

6th September 2023

# E-Zine



**Supporting  
Communities**  
Empowering Society

Welcome to Supporting Communities 216th 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

## Digital Voice is Coming to a Town Near You

**Come and speak to BT about their new home phone service, Digital Voice**

Landlines in the UK are going digital by 2025.

Although the landline isn't going away, BT know that you might have questions or would like to know more about this industry-wide change.

Throughout September, BT will be heading to towns and cities across the Northern Ireland where BT will have a team on hand who can tell you what Digital Voice is, why the change is necessary and what it means for you.

You don't have to pre-book, just turn up.

Where and when:

### Townhall events:

19<sup>th</sup> September - Girdwood Community Hub, 10 Girdwood Avenue, Belfast, Antrim BT14 6EG

26<sup>th</sup> September - Foyle Arena, 2 Limvady Road, Derry/Londonderry, BT47 6JY

### Pop Up events on 20<sup>th</sup> September 2023:

Enniskillen Library, Halls Ln, Enniskillen BT74 7DR

Lisburn City library, 23 Linenhall St, Antrim, Lisburn BT28 1FJ

Coleraine Library, Queen St, Coleraine BT52 1BE

### Pop Up events on 27<sup>th</sup> September 2023

Ballymena Central library, 5 Pat's Brae, Ballymena, Antrim, BT43 5AX

Newry City Library, 79 Hill St, Newry BT34 1DG

Portadown Library, Church St, Portadown BT62 3LQ

### The BT Truck locations in September from 9 am to 5 pm on:

1st-4th for 4 days at Cityside Retail & Leisure Park, 100-150 York Street Belfast BT15 1WA

5th-6th for 2 days at The Junction Retail Park, 111 Ballymena Road, Antrim BT41 4LL

7th-8th for 2 days at Bloomfield Retail Park, South Circular Road, Bangor, BT19 7HB

9th-10th for 2 days at Connswater Shopping Centre, Bloomfield Ave, A20, Belfast, BT5 5LP

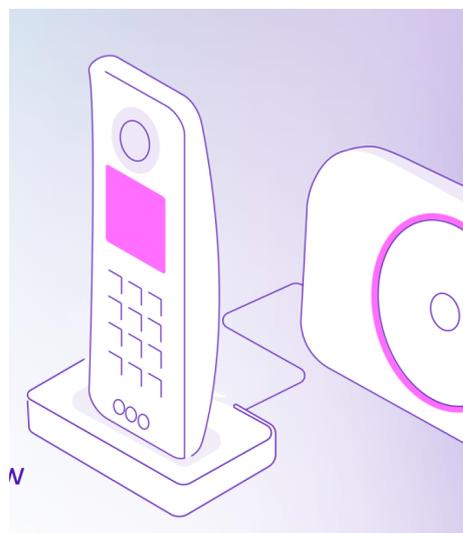
11th-12th for 2 days at The Boulevard, Cascum Road Outlet Park, Banbridge BT32 4LF

13th-16th for 4 days at Sprucefield Retail Park, Hillsborough Road, Lisburn, BT27 5UQ

17th-19th for 3 days at Omagh Town Centre, 1 Omagh Street, Market Square, Omagh BT78 7EE

20th-22nd for 3 days at Lisnagelvin Shopping Centre, Lisnagelvin Road, Limavady BT47 6DF

23rd-24th for 2 days at Junction Leisure & Retail Park, 111 Ballymena Road, Antrim BT41 4LL



## Tackling Health Inequality through Elevate's Mentoring Programme



*Lisa and Nuala with some of the groups they supported through the Elevate Programme*

Supporting Communities was delighted to be a part of the Community Development & Health Network's (CHDN) Elevate programme for 2022-2023, providing mentoring support to organisations tackling health inequalities.

Elevate is a support programme for the community, voluntary and public sectors. It provides opportunities for the development of skills, knowledge and expertise in community development as a way to tackle health inequalities. The Public Health Agency provides the funding for Elevate through the Transformation Work Stream.

Our CDOs, Nuala Kildunne and Lisa Clarke, worked closely with CDHN to support three organisations: Fresh Minds Education, Antrim & Newtownabbey Seniors Forum, and The Parent Rooms. Each group received funding to support them in delivering their projects and to attend mentoring sessions with us.

The Antrim & Newtownabbey Seniors Forum's project focused on empowering people over 50 throughout the borough. They held a series of workshops designed to build skills, connections and sustainability by addressing the health inequalities, current issues and needs of older people. They also worked to raise the organisation's profile by building a database of contacts to get important information and opportunities out to a greater number of seniors in the area.

Fresh Minds developed a user collective of 'experts by experience' - those affected by poor mental health, emotional distress, loss or bereavement in the community. Through their user collective, they worked with three target groups, children, families, and professionals, over a six-month programme. The project also explored diversifying the organisation's income through corporate sponsorship by building an understanding and skillset around developing a business case and package to approach potential partners. We helped to identify gaps in their network



**Community  
Development  
Capacity Building  
Programme**

**Working together to build  
healthier communities**

and linked them with other organisations and forums that could help.

Our third group, The Parent Rooms, addressed health inequalities for local parents experiencing poor mental health exacerbated by financial difficulties. It allowed 20 parents to access a 12-week mental health recovery programme called 'Space 4 Me' and 20 children (aged three and under) to attend 'Space 4 Me too', an early intervention program for children more likely to face health inequalities. 'Space 4 Me' responded to self-identified group needs and focused on recovery and sustaining improved health and development for parents and their children.



*Lisa Clarke (right) with Patricia Harte from CDHN and Chloe McVey from Parent Rooms*

Our mentoring sessions helped these groups to develop individual action plans and identify ways that Supporting Communities could support their growth, such as networking opportunities, signposting, engagement with local forums and networks and support in reaching 'hard-to-reach' clients.

The Elevate Programme for 2022-23 has now ended, but the connection and support from Supporting Communities will continue!

"It has been a privilege to mentor these groups," said Lisa Clarke. "It's wonderful to share our expertise with groups doing such amazing work and to see the difference they make for their communities."

The CDHN Elevate programme for 2023-2024 is now open for new applications. It closes on Monday, 28 August 2023.

Find out more and apply here: [Elevate Application Form 2023 2024 - Elevate NI](#)

## Departments provide funding to enhance council facilities for people with disabilities

**Council facilities are to benefit from a £714,000 investment aimed at making them more inclusive for people with disabilities.**

The Access and Inclusion Programme, funded by the Department for Communities (DfC) and the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA), has been running since 2018 and has enhanced services at dozens of public venues across the country.

The Department for Communities has secured a capital budget of £414,000 for the 2023/24 programme, with up to a further £300,000 available from DAERA for projects specifically located in rural areas.

Department for Communities Permanent Secretary Colum Boyle said:

“Working in partnership with the disability sector, DAERA, local councils and the NI Museums Council (NIMC), the Department’s capital grant programme promotes a more inclusive society by improving accessibility at arts, cultural and active recreation venues for people with disabilities.



“Over the past five years, we have made a real and positive difference to the everyday lives of people with disabilities, investing £5 million to enhance facilities at around 260 venues across Northern Ireland.”

DAERA Permanent Secretary Katrina Godfrey said:

“DAERA, through the Tackling Rural Poverty and Social Isolation (TRPSI) Programme, continues to work closely with other departments, agencies and councils to address access and isolation issues in rural areas. The Access and Inclusion Programme is an excellent example of how this collaborative working is promoting a more inclusive society by improving accessibility to facilities in rural areas.”

Recently supported projects include a sensory hub in Antrim and Newtownabbey Council area, inclusive swim facilities in Armagh, Craigavon & Banbridge Council area, Changing Places facility in Causeway Coast and Glens Council area and digital visual and audio guided tours at cultural venues in Derry City and Strabane Council area.

## Take Care with Oxygen

There is an increased risk of fire and explosion in the home where oxygen therapy equipment has been prescribed to assist people with breathing difficulties.

Oxygen, when used correctly, is safe and effective. However, if used incorrectly the consequences are significant, even fatal. A small increase in the concentration of oxygen in the air produces a potentially dangerous environment. It becomes easier to start a fire, which will then burn hotter and more fiercely than in normal air.

An oxygen enriched atmosphere is often the result of:

- leaks from damaged or poorly maintained hoses, pipes or valves; leaks from poor connections;
- opening valves accidentally or deliberately;
- not closing valves properly;
- poor ventilation where oxygen is being used; or
- misuse, ie, cooling or refreshing the air in confined spaces.

Follow these safety tips to reduce the risk of fire:

- Follow the oxygen supplier guidance.
- Never smoke a cigarette or use an electronic cigarette whilst on oxygen therapy or close to a patient using oxygen equipment.



**Northern Ireland  
Fire & Rescue Service**

- Never charge electronic cigarettes around oxygen therapy equipment.
- Do not store or use oxygen equipment near sources of heat; it is recommended that oxygen should be kept at a minimum of 3 metres from any open flame, including gas and electric cookers.
- Don't use flammable products, such as petroleum based creams near oxygen equipment.
- Turn off when not in use.
- Ensure equipment is kept clean and maintained. Report faults immediately.
- Store oxygen in a dry, well ventilated area.

If you have any concerns, please call your supplier. NEVER attempt to repair any fault or modify your oxygen equipment.

For further information phone NIFRS HQ 028 9266 4221 or visit [www.nifrs.org](http://www.nifrs.org)

## Kilcooley Social Supermarket supporting families

**A Social Supermarket scheme, which sells heavily discounted food and fresh produce to families in the Kilcooley Estate in Bangor, is helping over 40 local families facing food insecurity. Kilcooley Women's Centre, who delivers the service, now has a dedicated Project Worker funded by the Housing Executive's Sustaining Tenancies programme. This fund supports a range of projects which help tenants create more resilient and sustainable tenancies.**

Emma Geddis, Manager of the Sustaining Tenancies Funding Programme at the Housing Executive, said: "Our Sustaining Tenancies fund has awarded the centre £50,000 to provide it with a dedicated Project Worker for the next two years. This Project Worker supports tenants and can refer them to a number of initiatives run by Kilcooley Women's Centre. One of these is the centre's fantastic Social Supermarket, Kilcooley Pantry.

"Social Supermarkets are great initiatives which combine a discount food store with additional, complimentary, services aimed at people with debt management, legal and social welfare issues. "These services form part of the centre's Star Project and include money management and benefit advice clinics, mental health support initiatives, wellbeing clubs and parenting programmes."

Sarah Collyer, Training and Education Manager at Kilcooley Women's Centre, added: "After researching many different models of food provision we decided the model of a Social Supermarket afforded beneficiaries more dignity, a greater chance of moving to independent food support and gave the centre the ability to provide wraparound support.

"Members apply to the scheme and complete an initial assessment of needs. They then have an opportunity to talk through the issues that have led to the need for food support. This allows us to create an action plan and offer people the appropriate support. One of the barriers people were facing in accessing support was that they did not want to be seen to be using 'charity'.

"Our Social Supermarket addresses this by allowing participants to pay a small nominal weekly fee, giving them an allowance equivalent to the cost of a weekly shop. They therefore feel they are being more proactive in helping themselves. Another issue was



*The Housing Executive's Tanya Johnston, Emma Geddis and Steven McBurney with Sarah Collyer from Kilcooley Women's Centre*

choice and people wanted to be able to choose what food they could avail of.

"Kilcooley Pantry is set out like a shop providing a simulated shopping experience. Clients can choose at leisure from the shelves with a good level of choice across, food, cleaning, and personal care products. There are no prices in the supermarket taking monetary pressure out of the shopping experience. Dignity was a main factor in the decision to run with this model. People have said they feel ashamed or embarrassed to be in a position of need. As such, all our visitors on the scheme are greeted with tea and coffee and treated with respect and kindness. Shopping times and days are set to allow for privacy and our shopping bags are unbranded to avoid embarrassment.

"Our Social Supermarket has proved to be a hub of activity and we have received excellent feedback from the community.

"This vital service has been made possible thanks to the Housing Executive's generous funding towards a Project Worker."

## Celebrating the outstanding work of local volunteer groups across the UK



**The King's Award for Voluntary Service**

Created in 2002 to celebrate Queen Elizabeth II's Golden Jubilee and previously known as The Queen's Award for Voluntary Service (QAVS), the Award has been shining a light on the fantastic work of voluntary groups from across the UK for many years.

Every day, millions of people across the UK are making a difference by volunteering. Each year, outstanding examples of this work are celebrated through the King's Award for Voluntary Service (KAVS).

Equivalent to an MBE, KAVS is the highest Award given to local voluntary groups in the UK, and they are awarded for life.

If you know of a fantastic volunteer group and would like to find out more about nominating them for a KAVS, please go to [kavs.dcms.gov.uk](https://kavs.dcms.gov.uk). Nominations for the 2024 awards will be accepted until 15 September 2023.

# Consultations

## Future Operational Protocol to Assess the Impacts of Air Pollution on the Natural Environment - A Call for Evidence

Department for Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs Ammonia and Nutrients Policy Branch  
[Future Operational Protocol to Assess the Impacts of Air Pollution on the Natural Environment - A Call for Evidence | Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs \(daera-ni.gov.uk\)](#)

Closing date; 15<sup>th</sup> September 2023

## Provision of Free Period Products

The Executive Office Equality, Policy & Legislation Team  
[Provision of Free Period Products: Public Consultation - NI Direct - Citizen Space](#)

Closing date 18<sup>th</sup> September 2023

## Survey: Policing of protests in NI

Rights and Security International  
[Policing of protests in Northern Ireland Survey \(surveymonkey.co.uk\)](#)

Closing date; 15<sup>th</sup> September 2023

## Changes to the Discretionary Support Scheme

Department for Communities  
[Consultation on changes to the Discretionary Support Scheme | Department for Communities \(communities-ni.gov.uk\)](#)

Closing date; 25<sup>th</sup> September 2023

## All-Island Strategic Rail Review - Strategic Environmental Assessment and Draft Report

Department for Infrastructure  
[All-Island Strategic Rail Review - Strategic Environmental Assessment and Draft Report | Department for Infrastructure \(infrastructure-ni.gov.uk\)](#)

Closing date; 29<sup>th</sup> September 2023

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## The Belfast Agenda: Draft Strategic Plan 2023 – 2027



In 2021, we began the process of facilitating a review of the city's community plan, the Belfast Agenda. In addition to the legislative requirement to review the community plan, faced with the legacy of the Covid-19 pandemic and an on-going cost of living crisis, there has been a need to refocus on what partners can do collectively to make Belfast “a great place to live and work for everyone.”

Following extensive engagement with residents, the community and voluntary sector, statutory and non-statutory bodies including the private sector, we are pleased to be able to present a refreshed Belfast Agenda which outlines the city's strategic direction from 2023-2027.

In response to feedback from our first community plan, we have also published a suite of action plans produced by partners with the intention that these will be updated annually and help track progress.

### Have Your Say

Before the Community Planning Partnership signs off on the new Belfast Agenda, we are consulting with all stakeholders to ensure there is agreement that the strategy and actions focus on the right things and deliver the right outcomes for the people they are intended to benefit.

We are now pleased to present a new draft Belfast Agenda for formal consultation. Please fill in our short survey and tell us what you think of the plan, our priorities and the proposed actions.

The consultation will run until 2 October 2023.

We are also consulting on our draft Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA), which considers any equality and good relations implications, and a draft rural needs impact assessment. This linked consultation will run until 30 October 2023.

At the end of the consultation period, we will update the Belfast Agenda to take account of what we've heard and publish the document. However, you will still have the opportunity to get involved and have your say at different stages over the next year as we begin to develop and implement the Belfast Agenda actions. To stay up to date with what's happening with the Belfast Agenda, please 'follow' and sign up for updates using the link on this page.

[The Belfast Agenda: Draft Strategic Plan 2023 – 2027](#)

You do not have to sign in or register on our Your Say Belfast platform to take part. However, if you are a registered user, you must sign out of Your Say Belfast account so that your response is anonymous. Please be aware, that if you are signed into Your Say Belfast, your email and site registration details can be linked to this survey. The survey can be accessed on the link below.

[The Belfast Agenda: Draft Strategic Plan 2023 – 2027 | Your say Belfast \(belfastcity.gov.uk\)](#)

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# Policy and Practice Focus

## Report identifies housing cost as key contributor to cost of living crisis in Northern Ireland



**The Centre for Progressive Policy (CPP) published its report 'The cost of living crisis across the devolved nations: How rising costs are hitting different places across Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. The Report was launched in July 2023. Read an analysis of this Report by Housing Rights.**

Last week The Centre for Progressive Policy (CPP) published its report '[The cost of living crisis across the devolved nations: How rising costs are hitting different places across Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.](#)'

Housing Rights welcome this report which highlights the scale of the crisis in Northern Ireland, casting a much-needed light on the struggles of people coping with the financial pressures of what is a generational cost of living crisis.

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The report focuses on three key aspects to illustrate the impact of the cost of living crisis is having on people in each of the devolved nations:

- fuel poverty;
- food insecurity; and
- housing costs.

Housing Rights will specifically focus on the housing related issues.

### **The cost of a lack of government**

Housing Rights prefaces this article with a call for a Northern Ireland Executive to be established without delay. The CPP Report details many negative impacts the cost of living crisis has had on people in Northern Ireland, specifically highlighting Northern Ireland as the only UK nation to have lacked a proper policy response to the cost of living crisis. The negative impact this has had on society in Northern Ireland is manifold. The inability to build resilience within Northern Ireland's economy and its communities, to efficiently gather data and to make agile policy decisions to target those most in need has directly adversely impacted upon the most vulnerable.

It's clear the issues highlighted in this report could have been better foreseen and prepared for had an Executive been in place, offering opportunities to build resilience and soften the blow of the crisis. It's also clear that a regional government in Northern Ireland would be best placed to provide responsive and targeted policy initiatives to address the cost of living crisis and help protect people from the worst impacts of the crisis.

### **A need for robust data**

Housing Rights is disappointed that Northern Ireland has proven to be more difficult to meticulously

examine than Scotland or Wales. The lack of data in comparison with the other devolved nations is stark. This makes it hard for policy makers to effectively identify and target those most in need. With this in mind, Housing Rights specifically welcome [Recommendation 2 & 3](#) of the CPP Report and calls on any future NI Executive to adopt these as actions at the earliest possible juncture. It is vitally important that policy decisions are made using a clear and robust evidence base to ensure that resources are targeted to best meet the needs of our most vulnerable people.

### **Northern Ireland's Private Rental Market and impact on private tenants**

As Housing Rights has continually highlighted in recent months, the Report cites the overheating of Northern Ireland's Private Rental Market as a major contributor to the cost of living crisis. Between March 2022 – March 2023, [rent prices in Northern Ireland rose by 10%](#). By comparison, Scotland saw the second highest rise of the four devolved nations with a rise of 5.1%. Of all the local authorities in Northern Ireland, only Derry City and Strabane, and Mid Ulster saw rental prices increase by less than 5%.

It is Housing Rights' view that this trend is unlikely to reverse in the near future. The Private Rental Sector (PRS) in Northern Ireland is shrinking as a percentage of market share, down from [14% in 2020-21](#) to [13% in 2021-22](#). This reduction in supply may be in part influenced by rising interest rates, with some landlords deciding to sell. House prices in Northern Ireland have not seen a drop comparable to England, Scotland and Wales, and [most landlords in Northern Ireland have small portfolios of only one or two properties](#). If landlords have mortgages on these properties, the interest rate rises may have impacted on their income. Amid this, [demand has never been stronger according to rental agents, outstripping supply 10/1](#). There has also been evidence of rent bidding. These factors all contribute to continued price rises, further squeezing already struggling private renters in this cost of living crisis.

To add some insight into these struggles, in February 2023, [Renter's Voice](#), a project supported by Housing Rights for people renting from a private landlord or a letting agent, [conducted a survey of private tenants in Northern Ireland regarding the impact of the cost of living crisis on their rental situation](#).

Results from the 107 survey respondents showed that:

- 47% reported spending 40% or more of their income on rent;
- 54% reported they cannot currently afford to cover all of their household expenses; and
- Of those who could afford to cover their household expenses, 74% said they prioritised paying rent. This was followed by electricity at 41% and heating at 36%. This is particularly pertinent as fuel poverty is also highlighted in the CPP report as a significant contributor to the cost of living crisis.

Perhaps the most stark finding from Renters Voice survey, is that 44% of respondents believe that if the current cost of living crisis continues, renting in the current market will become unsustainable. It is clear that private renters are being squeezed to a perhaps unprecedented extent and that bold policy decisions need to be taken to address this.

### **Impact on mortgage owners**

The CPP report acknowledges a lack of comprehensive local data on mortgage vulnerability as a major hurdle to drawing detailed findings on the impact of the cost of living crisis on mortgage holders in Northern Ireland.

This is a frustration shared by Housing Rights. We have commissioned research into levels of mortgage vulnerability in Northern Ireland. We will share the findings in due course, as well as policy recommendations arising from the research.

# Publications

## Putting the US in hoUSing.

This research paper was commissioned to help us better understand work already happening to support people to be involved in decisions made about housing and homelessness.

At Housing Rights we are deeply committed to ensuring that people with lived experience of housing problems and homelessness are meaningfully involved in the decisions government makes.

We commissioned [Involve](#) to carry out research to better understand work already happening in Northern Ireland and further afield to support people to be involved in decisions made about housing and homelessness.



It was also intended to shine a light on those groups whose voices are not being heard. And to provide insights about how collectively we in the housing and homelessness sector and in government, can improve our practice in the area.

The research was supported by an Advisory Group with representation from the Northern Ireland Housing Executive and the Department for Communities.

Links to the three papers are found below;

- [involve-research.pdf \(housingrights.org.uk\)](#)
- [participation-policy-paper-final-pdf.pdf \(housingrights.org.uk\)](#)
- [Putting the 'Us' in HoUSing \(housingrights.org.uk\)](#)

## Live Here Love Here is Northern Ireland's largest civic pride programme



It's about loving where you live... and feeling empowered to take positive environmental action. Examples include: creating a community vegetable patch, organising a beach clean or starting up a tool swap scheme.

Create your profile [here](#) and join us in doing something positive for your community today.

Sign up for the e-bulletin here; [Live Here Love Here - Show your support](#)



Catch up on what's been happening at the Board in [Policing Matters July 2023 | Northern Ireland Policing Board \(nipolicingboard.org.uk\)](#) and the Chief Constable's Report to the Policing Board June 2023 is available at; [chief-constables-report-northern-ireland-policing-board 0.pdf \(nipolicingboard.org.uk\)](#)



The Environmental news bulletin is available at [ENRA-March-2023.pdf \(nienvironmentlink.org\)](#). 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 \(pcsp.org\)](#)



Each month the Community Relations Council release an e-Bulletin which contains news about CRC funded groups, as well as events and activities happening around Northern Ireland for peacebuilding and good community relations.

To sign up, go to; [NI Community Relations Council \(list-manage.com\)](#)



Welcome to the latest issue of Signpost full of updated news for September 2023 with all the latest updates on information and activities relevant to older people and organisations supporting older people this month. [age-ni-signpost-express-september-2023.pdf \(ageuk.org.uk\)](#)

# Events



## LGNI Network Meeting's Register Now!

LGNI have set the dates for their next round of intergenerational network meetings! To make the most of our staffing capacity and as this approach worked well last time we are combining Council areas and running 4 meetings in total.

LGNI networks membership has steadily increased to over 818 members and we get our enthusiasm from the amazing intergenerational connections these local Intergenerational Champions develop in their communities. If you are interested in bringing generations together and aren't signed up to our network you can do so by [Signing Up Here!](#)

Everyone interested in everything intergenerational is welcome to attend so check out how to register for your local area Zoom meeting from the list below. Come along and catchup on the latest LGNI news, training opportunities, Christmas Small Grants, Positive Ageing Month opportunities and hear from local intergenerational champions!

It's simple - just check out our meeting dates below and 'click' on the 'register to attend' link below! We would love to hear all about your intergenerational activities so please let us know if you would like a speaker slot!

**Mid Ulster, Armagh Banbridge Craigavon & Newry Mourne & Down 19th September 10:30am-12pm**  
[Register to attend](#)

**Antrim Newtownabbey & Mid & East Antrim 20th September 1:30pm - 3pm**  
[Register to attend](#)

**Ards & North Down, Belfast & Lisburn Castlereagh 21st September 10:30am -12pm**  
[Register to attend](#)

**Derry Strabane, Fermanagh & Omagh & Causeway Coast & Glens 21st September 1:30pm-3pm**  
[Register to Attend](#)

A large pink graphic with a white speech bubble. The speech bubble contains the text: "LGNI Network Meeting Dates released! Register to attend YOUR area! LGNI news, training opportunities, Christmas Funding, Positive Ageing Month &amp; local stories/updates!". Below the speech bubble is the website address "www.linkinggenerationsni.com". To the left of the speech bubble is the LGNI logo and a circular image of a child and an elderly person. At the bottom of the graphic is a row of colorful cartoon characters representing different generations.

## Let's Talk IRL: Meeting the Needs of Children From Diverse Backgrounds



Tuesday 3rd October 2023 at 7.00pm

230b Belmont Road, Belfast, BT4 2AW

Within Barnardo's Fostering NI service, 25% of the children in our care come from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic backgrounds, including those with Eastern European heritage or from the Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities.

During this in-person meeting, we will discuss the ways we are aiming to meet the needs of BAME children and young people in our care. We'll be reflecting on cultural competence in the context of fostering at a time when we are managing a shortfall in carers from diverse backgrounds.

We will discuss the kinds of fostering we offer: short term, long term and fostering-to-adopt. We will also be talking about the kinds of children we find placements for, the application process and the support you can expect along the way.

We need foster carers and adopters from all walks of life so that when a child comes to our service, we can find the right family for them.

Could it be you? for more information, go to; [Let's Talk IRL: Meeting the Needs of Children From Diverse Backgrounds Tickets, Tue 3 Oct 2023 at 19:00 | Eventbrite](#)

Please do register if you intend on joining us so we have numbers for refreshments, thank you.

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## Meet the Fundraising Regulator - In Person

14 September 2023 - 10.30am to 1.00pm

This session in NICVA with Fundraising Regulator is an opportunity to hear more about their work, the guidance they provide and how they can support you. It is also a chance to hear about their upcoming review of the Code of Fundraising Practice.



At this engagement event with the Fundraising Regulator on 14 September you can find out more about its role and the [Code of Fundraising Practice](#) which sets the standards for all charitable fundraising in Northern Ireland, England and Wales.

The Fundraising Regulator is currently [reviewing the Code](#) to ensure it provides an effective regulatory framework now and in the future. Chief Executive, Gerald Oppenheim, and Head of Policy, Paul Winyard, will talk about their plans for the coming months and share with you how you can have your say during the consultation process this autumn.

The event is open to anyone with an interest in charitable fundraising, from those who are new to fundraising, or to more experienced fundraising professionals. It is for those organisations who are already registered with the Fundraising Regulator as well as organisations that are not - everyone is welcome.

The event will end with a networking lunch.

To register go to; [Meet the Fundraising Regulator - In Person | NICVA](#)

# Training

## Volunteer Now Training Sessions in September 2023

### VOLT Lunch and Learn – Involving Refugees and Asylum Seekers as Volunteers



Thursday 21st September 2023 at 1:30 pm– 4:15 pm

Skainos Centre, 239 Newtownards Road, Belfast

#### **A Lunch and Learn session – Involving Refugees and Asylum Seekers as Volunteers, followed by our AGM.**

During Good Relations Week we are holding this lunch and learn session on involving refugees and asylum seekers as volunteers. Refugees & Asylum Seekers are a relatively new and fast-growing population within Northern Ireland. While paid work is not always possible for many members of this group, they can all offer their skills & time as volunteers, and many are very keen to volunteer as a means to build work skills, practise English, give back to society, integrate, and make friends. We know that in the wake of Covid lockdowns many organisations are struggling to recruit and retain as many volunteers as they had before and, since this new & growing group is so interested in volunteering, there is great potential here to build effective and mutually beneficial relationships between volunteer organisations and this newcomer population.

This session will give an overview of the key facts that organisations should know about this group, the main challenges and opportunities involved in including them in volunteering work, and the simple ways you can adapt roles and processes to make your organisation more welcoming and accessible to asylum seekers and refugees.

We will also hear success stories from people and organisations who have included asylum seekers and refugees in their volunteering work and who can advise from experience on the “why and how” of making this work most effectively for everyone.

NB The event will start with lunch and finish with our AGM, which we hope you will join us for!

Lunch at 1.30pm, with the session starting at 2.00pm and the AGM 3.15 – 4.15pm.

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## Keeping Children Safe: Designated Officer Training

Thursday 21<sup>st</sup> September from 10.00am to 3.30pm  
Online Standard Course fee from £75

This one day certificated training is suitable for Designated and Deputy Designated Officers.

It will cover:

- Knowledge of the legal context of safeguarding children;
- An understanding of the role and responsibilities of a Designated Officer;
- Knowledge of Health and Social Care Trust structures and processes; and
- Exploration of issues and concerns around referrals and sharing information.

All participants must have completed a safeguarding children awareness raising course prior to attending.

Keeping Children Safe: Training for Staff and Volunteers is a suitable foundation course.

*Places are allocated on a first come, first served basis and are limited to a maximum of 3 per organisation.*

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

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

## Housing Rights Training



### The essentials: accessing social housing

Support your clients in the application process for their social rented tenancy.

*Voluntary and Community from £56.00 / £70.00; Public and Statutory from £100.00 / £125.00*

Online

**Date** 26 September 2023 from 10:00am to 1:00pm

This course will help clients who are wanting to access social housing for the first time and moving through the Selection Scheme process to gain a social home. In this entry level course you will find out how to maximise client points & offer them the best outcome in their application process.

#### **What we will cover**

- the Selection Scheme
- how the NIHE will assess homelessness
- the legislation affecting social housing
- points maximisation
- recent / ongoing changes to the allocations system

#### **Who should attend?**

- housing advisers
- community / residents groups
- benefits advisers
- constituency offices staff
- social and hostel accommodation providers

**For more information on Housing Rights Training, courses and seminars, go to; [Housing Rights Training](#)**

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## Upcoming Training Sessions - September 2023

As the leading provider of nationally accredited Social Security, Legal Advice and Independent Advocacy Qualifications in Northern Ireland, we provide training and qualifications that support the continuous professional development of people working in the independent advice sector, and throughout the wider voluntary, public and private sectors.



All our courses, including [Wiseradviser courses](#), are available to view and book from the schedule below. If a course you want is not currently scheduled please register your interest.

We deliver training in three different formats:

[Live Online](#) – Scheduled courses delivered live via the Zoom online learning platform.

[Anytime Online](#) – E-learning courses to access anytime, and complete at a pace that suits you.

[Blended Online](#) – E-learning courses with scheduled live tutorials delivered via the Zoom online learning platform, designed to support you as you progress.

We can deliver any of our courses, or develop bespoke learning for your group or organisation on request. To speak to us about training options email [training@adviceni.net](mailto:training@adviceni.net).

You can view and register for all available courses on our website [here](#)

# Supporting Communities Training

## Writing Successful Funding Applications (Online Session) Wednesday 20th September 2023 from 10.00 am to 11.00 am

Join us for this short session looking at planning and completing a successful funding application.

Learners will gain:

- an understanding of the key processes of a successful funding application
- increased confidence when approaching funders
- enhanced fundraising skills and knowledge

### Register your place

To register for this course, [please fill in this form.](#)



**Please note, this session is designed for community groups in Northern Ireland.**



## Understanding 'Social Value'? (Online Session) Wednesday 30th September 2023 from 10.00 am to 11.00 am

Join us online to get a better understanding of what we mean when we talk about 'Social Value' and 'Impact Measurement'.

This session will help you to:

- Recognise the importance of measuring your social value
- Understand the jargon associated with impact measurement
- Learn about the tools available to use to measure your impact

### Register your place

This session will be held on Zoom. To register, [please fill in this form.](#)

**Please note, this session is designed for community groups in Northern Ireland.**

## UnLtd / Social Enterprise Support Online Information Session Tuesday 3rd October 2023 from 10.30 am to 11.30 pm

Social entrepreneurs, community groups starting a business, and anyone interested in learning more about support available for social enterprises in Northern Ireland, come along to this online information session.

Join us on 3 October, to hear from Nuala Smyth, Social Entrepreneur Support Manager, who will share with you the practical support and financial support available from UnLtd.

UnLtd finds, funds and supports social entrepreneurs - enterprising people with solutions that change our society for the better. We know social entrepreneurs offer some of the best solutions to loneliness, community resilience and long-term economic, social and cultural health and have a big role to play in tackling some of the monumental challenges we face today in Northern Ireland.

Stephen Marks, Supporting Communities' Social Enterprise and Business Development Advisor, will also be there to give an overview of the Social Enterprise training available to organisations.

### To Register Your Place

To register, please email [anita@supportingcommunities.org](mailto:anita@supportingcommunities.org).



## Tenant Participation & Community Development OCN Level 2 Wednesday 23rd October 2023 from 10.00 am to 12.30 pm

This new, improved 8-week course looks at the intersection of Tenant Participation and Community Development.

It is targeted at those working in social housing as well as community workers that engage with social housing providers in Northern Ireland.  
(We will be looking at a course aimed at the Republic of Ireland in the future!)

This newly revamped course now includes a good practice visit, more case studies, and practical examples to help you develop in your work!

### Learning Objectives:

This course will ensure participants are able to:

- Understand what tenant participation is
- Understand the policy context within the UK
- Have knowledge of the tenant participation requirements in NI
- Be aware of the range of approaches to tenant participation
- Understand the components of a good tenant participation strategy
- Understand what community development is
- Have knowledge of the different approaches to community development
- Understand the community development process
- Be aware of the governance requirements

### Course Benefits:

In addition to increasing your knowledge and understanding of tenant participation and community development, this course will:

- Help you carry out your role as staff/tenant representative/volunteer
- Examine your organisation's strategy and see how your role fits in with it
- Share good practices with other housing professionals and tenant representatives
- Provide networking opportunities with like-minded professionals and volunteers
- Develop your career prospects and professional development with an accredited qualification

### Time Commitment:

This is an 8-week course that will be held on Mondays from 23 October 2023 through 11 December 2023 from 10.00 am - 12.30 pm.

Weekly sessions will be held on Zoom. One week will be an in-person day trip for a good practice visit - date to be announced.

### Cost:

£425 per person

### Registration & More Information:

Contact Siobhan O'Neill at [siobhan@supportingcommunities.org](mailto:siobhan@supportingcommunities.org) with any questions and to register your place.



# Funding

## Cultural Multi-Annual Grants

Our Cultural Multi-Annual Grants scheme is open for applications. Under this scheme, we offer two funding strands which are available for two or four years.

This scheme includes:

### Arts and Heritage Grants

For arts and heritage organisations with a year-round programme of activity:

- two-year (2024-2026)
- four-year (2024-2028)

### Festival and Events Grants

For festivals and events:

- two-year (2024-2026)
- four-year (2024-2028)



**Belfast**  
City Council

Applications opened on Monday 7 August 2023 and will close at 12 noon on Friday 6 October 2023.

For more information or to apply, go to [Belfast City Grants](#) (link opens in new window). You can also email [culture@belfastcity.gov.uk](mailto:culture@belfastcity.gov.uk) for the guidance notes.

## Awards Programme for Outstanding NI Rural Community Projects Invites Applications

Applications are being invited by an annual awards programme that celebrates the work of rural community groups across Northern Ireland.

Financial prizes and award recognition are available to community groups who have delivered outstanding projects to improve health, wellbeing, and individual and community development for residents of rural Northern Ireland settlements.

The Rural Community Awards programme provided by the Northern Ireland Housing Executive is accepting applications from community groups, residents' groups, voluntary groups or other groups having a constitution and acting in the interest of a rural settlement within Northern Ireland.

For the purpose of this awards programme, 'rural' settlements are defined as those with a population of less than 5,000.

There are three award types:

- The Rural Community Spirit Award is open to all community groups based in rural areas who work together to make their village or small settlement a better place to live.
- The Cleaner & Greener Rural Community Award seeks to reward and encourage those rural communities who have come together to protect and enhance their built and natural environment and to promote sustainability with their residents.

## Housing Executive

- The Community Champion Award is open to extraordinary individuals nominated by the rural community group they represent.

In 2023, the following awards will be made:

- A £1,000 prize will be awarded to each of the winners of the northern and southern Rural Community Spirit and Cleaner & Greener Rural Community awards.
- Each winning individual of the northern and southern Rural Community Champion Awards receives a plaque, together with a £500 donation to the community group associated with their work.

The prize money awarded to winning groups is to be used to support and extend activities or projects which benefit their local rural community.

The deadline for applications is 29 September 2023 (4pm).

For more information and to apply, please visit [The Housing Executive - Rural Community Awards \(nihe.gov.uk\)](#)





## September Deadline for NI Arts and Leisure Venue Access and Inclusion Programme

A capital grant funding programme aimed at promoting a more inclusive society in Northern Ireland by enabling disabled people to participate more fully in arts, cultural and active recreation activities is inviting applications.

Funding is available to arts, culture and active recreation venues in Northern Ireland to enable both physical improvements at facilities and works that will enhance the experience on offer to people with disabilities.

The Access and Inclusion Grants programme provided by the Northern Ireland Executive's Department for Communities is accepting applications from local arts, culture and active recreation venues in Northern Ireland which are either:

- A museum accredited by Northern Ireland Museums Council.
- A local authority-owned venue where the council is providing Access and Inclusion programme support directly. Interested parties should contact their local council to confirm their eligibility and the support available.

The following criteria apply:

- There must be a demonstrable need for the project supported by evidence of consultation with and/or input from individuals with disabilities or the disability sector.

- An accessibility audit must be completed and attached to each application for a council-owned venue.
- Whilst an accessibility audit is not essential for an application from an accredited museum, the project must have the endorsement of Northern Ireland Museums Council.
- If the applicant is a community or voluntary organisation, it must have an agreed constitution which includes arts, culture (including leisure) or heritage as a primary objective of the body.

The programme is particularly keen to welcome applications for Changing Places facilities, accessible equipment for play parks and projects that will impact positively on sustainability and climate change. Grants of up to £30,000 are available, to fund up to 90% of total project costs.

**The deadline for applications is 14 September 2023 (5pm).**

For more information and to apply, please visit [Funding opportunities for Accredited Museums | NIMC](#)

## Christmas Festive Fund

Council's Christmas Festive Fund is now open for applications, closing date 12 noon on Friday 22nd September 2023:

The Christmas Fund will support community associations from Towns, Villages and hamlets to help celebrate Christmas. Please note that only **one** community group per settlement will be successful and projects/events must take place between 25th Nov and 16th Dec 2023. **Please note that if your community organisation is situated within Ballycastle, Ballymoney, Coleraine & Limavady and receive a Council Christmas event, then your group is unable to apply.**

Fund A – Applications for settlements with a population of 1000 can apply for a range of costs relating to festive entertainment, priority will be given to projects that promote wide community involvement for outdoor events – up to £2500.



**Causeway  
Coast & Glens  
Borough Council**

Fund B – Applications for settlements with a population between 100-1000 can apply for a range of costs relating to festive entertainment, priority will be given to projects that promote wide community involvement for outdoor events celebrating the festive period - up to £750

For more information and to apply please click on our council website –

[www.causewaycoastandglens.gov.uk](http://www.causewaycoastandglens.gov.uk) or to discuss your application, you can directly contact the Events team – Tracey Freeman – [tracey.freeman@causewaycoastandglens.gov.uk](mailto:tracey.freeman@causewaycoastandglens.gov.uk)



## Crowdfunder Cost of Living Crisis Emergency Fund



Crowdfunder are supporting projects who are tackling food poverty caused or accelerated by the cost of living crisis.

Projects can get up to £5,000 for their community food project.

This fund has been donated by members of the public who want to support community projects through the cost of living crisis. You can still [donate to the fund](#) to support good causes.

To be eligible to apply for match funding your organisation must:

- Be based in England, Wales, Scotland or Northern Ireland and is for the benefit of communities within the UK.
- Have a UK mainland bank account in the name of the organisation.
- The outcome of this crowdfunding campaign will need be delivered by 31st December 2023.
- Be raising funds for running costs only (capital costs such as building refurbishment are not eligible).

Have been operating for at least 12 months.  
Be one of the following:

- Registered UK Charities
- Registered community benefit organisations
- Registered social enterprises and charity companies

The funding would be applicable for projects that are focused on helping to resolve cost of living issues around food poverty and food education.

Typical projects may include (but are not limited to):

- Supporting the creation or continuation of foodbanks
- Providing support to those helping to provide free meals for children during the summer holidays
- Providing food budgeting or food education support to those in financial difficulties
- Reducing food waste and therefore food costs through community fridge creation/continuation

Selection process:

All projects that meet the criteria set out above will be assessed to determine which will receive match funding. Project owners will be informed whether their application has been successful or not. We will focus on prioritising organisations which are new to crowdfunding as well as seeking to ensure funding is distributed equitably, particularly in terms of geographic location and types of beneficiaries. A range of projects will be selected to achieve this.

Match Funding criteria:

To receive match funding (once approved), the following conditions must all be met:

- For every donation made towards your project we'll match it up to £250, so if your project receives a donation of £20 we'll add another £20. If your project receives a donation of £600 then you'll receive an additional £250.
- Only one donation per supporter will be matched (we will not provide match funding where a supporter is deemed to have made multiple donations).
- You can receive a maximum of £5,000 of match funding per organisation.

Timeline:

The Crowdfunder Cost of Living Crisis Emergency Fund will close when the funds are fully allocated.

Only one application per group or organisation will be accepted.

Please read the full [Eligibility Criteria](#) before applying.

Projects will be required to agree to the [Terms and Conditions](#).

For more information and to apply, please visit [Crowdfunder Cost of Living Crisis Emergency Fund | Crowdfunder UK](#)



## Grand Choice 2023

Grand Choice is a Participatory Budgeting initiative which means that local people get to decide how public funds are used to address needs in their area. Community Planning Partners have pooled their resources to fund community projects.

Local people with a valid email address and Castlereagh South postcode can apply for up to £1,000 for a project they think will benefit their area of Castlereagh South - and best of all, it is the local residents who decide which projects should go ahead!

Your project should take place between and must be within Castlereagh South District Electoral Area. This includes Beechill, Cairnshill, Carryduff East, Carryduff West, Galwally, Knockbracken, Newtownbreda

### Stage 1. Application Form

Generating Ideas and Apply Stage – where groups complete a short application form outlining their project idea.

If you decide to apply for funding and use your personal contact details in the Stage 1 application form. This information will be stored in a safe place and used to contact you about the application. Your full name will not be used in publicity material and contact details will not be shared.

If you are under 18 and you decide to add your personal contact details to the form you must ask a parent/ guardian/ carer to complete the online consent. It must be submitted by 17th September 2023.

When you submit your entry, we will check if it meets with our themes – we might give you a call for some further information.

We aim to let groups know if they've been shortlisted by 21st September or as soon as possible thereafter. The shortlisted projects will be required to exhibit their proposal at a Community Decision Event on Saturday 21st October 2023.

### Stage 2. Community Decision Event

At the Community Decision Event in October you will



tell the voters what you plan to do and what you hope to achieve as they visit your stand. All you need to do is tell them some information about what you do, what the project is about and how this will be good for the Lisburn North area. You can do this by using pictures, posters and/or display boards etc.

Your views, ideas and proposal may appear in reports and press releases once that information is made public.

### Voting Process

The people attending the Community Decision Event will vote on which projects should be funded. They will be required to vote for 10 projects.

You can apply for up to £1,000 for a local project.

### Key themes

Your project must demonstrate how it relates to one or more of the Take 5 Ways To Wellbeing themes:

- Connect – with the people around you and keep in touch with each other
- Be Active – to help us feel good both physically and mentally
- Take Notice – to ensure the community is safe
- Keep Learning – new things that give us a sense of achievement, enjoyment and increased confidence
- Give – doing something that gives back to our community and help each other

For more information and to apply, please visit [Grand Choice in Castlereagh South \(lisburncastlereagh.gov.uk\)](https://lisburncastlereagh.gov.uk)



## The Primary Club - James Fund

The Primary Club (the Club), now in its 68th year, provides financial support for a wide range of recreational and sporting facilities for the blind and visually impaired (VI). It is the major supporter of the thriving network of VI cricket clubs in the UK. But, while its origins and heart are in cricket, the Club also supports VI futsal, goalball, golf, skiing, swimming, tandem cycling and Braille chess.

The Club is both a registered charity and a membership organisation – open to anyone who has ever been out first ball, in any form of cricket (from a game in the back garden to an Ashes Test Match). It is run entirely by volunteers and its income is derived from donations, legacies and occasional events.

In 2022/23, the Club made grants to 43 clubs and organisations. The average grant was just under £4,000. However, following a significant legacy in 2023 from the late Kenneth G James, the Trustees are keen to encourage applications for more substantial funding for relevant new projects.

### How much funding is available?

The Trustees have earmarked a total of £75,000 for this initiative. The maximum amount available for any individual applicant or project is £25,000. There is no

lower limit, although applicants for less than £10,000 may be better advised to apply under the normal process.



### Which projects are eligible?

The following criteria apply to all funding provided by the Club

- All projects must relate clearly to the sporting and/or recreational needs of the blind and partially sighted.
- The Trustees generally prefer to support 'grass roots' and 'start up' activities rather than, for example, international teams of visually impaired sportsmen and women.
- The Trustees generally prefer to fund the whole of the cost of a project, even where this is spread across two or more years, rather than to be one of a number of contributors.
- The Trustees generally prefer to support running costs or the purchase of equipment, as distinct from items which will significantly increase the recipient's long-term asset base.

For more information and to apply, please visit [Trustees launch James Fund – The Primary Club](#)

## Empowering Local Communities Grant

*Applications open: 28th August to 3rd November 2023*

*Funding for activities & events: Before 1st March 2024*

This grant is one of three grants underneath our 'Grassroots Grants' programme and is designed to support a broad range of activities helping to transform communities and improve lives. We know every community need is different and therefore we will support and fund what is needed and important to your community. What do local groups in your area need support for? What would make the biggest difference for the people in your community?

Your group must meet the eligibility criteria below. Please check carefully before applying.

### Group Criteria

1. The group is not for profit
2. The end beneficiaries are community groups of people
3. The group has a presence locally and its work benefits the local community
4. The group has a bank account in its group name and can provide proof



5. The group has suitable governance to be able to manage funds from Asda Foundation. E.g., Financial reporting, committee meetings
6. The applying organisation must have a live safeguarding plan in place. The applicant needs to provide contact details of their Safeguarding Lead. Documentation may be requested.
7. There is no minimum timescale for how long the group has been in existence
8. Groups can apply for a maximum of one Grassroots Grant per year (in round 1, 2 or 3).

Grassroots Grants are: Empowering Local Communities, Under 18s Better Starts and Cost of Living. This year's Grassroots Grants started at the end of February. If groups received a grant in Round 1 or Round 2 2023, they cannot apply again this year. Groups must not apply to multiple stores; they should work with one store only.

For more information please visit [PowerPoint Presentation \(asdafoundation.org\)](#)



## Pudsey Next Steps

This funding is for groups new to Children in Need i.e. those who have not had a grant with us before, and who have a turnover of less than 100k per annum.

You can apply for project costs or core costs up to 15k per year for 3 years through our normal grant process on our website.

First step is to submit an expression of interest through link below - you can choose project or a core grant but for core there needs to be a clear connection between the core funding requested and direct outcomes/benefit for children and young people . Once you submit your Expression of Interest we will assign those eligible to Pudsey Next Steps, and then invite those who are successful to submit an

application.



<https://www.bbcchildreninneed.co.uk/grants/apply/>

The EOI is short but you will need to have your project idea and costs thought out before you submit this. Our Pudsey Next Steps funding is time sensitive and we would need any Expression of Interest eligible through before the end of August.

**For more information please contact Barbara Wallace on 0303 080 0940**

## South & East Belfast Funding Fair

**Date: Monday 23rd October, 2023**

**Time: 10:00 am to 1:00 pm**

East Belfast Community Development Agency  
55 Templemore Avenue  
Belfast,  
Northern Ireland, BT5 4HP

United Kingdom ([map](#))

Come to our South and East Belfast Funding Fair to meet funders face to face, find out what they have to offer, and discuss your ideas! Supporting Communities and the Housing Executive are hosting this event at the East Belfast Community Development Agency, 55 Templemore Avenue.

The funders in attendance will be confirmed soon!

### More Information

Contact Anita Doonan, Supporting Communities Funding and Social Value Officer

Email: [anita@supportingcommunities.org](mailto:anita@supportingcommunities.org)  
Tel: 07840849453

**South & East Belfast FUNDING FAIR**

**Monday, 23 October**  
10:00 am - 1:00 pm

**Meet the Funders!**

East Belfast Community Development Agency

**Supporting Communities**  
Empowering Society

**Housing Executive**