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Economy Minister Conor Murphy is pictured at the launch of the Digital Skills Action Plan 2024-34 at Belfast Met's e3 campus with media and journalism students and course director Lynda Bryans.

MURPHY LAUNCHES NEW DIGITAL SKILLS ACTION PLAN

Economy Minister Conor Murphy has launched a Digital Skills Action Plan for 2024-34.

The Action Plan sets out how digital skills will be nurtured and supported over the next decade by creating alternative pathways into the digital sector.

Speaking about the Action Plan after visiting Belfast Met's e3 campus, the Minister said: "Investment in the skills and talent of our people is vital for our economic

success.

In this age of rapid technological change and development, digital skills and a digitally competent workforce are crucial to ensuring the continued competitiveness of our businesses.

"This Action Plan will support and develop digital skills, promoting the breadth

of career opportunities within the digital sector. We will create alternative pathways into the sector, with a particular focus on underrepresented groups of people and those who need additional support to access the same opportunities as others."

The Minister concluded: "Our ambition is to transform the north

into a world leading digital hub. Focusing on our digital skills will boost our economy and result in more and better job opportunities and greater earning potential, alongside improved individual wellbeing and social inclusion."

Continued on page 7

Patients encouraged to sign up for My Care portal

People are encouraged to sign up for access to the My Care patient portal, which allows patients and service users to view information on their digital medical record.

The My Care portal gives patients instant access to information on their healthcare through their digital devices via an app or web browser.

The patient portal has been created to coincide with the move from paper patient records to electronic patient records through the roll out of encompass.

Patients and service users across the South Eastern and Belfast Health and Social Care Trust areas, where encompass is already live, can now access their information via the app or webpage by creating a My Care account.

Patients in the Northern, Southern and Western Health and Social Care Trusts will be able to access their personal health record via My Care once encompass goes live in their Trust area. The HSCNI

Senior Responsible Owner for encompass, Dr Dermot Hughes, said: "My Care is an important component running alongside the introduction of encompass and has huge benefits for patients. We are continuing with work to roll out encompass across the remaining three Trust areas and have no doubt that My Care will play a significant part in its success."

Patients can continue to receive traditional communication such as appointment letters alongside My Care. Patients may also permit proxy access to third parties such as a carer or family member to assist with managing their care should they wish.

Further information on My Care, including how to create a My Care account can be found at My Care - DHCNI (hscni.net)

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Legacy of 'An Irish Goodbye' celebrated with new mural in Belfast city centre

A new mural has been unveiled in Belfast city centre, celebrating the Oscar-winning short movie *An Irish Goodbye*.

The colourful artwork, on Winetavern Street in the Smithfield area, has been created by street arts collective Peaball – the team behind the iconic Derry Girls mural.

Lord Mayor of Belfast, Councillor Micky Murray, joined the cast and crew of the film at a special event to mark its completion, as part of Belfast City Council's Belfast 2024 celebration of culture.

"Belfast 2024 is all about highlighting and showcasing our city's creativity and we couldn't let it happen without paying tribute to one of our greatest creative success stories – *An Irish Goodbye*," said Councillor Murray.

"The film really put our local film sector on the map when it picked up both BAFTA and Academy Awards last year, so this is a fitting tribute to a creative collaboration which has done so much to promote Belfast on a world stage.

"Well done to the Peaball crew on creating another really striking and memorable piece of art. The location is perfect too - directly overlooking the site of Belfast Stories, the new home for storytelling and screen in our city when it opens in 2030."



The mural features the film's directors Tom Berkeley and Ross White, as well as actors James Martin, Seamus O'Hara and Paddy Jenkins.

Alongside their depictions, there are also nods to iconic scenes within the movie, including the famous balloons used by the brothers as part of their mother's final farewell.

"All of us behind *An Irish Goodbye* are totally honoured that Belfast City Council have decided to pay tribute to the film's success in this touching way," said

directors Tom Berkeley and Ross White.

"The people of Belfast were behind us every step of the way of this little film's incredible journey, from its humble beginnings on a farm in Templepatrick, all the way to the Dolby Theatre in Hollywood.

"As surreal as it is for the team to see our faces 10ft high across a wall, Peaball's wonderful artwork will hopefully go on to serve as a constant reminder of all the love, support and hard work that so many put into this film."

The mural is the next in a series of works by Peaball in Belfast and becomes the latest addition to the city's eclectic street art collection – much of which has been funded by council.

"*An Irish Goodbye* is a fantastic addition to Belfast's street art scene, honouring the film's Oscar win and showcasing the talent of our team at Peaball," said the collective.

"It's a proud moment for the city, highlighting this historic Oscar win and the city's famous creative spirit."



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Strong visitor numbers in Belfast for Summer 2024

Belfast city centre experienced a strong summer, with visitor numbers, footfall, and dwell time all up on the year before.

An estimated 133,490 visitors travelled into the city centre during July 2024 – an increase of 39% on the previous year.

Footfall was up 24.1% year on year from July 2023, with foot traffic in the retail core increasing by 1.6% over the same period. On average, people spent three hours 26 mins in the city centre during July 2024 – up 4% from the year before.

The figures were presented to elected members of Belfast City Council at the latest meeting of their all-party city centre working group, alongside updates on progress on initiatives to enhance the city's vitality, cleanliness, safety, investment and prosperity.

They included: New retail, hospitality and transport additions, Belfast Grand Central Station. The addition of two extra Safer Neighbourhood Officers to provide high-visibility patrols, challenge low-level anti-social behaviour and work in partnership with PSNI, Extern, DePaul and others to support vulnerable people. Council continues to deliver a daily and night-time cleansing operation, including street cleaning, emptying litter bins and power washing pavements. During autumn, this is supplemented with additional resources to help



clear leaf build-up, where possible. A packed autumn of events and activities for Belfast 2024, the biggest ever city-wide celebration of creativity.

Following the success of last week's Shadowdock spectacular at Thompson Dry Dock and the unveiling of a new mural celebrating Oscar-winning short movie An Irish Goodbye, next up is North Star – a celebration of the city's black cultures at The Telegraph Building from 24-25 October as part of the Belfast International Arts Festival.

The Wiggle Room at The MAC is a free digital playroom for families, running until November 29, while the new Augmented Reality experience, in

partnership with BT, opened recently at the free visitor exhibition in City Hall.

Councillor Michael Long, Chair of the council's All party Working Group on the City Centre, said: "We're really starting to see rewards from the proactive work we're delivering with our partners across the city centre – with new businesses locating here, new hospitality venues opening, new planning applications being submitted and exciting new additions to our entertainment offer.

"Later this winter, we'll take stock of our current Belfast City Centre Regeneration and Investment Strategy and set our priorities for the next ten years.

"Central to this will be continued partnership working, because it will take a joint, sustained effort from everyone with an interest in our city centre to ensure it reaches its full potential.

"So, in the run-up to the busy Christmas period, we'll continue to work with the NI Assembly, relevant Stormont departments, traders and their representatives, the Business Improvement Districts (BIDs) and all our statutory, public and private partners, to ensure Belfast city centre is vibrant, welcoming and safe, with something for everyone to come and enjoy."

For more information, visit www.belfastcity.gov.uk/citycentre




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Murphy launches new Digital Skills Action Plan

Continued from page 1

The Action Plan was developed by the Department for the Economy's Digital Skills Industry Reference Group and the NI Skills Council.

John Healy, Ex-Chair of the Digital Skills Reference Group, said: "Digital skills are at the very core of our lives and economy; these skills are essential in how we live and work. To keep pace with the rapidly evolving digital landscape, we need to continue to invest in our people, and embrace the change to enrich many aspects of our lives."

"The Digital Skills Reference Group has delivered the Digital Skills Action Plan, which is a significant milestone for the group. This plan sets out alternative pathways into the sector. This would not be possible without the successful collaboration of our local government officials, educators and industry."

Richard Williams, Chief Executive of



Economy Minister Conor Murphy is pictured at the launch of the Digital Skills Action Plan 2024-34 at Belfast Met's e3 campus with (l-r) Michele Corkey, temporary chair of the governing body of Belfast Met; Will O'Hare and Ana Leonor Pereira, media and journalism students at Belfast Met; John Healy, Chair of Invest Northern Ireland and ex-chair of the Digital Skills Industry Reference Group; Kathleen O'Hare, chair of the NI Skills Council; and Damian Duffy, interim Principal and Chief Executive of Belfast Met.

Northern Ireland Screen, which was represented on the Digital Skills Industry Reference Group, said: "The creative and screen industries are delivering growth, employment and innovation. Through its three Creative Learning Centres, Northern Ireland Screen is continually investing in training

and development to improve digital skills for young people and teachers across the curriculum.

"We remain strongly committed to the provision of programmes that target the marginalised and most disadvantaged schools and are delighted to support DfE's Digital Skills Action Plan

to provide more opportunities for young people, regardless of background or circumstances, to experience, learn and develop creative and digital skills."

The Digital Skills Action Plan 2024-34 is available at: <https://www.economy-ni.gov.uk/publications/digital-skills-action-plan-2024-2034>

Looking for a Primary School?

We would love to welcome you to Leadhill Primary School. We have a range of ways to provide you with the information you need:



Visit our school website

Bring your child to 'Stay and Play' sessions on Fridays from 2:30 to 3:15 on 8, 15, 22, and 29 November.

Arrange to take a tour of the school. Visits can be arranged by appointment throughout December and January.

Take part in our Toddle Time group each Wednesday from 9 -11am

Find out about our Wrap-Around childcare solutions

Find out about our Pre-School Playgroup for children from 2 years and 10 months.



'Children are offered a range of opportunities to shine, which highlights all children's gifts. Leadhill is a great family school.'
(Parent comment)

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Visiting a school is an important step in choosing a school, and this personal touch reflects Leadhill's approach in supporting families.

As a smaller, nurturing school in the Castlereagh area, working to support parents and children is central to what Leadhill has to offer. Leadhill recognises the value of a primary school setting where every adult knows every child. Our school welcomes and supports children from all backgrounds and promotes inclusivity and child-centred approaches. This year, Leadhill

are offering a range of flexible opportunities to visit.

Bring your nursery-age child to 'Stay and Play' sessions on Fridays from 2:30pm to 3:15pm on 8, 15, 22 and 29 November. Come along to all the sessions or just to those that suit. Parents can enjoy a cuppa and a chat while children enjoy a range of activities in the P1 classroom.

Arrange for a visit at a time that suits you, throughout December and January.

Mrs Millis, the Principal will take the time to tailor your visit to address the things that matter to your family. Visiting Leadhill during the school day gives a fantastic opportunity



to experience the nurturing, family atmosphere and meet our fabulous staff and pupils.

For younger children, Toddle Time - Leadhill's toddler and adult group, meets every Wednesday during termtime

from 9 - 11am. This provides another great opportunity to get to know Leadhill and to see how the school can meet the needs of your family

The Leadhill Website provides a useful window into life in Leadhill. Visit us on

www.leadhillps.com. Leadhill would love to welcome you for a visit. Contact the school office on 028 90401101 or email Mrs Millis on amillis370@c2kni.net to arrange for a suitable date and time.

Services: At Jo Jingles we run fun music and movement sessions for babies and children aged 3 months to 7 years. Public classes run term time across South and East Belfast with locations in Fourwinds, Stranmillis, Castlereagh and Stormont. Nursery school, toddler groups, playgroups and after school sessions are available on request.

What is our aim?
To encourage the physical, mental, and emotional development of every child attending classes through our music and movement programme. To give children their first structured, fun, introduction to music. To give every child attending classes the chance to play age specific musical instruments. To make learning fun!

Contact Number: 07979733309. Email: nicola.donaghy@jojingles.co.uk
Facebook: Jo Jingles Greater Belfast. Instagram: nicola_joingles
Webpage: www.joingles.co.uk/greater-belfast

Nicola Donaghy was awarded Best Newcomer Award in September 2023 at the last Jo Jingles Regional Conference. Jo Jingles as a brand are finalists in the 2024 National Children's Awards for 3 categories: Most Loved Music, Dance or Performing Arts Activity, Most Loved Baby Activity and Most Loved Academic or Creative Activity.

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Giant's Causeway Visitor Experience included, guests have the opportunity to delve into the history of this UNESCO World Heritage site, adding an educational and awe-inspiring dimension to their stay.

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Steiner School Holywood

Headteacher Peter Chambers says that Holywood Steiner school offers an alternative to mainstream education!

IN A RECENT BEST OF BELFAST PODCAST PETER DISCUSSED HOW THE SCHOOL HAS DOUBLED IN BUDGET, SIZE, AND STAFF SINCE 2020. HE ALSO HIGHLIGHTED THAT MOST PEOPLE IN NORTHERN IRELAND ARE UNAWARE OF ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION OPTIONS!

One of the key aspects Peter emphasized was the power of delaying traditional desk-based learning until the age of six. Instead the school focuses on practical skills like outdoor play, baking and crafts. Peter explained that smaller class sizes create a more conducive learning environment, allowing teachers to focus on teaching rather than constantly managing poor behaviour. He also shared how the school encourages a more informal atmosphere by allowing students to call teachers by their first names and eliminating school uniforms.

Founded in 1975, Holywood Steiner school is looking forward to celebrating 50 years in the anniversary year, 2025!

A co-educational, independent and integrated school the educator is a proud member of the global Steiner school network, with over 1400 schools in 75 countries. Within the UK and Ireland, there are 29 and 6 Steiner schools, respectively, making us the sole representative in Northern Ireland.

At Holywood Steiner School, you'll find a welcoming community that feels like an extended family. The campus serves as a community hub, hosting events throughout the year.

At the heart of Holywood Steiner is the Waldorf Curriculum. This curriculum prioritizes childhood development, starting with preschool and kindergarten. Nature-based experiences and imaginative play are key components. Formal reading and writing instruction begins at age 6, aligning with global standards. The approach fosters moral responsibility, empathy, and a sense of wonder, leading to emotionally mature and academically successful students.

Unlike traditional education, the Waldorf model allows children to learn at their own pace. This personalized approach ensures a deep understanding of concepts and skills. This independent school offers a rich, diverse, and integrated education that emphasizes cooperation over competition.

Why Choose Holywood Steiner School?

The school consistently scores well above the NI average and in this years GCSE results 88% of students achieved seven GCSE A* - C (pass grades), including English and Maths.

Holywood Steiner school is suitable for every child. For academically advanced students, we provide a balanced approach that nurtures their social-emotional and creative strengths. For those who may need additional support, our curriculum offers a nurturing environment that allows them to grow at their own pace and reach their full potential. The Waldorf curriculum fosters well-rounded individuals who are both happy and successful!



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DENTIST DR NIGEL SMITH WINS AWARDS SUCCESS ACROSS IRELAND AND UK!

Hollywood Dental Care has recently been named BEST NEW PRACTICE in IRELAND at Irish Dentistry Awards 2024!

Members of the Hollywood Dental Care Team attended the glittering awards ceremony in Dublin at the beginning of September.

Dr Nigel Smith received the Award and was also delighted to learn that his other practice Nigel Smith Dental was Highly Commended in the category for Best High Technology Practice!

Dr Nigel Smith is looking forward to attending the Private Dentistry Awards 2024 in London in November where he is a finalist in the Principal Dentist of the Year category. Being the only NI representative at these prestigious awards only adds to the achievement!

Nigel Smith Dental and Hollywood Dental Care are also rightfully proud to announce their recent

and community involvement. Both Nigel Smith Dental and Hollywood Dental Care offer Invisalign – for adults and teenagers, a popular orthodontic treatment that uses a series of clear aligners to straighten teeth. Invisalign offers several benefits, including:

- **Discreet:** The clear aligners are virtually invisible, making them a great option for those who want to avoid traditional metal braces.
- **Comfortable:** Invisalign aligners are made from smooth, BPA-free plastic, making them more comfortable to wear than metal braces.
- **Removable:** The aligners can be removed for eating, drinking, and brushing, making it easier to maintain oral hygiene.

These nominations once again demonstrate their commitment to providing exceptional dental care. These accolades highlight their dedication to patient satisfaction, clinical excellence,

and community involvement.

Both Nigel Smith Dental and Hollywood Dental Care offer Invisalign – for adults and teenagers, a popular orthodontic treatment that uses a series of clear aligners to straighten teeth. Invisalign offers several benefits, including:

- **Discreet:** The clear aligners are virtually invisible, making them a great option for those who want to avoid traditional metal braces.
- **Comfortable:** Invisalign aligners are made from smooth, BPA-free plastic, making them more comfortable to wear than metal braces.
- **Removable:** The aligners can be removed for eating, drinking, and brushing, making it easier to maintain oral hygiene.



Shorter treatment time: In many cases, Invisalign treatment can be completed in a shorter timeframe than traditional braces. Nigel Smith Dental and Hollywood Dental Care continue to set the standard for dental excellence in the

region. Their recent award nominations and multiple accomplishments already earned are a testament to their dedication to patient care, clinical excellence, and community involvement.

CLASSES TO EMPOWER WOMEN

Empower Yourself with Shield Defence's Women's Beginner Self-Defence Courses

Belfast, October 2024 – Shield Defence, in collaboration with TKD Women, is excited to announce the launch of their Women's Beginner Self-Defence Courses. These courses are designed to empower women aged 16 and above by teaching essential self-defence techniques in a supportive and engaging environment. Starting in October, this 4-week course will take place every Monday from 6:30 PM to 8:30 PM at the Grove Leisure Centre, located at 120 York Road, Belfast BT15 3HF. No prior experience is required, making it an ideal opportunity for beginners to learn and grow.

What to Expect

Participants will be guided by fully qualified female instructors who are dedicated to providing a safe and encouraging atmosphere. The course covers a range of self-defence techniques aimed at enhancing personal safety and boosting confidence. Upon completion, graduates will receive a certificate and a personal safety alarm, symbolizing their readiness to protect themselves.

Course Highlights

- Duration: 4 weeks
- Schedule: Every Monday, 6:30 PM - 8:30 PM
- Location: Grove Leisure Centre, 120 York Road, Belfast BT15 3HF
- Cost: £80
- Instructors: Fully

qualified female instructors

- Additional Benefits: Certificate and personal safety alarm upon graduation

Join Us

Shield Defence is committed to strengthening independence and empowering women through practical self-defence training. For more information or to register, email us or message our social media channels. Follow us for updates and additional resources.

Empower yourself with the skills and confidence to stay safe. Join Shield Defence's Women's Beginner Self-Defence Courses this October and take the first step towards a more secure and empowered future.



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Can you help Belvoir Park Primary School celebrate its 60th anniversary with your memories?

Belvoir Park Primary School was built in the early 1960's as part of Belvoir Park Estate opening its doors to pupils in 1964.

The name Belvoir – meaning 'beautiful view' in French and pronounced today as 'beaver' – dates to Norman times. The thriving Nursery unit, now providing 52 Full-time places, added in 1977, has recently benefitted from a complete refurbishment. In 1999 Belvoir Park Primary school was one of the first mainstream schools to open Specialist Provision classes, catering for P4-7 children with speech and language developmental delay. It now has 3 Speech and Language Provision classes and 3 Social Communication Provision classes catering for pupils from P1-P7. Belvoir Park Primary School prides itself on its inclusive environment and being connected to its community. The school community believes that every child has the right to an educational experience that aims to meet their individual needs.

We have many activities planned for current pupils this year and are preparing a whole school show for around Easter, that will take place in Belvoir Park Theatre. With such a long history we are appealing to anyone who has photos or memories of the school throughout the last 60 years to share them with us by emailing us at info@belvoirps.belfast.ni.sch.uk. We are keen to share this with our pupils as they create their own memories. We are hosting an Open afternoon from 4:30pm to 6pm on Tuesday the 3rd December 2024. We wish to extend the invitation to past staff, pupils, and any other members of the local community. We would love you to come along and see the school now and share stories and memories of your time at the school. For more information see www.belvoirparkps.co.uk

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PATRICK FEENEY 9.30pm-11.30pm
JIMMY BUCKLEY 11.30pm-1.30am
KIERAN MC AREE 1.30am

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Specsavers Connswater encourages eye tests for children with competition in local East Belfast community

DIRECTORS at Specsavers Connswater have marked six months in their new location within Connswater Retail Park with a community initiative, aimed at promoting eye tests for children.

To encourage this important health check, the store is hosting a Halloween-themed colouring competition for kids, starting in store this week from 1st October to 31st October, with winners being announced shortly after.

Research from the Royal National Institute of Blind People (RNIB) reveals that around 890 children in Northern Ireland aged 0-17 are partially sighted or blind. To help spot any sight issues in children as early as possible, Specsavers Connswater is urging parents in the local community to prioritise eye tests as part of their children's regular health care.

As well as families who come into the store, the competition is also offering families in the East Belfast area a chance to win a number of prizes from other local businesses, including a family pass to Movie House Cinema, courtesy of Cityside/Yorkgate and a family voucher for the nearby McDonald's at Connswater Retail Park.

Following a significant £650,000 investment, Specsavers Connswater transformed its store earlier this year and expanded its team from 7 to 37 members since its establishment in 2001. The dedicated staff bring over 440 years of combined experience in eye and hearing care, ensuring that the community receives top-notch service.

Store director Paula Cunningham emphasises the importance of eye health for children, stating, "Taking your

child for an eye test should be as common as taking them to the dentist. 80 per cent of what is taught in schools is visual, and for children to grow and develop, their sight needs to be properly looked after. In addition to underlying conditions, eye health can be affected by the overuse of electronic screens."

Store Director Lynsey Caldwell adds: "Screen fatigue won't permanently damage a child's eyes, but it can make symptoms of existing eye conditions such as short-sightedness more pronounced. We are delighted to engage with our local community in East Belfast with this initiative to encourage families to come into the



Connswater Specsavers Store Directors Paula Cunningham and Lynsey Caldwell

store and prioritise their eye health."

Located at Unit 7A Connswater Retail Park, Specsavers Connswater offers convenient access and free parking for

families seeking quality eye and hearing care.

To learn book an eye test for you or your child visit <http://www.specsavers.co.uk/stores/connswater>.

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Forge is a well established, forward looking, high achieving, Integrated School helping the South East Belfast community to prepare their children for a shared future in a brighter, better Belfast. We are located just off the Ormeau Road beside Wellington College and Rosetta Roundabout.



OPEN DAYS -
Wednesday 4th December 2024
Thursday 9th January 2025

20 Carolan Road Belfast, BT7 3HE
Email: info@forge.belfast.ni.sch.uk

To find out more about us visit:
www.forgeips.co.uk

Rainy Day Fun: Indoor Activities for Kids

Stuck indoors due to a downpour? Don't worry, there's plenty of fun to be had! Here are some creative indoor activities to keep your kids entertained:

- Indoor Adventure**
Set up a tent in your living room or bedroom for a cozy camping experience. Create a campfire atmosphere using flashlights or fairy lights. Enjoy camping snacks like roasted marshmallows (supervised) or hot dogs and s'mores. Tell stories around the "campfire" for a fun and spooky experience.
- Camping**
Set up a tent in your living room or bedroom for a cozy camping experience. Create a campfire atmosphere using flashlights or fairy lights. Enjoy camping snacks like roasted marshmallows (supervised) or hot dogs and s'mores. Tell stories around the "campfire" for a fun and spooky experience.
- Experiments**
Paint masterpieces using watercolors, acrylics, or finger paints. Build a cardboard castle by cutting out shapes from cardboard boxes and assembling them. Conduct simple experiments like making slime, volcanoes, or crystal gardens. Create homemade playdough by mixing flour, salt, water, and food coloring.
- Indoor Scavenger Hunt**
Hide clues around your home leading to a final prize. Create riddles or puzzles to make the clues more challenging. Choose a theme like pirates, animals, or superheroes for added excitement.
- Board Games and Puzzles**
Break out the board games and enjoy classic games like Monopoly, Scrabble, or Clue. Solve jigsaw puzzles of varying difficulty. Play card games like Go Fish, Uno, or Rummy.
- DIY Crafts and Indoor Picnic**
Spread a blanket on the floor and create a picnic atmosphere. Prepare delicious food like sandwiches, fruits, and snacks. Decorate the area with flowers, balloons, or other decorations for a festive feel.



Spread a blanket on the floor and create a picnic atmosphere. Prepare delicious food like sandwiches, fruits, and snacks. Decorate the area with flowers, balloons, or other decorations for a festive feel. With a little creativity, you can turn a rainy day into a memorable adventure for your kids. These indoor activities are not only fun but also encourage learning, creativity, and bonding.

Knockbreda Primary School

Knockbreda Primary School is a small school at the centre of the community that has a big heart!

We are a controlled school who are 'Open to All' and our children come from a wide range of cultural and socio-economic backgrounds. The ethos of our school is, that all children will develop as happy and well rounded individuals who want to learn. Our school is single year group. Within our school we also have 3 Learning Support classes for pupils with additional needs. We offer a wide range of opportunities including Forest School, Roots of Empathy, links with other schools and a wonderful relationship with Annadale Nursing home. Our fantastic outdoor areas boast a dedicated play garden, outdoor classroom and large playground. Recent investment includes a new mobile classroom, additional sensory space and interactive whiteboards across the school. We provide a wide range of out of class experiences including overnight residential for P5 to P7. Wrap around care is also available at Knockbreda through our Early Morning Club and after school care run by Sleepy Hollow. Our school community continues to thrive and grow. If you are interested in visiting our school, contact our school office on 02890401871. You will find a very warm welcome awaits you.

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Come and see what Orangefield Primary School and Nursery Unit have to offer



Orangefield Nursery Unit Open Event -
Wednesday 27th November 2024 at 9.15am
Orangefield Primary School Open Event -
Thursday 28th November at 9.15am

Individual guided tours with the Principal can be arranged by contacting the school office on - 028 90 704 822
 All prospective new families welcome

Cameronian Drive, Belfast, BT5 6DF | info@orangefieldps.belfast.ni.sch.uk

KNOCKBREDA PRIMARY SCHOOL



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January **Wednesday 8th January 2025**
2025 **Open Viewing 3pm-5.30pm**
Principal's address 3pm
www.knockbredaps.com



TOP QUESTIONS TO ASK AT A SCHOOL OPEN DAY

Attending a school open day is a great way to get a feel for a potential school and decide if it's the right fit for your child. Here are some key questions to ask to help you make an informed decision:

About the School
When visiting a school, it's important to understand its academic focus and achievements. Ask about the school's specialization and how it aligns with your child's interests. Inquire about recent exam results, such as GCSEs and A-levels, and compare them to national averages.

Extracurricular activities and clubs can play a significant role in a child's development. Ask what the school offers in terms of extracurricular activities and whether they cater to your child's passions. It's also crucial to understand the school's approach to pastoral care, including how they support students' emotional and social well-being.

Finally, inquire about the school's discipline policy. Learn how behaviour issues are addressed and if the approach aligns with your family's values.

About the Curriculum
Understanding the school's teaching methods and assessment practices is essential. Ask about the teaching styles used and whether they are traditional or more progressive. Inquire about how students are assessed, such as through



regular tests, exams, or coursework.

Homework is another important factor to consider. Ask about the school's homework policy and how much homework is expected of students. If your child has special educational needs (SEN), inquire about the school's experience in supporting such students and the kind of support available.

About the School Environment

The school's facilities, such as sports grounds, libraries, and science labs, can significantly impact your child's learning experience. Ask about the facilities available and whether they are well-maintained. Class sizes can also influence the quality of education. Inquire about the typical class sizes and if the school has a policy regarding them.

The school's ethos or values can also be a deciding factor. Ask about

the school's culture and whether it aligns with your family's beliefs. Location and transport options are also worth considering. If the school is independent, inquire about fees, what they cover, and any available bursaries or scholarships.

By asking these questions, you can gather valuable information about the school and determine if it's the right choice for your child. Don't hesitate to ask any other questions that come to mind.

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Bethlehem Nursery School

OPEN DAY

MONDAY 6TH JANUARY 2025

9.30AM - 11AM

PARENTS AND CHILDREN ARE INVITED TO VISIT.

If you have any queries, please telephone the school and speak to the Principal, Mrs Jacqueline Mallon.

028 9064 0406

514 Ravenhill Road, Belfast, BT6 0BW

Gilnahirk Primary School

Today's Learning for Tomorrow's World

Open Morning

Friday 6th December
from 11am – 12.30pm.

Principal's address at 11am followed by guided tours of the school by Year 7 children.

Principal: Mr D Corbett
BA(Hons), PGCE, PQH(NI)

www.gilnahirkps.org.uk/school-tour
148 Gilnahirk Road, Belfast, BT5 7QQ | T: 028 9040 1697
E: dcorbett546@c2kni.net

Brooklands Primary School

OPEN WEEK

Monday 2nd December to Friday 6th December 2024

Guided tours of the school available each day at the following times
9.30am - 10.30am | 1.00pm - 2.00pm

Please email the principal to book a tour.

Brooklands Primary and Nursery School is a warm and welcoming place where every child is valued, listened to and respected, and we hope that we will be welcoming your child in to the Brooklands family from next year.

Our pupils' successes are possible, due to the trusted relationships we have with our parents and the whole school community, where we all work together to achieve the very best outcomes for the children, where they reach their potential and thrive, as confident, independent learners who care for one another, and the world around them.

For working families we have Wrap Around Care which opens at 8.00am with Breakfast Club and runs through until 5pm each afternoon.

Our After School Club is staffed by our own dedicated team of classroom assistants and includes a healthy snack with indoor and outdoor activities.

Brooklands Primary School
Brooklands Avenue, Dundonald, Belfast, BT16 2PA
Telephone: 02890 487 589 | Email: jarmstrong775@c2kni.net

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If you like us, value the importance of high-quality teaching & learning, family & community we are the right choice of school for you!

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We offer a Breakfast Club from 8:00am each morning, a wide range of afterschool clubs & activities, as well as afterschool care until 5pm.



You are warmly invited to come & see for yourself what makes us the ideal choice of school for your family...

**Wednesday 13th November (1:00-1:45pm)
Come & Play Open Afternoon for Preschool-aged children (starting P1 September 2025)**

**Saturday 7th December (9:30-10:45am)
Breakfast with Santa
Christmas themed event for Pre-school children (starting P1 September 2025) and our own P1 and P2 pupils**

**Wednesday 15th January 2025
Cregagh Primary School Open Night
There will be 2 separate sessions: an earlier, less busy session for parents of preschool aged children (5pm-6pm) followed by the main session (6:00pm-7:30pm).**

Mount Merrion Avenue, Belfast BT6 OFL | T: 02890 401246

WWW.CREGAGHPRIMARY.ORG.UK



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SCAN AND SEE



NEW OWNERS OF THE PIZZA CO. INVEST £550,000 TO EXPAND AND RELAUNCH CHAIN OF OUTLETS

The Pizza Co. announces opening of new Lisburn store and brand

LOCAL pizza chain, The Pizza Co. has announced a major investment of £550,000 following a recent change of ownership, marking the start of an ambitious growth strategy for the business, which currently operates six outlets in Greater Belfast and employs 200 dedicated staff.

The new management team comprising of Matthew Stevenson, formerly a manager of the Botanic outlet, Conall Humston, and Matt McGrath, has installed state-of-the-art technology such as a new POS system, touchscreen self-service tills, and real-time driver tracking, alongside a complete rebrand of all six stores across Greater Belfast, undertaken by Belfast creative agency, Aspect Media.

Matthew Stevenson, Director, commented: "Purchasing the brand with Conall and Matt is hugely exciting. I previously worked for The Pizza Co. at its Botanic Avenue store, so I know the business well. We have made significant investments in all areas, and we're buzzing to open the next chapter in The Pizza Co. story, with a fresh identity that encapsulates our new approach to the exciting journey ahead of us. "As three long-time

friends with 50 years of combined industry experience, we are ideally placed to take The Pizza Co. to the next level. We recently opened our newest store in Lisburn, and have exciting plans in place for further expansion of the brand across Northern Ireland. Our passion for quality pizza, combined with an unwavering dedication to improving the customer experience, and a commitment to give back to the communities within which we operate, is a winning formula and one that we are excited about sharing through our planned expansion.

"We are already seeing the benefits of our new technology which has led to quicker delivery times and happier customers. Last week alone, we delivered 82% of our orders within 30 minutes," says Matthew.

"Food provenance and quality is paramount to us, with the standard of our pizzas now significantly improved with dough meticulously hand-rolled, proven for up to four days and hand-stretched on-site by our skilled pizza chefs. We avoid synthetic cheeses - instead using 100% local diced Mozzarella - and our distinctive sauce uses tomatoes sourced from



The Pizza Co. has announced a major investment of £550,000 following a recent change of ownership, marking the start of an ambitious growth strategy for the business which currently operates six outlets in Greater Belfast and employs 200 dedicated staff. Pictured (L-R) are Matthew Stevenson, Matt McGrath and Conall Humston.

Northern Italy. Simply put, we aim to serve the best and freshest takeaway pizzas in Northern Ireland."

Dedicated to supporting the local communities in areas surrounding their outlets, The Pizza Co. currently donates meal vouchers totalling £2,400 every week to local sports clubs, schools and youth groups, while also

sponsoring local basketball, soccer and GAA clubs.

"We are a local company and as such see ourselves as an extension of the neighbourhoods surrounding our outlets," explains Matthew. "This level of engagement is an integral aspect to our projected growth and expansion where we can share our success with customers."

Open Morning Thursday 28th November

9:30 - 10:30 am walk around. No appointment necessary. Everyone welcome.



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THE TRADE JOBS BELFAST RESIDENTS ARE MOST INTERESTED IN REVEALED

A new study reveals the most sought-after skilled trade jobs across various UK areas.

The study by flooring specialists Mr Sander analysed Google search data from various UK areas to determine the skilled trade jobs with the highest interest.

Data was found for searches with keywords such as '(job) jobs', '(job) jobs near me', 'how to become a (job)', 'how much does a (job) make' and '(job) salary'.

Results are based on the average search volumes for each of these keywords combined.

Skilled trade jobs are essential and highly sought-after in the UK. Despite being competitive, they offer good wages and opportunities for career growth, attracting many people who want to learn new skills while earning a solid income.

This study aims to

determine which skilled trade jobs are the most popular among people across the UK.

The five most sought-after skilled trade jobs in Belfast are:

Electrician
Average Monthly Search Volume: 122.50

An electrician's responsibilities include installing, repairing, and testing electrical products and systems. Some of the main aims for this role is to design the layout of electrical wiring, diagnose faults, and perform general maintenance on all electrical systems.

Starting with an apprenticeship is the most popular path for this career since it allows new employees to get the ideal work experience required to begin in the position. Electricians earn

an average hourly pay of £17.51.

Plumber
Average Monthly Search Volume: 121.67

Plumbing jobs in the UK are highly popular due to their higher average salary and their minimal educational requirements- GCSEs or equivalent are enough to enter this field. The average salary for plumbers is £16.49 per hour, although this can vary based on location, experience, and the employing company.

Bricklayer
Average Monthly Search Volume: 111.67

Bricklayers are responsible for constructing and repairing houses and buildings, as well as renovating stonework. To get started in this field, individuals can start with training



courses such as a Level 1 Certificate in Construction Skills or a Level 2 Diploma in Bricklaying, or they can pursue an apprenticeship. The average annual salary for bricklayers is £31,851, although this is dependent on several factors.

Painting and Decorating

Painter and Decorator
Average Monthly Search Volume: 110.00

Painters and decorators are responsible for finishing homes with tasks like wallpapering, painting, and applying protective finishes. This role requires at least GCSEs and, often, additional training

depending on the employers' preferences. The average salary for painters and decorators is £14.03 per hour, making it one of the lower-paid trade jobs.

Joiner
Average Monthly Search Volume: 100.83

A joiner's job is to make

wooden structures by joining together pieces of wood to form the fittings of a house or piece of furniture such as a chest of drawers, wardrobes, or doors. Joinery is in the same industry as carpentry, and to work in the field, people must be trained to a specific level. For example, most people will complete at least Level 2 college courses or begin as apprentices. This industry pays an average salary of £38,216.

Anthony Miller, CEO of Mr Sander commented on the findings

"These trends in job searches show a continued interest in skilled trade jobs, highlighting their importance in addressing everyday needs.

"Skilled trade jobs like those in the study are in high demand, and

the best way to begin a career in these roles is usually through education and hands-on training. For many, this involves enrolling in job-related training programs or obtaining certificates that provide essential skills.

"Apprenticeships are also a good method for gaining practical experience whilst earning money.

They provide on-the-job training under the guidance of qualified professionals, which is valuable when learning the necessary skills.

"These approaches not only prepare individuals for successful careers in these jobs but also ensures that they are well-equipped to take advantage of the high earning potential and opportunities for progression."



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Bright Ideas: Lighting Design Tips for Your Home

Illuminate Your Space with Style

Good lighting can transform a room, making it feel cozy, inviting, or vibrant. Here are some expert tips to help you create a beautifully lit home:

Kitchen
Combine ambient and task lighting. Use recessed lighting or a pendant light for overall illumination, and install under-cabinet lights for focused task lighting. Consider natural light. If possible, place your kitchen near a window to maximize

Bedroom
Create a relaxing atmosphere. Use warm white bulbs and dimmers to create a soothing ambiance. Layer your lighting. Combine a ceiling light with bedside lamps and wall sconces for a versatile lighting solution.

Bathroom
Use waterproof fixtures. Choose lights specifically designed for bathrooms to prevent moisture damage. Combine ambient and task lighting. A ceiling light provides overall illumination, while vanity lights offer focused task

Hallway
Ensure adequate lighting. A well-lit hallway provides safety and security. Consider sconces or a ceiling light. Create a welcoming atmosphere. Use warm white bulbs to create a warm and inviting feel. Remember: Lighting is a personal preference. Experiment with different fixtures, bulbs, and placements to find the perfect lighting solution.




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PropertyPal and Propertynews announce merger with major investment in technology and innovation

PropertyPal today announces a strategic merger with Propertynews, uniting two of Northern Ireland's leading property websites.

This merger combines the best of both platforms' technology, people, and skills, with the aim of driving innovation and enhancing the experience for home searchers and agent advertisers across Northern Ireland.

Both the PropertyPal and Propertynews brands will continue to operate as distinct websites, appealing to their loyal audiences. Significant investment is planned for both platforms focusing on marketing, upgrading the underlying technology infrastructure, and enhancing their software suite for agents. The merger will deliver greater value and improved services for both agents and website users.

Jordan Buchanan, CEO of PropertyPal, said: "This merger is very positive for our people, our customers, and our website users. We are bringing together the best of our technology, people, and cultures to create something even better. Our aim is to enhance the value we offer



to consumers and agent partners alike."

He continued: "By combining our resources and expertise, we will deliver more efficient, cost-effective, and user-friendly platforms. Our commitment to innovation and customer satisfaction remains at the core of everything we do, and I am confident that this

merger will drive forward our vision of providing exceptional service and support to the Northern Ireland property market. We look forward to working closely with our agents and stakeholders during this exciting transition and beyond."

A new leadership team will oversee these efforts, ensuring that the websites

meet the evolving needs of their users and agents.

GCD Technologies, former owner of Propertynews, becomes a shareholder of the parent company, PropertyPal Ltd and GCD Managing Director, Andrew Gough, will join PropertyPal's Board of Directors. The new Board of Directors will also include Conor

MacCarrick, former Board member of Propertynews, and Jordan Buchanan, CEO of PropertyPal, who also becomes a shareholder of the new PropertyPal. These new board members will join the existing team, including Cecil Hetherington (Chair) and Errol Maxwell (Founder), to work alongside the management team guiding the future of PropertyPal and Propertynews.

Additionally, Emma McNally, Commercial Director at Propertynews, will step into the role of Chief Operating Officer at PropertyPal. The new leadership team, integrating the combined talents and expertise of both teams, will continue to drive the strategic goals and customer engagement for both brands.

Emma McNally, the newly appointed COO of PropertyPal, said: "This is a significant milestone for both websites. Through a united approach, we will strengthen our offerings to drive growth and innovation. By combining our technical, commercial, and sector expertise, we will deliver a best-in-class user experience and create additional value for our customers. I am eager to engage with our expanded team and valued business partners to achieve our shared vision for success."

This merger marks the beginning of a new chapter for PropertyPal and Propertynews, bringing together the best of both websites to drive growth and innovation within the Northern Ireland property market.



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One satisfied customer told EDA Media:

"After receiving notification that our electricity rate was increasing by 25%, we decided it was time to think seriously about solar. As we are nearing retirement age the idea of securing energy costs and reducing bills was very appealing. After much research for MCS accredited companies, we got in touch with Clover Energy Systems to see what solutions were available for our home.

We spoke to Tim who was able to provide a lot of information over the phone and arranged to come out and survey the house in person. To begin, he assessed the condition of our roof, had a look at equipment locations and then sat down for a chat to answer all our questions. Within a couple of days, we received our final



quotation which included 16x PV panels, a hybrid inverter and a battery. We were very happy with the proposed system and scheduled our installation date. Three weeks later the Clover team arrived and the entire process was finished within two days. The team were fantastic - they left everything clean and tidy and took the time to explain exactly how the system works.

Needless to say, after one full year, we are over the moon with the results. Previously we were buying

around 5000 units of electricity per year but this year we have only imported 598 units! We also are being paid for the electricity we feed back to the grid which helps offset the winter bill. Overall, we are incredibly happy with our system and couldn't recommend Clover Energy Systems more."

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M&S customers and colleagues across Northern Ireland help smash £2m fundraising milestone in first year of YoungMinds partnership

Thanks to incredible support from colleagues and customers across the UK and Northern Ireland, the M&S and YoungMinds partnership has already raised over £2million to support young people's mental health.

The partnership was launched last year and aims to raise £5million over the next three years. This will enable YoungMinds to double its reach to support seven million young people and the adults in their lives through easy to access online resources and its dedicated Parent's Helpline. With five pupils in every classroom saying that they are having difficulty coping, M&S and YoungMinds are calling on everyone to stand together in a coalition of the hopeful in support of young people's mental health this October. Now M&S and YoungMinds are going even bigger with ambitious plans for Hello Yellow, which marks World Mental Health Day on 10th of

October. Every year for Hello Yellow, YoungMinds calls on teachers, pupils, parents and colleagues to wear yellow on the day, to show young people that they are not alone with their mental health. This year, with M&S' support, the charity is aiming to expand the campaign's reach across the UK and Northern Ireland, encouraging more schools to participate and ensuring that even more children can get involved. Northern Ireland schools that sign up will receive free resources to support young people's mental health, including a video in partnership with The Doodle Boy encouraging young people to doodle what makes them happy. A new initiative,

spearheaded by M&S x YoungMinds ambassador and mum, Rochelle Hulmes is rewarding schools signing up for Hello Yellow with free 'Buddy Benches'. One hundred benches are up for grabs, to provide kids with an easy way to signal a need for friendship and support. Each buddy bench is made from 95kg of recycled plastic, collected in M&S stores across the country. Schools can sign up for Hello Yellow here: Hello Yellow | World Mental Health Day | YoungMinds To celebrate M&S is also launching a brand new 'Hello Yellow' kidswear collection in collaboration with YoungMinds and The Doodle Boy. This special collection, which



Tracy Woods

includes yellow hoodies, t-shirts, socks, beanie hats, wristbands and stress balls, encourages customers to 'wear it loud, wear it proud'. All profits from the collection will be donated to YoungMinds. Till donations at M&S stores across Northern Ireland and online, as well as in-store and digital marketing to customers went live on 26th September running for two weeks to raise even more funds to support young people's mental health.



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THE ALL-NEW DACIA DUSTER

The All-New Dacia Duster is now available to order via dacia.co.uk and at Dacia retailers across NI with prices starting from £18,745, or just £193 a month on a 6.9% APR representative* four-year Personal Contract Purchase (PCP) deal.

Building on the merits of its predecessor, the All-New Duster enhances the multi-award-winning formula with a distinctive new design, greater interior comfort and space, and the latest technologies including hybrid powertrains and advancements in safety.

With its bolder, more robust style, the All-New Duster is always ready for adventure. The underbody shields, wheel-arch guards, snorkel and bumper inserts are made from a sturdy new material called Starkle that flaunts its unpainted finish with a mottled look that comes from its up to 20% recycled composition (as well as being 100% recyclable). The front and rear skid plates, meanwhile, are dyed in the mass, meaning the plastic is already coloured when the part is made. This is better for the environment since

it does away with the need for painting, while scrapes and scratches won't alter the original colour.

Inside, the new, more vertical dashboard is both welcoming and practical, and combined with its more cohesive design that matches the robust nature of the exterior, the use of the new CMF-B platform creates more space for passengers and their luggage.

Dacia's new YouClip system, an example of the brand's famed good thinking, provides thoughtful mounting points for accessories such as tablet and smartphone holders throughout the interior.

The All-New Duster is powered by a choice of three engines, including an advanced hybrid powertrain for the first time.

The All-New Duster range starts at £18,745 with the Essential trim, which



comes equipped with a Y-shaped LED lighting signature, longitudinal roof bars, tinted windows, front electric windows with driver's one-touch operation, height and reach adjustable steering wheel, 6-way adjustable driver's

seat, 4-way adjustable front passenger seat, height adjustable front seatbelts and headrests, manually adjustable door mirrors, air conditioning, automatic central locking, analogue dials with 3.5-inch TFT information display, and

Dacia's clever Media Control system that revolves around a smartphone docking station integrated into the dashboard.

As with all models in the range, it benefits from a comprehensive array of safety and driver assistance

systems, including six airbags, cruise control with speed limiter, traffic sign recognition with speed alert, rear parking sensors, driver attention warning, lane departure warning, lane keep assist, advanced emergency braking system,

emergency E-Call, vehicle dynamic control, and hill start assist.

From £21,245, the Expression trim adds body-coloured door handles, grey door mirrors, 17-inch Tergan diamond cut alloy wheels, automatic wipers, electric parking brake, rear electric windows, high

central armrest with console storage, 7-inch digital driver display, adaptive hill descent control on 4x4 models, rear camera, and 10.1-inch Media Display with Apple CarPlay and Android Auto.

The All-New Dacia Duster is available to order now, with first deliveries expected in November.

KIA EV3: UK PRICING AND SPECIFICATION ANNOUNCED

Kia UK has announced pricing and specifications for the Kia EV3 recently, with pre-orders now open for the brand's most affordable electric vehicle yet.

Following the example of the EV6 and EV9, Kia will offer three grades to EV3 buyers in the UK: 'Air', 'GT-Line' and 'GT-Line S', each with a generously equipped specification as standard.

The EV3 'Air' is offered with a choice of 58.3kWh or 81.4kWh battery packs, with the ability to travel up to 267 miles with the 58.3kWh version, or up to 372 miles on the larger long-range 81.4kWh battery pack. 'GT-Line' and 'GT-Line S' versions are offered solely with the larger 81.4kWh battery choice, and are capable of driving up to 347 miles on a single charge (WLTP 'combined' cycle*).

UK customer deliveries will start from late 2024, with customers able to choose from all variants from launch. Fleet customers will benefit from the two per cent BIK (benefit-

in-kind) rate for EVs in 2024/25 and three per cent for the 2025/26 tax years.

Standard equipment across the EV3 line-up

Every EV3 offers a generous repertoire of standard equipment. This includes:

EV3 'Air' from £32,995

The starting point for the EV3 line-up is the 'Air' grade. This is priced from £32,995 on-the-road for the 58.3kWh battery pack, and £35,995 with the long-range 81.4kWh battery pack. Both battery packs feature a front-wheel drive single-motor powertrain, producing up to 201bhp and peak torque of 283Nm. The 58.3kWh battery pack is capable of travelling up to 267 miles on a single charge, while the long-range 81.4kWh has a maximum driving range of 372 miles (WLTP 'combined' cycle).

As with almost all Kia



models, the generous list of standard equipment means the only option for customers to choose is the paint. EV3 'Air' models feature an eye-catching Sunset Orange as standard, with four optional premium colours – White Pearl, Midnight Black, Lithium Silver, and Frost Blue – available for an additional £625.

EV3 'GT-Line' from £39,495

By choosing the 'GT-Line' grade, the EV3 features the long-range 81.4kWh battery pack for a driving range of up to 347 miles (WLTP

'combined' cycle), more aggressive 'GT-Line' styling cues, and an even longer list of standard equipment adding the following over 'Air' variants:

As with all new Kia EVs going forward, the EV3 has a strong focus on sustainability. Integrated into the dashboard for every version of EV3 is a QR code, which if scanned will direct the user to a landing page detailing Kia's sustainability mission, and more information on exactly which recycled materials have made their way into the EV3's cabin.

The Kia EV3 is the latest battery electric vehicle to arrive as part of Kia's 'Plan S' strategy, which will see the brand launch 15 EVs by 2027, nine of which are destined for the UK. Order books for the EV3 open on 1 August as the most affordable way of purchasing a

new zero-emissions electric vehicle from Kia. The EV3 plays a significant role in Kia's transition to becoming a global leader in sustainable mobility solutions.

You can buy your Kia at dealerships province-wide including www.downeys.co.uk

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WHAT DOES YOUR HOME INSURANCE ACTUALLY COVER?

Home insurance is a crucial financial safety net, protecting your property and belongings from unexpected events. However, understanding the exact coverage can be confusing. Here's a breakdown of what your home insurance typically covers:

Building Coverage
Home insurance covers damage to the main structure of your home, including walls, roof, floors, and foundation. It also extends to damage in outbuildings like garages, sheds, and patios.

Contents Coverage
In addition to protecting the building itself, home insurance covers your personal belongings inside your home.

This includes furniture, electronics, clothing, and other personal items. Some policies may also extend coverage to your personal belongings when they're away from your home.

Additional Coverages
Beyond the basic building and contents coverage, many home insurance policies offer additional benefits. These can include:

- **Liability:** Covers bodily

injury or property damage caused by you, your family members, or pets on your property.

- **Loss of Use:** Provides temporary living expenses if your home becomes uninhabitable due to covered damage.
- **Water Back-Up:** Covers damage caused by water backing up into your home, such as from a sewer or sump pump failure.
- **Tree and Shrub Damage:** Covers damage to trees and shrubs on your property caused by covered perils.

Common Exclusions
While home insurance



provides extensive coverage, there are some common exclusions that you should be aware of:

- **Flood Damage:** Flood insurance is typically separate from home insurance.
- **Earthquakes:**

Earthquake coverage is also usually an additional policy.

- **Neglect:** Damage caused by intentional neglect or failure to maintain your property.
- **Business Activities:** Home insurance doesn't cover business-related activities conducted at your home.

Important Considerations
When reviewing your home insurance policy, keep these key factors in mind:

- **Deductible:** This is the amount you're responsible for paying out-of-pocket before your insurance

coverage kicks in.

- **Coverage Limits:** Your policy will have limits on how much it will pay for specific types of damage.
- **Perils:** The types of events covered by your policy (e.g., fire, theft, storms) will vary.

Review Your Policy Regularly
It's essential to review your home insurance policy annually to ensure it meets your changing needs and that you understand the specific coverage you have. If you have questions or concerns, don't hesitate to contact your insurance agent.

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Autumn Home Maintenance: Prepare Your Home for Winter

As the leaves begin to change colour and the days grow shorter, it's time to turn your attention to preparing your home for the colder months ahead.

Autumn is the ideal time to carry out essential maintenance tasks that will protect

your property and save you money on energy bills. Here's a checklist to get you started:

Exterior Maintenance

- **Clear gutters and downpipes:** Autumn leaves can quickly clog gutters, leading to water damage. Clear them thoroughly to prevent blockages.
- **Check roof for damage:** Inspect your roof for missing tiles,

damaged flashing, or signs of wear and tear. Address any issues promptly.

- **Trim trees and shrubs:** Remove overhanging branches that could damage your property during storms.
- **Insulate pipes:** Protect external pipes and taps from freezing by wrapping them in insulation.

Interior Checks

- **Boiler service:** Schedule a professional boiler service before the heating season kicks in.
- **Bleed radiators:** Ensure efficient heating by bleeding your radiators to remove trapped air.
- **Check for drafts:** Seal any gaps around windows and doors to prevent heat loss.
- **Chimney sweep:** If you have a fireplace,

arrange for a chimney sweep to remove soot and creosote.

- **Ventilation:** Maintain good ventilation to prevent damp and mould issues.

By taking the time to complete these autumn home maintenance tasks, you'll not only protect your property but also create a warm and cosy environment for the winter months.

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10 HOME JOBS YOU CANNOT DIY

When it comes to jobs around the home there are some things you shouldn't try yourself, especially when 47% of Brits have had a DIY disaster*.

Your unqualified hands could put you in a lot of danger, and worse, put others in danger. You could even invalidate your home insurance, which would leave you in a really difficult situation and with a heavy repair cost.

This list by no means covers everything, but it does answer the most common queries we get on whether to hire a pro or not for a job.

1) Fixing a gas leak. In fact, anything to do with gas. You must legally be on the Gas Safe Register to deal with any gas appliances. Attempting to fix anything gas related can have serious effects on your health and the safety of others around you, not to mention the potential of an explosion.

2) Removing asbestos. Asbestos is dangerous, so removing it is best left to the professionals. Asbestos comes with serious health risks. So much so that in 1999, the dangers of asbestos were officially recognised in the UK. All use of asbestos was banned. To have asbestos removed, you will need a qualified surveyor to carry out an inspection.

3) Fitting a new bath. Whether you're upgrading your entire bathroom, or you're having issues with your current bathtub,



you should definitely leave the installation of a new tub to a professional. Failure to do so could result in a leak in your home and a very unrelaxing soak in the tub!

4) Knocking down an internal wall. Knocking down an

internal wall is a great way to open up your living space and create a free-flowing area to enjoy. But knocking down an internal wall is not a DIY job, so don't start swinging your sledgehammer around. The wall could be load-bearing. If

you attempt to knock down a load-bearing wall without any steel reinforcement, it will result in your ceilings falling through, and whatever is above it coming down too.

5) Foundation work. The foundations of any building are

the most important part of the structure. If the foundations are wrong, then the subsoil can spread and the structure can settle unevenly, leading to structural problems down the line. Good foundations are a lot more than just digging a hole and pouring some concrete in, it needs to be exactly right.

6) Window installation. A poorly fitted window leads to lots of problems. These include: Injury to yourself, your family, and people passing by Reduced home efficiency (energy loss, draughts and leaks) Lack of security Legal and insurance ramifications Structural issues and a poor finish (mould

and mildew may appear) Avoid these risks and work with a professional window fitter.

7) Tree removal. Cutting down a tree is dangerous work. Although there's a risk of falling from a height, there's also the risk of being hit by debris. And even if the falling debris misses you, other people, houses and vehicles nearby may not be so lucky. A professional tree surgeon will know exactly how to control the removal of your tree. They have the experience, they have the tools, and they know how best to cut a tree of any size. Even better, they will remove your tree much quicker than you would yourself.

8) Electrical work.

Electrical work, similar to gas work, requires a highly qualified professional to take on the job, due to safety reasons. Incorrect or unsafe wiring is dangerous. Not only is it a massive fire risk, but it could electrocute you, a member of your family, or guests.

9) Roof installation and repairs. Your roof protects you from the elements, but only if it has been installed or repaired correctly. Keeping it watertight and making sure there are no leaks is so important. A damaged roof can lead to lots of problems in your home, from damp, leaking ceilings to severe structural damage. Patching it up yourself can be dangerous without

the correct safety equipment. Getting up onto the roof is a risk to yourself. Then once you're there there's also the risk that you do not patch up the roof correctly, meaning the damage will worsen over time.

10) Pest infestations. Pest control specialists can have your home cleared of unwanted visitors quickly without you having to live in fear of living with whatever pest it may be. Prices usually start at around £120 to have mice and rats removed. Pest controllers can also remove bedbugs, cockroaches and ants.

For more guidance see <https://www.checkatrade.com/blog/expert-advice/home-jobs-you-shouldnt-do-yourself/>

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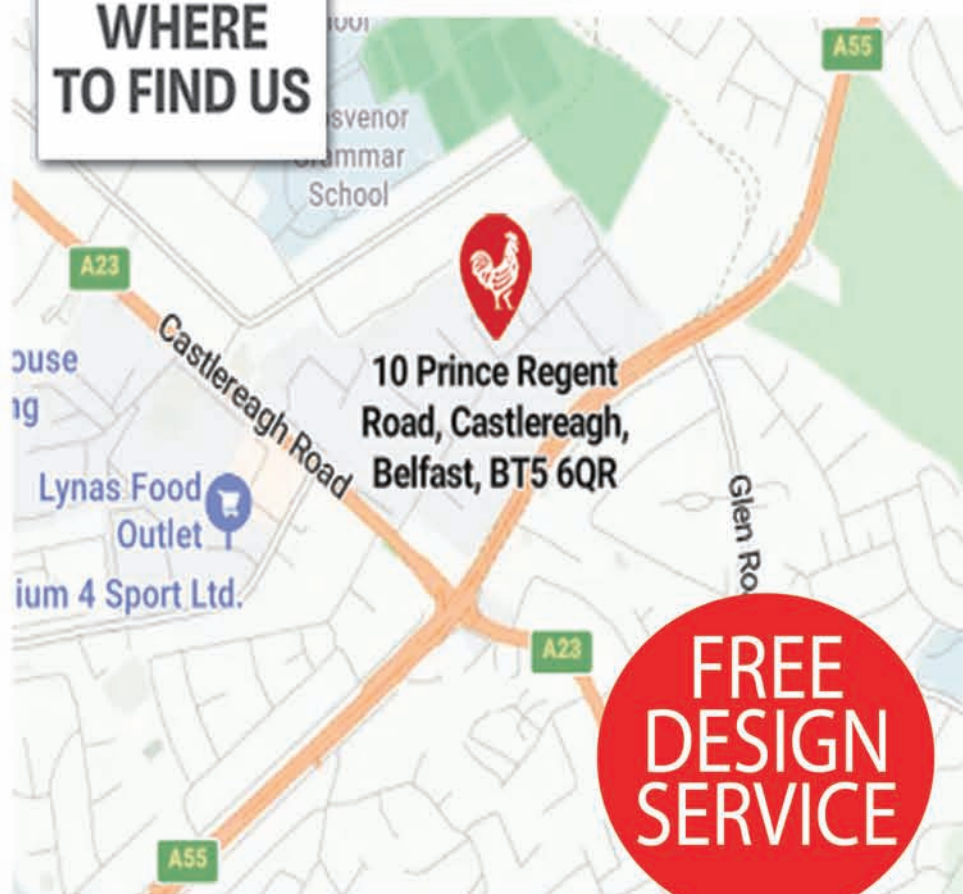
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