



Date: 16 January 2012

Welcome to the 8th Edition of Supporting Communities NI E-Biz

NEWS

FUEL POVERTY COALITION LAUNCHES PETITION

The Fuel Poverty Coalition launched a petition on 15 December calling on the Northern Ireland Executive to use the final Programme for Government 2011-2015 to tackle fuel poverty in a comprehensive and sustained way.



Antoinette McKeown, joint Chair of the Fuel Poverty Coalition said:

"Northern Ireland suffers the worst levels of fuel poverty anywhere in the UK with 44 per cent of all households experiencing fuel poverty and spiralling energy costs. The seriousness of this problem and the impact it has on the health and wellbeing of local families deserves a comprehensive and coordinated response from the NI Executive. The Fuel Poverty Coalition is now seeking public support for our petition calling on the NI Executive to make tackling fuel poverty a key priority in the final Programme for Government 2011-2015, by committing to develop a detailed and costed action-plan setting out how and when fuel poverty will be eradicated in Northern Ireland."

The public and interested organisations and groups can sign the Fuel Poverty Coalition's petition and tell them about their experiences or views by visiting www.fuelpovertycoalition.org.uk/

Fuel Poverty Coalition members will also make available freepost petition postcards for anyone without internet access. People can call to get a copy on 0800 121 6022.

ONE OFF FUEL PAYMENT

On Thursday 8 December 2011, First Minister and deputy First Minister announced the Northern Ireland Executive's intention to make a one off Fuel Allowance Payment to vulnerable people to assist with fuel bills.

Payments will be made in February to low income families pensioners and cancer patients.

Who can get it?

People will be eligible for the payment if they are in receipt of either:

- State Pension Credit
- Income Support
- Employment Support Allowance (Income Related)
- Job Seekers Allowance (Income Based)

To qualify they must be in receipt of any of the above benefits during the week of Monday 12 December to Sunday 18 December 2011.

How much will a person get?

People in receipt of State Pension Credit will receive £100.

People in receipt of Income Support will receive £75.

People in receipt of Employment Support Allowance (Income Related) will receive £75.

People in receipt of Job Seekers Allowance (Income Based) will receive £75.

When will the payments be made?

The exact payment date has yet to be confirmed but it is expected that all payments will be made in February 2012. People eligible for the payment will receive a notification letter at that time confirming the details of the payment. There is no need for customers to contact their benefit paying offices with queries in relation to this payment.

How will the payment be made?

People who are eligible will receive the payment in the same way as they receive their usual benefit payment either directly into a bank or Post Office Card account. People who receive their benefit by cheque will receive a cheque through the post.

Is there any further action needed?

No. People will receive a notification letter shortly before the payment is issued. There is no need for people to contact their benefit paying offices with queries in relation to this payment.

Do people need to make a claim?

No. The payment will be issued automatically to people entitled in the same way as they receive your normal benefit payment. There is no need for customers to contact their benefit paying offices with queries in relation to this payment.

Is this in addition to the Winter Fuel Payment?

Yes. This payment is in addition to any other payments. It is a one-off payment.

Can I appeal if I am not entitled?

This is a one-off payment and there is no right of appeal.

Will it affect a person's benefit?

No. This is a one-off payment which will not affect any other benefits a person may be receiving.

Will this be a cash payment or a fuel credit?

This is a cash payment and will be paid in the same way as people receive their normal benefit payment.

More information is available at www.nidirect.gov.uk/Information

NIHE UPDATE ON CHANGES TO PAYING RENT AND RATES

The NIHE has announced that from 1 April 2012 tenants will no longer be able to pay rent and rates at Post Office or Payzone outlets.

Tenants will be able to pay using the following methods:

- PayPoint (by cash). There are 959 outlets throughout Northern Ireland
- Automated Telephone Service (24hr by Debit or Credit Card)
- Payment by monthly Direct Debit Payment is being piloted in the South area
- Online www.nihe.gov.uk/paying using a Debit or Credit Card
- Standing Order
- Local Accounts Office

New payment cards will be issued to tenants throughout January and February and a publicity campaign will be launched shortly. Tenants will receive an information leaflet "Paying Your Rent and Rates" outlining the changes and providing a choice of ways to pay.

Information is also available on the NIHE website www.nihe.gov.uk.
For further information contact your local District Office.



BOARD LAUNCHES POLICING AND COMMUNITY SAFETY PARTNERSHIPS (PCSPs) INDEPENDENT MEMBER APPOINTMENT CAMPAIGN

The Northern Ireland Policing Board today commenced the process to appoint 237 Independent Members to the new Policing and Community Safety Partnerships (PCSPs) across the 26 Council areas.

PCSPs are new statutory bodies established under the Justice Act (Northern Ireland) 2011 to help make communities safer. These new partnerships will bring together within a single partnership the functions and responsibilities currently undertaken by District Policing Partnerships (DPPs) and Community Safety Partnerships (CSPs).

Independent Members of PCSPs will work with their elected colleagues, the statutory and voluntary sector and the community to identify and develop local solutions to policing and community safety issues.

"We are looking for people who can demonstrate an interest in their local community and have an understanding of community safety or community policing issues, either through their employment or voluntary activity. People applying for these roles should live in, or be able to show they have a close connection with the Council area the PCSP is in."

Information on how to apply to become a PCSP Independent Member can be found on the Board's website at www.nipolicingboard.org.uk/pcsprecruitment phone: 028 9040 8566;
by email: pcsprecruitment@nipolicingboard.org.uk or write to:
PCSP Recruitment, Northern Ireland Policing Board, Waterside Tower,
31 Clarendon Road, Clarendon Dock, Belfast, BT1 3BG.



Completed application forms must be returned no later than noon on Monday 30 January 2012

A meeting expense payment of £60 per meeting, for up to 20 meetings per year, is available to all Members of a PCSP and DPCSP. In addition Members will be able to claim travel and subsistence.

The political and independent members will together form the Policing Committee of a PCSP which will carry out a distinct role in relation to the policing functions previously carried out by DPPs. Partnerships will also be able to establish delivery committees to take forward work in the community or any other pieces of work they may need, and can form links with other groups who may have an interest in policing or safety.

IMPORTANT PAYE INFORMATION

HMRC appears to be becoming more stringent in the application of penalty charges for employers who haven't ensured that payments are made in time to clear on due dates.

NICVA recently heard from a community group about penalty charges for late PAYE deductions. The group was unsuccessful in an appeals process.

For more information and for a reminder of the payment deadlines and penalty charges read the full article at www.nicva.org/news/important-payee-information



iPADS FOR AUTISM APPEAL

Helping Hands Autism Support Group is currently taking part in a scheme "iPads for Autism".

The group can recycle 165 old mobile phones (back and battery must be included) for an ipad 2.



iPads are a vital communication tool for children with Autism and Aspergers, they can also improve social communication and verbal communication for those without speech.

30 families are currently on this scheme, and four iPads have already been delivered to members.

If you have any old mobiles that you do not require and would like to donate them please email helpinghandsbelfast@yahoo.co.uk or call 07830 345 056.

CONSULTATIONS

Current consultations with closing date

EQUALITY COMMISSION DRAFT CORPORATE PLAN

Improving people's lives – our draft corporate plan 2012-2015

The Equality Commission for Northern Ireland is keen to hear your views on its draft corporate plan 2012-2015.

If you would like to find out more please contact Naomi Roberts on 028 9050 0645, Textphone 028 9050 0589 or email nroberts@equalityni.org.

You can also write to: Naomi Roberts, Equality Commission NI, 7/9 Shaftesbury Square, Belfast, BT2 7DP.

The draft Corporate Plan can be accessed here;

www.equalityni.org/archive/pdf/draftcplan2012-15.pdf

Consultation closing date Tuesday 14 February 2012

EVENTS



PROGRAMME FOR GOVERNMENT AND ECONOMIC STRATEGY

The First Minister and deputy First Minister have published the draft Programme for Government, laying out the Executive's commitments and priorities for 2011-2015. The Executive is now seeking views on this draft document and the consultation period will run until 22 February 2012.

NICVA, in conjunction with member organisations has organised six consultation sessions for the voluntary and community sector;

19 January, 10.00am – 1.00pm	Waterfoot Hotel, Derry
25 January, 10.00am – 1.00pm	Fermanagh House, Enniskillen
31 January, 10.00am – 1.00pm	Ballybot House, Newry
2 February, 10.00am – 1.00pm	Willowbank Community Resource Centre, Dungannon
7 February, 10.30am – 1.00pm	Strabane District Council, Strabane

ECONOMIC STRATEGY

As part of its engagement in the Northern Ireland Executive's Economic Strategy consultation, NICVA will be hosting an event for the voluntary and community sector in order to help develop a cohesive response.

The event will be in round table format to facilitate discussion and debate and will be attended by a department official, as well as experts from different sectors of the economy, subject to their availability.

23 January, 10.00am – 1.00pm NICVA 61 Duncairn Gardens, Belfast

More details, booking forms and the full agenda for all sessions can be found at www.nicva.org/news/programme-government-consultation-dates

INSPIRING CHANGE THROUGH VOLUNTEERING

Be the Change You Want - 26 January 2012, 10.00am - 12.30pm, at The Diocesan Office, 24 London Street, Derry / Londonderry, BT48 6RQ (with lunch provided). This is one of a series of planned events.



This special event is designed to inspire a conversation - about how we can change our communities for the better by volunteering for the common good. It is also about moving this conversation forward to see how we can achieve even more by working with unexpected partners. The keynote speaker will be Bishop Ken Good (Church of Ireland Diocese of Derry and Raphoe).

Be the Change You Want is organised by a joint volunteering project funded by the Department for Social Development in Northern Ireland and the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht in the Republic of Ireland.

A unique partnership between the GAA, Voluntary Arts Ireland, the Church of Ireland diocese of Derry and Raphoe and City Church Belfast, the project brings together a diverse partnership to promote volunteering to meet needs in our community.

Places are limited so please RSVP by 20 January to tony@vairland.org or call 028 7127 2501 (from Northern Ireland) or 048 7127 2501 (from Republic of Ireland).

MEASURING THE IMPACT OF VOLUNTEERING

Measuring the impact of volunteering activities is increasingly important as the demand for organisations to evidence the impact and outcomes from their work becomes greater.

The **Volunteer Impact Assessment Toolkit** provides information and customisable tools which organisations of all sizes can use to measure impact and therefore evidence what is being achieved.

Volunteer Now offers a one day training course to supplement the written toolkit handbook. The aim of the session is to guide people through the handbook, using exercises and group discussion to help people to start planning their own assessment.



The next training session will take place on 15 March 2012 from 10.00am - 3.30pm at Volunteer Now's Office, Shaftesbury Square, Belfast. Book directly on to the training course at <http://www.volunteernow.co.uk/training-events/view/83>

Contact Julie Aiken to find out more email: Julie.Aiken@volunteernow.co.uk or call 028 9023 2020.

COMMUNITY FOUNDATION NI JANUARY SEMINARS



The CFNI Observatory is organising two seminars this month.

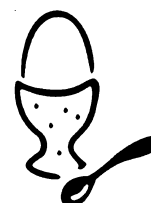
Community Activism: developing relationships between the community and political sectors
18 January, 10.00am-1.30pm, Ebrington Barracks, Derry

The seminar provides a timely opportunity for community organisations to meet together to learn about different approaches to mobilising communities, and reflect on the community sector's experiences of developing relationships with the political sector. Key speakers are: Niall Crowley, founding member of Claiming Our Future and Is Feidir Linn, and former CEO of the Equality Authority, Ireland; Peter Sheridan, CEO Cooperation Ireland; Lynn Carvill, women's sector lobbyist WRDA; and Eamonn Deane, Director Holywell Trust.

Community Policing: the challenges from a community perspective
26 January, 10.00am – 1.00pm, Lough Neagh Centre, Oxford Island

This seminar will explore what is meant by the term 'community policing' and what the challenges are for communities in working with the PSNI and others to develop an effective police service. For more information about the Observatory, which is funded by a Building Change Trust transformation grant, and these events visit www.communityfoundationni.org/Programmes/Observatory To register for either of these events please contact blivesey@communityfoundationni.org.

AN INVITATION TO BREAKFAST



NIHE's Review, the Housing Association Review and Welfare Reform are the important themes we will discuss at our Associate Briefing on Tuesday 24 January 2012.

We will begin with breakfast, served from 8am and the briefing will start at 8.20am with everyone away by 10am. It will be held in NIFHA's office, 6c Citylink Business Park, Albert St, Belfast, BT12 4HB and I hope you will be able to join us.

To book a place at our Associate Breakfast Briefing click on:
<http://www.nifha.org/training-and-events/153/>



TRAINING



The following training courses are currently offered:

GET INVOLVED WITH 'GET TO KNOW THE SECTOR'

Vital Links is launching its next 'Get to know the Sector' training from 17 January 2012 to 27 March 2012.

This training course, which is ILM accredited, will provide participants with the tools to explore policy issues, build new relationships and engage meaningfully with the voluntary and community sector. The course, which is fully funded and free of charge, covers six half day sessions over a three month period. It also includes a one day placement of your choice with a voluntary or community organisation. This project is part-financed by the European Union's Programme for Peace and Reconciliation (PEACE III) managed by the special EU Programmes Body.

The course is for anyone who doesn't work within the voluntary and community sector but has an interest in it, or who is currently working with voluntary and community organisations. If you work within the voluntary and community sector and know someone in the public sector who would benefit from or have an interest in this training then why not encourage them to get involved!

Also if your organisation could offer a placement opportunity to someone taking part in this training please get in touch with Colm Burns at colm.burns@nicva.org for further details. These placements are an invaluable way to make contacts and showcase the real work that is done in the sector. For more information on these free sessions, please go to www.nicva.org/training or you can email info@vital-links.org

FUNDING

THE BIG LOTTERY FUND'S REACHING OUT PROGRAMMES

The Big Lottery Fund's Reaching Out programmes – Empowering Young People and Connecting Older People - will invest up to £40 million into supporting young and older people most at risk across Northern Ireland.

The Big Lottery Fund in Northern Ireland is making up to £20 million available over the next two years to ensure young people at risk have the necessary support structures, capacity, improved personal development and improved skills to help them negotiate the transitions in their life.

We will support projects that:

- Focus on young people aged between 8 and 20
- Last from 3 to 5 years
- Involve young people in designing, developing and running projects
- Target young people 'at risk'

Voluntary or community-led organisations can apply to this programme

Grant: £100,000 - £500,000



To find out more and make an application visit <http://www.biglotteryfund.org.uk/>

Closing date: 27 January 2012

TESCO CHARITY TRUST

Closing date for children's education & welfare schemes: 31 January 2012

For further details – http://www.tescopl.com/media/212657_community_award_guidelines_nov_11.pdf

To apply - <http://www.tescocharitytrustcommunityawards-applications.co.uk/>

LANDAID ANNUAL GRANTS PROGRAMME

Deadline: 31 January 2012

Have grants for disadvantaged or homeless people with an emphasis on young people between the ages of 16 -25

<http://www.landaid.org/grants/>

ARTS COUNCIL SMALL GRANTS SCHEME

What is the funding for? The aims of the ACNI small grants are to fund projects which involve people in their communities, bringing them together to enjoy a wide range of arts activities. Well thought-out activities meet community needs better and have the most impact. ACNI will give high priority to activities which are new or which develop what you do now.

What grants are available? £500 - £10,000

You can apply any time.

Click on the ACNI link where you will find guidance, application forms and FAQs

<http://www.artscouncil-ni.org/award/smallgrant.html>

FUNDING OPPORTUNITY FOR LOCAL COMMUNITIES

Volunteer Now is inviting applications from local groups and communities to support the development of Timebanking. Timebanking is a framework which allows members of communities to tap into the abundance of untapped potential and skills that exist out there!

Originating in America in the 1980's Timebank is a community based project that measures and rewards the efforts that people make in their communities by sharing their skills.

Everyone is valued equally by Timebanks and for every hour that a member contributes by helping someone else they receive one hour of credit which enables them in equal measure to receive help from other members of the Timebank.

Although Timebanks are open to everyone, this particular round of funding focuses on supporting older people to take a leadership role locally or groups can use the funding to enhance or develop new or existing services for older people.

Grants of up to £3000 are available to local groups and application packs can be downloaded from www.volunteernow.co.uk

Volunteer Now's Timebank small grants programme is funded by The Atlantic Philanthropies, whilst supported Timebanks may involve a range of stakeholders in the community, applicants must evidence in their application how their Timebanking activity will actively involve and support people from older age groups.

The closing date for completed applications is **27 January 2012**.

Volunteer Now works to promote, enhance and support volunteering across Northern Ireland.

Volunteer Now is about connecting with individuals and organisations to build healthy communities and create positive change.

Belfast, Broughshane, Enniskillen, Newry
Registered Office: Volunteer Now, 129 Ormeau Road,
Belfast, BT7 1SH.
T: 028 9023 2020. E: info@volunteernow.co.uk
Web: www.volunteernow.co.uk



COMIC RELIEF



Comic Relief are opening a new fund, Managing Money Better, early in 2012.

The £2 million fund is to support projects helping older people (aged 65+) cope with the harsh economic climate and financial exclusion and hardship; it will focus on isolated older people and those living in the most disadvantaged areas. There will be two grant cycles, one in January 2012, and another in April.

Comic Relief will be looking for organisations which are already working with older people and for projects which involve older people in their design and delivery. Projects involving partnerships between voluntary, public and private organisations will be looked on favourably.

The minimum grant size is £10,000.

Deadline: the first grant making cycle will open on 16 January 2012 with a deadline for first-stage applications of 13 February 2012.

<http://www.comicrelief.com>

FOYLE FOUNDATION - SMALL GRANTS

Funding is available for general charitable activities. Small charities in the UK working at grass-roots and community level. One year grants of between £1,000 and £10,000 to charities which can demonstrate that such a grant will make a significant difference to their work. If you cannot demonstrate this, your application will be declined. No multi-year funding awards will be made.

Applications are welcomed from charities that have an annual turnover of less than £100,000 per annum. Larger or national charities will normally not be considered under this scheme, nor will the Scheme generally support charities that are able consistently to generate operational surpluses or which have been able to build up unrestricted reserves to a level equivalent to three months turnover.

Funding can be used for: Details on the website of activities and organisations previously funded indicate that the Foundation average grant award is from £3,000 - £10,000.

There are no deadlines for submission. Applications will be received at all times but it may take up to four months to obtain a decision from Trustees. Please apply well in advance of your requirements. All applications will be acknowledged but in order to reduce administration, usually we will not send declination letters. If you have not heard from The Foundation within four months of your application being acknowledged, you should assume that your application has been unsuccessful.

www.foylefoundation.org.uk

