

ACF Northern Ireland Conference 2017

Funders Shaping the Future

9 – 10 October 2017, [Clifton House](#), Belfast



Please note the following:

The date has changed and is now confirmed as Monday 9 – Tuesday 10 October 2017. Delegates need to make their own accommodation arrangements.

Funders Shaping the Future

This year's Northern Ireland conference will explore the challenges facing charities in Northern Ireland, particularly in relation to building resilience, promoting civic engagement, and strengthening the voice of the sector. Delegates will have the opportunity to:

- Learn from the findings of the Voluntary Community and Social Enterprise (VSCE) Futures project;
- Contribute to the project by sharing and reflecting on their experiences of funding both in Northern Ireland and elsewhere;
- Consider the role of funders in shaping policy and practice for charities;
- Discuss the implications of the wider political context;
- Connect with other funders with an interest in Northern Ireland.

Conference fee not including accommodation

£95 for ACF members

£135 for non-members

To book

Click [here](#) to book a place. Please note that ACF members must be logged-in in order to book a place.

For more information

Please email James Magowan, ACF Development Officer Northern Ireland, at james@acf.org.uk or call James on 07805 175 456, including help regarding accommodation.

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Conference Programme

Day 1 Monday 9 October 2017

11.30 – 13.00 **OPTIONAL: Walking tour and project visit North Belfast** led by Janice Beggs (2017 winner of the SMK Local Campaigner Award) will take participants through an area blighted by the conflict but where there are signs and sounds of hope for a positive future.

13.00 – 13:45 Informal lunch

13:45 – 14.00 **Welcome and introductions**

John Mulligan, Northern Ireland ACF Network Convenor & Esmée Fairbairn Foundation

14:00 – 15:00 **Contextual Briefing**

Overview of Northern Ireland socio-economic and political situation and perspectives from the voluntary and community sector *with Dr James Magowan, ACF Development Officer Northern Ireland and Seamus McAleavey, NICVA.*

15.00 – 15:30 **Break**

15:30 – 16.00 **Introduction to VCSE Futures** initiative and to the team: Helen McLaughlin, Pamela Montgomery and Stevie Johnston, and Louise O'Meara, Interaction Institute for Social Change. Plus an introduction to the objectives and process for the three conference workshops *with Nigel McKinney & VCSE Futures team*

The three conference workshops facilitated by the *VCSE Futures* team, will each be on a key area arising from the *VCSE Futures* initiative and will provide opportunities to reflect on what needs to happen to create an enabling environment that delivers the best outcomes for the people and places the VCSE in Northern Ireland works with.

16.00 – 17.30 **Workshop 1: Building VCSE sector Resilience**

Consideration of issues around sustainability and independence; and how collaboration between the VCSE sector and funders, and different approaches to funding, could contribute to building resilience in the sector.

17.30 – 19:00 **Break**

19.00 – 22.00 **Dinner** in Members Dining Room, Stormont, with guest speaker Nick Garbutt 'Reviving Democracy in Northern Ireland'.

Day 2 Tuesday 10 October 2017

09:00 – 10.30 Workshop 2: Promoting Civic Engagement

Consideration of issues relating to participative v representative democracy set in the context of the current political environment and community tensions, and the role of funding and non-funding strategies e.g. convening role of foundations

10.30 – 11.00 Break

11.00 – 12.30 Workshop 3: Strengthening the voice of the sector

Consideration of issues around the 'closing space for civil society', a weakening advocacy role, and funder approaches both direct and indirect.

12.30 – 13.00 Summing-up and take-aways *with John Mulligan, Northern Ireland ACF Network Convenor & Esmée Fairbairn Foundation*

13.00 – 14.00 Informal lunch and departure