

Magazine of the Londonderry Chamber of Commerce

CONNECTE

ISSUE 24

COMPLIMENTARY COPY



SMARTPAY NI POWERING PAYMENTS

**ENERGY, SUSTAINABILITY
AND IMPACT ON THE
NORTH WEST**



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MESSAGE FROM THE CEO



Welcome to the latest edition of CONNECTED, the Londonderry Chamber of Commerce magazine.

As 2025 draws to a close, the Chamber and its members have many welcome announcements, plans and investments to both look back on and look ahead to in 2026. Indeed, it is an encouraging time for the North West, accompanied by a sense that the potential of our region is starting to be recognised.

The Irish Government confirmed that flights between Derry and Dublin will return in 2026 as part of its expanded Shared Island initiative. Reconnecting the North West directly with Dublin for the first time since 2011 represents a major milestone for our region that will provide crucial connectivity; opening up new opportunities for trade, investment and growth across our region. We at Derry Chamber will continue to provide a strong voice for the North West on this issue, ensuring this vital commitment continues to progress.

Chamber warmly welcomes the news that the Ulster University Magee campus experienced its largest annual increase in student numbers in over a decade, with enrolment rising by 510 students in 2024/25 — more than the combined growth of the previous ten years. We will continue to work with all relevant stakeholders to ensure this expansion continues and that we proceed to advance towards the crucial goal of reaching 10,000 students by 2032.

The return of The Open Championship to Royal Portrush earlier this year was a landmark opportunity for the entire region. The prestigious event generated excitement across Derry and beyond, with more than £280m of economic benefit felt across Northern Ireland. The North West also took centre stage over the Summer for the biggest ever O'Neill's Foyle Cup, welcoming 950 teams and over 20,000 players to the region.

We again showcased our strength as a leading global destination at this year's Derry Halloween Festival. Attracting over an estimated 100,000 visitors from across the globe, and council officials having projected £7.4 million for the local economy, there is no doubt that the North West leads the way in global tourism. We now need to build on this success and strive for even greater impact in 2026.

Our region has also seen a flurry of positive business developments – to begin with, the financial services sector in the North West is thriving, with Chamber member FinTrU having opened its expanded Carlisle House office, now its largest single office globally, while a new Technology Hub is also set to follow next year.

Seagate Technology announced a £115m investment at its Springtown plant, creating 30 new jobs and underlining the North West's important role in the global technology market. Alchemy Technology Services was acquired by global technology leader NTT DATA in a move that will accelerate international growth and establish a new Global Centre of Excellence in our city.

These businesses have all recognised the first-class talent and skills that exist in our region, our unrivalled entrepreneurial spirit, and that the North West is well and truly open for business. On all of these issues and developments, the Chamber stands ready to continue advocating for the North West and its vast potential.

I hope you enjoy this year's final edition of CONNECTED, and as we approach 2026, I would like to wish all of our members continued success in the New Year.

Anna Doherty
CEO

Commercial Insurance Corporate Partner:



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GO SUCCEED: EMPOWERING GROWTH ACROSS THE NORTH-WEST

Northern Ireland's business support service Go Succeed is empowering local entrepreneurs and thousands throughout the north-west have already benefited.

Whether you're starting out on your entrepreneurial journey, growing your customer base, or scaling up, Go Succeed provides expert, hands-on support every step of the way. Delivered by the 11 local councils across Northern Ireland, including Derry City and Strabane District Council. All support is completely free of charge.

Local success stories include Northbound Brewery in Derry, which used Go Succeed support to advance plans for a visitor experience, and Farmgirl Florals in Claudy, who enhanced their digital offering with the help of a Go Succeed grant.

Go Succeed is built around three pathways: Start, Grow, and Scale and participants can expect expert advice on business planning, accessing finance, and marketing your brand

For those ready to grow, Go Succeed can help you recruit new staff, introduce digital tools, or expand your product or service offering.

Through Go Succeed, local business owners can access one-to-one mentoring, expert-led workshops and masterclasses, peer support networks, and even opportunities for grant funding. The service also provides bespoke business planning support to help clarify goals and map out practical next steps.

In addition to these core services, Go Succeed clients can access an exclusive Members Area providing an online hub for entrepreneurs and businesses who are on their Go Succeed journey.

Members can access downloadable business templates, bite-sized tutorials, and on-demand content delivered by industry experts, all designed to help business owners continue learning and growing.

Meanwhile, our Business Benchmarking Tool helps businesses of all sizes assess their performance and identify areas for improvement. It's a data-driven way to compare your business with others in your sector. Visit www.go-succeed.com for more information.

“Thinking of launching or expanding your business?”

Get **FREE** expert business advice today.

Search: **Go Succeed NI**

Martina Rogers, Northbound Brewery.

WELCOME MESSAGE FROM THE CHAMBER PRESIDENT

Dear Members and Friends,

Welcome to our second edition of CONNECTED this year, which comes amidst exciting times for the North West. I would firstly like to thank everyone who has contributed to this latest edition, which serves as an important vehicle in highlighting and amplifying the continued progress underway in our region.

There is no shortage of positive developments, which we should all be collectively shouting from the proverbial rooftops to showcase the potential of the North West. More than £2 billion of projects in roads, regeneration, university expansion, healthcare, and leisure are within reach. These investments are not just about concrete and steel; they are opportunities for our businesses to grow and to improve the lives of our local communities.

The Chamber will be there every step of the way to relentlessly push for delivery on these investments and ensure the North West achieves its full potential. We will endeavour to continue beating the drum on fair and equal investment for our region, and we will continue working to be a strong voice for the North West.

Ambitious regional collaborations has been the theme of my year as President. In practice that has meant looking beyond the boundaries that have defined us. Derry, Strabane, Donegal,



the Causeway Coast – together we are stronger. When we speak with one voice, we have scale, credibility, and influence; a region that speaks with confidence and shows momentum.

It is our collective responsibility to continue to drive this progress and momentum for our region. The North West grows stronger with every new business that opens its doors, every investment made in our region, and every

person that chooses to make their lives here.

As we approach the New Year, let us all strive to continue this positive march forward.

Warm regards,

Andrew Fleming
President, Londonderry Chamber
of Commerce

INVESTING IN HERITAGE AND THE FUTURE: FINTRU'S VISION FOR THE NORTH WEST

CONNECTED sat down with Katrien Roppe, FinTrU's Chief of Staff, and Greg McCann, Executive Director of FinTrU North West and former Chamber President, to discuss the company's major expansion at Carlisle House, a project that celebrates both the city's industrial past and its technology-driven future.

Since opening its North West office in 2018, FinTrU has been at the heart of Derry's transformation into a hub for world-class financial and technology services. What began in Carlisle House has grown rapidly, with the company adding a second site at the City Factory during the pandemic and now returning to its original home to double its footprint.

"This expansion has been a journey since 2018," says McCann. "We started in Carlisle House, grew quickly, then grew our North West footprint to include City Factory. Even during Covid, we kept expanding, so returning to Carlisle House for a major refresh was a natural next step."

That refresh has been much more than cosmetic. The newly redeveloped second floor – formerly part of a government building – has been completely transformed into a state-of-the-art workspace, blending FinTrU's future-focused culture with Derry's rich industrial heritage.

"The theme of the project was 'From Fabric to FinTrU,'" Roppe explains. "We've literally stripped the building back to its brickwork, celebrating the city's shirt-making history while creating a modern, dynamic environment. We've named many of our spaces after former shirt factories. It's our

way of honouring the past while shaping the future."

Both leaders emphasise the importance of maintaining FinTrU's presence in the heart of Derry rather than on the outskirts. "Creating jobs within the city centre is vital," says McCann. "These buildings once generated wealth for Derry through manufacturing, and now they're doing it again, but in a completely different industry."

With over 425 employees based in the city, FinTrU is one of Derry's largest graduate employers. "It's something not everyone realises," says Roppe. "We're offering local graduates the chance to work with some of the world's largest financial institutions, all while staying in their hometown." The company's investment doesn't stop with Carlisle House. FinTrU is now embarking on a second phase, refurbishing the ground floor into a technology hub that will house its growing tech teams. "It's a huge vote of confidence in Derry," McCann says. "That commitment is something the city needs more of."

Local impact has been central to the project, from employing local contractors to supporting surrounding businesses. "Our people fill the local cafés at lunchtime," acknowledges McCann. "That kind of footfall supports the whole city centre economy."

The sense of connection runs deep. During their official opening event, the team displayed artefacts from the original shirt factories, lent by Derry City and Strabane District Council. "It was a wonderful moment," says Roppe. "Some of our employees have

grandparents who worked in these very buildings. Their grandchildren are now working here in industries that didn't even exist back then; it's a beautiful continuity."

In a symbolic gesture honouring the city's industrial heritage, the Economy Minister cut the ribbon at the official opening using a pair of original shirt factory scissors dating back to 1962. Looking ahead, Roppe and McCann see the Carlisle House expansion as part of a broader strategy to future-proof FinTrU in an era defined by technology and AI. "There's a lot of talk about transformation, we're actually doing it," says McCann. "We're building AI-driven tools and technology-enabled solutions right here in Derry. That's the next chapter."

The partnership with Ulster University's Magee campus is another vital piece of that vision. "It's not just about taking graduates," McCann adds. "It's about collaborating on research, productivity, and innovation — helping to create a continuous cycle of talent and opportunity."

Ultimately, the expansion reflects FinTrU's belief that Derry's best days lie ahead. "By investing in our people and our city, we're ensuring that industries born here don't fade away," says McCann. "Instead, we're creating something sustainable, something that will take us into the future."

To see more photographs of FinTrU's Carlisle House office, please visit www.fintru.com.



NEW HIRES, PROMOTIONS AND A RECORD QUARTER FOR COMMERCIAL TEAM AT MCCAY LEGAL

Local law firm McCay Legal reports that Q2 was the busiest quarter on record for its Commercial Team since the firm opened 10 years ago, with over £15 million in completed transactions across its Commercial Property and Corporate teams. The largest transaction being a £5.5 million share acquisition. The Commercial Team is led by Managing Director Gareth McCay (Commercial/Corporate) and Sinead Creighan (Commercial Property) and operates across the UK and Ireland.

With the firm continuing to grow, it has hired five new team members across its offices in Derry/Londonderry, Strabane and Omagh. Solicitors, Naomi White (Litigation) and Mia Fox (Private Client) join as Associates whilst Niamh Durnin, Eilise Meehan and Molly Hamilton-Curran have joined as Paralegals. The firm now has a headcount of 22 staff following its acquisition of an Omagh based firm in March of this year.

The firm has also announced internal promotions with Aaron Mullen being promoted to Director after 6 years as an Associate and Associate Director with the firm and Gillian Smyth being promoted to Operations Manager to oversee daily operations, staff development and client experience across all three offices.

Managing Director Gareth McCay said: "There is a misconception that you cannot source commercial legal services in the North West; however, we are seeing our transaction volume and transaction value steadily increasing. We have a cross-border multidisciplinary team who are experts in their areas with

experience of working for leading commercial firms both in Northern Ireland and GB."

"I am delighted to welcome the new members to the team and to congratulate Aaron and Gillian on their respective and well deserved promotions. Aaron joined the firm as an NQ in 2019 so it is particularly pleasing to see his progress to now lead our Employment & Litigation team. We are committed to enhancing our services to our clients and to do so, we are training and developing the next generation of legal advisers and creating much needed jobs in the region."

Sinead Creighan, who joined McCay Legal in 2024 from one of Northern Ireland's leading commercial firms holds tri-qualification across Northern Ireland, Republic of Ireland, England and Wales; "Given our location, we have benefited from being able to assist our clients across jurisdictions. My recent transactions have included the purchase of an office block in England, the purchase of a factory in Cork and everything in between. The North West region is open for business, and we are well equipped to assist commercial clients achieve their future plans."

McCay Legal has offices in Derry/Londonderry, Strabane and Omagh, and offers legal services in Commercial & Corporate Law, Commercial Property, Employment Law, Litigation, Probate and Conveyancing.

To speak to one of the team, please call **028 7137 1705** or email gareth@mccay.legal or sinead@mccay.legal



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PROMOTION ANNOUNCEMENT: AARON MULLEN NAMED DIRECTOR AT MCCAY LEGAL

McCay Legal has announced the promotion of Aaron Mullen to the role of Director. Aaron began his career with the firm in September 2018, joining our Employment Law and Litigation team, and has steadily risen through the ranks to Associate Director.

Aaron is a graduate of Queens University and is dual-qualified in Northern Ireland and England & Wales, bringing to the role a powerful blend of cross-jurisdictional expertise and strategic acumen. Over recent years, he has built a formidable reputation for delivering pragmatic, client-focused legal solutions across employment law and litigation.

Aaron has acted in a wide range of complex matters, achieving strong outcomes for clients in tribunal and court proceedings. Most recently he helped secure six-figure settlements in a clinical negligence case and resolved a matter

via mediation in Manchester again for a substantial six-figure sum, enhancing his reputation for handling high-value and sensitive claims with precision and professionalism.

In his new capacity as Director, Aaron will play a key role in shaping the firm's strategic growth in employment law and litigation services, mentoring junior lawyers, and helping to enhance McCay Legal's position as a leading legal practice in the Northwest of Ireland. With offices across Derry/Londonderry, Strabane and Omagh, McCay Legal provides bespoke legal advice across a wide range of practice areas, including employment law, commercial litigation, commercial property, probate, residential property, personal injury, clinical negligence, commercial/corporate.

Managing Director Gareth McCay said: **"Aaron's promotion to Director is**

a recognition of his outstanding contribution to the firm and to our clients. He joined us as a newly qualified solicitor in 2018 and has been a shining example to all young lawyers as to how to perfect their craft and consistently excel in a very challenging industry. His dedication, legal insight and leadership qualities have made a significant difference to our team and our business. We look forward to the next chapter of growth under his guidance."

Aaron said:

"I am delighted to step up to Director of the firm and I am looking forward to driving the department and the firm forward alongside Gareth and Sinead. I have been afforded great opportunities here over the past seven years and the growth has been fantastic to be part of. I now look forward to continuing that progress."

📍 DERRY/LONDONDERRY

📍 STRABANE

📍 OMAGH

McC McCay
Legal

STRENGTHENING COLLABORATION THROUGH INVESTMENT AND INNOVATION

**Fergus O'Donnell,
Vice President,
Wafer Operations,
Seagate NI**



At Seagate, we've always believed that world-class technology and innovation can thrive in Northern Ireland, which has driven us since the day construction began on our Derry~Londonderry facility over three decades ago.

In September, that confidence was reinforced when Seagate announced a £100 million investment, supported by £15 million from Invest NI, to fund a five-year R&D programme focused on next-generation nano-photonic innovation.

This investment will expand our expertise, create thirty new high-value roles in R&D and manufacturing, and create opportunities for the local supplier ecosystem through increased materials and labour sourcing. It's a positive signal of confidence in our region's talent, capability, and ambition for the future.

For the NI team and partners, the investment feels deeply significant. Seagate has been part of this community for more than 30 years and over that time, we've grown from a manufacturing site into a global centre of excellence for nano-manufacturing and advanced research.

This new phase of investment will allow us to build on that success and enable the next generation of hard drive innovation and research – producing over a quarter of the world's recording heads and advancing pioneering semiconductor laser R&D.



But what matters most is more than the technology – it's about what it means for Northern Ireland: skilled jobs, strengthening the supply chain and the reputation for innovation and excellence that continues to grow on the global stage.

We're fortunate to operate in a region where collaboration is core to our way of working. Alongside Invest NI, Queen's University Belfast, Ulster University, and partners across the Smart Nano NI consortium, we're linking industry, academia, and government in a way that creates genuine momentum for innovation and growth.

From a personal perspective, the most exciting part of this investment is what it means for people. It gives our

existing teams the resources to push further, and it opens new pathways for young engineers, scientists, and technicians who want to build their careers locally.

In a global industry, it's often assumed that innovation happens somewhere else. This investment shows that's no longer the case. With the right skills, partnerships, and long-term vision, Northern Ireland can compete - and lead - in some of the most advanced technologies in the world.

For Seagate, this is both a renewal and a statement of intent. We're building for the future, right here in the city and that's something every one of us can take pride in.

www.seagate.com

3 SMART WAYS TO REDUCE YOUR INHERITANCE TAX EXPOSURE

For many business owners, building wealth is a lifelong achievement. But when it comes to passing that wealth on, Inheritance Tax (IHT) can present unexpected challenges. Careful planning is essential to ensure your family benefits from what you've worked so hard to create.

WHY IT MATTERS

IHT has been in the news a lot recently after Chancellor, Rachel Reeves announced plans to change the way that pensions are taxed when you pass away.

Right now, your pensions don't count as part of your estate for IHT purposes, so you can pass on any savings left in there tax-free. But the government recently confirmed plans to end this exemption from April 2027.

PRACTICAL STEPS TO CONSIDER

- Understand the thresholds**
 Knowing the current nil-rate band and residence nil-rate band is the first step. These allowances can make a big difference to your planning.
- Review your pension arrangements**
 Pensions often fall outside your estate for IHT purposes, but the rules are nuanced. Large pension pots need careful structuring to avoid unnecessary tax.
- Explore gifting and trusts**
 Lifetime gifts and trusts can help reduce the taxable value of your estate, but timing and compliance are key.

WHY PROFESSIONAL ADVICE HELPS

IHT planning isn't one-size-fits-all. Every business owner's situation is unique, and the right approach depends on your assets, family circumstances, and long-term goals. Working with a trusted adviser can help you navigate these complexities with confidence.

At Benchmark Financial Planning, backed by Schroders, we provide tailored guidance for individuals with significant wealth and large pension pots. Our goal is simple: to help you protect what matters most.

If you'd like to learn more about the ways to reduce your IHT exposure, you can read the full article on our website: www.benchmarkfp.co.uk.

This article is for general information only and does not constitute advice. The information is aimed at retail clients only. Please do not act based on anything you might read in this article. All information is correct at the time of writing based on our understanding of HMRC legislation, however, this is subject to change. The Financial Conduct Authority does not regulate estate planning or tax planning.

YOUR BENCHMARK TEAM



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A DAY IN THE LIFE

NAME

Alan Campbell

AGE

48

HOMETOWN

Coleraine

ORGANISATION

System Operator of Northern Ireland (SONI)

Job Title: Chief Executive

TELL US A BIT ABOUT YOURSELF

I'm originally from Coleraine, though I lived in Derry/Londonderry for many years. I spent 13 years at Coolkeeragh Power Station, working my way up from team leader to maintenance manager and then plant manager. The north west is still close to my heart – it's where many of my family and friends are, and I always enjoy getting back to the city to catch up with everyone.

DESCRIBE WHAT YOUR JOB INVOLVES

As Chief Executive of SONI, I lead a team of around 180 people across a 24/7 operation. We're responsible for managing Northern Ireland's electricity grid – ensuring everyone has electricity when they need it. My role is part of the bigger picture of keeping the lights on, planning for the future, and ensuring the system runs securely and efficiently.

My role is varied, I help steer the direction of the business and driving forward the future of the electricity grid and decarbonisation goals for the island. I work with stakeholders across government and industry, and represent SONI at board level. We also operate the wholesale electricity market for the island of Ireland, so it's a role that combines technical responsibility with long-term planning and leadership.

DESCRIBE A TYPICAL DAY IN YOUR WORK

No two days are ever the same – and I know that's a cliché, but it's true! Some days I'm meeting with political representatives

or businesses about new connections to the power grid; other days I'm focused on internal meetings, updates, and employee engagement.



A big part of my job is driving meaningful change – whether that's through consultations, strategic decisions, or industry collaboration. I was in the Northwest recently meeting members of the Londonderry Chamber to discuss how SONI is playing a leading role in decarbonising Northern Ireland's electricity system while, at the same time, keeping costs down for consumers.

WHAT HAS BEEN YOUR MOST MEMORABLE DAY AT WORK?

Without a doubt, seeing construction begin on the North South Interconnector. It's something we've been discussing for years and taken through planning and legal challenges. To finally see the project underway was a huge milestone. It's one of the most important infrastructure developments on the island and will deliver real, lasting benefits for consumers including lower energy costs, increased integration of renewables, improved security of supply while also supporting economic growth.

WHAT IS YOUR GREATEST ACHIEVEMENT?

Launching the Shaping Our Electricity Future strategy is something I'm very proud of. It aligns with Northern Ireland's Climate Change Act and sets out how we can decarbonise our electricity system over the coming decades. Being part of a plan that supports sustainability and benefits society at all levels is incredibly rewarding.

WHAT IS THE BEST ADVICE YOU'VE EVER BEEN GIVEN IN WORK?

Always do your best in work so you can

end the day with your head held high – that's something that's always stuck with me. Another great piece of advice is that a problem shared is a problem halved. In this industry, collaboration is everything. Working together with colleagues and stakeholders allows us to use everyone's strengths to solve complex issues efficiently.

WHAT IS THE MOST FULFILLING ASPECT OF YOUR JOB?

For me, it's the wider societal impact of what we do. SONI isn't just about keeping the grid running – it's about enabling positive change for the environment, for businesses, and for communities.

We're playing a key role in decarbonising Northern Ireland's energy system, supporting economic growth, and ensuring those benefits are shared across the region — not just in Belfast. It's exciting to be part of that journey.

WHAT QUALITIES OR SKILLS ARE MOST IMPORTANT FOR YOUR ROLE?

Being a good listener is vital – both internally and externally. You have to be open-minded and responsive to change.

Innovation is at the core of our work, but it has to be balanced with careful management of risk. The grid is critical infrastructure for everyone on the island of Ireland, so it's about pushing forward progress while maintaining stability and security.

LACK OF PLANNING CAN DELAY YOUR RETIREMENT

**KEVIN MCPARLAND,
ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR, DAVY UK**

For many business owners, retirement planning is often overshadowed by the immediate demands of running and growing a company. It's a common blind spot—some assume their pension will take care of itself, while others defer the issue entirely. But your pension isn't just a standalone product; it's a cornerstone of your overall financial planning.



A well-managed pension can be the difference between financial freedom and financial fragility in later life. While the idea of engaging with long-term financial planning can feel daunting, postponing it only increases the risk of falling short. Your pension deserves regular attention—reviewing it periodically as part of your financial plan can significantly enhance its value and ensure it aligns with your broader goals. There are some key steps you can take to help ensure you can retire when you want to.

1. WHAT IS YOUR RETIREMENT NUMBER?

A key consideration is the cost of your desired lifestyle. The closer you are to retirement, the easier it is to work out.

Your retirement number is the capital you require to generate the income you need. The earlier you know your number, the more time you have to adjust your pension contributions and investment strategy.

2. MAKE SURE THE ADVICE YOU GET IS PERSONAL

Most pension arrangements offer a default investment strategy for individuals who don't wish to make a specific investment choice. Under a standard pension arrangement, as you approach retirement, your funds will move from higher risk assets into lower risk ones.

While this may appear sensible, an overly cautious approach may result in lower growth. The fund transition does not account for the prevailing economic and market conditions. Your financial plan should be aligned to your life goals beyond your retirement date.

Only having a rough idea of the value of your pensions or how many pension pots you have could result in missing out on growth over the longer term. It's worth considering consolidating your pension accounts to streamline your income withdrawals in retirement.

For a business owner, making pension contributions is one of the most tax efficient ways to transfer company funds into personal wealth. Getting expert advice can ensure you are maximising your allowances and reducing your current tax liability.

3. DON'T UNDERESTIMATE HOW MUCH MONEY YOU WILL NEED IN RETIREMENT

This will vary from person to person and will depend on factors including when you plan on retiring, one-off costs when you retire, your health and your desired lifestyle. Whatever your target for retirement income is, the very first rule of retirement planning is to start as early as possible.

The state pension, for those who qualify, is less than £12,000 per year, significantly lower than what many would require to maintain their desired lifestyle in retirement.

4. STRESS TEST YOUR ASSUMPTIONS

Your retirement number is only as

reliable as the assumptions it's based on. If you don't test it, you risk underestimating how much you'll need.

A cashflow projection will demonstrate the longevity of your fund. A good cashflow will include scenario-based testing for market corrections, inflation and unexpected expenditure. Your cashflow should be a living document which is updated when any of your assumptions change.

You wouldn't run your business without a clear strategy. The same principle applies to your personal wealth. Without a plan, you risk drifting off course; with one, you can achieve the retirement lifestyle you want.

To get advice on how we can help you identify your retirement number, contact us on **028 90 31 0655**. Visit **davyuk.co.uk** for more information.

WARNING:

The information in this article does not purport to be financial advice and does not take into account the investment objectives, knowledge and experience or financial situation of any particular person. The information contained herein is based on our understanding of current tax legislation in the UK and the current HMRC interpretation thereof and is subject to change without notice. It is intended as a guide only and not as a substitute for professional advice.

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SAVE THE DATE

19th Mar 2026

President's Annual
Lunch

5th Jun 2026

North West Business
Awards

July 2026

Fore The Win: Golf Day

2nd Oct 2026

President's Annual
Dinner

18th Nov 2026

North West Future of
Energy Conference

More Information + Registration
londonderrychamber.co.uk/events/

THE ESSENTIAL HR DOCUMENTS EVERY EMPLOYER SHOULD HAVE – BUT MANY DON'T

Being an employer or manager is becoming increasingly challenging due to skills shortages, rising employee expectations, greater legal scrutiny and a general climate of dispute. Julie Pollock from Consult HR explains that many employers believe their HR paperwork is “fine” until a grievance, tribunal claim or internal conflict forces them to look closely. By then, gaps in documentation are already costing time, money and unnecessary stress. The truth is that many businesses across Northern Ireland still operate with outdated, inconsistent or missing HR documents, creating avoidable risk.

Consult HR outlines the key foundations every business should have in place. Just as you would never build a house without solid foundations, running a business is no different.

1. UP-TO-DATE EMPLOYMENT CONTRACTS

These are a legal requirement and the basis of the working relationship. Relying on old templates, incomplete offer letters or AI-generated documents leaves employers exposed.

Incorrect clauses on hours, flexibility, deductions or confidentiality can lead to significant problems.

2. A CLEAR, LEGALLY COMPLIANT HANDBOOK OR COMPANY POLICIES

Your handbook or policies act as your rulebook. They set expectations and protect the business when issues arise. Many are outdated or too vague to be useful. Core policies such as absence, social media, equality, data protection, whistleblowing and flexible working must reflect current law and actual practice.

3. A ROBUST DISCIPLINARY AND INVESTIGATION FRAMEWORK

These are statutory minimums. When conflict occurs, following the correct process is essential. Templates, scripts and checklists support consistency, fairness and defensibility.

4. ONBOARDING DOCUMENTS AND INDUCTION FRAMEWORK

A structured induction improves retention and sets employees up for success. Role clarity, training plans, probation reviews and check-ins are vital yet often overlooked.



5. PERFORMANCE AND DEVELOPMENT DOCUMENTS

Without clear objectives and review processes, managers struggle to address poor performance or recognise good work.

Consult HR supports businesses by reviewing, updating and creating essential documentation and ensuring it is used correctly. The right HR documents provide confidence, compliance and clarity — they are the backbone of a well-run business.

Julie@consulthr.co.uk | Tel 07858 089006 www.consulthr.co.uk

DRIVING URBAN REGENERATION IN DERRY-LONDONDERRY



The Inner City Trust is a long established charitable Trust whose mission is to positively and systematically secure the physical, economic and social regeneration of Derry – Londonderry.

The Inner City Trust, along with its sister Trusts, Tamnemoore Enterprise Trust and the Inner City Building Preservation Trust pursue a comprehensive strategy of investing and re-investing both directly and indirectly in a range of activities that help in improving skills, relief of poverty and urban regeneration. The strategic interventions made by the Trust are funded by the management of a varied portfolio of properties spread throughout the city and encompassing a wide variety of commercial and residential property,

including many listed buildings. The Trust supports a range of charities with the theme of alcohol, drugs and suicide prevention that not only assist in their sustainability but also helps the Trust increase its front-line impacts.

The Inner City Building Preservation Trust is the historic and listed buildings arm of the group and has been responsible for the rescue and revitalisation of some iconic buildings in the city centre over the last few years e.g. 31-33 Shipquay Street and the restored old Northern Counties building now the Bishop's Gate Hotel.

Our most recent project included four buildings at 17-20 Magazine Street, three of which are listed. Built in the 1840s they

are a combination of early Victorian townhouses and a former stone-faced cork factory. Post Covid and Brexit it became underused. A partnership with Ulster University was forged to deliver student accommodation across all four buildings. In August 2024 the works were complete and accommodated 40 post-graduate medical students for the academic year.

These projects have greatly improved the urban landscape and have also created job opportunities adding to the supplier economic model in the city. These projects are the latest in a series of physical regeneration interventions that the Trust group has made across the city over the years.

SMARTPAYNI – NORTHERN IRELAND'S MOST TRUSTED MERCHANT SERVICE PROVIDER

As Northern Ireland's only locally owned and operated card merchant provider, family-run SmartPayNI is redefining what exceptional customer support and transparency look like in the payments industry.

At the heart of its success are five core strengths, being the only local card merchant provider, offering specialised installation, providing 24-hour customer support, and delivering low, competitive rates. All of which have helped SmartPayNI become one of the fastest-growing names in business support and payment technology across the region.

THE ONLY LOCAL CARD MERCHANT PROVIDER IN NORTHERN IRELAND

SmartPayNI is proud to be the only card merchant provider based entirely in Northern Ireland and now venturing further across Ireland also.

This local foundation allows the company to deliver a more personal, responsive, and efficient service to businesses of all sizes, from independent retailers to multi-site operations.

SmartPayNI offers a complete range of payment solutions including card terminals, e-commerce, payment gateways, cash advances, unattended payment systems for car parks, vending machines, and EV charging, as well as virtual terminals and EPOS systems making it your one-stop shop for all payment services.

By keeping operations, support, and decision-making local, SmartPayNI ensures every client benefits from fast response times, face-to-face support, and a partner that truly understands local business needs.

DEDICATED ACCOUNT MANAGEMENT

Every SmartPayNI client is assigned a dedicated account manager, offering

one-to-one support and industry-leading response times.

From installation to ongoing account reviews, the team provides transparent communication and proactive management, ensuring each business receives the right solution and the best possible value.

This high level of service has led to strong retention rates and outstanding customer satisfaction, setting SmartPayNI apart from larger, less personal competitors.

SPECIALISED INSTALLATION & EXPERT SETUP

Unlike many providers that simply ship terminals out with limited setup support, SmartPayNI provides local, specialised installations carried out by trained engineers.

This ensures businesses are fully operational from day one, with on-site testing and team training to help staff get comfortable using the system.

It's this hands-on approach that allows SmartPayNI to deliver seamless setups and fewer service interruptions for customers.

24-HOUR SUPPORT – REAL PEOPLE, REAL SERVICE

Customer service is at the heart of SmartPayNI's operation.

With 24-hour customer support, businesses can speak to a real person at any time with no automated systems or long waiting times.



The focus is on quick resolutions and direct access to someone who can help immediately, giving business owners peace of mind that their payment systems are always backed by responsive, local support.

LOW, COMPETITIVE RATES – TRANSPARENT AND FAIR

SmartPayNI offers some of the lowest and most transparent rates in the industry, helping Northern Ireland businesses reduce costs and take control of their payment processing fees.

With a clear, open pricing model, customers know exactly what they're paying for with no hidden costs, no surprises, just fair, honest pricing from a company that values long-term relationships.



INVESTING IN PEOPLE AND GROWTH

SmartPayNI's continued growth has been driven by its people.

The company is expanding rapidly, with a recruitment drive now underway to bring in new talent across several departments from client outreach and account management to compliance and marketing roles.

In partnership with Rutledge Training, SmartPayNI has developed a skills programme to help team members grow professionally while improving their CVs for the future.

This investment in people ensures every customer receives world-class service and support from a knowledgeable, confident, and motivated team.

SUPPORTING THE COMMUNITY

Community is at the core of SmartPayNI's values. The company is proud to support local charities, grassroots sports clubs, and community events across Northern Ireland.

From sponsorships to charitable donations, SmartPayNI continues to reinvest in the people and places that make our community stronger as well as building meaningful connections beyond business.

LOOKING AHEAD

As SmartPayNI continues to grow, the company's mission remains clear, to offer unmatched service, transparent pricing, and genuine local expertise.

Sales Director Marc summed up the company's vision perfectly:

"Our goal is simple, to keep raising the standard for what local businesses should expect from their payment provider. We're proud of how far we've come, but we're even more excited about where we're going. SmartPayNI will continue to invest in our people, our technology, and our customers, ensuring our current and future customers always have a trusted local partner they can rely on."

The ongoing recruitment drive reflects its commitment to growth, creating opportunities for passionate individuals to join an ambitious, forward-thinking team that puts customers first.

Further expansion plans have now begun for Ireland in 2026, marking



another major milestone in SmartPayNI's journey.

By investing in people, technology, and community, SmartPayNI is not only helping businesses succeed, it's helping our communities and people grow.

For businesses ready to partner with a provider that's local, responsive, and totally committed to your success, SmartPayNI is your only local partner in growth.

Contact us today for a quick chat:
 Email: admin@smartpayni.co.uk
 Call: **028 7116 3240**
 Follow us: Facebook | LinkedIn | TikTok



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JOIN THE LONDONDERRY CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Join the Londonderry Chamber of Commerce for a vibrant business community. Membership offers networking, expert support, and exclusive benefits to help your business grow. Contribute to a stronger network while promoting your brand and making Londonderry a great place for business success!

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CHAMBER LIFE

It has been an exciting period in the Derry Chamber calendar, filled with collaboration, celebration, and momentum for the North West business community. From factory floors to fairways, gala dinners to policy discussions, Chamber members have continued to connect and champion regional growth.

The month of May began with a focus on cross-border collaboration at the Cross-Border Partnership for Employment Services (CBPES)

Breakfast Briefing, held at the Inishowen Gateway Hotel. Attendees gained valuable insights into the complexities of cross-border employment and taxation, guided by experts Rose Tierney and Orla Rafferty on behalf of CBPES.

Later that month, members attended the 'Rolling in Connections' networking session at McColgan's Quality Foods factory in Strabane. This behind-the-scenes tour offered the chance



to connect with fellow Chamber members and local business leaders while exploring one of Ireland's largest independent savoury food producers. Sponsored by Benchmark, the event served up plenty of networking alongside sausage rolls and pies!

July brought blue skies and friendly competition to Foyle Golf Club with 'Fore The Win', the Chamber's annual golf day. Nineteen teams teed off in good spirits for a day that blended sport and networking, kindly sponsored by FNW Group. Congratulations to the Bishop's Gate Hotel team for taking top honours, and sincere thanks to all who supported and participated in this memorable day.



As summer drew to a close, the Chamber celebrated local enterprise in style at the 2025 North West Business Awards, hosted in partnership with City Centre Initiative and sponsored by Bank of Ireland. The evening at the White Horse Hotel recognised the innovation, talent, and entrepreneurship that define the region. From hospitality and retail to technology and the creative industries, every winner reflected the North West's first-class business community.





October saw the Chamber community gather for a series of flagship events. The President's Annual Dinner at the Everglades Hotel was a highlight of the year, drawing over 350 guests for an evening of inspiration and celebration. Sponsored by Foyle Port, the event featured a lively programme hosted by broadcaster Lynette Fay, with performances from Le Foyer des Artistes and a creative panel exploring the role of arts in regional regeneration. In his keynote, Chamber President Andrew Fleming called for confidence, collaboration, and delivery; for visible leadership from government, and investment that reflects the potential of our region.





October also marked an important international engagement, with the Chamber welcoming Pedro Serrano, European Union Ambassador to the UK, and a wider delegation of Ambassadors and senior European diplomats. In partnership with Derry City and Strabane District Council, the Chamber co-hosted roundtable discussions at the Bishops Deanery exploring market access, skills development, investment prospects, and how to strengthen business and trade links between the North West City Region and the European Union.

That same month, members explored the human side of business at the Workplace Wellbeing Festival, hosted at The Playhouse and sponsored by Gray's Communications. With talks from experts including Aware NI and ARC Fitness, the event equipped employers with practical strategies to support mental health, combat burnout, and foster thriving workplaces.



October also saw Ulster University welcome Paul Cheek, an international leader in entrepreneurship and innovation from Massachusetts Institute of Technology, to its Derry campus. His AI in Action lecture, a members-only event, explored how Northern Ireland can raise its ambition for AI adoption across sectors and secure a real global edge.

The momentum around emerging technologies and innovation continued in November with the Matt Cooper "AI for SMEs" event, delivered in collaboration with Letterkenny Chamber, Causeway Chamber, and Catalyst.

Delegates heard from Matt Cooper, CEO of Volta, who shared an exemplary case

study on how a region can lead and transform productivity by harnessing AI and advanced technologies. His insights reinforced the North West's ambition to position itself as a leading hub for digital innovation and cross-border collaboration in emerging tech.



In November, we played a key role in strengthening transatlantic business ties at the Golden Bridges Conference in Boston, with President Andrew Fleming and CEO Anna Doherty representing Derry Chamber at this significant cross-sectoral and cross-border initiative. The conference, now in its 17th year, has been instrumental in building relationships between the North West region and Boston, and showcasing our region's growing appeal to US investors.

November also saw the North West Future of Energy Conference return to the White Horse Hotel with renewed purpose. Now in its seventh year, the event brought together business leaders, experts, and policymakers to explore how the North West's energy transformation can drive economic renewal. An address from the Economy Minister Dr Caoimhe Archibald MLA and panels on green skills, cross-border energy collaboration, and economic transformation underlined one clear message, that the North West can be a leader in clean energy and inclusive economic growth.





As we look ahead to 2026, the focus remains clear: building confidence, fostering collaboration, and delivering a brighter economic future for the North West.

NORTH WEST FUTURE OF ENERGY CONFERENCE 2025: POWERING A NEW ECONOMIC ERA

The North West Future of Energy Conference 2025 brought policy, industry, academic, and community leaders together at the White Horse Hotel, Derry, to examine how the region can harness clean energy as the foundation of long-term economic renewal. Hosted by Jim Fitzpatrick of the Irish News, the event reinforced a central message: energy transformation is economic transformation.

ENERGY AT THE HEART OF GROWTH

Opening the conference, Derry Chamber President Andrew Fleming emphasised that the North West is “a natural hub” for clean energy. Offshore wind, hydrogen, and grid upgrades, he said, are not abstract concepts but real opportunities to power the regional economy, attract investment, and create high-quality jobs.

SONI Chief Executive Alan Campbell stressed the strategic importance of the North West Energy Corridor. With energy demand and renewable generation both increasing rapidly, he said the system will require unprecedented flexibility. A data-driven roadmap, strong north-south collaboration, and continued progress on key infrastructure, including the North-South Interconnector and the expansion of Coolkeeragh Power Station, will be essential.

Richard Rodgers, Head of Energy at the Department for the Economy, said Northern Ireland is fortunate to have political leadership committed to indigenous energy development. With UCL research pointing to over £100 billion in net benefits from renewable electricity, he urged the

sector to “accentuate the positive” and build confidence in a growing success story shared across the island.

ENERGY TRANSFORMATION = ECONOMIC TRANSFORMATION

The first panel explored how clean energy can underpin investment and regional balance. Speakers from EirGrid, SONI, Foyle Port, Invest NI, and the Department of Climate, Energy, and the Environment highlighted the island’s heavy dependence on imported energy—an issue that domestic renewables can directly address.

The Republic’s RESS programme, which has delivered 7GW of renewable capacity, was cited as a model of policy-driven investment. The panel repeatedly pointed to Foyle Port as a strategic asset with the infrastructure, logistics, and talent pipeline, via ATU, Ulster University, and NWRC, to support large-scale offshore wind and hydrogen projects.

However, panellists stressed that the region must now focus on delivery: bringing power onshore, modernising planning processes, and co-locating generation with major demand centres if Northern Ireland is to achieve net zero by 2050.

POWERING SKILLS FOR A NET ZERO ECONOMY

The second panel examined the workforce needed to realise these ambitions. Skills gaps persist across engineering, electrical roles, and digital/data specialisms, while limited placement opportunities in green-tech firms mean students often choose more traditional sectors.

Panellists from NWRC, ATU, Ulster University, and the Donegal ETB emphasised that better data from industry is essential for educators to deliver targeted training. They called for a shift from talking about “jobs” to offering clear pathways into long-term green careers, with the



aim of attracting young people and under-represented groups. The GRASP Project was highlighted as evidence that collaborative education-industry partnerships can succeed.

THE NORTH WEST ENERGY CORRIDOR

The final panel focused on the emerging cross-border opportunity. With wind resources concentrated in the west and growing demand for electrification, the North West could become a major clean-energy production hub. Speakers from NIE Networks, Derry City and Strabane District Council, Turley, and the Department for the Economy acknowledged that regulatory differences can slow collaboration, but the potential remains significant.

Richard Rodgers asked why the region could not create a renewable-energy equivalent of North Sea Oil, generating long-term value for citizens. The Single Electricity Market was referenced as proof that all-island mechanisms can deliver. City Deal projects such as CADRIC and the expansion of the Magee campus were cited as catalysts for innovation and investment.

A REGION READY TO LEAD

Closing the conference, Economy Minister Dr Caoimhe Archibald reaffirmed her commitment to supporting the North West’s ambition to become a leader in clean energy and inclusive growth.

She commended the collaborative spirit of the event delivered by the three Chambers, noting that bringing industry, government, academia, and local employers together is essential if energy transformation is to underpin long-term regional renewal.

HELEN MCDONNELL: INDIGOLIFE COACHING 'CATCH YERSELF ON!' WORKPLACE WELLBEING PROGRAMME



"You're not alone." That's the message from Helen McDonnell's Workplace Wellbeing Programme which is aimed at improving and sustaining good mental health among employees.

Helen's years of expertise in this field has dovetailed perfectly with many employer's realisation that staff's wellbeing impacts productivity and effectiveness and makes for a happy workplace! Which in turn helps recruitment and retention of staff.

The tools to face challenges of the everchanging world we live in, are laid out in this innovative programme. She is keen to point out that there is no "one size fits all," approach to tackling

wellbeing issues. The development of the individual lays the foundation for the collective strength of any company, particularly during challenging times when the bottom line is under so much pressure.

Helen said: "We cannot change people, but we can help them change themselves."

She added: "Imagine a workforce who are resilient, who take responsibility for their own mental health and who implement their own personal strategies for greater effectiveness."

The cornerstone of this Workplace Wellbeing Programme is for

participants not only to develop that self-awareness but to understand what is happening to them mentally and physically when faced with pressure.

Helen said: "Knowledge is power and self knowledge is self empowerment. That is what this programme brings to my clients."

If you would like to find out more, contact Helen for a free consultation

For more details contact Helen

T: **07719302988**

E: helen@indigolifecoaching.com



Welcome to **The Playhouse**, located within Derry's historic city walls. Our versatile venue includes a 143-seat theatre, a **panoramic dance studio**, a gallery with city wall views, and a tranquil Writers' Room. Enjoy our plaza with tea, coffee, and bar services, alongside modern amenities like changing rooms and **full disabled access**.

The Playhouse is ideal for any event or creative project.

To plan your next show-stopping event, visit www.derryplayhouse.co.uk

CITY OF DERRY AIRPORT CELEBRATE THE PLANNED REINSTATEMENT OF DUBLIN SERVICE



The Gateway of the Northwest has achieved continued growth as easyJet expands services, Loganair and Ryanair launch their winter schedule, and European Charters are set to take flight in 2026

City of Derry Airport has remained committed to ensuring the successful reestablishment of air connectivity between Dublin and the Northwest over the last number of years, and October 2025 brought the welcome announcement the Irish Government that a PSO service between City of Derry Airport and Dublin will be reinstated in 2026.

The new airlink will truly open a gateway for corporate, leisure, and student travellers, as well as those visiting friends and relatives, across Derry City and Strabane, Causeway Coast and Glens, Donegal, and beyond. The air connectivity to Dublin will remove the pain of a road journey of up to four hours for travellers in the Northwest, providing more opportunity for productivity, rest and enjoyment for business and leisure passengers.

Research carried out with the local corporate market across 2023 and 2024 produced findings on the essential requirement for air access between the Northwest and Dublin, with 66.7% of respondents outlining that

they would use the service for business travel. 42.9% noted a requirement for this air travel a few times a year and 28.6% require this every month.

Data produced from research with the leisure market across the same period highlighted that respondents in the Northwest enjoy regular breaks in Dublin, with 57.1% visiting a few times per year, and 4.9% even visiting every month.

The new service will also undoubtedly yield a valuable contribution towards growing inbound tourism, a key economic driver to the Northwest economy, both directly from Dublin, and internationally as tourists visiting Ireland via Dublin can now add the exploration of the beautiful Northwest to their itinerary.

Steve Frazer, Managing Director at City of Derry Airport, outlined that the reinstatement of the Dublin service marks another significant step forward in delivering enhanced air connectivity for the Northwest region: "The route represents a strategic



Mr. Steve Frazer, Managing Director at City of Derry Airport

opportunity for us to strengthen regional connectivity, improve vital access for business and tourism, support economic growth and promote balanced regional development. We look forward to seeing the transformative service take flight in 2026.

"Details on the airline operating the service between City of Derry Airport and Dublin, and when the flights will be going on sale, will be confirmed early in 2026."



City of Derry Airport has achieved continued growth and expansion over the last few years, as the team welcomed EasyJet to the Northwest for the first time in history in November 2024 with new services to Edinburgh and Liverpool. The airline has since launched an additional service to Birmingham in September 2025, indicating the success of easyJet in the region in this short period, and already the largest carrier by volume.

Loganair's three times daily London Heathrow offers a convenient gateway to central London for business travellers in the Northwest, as well as access to 119 international destinations on a single-ticket fare. The international connections available from City of Derry Airport has brought a new wave of global travellers using the Airport over the last few years, with the top connecting destinations outlined as Dubai, Doha and Abu Dhabi, and the top connecting airlines shown as British Airways, Emirates and Etihad Airways.

Loganair's direct services to Glasgow and Ryanair's services to Manchester remain in demand for business, leisure and student travellers, and those regularly visiting family and friends, as the winter schedule recently launched for 2025/26.

January 2026 will see the take-off of Topflight for School's ski charters to Verona for secondary schools across the Northwest for the third consecutive year. The ski programme has proved hugely popular with 2026 completely sold out and the 2027 programme now on sale. Joe Walsh Tours' pilgrimages to Lourdes and Marian Tours pilgrimages to Medjugorje will also take to the skies in Summer 2026.

Steve Frazer commented: "As the 'Gateway for the Northwest' for over 40 years, the air connectivity from City of Derry Airport supports the Northwest's thriving regional development plans. It's wonderful to see travellers across the Northwest enjoying the benefits of flying local.

"With 10 minutes from car to bar, ease and convenience are key at City of Derry Airport. We offer exceptional rates on airport parking with a week's parking available from just £38.04, and the Amelia Earhart Lounge is one of the best priced Airport Lounges in the UK at just £16.50pp, offering business travellers with a tranquil space to catch up on work before boarding, or to simply relax and unwind."

"As a team, we pride ourselves on providing customer service excellence and inclusive travel for all, having been awarded with the Impact Award from Autism NI, and we were the first Airport in Northern Ireland to welcome the Hidden Disabilities Sunflower Scheme. The compact single-level Terminal Building additionally

provides a convenient journey through for anyone with a disability or reduced mobility."

As to what 2026 will bring for City of Derry Airport, Mr. Frazer stated: "Demand for access to the Northwest from international leisure, corporate markets, and university students, means that the Airport is in a position to bring further tourism opportunities and economic growth to the local region.

"We will continue to work on the further expansion of our route network across the UK and Europe with existing partners, as well as the development of additional travel partnerships, that can best fulfil the travel requirements of the Northwest."

For more information on the flight services available from City of Derry Airport, visit

www.cityofderryairport.com.

IS YOUR BUSINESS CYBER SECURE? THE ESSENTIAL QUESTION FOR BUSINESS LEADERS

The dynamic business landscape of the North West, with its blend of retail, industry, and growing tech sectors, demands forward-thinking risk management to ensure your business is protected should the worst happen. Find Insurance NI, with over 50 years' experience in the Northern Ireland market, understands that having the right cyber insurance in place is essential for local businesses to navigate this new era of digital exposure.

A single ransomware attack, data breach, or fraudulent funds transfer can swiftly cripple operations, causing irreversible damage. Beyond the immediate financial loss, the resulting fallout can lead to severe GDPR penalties and long-term reputational

erosion. The comprehensive recovery costs - including IT forensics, system restoration, and mandatory legal and PR crisis management - can be catastrophic for business owners who are unprepared.

Cyber insurance is far more than a simple financial safeguard; it's a critical incident response plan that activates immediately. A robust, tailored policy ensures immediate, expert intervention, which is crucial for limiting damage and getting your business back online fast. The policy funds the necessary proactive response to halt an attack and covers critical costs standard insurance leaves exposed, including overtime costs to restore systems, defending

against liability lawsuits, and protecting your brand reputation following common threats like ransomware or phishing.

You can secure this crucial protection either through a dedicated standalone Cyber Insurance policy or as an add-on cover to your existing Business Insurance policy. Don't wait for a breach to find out your commercial policy falls short.

Contact Find Insurance today and speak to our specialist team. We can design comprehensive protection, enabling you to enjoy peace of mind knowing you're supported should an incident occur, ensuring your business is cyber-ready.



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TRANSLINK – A NORTH-WEST THAT’S BETTER. CONNECTED

More people across Northern Ireland are choosing the bus and train.

With an additional 4m passengers travelling on our network last year, as well as sustained growth across the North-West, Translink continues to emerge as first choice for travel, today for tomorrow, across the region.

By driving modal shift, Translink is continuing to support economic, environmental, and social wellbeing; public transport is crucial for delivering the Programme for Government priorities of People, Planet, and Prosperity and integral to achieving carbon emission reduction targets set out in the Northern Ireland Climate Change Act.

Derry~Londonderry has been a trailblazer in modal shift and in the development of new technologies, with the 100% Zero Emission Foyle Metro and the further gradual introduction of battery electric technology in our Ulsterbus fleet, continuing to drive passenger growth. These vehicles have been trailblazers, leading the way to a 250+ strong Zero Emission bus fleet across our network with more than 7m emission free miles in total!

Recent alterations to some Foyle Metro routes have also helped connect parts of the city to Drumahoe Park and Ride, as well as significant new

housing developments with the city centre and with Altnagelvin Area Hospital. The completion of major infrastructure works in Foyle Street has also improved the reliability and effectiveness of services in the city centre. Over 170 Foyle Metro services operate from the city centre on a daily basis, passing close to the expanding Ulster University Magee campus.

Goldliner services continue to deliver the essential inter-city connections Derry~Londonderry requires; we have ambitions to enhance the service further, although this will be dependent on funding.

The city’s rail connection also continues to flourish; passenger numbers on the North-West corridor have grown by 13.6% year on year, a figure that rises to nearly 17% for services between Derry~Londonderry itself and Coleraine. Coupled with enhanced rail capacity with the use of 6-car walkthrough trains on services between the city and Belfast, there is a clear catalyst to inspire more and more people to choose public transport options, and where funding and resource permits, to run additional services on this vital corridor.

With Christmas coming up, Translink will also be providing a service to help residents and visitors stay connected to all the action. We’ll be continuing to provide additional capacity on our Goldliner 212 services departing Belfast Grand Central Station for Derry~Londonderry at 12:15 and 01:15 on Friday and Saturday nights in the run-up to Christmas, with the 23:10 rail departure from Belfast extending its journey to the city; a rail service will depart the North-West Hub for Coleraine at 23:30 on Friday and Saturday nights. An Ulsterbus 98



service will depart Foyle Street for Strabane at 23:00



during pre-Christmas weekends, and there will be a Foyle Metro later night offering for those travelling within the city.

Despite the strong progress, however, challenges remain for Translink – public transport remains underfunded compared with other jurisdictions in these islands, and there is a pressing need to address the imbalance in funding between public transport and roads. This has been highlighted on many occasions since the publication of the Northern Ireland Audit Office report in 2015, yet little substantive progress has been made.

The fundamentals of the Translink network are strong; passenger numbers have returned to pre-pandemic levels, we provide 13,000 bus and rail journeys every day, transport 60,000+ school pupils daily during term time, and support 500,000 journeys to access health appointments annually.

We are living in a time when governments globally are prioritising sustainable infrastructure to support the transition to a green economy, tackle climate change and support social, economic, and environmental wellbeing, yet, the budgetary situation for public transport in Northern Ireland is not a sustainable one; there is an urgent need to put the public transport network onto a sustainable long-term footing so that it can play its vital role in meeting the Programme for Government priorities of People, Planet, and Prosperity.





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Driving Innovation for Impact in the North West

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At T&E Howie, we've been helping the North West shine for more than five decades. From our base in Derry-Londonderry, we've seen lighting technology evolve massively — and we've been proud to lead the way every step of the journey.



Today, that same forward-thinking spirit drives everything we do. Whether it's designing stunning lighting schemes, upgrading buildings to low-energy LED, or helping local businesses hit their sustainability goals, we believe great lighting should have impact — visually and environmentally.

Every project we work on is built around the same simple idea:

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As the conversation around energy and sustainability grows, we're proud to be part of the change — using our experience to help shape a brighter, greener future for the North West.

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028 7130 2343

We were one of the first companies in Northern Ireland to supply LED lighting, long before it became the norm. Back then, we saw the potential for energy-efficient lighting to make a real difference — not just to electricity bills, but to the environment too.

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DOWN MEMORY LANE

FROM SHIRT FACTORIES TO HIGH-TECH SOLUTIONS: THE HUNTER FAMILY LEGACY

HOW OLD IS YOUR COMPANY, AND WHERE DID IT ALL BEGIN?

Hunter Apparel Solutions Limited (Hunter) has been part of Derry's shirt-factory story for 89 years, and in 2026 we celebrate our 90th year in business as a fourth-generation company — something we are extremely proud of.

Our company began in Belfast in 1936, when Reggie and Frank Hunter founded Hunter Brothers (Belfast) Limited, a wholesale menswear business. After the Second World War, the company relocated to Derry~Londonderry in 1952, purchasing Usher's shirt and pyjama factory on Carlisle Road before later moving to Magazine Street. When structural issues forced a relocation in 1989, the company moved to Springtown Industrial Estate, where we are still located today.

WHAT WAS THE BUSINESS LIKE IN THOSE EARLY DAYS?

In the 1960s, Graham Hunter OBE took over, transforming the family business into the Huntwright Shirt and Collar Company. The company became one of the region's leading manufacturers, producing over 500,000 shirts per year and exporting around the world — particularly to the Middle East. The factory was not just a place of work but a symbol of craftsmanship, community, and opportunity for generations of local families.

WHEN DID THE MODERN TRANSFORMATION BEGIN?

When the company relocated to Springtown Industrial Estate, it was able to expand its operations to include uniforms and protective workwear. Under the leadership of Graham's sons, Simon Hunter Esq M.B.E, and Jeff Hunter, the company evolved into Hunter Apparel Solutions Limited — a trusted provider

of bespoke uniform and protective clothing for clients across the UK, Ireland, and beyond.

HOW HAS THE NEXT GENERATION CONTINUED THE LEGACY?

Today, Hunter is proud to welcome its fourth generation. Simon Hunter Esq M.B.E, is CEO, and his son, Jude Hunter, now works within Business Development — continuing a proud legacy that now spans nearly 90 years.

HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE THE COMPANY'S ETHOS TODAY?

Hunter remains true to its roots while embracing innovation. We combine decades of craftsmanship with robotics, advanced design, and modern materials to create apparel that performs and protects. In 2025 alone, we have received five awards, including the highest global honour in the professional clothing industry—taking the top prize for Safety Product Innovation at the 2025 NAUMD Awards in North America.

We have also received two major UK awards at the British Safety Industry Federation (BSIF) Safety Awards: FLEXGUARD® won Product Innovation of the Year, and the company's firefighter PPE decontamination system, Deconology®, was named Safety Solution of the Year. Locally, Deconology® was recognised with the Excellence in Innovation award from the Belfast Telegraph Awards and the Innovation & Technology Award from the North West Business Awards.

With our award-winning innovations now gaining national and international traction, Hunter

hunter®

Wear it | Be it

is entering a major growth phase—expanding its operations, accelerating product deployment, and engaging new public-sector and export partnerships. Our purpose at Hunter is “We protect those on whom society depends,” and these awards serve as a testament to our commitment to that mission.

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO REMAIN PART OF DERRY'S INDUSTRIAL STORY?

This is more than just the company's home; it is a source of inspiration and pride to be the longest-surviving clothing and textile company in our region. This community and its rich history — as well as the enduring skills of its people — have shaped Hunter's modern identity. What was once a shirt factory has become a hub of innovation, exporting specialist workwear and uniform solutions around the world.

WHAT'S NEXT FOR HUNTER APPAREL SOLUTIONS?

Hunter continues to grow, recruit, and develop local talent. We are passionate about combining traditional skills with new technology to ensure our legacy continues for decades to come.

If you think you would like to be part of the team, send your CV to jobs@hunterapparelsolutions.com or you can contact us to learn more at sales@hunterapparelsolutions.com or visit www.hunterapparelsolutions.com



AWARE

1996 - 2026

OVERCOMING DEPRESSION.
CHANGING LIVES.



Join us in celebrating 30 years of AWARE NI

by

BOOSTING YOUR EMPLOYEE WELLBEING

17.9 million working days were lost to stress, anxiety or depression in 2019/20 in the UK and mental health issues cost the Northern Irish economy £3.4 billion annually.

By investing in our training programmes, you can improve employee productivity and performance, reduce absenteeism and create a positive work environment that fosters employee wellbeing.

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS?

By investing in our training programmes you can help create positive work culture.

- IMPROVE STAFF PRODUCTIVITY & PERFORMANCE
- REDUCE ABSENTEEISM
- BUILD A POSITIVE WORK CULTURE
- FOSTER EMPLOYEE WELLBEING
- WORK TOWARDS AWARE'S INVESTORS IN MENTAL HEALTH AWARDS
- MEET YOUR SOCIAL VALUE GOALS

“

Our sessions with AWARE have always been informative, insightful and helpful. The tools and advice outlined in the session are excellent; everyone who attended this session related to something that was being discussed at one point or another. The host helped answer questions in a professional and friendly manner.

- Emma McPeake, Version 1, Belfast.

”

Investing in the mental health of your staff can create a healthier, happier & more productive team.



DID YOU KNOW?

28% of UK employees either left their job in 2021 or planned to leave it in 2022, with 61% of respondents saying this was due to poor mental health.

AWARE NI is the Depression Charity for Northern Ireland

Registered with The Charity Commission for Northern Ireland NIC100561 . Company No. N.I. 30447

AWARE-NI.ORG



AWARE delivers a range of mental health and wellbeing training options to **staff, managers & mental health champions...**



OUR PROGRAMMES

MOOD MATTERS IN THE WORKPLACE

An introductory mental health awareness programme for employees delivered either online or on-site in workplaces at the employer's convenience.

IAMAWARE - E-LEARNING PROGRAMME

An interactive e-learning programme for employees and managers. It teaches attendees the key concepts around mental health and how to look after their own.

MINDFULNESS IN THE WORKPLACE

A selection of mindfulness courses to create a more grounded, less stressed workforce.

For more information on any of our workplace programmes or workshops, please email training@aware-ni.org or call 028 9035 7820

SUPPORTING EMPLOYEE WELLBEING

A mental health awareness programme for managers equipping them with the skills and knowledge to support their employees' mental health.

MENTAL HEALTH FIRST AID

Designed to create mental health champions. It equips attendees with the skills and knowledge they need to help someone with a mental health problem or in a mental health crisis.

FOLLOW-ON WORKSHOPS

We also offer a range of follow-on tailored workshops in areas such as stress management and unhelpful thinking.

CORPORATE PARTNERSHIPS

Fundraising and donations sustain our vital services as a non-profit charity. With corporate partners, we can expand our reach and impact more lives.

TOGETHER, LET'S CHANGE LIVES

How we support you:

- ▶ Personalised support to help craft your tailored fundraising plan;
- ▶ Boost your company's PR through our partnership showcased in online and offline media;
- ▶ Support to reach your corporate social responsibility goals;
- ▶ A calendar of AWARE-organised events and support organising your own bespoke challenges to boost staff engagement;
- ▶ Promote positive mental health and wellbeing among your staff with workshops and resources, including Mental Health First Aid;
- ▶ Recognition through the Investors in Mental Health Award (an AWARE initiative to mark significant contributions to the promotion of positive mental health in NI).

How you can support AWARE:

- ▶ Make AWARE services available to staff and customers/clients;
- ▶ Support our services and messaging to initiate conversations on mental health;
- ▶ Raise vital funds to support AWARE's services to continue and expand;
- ▶ Offer your staff volunteering opportunities in our support services and fundraising department. This includes training as Support Group Facilitators and assisting with Information Outreach events.

Email fundraising@aware-ni.org or call 028 9035 7820 to find out more



Registered with The Charity Commission for Northern Ireland NIC100561 . Company No. N.I. 30447

AWARE
OVERCOMING DEPRESSION.
CHANGING LIVES.

BUSINESS ADVICE

When it comes to skills and employment, there's a word that continues to gain popularity — apprenticeships!

Tracing back to the Middle Ages, they were once reserved only for trade industries, however in the past decade apprenticeships have undergone a transformation, allowing access to careers in Dental Nursing, Housing, Tourism, Early Years, Computing, Construction, Business, Accounting and Engineering, alongside traditional crafts.

And the success of apprenticeships locally was recently celebrated at North West Regional College's (NWRC) Higher Education and Access Graduation ceremony.

Eimear Morrison and Sarah Jane Glenn are two recent graduates from NWRC who completed Higher Level Apprenticeships (HLAs) – and their individual journeys are examples of how students and employers can benefit from the apprenticeship model.

Eimear studied for a HLA in Computing while working for Fujitsu allowing her to earn while she learned. She is now an Associate Applications Developer with the company. Sarah Jane Glenn who works for Woven Housing graduated from NWRC with a HLA in Modern Construction & Renewables and was presented with the FK Lowry Cup for Best in Construction.

At North West Regional College (NWRC), apprenticeship enrolment numbers have continued to rise steadily. Since 2021, the ApprenticeshipNI provision has grown by 10%, while HLAs (post A-Level) have seen a remarkable 148% increase.

This growth reflects both the success of the college's programmes and the increasing recognition from local employers of the many benefits of hiring apprentices.

Orlaith McEleney, HLA Skills Development Officer at NWRC says the shift towards apprenticeships has



been shaped by economic changes, a focus on real-world skills, and strong support from governments and employers.

"Apprenticeships play a vital role in developing a skilled and motivated workforce, offering employers the opportunity to shape training from the ground up to meet their specific operational needs," she said.

"Key benefits of apprenticeships include cost-effective skills development, improved productivity and innovation, and stronger staff retention. Apprenticeships also help to address skills gaps, future-proof local industries, and demonstrate a strong commitment to supporting both the local economy and community growth.

"The growth in apprenticeships reflects both the success of the college's programmes and the increasing recognition from local employers of the many benefits of hiring apprentices.

"NWRC's strong partnerships with local employers have been key to this success. The college has dedicated staff who work directly with businesses across a range of industries, helping them to find the right apprentice at no cost to the employer. With consistently high application numbers across all subject areas, NWRC can match employers with motivated apprentices who meet their specific needs."

NWRC recently partnered with Women's Tec to launch an initiative encouraging more women to consider careers in the construction industry. The college is proud to be the first in Northern Ireland to sign up as a #NotJustForBoys Champion, demonstrating its commitment to promoting gender diversity in traditionally male-dominated sectors.

For more information on how your business can benefit from hiring an apprentice or upskilling existing staff, or if you want to advertise your Apprenticeship vacancy with us free of charge through our HLA link portal, contact Orlaith.McEleney@nwrc.ac.uk



STAFF CHRISTMAS PARTY: CONSULT HR EMPLOYER ADVICE

As the festive season arrives, many organisations are preparing for their annual Christmas party. While these events provide an excellent opportunity to celebrate the year's achievements and strengthen team relationships, Consult HR reminds employers a Christmas party is still a work-related activity and if not managed properly can pose a risk for future claims. The most common situation being alcohol fueled conversations which lead to inappropriate comments or behaviour leading to a potential discrimination complaint landing on your desk to manage. Taking a structured and proactive approach will help ensure the event is both enjoyable and professionally managed.

BEFORE THE EVENT

It is important to re circulate your Social Events Policy or provide a clear reminder outlining expected standards of behaviour. This helps reinforce the professionalism required and reduces the risk of 'mishaps' on the night. Employees should also be made aware the usual workplace policies on conduct, dignity at work and social media policy continue to apply during work-related social events. Careful planning around alcohol consumption is equally important. Limiting complimentary drinks, providing substantial food and ensuring non alcoholic options are readily

CONSULT HR

available will help maintain a safe and controlled environment. Inclusivity should also be prioritised by ensuring that all employees, including those on sick leave, maternity leave or other forms of absence, receive an invitation.

DURING THE EVENT

Employers should appoint responsible managers or senior staff to discreetly monitor the event. Their presence will allow early identification and intervention should any behaviour raise concern. If issues do arise, they should be addressed promptly, calmly and in private to prevent escalation and protect the dignity of those involved. It is also advisable to promote safe travel arrangements, whilst it is not your responsibility to arrange the travel for staff, it is a good idea to provide information on public transport, suggest staff pre-book taxis where possible and clearly communicating the agreed finish time.

AFTER THE EVENT

Any incidents should be reviewed and followed up in line with HR policies. By taking these practical steps, employers can ensure the Christmas celebration is safe, inclusive and professionally managed.

BUSINESS ADVICE

The Cross Border Partnership for Employment Services (CBPES) is



an alliance consisting of representatives from the Employment Services in Ireland (Dept. of Social Protection DSP), the Employment Services in Northern Ireland (Dept. for Communities DfC), Trade Unions from both sides of the border (Belfast Unemployed Resource Centre NI and Unite the Union). Chambers of Commerce (Londonderry Chamber of Commerce from NI and Dundalk Chamber of Commerce Ireland). Employer Organisations namely The Confederation of British Industry (CBI in Northern Ireland) and the Irish Business and Employer Confederation (IBEC in Ireland).

The aim of the Cross Border Partnership is to promote the benefits of cross border labour mobility and to increase awareness of job opportunities and economic development across the region.

One way the Cross Border Partnership supports Employers, is to assist them with their recruitment needs. The Cross Border Partnership can assist by advertising vacancies through the Department for Communities free recruitment website www.jobapplyni.com or if the employer is based in Ireland www.Jobsireland.ie.

If vacancies are not being filled the Cross Border Partnership can promote them across the border via the "Reciprocal Process" agreed between the employment service in both jurisdictions. This will ensure the net is cast further afield and opens the opportunities to many more jobseekers or job changers. This service has no costs to either employer or jobseeker and we encourage all members of the chamber to consider our services when posting vacancies or alternatively get in touch.

For more information on this process or to contact one of our Advisers, please see our website www.cbpes.com.

Unlock Exclusive Sponsorship Opportunities

Opportunities include:

Presidents Lunch

Main Sponsor
Programme Sponsor

Future of Energy Conference

Main Sponsor
Programme Sponsor
Exhibition Stand

North West Business Awards

Award Sponsor

Why Sponsor?

Boost brand awareness among high-level professionals
Network with key industry figures
Align your brand with prestigious and influential events
Unique opportunities for promotional visibility
Take your brand to the next level by partnering with us. Explore the opportunities and secure your spot today!

Golf Event

Main Sponsor
Hole Sponsor
Goodie Bag Sponsor

Presidents Dinner

Drinks Reception Sponsor
Programme Sponsor
Entertainment Sponsor
Main Sponsor

PEOPLE ON THE MOVE

AWAKEN HUB

1. Niamh Sweeney

Niamh Sweeney is currently completing her placement year with AwakenHub as the Events and Marketing Associate. As an Events Management student at Ulster University, this role provides her with invaluable practical experience in event planning and marketing, enhancing her professional development and preparing her for her final year of study.



DERRY CHAMBER

2. Joshua Kyle

With a background in hospitality and the private sector, Josh joined the Chamber to champion members' voices. He believes the North West has huge untapped potential and is passionate about helping unlock it. Recognising the complexity of change, he is driven by persistence, evidence, and collaboration to deliver progress.

JMK SOLICITORS ANNOUNCES APPOINTMENT OF NEW ASSOCIATE DIRECTORS

JMK Solicitors, Northern Ireland's number one personal injury specialists are delighted to announce the appointment of their new Associate Directors across multiple departments within the business. These appointments reflect JMK's ongoing commitment to developing and deepening their leadership team, to help support their business growth as well as the people themselves.



Colleen Ward, Laura Lynn, Ciara Mackin and **Sinead Sinclair** as Operations Associate Directors, **Amy Goss** and **Una O'Neill** as Finance Associate Directors, **Lorraine Murphy** and **Karen McKee** as Risk & Compliance Associate Directors and **Cieran Marshall** as Legal Technology Associate Director.

We would like to congratulate each of our colleagues and thank them for their ongoing commitment to helping strengthen JMK Solicitors' position as Northern Ireland's leading personal injury law firm. Their growth within the firm is a direct reflection of the impact they make every day."

JMK Solicitors assist clients all over Northern Ireland, if you have suffered a personal injury, been in a car accident, or had an accident at work, contact our team for a free consultation.

Call us today on **028 9032 0222** or email us law@jmk solicitors.com

HOME INSTEAD FOYLE AND ERNE

3. Garth Duncan

Garth Duncan, owner of Home Instead Foyle and Erne, returned home after working in Manager and Director roles in London and Riyadh. With 20 years in Health and Safety, he witnessed the long-term impact of injury and ill-health on workers and their families.

This inspired his move into home care focusing on the elderly and adults with learning or disability needs. His research revealed industry flaws - underappreciated staff, rushed visits, and lack of personal connection. Determined to improve standards, Garth now delivers dignified, person-centred care across the North West, supporting clients and carers alike with compassion and respect.

The new Associate Directors bring a wealth of experience and industry knowledge, which will act as a support to the JMK Solicitors Board to help them achieve their strategic vision and mission of helping clients who have faced traumatic events while securing the best possible outcomes with the least amount of stress.

Louise Mone, Managing Director at JMK Solicitors commented: "Now in our 21st year and having held the title of Northern Ireland's number one personal injury practice for over a decade, our ongoing success relies on having a strong, capable team committed to delivering the highest standards of service.

We are delighted to announce the appointment of: **Steven Gilliland & Karl O'Hagan** as Legal Services Associate Directors, **Amy Bradford, Paul O'Brien,**

MCCAY LEGAL

5. Mia Fox

Mia graduated from Nottingham Trent University before completing her Legal Practice Course and Master's Degree at Nottingham Law School. She went on to train at the Institute of Professional Legal Studies and was admitted to the Roll of Solicitors in Northern Ireland in September 2023.

With a strong background in matrimonial law, Mia is now expanding her expertise into general practice, including probate, wills, and conveyancing.

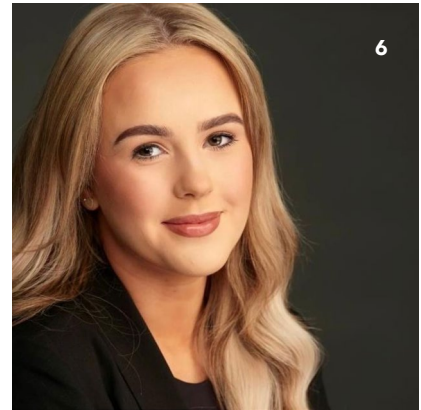
For enquiries, contact Mia on **02871 371705** mia@mccay.legal

6. Naomi White

Naomi is an experienced litigation solicitor who brings a wealth of knowledge from both the public and private sectors. Her well-rounded experience allows her to provide practical, strategic support to clients facing complex and challenging legal issues.

Naomi is looking forward to working with our team and supporting clients across a wide range of matters.

You can contact Naomi directly at naomi@mccay.legal or by calling our office on **028 8224 2177**.



MCCAY PARALEGAL

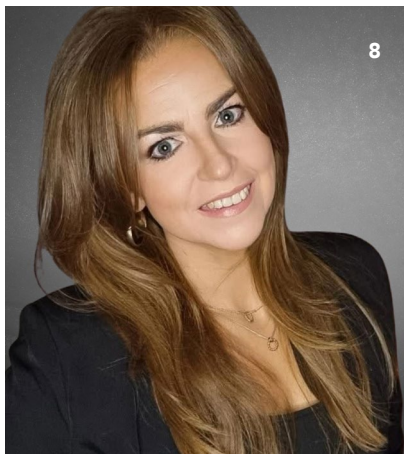
7. Molly Curran - Hamilton

With nearly seven years of experience in litigation, Molly brings a wealth of knowledge from both the private and public sectors—supporting Plaintiffs and Defendants alike. Her meticulous approach and love for organisation make her a perfect fit for tackling complex legal matters.

Eilise Meehan

Eilise recently graduated from Ulster University (Magee Campus) with a First-Class Honours Degree in Law, having completed her studies on a part-time basis while gaining practical experience working as a legal secretary. This combination of academic excellence and real-world experience has already proven invaluable.

Since joining us, Eilise has been supporting the team on a range of commercial conveyancing matters, and is gaining hands-on exposure to the busy and fast-paced world of property law.



8. Gillian Smyth

Operations Manager
Gillian has been a committed and valued member of our legal support team, bringing considerable experience, knowledge, and leadership to the day-to-day running of the firm.

In her new role, Gillian will be overseeing the operations across all McCay Legal Offices, and she has already stepped into the position with energy, focus, and a drive to support both the team and our clients.

9. Aaron Mullan

Director
Aaron, recently appointed Director at McCay Legal, continues to lead within the Employment Law and Litigation Team. Dual-qualified in Northern Ireland and England & Wales, he brings extensive experience across employment, civil, and commercial litigation. His appointment reflects his dedication, expertise, and leadership in delivering exceptional legal services to clients across both jurisdictions

PLAYHOUSE

10. Jack McGarrigle

Jack joined the passionate Playhouse team in August as Climate Engagement Officer for the Artitude: Climate, Culture and Circularity project, a collaborative movement empowering communities to transform their relationships with nature, waste, and climate action. Sustainability lies at the heart of Jack's artistic practice. With experience in creative production across theatre and TV, returning to the Playhouse feels like a homecoming as he contributes to Artitude's creative, community-driven approach to climate solutions.



11. Orion Powell

Orion Powell is joining The Playhouse team from a diverse and exciting background in theatre, film, and the music industry. He has performed and produced at both the Edinburgh and Adelaide Fringe Festivals, and his career spans touring music and record production, as well as creating music videos across several countries. Whether on stage, in the studio, or behind the camera, Orion has built a reputation for collaboration, creativity, and bringing bold ideas to life.



Orion now takes up the role of Project Manager for That's Powerful, The Playhouse's new programme celebrating civic engagement and dialogue through the storytelling power of the arts. Drawing on his international experience in performance and production, he is excited to support our regional communities in coming together, sharing perspectives and experiences, and producing powerful creative work that fosters connection, understanding, and positive change.



POPLAR DESIGN

12. Jamie Toland

Design & Interiors Consultant
 Jamie has been immersed in the world of creativity from a young age, earning a BA in Interior Architecture before launching a career in interior design. Specializing in both commercial and residential projects, Jamie's passion for interiors is the driving force behind his ability to translate each client's vision into a thoughtfully crafted space. With a distinctive creative flair and an eye for timeless quality, he guides clients through every stage of the process - from pre-build analysis to final completion.

13. Anna Hamilton

Design & Interiors Consultant
 Anna Hamilton has recently joined Poplar Design as a Design and Interiors Consultant. With a degree in Interior Design and with experience in fabrics and interior design, Anna combines creativity and technical knowledge to help clients create stylish, functional spaces that beautifully reflect their lifestyle and individuality.

ULSTER UNIVERSITY

14. Élise Féron

Élise Féron has been appointed as the Ulster University new Director of INCORE (International Conflict Research Institute) and will take up the position on 1 August 2025.

She joins from the Tampere Peace Research Institute at Tampere University (Finland), where she is currently a Docent and a Senior Research Fellow. She is also an invited professor at the University of Turin (Italy), the Diplomatic School of Yerevan (Armenia), Sciences Po Lille (France), and the University of Coimbra (Portugal).

Élise's main research interests include feminist peace research,

diaspora politics, the multiple entanglements between conflict, violence, and peace, as well as the aftermath of wars, including the long-term consequences of disappearances.

15. Peter Bazira

Ulster University has appointed Professor Peter Bazira as Dean of the School of Medicine in Derry~Londonderry. An experienced physician and educator with 25 years in academic medicine and clinical leadership, he brings strong credentials in strategy, curriculum development, and student experience. He aims to strengthen partnerships, expand education and research, and guide the School's growth and community-focused impact.

WELCOME TO THE CHAMBER

CONNECTED is highlighting some of the Chamber's newest members. Let us introduce you to the wider range of members that the Londonderry Chamber represents across the North West. Will your business be featured in the next edition?

#GrowingBusinessNW



Interested in your business benefiting from all Chamber has to offer?
For further information on membership contact natalie@londonderrychamber.co.uk



md educational

mdeducational foundation is a charity prioritising student wellbeing by providing fully funded wellbeing support in schools across the UK and Ireland.

Our approach is to enable educational settings to kickstart their long-term wellbeing strategies by providing a three-year salary-funded commitment to placing dedicated wellbeing professionals within post-16 educational settings.

Our dedicated wellbeing professionals, Wellbeing Leads, promote positive wellbeing through the delivery of a bespoke wellbeing curriculum, specifically designed for post-16 students.

By funding the placement of Wellbeing Leads, we're putting student wellbeing at the forefront of education - providing much-needed support for their wellbeing needs through education and beyond.



Foyle Network Foundation

Foyle Network Foundation is an anti-poverty charity committed to ending the need for foodbanks. We work with over 150 referral partners, delivering food and household essentials alongside wraparound services that tackle the root causes of hardship in our city. Our inhouse team offers debt and benefits advice, housing advice, baby hubs, counselling, and bespoke health & wellbeing programmes. We work in partnership with a wide range of organisations to support people's needs and look at solutions to provide people with a pathway out of poverty.

We empower individuals to regain stability and move beyond emergency aid.



Triangle

Triangle Progression To Employment can offer support to employers to recruit economically inactive participants back into paid employment with our dedicated team of Employment Officers that provide free advice and support to participants. Our Employment Service has dual involvement - supporting local businesses with recruitment needs and providing 'in work' support, as well as offering guidance on diversity and inclusion best practice and reasonable adjustments.

We deliver a range of employment academies (Accelerate Into Employment) that are codesigned in partnership with all our employers that provides participants with the relevant training needed for specific job roles such as World Host Customer Service, Food Safety, Manual Handling etc. Our employer jobs partners range from small to medium enterprises to large global companies, some examples of employer jobs partners are retail giant Henderson Group, The Range, McDonald's, OCS (Global Facilities Management), Lunn's, Tim Hortons, Andras Hotels, Galgorm Collection etc. Employer jobs partners have access to a dedicated Employment Business Development Coordinator who will manage their recruitment needs and ensure that the academy delivery is successful and meets expectations.



GEMX

GEMX is an industry led collaborative network of innovative companies and educational institutes in the North West.

Working together our aim is to inspire and generate engineering and manufacturing excellence.



Forward Emphasis

Forward Emphasis (FE) is a leading provider of Customer Experience and Claims Solutions for regulated industries. Founded in 2000, FE has grown from a small business into a national BPO leader, serving top insurers with expert teams and cutting-edge RegTech. FE continues to drive innovation, compliance and collaboration across the sector, blending technology with talent from rural communities to deliver customised, regulatory-ready services. Passionate about transforming customer engagement, FE invests in people, solutions and the future of experience management.



Home Instead

Launched in December 2024 by Garth Duncan, Home Instead Foyle & Erne is dedicated to delivering high-quality, person-centred care for older adults and individuals with learning or physical disabilities. Our mission is to support independence, dignity, and wellbeing, enabling clients to live comfortably and confidently in their own homes. Our experienced and compassionate team provides Personal Care, Dementia Support, Live-In Care, Specialist Care, Family Respite and Companionship.

At Home Instead Foyle & Erne, we believe care should enhance wellbeing, foster connection, and support independence and our bespoke tailored care plans offer practical solutions that reflect each client's unique needs and provide peace of mind for families.

www.homeinstead.co.uk/foyle-erne/



Guildhall Press

Founded in Derry in 1979, Guildhall Press is Ireland's leading independent publishing house and a social enterprise dedicated to celebrating and preserving the rich cultural, historical, and artistic heritage of the North West.

They publish distinctive photographic collections, local history works, and diverse literary fiction, providing a platform for writers and artists to share their stories with audiences worldwide.

Alongside publishing, they offer editorial, design, digital, and distribution services in partnership with their sister organisation, The Hive Studio.



The Maiden City Hotel

Bringing two new hotels to the heart of Derry City, they offer distinctive experiences for every guest.

The Maiden City Hotel is a boutique-style property with 43 beautifully appointed guestrooms, perfectly blending comfort, character, and charm. An ideal retreat for solo travellers, couples, families, and business guests alike.

The Walled City Hotel, housed in the former Bank of Ireland building, preserves every stone and cornice with care. Here, the grandeur of history meets modern hospitality, creating a truly unique guest experience.

We're thrilled to have you on board and look forward to supporting your journey in the local business community!



Liam Coyle

Liam Coyle is an Independent AI Consultant helping startups and SMEs implement AI & Digital Transformation initiatives within their business.

Liam has previously worked for Kainos as an AI Engineer, delivering AI Proof-of-Concept projects for the UK government. He has close links with Queen's University Belfast, and is passionate about helping businesses adopt new technology in ways that create measurable value.



McHugh Lindsay

Founded in April 2025 by Catriona McHugh and Steven Lindsay, McHughLindsay delivers hands-on, bespoke advisory and consulting services that help organisations build resilient, effective governance frameworks. We believe governance should be a force for good, driving strategy, performance, and positive change.

Our expert team offers governance evaluations, performance assessments, coaching and mentoring, training, and facilitation for clients across the public, private, and community sectors.

At McHughLindsay, people come first. We combine deep local insight with practical, realistic solutions tailored to each client. With years of experience guiding diverse organisations, we help leaders grow, develop, and realise their potential—empowering stronger decisions, better performance, and lasting success.

Visit our website www.mchughlindsay.com



Lo & Slo

Lo & Slo is an ICSA-accredited live-fire cookery school at Brook Hall Estate, offering immersive fire cookery classes, private dining, and corporate catering. We also operate a food truck for festivals, private bookings, and corporate events, championing local producers while inspiring deeper connection through fire, flavour, and shared experience.



LMC Associates

Lydia McClelland is the Founder and Director of LMC Associates, a marketing consultancy and training provider. A Chartered Marketer and Fellow of the Chartered Institute of Marketing, Lydia brings over 20 years' experience helping organisations develop impactful strategies, strengthen teams, and deliver measurable results. LMC Associates specialises in fractional CMO support, SOSTAC® marketing planning, mentoring, and accredited training programmes including WorldHost™. Passionate about supporting business growth, Lydia works with clients across Northern Ireland, the Republic of Ireland and Great Britain, and is actively involved in mentoring entrepreneurs and leaders through a wide range of professional networks.



McAteer Solutions Ltd

Olga McAteer is the Founder and Director of McAteer Solutions Ltd. With 30 years' experience in the construction and property industry, Olga has built a successful estate agency practice across Northern Ireland. The company specialises in residential and commercial sales, lettings with property management, and land sourcing. McAteer Solutions has grown considerably with branches in Toomebridge, Belfast, and Derry City, and a new sub-branch in London expanding into the UK commercial market. A busy working mother of five, Olga enjoys eating out, holidays, and long walks with friends while leading one of Northern Ireland's fastest-growing estate agencies.



Rexel UK

Rexel UK is a leading distributor of electrical supplies and energy solutions, proudly supporting the growth and success of local businesses across the region. With over 100 years of experience and a nationwide network of more than 200 branches, Rexel delivers trusted expertise and innovative products to a wide range of market sectors.

In Northern Ireland, our Belfast and Coleraine branches have long served the province with excellence, and now, we're excited to expand our presence with the opening of our new Springtown branch in Derry. Open to both trade and public customers, Rexel provides a one-stop shop for all electrical, renewable, and energy-efficient needs.

Our mission goes beyond supplying products, we're committed to empowering local communities, building sustainable partnerships, and driving regional economic growth. With a strong local presence and a people-first approach, Rexel connects businesses, trades, and communities, powering progress together.

Find out more here:
www.rexel.co.uk



Walled City Photobooths

Walled City Photobooths delivers award-winning, luxury photobooth experiences across Derry and Northern Ireland. Trusted by over 1,000 couples, we specialise in premium photobooth hire, selfie mirrors, and immersive 360 video spinners that bring fun, style, and unforgettable moments to weddings, parties, and corporate events. With stunning backdrops, instant prints, custom templates, and friendly professional hosts, we ensure every celebration feels exciting and effortlessly smooth. Make your event truly memorable with Walled City Photobooths - where premium service meets unforgettable entertainment.



SeeMe Ltd

SeeMe Ltd has developed an AI enabled personal archive platform to capture memories behind images and build intergenerational sharing and legacy solutions. A privacy first platform (SaaS subscription) SeeMe uses curatorial tools to reduce image dumps and help users to capture their unique Story of a Lifetime. Through reminiscence and sharing SeeMe is supporting the Care and Cultural sectors as well as targeting our global diaspora.

SmartPA

SmartPA

SmartPA is a global leader in Virtual Assistant and Virtual PA services, helping businesses of all sizes increase efficiency, drive productivity, and maximise profits. With over a decade of experience, they integrate seamlessly into your clients' processes, becoming a trusted extension of their team.

From diary and email management, HR, bookkeeping, and supplier management to CRM, social media, and marketing support, their tailored service packages are designed to meet the unique needs of each client.



Skilled NI

Skilled NI is a leading training provider dedicated to enhancing the skills, confidence, and opportunities of Northern Ireland's workforce. With 40+ years' combined experience, we deliver high-quality, industry-relevant training through ApprenticeshipsNI, Skills for Life and Work, and tailored employer-led programmes. We work closely with businesses to align training with operational needs and growth plans, ensuring real-world impact. Our personal, adaptable approach is rooted in commitment to communities, creating futures as well as qualifications. With strong industry links, dedicated educators, and a growing employer network, Skilled NI drives skills development and supports economic growth across Northern Ireland.



TechTides

TechTides is a dynamic, one-day tech conference taking place at the Millennium Forum, designed to attract professionals, students, entrepreneurs, and technologists from across Northern Ireland and Ireland.

The event will centre on three key themes: AI & Data, Social Impact, and Founders & Startups, with engaging sessions aimed at sparking discussion, fostering collaboration, and inspiring action.

Attendees will hear from keynote speakers representing some of the world's leading technology companies, including the Director of Learning Experiences at Minecraft Education, the former Head of Communications at Tinder, and the Director of Technology at ASOS. They'll be joined by other high-profile figures and local innovators, sharing real-world insights and strategies for building impactful solutions.

We're proud to support TechTides in its mission to establish Derry as a vibrant hub for innovation, entrepreneurship, and technology on the island of Ireland.

THE FINAL WORD

CRAFTING THE FUTURE THROUGH SKILLS AND TRAINING

In a world of rapid change and shifting economic pressures, one thing remains constant — the need for people with real skills. At Craft Training, we believe that investing in hands-on learning is not only about preparing individuals for employment, but also about strengthening the backbone of our regional economy.

Craft Training is a proud, family-run business established in 1994. Led by CEO Seamus Nealis who brings over 40 years of experience in the education sector Craft was founded on a simple belief — that people are the heart of progress. From our earliest days, that family ethos has guided everything Craft do: treat people with respect, invest in their potential and the results follow.

As a private training organisation, we specialise in delivering high-quality training and skills programmes that empower people to reach their full potential. Whether it's supporting school leavers as they take their first steps into work, helping employers upskill their teams, or guiding career changers into new industries our mission is simple: to help people build real skills, real confidence, and real futures.

Across the North West, businesses are feeling the pressure of rising costs, skills



shortages and evolving market demands. For us, these challenges highlight the importance of collaboration between training providers and employers. By understanding the real needs of industry, we can shape programmes that deliver relevant, practical skills — not just qualifications on paper.

Our work goes beyond the classroom. We're proud to partner with local employers, community groups and regional authorities to ensure our training has a direct, lasting impact. Every new learner we support contributes to the local skills base and helps businesses grow sustainably. This approach creates a ripple effect — boosting confidence, employment and economic resilience across the region.

At Craft Training, family values are woven into the fabric of our organisation. We take pride in creating a supportive environment where learners feel seen, heard and encouraged. It's about helping people discover not only what they can do, but who they can become. That sense of belonging and shared purpose is what sets our approach apart — training delivered with heart.

As technology continues to evolve, there's growing recognition that practical skills and human creativity remain irreplaceable. From construction and engineering to hospitality and the creative industries, craftsmanship and applied learning are the foundations of progress. That's why we're committed to ensuring that skills training stays modern, inclusive and accessible to all.

Looking ahead, our goal is clear: to keep growing opportunity through learning. We're passionate about working with employers, educators and local partners to build stronger pathways into rewarding careers. Because when individuals thrive, so do businesses — and when businesses thrive, our whole community benefits.

At Craft Training, we believe that every skill learned is a building block for the future. By investing in people today — with family, integrity and heart — we're helping to craft a stronger, more resilient North West for tomorrow.

If you or any of your employees are interested in finding out more and being part of this future- get in touch on any of our socials or call **(028) 71880044**.



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Caldwell & Robinson is an Ireland-wide legal practice, headquartered in Derry-Londonderry, that has been providing advice on personal and commercial matters for over one hundred years.