?

- housing advisers
- constituency office staff
- community / resident groups

For more information on Housing Rights training courses and events, go to; [Training and events | Housing Rights](#)

Funded by UK Government

Go Succeed Grow

Social Enterprise Business Support
Are you a social enterprise with ambitions to grow?

Free 1-1 mentoring support, workshops and grant to support growth plans
Visit www.go-succeed.com

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HCN Members Forum Training

Book your session:

Carrickfergus

Thursday 7 March 2024
10.15 am-1.15 pm
Carrickfergus Community Forum

Larne

Tuesday 12 March 2024
10.15 am-1.15 pm
NIHE Offices Conference Room, 1st floor

Ballymena

Tuesday 19 March 2024
10:15 am – 1:15 pm
NIHE Twickenham House
Rooms 3&4, 2nd floor



Bring your own device:
laptop/tablets/
mobile phone



Each session from 10:15am- 1.15pm



7 March 2024
12 March 2024
19 March 2024

Sign up now:

Marie-Louise McClarey
07840849449
marie-louise
@supportingcommunities.org

Carla Mulholland
carla@supportingcommunities.org



Mid and East Antrim Area HCN members, join us for training on the new online forums!
[Carla Mulholland](#), our digital inclusion officer, will help you register on the system and show you everything you need to know to participate in the HCN online.

Funding

Ireland's Toy Show Appeal Impact Grants Fund Open for Applications

The RTÉ Toy Show Appeal has opened applications for two funding rounds that will take place during the first quarter of 2024.

In the Impact Grants round, applications are invited from children's charities in Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland who are undertaking larger scale projects, up to a maximum grant of £50,000. The Community Grants round, meanwhile, invites applications from smaller, community-level groups for funding up to £10,000.

Impact Grant applications will be accepted from regional or national registered children's charities with an annual income of £500,000 or more. Collaboration between organisations is encouraged where impact is substantially increased and where collaboration enables shared learning across the sector.

Project proposals must focus on children between the ages of 0-18 and must align with at least one of the three thematic areas of need:

- Addressing Essential Needs - providing grants to

ensure children's basic needs are met, like warmth, security, safety, food and housing.

- Improving Health and Wellbeing - giving opportunities to improve the physical and mental health of children who are disadvantaged or have additional needs.
- Creativity and Play - giving opportunities for children to engage with creative and cultural activities that enhance their personal development.



Impact Grants of £25,000 to £50,000 are available. Projects must start in June 2024 and run for 12 months.

The deadline for applications is 22 March 2024 (1pm).

For more information, please visit [Available Grants - Community Foundation Northern Ireland \(communityfoundationni.org\)](https://communityfoundationni.org)

Grow Wild Invites Young People to Apply for £500 for a Nature Project

Grow Wild is once again offering grants of up to £500 to young people in the UK aged 14-25 to bring their nature project to life this summer.

Individuals or groups of up to six people can apply for a grant to support an innovative project idea to celebrate why UK native plants and/or fungi are so special.

Organisations supporting young people with their project must be established, relevant and charitable in purpose or not for profit. This includes voluntary, youth or community groups, education bodies, arts or environmental charities, local authorities, other council bodies or health authorities.

Grant recipients will receive:

- £500 grant for the project which can be used for anything needed such as materials, equipment, resources or helpful training.
- Support and online training from Grow Wild.
- Opportunities to connect with a community of young nature enthusiasts completing projects



across the UK.

- The chance to complete Kew's Young Environmental Leader Award designed to work alongside their Grow Wild project and recognise their achievements.

There is particular interest in applications from people who don't know much about UK native species.

Successful projects can be started in May 2024 and must be completed by the end of October 2024.

The deadline for applications is 19 March 2024 (15:00).

For more information, please visit [Youth Grants | Grow Wild | Kew](https://www.kew.org/young-environmental-leader-award)



Funding for Projects to Improve Financial Wellbeing for Low to Middle Income Individuals Across the UK



Abdrn Financial Fairness Trust, makes around 15 to 20 awards each year, and intends to award around £3 million annually to organisations undertaking charitable activities in the UK for projects focused on financial wellbeing. This includes voluntary organisations, think tanks, campaigning groups, research bodies and universities. Most funded projects will benefit residents from across the UK. However, the Trust is keen to support work in Scotland, including UK-wide work with a Scottish element.

There is no minimum or maximum size of grant. Grants typically range between £10,000 and £200,000, with most being between £50,000 and £120,000 in total. The funding may be spread over one, two or three years, and sometimes shorter periods, for example six months.

The funding is intended for strategic work, including policy work, campaigning and research that has the potential to improve financial wellbeing for those on low to middle incomes and on a national scale. Eligible projects must focus on one or more of the following areas:

- Income
 - Wages
 - Social Security
 - Pensions
 - Taxation

- Spending
 - Cost of living
 - Consumer spending
 - Gambling harms
 - Borrowing
 - Payment problems
 - Net zero
- Assets
 - Taxation
 - Retirement saving
 - General saving
 - Housing

Funding can be used for project costs and ongoing costs, including staff salaries and overheads. There are typically two application deadlines per year.

The next deadline for outline applications is 3 June 2024 (13:00).

For more information, please visit [Home | abrdn Financial Fairness Trust](#)

HRUK Announces Application Windows for Healthy Heart Grants

Heart Research UK (HRUK) will be offering grants of up to £15,000 again this year to registered charities and community interest companies (CICs) in the UK with an annual income of less than £1 million.

The funding is for new projects that work with communities to prevent heart disease, particularly for vulnerable and isolated groups of individuals (adults) who are at an increased risk of developing heart problems in the future. Projects that are likely to have a big impact and have considered novel ways to encourage people to look after their hearts and promote positive lifestyle changes are also sought.

Activities must have a primary focus on one or more of the following four risk factors for heart disease:

- Nutrition and Healthy Eating
- Physical Activity
- Smoking
- Alcohol

The funding can support salaries, overhead expenses/on costs and equipment that is necessary

for the successful delivery of the project which should be for at least three months but no more than 12 months.



The funding rotates around the UK at different times of the year.

The 2024 application windows are:

- Wales (27 March to 24 April)
- England North (8 May to 5 June)
- England South (12 June to 10 July)
- Scotland (17 July to 14 August)

Northern Ireland (21 August to 18 September)

This is a competitive grant scheme as there is a funding pot of £15,000 for each region.

For more information, please visit [Healthy Heart Grants - Heart Research UK](#)



Baring Foundation's New Funding Round Focuses on Creativity for Men with Mental Health Problems

Through its Arts and Mental Health Programme, the Baring Foundation is making available grants of between £20,000 and £50,000 for work seeking to achieve improved or equal representation of men joining mixed-gender creative activities, or for men-only creative projects.

The Baring Foundation has recently published a new report, *Creatively Minded Men*, which has helped inform their current funding round.

The purpose of the 2024 call is to fund activity to redress the under-representation of male participants in participatory creative activities in the UK for people with mental health problems and to learn what works in this regard.

There is particular interest in intersectionality, meaning that men are not a homogenous group but differ in a large variety of ways including through age, racial background, sexual orientation, disability status, and class and the way in which multiple discrimination and disadvantage impacts participation. Some men will define as Trans. Priority will be given to work that encourages men who are least likely otherwise to attend.

A total of £1 million is available for this round with grants of between £20,000 and £50,000. Projects should take place over at least one year, and preferably two or more years.

The Baring Foundation

To be

eligible, applicants must:

- Be an established arts organisation of any kind (including museums) operating in the UK. This could be a charity or a regulated social enterprise, such as a Community Interest Company.
- Have delivered creative opportunities to people with mental health problems for at least two years.
- Have had an annual income of over £75,000 for the last two years.

There will be two Zoom meetings to answer any questions about this funding round:

- 4 March (14:00 to 15:15)
- 19 March (14:00 to 15:15)

Registration is required and can be done via the Baring Foundation website.

Applications are currently being accepted with a deadline of 23 April 2024 (noon).

For more information, please visit [Current funding opportunities - The Baring Foundation](#)

Funding to Support Disabled Children and Children with Life-Limiting Conditions Across the UK

The True Colours Trust is offering grants of up to £10,000 for registered charitable organisations with an annual income of less than £350,000 across the United Kingdom. to deliver projects that work to improve the lives of disabled children and young people up to the age of 25, children and young people with life-limiting conditions, and their families.

The Small Grants Programme will provide funding for projects such as:

- Activities for disabled children, children with life-limiting conditions and their families.
- Activities which support siblings of disabled children or siblings of children with life-limiting conditions.
- Bereavement support for children and young people and families bereaved of a child.
- Family support/parent-led peer support for parents of disabled children
- Respite which supports the whole family.



Eligible costs include renovation work, upgrading, and additional equipment for hydrotherapy pools and multi-sensory rooms, minibuses, and specialised play equipment or access to play for disabled children, children with life-limiting conditions and their families.

Priority will be given to organisations that operate in areas of high deprivation.

Applications can be submitted at any time.

For more information, please visit [The True Colours Trust | UK small grants](#)



KFC Youth Foundation Accepting Applications for First 2024 Funding Round

The KFC Youth Foundation is offering grants of up to £2,500 to not-for-profit groups with a turnover of less than £300,000 and that have existed for at least 12 months to deliver a variety of projects that help young people create firm foundations through early intervention in communities near KFC restaurants across the UK.

Applications will be considered from registered charities, registered community interest companies, unincorporated clubs or associations or unregistered charities that:

- Benefit young people aged 11-25 years old.
- Support those in a position of economic disadvantage (including one of the following: care leavers, those experiencing homelessness, young carers, young parents, refugees, young people at risk of or with experience of the criminal justice system).
- Empower young people to fulfil their potential and build a positive future by providing spaces that

allow young people to feel safe and secure, helping them to unlock talent, build life skills, provide mentoring, and improve their chances to gain meaningful employment.

- Demonstrate positive results from their project within 12 months of KFC funding being received.



There is a two-stage application process. Groups must first submit an online Expression of Interest, including a two-minute video about their organisation, before being invited to submit a full application.

The deadline for application is 17 March 2024 (23:59).

For more information and to apply, please visit [The KFC Foundation Community Grants](#)

Climate Action Fund - New funding

We want to involve more people in climate action. And we want to inspire bold and exciting change.

From Wednesday 27 March 2024 you can apply for funding from the Climate Action Fund to help do this.

We'll fund projects that reach more people by either:

- linking climate action to the everyday lives and interests of local communities. And inspiring them to take action.
- influencing communities at a regional or national level. Like linking up groups across locations. Or a campaign that inspires change across one country, or the whole UK.

You should be in a partnership with

- a mix of organisations and sectors
- smaller groups that represent the people you're working with.

You do not have to be a climate or environment-focused organisation to apply

We want to reach people who are new to climate action by funding other types of organisations too. And by using people's everyday activities and interests as a starting point for climate action.

For example, your project might:

- involve people who have not had a say. For example because they are new to climate action. Or because they come from communities that experience poverty, disadvantage and discrimination
- introduce a climate perspective to a group who came together around another interest or activity



- test the best ways to engage different audiences in climate action
- spread an exciting local approach to climate action by sharing it nationally.

The minimum you can ask for is £500,000. We expect to fund most projects for between £1 million and £1.5 million over 3 to 5 years. We may fund some exceptional projects up to £3 million, and for up to 7 years. We aim to fund up to 25 projects.

For more information, you can attend one of our webinars:

- [Wednesday 27 March 2024 - register for webinar \(English, including British Sign Language\)](#)
- [Thursday 16 May 2024 – register for webinar \(English and Welsh\)](#)
- [Tuesday 21 May 2024 - register for webinar \(English\)](#)

Please visit the National Lottery Community Fund page for more information - [Awards from the UK Portfolio | The National Lottery Community Fund](#) (tnlcommunityfund.org.uk)



The Thomas Devlin Fund

The Thomas Devlin Fund has now re-opened for 2024 for applications from gifted young people, aged 15 to 19 years, who would like to study, or pursue a career, in creative arts, performing arts or music. The fund was set up in memory of Thomas Devlin who, at the age of 15, was murdered in an unprovoked attack in 2005.

The Fund provides an annual bursary scheme to support the development of applicants with a particular talent in their chosen career path of either music, performing arts or creative arts (including fine arts and literary art), to financially assist them to develop their skills and knowledge and help them move up to the next level in their journey.

Over the last seventeen years the bursaries have supported 110 young people in a range of diverse activities, including:

- Assisting an aspiring young artist to attend Arts College in London to pursue a career in Art & Design as well as Photography;
- Funding a young girl to attend a Prosthetics and Special Effects Makeup summer school for a once in a lifetime opportunity to work with a top Hollywood makeup artist;
- Assisting a local dancer hoping to work with the Birmingham Royal Ballet;
- Funding living costs in London so a recipient could take part in a summer National Youth Theatre production;
- Attending a 2-week residential cello course in Minnesota;
- Assisting a young girl to attend The Amy Geddis fiddle course in Scotland

In 2024, the Fund will offer grants of up to £1,750 to young people, aged between 15-19, who would like to study or pursue a career in any one of the 3 categories of creative arts, performing arts, and music.

The Fund would particularly welcome innovative creative arts projects (including fine arts and literary

art).

Fund Aims:

The aim of the Fund's bursary scheme is to fund unique opportunities and activities above and beyond the ordinary, that will stimulate, encourage and inspire the young beneficiaries to enhance their prospects for their future and succeed in their particular field. We are particularly interested in supporting young people who may not have access to such opportunities.

The Fund will not support:

- Equipment costs
- Formal tuition fees
- Mobile app design/development or games design/development

You will need to demonstrate the following, within the application form:

- Prospect for development of your potential
- Your need for financial assistance – *please note that all personal information provided around your specific need will remain confidential and will require to be evidenced by way of a reference from your teacher/tutor/youth or support worker. We strongly encourage your referee to support your application and clearly articulate why you should receive a bursary.
- How the award will make a difference to your own life and to others in your community.

The application form should be completed by both yourself and your teacher/tutor/youth or support worker and returned to the Community Foundation by the closing date: **Monday 25th March 2024 at 1:00pm.**

Please note that incomplete or late applications will not be accepted.

For more information and to apply, please visit [The Thomas Devlin Fund - Community Foundation Northern Ireland \(communityfoundationni.org\)](https://www.communityfoundationni.org)



Kellogg's School Breakfast Clubs Grants Programme Reopens for 2024

Kellogg's, in partnership with Forever Manchester, is offering grants of up to £1,000 to schools across the UK to help fund breakfast clubs aimed at pupils between reception class and year 13 to ensure that those who need it most receive a morning meal.

Priority will be given to schools that either:

- Have 35% and above of children eligible for pupil premium funding (for England) and eligible for free school meals (Northern Ireland, Scotland, and Wales); or
- Are based in an area which is classified as falling in the 10% of most deprived areas according to the

Index of Multiple Deprivation.

Only one grant per school in each academic year is available. A limited number of grants are available, and the fund may close at short notice if oversubscribed.

Applications can be submitted at any time.

For more information, please visit [Grants For Schools | Kellogg's \(kelloggs.co.uk\)](https://www.kelloggs.co.uk)



Hope for Youth NI

The trustees award grants on an annual basis. Currently:

- They will provide grants up to a maximum of £5000, although they reserve the discretion to award a larger sum in exceptional circumstances.
- Applicants must be able to demonstrate a cross community emphasis e.g. a focus on improving community integration in regard to cultural, ethnic or religious diversity and all applications must include a statement of accounts, including details of income and expenditure.
- Each application is considered on its merits. Therefore, successful applicants can apply for a grant in future years and applicants who have been unsuccessful can apply again immediately.

The Criteria for a Grant

The Hope for Youth criteria for awarding grants are listed below:

Hope for Youth supports organisations demonstrating the following:

- Projects that engage with young people in Northern Ireland normally aged 11 to 18.
- Projects that foster community integration.
- Projects that focus on outdoor activities, sport, music, dance, drama and the arts.
- Projects that promote personal or team development.

Hope for Youth will give priority to:

- Projects based in recognised areas of socioeconomic deprivation.
- Projects where the benefits or effects on the communities and individuals can be measured.
- Projects that can demonstrate sustainable benefit.
- Longer-term projects i.e. held over a number of months, where ongoing community development and improved community relationships can be realised.
- Projects that are small/locally based and those that are “start-ups”.
- Projects that can match fund from other sources.

Hope for Youth regrets that it cannot support:

- Funding to cover the core salaries of an organization, but it will consider funding the staff costs associated with the delivery of a project.
- Funding to cover transport, kit and equipment unless it is an essential part of a wider sustainable project.
- Applications from individuals.
- Grants to cover capital building costs
- Grants to cover the provision of utilities and running costs.
- Grants for publications or research (unless the output of the project is a result of young people's collaborative work, such as a book of artwork).
- Projects taking place outside of the United Kingdom or the Republic of Ireland (e.g. foreign travel or expeditions or the preparation for a trip).



- The core work of statutory organisations.
- Other established fund raising charities.

The Requirement to Provide Publicity Material

Hope for Youth's ability to award grants is wholly dependent on its ability to generate funds. One of the best ways to encourage potential donors to provide funds for the charity is to demonstrate the positive impact that grants have made previously. Therefore, a stipulation that Hope for Youth will make when offering a grant is the requirement for the applicant to be agreeable to provide suitable material that can be used to publicise the activities that the grant supports.

The Timetable for Applications

The closing date for an application for a grant is 31st July and successful bids will be allocated funding in the following calendar year. Applications can be made at any time during the year and early applications are encouraged as this allows time for the trustees to seek additional information from the organisation, should this be necessary. There are five stages and the timetable runs as follows:

• Stage 1 – By 31st July

Applications for grants in the following calendar year must be received by 31st July at the latest. Early applications are encouraged.

• Stage 2 – Between August to January (the following year).

Once the application has been screened to confirm that it meets the charity's criteria for a grant, the applicant will be visited by a Hope for Youth Northern Ireland trustee or adviser.

• Stage 3 – January to February (the following year).

Applicants will normally be advised by the end of February if they have been selected to receive a grant. Grants will be made in two tranches and the first tranche will usually be handed over in March/April. More details surrounding the payment of grants is covered below.

• Stage 4 – March/April onwards.

When a project has started, a Hope for Youth Northern Ireland trustee or adviser will visit the organisation to assess how the project is progressing. The second tranche of the award will be made following this visit.

• Stage 5 – At the conclusion of the project.

When the project is completed, the applicant will be requested to provide a short report covering the project's results and expenditure.

For more information and to apply, please visit [Grant Applications — Hope For Youth NI](#)



National Lottery Community Fund - Sustainable Community Buildings Programme (Northern Ireland)

Grants are available for voluntary and community organisations in Northern Ireland to support them in making their buildings more energy efficient, helping to save money on bills.

Funding body: National Lottery Community Fund - Northern Ireland

Maximum value: £ 50,000

Application deadline: 20th March 2024

Background

The Sustainable Community Buildings programme is provided and administered in Northern Ireland by the National Lottery Community Fund.

Objectives of Fund

The funding is intended to support organisations with reducing their carbon footprint, creating an environment plan, and improving the environmental performance of their community buildings.

Value Notes

Grants of up to £50,000 are available. Organisations that apply to the programme will also take part in free carbon literacy training delivered by Business in the Community, which will help them to look at ways to reduce their carbon footprint. Action Renewables will also support organisations to write and implement an environmental plan to consider steps to improve sustainability and cut costs.

Who Can Apply

Applications will be accepted from voluntary and community organisations with an annual income of less than £500,000. This includes:

- Registered charities.
- Unregistered voluntary or community organisations with a governing document, e.g. a constitution.
- Not-for-profit companies (company limited by guarantee).
- Charitable Incorporated Organisations (CIO or SCIO).
- Community Interest Companies (CIC).

To be eligible, applicants must:

- Have at least two board or committee members who are not related.
- Have a bank account in the organisation's name.

The applicant's community building must meet the following criteria:

- The building must have been built before 2005.
- The organisation must own their building or have an unbreakable lease for at least six years.
- The building must be open and used, evidenced by the number of people who use the building and its opening hours.
- The organisation must not be solely focused on delivering sports activities, or affiliated with a governing body of sport (recognised by Sport

Northern Ireland).

- The building must not already have solar panels.



Location: Northern Ireland

Restrictions

The following are not eligible for funding:

- Anything that is not listed on the environment plan that the applicant creates together with a sustainability expert.
- Revenue costs for the organisation, e.g. salaries or running costs.
- Activities or events.
- Sports clubs that are affiliated with a governing body of sport (recognised by Sport Northern Ireland) - for example, the Gaelic Athletic Association (GAA), Ulster Rugby and Irish Football Association.
- Individuals.
- Sole traders.
- Faith or religious institutions - such as churches, synagogues and mosques. However, faith-based groups that are working in a community setting are eligible.
- Organisations based outside Northern Ireland.
- Companies that can pay profits to directors, shareholders or members (including Companies Limited by Shares).
- Statutory organisations.
- Schools.
- Organisations applying to more than one National Lottery Community Fund programme for the same project over the same period.
- One organisation applying on behalf of another.
- Applications written on behalf of an organisation by private businesses or consultants.

Eligible Expenditure

Grants may be used for **capital funding only**.

Upon completing carbon literacy training and creating an environment plan, organisations invited to apply for funding to improve their building's environmental performance may use grants to support costs including:

- Solar panels.
- Battery storage.
- Ground-source heat pumps.
- Energy efficient lighting.
- New insulation.
- Energy-efficient windows and doors.

How To Apply

The Sustainable Community Buildings programme will open in stages across Northern Ireland.

In the first application period from 7



February 2024 to 20 March 2024, applications will be accepted from organisations with community buildings located in the following council areas:

- Ards and North Down Borough Council
- Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council
- Mid Ulster District Council
- Newry, Mourne and Down District Council

In the second application period from 11 September 2024 to 23 October 2024, applications will be accepted from organisations with community buildings located in the following council areas:

- Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council
- Derry City and Strabane District Council
- Fermanagh and Omagh District Council
- Mid and East Antrim Borough Council

In the third application period from 8 January 2025 to 19 February 2025, applications will be accepted from organisations with community buildings located in the following council areas:

- Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council
- Belfast City Council
- Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council

For all applicants, there is a two-stage application process:

- Stage 1: submit an Expression of Interest - National Lottery Community Fund aims to give

- applicants a decision in around six weeks. If successful, applicants will be invited to Stage 2.
- Stage 2: full application for funding.

Organisations successful at stage one will be asked to sign up to carbon literacy training. National Lottery Community Fund will also ask organisations to work with a sustainability expert to create an environment plan for their organisation.

Guidance notes and the online Expression of Interest form can be found on the National Lottery Community Fund website.

Useful links

National Lottery Community Fund - Sustainable Community Buildings Programme
[Sustainable Community Buildings | The National Lottery Community Fund \(nlcommunityfund.org.uk\)](https://www.nlcommunityfund.org.uk)

Deadline - First Application Period

Application start date: 7th February 2024
 Application end date: 20th March 2024
 Frequency: Key Deadline

This application period is for organisations with community buildings located in the following council areas:

- Ards and North Down Borough Council
- Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council
- Mid Ulster District Council
- Newry, Mourne and Down District Council

Research Programme for Social Care (RPSC)

NIHR are just about to launch their second Research Programme for Social Care (RPSC) Call, offering funding for both adult and children's social care research. RPSC invites applications from higher education institutions, charities, Local Authorities and relevant third sector organisations in all four nations of the United Kingdom.

NIHR is running an online Research Information Event on **04 April 2024, 10-12 BST** How to learn more about NIHR's Research Programme for Social Care, and how to apply for Call 2. You can sign up to this event here: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/rpsc-call-2-researcher-information-event-tickets-852747720387?aff=oddtcreator>

NIHR's Research Programme for Social

NIHR | National Institute for Health and Care Research

Care is once again offering funding for research proposals that will generate evidence to improve, expand and strengthen the way that adult and children's social care is delivered for people - across all four nations of the United Kingdom - who draw on social care support and services, carers, and the public.

The Call opens on **March 6, 2024**. Apply online by **June 26, 2024**.

For more information about RPSC and on how to apply, please visit: <https://www.nihr.ac.uk/explore-nihr/funding-programmes/research-programme-for-social-care.htm>