

10th January 2024

E-Zine



**Supporting
Communities**
Empowering Society

Welcome to Supporting Communities 223rd 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

Northern Ireland Housing Executive – Building for the future

The Northern Ireland Housing Executive has cut sod on its first housing development in nearly 25 years.

The scheme will see six semi-detached dwellings built at Sunningdale Gardens, North Belfast by construction company, GEDA. Part of a new build pilot, the six homes will be built using Modern Methods of Construction (MMC) and ultra-low energy building techniques, to Passive House standard.

NIHE Chief Executive, Grainia Long said: “We are excited to see work begin on these modern homes which we hope will offer a blueprint for the future of social housing. We are not just building new homes for our tenants for the first time in a generation. We are building future-proofed homes that will be constructed to a standard beyond that of current building regulations in Northern Ireland.

“Making sure our tenants have homes that are safe, warm and dry is always our priority and this pilot pairs that with our commitment to reaching net zero. The ultra-low energy building methods being used to construct these houses will mean that our tenants benefit from improved energy efficiency and a reduction in carbon emissions, lower heating bills, savings from reduced fuel costs and more comfortable homes. This pilot will also give us the opportunity to explore the practicalities of returning to building homes as part of the revitalization of our organization.”

Construction on site will begin immediately.

Ms Long continued: “We are keen for work to get underway so that people on the waiting list can benefit from these additional homes. It is important for us, as the strategic housing authority for Northern Ireland, to influence the future of social housing and reimagine what estates and housing developments could look like. This scheme will help us to investigate how Modern Methods of Construction can be utilized to deliver much needed homes within a faster timeframe, to a higher level of fabric performance and explore ways to drive down costs, in comparison with traditional construction methods.”



NIHE Chief Executive, Grainia Long, Chair of the Housing Executive Board, Nicole Lappin, Construction Director, GEDA Construction, Damian Murray and Department for Communities' Director of Social Housing, Paul Price gathered with representatives from NIHE and GEDA Construction to cut sod on the new build pilot at Sunningdale Gardens, north Belfast.

Construction Director for GEDA, Damian Murray, welcomed the partnership with NIHE and said: “Geda Construction, as prominent social housing builders, are delighted to be involved in this pilot scheme that builds on our long-standing eco credentials.

“Bringing Passive House standards to social housing helps tackle the fuel poverty crisis and aligns perfectly with our Net Zero ambitions. We are looking forward to working with the team at NIHE and our Passive associates, Nilan.Green in making the comfortable and economic attributes of Passive House living achievable for all.”

From the Department for Communities, Director of Social Housing Paul Price said: “We’re marking the start of this a significant, and welcome, development at Sunningdale Gardens for a number of reasons. Primarily, these homes will help address the need for quality housing which exists in our society. Alongside this, these homes will be built to energy efficiency standards at a time when tackling climate change is a key strand of government policy. So what is happening here won’t just provide accommodation for those in need, it will also be more fuel efficient for the residents and have less of an environmental impact overall.”

Is There Tree Equity Where You Live?

Every community across the UK deserves equitable access to trees. Our new Tree Equity Score tool, developed in partnership with American Forests, could make that happen.

With 84% of people in the UK now living in urban areas, equal access to nature has never been more important.

It's no secret that woods and trees are good for people's health and wellbeing, particularly in our towns and cities. But urban trees and woods aren't distributed equally, and the communities that could most benefit are losing out.

Everyone should have easy nearby access to [the benefits of trees](#). This is what we call 'tree equity'.

What is tree equity?

Tree equity is the idea that all communities have equitable access to the benefits of trees where they live. While some urban areas enjoy abundant greenery and tree cover, others lack these essential natural assets.

Tree equity must be embedded into urban forest planning, and that doesn't just mean planting. Plans must also include caring for and protecting trees - both newly planted and existing - to ensure they continue to thrive and improve the quality of life of residents for years to come.

- 34,000 neighbourhoods now have a Tree Equity Score
- 1,300km² added tree cover would achieve tree equity in the UK
- 53m people now have a Tree Equity Score

Why is tree equity important?

Studies have shown that trees in urban areas can:

- reduce air pollution, quieten noise and keep cities shaded and cool
- improve ecosystems and boost biodiversity
- create a sense of place, beauty and heritage
- create attractive environments where businesses want to invest and people want to live, work and play
- alleviate stress, stabilise blood pressure, ease anxiety and depression, and provide opportunity for healthy, active lifestyles.



High tree equity creates attractive environments that promote better wellbeing.

Embedding tree equity in the UK

The UK's total woodland cover is just 13%, with our towns and cities faring even worse. Studies from Forest Research, cited in our [State of Woods and Trees report](#),



have revealed that urban tree cover varies wildly, ranging from as little as 3% in Fleetwood, Lancashire to 45% in Farnham, Surrey.

Everyone should have easy nearby access to the benefits of trees, but to make that happen, we first need to find out where disparities in urban tree cover lie.

Is there tree equity where you live?

The Woodland Trust and Centre for Sustainable Healthcare have partnered with American Forests, the US non-profit organisation that created Tree Equity Score, to bring Tree Equity Score to the UK.

This tool calculates a Tree Equity Score out of 100 for urban neighbourhoods. The lower the score, the greater the need for trees – a score of 100 means tree equity has been achieved.

[Get your tree equity score.](#)

How to use your Tree Equity Score

Your Tree Equity Score is a powerful tool that you can use to help improve urban green space in your local area.

Lobby your council

[Write to local decision-makers](#) with your Tree Equity Score and ask what they're doing to help address the disparities in tree cover where you live.

Apply for free tree packs

Each year we give away thousands of [free tree packs](#) to schools and communities. If tree equity is low where you live, check whether our free tree applications are open and choose from a range of packs including urban trees and wildlife-friendly trees.

Our Tree Equity Score partners

[American Forests](#) is the oldest national non-profit conservation organisation in the United States. It creates healthy and resilient forests, from cities to large natural landscapes, that deliver essential benefits for climate, people, water and wildlife. American Forests pioneered the development of Tree Equity Score, first launched in the U.S. in 2021.

The [Centre for Sustainable Healthcare](#) is one of the world's foremost institutions for sustainable healthcare in research and practice. By sharing knowledge, skills and tools, it inspires and empowers all people in the health system to play their part in the transformation to a sustainable health service that supports our communities and natural world.

Shaping the Future Relationship with Government

An update from Denise Hayward, VCS Co-Chair of the Joint Forum on behalf of the Voluntary and Community Sector Panel, on proposals for a new Agreement between the Voluntary and Community Sector and Government

The [Joint Forum](#) was set up in 1988 to promote regular dialogue between the Voluntary and Community Sector and Departments of the NI Government. The forum is made up of public sector representatives and a Voluntary and Community Sector Panel (VCS Panel) of 15 representatives elected from the sector. The VCS Panel meets with senior representatives from across government and the public sector regularly throughout the year, as the Joint Forum. As an integral part of its workplan for this current Joint Forum term, the Forum's membership has been working on a review of the existing [Concordat](#) - an agreement which underpins the relationship and which was last updated in 2011. Former Communities Minister Deirdre Hargey mandated the forum to undertake this review of the Concordat as part of a reset of the Joint Forum in September 2022.

The Forum has taken evidence from across the UK and Ireland about how the relationship between public bodies and the sector works elsewhere and the public policy and legislative frameworks which support these relationships. In the past six months the Forum and in particular the VCS Panel has been shaping a set of values and practices that should underpin these relationships in the future. Our proposals are rooted in recognition of both sectors distinct yet complementary roles in contributing to the social, economic, environmental, and cultural life of Northern Ireland and the belief that by collaborating and working better together, we can increase our impact and agency. Any new Concordat/Agreement should act as a framework for improving partnership working which recognises and supports the contribution each makes to improving the lives of individuals and communities.

On the basis of this mutual understanding of each other's roles, it should be recognised that the VCS sector continues to be a key partner in formulating and delivering many aspects of public policy/ services, and as such, there is a need to develop much stronger partnerships/relationships with government and its agencies. Many VCS sector organisations play a dual role, acting not only as advocates for change or improvement, but also delivering vital service and supports to beneficiaries and communities. A new Concordat/Agreement should recognise the importance of the VCS sector to a healthy, just and prosperous society, and set out how Government will work alongside and support the sector as a key partner in the years to come.



It should be noted that the VCS Panel is most keen to continue exploring the potential for any new agreement to be given a statutory footing by implementing legislation that would solidify the relationship between the VCS and the Northern Ireland Government and the commitments enshrined in any new concordat/agreement. However, we recognise that this process will take time and we therefore support, in the interim, a clearer link between the new Concordat/Agreement and the Programme for Government and other measures such as a Ministerial statement.

The VCS Panel has begun a process of engagement with the wider sector on these issues via an online consultation event on the 14th November 2023 in preparation for a public consultation by the Department for Communities on the values and principles of a new agreement. This forms part of a wider consultation by the Department on draft proposals for future Infrastructure support of the Voluntary and Community Sector in NI. This [consultation](#) launched on 15th November, and we would encourage everyone in the sector to respond to this to help shape and inform these important relationships.

In addition, the VCS Panel will be hosting a series of face to face and online events in January 2024 to engage with the sector in more detail on these issues and to ensure that we represent as wide a range of views as possible in our discussions on final proposals for an agreement between the sectors. *More details on these events, including venues etc. will follow in the next few weeks.*

Denise Hayward
Co-Chair, Govt and Voluntary Sector Joint Forum – on behalf of the Joint Forum Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) Panel

The [Concordat between the Voluntary & Community Sector and the Northern Ireland Government](#) published in 2011, set out a shared vision and agreed commitments between the sectors to work together as social partners to build a participative, peaceful, equitable and inclusive community in Northern Ireland.

For more information on the Joint Forum, including the full list of current Voluntary and Community Sector Panel representatives, please visit [here](#).

New traffic light display for charity accounts and reports

A new traffic light display indicating if a charity has submitted their accounts and reports to the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland on time, is now live on the *register of charities*.

The public register lists all the charities registered in Northern Ireland as well as providing information such as what they do, where they work and their annual accounts for applicable years.

Under the traffic light system, the public will be able to see if a charity has submitted their accounts and reports to the Commission on time or late, and by how many days they are overdue if not submitted at all.

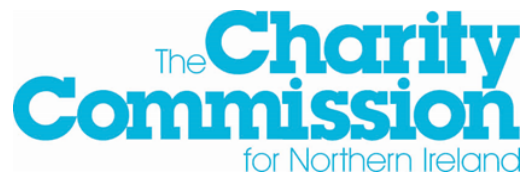
“The register is the only place you will be able to find information on all registered charities, together and available at just the click of a button,” explained Rossa Keown, Head of Compliance and Enquiries at the Commission.

“All you have to do is go to the register, search for a charity and you can see important facts and documents such as the charity’s accounts and annual reports for the years the charity had a duty to file for. With all that data available, the public have the tools they need to make the right charity decisions for themselves, like what charity to support or donate to, or even to join as a volunteer or service user,” continued Rossa.

“The new traffic light system will enhance that, letting you see if a charity submitted their accounts on time, maybe they were a few days late or perhaps months overdue and it’s time to start asking why,” he said.

Annual reporting by registered charities is a key element of the Commission’s ongoing regulatory work as well as being a vital way for charities to be open and accountable to their supporters, and the public. Once a charity is registered, the trustees have a legal duty to report annually to the Commission on the charity’s finances, resources and activities. To check when your charity is due to submit their accounts and reports, [please click here](#).

The new traffic light system indicates if a charity is:



- **Registered** – this will display on a registered charity’s entry up until their first annual reporting deadline date has been reached.
- **Received: on time** – displays on a charity’s entry when they have filed their annual reporting information on time.
- **Received: x days late** – displays on a charity’s entry when the charity’s annual return has been filed after their deadline date, including the number of days overdue.
- **Overdue: x days** – displays on a charity’s entry for the X number of days after their 10-month deadline. The text will be amber if the charity is in default for 2 weeks or less.
- **Overdue: x days** – displays, in red text, on a charity’s entry when the charity’s annual return are outstanding for more than two weeks.
- **Removed** – displays on a charity’s entry when they have been removed from the register. This is usually because the charity has closed or merged with another charity.

The Commission has published a range of guidance and video tutorials on annual reporting, available in the [Annual reporting section of the website](#). The resources available include:

- Annual monitoring return online tutorial video.
- How to complete the annual monitoring return – 10 minute guide.
- The online tutorial, Backfilling your charity accounts and reports.

For more information, please contact Shirley Kernan, Commission Communications Officer, on telephone: 028 3832 0169 or email: shirley.kernan@charitycommissionni.org.uk

Consultations

Launch of a consultation on proposals to amend legislation to help tackle Anti-Social Behaviour

DfC, in conjunction with the Department of Justice, is publishing proposals for future legislation on Anti-Social Behaviour. A consultation has been launched and will run for 14 weeks until Monday 4th March 2024. The full consultation documentation is available online [here](#) and there will also be social media activity to increase awareness of the consultation.



Social Housing Policy have contributed to the consultation and have developed housing-related proposals concerning:

- Injunctions against anti-social behaviour; and
- Absolute Grounds for Possession.

We want to ensure that we receive as many responses as possible to enable the proposals to be strengthened and developed in order to bring forward legislation. We would encourage all relevant housing colleagues to read the consultation and provide feedback.

The consultation document and supporting documents are available at; [Anti-Social Behaviour | Department of Justice \(justice-ni.gov.uk\)](#)

Community and Voluntary Sector Infrastructure Support - future plans

The Department is carrying out a programme of work aimed at refreshing the policy frameworks for our voluntary and community sector support. This includes agreeing with



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our partners on the outcomes that we should prioritise in future years. A review of sectoral needs will inform how we can better support the sector to deliver outcomes set out in any future Programme for Government.

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We welcome views and responses on the proposed framework through our consultation events being hosted both in person and online through November and December 2023, and are inviting you to sign up for one of our events at; [Community and Voluntary Sector Infrastructure Support - future plans | Department for Communities \(communities-ni.gov.uk\)](#)

The events will take the form of roundtable discussions and are an opportunity to share thoughts, ideas or comments.

Financial Context for Revenue Raising

Department of Finance

[Financial context for revenue raising consultations | Department of Finance \(finance-ni.gov.uk\)](#)

Closing date; 17th January 2024

Strategic Framework to Prevent the Harm caused by Obesity, and Improve Diets and Levels of Physical Activity

Department of Health

[Strategic Framework to Prevent the Harm caused by Obesity, and Improve Diets and Levels of Physical Activity | Department of Health \(health-ni.gov.uk\)](#)

Closing Date; 16th February 2024

Department launches a Call for Evidence on Planning Policy and Climate Change

The Department for Infrastructure is inviting the public to have their say as a consultation to help inform any future focused review of the Strategic Planning Policy Statement (SPPS) is launched.

The SPPS sets out the regional planning policies for the orderly and consistent development of land here. Given the climate emergency and the Climate Change Act (Northern Ireland) 2022, the Department is looking at how its planning policies can help to reduce carbon emissions, as we collectively chart the path to net zero by 2050. We have seen at first hand the significant impacts of recent flooding events and there is understandably an increased interest in the role of planning policy in responding to our changing climate.

Our planning system plays an important role in helping to address the climate change challenges we will continue to face. We are currently finalising the review of planning policy for renewable and low carbon energy, which was consulted on last year. In addition, we need to consider whether the rest of the SPPS remains appropriate and fit for purpose in relation to climate change. For example, a future focussed review of the SPPS could include a fresh look at the appropriateness of extant policy provisions such as on flood risk, transportation and development in the countryside.

Planning matters affect everyone and the Department is continually seeking opportunities to make positive changes to planning policy which will support the planning system as it shapes our places and communities, delivering for people now and for future generations.



The primary purpose of the Call for Evidence is to engage with stakeholders on the proposed areas of focus for a review of the SPPS and to invite the submission of evidence on the relevant factors that can assist with determining the best way forward.

The consultation will run for 12 weeks until 5.00 pm on Thursday 28 March 2024 and the Department welcomes responses from the public, stakeholders and planning authorities.

Documents are available at:

<https://www.infrastructure-ni.gov.uk/consultations/call-evidence-future-focused-review-SPPS-climate-change>

The information gathered through the Call for Evidence will be considered by the Department and will help inform any decision by a future Infrastructure Minister on a potential review of the SPPS and the options for it. In the absence of Ministers, any final decisions will be taken in light of the decision-making framework at that time.

Northern Ireland Youth Assembly - The Big Youth Survey

The Big Youth Survey is live on CitizenSpace and we need your help!

As you may be aware, the new Youth Assembly is up and running and they will be choosing issues to focus on over their two-year mandate. We're asking young people, aged between 12-21, to help them decide.

It is live from 8 January until midnight 26 January. It will only take 5 minutes to fill in and you can find the link below:

<https://consult.nia-yourassembly.org.uk/youth-assembly/big-youth-survey-2024>

Young people, aged 12-21 years old are encourage to tell us what issues they think the Youth Assembly Members should focus on.

It can also be found on our social media channels below:

<https://twitter.com/niyouthassembly>

<https://www.facebook.com/northernirelandyouthassembly/>

<https://www.instagram.com/niyouthassembly/>



Youth Assembly

Room 26
Parliament Buildings
Ballymiscaw
Stormont
Belfast BT4 3XX

Policy and Practice Focus

Charities in Scotland report rising costs and staff shortages

Voluntary organisations in Scotland have reported facing rising costs and shortages of staff and volunteers.



Rob Preston, News editor, Civil Society Media

According to a [recent report by umbrella body SCVO](#), 65% of charities in Scotland reported a significant concern about staff and volunteer numbers in April last year, up from 35% in August 2021.

Financial challenges also rose sharply and were reported by 71% of organisations last year compared to 47% two years earlier.

In 2021, 56% of charities reported an increased demand for their services, but this rose to 63% in 2023.

A third of organisations reported having made use of their financial reserves in the three months leading into April 2023, an increase compared to the same period in 2022.

Some 44% of the organisations using their reserves last year said they thought that the situation was unsustainable.

SCVO chief executive Anna Fowlie said: “At a time where many organisations are facing recruitment challenges, the funding environment means that many voluntary organisations are struggling to keep pace with salary increases needed to attract and retain staff.

“Existing staff and volunteers have been working flat out since Covid, helping organisations and communities to weather the cost-of-living crisis.

“We can no longer afford to rely on their goodwill to go the extra mile. The invaluable services and supports provided by Scotland’s voluntary sector need sustainable investment to ensure their survival.”

Alan Stevenson, chief executive of Volunteer Scotland said: “The many impacts of the cost-of-living crisis on volunteering has meant that we can no longer take for granted the contribution of our volunteers.

“While recruitment and retention issues are being felt more acutely by some, the first step for all must be the focus on good volunteering practice, appropriately supported.”

The Scottish Third Sector Tracker is run by an independent research company called DJS Research on behalf of SCVO, the Scottish Government, the William Grant Foundation and the National Lottery Community Fund.

Some 715 charities were involved in the research overall with at least 377 in each of the six waves of data collection so far.

See more at: https://www.civilsociety.co.uk/news/charities-report-rising-costs-and-staff-shortages.html?utm_source=New+Main+List+From+Live+CIVIL+Site&utm_campaign=5f9fb167a9-EMAIL_CAMPAIGN_2024_01_03_01_00&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_-5f9fb167a9-%5BLIST_EMAIL_ID%5D#sthash.KuGKOavz.dpuf

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

- 2024-10 - Assistant Solicitor
- 2024-3 - Assistant Principal Officer—Housing Policy/ Housing Information and Tenancies
- 2024-11 - Senior Solicitor
- 2024-6 - Technical Policy & Governance Officer
- 2024-12 - Housing Benefit Projects Manager
- 2024-5 - Planning Officer
- 2024-8 - Building Surveyor
- 2023-15 - Housing Advisor



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.

Publications



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 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 December 2023.pdf](#)



The Report "*Linking the Irish Environment*" is available at [Linking-the-Irish-Environment-Executive-Summary-June-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 \(pcsp.org\)](#)



RCN produces a range of publications including Rural Brief, a regular update of news and views affecting rural communities as well as Consultation Responses and Policy updates. A range of RCN publications is available at [Publications Archive - Rural Community Network](#)



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

Charity Commission Annual Public Meeting

Northern Ireland's Chief Charity Commissioner, Gerard McCurdy, invites you to the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland's annual public meeting on Wednesday, 31 January 2024.



The event, which will take place from 9.30am to 12.30pm at Riddel Hall, Belfast, will see Mr McCurdy, Commission Chief Executive, Frances McCandless, and colleagues provide updates and insights into the Commission's work.

Given the growing prevalence of online crime, this year's event will also have a focus on cyber-crime with speakers from the National Cyber Security Centre and Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) looking at the latest trends and offering advice on how to protect your charity.

Open to the public, the event is free of charge but pre-registration is a must. To book your place please email events@charitycommissionni.org.uk

For more information, please contact Shirley Kernan, Commission Communications Officer, on telephone: 028 3832 0169 or email: shirley.kernan@charitycommissionni.org.uk

Big Garden Birdwatch

26-28th January 2024



Big Garden Birdwatch is the world's largest garden wildlife survey. Every year, hundreds of thousands of nature lovers like you take part, helping to build a picture of how garden birds are faring.

How to take part

Spend an hour watching the birds in your patch,

between 26 and 28 January, and record the birds that land.

Tell us what you saw (even if that's nothing at all)! You can submit your results online or by post.

[Big Garden Birdwatch FAQs](#)



Choose an hour between 26 and 28 January

Only record the birds that land in your patch



Record the highest number of each bird species you see at any one time



For more information and to sign up, go to;

[Big Garden Birdwatch | Register \(rspb.org.uk\)](https://www.rspb.org.uk)

Omagh Funding Fair

Date: Tuesday, 18th January, 2024

Time: 4:00 pm - 8:00 pm

**Venue: Omagh Leisure Complex, Old Mountfield Road
Omagh, Northern Ireland, BT9**

The Fermanagh & Omagh District Council Funding Fair takes place on Thursday, 18 January, from 4-8 pm at the Omagh Leisure Complex.

The Fair will allow groups and individuals to drop in and meet with representatives from various funding and support agencies.

We'll be there to help groups looking for funding and to tell them about our funding support services. Come meet funders face to face, find out what they have to offer, and discuss your ideas!

More Information

Contact Anita Doonan, Supporting Communities Funding and Social Value Officer

Email: anita@supportingcommunities.org
Tel: 07840849453



Mid & East Antrim Funding Roadshow for Community & Voluntary Groups

Date: Tuesday, 30th January 2024

Time: 2:30 pm to 7:30 pm

Location: Larne Town Hall, Upper Cross Street, Larne, Northern Ireland, BT40

Mid and East Antrim Borough Council, in partnership with Supporting Communities and Larne Area Community Cluster, are hosting a Funding Roadshow for Community and Voluntary sector groups across Mid and East Antrim.

This event includes:

- A drop-in Funding Fair from 2.30 pm – 6.30 pm. This is an opportunity to speak with funders about funding opportunities and project ideas.
- A free awareness training workshop from 6 pm -7:30 pm on how to generate sustainable income through Social Enterprise. Numbers for this session are limited and will be allocated on a first-come, first-served basis.

Organisations attending on the day include:

- National Lottery fund
- CommunityFoundation NI
- NI Housing Executive
- The Executive Office
- Groundwork
- The Heritage Fund
- Network Personnel
- Department of Foreign Affairs
- Larne Community Development Project
- Supporting Communities



To Register

Please contact Amanda at Amanda.Cotter@midandeantrim.gov.uk or call 07391863492.

Funding Clinic Sessions

Date: Tuesday, 6th February, 2024

Time: 10:00 am to 3:00 pm

Finding the right funding can be difficult and time-consuming. Get some help to streamline the process and improve your chances of success!

HCN members can book a one-to-one funding support session with Anita Doonan, Funding and Social Value Officer, for advice and help to access the resources your group needs.

Start thinking about your next projects by asking questions like:

- What funding to apply for
- How to structure your application and plan accurate budgets
- How to carry out a community survey
- How to prepare for action planning
- How to do pre and post-monitoring and evaluation of your project

Book Your Place

Please [fill in this form](#) to request an appointment.

The funding clinic will run from 10 am - 3 pm with 30-minute slots available for individuals or groups to discuss their funding needs one-on-one with our funding officer.

This service is free for HCN members. If you are interested in becoming a member of the [Housing Community Network](#), please get in touch!



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

Date: Thursday, 29th February 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!

A second drop-in day will be held on Thursday, 14 March also at the Ederney Community Hub.

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 1412.



FREE DIGITAL SKILLS SUPPORT

Digital Drop-In Sessions at Murphy's on Main Street Ederney

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 just learning how to turn your tablet on, we can help!

Anita Doonan from Supporting Communities will be at Murphy's on Main Street for free digital skills support days on **Thursday, 29 February** and **Thursday, 14 March**.

Bring your tablet, laptop, or smartphone and get one-to-one support on whatever has you stumped!

To book, contact:

Neil at the Community Hub
on 028 6625 1412



**Supporting
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Training

Volunteer Now Training Sessions

Keeping Adults Safe: Recruitment, Selection and Management (Belfast Trust area)



DATE: Tuesday 18th January 2024, 10.00 am - 1.00 pm
ONLINE Free Course

Joining information will be sent out 24 hours before the session.

Alternatively, we can provide tailored training for your team (across Northern Ireland): <https://www.volunteernow.co.uk/training/tailored-training/>

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

Housing Rights Training

Housing Benefit and Universal Credit: The differences



Gain a basic understanding of the differences between Universal Credit and Housing Benefit.

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

Book now

Location; Online, Via Zoom

Date; 31 January 2024

Time; 10:00am to 1:00pm

This course is an entry level introduction to the housing element of Universal Credit and Housing Benefit. It will highlight the differences between the two.

- how housing costs will be dealt with under Universal Credit
- What types of accommodation are currently ineligible for UC applications

What we will cover

- Updates on the progress of 'Move to Universal Credit' in Northern Ireland
- how Universal Credit differs from Housing Benefit
- how to assist people with applying for Universal Credit

Who should attend?

- housing advisers (new or looking refresher)
- support workers (new or looking refresher)
- welfare officers (new or looking refresher)
- Constituency office staff

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- **BONUSES**
- **WEEKLY AND MONTHLY DRAWS**
- **EMERGENCY HELP WITH UTILITY BILLS AND FOOD**
- **VOCATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS**
- **EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES & MORE!**

For more information contact the Recruitment Team on **07730 527528**

@Bryson Training and Employability  

Bryson Energy – Training and Employability is a leading provider of a range of employment and training initiatives, designed for young adults and those living with long term unemployment. We are contracted by the Department of the Economy for the delivery of Programmes such as ApprenticeshipsNI 2021, Skills for Life and Work, Up Skilling and Employability Programmes.

Enhancing Opportunities

Bryson deliver vocational training and employment opportunities through the Skills for Life and Work Programme to 16 & 17 year olds, individuals under 22 years of age who have a disability and individuals under the age of 24 who qualify under the Children (Leaving Care) Act (NI) (2002).

Skills for Life and Work includes:

- No exam requirements to join
- Vocational qualifications & work experience
- £40 per week Educational Maintenance Allowance
- Travel allowance & bonuses
- Pastoral care programme and employment opportunities

Vocational Qualifications include:

- Business Administration
- Childcare
- Health and Social Care
- IT
- Retail

At Bryson we offer a comfortable learning environment with small groups of 10-12 learners. Learners also experience all round specialist support from our Learning Support Team, the team includes a full time qualified councillor, Mentors & Employability Officers.

Skills for Life and Work is designed for individual abilities and includes real work experience with an employer.

For more information on vocational qualifications available - contact Nuala on: 07730 527528



On [Facebook](#)

Bryson
Energy

Bryson
Training and
Employability

Tenant Participation & Community Development OCN Level 2

Thursday, 1st February 2024 at 10.00 am
Thursday, 21st March 2024 at 12.30 am

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 Thursdays from 1st February 2024 until 21st March 2024 from 10 am until 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 with any questions and to register your place. (Places are limited)

Funding

Halifax Foundation for NI launch new funding streams

Halifax Foundation for NI have launched their new website and Strategy for 2024 - 2028, 'Better Together' - the following new funding streams are now available;

Community Flex

This is our main programme which will be a rolling programme, open to registered charities only which have 1 years full accounts published on the Charity Commission website. Maximum grant available £10,000. The charity income in the last 12 months needs to be less than £500,000 (this is a change to our last programme as it was open to those with an income of less than £1m) the charity must support those in greatest need and we can support running costs, salaries, materials, training, transport, activity costs and volunteer costs. Open now!

Ignite

This is a seeding grant for new charities, this does not mean newly registered on the Charity Commission website this means set up within the last 2 years -we will check the constitution date for this information. Groups must be on the Charity Commission website. The maximum grant available is £2,000. There is a set budget for this programme and once this has been allocated we will not be able to issue any further grants. There is an option for mentoring or training support with this grant. Open now!

Collaborate

This programme is for 2 or more registered charities coming together to tackle a social issue, both charities must have an income under £500k. This programme has a set budget and once this is allocated we will not be able to issue any further funding. Applicants must have a pre-application meeting with the Grants Team before applying online. This is for one year funding only. This programme is open for applications now. Max grant £20k.



Empower

This programme is not currently open for applications however this will open for funding on **3rd June 24 closing on 28th June 24. Awards will be made in August with a starting date of September.**

This is for infrastructure charities supporting community groups to receive 1-2 year funding , maximum grant is £20k. The organisation needs to be a registered charity and must be strategic/transformational in nature. Projects must not duplicate activities supported by or the responsibility of government departments. A pre-application meeting must take place before applying.

40 Invest

This programme is not open for applications. It's our 40th Anniversary in 2025, to celebrate we will be providing 2 year grants of £40,000 (£20k per year) 10% of this can be allocated as a contingency fund for unexpected expenditure.

This programme opens for applications on Monday 2nd September and closes on Monday 30th September 2024. Awards will be made in December, with a start date of January 2025.

An additional £5,000 we will held for each grantee to support capacity building initiatives. Income must be less than £250k.

More information on each funding stream can be found on their website - [About Us – Halifax Foundation NI](#)

Grants for Digital Projects Tackling Problems in Vocational Learning

The VocTech Activate scheme supports the development of new ideas that use digital tools and approaches to transform how people in the UK gain skills for work. The scheme is described as a 'test bed' where the first spark of an idea which could solve a vocational learning problem can be scoped and tested in a supportive environment.

The design, development and early stage testing of novel approaches to digital vocational learning will be funded. The aim is to help take those ideas through basic prototyping to the next stage of 'seeding the market' by delivering a first proof of concept prototype and planning a route to market.

Individual grants of between £30,000 and £60,000 will be awarded for projects lasting up to 12 months.

Applications are invited from UK-based early-stage businesses, smaller digital innovators and other organisations looking to test new digital approaches on a small scale. Charities, trade bodies, existing learning providers, and employers who would like to test new approaches to using digital technology for vocational learning, may also apply.



The deadline for applications is 31 January 2024.

For more information, please visit [Ufi VocTech Activate grant fund 2024 | Ufi VocTech Trust](#)



Call 1 2024-2025 Financial Assistance opening soon

Call 1 2024-2025 Financial Assistance will **open on 22nd January 2024 at 12 noon.**

Newry, Mourne and Down District Council invites applications for financial assistance towards the programme areas outlines below:

- Arts & Culture Projects
- Community Engagement
- Community Events, Festivals
- Community Summer Schemes
- Good Relations
- Irish Language
- Minority Communities Fund
- PCSP Community Safety Support
- Sports Programmes
- Tourism Events

All themes are subject to funding availability. Late application submissions will not be accepted under any circumstances.

Closing: 28 February 2024 at **12 noon**

Due to the new system being built at present, please keep an eye on the Council's [Grants and Funding](#) page for where to apply and access the guidance notes. If all goes to schedule with the system build this information should be available the week commencing 15th January 2024.

Information workshops

We will be running a series of online and in person workshops and recommend anyone interested in



Comhairle Ceantair
an Iúir, Mhúrn
agus an Dúin
**Newry, Mourne
and Down**
District Council

applying for financial assistance come along as we will be able to introduce you to the new grant management system. There have also been quite a few changes to the eligible and ineligible criteria of some of the themes. Should you still be experiencing difficulty backing-up your information from the existing grant management system we will be offering support after the in-person workshops in Newry and Downpatrick, so if you wish to utilise this support please bring a laptop or tablet device with you to the session.

Workshop date, times and locations:

- 17 January 2024, **10am – Online**
- 18 January 2024, **2pm – Online**
- 23 January 2024, **7pm – Newry Leisure Centre**
- 25 January 2024, **7pm – Conference Room, Downshire Civic Centre**

[Tickets are booked via TicketSource.](#)

Should you have any queries, please contact:
Grants & Funding Unit

T: 0330 137 4040 / 0330 137 4782

E: programmesunit@nmandd.org

Comic Relief Announces New UK Fund for the UK's Migration Sector to Open in February 2024

Comic Relief has given advanced notice that it 'expects to launch a new funding opportunity in February for organisations that are supporting refugees and asylum seekers in the UK and/or who are doing influencing work for safer routes and improved outcomes for people affected. **This will be for organisations that are already working in this area.**'

'Further funding criteria is being developed. More information about the funding and the application process will be made available in February 2024.'

This will be the first grant scheme under Comic Relief's new funding strategy, which is focused on the following:

- Effects of Poverty programme fund works that enables people who bear the brunt of poverty to build community-led solutions and overcome the many problems they face.

- Tackling Injustices programme funds organisations and movements that strive for fairness and equity, in order to end the injustices that cause and keep people, in poverty.
- Climate Justice programme will work in places and with people who are already vulnerable and dealing with the effects of climate change.

Further details about the new grant will be provided as soon as they become available.

For more information, please visit [Funding opportunities | Comic Relief](#)



Community Festivals Fund and Social Connections Grant are now open for applications

Community Festivals Fund

Grant Amount: £750-£3,000

Purpose: to support community organised festivals that enable communities to enhance their quality of life through participation and engagement in culture, arts and leisure activities.

Closing Date: Friday 2nd February 2024 at 12 noon

The following costs can be applied for: Event insurance, Venue hire, Performance fees, Transport within the community/ area that the Festival is taking place in, Equipment hire, Signage, Advertising, marketing and media costs, Printing, Administration (stationery, postage etc.)

Social Connections Grant

Grant amount: £500

Purpose: to address loneliness and isolation and build social connections.

Closing Date: rolling programme

We want to fund projects that:

- create more opportunities to bring people together to make connections doing something they enjoy;
- help to reduce the social isolation that can be a result of experiencing financial difficulties;
- enable local activities to become more accessible.

You might be operating a Warm Space scheme, or planning an arts and craft programme or a community growing project or yoga classes and could apply for the

grant towards the costs of venue hire, transport, refreshments, tutors or materials.



This is a rolling grant programme for activity from 1st April onwards and applications will be assessed on a regular basis within 3 weeks of applying.

You can find the online application forms and guidance notes at <https://grants.ccgbcapps.com/>

If you've any queries please get in touch with us at community.development@causewaycoastandglens.gov.uk.

There are a number of other grants open for applications and details of these can be found at <https://www.causewaycoastandglens.gov.uk/grantsandfunding>:

- Policing & Community Safety Partnership
- Sports Grant & Bursary Programme
- Personal Learning Account Fund
- Food Hardship Grant
- LiveSmart Grant
- Building A United Community Fund
- Culture, Arts & Heritage Grant
- Creative Practitioner's Bursary Scheme
- Youth Creative Skills Bursary Scheme
- Tourism Large Events Fund
- Tourism Events Growth Fund
- Landfill Community Fund
- Town Twinning Grant
- Town Centre Experience Fund

Vision Foundation Accepting Applications for National Resilience Fund

Vision Foundation is offering grants of up to £30,000 for registered charities, community interest companies, charitable incorporated organisations, and other charitable organisations that provide support and services for blind and partially sighted people across the UK, for projects and activities designed to reduce levels of isolation and loneliness.

In the current funding round, grants are available for projects that:

- Reduce loneliness and isolation for people living in rural areas.
- Increase people's confidence in engaging in activities that reduce loneliness and isolation and improve well-being, eg cultural, physical and work-related activities.
- Equip people with practical and sustainable tools and skills that reduce anxiety about interacting in person or online, eg digital or interpersonal skills.
- Support people to build and maintain healthy personal relationships that reduce feelings of loneliness and isolation.
- Address specific challenges faced by under-served

groups, eg the queer community, black or Asian



communities and people with multiple disabilities or learning differences.

- Focus on the ways that challenging life events can increase loneliness and isolation for blind and partially sighted people, eg relationship breakdown, bereavement or experiencing domestic violence and abuse.

Priority will be given to organisations that demonstrate a strong commitment to involving experts and people with experience, such as blind and partially sighted people or people at risk of sight loss, in their work.

The deadline for applications is 22 January 2024 (23:59).

For more information please visit [Apply for funding – Vision Foundation](#)



TBUC Camps Programme 2024-25

Applications are now open for groups who wish to run a Camp under the T:BUC Camps Programme 2024/25. Completed applications must be returned to the Education Authority no later than **4pm on Friday 9th February 2024**.

**Successful applications are subject to funding being made available*

The T:BUC Camps Programme is a headline action described in the Together: Building a United Community (T:BUC) strategy which was announced by the Northern Ireland Executive in 2013. The relevant strategic aim relating to young people is:

“To continue to improve attitudes amongst our young people and to build a community where they can play a full and active role in building good relations.”

The Programme is about building positive relations and long lasting friendships among young people across all parts of the Northern Ireland community. Camps must therefore bring diverse groups together to get to know each other, try new experiences and help build longer term relationships between young people.

Good Relations learning must be at the heart of every Camp.

All Camps must:

Have a significant good relations element throughout the Camp which must be clearly demonstrated in funding applications;

- Be run on a cross community basis and focus on ensuring correct variance of both Catholic and Protestant participants is met. Proposals are also strongly encouraged to include participants from other communities including ethnic minority communities

and those of different racial backgrounds;

- Target young people aged 9 to 25 years;
- Provide social action opportunities
- Be fun and be appropriate to the needs and interests of participants.

Who is Eligible?

EANI registered youth organisations

- Bona fide voluntary and community organisations (including churches/faith based organisations, sports groups, arts groups etc.)
- Schools
- Regional organisations that have experience in working with young people
- Councils

The Education Authority will be running workshops to support groups to help develop their programmes and assist with applications.

Attendance at a workshop is strongly encouraged, as it will allow you to meet and network with other possible applicants, speak directly to members of the T:BUC team, receive support and guidance on programming and good relations resources, and be given support in how to make a good quality application to the T:BUC Camps Programme.

A number of the workshops are face to face, with online options also available. It is essential that a place is pre-booked. You can do so through the button below or by [clicking here](#).

For more information, please visit [T:BUC Camps Programme – EANI Funding](#)



LandAid's Routes Out of Homelessness Programme to Open 8 January

LandAid is a charity established by the UK property industry that has been working for 30 years to end youth homelessness across the UK.



It award grants to exceptional small-medium sized charities working with young people who are at risk of becoming homeless, are currently homeless, or have experienced homelessness in the past. Mainly capital projects are funded as they provide much-needed homes for vulnerable young people.

The Routes out of Homelessness grants programme aims to create new bedspaces for young people (16-25 years) who are homeless or have experienced homelessness.

There are three funding streams within this programme.

- **Safe Spaces Programme:** to create new/additional hosting bedspaces, generally bedspaces in the homes of individuals or families who may be volunteers or paid. These bedspaces would generally be used for emergency housing, or as a form of supported housing. There are no funding limits, but bedspaces are expected to cost anywhere between £1,000 and £3,500.
- **Capital Grants Programme** with awards between £20,000 and £100,000: to create bedspaces in properties owned by, or on a long-term lease to, charitable organisations. These bedspaces could be used for emergency, supported or move-on accommodation.
- **Move-on Grants Programme:** To unlock bedspaces in the private, or social, rental sector. These bedspaces will be for move-on accommodation. These grants would be for charities working with young people who are ready and wanting to move forward into

independent living, but face barriers in accessing rental accommodation. It is anticipated that the average move-on bedspace in the private sector will generally cost £1,000 to £2,000 to unlock.

In 2024, there is particular interest in projects that will create bedspaces with the following attributes:

- Based in the North-East of England, Scotland, Wales or Northern Ireland.
- For groups of young people who may be disproportionately at risk of homelessness. This would include young people of colour, young refugees and young people identifying as LGBTQ+.
- Which would be transformational for the charity and/or local area.

UK organisations with charitable objectives and three unrelated members of their board of trustees can apply. This includes registered charities, Community Interest Companies (CICs), Charitable Incorporated Organisations (CIOs) or other not-for-profit organisations. Partnership applications are also welcome.

There is a two-stage application process.

Expressions of Interest will be accepted from 8 January 2024.

For more information, please visit [Routes Out of Homelessness Grant Programmes - LandAid](#)



From Idea to Impact: UnLtd Offers Funding and Support for Social Ventures

Funding and specialist support are available for UK social entrepreneurs to help them develop as social leaders, and to start up or grow their idea for a social venture.

UnLtd is inviting applications from social entrepreneurs aged 16 and over who are living in the UK and who are the founder of the social business. Depending on the stage of development, UnLtd can offer:

- Funding of up to £8,000 for entrepreneurs who are starting up their venture.
- Funding of up to £18,000 for entrepreneurs who are scaling up their venture.

To be eligible, the social entrepreneur must:

- Have identified a social issue and developed a business model that works to solve it.
- Be committed to, and have a track record of, delivering local, regional or national social impact at scale.
- Be experienced, ambitious and capable of growing their venture.
- Have a realistic growth plan.
- Be committed to working full-time in their social venture.

Their social venture must:

- Be at least one year old and less than four years old.
- Have a turnover of less than £250,000 in their last financial year.
- Be dynamic and ready to grow to local, regional or national scale and have a logical and appropriate plan to deliver this.
- Have a compelling performance to date and/or a logical and appropriate plan for rapid growth to reach local, regional or national scale.
- Not solely exist to secure investment in the year ahead.
- Target beneficiaries predominantly based in the UK.



Together with funding, programme participants receive expert advice and mentoring through a community of business professionals, corporate partners and social entrepreneurs.

The deadline for applications is 31 March 2024.

For more information please visit [UnLtd - Awards | Funding and support to grow your impact |](#)

Applications invited for Assets Recovery Community Scheme (ARCS) funding to prevent crime in communities

The Assets Recovery Community Scheme (ARCS) funding is aimed at preventing crime and/or reducing the fear of crime. The scheme is open to voluntary and community sector organisations; registered charities; and statutory bodies delivering projects in community settings in Northern Ireland.

Richard Pengelly CB, Permanent Secretary at the Department of Justice said: “ARCS seeks to re-invest funding which has been confiscated from criminals, and direct it towards projects that prevent crime and/or reduce the fear of crime.

“The Organised Crime Task Force (OCTF) partners continue to use asset recovery powers to deprive criminals of their ill-gotten gains, removing profits that fund crime and helping break the cycle of criminal activity. This sends a clear signal that crime does not pay.”

ARCS allows monies received from the payment of confiscation orders, following a conviction, to fund community projects across Northern Ireland. Through this, communities and individuals are supported, addressing some of the harmful impacts from a wide range of crimes.



Department of
Justice

An Roinn Dí agus Cirt
Máinnstríe o tha Laa

The scheme will run for three years and applications are invited from organisations that will run projects during all or part of that period.

Projects can bid for money in each or any of the three years and should demonstrate how their proposals would meet the essential ARCS criteria of preventing crime and/or reducing the fear of crime and how the project would directly benefit victims; communities; or the environment.

The application form and guidance notes can be found on the Department's website at [Assets Recovery Community Scheme 2024/27 Guidance notes and application form | Department of Justice \(justice-ni.gov.uk\)](#)

The closing date for applications is Wednesday 31st January at 5pm.