



Northern Ireland Committee Candidate Briefing Pack June 2026

Welcome

Thank you for your interest in The National Lottery Community Fund

The National Lottery Community Fund (the Fund) is the largest community funder in the UK. We support amazing projects and activities that strengthen society and improve lives. National Lottery players raise over £30 million a week for good causes. We are proud to be one of 12 distributors responsible for awarding this funding across the UK. We also distribute non-National Lottery funds, working closely with the Department of Finance to develop programmes and distribute funding from the Dormant Assets scheme.

We are now recruiting for **two new Committee members** to join our Northern Ireland Committee from 1 November 2026 for an initial 4-year period.

The Northern Ireland Committee sets the direction of our work in line with policy directions and the Fund's strategy. It oversees effectiveness and impact and makes funding decisions on our larger grants. There are currently seven members including the NI Chair.

Committee members use their knowledge of Northern Ireland communities, along with broader contextual knowledge and strategic thinking, to provide direction and impartial input to our grant-making activity. They also act as ambassadors for the Fund.

This opportunity comes at a significant time at the Fund, as we are 3 years into our 7-year strategy, ***"It starts with community"***, setting a new direction to 2030. Northern Ireland Committee Members joining at this exciting time will be responsible for overseeing implementation of the strategy in Northern Ireland.

We are looking for Committee Members who understand Northern Ireland's communities, the challenges they face and the ways in which funding can help. You may have particular regional expertise, or experience relevant to one or more of our community-led missions. **We are keen to hear from people who may have gained such knowledge and insight through their lived experience as much as through professional experience or learning.**

This is a significant opportunity to be involved in an organisation which transforms people's lives. If you believe you have the background and personal qualities needed, we would be delighted to hear from you.

Paul Sweeney
Chair, Northern Ireland Committee, National Lottery Community Fund



The National Lottery Community Fund

It Starts with Community - Our Journey to 2030

Social connections and community activities are at the heart of creating healthier, happier lives and a flourishing society. That's why The National Lottery Community Fund supports amazing community-led projects, and why we are looking to make a bigger difference in the years ahead, by listening and responding to communities and focusing on supporting bolder change.

The ambition through this strategy is to create resilient communities that are more inclusive and environmentally sustainable, funding activities and organisations that strengthen society and improve lives across the UK.

We will be delivering this strategy to 2030 at a time of renewal and expected growth in returns to 'good causes' from The National Lottery, alongside the Fund's third party and dormant assets work.

Reading online? You can find out more about our strategy - It starts with community [here](#).

The Organisation

The National Lottery Community Fund is established as a non-departmental public body by an Act of Parliament. The Fund is governed by Board, which is responsible for setting the Fund's long-term strategy and key policies, and making sure that it is run in an effective and efficient way. The Board delegates the day-to-day running of the organisation to the Chief Executive and his Senior Management Team.

Funding decisions are delegated to four Country Committees (England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales), to the UK Funding Committee and to Executive Officers.

Policy responsibility for the Fund in Northern Ireland, including setting policy directions, rests with the Department for Communities.



Our Purpose

We support activities that create resilient communities that are more inclusive and environmentally sustainable - activities that will strengthen society and improve lives across the UK.

Our community-led missions and what we'll achieve by 2030

We'll support communities to connect by:

- creating accessible, welcoming places, both physical and virtual, for people to meet
- initiating engaging and inclusive activities that support connections within and between groups of people
- enabling people from all backgrounds to shape the future of their communities
- cultivating an increased sense of belonging.

We'll support environmentally sustainable communities that:

- reduce carbon emissions and negative environmental impact
- create positive environmental impacts
- establish equality of access to the natural environment
- improve the quality of natural spaces.

We'll enable children and young people to thrive by:

- creating opportunities for children and young people from all backgrounds to enjoy community experiences
- helping children and young people shape the decisions that affect them and their communities
- providing children and young people access to safe spaces to play, participate, socialise and get support.

We'll enable people to live healthier lives by:

- helping reduce health inequalities
- increasing opportunities for community participation to shape better health services
- taking a preventative approach to health.

Our approach

- An equity-based approach to tackle inequality
- Supporting communities to build from their strengths
- Supporting what matters most to different communities
- Flexible grant making model with small one-off grants from £300-£20k, to longer-term grants and strategic investments

Our values

We are:

- Inclusive
- Ambitious
- Impact Focused
- Adaptable
- Compassionate

The Northern Ireland Committee

The Northern Ireland Committee sets the strategic direction for our work in Northern Ireland, oversees its effectiveness and impact and takes larger funding decisions. There are currently seven members including the Northern Ireland Chair.

As a funder, our relational approach is supported by our focus on local area working in the community, so it is vital that our Northern Ireland Committee reflects this approach. In this recruitment round we will seek to achieve a balance of membership which is diverse and inclusive, representing the communities we serve.

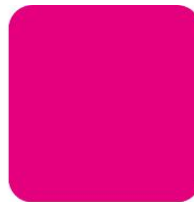
Our Funding in Northern Ireland

We help fund all kinds of organisations in Northern Ireland, ranging from small grants of £300 to £20,000, through National Lottery Awards for All, to large grants up to £500,000 over five years, through the Strengthening Communities programme.

In Northern Ireland, in 2025/26 we awarded over **900** grants worth over **£38 million** supporting organisations throughout Northern Ireland.

Further information on our **Northern Ireland Programmes** can be found [here](#)

But we're more than just a funder. We also collaborate with other funders, charities, and individuals, sharing knowledge and building partnerships, so we can be as effective as possible. We like to bring our stakeholders and the groups we fund together so that they can share their learning, influence policy and practice and strengthen links between them e.g. through the Learning Exchange Network, which is delivered for us under contract by The Centre For Effective Services.



Role of the Northern Ireland Committee

Overall strategy and policy setting

- To agree long-term direction and key approaches to our funding in Northern Ireland, in line with the Fund's overall strategy and its governance processes.

Accountability

- To ensure the highest standards of governance and discharge of responsibilities.
- To observe the Seven Principles of Public Life and the Cabinet Office Code of Conduct for non-departmental public bodies (NDPBs), comply with all statutory responsibilities.

Challenge and support the executive

- To hold the executive team accountable for the overall performance of the organisation against agreed longer term strategic objectives.
- To support the Northern Ireland Director, be a source of guidance and advice and challenge and support the NI executive.

Effectiveness

- To agree the Northern Ireland Directorate's annual grants budget, monitor progress and approve corrective actions.
- To agree the distribution of funds for Northern Ireland.
- To agree key changes to funding programmes and monitor progress and impact our grant making.
- To ensure that risks are appropriately considered and monitored.

Ambassadorial/reputational

- To be ambassadors for the organisation, within guidelines agreed by the Northern Ireland Directorate.
- To enhance and protect the reputation of the Fund.

Person Specification

Skills and Experience Required

We want our Committee to have a broad base of knowledge, skills and experience and to reflect the diversity of Northern Ireland and the communities that we serve.

Our focus on local area working has seen the development of closer relationships in communities across Northern Ireland. This has increased opportunities for Committee members to work more closely with our Local Area Teams and engage directly with stakeholders, grant holders and people who want to apply for funding. The skills and experience we are seeking for this role reflect the need to engage effectively as well as performing core committee roles.

The person - essential criteria

- Experience of working with and for communities to deliver local priorities and a deep understanding of the wider political and socio-economic context of Northern Ireland.
- Strategy implementation: the ability to contribute to strategic decision-making on priorities and funding in line with strategy and missions, taking into account the wider political and socio-economic context.
- Decision-making: Ability to understand complex issues and make decisions taking into account competing demands.
- Equity, Diversity & Inclusion: a clear understanding and commitment to achieving equitable outcomes through grant-making and advancing EDI in the context of a public body and a funder.
- Governance: An awareness of the governance framework relevant to the Fund and an understanding and commitment to the principles required to hold a public post of this nature (The Nolan Principles).

The person - desirable criteria

- Experience and/or knowledge of grant-making or managing grants or other funding
- Knowledge and expertise relevant to the Fund's four community-led funding missions
- Expertise in delivering equity-based approaches to tackle poverty, disadvantage and discrimination
- Knowledge of the role of emerging technologies and artificial intelligence in funding and the work of community-led groups
- Experience of representing an organisation and willingness to represent the Fund at public events

Terms of Appointment

Time Commitment and Remuneration

The time commitment is expected to be an average of two-three days per month to include the following:

- The Northern Ireland Committee meets ten times per year plus one annual planning day. Most meetings are held face-to-face in the Belfast office but will be at other locations across Northern Ireland when agreed.
- Committee members also provide informal support and advice to the Northern Ireland Directorate executives, drawing on their specific expertise and on occasion representing the Fund at events or to assist with networking.
- There will be other Committee or Funding Panel meetings, which will be identified on appointment and in discussion with the Chair of the Northern Ireland Committee.

Remuneration and Expenses

The successful candidate will receive an annual fixed payment of £5,232. The role is not pensionable but may be subject to tax. Travel across Northern Ireland and occasional travel across the UK will be required. All expenses such as travel and subsistence incurred on National Lottery Community Fund business will be fully covered.

Length of Appointment

The appointment is for an initial period of up to four years and expected to be from 1 November 2026.

Equity, Diversity & Inclusion

Equity, diversity and inclusion in our grant-making, and amongst our people, are all vital to our success in achieving our strategy - It starts with community. We believe our people should represent the communities, organisations and individuals we work with. We are committed to being a fair and inclusive place to work and recognise people in our society come from diverse backgrounds. We are a Disability Confident employer and positively welcome applications from people with disabilities.



Meet the Committee Members



Paul Sweeney
Committee Chair

Paul has extensive experience across Northern Ireland's voluntary, community and public sectors, including leading the Northern Ireland Voluntary Trust and holding senior Civil Service roles. Since retiring in 2017, he has served as a trustee, supporting regeneration, culture and young people. He brings expertise in community development and policy leadership.



Cara Cash Marley

Cara Cash Marley has 17 years' experience in Northern Ireland's community and voluntary sector, including leadership in regeneration. She brings expertise in service delivery, governance and strategy, and is committed to empowering communities through user-centred approaches while contributing as a trustee and speaker.



Kate Clifford

Kate has 25 years' experience in rural community development in Northern Ireland, with expertise in peacebuilding, tackling inequality and policy advocacy. She has worked with governments and agencies, supported grassroots change, taught at postgraduate level, and holds degrees in agricultural economics and rural development.



Nick Garbutt

Nick Garbutt is a journalist and public relations consultant, former editor of the Irish News and deputy editor of the Belfast Telegraph. He edits ScopeNI, advises on health reform, and brings non-executive and governance experience across charities, advocating citizen empowerment and participatory democracy.



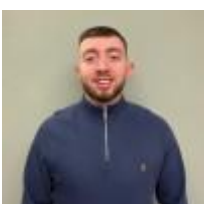
Anne-Marie McClure

Anne-Marie McClure has nearly three decades' experience in Northern Ireland's community and voluntary sector, including leadership of major support services. She brings extensive board and governance experience, alongside a strong commitment to community participation, addressing need, and improving outcomes for individuals and families.



Norman McKinley

Norman McKinley has spent his career as a senior leader in the UK voluntary sector, including as Executive Director of UK Operations at the British Red Cross. He volunteers in Northern Ireland and supports the NI Committee's work strengthening communities locally.



Caolan McKiernan

Caolan is a youth work student at Ulster University, in his mid-20s, and works at Holy Trinity Youth Centre. Passionate about supporting young people, he combines lived experience with strong leadership training, including completing the Washington Ireland Programme and earning Class Valedictorian recognition.

How to Apply

Please provide a brief CV and a supporting statement on the form provided. Please also complete the diversity monitoring form.

Please note that CVs will not be accepted unless also accompanied by the supporting statement demonstrating how you meet each of the essential criteria for the position. Please note that this statement will be assessed for the purpose of shortlisting. Those candidates failing to demonstrate evidence of the essential criteria are unlikely to be shortlisted for interview. Shortlisted candidates will be invited for an in-person interview.

Interviews will be held w/c 3rd August at our Belfast office at 1 Cromac Quay, Belfast, BT7 2JD.

The closing date for receipt of completed applications is Noon on Thursday 16 July 2026.

Please indicate on the monitoring form if you have any special requirements which will help you fully engage with the appointment process. This information is for monitoring purposes only and will not be seen by the selection panel.

If you have any questions on any aspect of the appointment process, need additional information or wish to have an informal discussion, please contact our search partner at Engage: **Patrick Minne, 07792 509003, patrick@co3.org.uk**

About the Way We Work

Nolan Principles - The Seven Principles of Public Life

The Committee on Standards in Public Life (originally the Nolan Committee) set out Seven Principles of Public Life: Selflessness; Integrity; Objectivity; Accountability; Openness; Honesty; Leadership. All National Lottery Community Fund Board and Committee members are expected to uphold these.

All public appointments are based on merit

This appointment will be made in accordance with the OCPA Code of Practice which requires that appointments are made on merit with independent assessment and transparency of process. Political activity will play no part in the selection process.

Candidates may come from a wide range of backgrounds and experience. The National Lottery Community Fund welcomes applications irrespective of race, colour, ethnic or national origin, sex, marital status, disability, sexual orientation, religion, religious beliefs or similar philosophical beliefs, age, gender re-assignment or community background.

Accessibility to public appointments is a fundamental requirement and the public appointments process promotes, demonstrates and upholds equality of opportunity and treatment to all applicants. If you require any of the application documentation in an alternative format, please contact us.

If you require any of the application documentation in an alternative format, please contact **apply@engageexec.co.uk** or phone **07792 509003**.

These positions are public appointments, not employment positions, and subject to the relevant appointment principles.