

David Price joins the RCN team

We would like to introduce our new Community Relations Officer, David Price.

David is delighted to be joining the Rural Community Network team and is looking forward to the job ahead. He comes to us having spent the past 20 years working within the third sector across the region, gaining experience focusing on Community Relations, Peacebuilding, Collaboration, Education, Wellbeing and Fundraising.



He is passionate about collaboration, community and coffee and is hoping to experience plenty of all three within his new role with RCN. Contact David at David@ruralcommunitynetwork.org

Secretary of State Visit to RCN

RCN recently hosted a visit by the new Secretary of State to Northern Ireland, Chris Heaton Harris, and a number of Northern Ireland Office officials.

Several member groups were invited to attend the meeting to discuss the current issues that they are facing. Conversations centred around, the cost-of-living crisis, the cost of fuel and its impact on rural transport, the lack of an Assembly for decision making, ongoing issues relating to Brexit impacting on cross border and East West relationships, the need to sustain peace within and between communities, the need for more civic engagement with decision makers.



Members also called for the heated language in Protocol related negotiations to be toned down and for him to be solution orientated when faced with the challenges that are arising.

Cost of Living

Northern Ireland is set to be **worst affected** part of the UK in terms of fuel poverty levels with **76.3% of families falling into fuel poverty by January 2023** ([University of York, 2022](#))

The **Crushed by Cost-of-Living** event will bring together people from across the C&V sector, academia and the wider community to call for the implementation of emergency measures to lessen the impact of the cost-of-living crisis for those with the lowest incomes.

This hybrid event will take place in Parliament Buildings, Stormont on **21st September at 10am**.

The event will explore the latest evidence on the implications of inflation and the lack of devolved government for citizens in this region.

RCN's Aidan Campbell will be giving a presentation at the event.

You can join this event online by registering here:

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/crushed-by-the-cost-of-living-crisis-the-time-to-act-is-now-tickets-403899894457>

Four emergency policy interventions being sought include:

- **A pause in social security debt for six months**
- **To reinstate the £20 uplift to universal credit and extend it to legacy benefits**
- **A one-off payment of £500 to those entitled to disability benefits or carer's allowance**
- **To remove the two-child limit for universal credit and child tax credit**

(all measures are emergency interventions and should be activated for six months October 2022 – March 2023):

For further reading you can explore:

https://www.ruralcommunitynetwork.org/app/uploads/2022/09/Final-Media-Brief_NI-Stats.docx

Rural Community Awards

The Housing Executive has launched its 2022 Rural Community Awards competition

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Awards competition.

NIHE want to

continue to celebrate

the work of

volunteers across NI

who are quite often the 'unsung heroes' within our communities, going above and beyond to promote health and well-being, individual and community development, social inclusion and to help make life better for all residents.



The following awards are available this year.

Rural Community Spirit

The aim of this award is to focus on and reward those community groups who work together to make their village or small settlement a better place to live.

Community Champion

The Community Champion award is open to extraordinary individuals nominated by the rural community group they represent. This person may regularly sacrifice free time to help others with no requirement for recompense or appreciation.

Cleaner & Greener

The Cleaner & Greener Rural Community award seeks to reward and encourage those rural communities who have come together to protect and enhance their built and natural environment and to promote sustainability with their residents.

Prize money

There will be a £1,000 prize for the winners of the northern and southern Community Spirit and Cleaner & Greener awards, and £500 will be donated to the community groups nominating the highly commended winning applicants.

For more information please contact Eoin McKinney:

Thomas.McKinney@NIHE.GOV.UK

And to download an application please click on the link [here](#).

Community Leadership Training

RCN in partnership with Community Leadership (West) Training have announced their **September – December** program of short courses and workshops which are **free** to anyone working or volunteering in the Community or Voluntary sector in the Western region.

For full information on what's available and to register, simply click on the link below, if you have any difficulties or any questions please get in touch.

Full Community Leadership (West) Training Programme

<https://www.fermanaghtrust.org/community-support/training-programme>

CR/CD Small Grants Scheme

The Community Relations Council, with the support of Government, has established a fund to spend each year on community relations projects.



This funding is

intended to help

community/voluntary groups throughout Northern Ireland develop their capacity to engage in community relations work and to enhance the community relations potential of projects they undertake.

To read more about the grant follow the link [here](#).

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Fund

Community Foundation NI have Grants available to locally based, not-for-profit, community and voluntary organisations in Northern Ireland who wish to explore and/or enhance diversity, equity and inclusion within their group and community.

[Available Grants - Community Foundation Northern Ireland \(communityfoundationni.org\)](https://www.communityfoundationni.org)