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Pictured at Radius's St John's Close site in Belfast are Dominic O'Neill from Danske Bank, Alan Thomson from Radius Housing and Claire McKeown from Danske Bank.

## RADIUS HOUSING SECURES SUSTAINABILITY LINKED FUNDING FROM DANSKE BANK TO SUPPORT FUTURE DEVELOPMENT PLANS

Danske Bank and Radius Housing Association have agreed a new £75m Sustainability Linked Loan package that will support the development of new social and affordable homes across Northern Ireland in the next three years.

Radius Housing said the loan will be used to support investment in up to 500 new homes and to fund the retrofitting and refurbishment of 1,000 other homes to improve energy efficiency.

Radius Housing is a social enterprise which provides housing, care

and support to over 33,000 homes throughout the island of Ireland. It employs around 1,000 people and manages 14,000 properties in 80 towns across Northern Ireland, with a presence in all 11 council areas.

The deal is one of the largest sustainability

linked loans ever agreed by a Northern Ireland Housing Association. Sustainability-linked lending links the debt costs of a business's finance with its performance against pre-agreed sustainability objectives.

The funding is aligned with Radius'

sustainability ambitions, and incorporates targets focused on reducing greenhouse gas emissions intensity and improving property energy performance certificates (EPCs).

**Continued on page 4**

## Belfast Author Launches Debut Children's Book

**Author Patience Bradley has launched her debut children's book, Princess Mary's Journey to Find True Love.**

The book tells the story of a small pedigree dog named Princess Mary, who embarks on an epic journey from Poland to Northern Ireland in search of her one true love.

Told entirely from the perspective of the dog herself, the story captures the highs and lows of her travels, the friendships she makes along the way, and her unwavering belief that love is waiting for her at the end of the road.

Speaking at the launch event in Hollywood library recently, Patience said: "I wrote this story with tears in my eyes and a smile on my face."

"When Princess Mary came into my life, she gave me something to focus on. She brought joy back into my home."

The event was an emotional occasion for the author, who chose the date in memory of her late husband

- Ivor, a great supporter of her work as an author. It was on his birthday that she officially shared Princess Mary's story with the public.

Patience explained: "I wanted to write a story that had heart, something that children and adults alike could relate to."

"This little dog has taught me more about courage and loyalty than I ever thought possible."

The launch included a reading from the book and a discussion about the journey that inspired it. Attendees heard how Princess Mary's real-life travels across Europe were marked by separation, uncertainty, and ultimately, a joyful reunion that changed Patience's life.

The book is now available to purchase on Amazon and through the Excalibur Press website at [excaliburpress.co.uk](http://excaliburpress.co.uk)

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# Belfast selected as a global finalist in Bloomberg Philanthropies 2025 Mayors Challenge

Belfast has been selected as one of the 50 finalists of Bloomberg Philanthropies' sixth Mayors Challenge, a competition to spur local government innovation that improves lives in cities around the world.

The sixth Challenge elevates municipalities that have proposed the boldest ideas to bolster essential municipal services. The 50 finalists, selected from more than 630 applications, together hail from 33 countries and represent over 80 million residents.

Belfast will receive \$50,000 (almost £37,000) to prototype an idea, put forward by Belfast City Council, to work with communities and stakeholders to re-imagine the city's network of alleyways and create shared community assets that deliver benefits for local neighbourhoods.

Council staff will also participate in Bloomberg Philanthropies' Ideas Camp in July to hone and test their concept with feedback from experts and fellow peers.

In January 2026, the 25 cities with the most promising ideas will each be awarded \$1 million (£735,000) and operational assistance to bring their proposals to life.

The 630 ideas submitted to the Mayors Challenge reflect some of the greatest public service challenges facing cities today—as well as the creativity that animates local governments across the globe.

A third of U.S. and Canada applicants, for example,



devised solutions addressing housing and shelter. Nearly half of the applicants from Africa proposed upgrades to waste collection and management.

One out of five applicants from the Asia-Pacific region focused on cleaner water, air, and infrastructure, and 22 percent of European applicants sought ways to reduce poverty or enhance social inclusion.

The 50 finalist ideas were selected for their originality, potential for impact, and credible vision for delivery.

Belfast's proposal aims to develop a more strategic, sustainable approach to regenerating 126 miles of

alleyways across the city.

Using the funding provided by the Mayors Challenge, the council will trial activities to provide additional outdoor space for residents to enjoy, improve wellbeing, increase planting and play spaces, reduce dumping and foster an increased interest in these spaces.

The awards to date across five previous rounds of competition have provided 38 winning cities with funding and technical assistance to realise their ideas for addressing civic issues.

By supporting the replication of the most successful winning ideas, Bloomberg

Philanthropies has expanded the impact of the Mayors Challenge to 337 other cities globally, reaching over 100 million residents around the world.

With the expansion of the Bloomberg Cities Idea Exchange, future Mayors Challenge-winning ideas and other locally led solutions supported by Bloomberg Philanthropies will have new potential to scale - serving as models and catalysts for how governments solve problems across the globe.

To learn more about the 50 finalist proposals, visit [mayorschallenge.bloomberg.org](https://mayorschallenge.bloomberg.org)



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# Srebrenica Memorial, 30 Years on

The 30th anniversary of the genocide at Srebrenica was marked with an event at Belfast City Hall which included Junior Minister Aisling Reilly MLA, Junior Minister Pam Cameron MLA, Minister of State Fleur Anderson MP, and survivor Azra Omerbegovic.



Belfast City Council hosted the event along with Remembering Srebrenica, and guests were welcomed by Lord Mayor, Councillor Tracy Kelly.

The Srebrenica genocide happened in the heart of Europe in July 1995, just a generation ago. The 8,372 victims are remembered each year in Bosnia and around the world.

Belfast City Hall was lit up green and white on the evening of 25th June to commemorate the genocide and remember the victims.

Survivor Azra

Omerbegovic said: "I was humbled to speak in Northern Ireland about what happened at Srebrenica on this 30th anniversary and tell of how so many mothers of victims still mourn as they come to terms with the loss of sons, brothers, fathers and husbands. We have a duty to challenge racism so that any violence driven by ignorance and prejudice, whether or not as significant as the Srebrenica genocide, will never happen again.

"I want to thank the Lord Mayor, Ministers and all who took part

for their interest and support."

Peter Osborne, Chair of Remembering Srebrenica in Northern Ireland said: "The families of the victims at Srebrenica and many people throughout Bosnia and Herzegovina are already aware of the support from Northern Ireland over recent years.

The families are so appreciative of demonstrations of support like this, and previously when all political parties supported the memorial tree in Stormont estate. We know

what happens when prejudice and hatred is left unchecked. That is why we must always challenge and confront racism and sectarianism."

At the commemoration event inter faith reflections and prayers were offered by people from different faiths including Christian, Muslim, Ba'hai, Buddhist, Hindu, and Jewish.

Members of the Ulster Youth Orchestra participated with powerful musical contributions including the music from Schindler's List.

# Learners take centre stage at OCN Awards

Over 350 learners, teachers, tutors, and special guests celebrated the OPEN COLLEGE NETWORK NI (OCN) Learning Endeavour Awards 2025 at Titanic Belfast recently.

The annual awards, now in their 7th year, were hosted by Denise Watson and aim to celebrate the achievements of learners who have gone to exceptional lengths to achieve their learning goals. This year's special guest was Matthew Bell, the former Ireland international hockey player who shared his remarkable story after being given a day to live by medics back in 2019 when they discovered he had a brain tumour.

A total of £16,000 was awarded to learners and education and training providers through learning bursaries from across the province who have achieved extraordinary results, with some learners overcoming numerous personal hurdles to achieve their technical and professional OCN qualifications.

The learners and providers recognised at the OCN Learning Endeavour Awards are a powerful reminder of the profound impact that education can have on individuals and communities. Economy Minister Dr Caoimhe Archibald said: "I was delighted to open the OCN Learning Endeavour Awards. OCN help people build confidence, gain recognised skills, and progress into meaningful employment. I offer my warmest congratulations to all the award nominees and winners and want to pay tribute to their commitment and inspiring stories."

Martin Flynn, Chief



Executive OCN, said: "This year's awards ceremony had an extra special feel to it given it's our 30th anniversary year. I am delighted that once more OCN was able to provide a unique platform for learners to take centre stage, sharing their inspiring stories of achievement."

Economy Minister Dr Caoimhe Archibald said: "I was delighted to open the OCN Learning Endeavour Awards. OCN help people build confidence, gain recognised skills, and progress into meaningful employment. I offer my warmest congratulations to all the award nominees and winners and want to pay tribute to their commitment and inspiring stories."

The Third Sector Learner of the Year winner was Siun McCarthy, Bolster Community, taking home the Schools Learner of the Year award was Leon Callaghan, St Patrick's College, Maghera; OCN Provider of the Year category winner was Clanrye Group and the Inspiring Tutor/Teacher of the Year award went to Peter Knox, Rossmar School, Limavady.

Sam Welsh, Northern Regional College won Further Education Learner of the Year category, with Mustafa Alshowely from People 1st, collecting the Essential Skills Learner of the Year category.

The Health & Well-being Learner of the Year went to Gavin Boyle,

Action Mental Health; and South Eastern Regional College – Truffle Shop won the Advancing Learning Through Innovation category; Traineeship/Apprenticeship Learner of the Year was won by Eugene Prunty, South Eastern Regional College.

The final Award of the 2025 ceremony, the Hilary Sloan MBE Learning Endeavour Award, in memory of former OCN Chair who was a powerful advocate of life-long learning, was announced by OCN Vice Chair Anne-Marie McClure, the award went to Eugene Prunty winner of this year's Traineeship/Apprenticeship Learner of the Year category.

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# Crane name's a winner at Short Strand site

A pupil at St Matthew's primary school in Short Strand, Belfast has won a competition to name a crane on a Clanmil Housing development on Mountpottinger Road, Belfast

Primary 7 pupil Kamallesh Vadlaman's winning name, An Craein Tithochta, which is Irish for 'the housing crane', stood out among the entries in the competition. He explained his thinking

behind it: "I picked the name because I enjoy speaking in Irish, and the crane will help build houses for people."

Kamallesh was presented with an iPad by Dermot McBride of MJ McBride construction company who are building the homes for Clanmil.

Kamallesh's principal, Ciara O'Neill, added: "Well done to Kamallesh for his winning name and a big 'thank you' to Clanmil

for their commitment to investing in the education and wellbeing of our children. It is important for our children to engage in what is happening in the local community, and the partnership between Clanmil and St Matthew's has enhanced the learning experiences of the children and fostered a sense of responsibility."

The newly named crane overlooks a site where 13 new homes



Kamallesh Vadlaman with his mum Lalitha, St Matthew's school principal Ms Ciara O'Neill, Dermot McBride of MJ McBride Construction and Clanmil Development Officer Julie Donaghy.

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are being built for people on the social housing waiting list, including 11 2-bedroom apartments, 1 2-bedroom wheelchair accessible apartment and 1 3-bedroom apartment. The homes, which are being built to Lifetime

Homes and Secure by Design standard, will be completed in summer 2026.

Jan Sloan, Executive Director of Development and New Business at Clanmil added: "Congratulations to Kamallesh on choosing

such a unique name for the crane at this site. Work is progressing well on this site and we're looking forward to the apartments being ready by summer 2026, providing much-needed new homes for this part of Belfast."



# Local sporting heroes honoured at the GolfNow Belfast Sports Awards 2025

Guests at the awards ceremony in City Hall included Olympians, athletes, volunteers and coaches of all ages and abilities from across Belfast.

As well as a host of awards, two athletes were inducted into Belfast City Council's Sporting Hall of Fame – Marissa Callaghan (Football) and Michael Halliday (Football).

Lord Mayor of Belfast, Councillor Micky Murray, said the GolfNow Belfast Sports Awards celebrated all the winners' sporting achievements and accolades this year and recognised all the sport and physical activity that goes on, in the city.

Inducted into the Council's Sporting Hall of Fame, Marissa Callaghan is a trailblazer in women's football and a dedicated ambassador for sport. Marissa made her international debut for the Northern Ireland women's national under-19 team in 2002 and progressed to earn her senior cap in 2010. She captained Northern Ireland at the UEFA Women's Euro 2022—an historic moment as the team competed in a major tournament for the first time. Marissa retired from international football in 2025 with an incredible 91 caps, leaving behind a legacy that continues to inspire. She was awarded an MBE in The Kings New Years Honours List in 2025.



Also inducted into the Council's Sporting Hall of Fame, Michael Halliday began his footballing career with East Belfast and then he moved to Glentoran, a club he has supported all his life, where he played for 11 years and won numerous trophies. He made his debut towards the end of the 1999/2000 season. Signed as a midfielder, Glentoran manager Roy Coyle soon converted him to centre forward and over the next ten years he made 468 appearances, scoring

141 goals. He won fifteen winners' medals, including three league titles and two Irish Cups.

Olympic medalists Rebecca Shorten and Jack McMillan were awarded Sports Personality of the Year.

Former Methodist College Belfast pupil Rebecca Shorten and her teammates became World and European Champion in the coxless fours. Rebecca competed at the Paris 2024 Olympic Games in the Women's Four where

the team secured a silver medal. Rebecca continues to inspire the next generation of rowers in Belfast as she often returns to Methodist College's boathouse.

Jack McMillan, past pupil of Belfast INST, competed as part of the men's 4X 200 freestyle relay at the Paris 2024 Olympic games as part of team GB where they won gold. Jack has become only the second Northern Irish swimmer ever to win an Olympic gold medal in 128 years.



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# Lizards and Legends

**JV Allister focuses on our only native reptile, The Common Lizard**

Legend has it that St. Patrick banished all the snakes from Ireland, but if he had had all the reptiles in mind, he overlooked one, the Common Lizard. Maybe it was hiding under a stone at the time!

In any case, it's our only native reptile, and a very interesting animal.

Like all reptiles, common lizards are cold blooded, relying on external heat to regulate their body temperature, and are often found sunbathing on rocks or sand in the mornings in their known habitat 'hot spots', mostly in mountainous areas such as the Mourne and Sperrins, even the Belfast Hills, as well as some bogs and coastal dunes.

They might be slow when cold but can run fast when fully heated, which is their main means of escape if birds or mammals try to catch and eat them. But they have another much more cunning plan: they can shed their tails (still wriggling) to confuse predators, and regrow them, even if they're



usually shorter than the originals. A remarkable adaptation for survival of an otherwise vulnerable creature.

They have also adapted to living in colder northern regions as they spread through Europe and beyond. Most reptiles, and all birds of course, lay eggs, but our female common lizards give birth to live young. In more southern, warmer climes, common lizards are known to lay eggs.

While their overall numbers here are not

exactly known, it's thought likely that they are in decline, mainly because of habitat loss; and the extensive wildfires this year will have destroyed precious habitat for many years to come, as well as killing many lizards.

Despite their adaptations, they live precarious lives, particularly as weather patterns change and people do stupid things like setting fire to wild places.

Incidentally, St. Patrick didn't banish the snakes from

Ireland, for the simple reason that there were none in his time, since before the last Ice Age. Rather, it seems that snakes served as an allegory for paganism, which Patrick 'banished' as he brought Christianity to our shores.

Myths and legends have their place in our folk memories, but we also need to know the stories about our highly adaptable native wildlife, and in the case of common lizards, protect our only native reptile.

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# SUMMER EVENTS TO ENJOY IN BELFAST

If you are enjoying a staycation this summer, then exploring the history and heritage on your doorstep is a great way to find out more about the city you call home... Belfast.

We have a number of seasonal tours over the holidays, where every weekend we cover different stories, topics and even locations. We're kicking off our seasonal tours on the 26th July with the North Belfast Heritage Walking tour, a great introduction to some of the historically significant buildings in the city. On 8-9 August, "The Medical History of Belfast Charitable Society" Cemetery Tour delves into how 18th and 19th century philanthropy and pioneering surgery left their mark. The following weekend, 15-16 August, "The Hidden History of the Women of Clifton Street Cemetery" shines a spotlight on heroines like Mary Ann McCracken, Martha McTier, and Charlotte Sinclair—women whose powerful yet often overlooked contributions shaped the city of Belfast. On 22-23 August, we invite you to join our "Plots & Plotters,". This tour of Clifton Street Cemetery unravels the radical roots of the Belfast Charitable Society and their entanglement in the 1798 Rebellion, through the stories of William Drennan, the McCrackens, and the Joys. Finally, on 29-30 August, "Belfast's Heroines: Mary Ann McCracken and Martha McTier Walking Tour" returns, revisiting Belfast's most courageous women as they fought inequality, championed education, and shaped civic life. This tour starts at Clifton House and



ends at Belfast City Hall. Each tour is fully guided by one of our expert white badge volunteers, with group sizes limited for the maximum comfort of those attending. So whether you're a history buff or simply curious, August at Clifton House promises rich storytelling woven into the city's very fabric. For full tour details and to book, visit [www.cliftonbelfast.com](http://www.cliftonbelfast.com) or call 028 9099 7022.

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Old School Lime Restorations Limited is based in Belfast, covering all of Northern Ireland.

The company carries out specialist work of conserving, restoring, and repairing period, listed, and historic buildings using traditional lime-based materials and techniques including: Lime plastering: Applying breathable lime plasters to interior walls. Lime rendering: Applying lime-based renders to exterior surfaces. Lime pointing: Re-pointing brickwork or stonework with lime mortar. Stucco restoration: Repairing and restoring decorative stucco facades. Conservation of decorative mouldings and ceilings: Working on intricate plasterwork. The company adheres to conservation principles - working to repair and retain original fabric rather than replace it. They aim to preserve and utilise traditional skills and heritage craftsmanship. This company has specialist knowledge and understanding of historic buildings, such as, how lime materials interact with older structures, allowing them to "breathe" and manage moisture, making use of natural materials .Old School Lime Restorations Limited can work on a variety of properties, from private homes to major heritage sites. For specific inquiries about their services or to obtain a quote contact them directly. Tel: (0)79 3598 4489.

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# The Abbey Hotel, Donegal

Located on the Diamond in Donegal Town, with views stretching across Donegal Bay and the River Eske, the Abbey Hotel is a long-established and much-loved landmark in County Donegal.



## Active Escape

Relax, Unwind, Enjoy & Meet new people  
February 16th to 20th 2026



From €270pps

Make friends for life with Scenic & Relaxing Waterbus Trip, an Engaging Storytelling Session, and a Cozy Movie Night. A Well-Deserved Break for You!

Enjoy good company, great food, and delightful experiences in a welcoming atmosphere.

Escape to Comfort & Fun  
This offer includes:

- 4 Nights Bed & Breakfast
- 2 Delicious Evening Meals
- 1 Light Lunch



Abbey Hotel  
The Diamond  
Donegal Town  
Co. Donegal F94 AP8W

Get in Touch

Phone: +353 (0) 749721014  
info@abbeyhoteldonegal.com  
www.abbeyhoteldonegal.com

The Abbey Hotel boasts a range of comfortable and recently refurbished en-suite bedrooms, many of which offer stunning views of Donegal Bay and the River Eske. Each room is well-equipped with modern amenities, including flat-screen TVs and complimentary Wi-Fi, ensuring a relaxing stay.

The award-winning Market House Restaurant is celebrated for its diverse menu, featuring high-quality dishes prepared with creativity and flair using the freshest locally sourced ingredients. A must-try for many is their signature “Steak on the Stone” experience. For a more informal setting, the lively Abbey Bar offers an extensive bar food menu and is a popular spot for both guests and locals to relax and enjoy a bite to eat. The hotel also boasts a coffee shop and a snack bar/deli for lighter refreshments.

Beyond dining, the Abbey Hotel is a true entertainment destination. It has a strong reputation for hosting high-profile

concerts and events, including country and western weekends and traditional Irish folk music nights, with live music almost every night in the Abbey Bar. While the Abbey Hotel itself doesn’t have its own dedicated leisure centre, guests enjoy complimentary access to the leisure facilities at its sister hotel, the Central Hotel, located conveniently next door. These facilities include a 13-meter swimming pool, a separate kids’ pool, a jacuzzi, a steam room, and an extensive gym. For those looking for more active pursuits, the hotel can arrange activity packages such as golfing, dancing, and Wild Atlantic Way walking weeks. The surrounding area also offers opportunities for cycling, horse riding, fishing, hiking, and watersports.

The Abbey Hotel also caters to events, with meeting and banquet facilities capable of accommodating a wide range of gatherings, including weddings and civil ceremonies



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FROM €270 PPS

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### Package €249pps

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### FRIDAY 12TH SEPTEMBER 2025



STACEY BREEN & BAND  
9.15PM-11.30PM



DEREK RYAN  
11.30PM-1.30AM



STUART MOYLES  
1.30AM

### SATURDAY 13TH SEPTEMBER 2025



KIERAN MC AREE  
2.30PM-4.30PM



PATRICK FEENEY  
9.15PM-11.30PM



JIMMY BUCKLEY  
11.30PM-1.30AM



GAVIN GRIBBEN  
1.30AM

### SUNDAY 14TH SEPTEMBER 2025



MIKE DENVER  
3.00PM-5.00PM



TREVOR LOUGHREY  
9.00PM-11.00PM

### ADMISSION:

FRIDAY: €20  
SATURDAY: €20  
SUNDAY: €15

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t: + 353 (0)74 97 21014  
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## HANNON Coach & Sail is perfect for a city break in Glasgow!

**Direct Belfast – Glasgow Express now departing from the new Belfast Grand Central Station.**

An award-winning service offering hassle-free travel, HANNON Coach & Sail is ideal for a city break in Glasgow and the perfect antidote to flying and airport stress! Already hugely popular with those in the know, the Belfast – Glasgow Express Coach Service is rated 5-Star on TripAdvisor.

A shopper's paradise, Glasgow is recognised as having the best retail therapy in the UK outside of London. Consistently voted 'top of the shops', the city is Scotland's premier shopping destination.

Not just shopping, Glasgow is also famous for its fantastic nightlife, and great choice of restaurants

and bars. Glasgow is the perfect choice for your next city break away.

With a simple flat fare of £47 which includes the cost of the ferry and your bag, the Belfast – Glasgow Express offers a really attractive, convenient and low-cost alternative to flying.

The service is operated by HANNON Coach and leaves twice a day from Belfast, Grand Central Station (Stand 18) and drops visitors right in the heart of Glasgow's 'Style Mile'.

The simple flat fare allows passengers to pick and mix dates and times of travel to suit and with no luggage charges it makes a perfect travel option for a shopping trip.



There are also a great range of hotels just minutes from Glasgow Buchanan Bus Station.

Company director Aodh Hannon says people seem to really love the convenience of the service as we take you right into the heart of the city centre.

"People love the fact that it's so hassle-free compared to flying, no airport

transfers and with no extra charge for luggage it is a massive help with keeping the cost of a break down," said Mr Hannon.

The service can be booked online at www.hannoncoach.com up to 1 hour before departure or by phone using the very friendly telephone booking service.

Call 028 9265 0700 (Mon – Fri) or visit www.hannoncoach.com

## Game Locker: Celebrating 5 years in Business in Dundonald

**Get ready to step into a digital realm where pixels meet passion!**

Game Locker, a premier gaming destination, is revolutionizing the gaming experience, offering an immersive environment for individuals, groups, and even corporate events. Established since 2020; Game Locker is proud to be celebrating 5 years in business!

More than just a gaming company, Game Locker prides itself on being "architects of epic experiences" and game-changers that set new standards of epic fun.

Located at Carrowreagh Rd, Belfast, Game Locker provides a unique opportunity to "unlock the player inside." Their state-of-the-art arena is designed to elevate your play, forge new friendships, and power up positive vibes.

Experience Gaming Like Never Before:

Game Locker offers a diverse range of gaming experiences to cater to every interest:

**Levelling Up Community:** Beyond just individual play, Game Locker extends its arena to schools, community groups, and workplaces, bringing the joy of gaming directly to the doorstep. This initiative aims to build a vibrant gaming community and foster connections through shared experiences.

**New Racing Simulators:** For speed enthusiasts, Game Locker now features cutting-edge racing simulators, promising an adrenaline-pumping experience that puts you right in the driver's seat.

**Private, Personal & Corporate Events:** Looking for a unique venue for your next gathering? Game Locker is the perfect spot for:

- Birthday Parties: Host and plan an unforgettable birthday celebration with Game Locker.

- Corporate and Private Events: Offering a virtual pistol in your hands with



kickback and rumble, these events are perfect for team-building or private gatherings.

- Family Time: Spend quality time with loved ones through some competitive gaming.

- Playing with Friends: Gather your gaming crew and create lasting memories in a dynamic and exciting environment.

With a focus on providing unparalleled gaming experiences, Game Locker

is quickly becoming a go-to destination for gamers of all ages and skill levels in the Belfast area.

You can reach Game Locker at:

- Tel: 07519 312338
- Email: gl.gamelocker@gmail.com

- Website: WWW.GAMELOCKER.ONLINE

Follow Game Locker on their social media channels (Facebook and Instagram) to stay updated on their latest offerings and events.

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# UNVEILING THE WONDERS OF A ROCK POOL

Rock pools are miniature marine worlds, teeming with fascinating life just waiting to be discovered.

14TH ANNUAL

# The Little Green Allotments

## FUN DOG SHOW

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Investigating them is a rewarding adventure, but remember to be gentle and respectful of their delicate ecosystems.

Before you begin, check the tide times and only explore during low tide. Equip yourself with a clear bucket or a magnifying glass for a closer look. Approach the pool slowly and quietly to avoid startling its inhabitants.

Begin by observing from a distance. What larger movements do you notice? You might spot small fish darting amongst the seaweed or scuttling crabs hiding under rocky overhangs.

Next, gently peer into the water. Look for anemones, often resembling colourful jelly blobs, that will retract their tentacles if disturbed. Keep an eye out for limpets and periwinkles clinging to the rocks, and common starfish, sometimes nestled in crevices. If you're lucky, you might even spot a tiny, translucent prawn or a camouflaged blenny.

Remember to touch as little as possible. If you pick something up for a closer look, return it carefully to exactly where you found it. After your exploration, leave the rock pool as undisturbed as possible, ensuring these vibrant habitats continue to thrive for others to enjoy.

## School-Age sessions at Malone Kindergarten | Family Wellbeing and SEN Support Services

Learning Extends Beyond the Classroom.

At Malone, we're excited to further expand our support and provision for school-age children (ages 4-10) through a wide range of enriching, small-group sessions. While many of our programmes run after school, we're also introducing daytime sessions—perfect for families who home educate or whose children attend school on a flexible basis. Whether your child is a gifted learner seeking challenge, or benefits from additional support in areas like literacy, maths, social skills, or executive functioning, our sessions are thoughtfully designed to meet their unique needs, following the Montessori approach of progressing at each child's natural pace. You can choose to sign up for individual sessions that run weekly by term, or attend across several days to experience the full breadth of learning opportunities on offer—all delivered in our nurturing, nature-rich forest environment.

### School-age sessions @Malone

~ Family Wellbeing and SEN Support Service ~

Contact for more details and to sign up:  
*Malone Kindergarten*  
Kings Hall Health and Wellbeing Park, Lisburn Rd  
Tel: 02820660688  
[malonekindergarten@gmail.com](mailto:malonekindergarten@gmail.com)  
[www.malonenurseryschool.com](http://www.malonenurseryschool.com)

At Malone, we offer a holistic service for 0-12 year olds and their families overseen by in-house Educational Psychologist and multidisciplinary passionate team of experienced educators and SEN professionals providing:

- Specialised early years education for children with additional needs
- Family support through parent workshops
- SEN individual learning support
- SEN Advice centre and support for parents
- Specialised assessment and intervention. Contact us to chat about how we can best support your child's learning journey.

Rooted in nature, guided by curiosity

## Your invitation to Northern Ireland-ITF!

Grandmasters, Masters, Instructors, Coaches, Competitors and Spectators, Coach Leo and Taekwon-Do Northern Ireland is delighted to invite you all to participate in the 2025 ITF Taekwon-Do Northern Ireland Championship.

This historic event will be held in the National Badminton Centre Lisburn Northern Ireland. The event will run on Sunday 21st September and is open to all Juniors (6-17 years), Adults (18-34 years) and Veterans (35 years & above) who hold the ranks of Green Belt (6th Kup) to Black Belt (6th Degree).

For our participants, the venue is within a very short distance of our major cities (Belfast and Lisburn) which will allow you to enjoy the very best of Northern Ireland's culture and history.

We look forward to welcoming you all to enjoy a one day display of Taekwon-Do skills from some of the very best ITF Taekwon-Do athletes in the World.

Kind Regards,  
Master Leo Maguire  
President Taekwon-Do

Northern Ireland SCHEDULE:  
Sunday 21st September, 10am-8pm

All Junior Belts – Green Belt, Blue Belt, Red Belt and Black Belt – 6th Kup to 3rd Dan (Under 18 Years of age).

All Adults (18 -34 Years) – Green Belt, Blue Belt, Red Belt and Black Belt -6th Kup to 6th Dan.

All Veterans (35 Years & Above) – Green Belt, Blue Belt, Red Belt and Black Belt - 6th Kup to 6th Dan.

<https://www.kihapp.com/.../20286-northern-ireland-itf...>

# NORTHERN IRELAND

## ITF NORTHERN IRELAND CHAMPIONSHIPS

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# Forest Literacy Explorers @Malone

Where nature nurtures language, imagination, and a love of literacy

**Why learn literacy in nature?**  
Multi-sensory experiences in nature support **memory and understanding of language concepts**, especially for early and diverse learners. Children have been found to build phonological awareness and **retain new vocabulary** better when linked to meaningful, embodied experiences.

**Nature rich environments** reduce stress and improve focus, helping children engage more fully in literacy activities.

**Who benefits?**

- Gifted learners
- Kinesthetic learners
- Reluctant readers
- Children with speech, language or communication needs
- Children with **attention or regulation** challenges
- EAL learners
- Early readers/emergent writers

Leave the tables and chairs behind—let reading take root in the forest.



# Montessori Maths @Malone

Montessori maths meets each child where they are, offering hands-on materials and tailored challenges that support deep understanding and stretch thinking at every stage.

**Who can benefit?**

- Gifted learners
- Children with **maths difficulties**
- Children with SEN
- Children who need more time
- Children who thrive on independence
- Children who **learn differently**
- Children with attention or executive functioning needs

# Social Thinkers & Executive Functioning skills @Malone

## Malone Kindergarten Family Wellbeing & SEN Support Service

Kings Hall Health and Wellbeing Park, Lisburn Rd [www.malonenurseryschool.com](http://www.malonenurseryschool.com)

Tel: 02890660688 | E: [malonekindergarten@gmail.com](mailto:malonekindergarten@gmail.com)

We deliver a range of **small group support sessions** designed and facilitated by Educational and Child Psychologist



other sessions also include:

Lego brick-by-brick club,  
French Montessori lessons  
... and more



- gaining confidence  
- greeting a peer  
- asking to play  
- making friendships  
- following a group plan

**Social skills**

- working memory  
- focus and attention  
- emotional regulation  
- planning, organisational skills  
- time management  
- impulse control  
- flexible problem solving

**EF Skills**



## “I Thought I’d Just Have to Live With It...”

How Foot Medic Hillsborough Helped Me Walk Free of Pain

For years, Hillsborough resident Margaret struggled with constant foot pain. “I just thought it was part of getting older,” she says. “Walking the dog, shopping, even standing to cook dinner became painful. I tried everything — new shoes, insoles from the internet — but nothing worked.”

Then a friend recommended Foot Medic Hillsborough.

“From the moment I walked in, I knew this wasn’t like anywhere else. They listened carefully, examined my feet thoroughly, and explained exactly what was going on.”

It turns out Margaret had a combination of heel pain and collapsed arches — common issues, but ones that need specialist care.

With a clear treatment plan involving hands-on therapy, laser treatment for inflammation, and custom-made orthotics, Margaret



noticed the difference within weeks. “For the first time in years, I could walk the dog without stopping. It’s honestly changed my life.”

At Foot Medic Hillsborough, this story isn’t unique. Whether it’s heel pain, ingrown toenails, arthritis, or sports injuries, the team combines modern technology with years of

clinical expertise to get you moving again — pain-free.

If you’ve been living with foot or ankle pain and told to “just put up with it” — don’t. You don’t have to.

Call Foot Medic Hillsborough on 02892789105 today and take your first step towards comfort, confidence, and freedom from pain.

## Robinson Goldsmiths: A Jewel in Northern Ireland’s Crown

In an era where mass-produced items often overshadow craftsmanship, Robinson Goldsmiths stands as a beacon of creativity and family tradition.

Founded in the 1980s, this remarkable family business has evolved from humble beginnings to become a premier destination for bespoke jewellery in Northern Ireland.

Starting their journey as dental technicians, Rosemary and (the late) Eric Robinson discovered that their true passion lay not in the dental arts but in creating exquisite jewellery.

With just a modest sum of money and a heartfelt commitment to their craft, they melted their own wedding rings to launch a business that would ultimately define their family’s legacy. This leap of faith transformed their lives, turning a home-based endeavour into a flourishing enterprise.

Now the gallery shop is located where once stood the family’s old Hay loft. It beautifully showcases their unique designs, each piece inspired by the rich stories and landmarks of Northern Ireland.

This connection to local heritage sets Robinson Goldsmiths apart, making their jewellery not just adornments, but narratives of culture and history.

These days daughters, Gillian and Jennifer, bring a new generation and their own inspiration into the fold, blending traditional craftsmanship with modern technology. Their use of computer-aided design and wax printing highlights a commitment to innovation, ensuring that each piece is both contemporary and rooted in tradition.

Robinson Goldsmiths has also garnered attention on a national stage, creating stunning pieces for notable figures such as Princess Anne during a visit to Bangor in recent years and the talented team behind the Oscar-winning film “An Irish Goodbye.” Such achievements not only elevate their brand but also showcase Northern Ireland’s rich artistic talent to the world.

For those seeking the perfect gift or a unique statement piece, Robinson Goldsmiths offers a seamless shopping experience, including a click-and-collect service through their website. Visitors are warmly welcomed at their refurbished gallery, where they can explore the



artistry and dedication that go into every creation.

As we celebrate Robinson Goldsmiths, we honour not just their beautiful jewellery but also their inspiring story of resilience, creativity, and familial bonds. In a world that often prioritizes speed over quality, they remind us of the value of artistry and the stories that lie

behind each piece.

To explore their exquisite collections or take a virtual tour, visit [www.robinsongoldsmiths.com](http://www.robinsongoldsmiths.com) or scan the QR code in their advertisement. For enquiries, don’t hesitate to call 02891 270766. We encourage everyone to support this local treasure and witness firsthand the magic that unfolds in every piece of jewellery.

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26 Benone Avenue, Limavady, Co. Londonderry, BT49 0LQ.

[www.goldensandsbenone.com](http://www.goldensandsbenone.com)

## Milne adds two more sites to Holiday Park Portfolio

Milne Holiday Parks has recently expanded its portfolio with the exciting acquisition of two new holiday parks, now known collectively as Groomsport Bay.

This significant development further solidifies Milne Holiday Parks’ position as the leading provider of high-quality holiday destinations along the stunning Northern Irish coastline.

Milne Holiday Parks now boasts a collection of seven beach-front parks, offering an enviable selection of locations for those dreaming of owning a home by the Sea. The addition of Groomsport

Bay complements their existing parks: Cranfield Bay, Mourneview, Silvercove, Pebble Beach, Cranfield House and Shanlieve All 12x month holiday parks. Each of these parks offers unique characteristics and access to the beautiful beaches and landscapes that Northern Ireland is renowned for.

The appeal of owning a holiday home at a Milne Holiday Park is further enhanced by the attractive

financial options available. Prospective owners can step into their dream with deposits starting from as little as 10%. Flexible finance options are available at low rates, making holiday home ownership more accessible than ever. This allows families and individuals to invest in a lifestyle of relaxation and coastal enjoyment without undue financial strain.

Currently, Milne Holiday Parks offers an



impressive selection of over 200 new and pre-owned holiday homes for sale. This extensive range ensures that there is something to suit various tastes and budgets. Adding to the appeal, Milne Holiday Parks is currently offering free site fees for 2025 & 2026 on new purchases, representing a significant £6000 saving for new owners. This limited-time offer presents a compelling reason to explore the opportunities available at their six beach-front locations.

Owners at Milne Holiday Parks can enjoy their holiday homes ALL Year Round, allowing for extended breaks and the flexibility to visit whenever they desire. This extended season maximizes the value of

ownership and allows for enjoyment across different seasons, from summer beach days to cosy autumn retreats and refreshing spring escapes with the added bonus of being able to rent out their holiday homes with great returns.

For those interested in learning more about owning a holiday home at any of the Milne Holiday Parks, including the new Groomsport Bay, further information can be found on their website: [www.milneholidayparks.com](http://www.milneholidayparks.com). Additionally, individuals can text “HOLIDAY HOME” to 07860 617 616 to request a call-back and speak directly with a representative who can provide personalised assistance and details on available properties and financing options.

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# BELFAST HARBOUR CELEBRATES 1500TH CRUISE CALL WITH ARRIVAL OF PRINCESS CRUISES' REGAL PRINCESS

Belfast Harbour has today welcomed the 1500th cruise ship to call in the city, as Princess Cruises' Regal Princess arrived in Northern Ireland.

The landmark was announced by Cruise Belfast, the partnership between Belfast Harbour and Visit Belfast which markets the city as a leading cruise ship destination.

Since the first cruise ship arrived in Belfast in 1996, the industry has grown exponentially and now contributes approximately £25m a year to the local economy.

To date almost 2.5 million cruise passengers have come to Northern Ireland on cruise ships and in 2025 there will be 148 cruise calls by 58 ships from 31 different cruise lines calling at Belfast Harbour during the seven-month cruise season – including first time calls from 10 cruise ships.

Regal Princess is

Belfast's most frequent cruise caller, with this latest visit the 32nd time it has called in Belfast since 2015, and the fifth time it has stopped in Northern Ireland this year. Princess Cruises has brought almost a third of the total number of people who have visited Northern Ireland on a cruise.

Mary Jo McCanny, Director of Visitor Experience and Destination Initiatives at Visit Belfast said: "We are proud to mark the arrival of Belfast's 1500th cruise ship, a major milestone that reflects just how far the city has come as a world-class cruise destination. Over nearly three decades, Cruise Belfast has helped establish Belfast as a welcoming, exciting,



and high-quality port of call, with strong partnerships, exceptional visitor experiences and a growing global reputation.

"Cruise tourism is an important part of our visitor economy, supporting local businesses and connecting millions of visitors with the culture, heritage and warm welcome that Belfast City Region is known for. As we continue to build for the future this milestone is both a celebration and a launchpad for the next chapter of growth for the city."

Among the ships calling at Belfast for the first time this year are Viking's newest vessel, the 'Viking Vela' and

Virgin Voyages first ship 'Scarlet Lady'. The largest vessel visiting Belfast this year will once again be the 333 metre-long MSC Preziosa.

In a further indication of the city's growing status in the cruise industry, this year will see Belfast Harbour facilitate eight 'turnarounds' – which means passengers beginning and ending their trip in Belfast boosting overnight stays in city hotels.

The 2025 cruise season will come to an end on 6th November 2025.

## Make a Real Difference with St John Ambulance Northern Ireland

Our Youth Team Volunteers are particularly vital, consistently empowering our Badgers (ages 5-10) and Cadets (ages 10-17) to develop crucial life skills and foster a spirit of community.

At the heart of St John Ambulance (NI) is our commitment to young people. Our youth programmes operate throughout Northern Ireland, equipping young people aged 5 to 25 with essential first aid knowledge, boosting their confidence, and imparting vital life skills. By engaging young people in a wide array of programmes, events, and activities, we not only create healthier and safer local communities but also provide experiences that can influence career paths, enhance prospects, and benefit their physical and mental well-being.

Our local youth units, located in Bangor, Dundonald, and Newtownards, are only possible thanks to our incredible adult volunteers. These dedicated individuals generously give their spare time to run our youth programmes. This is where you come in! We're actively seeking enthusiastic new Youth Team Volunteers to support our programmes in your local community.

Our Youth Sections: Fun, Learning, and Lifesaving Skills

Badgers

For our youngest members, Badgers (ages 5-10) offer an exciting



blend of fun, adventure, and first aid learning.

Cadets

Our flagship programme, St John Ambulance Cadets, boasts a century of success and a promising future. Young people aged 10 to 17 learn lifesaving skills and much more as they work towards their prestigious Grand Prior's Award. Cadets also engage in a variety of other activities, including the Duke of Edinburgh's Award, and

Badgers (ages 5-10) or Cadets (ages 10-17). If you or someone you know is interested in volunteering with us, please email [youth@sjani.org](mailto:youth@sjani.org) or visit [sjani.org](http://sjani.org) to learn more.

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## Hydraquip Opens New Trade Counter in Lisburn, Northern Ireland

Established in 1989, Hydraquip Hose & Hydraulics, one of the UK's leading providers of hydraulic solutions, is proud to announce the opening of its new hydraulic trade counter in Lisburn, Northern Ireland.

This exciting development coincides with Hydraquip's first anniversary operating in Northern Ireland. The launch of the Lisburn branch marks a key milestone in strengthening support for local customers and enhancing service delivery throughout the region. The company is proud of the progress made over the past year and is looking forward to further growth in the years ahead.

Hydraquip's trade counters provide access to over 70,000 products, offering customers immediate availability of essential parts. From hoses and fittings to vital hydraulic components, there is no need to wait for delivery, helping projects to stay on schedule.

Alongside the trade counter, Hydraquip operates a dedicated fleet of mobile hydraulic service engineers across Northern Ireland, delivering a 24-hour HQ Onsite Hose Replacement Service. The team, equipped with up-to-date and specialised training, achieves a 95% first-time fix rate for on-site repairs. From hose replacements to full hydraulic installations and maintenance contracts, Hydraquip offers tailored solutions to meet the diverse needs of various industries.

Avoid costly downtime by visiting the Lisburn trade counter, open from 8 am to 5 pm at 19 Ferguson Drive, Knockmore Road, BT28 2EX.

For assistance, call 028 92 29 4000 or email [sales@hqonsite.com](mailto:sales@hqonsite.com). Follow @hqonsite on Instagram for job updates and team insights.

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## Olympic Lifts and Stannah have the lift solution for you!

**Celebrating 40 years of providing lifting solutions across the UK & Ireland, Olympic Lifts is your trusted partner for a wide range of accessibility products.**

Based in Lisburn, our easily accessible showroom just off the M1 showcases several Home Elevators. Our strategic location allows us to provide rapid and efficient maintenance and support throughout Ireland, with vehicle tracking ensuring the closest technician is dispatched in the event of a fault.

A key area of our expertise lies in Stannah stairlifts, for which Olympic Lifts is sole distributor in NI. Our extensive range of Stannah products is designed with a refreshingly modern aesthetic to integrate beautifully into any home, whether classic or contemporary. We offer Stannah stairlifts for all types of staircases, including:

- Stannah curved stairlifts: Expertly designed to navigate winding or complex staircases, effortlessly handling curved bends, intermediate landings, and corridors.
- Stannah outdoor stairlifts: A revolutionary solution for split-level properties, providing access to lower gardens, garages, or cellars.
- Stannah straight stairlifts: Reliable and space-saving options for straightforward staircases.

Beyond Stannah stairlifts, Olympic Lifts also supplies, installs, tests, and maintains Passenger Lifts, Access Lifts, Goods Lifts, escalators, and Moving walkways. We are proud to have completed almost 20,000 projects over the past four decades. Recently, we launched our new machine room traction drive access passenger lift, a versatile Hybrid Lift suitable for both domestic and commercial properties, offering numerous sizes and finish options.

Our commitment to continuous development, investment, and product advancement ensures that Olympic Lifts offers the most up-to-date, highest quality products and services. This dedication translates to an improved purchasing experience, enhanced efficiencies, and cost savings for our valued customers.

For more information on our range of Stannah stairlifts and other lifting solutions, please contact us at 02892 622331 or visit our website at [www.olympiclifts.co.uk](http://www.olympiclifts.co.uk).



## MAJOR SALE OF IRISH ART AT SLIEVE DONARD HOTEL END OF AUGUST

**North Coast artist Adrian Margey will be holding a major exhibition and sale of his work at the Slieve Donard Resort and Spa Newcastle over the Bank Holiday Weekend (Saturday 23rd – Monday 25th August).**

The Slieve Donard exhibition will place a strong focus on the landscape and landmarks of County Down and the Mourne area. Contemporary and traditional depictions of Murlough Bay, Spelga, Silent Valley, Newcastle, Annalong Harbour, St John's Point and Dundrum Bay will take centre stage together with portrayals of North Down and the Ards Peninsula. Visitors to this stunning new exhibition will also enjoy dramatic Belfast and Dublin cityscapes and interpretations of the artist's beloved North Coast. Representations of traditional Irish musicians and dancers will also be on show.

"I have been exhibiting at the Slieve Donard for a number of years now – and each time I look forward to showcasing my work in this beautiful old building overlooking the Mournes," enthused Adrian.

The artist will be in attendance all weekend to discuss his work. Opening times are as follows:  
Saturday 23rd & Sunday 24th August: 11am – 8pm  
Monday 25th August: 11am – 6pm. Admission free – everyone welcome. Further details about the exhibition can be found at [www.adrianmargey.com](http://www.adrianmargey.com). For more information, telephone the Portrush Studio on 07841593762.





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# HOWDENS PRINCE REGENT ROAD, CASTLEREAGH BT5

**Howdens is a leading supplier of fitted kitchens, wardrobes, appliances, and joinery products. These are exciting times for the Howdens Brand as the company is rapidly expanding across Northern Ireland and Howdens' Castlereagh is a fast-growing depot!**

Howdens is a family friendly organisation with upwards of 900 depots in the UK. They do much of their own manufacturing in kitchens, bedrooms and joinery. Howdens pride themselves on providing the best service to customers, and as a result, are already the UK's Number 1 Trade Kitchen Supplier! The manufacturer literally has 1000's of lines available for immediate delivery. Howdens Castlereagh is known to build strong relationships with customers and compete well on price. The devil is also very

much in the detail from Quality in Constructed cabinets to supplying a wide array of cabinet sizes and configurations, allowing for efficient use of space and tailored storage solutions, from integrated appliances to clever pantry units. Aspects such as worktop, lighting, splashbacks and flooring as well as joinery supplies are not forgotten ensuring a seamless look and finish for your kitchen. Free design appointments are available! Howdens Castlereagh, reports strong local performance and positive customer feedback,

reflecting the successful implementation of the Howdens model at a regional level. This local engagement is crucial for gaining and maintaining market share. Howdens Joinery Group Plc has solidified its position as the UK's leading specialist trade kitchen and joinery supplier, driven by a distinctive business model and consistent strategic expansion. Serving primarily local builders through its extensive depot network, Howdens has demonstrated remarkable resilience and continued growth,

even amidst challenging market conditions. At the heart of Howdens' success is its trade-only model. Unlike retail kitchen showrooms, Howdens caters specifically to professional tradespeople, offering immediate availability of stock, competitive pricing, and dedicated expert support. This approach fosters strong relationships with builders, who in turn rely on Howdens for their projects, creating a robust and loyal customer base. Key elements of their

strategy include: **Extensive Depot Network:** Howdens operates a vast network of depots, allowing builders convenient access to products and services. Each depot functions as a local business, with incentivised teams focused on building strong relationships with local trades. **Stock Availability:** A crucial differentiator is the immediate availability of a wide range of products, allowing builders to collect materials on demand and keep projects moving without

delays. **Comprehensive Product Range:** Beyond kitchens, Howdens supplies a broad array of joinery products, including doors, flooring, and appliances, making it a one-stop shop for builders. **Investment in Manufacturing and Supply Chain:** Howdens invests heavily in its own manufacturing capabilities and a highly efficient supply chain, ensuring quality control, cost effectiveness, and high service levels to its depots. **Digital Evolution:** The company is continuously

enhancing its digital platforms to support its trade customers, including online accounts, click-and-collect services, and improved CRM systems. In 2022, Howdens publicly stated its aim to increase its UK depot count to 950, specifically identifying potential for around 25 depots in Northern Ireland. This proactive target highlights Northern Ireland as a key area for concentrated growth within their UK expansion strategy. Despite macroeconomic headwinds and an anticipated contraction in

the UK kitchen market in 2025, Howdens remains confident in its ability to continue gaining market share. This confidence is rooted in its robust trade-only model, continuous investment in its network, product range, manufacturing capabilities, and digital platforms. The sustained focus on supporting local builders, combined with strategic expansion into new areas like Northern Ireland, positions Howdens for continued long-term growth and market leadership in the UK kitchen and joinery sector.



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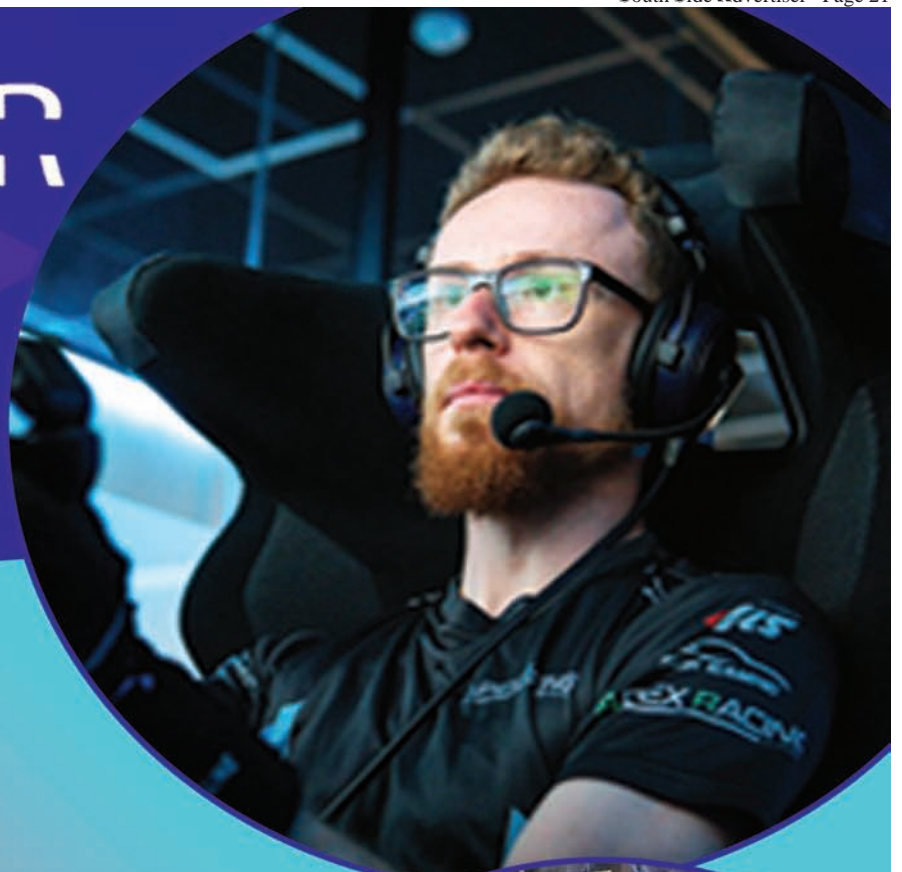
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# AC NOT BLOWING COLD? TROUBLESHOOTING CAR AIR CONDITIONING ISSUES

There's nothing quite like the blissful relief of a perfectly functioning air conditioner on a sweltering summer day.

Conversely, there are few motoring frustrations quite as immediate as flipping on your AC, only to be met with warm, stale air. If your car's air conditioning isn't blowing cold, don't sweat it just yet. Often, the issue might be simpler than you think.

Before you book a costly garage visit, let's go through some common culprits and troubleshooting steps.

First, The Basics: Check These Simple Things

Sometimes, the fix is literally at your fingertips.

Check Your Settings: It sounds obvious, but ensure your AC is actually switched "on" and the temperature control is set to its coldest setting. Many cars have a separate AC button (often with an "AC" or snowflake symbol) that needs to be engaged. Also, confirm the fan speed is up.

Recirculation Mode: Ensure your recirculation (or "recirc") button is engaged. This mode cools the air already inside the cabin, making it much more efficient than constantly

trying to cool hot outside air.

Cabin Air Filter: A clogged cabin air filter can severely restrict airflow, making your AC feel weak even if it's producing cold air. This is a common maintenance item and relatively easy to replace yourself in many vehicles. Check your owner's manual for its location and replacement instructions. If it's dirty, swap it out and see if that improves airflow and cooling.

Common Issues and What They Might Mean

If the basics are covered, let's delve a little deeper into more specific problems:

1. The Air is Only Slightly Cool, Not Cold

This is often the classic sign of low refrigerant (also known as Freon or R-134a). Refrigerant is the lifeblood of your AC system, responsible for absorbing heat from the cabin and releasing it outside. Over time, small leaks can occur, leading to a gradual loss of refrigerant.

Troubleshooting: You

can buy DIY AC recharge kits from most automotive stores. These kits often include a pressure gauge, allowing you to check the system's pressure and add refrigerant if it's low. Follow the instructions carefully.

Important Note: While a DIY recharge might offer a temporary fix, a professional will investigate why the refrigerant is low, which usually points to a leak. Simply topping it up without addressing the leak means the problem will return.

2. The AC Blows Cold for a While, Then Gets Warm

This intermittent issue can be frustrating and might indicate a few different problems:

Overheating Compressor: Your AC compressor is the heart of the system. If it's working too hard or starting to fail, it might cycle on and off, leading to inconsistent cooling. This can sometimes be due to low refrigerant as well, as the compressor struggles.

Clutch Issues: The



compressor has an electromagnetic clutch that engages and disengages it. If this clutch is faulty, it might not be engaging consistently. You might hear a "clunk" when the AC button is pressed, indicating the clutch engaging. If you don't hear it, or it's an inconsistent sound, that could be a clue.

Electrical Problems: A loose wire, a blown fuse (check your fuse box diagram in the owner's manual), or a faulty relay

could be causing the system to lose power intermittently.

3. No Air (or Very Weak Airflow) from the Vents

If the air isn't blowing at all, or is barely trickling out, even with the fan on high, the problem likely lies with the fan system itself.

4. Strange Noises or Smells When the AC is On  
Hissing/Gurgling: This often points to air or moisture in the AC system, or a very low refrigerant level.  
Clicking/Clunking (Loud/

Repeated): This could be a failing compressor clutch or the compressor itself.

Musty/Mouldy Smell: This is usually due to mildew growth on the evaporator coil, which gets damp when the AC is running. Specialist cleaning sprays can help, or a professional "AC refresh" service might be needed.

Sweet Smell (like antifreeze): This is serious and could indicate a leaking heater core or coolant leak. Stop driving and seek

immediate professional help.

When to Seek Professional Help

While some issues can be DIY-ed, many AC problems require specialist tools, diagnostic equipment, and the safe handling of refrigerants. Here's when it's definitely time to visit a qualified mechanic:

Repeated Refrigerant Loss: If you've recharged your system and it goes warm again within a few weeks or months, you have a leak that needs to be found and repaired.

Professionals use leak detection dyes and equipment to pinpoint these.

Compressor Issues: Replacing a compressor is a complex and expensive job that requires professional expertise and specific tools for evacuating and recharging the system correctly.

Electrical Diagnostics: Tracing complex electrical faults (beyond a simple fuse) is best left to technicians with diagnostic tools.

Any Sign of Major Leakage: If you see puddles under your car that aren't water condensation from the AC, or smell unusual odours, get it checked immediately.

You're Uncomfortable Doing It Yourself: AC systems operate under high pressure and contain chemicals that need to be handled carefully. If you're unsure, it's always safer to let a professional handle it.

No Obvious Solution: If you've checked the basics and still have no cold air, a deeper diagnostic is needed.

A properly functioning air conditioning system isn't just about comfort; it contributes to driver alertness by preventing fatigue and heat-induced sluggishness. By understanding these common issues, you can often diagnose the problem yourself, saving time and money. But remember, for complex or persistent issues, a trip to a trusted mechanic will ensure your car's AC is blowing perfectly cold for many summers to come.

## Polestar innovates audio experience

Polestar innovates audio experience

Abbey Road Studios Mode, available exclusively for the Bowers & Wilkins audio system, offers a listening experience inspired by the iconic London recording studio while on the move in the Swedish brand's flagship SUV.

Abbey Road Studios Mode provides four entirely new sound presets, as well as an additional Producer mode, to users of the Bowers & Wilkins audio system in Polestar 3. Each preset draws on the sound of the control rooms and live spaces whilst taking inspiration from the studios' original EMI-era equipment, used in the recording, mixing and mastering process on countless era-

defining recordings. All have been curated and designed by the studios' expert engineers, many of whom have worked with some of the biggest artists in the world. Producer mode allows for even greater personalisation, enabling users to tailor the sound to their personal preference.

The four presets in Abbey Road Studios Mode include Intimate, Open, Energised and Expansive, providing Polestar 3 with a distinct audio experience inspired by the studio's spaces and equipment. Each preset is complimented by a bespoke image from the studio, displayed in high definition on the sophisticated 14.5-inch touch screen inside the Polestar 3, showing some of

the most iconic instruments and equipment from the Abbey Road collection.

Intimate: The Intimate preset evokes the intimacy of sitting in the producer's chair in the studio control room, bringing the listener closer to the performance. Offering a warm, pristine and detailed experience, inspired by vintage sounds, the mode creates an intimate atmosphere, allowing the listener to immerse themselves in the music with an unparalleled sense of closeness and authenticity.

Open: The Open preset creates an immersive experience inspired by the studio environment where the music is performed. Allowing the listener to hear

the music as if alongside the artists, with the rich, authentic sound of the live studio space.

Energised: The Energised preset combines vivid detail with vintage warmth, inspired by the energy and excitement of a performance in the studio's live room. Offering a lively, vibrant acoustic with pristine detail, the sound is broad, energetic, and engaging.

The optional Bowers & Wilkins audio system in the Polestar 3 features 25 strategically placed speakers, including the proprietary Continuum™ cone and is complete with a 1,610 watt power output, 3D surround sound, Dolby Atmos capability, and active road noise cancellation.

## KIA EV3 NAMED AUTOTRADER'S CAR OF THE YEAR FOR 2025

The Kia EV3 has collected two major award wins at the Autotrader Drivers' Choice Awards 2025: 'Best Mainstream Electric Car' and overall 'Car of the Year'.

The awards, formerly known as the Autotrader New Car Awards, feature 25 categories. Finalists and overall winners are determined by the real-world opinions of more than 225,000 UK car owners, who completed an online survey sharing exactly what they think of their car. Every vehicle is rated across 16 different criteria, from reliability and performance to appearance and running costs. Owners were also asked about their overall satisfaction with their car and how likely they would be to recommend it to others.

The EV3 impressed UK customers for offering great value and a complete, refined package, with owners naming the model both the EV that represents the best of the best in terms of 'mainstream' vehicles, and the best car overall of 2025. The Kia EV3 is priced from £33,005 and offers up to 375 miles on a single charge\* on the WLTP 'combined' cycle, a range of three competitively equipped trim levels, and space for five occupants.



Erin Baker, Autotrader's Editorial Director, said: "It may be Kia's most affordable current EV on sale, but the EV3 still manages to pack a premium punch. It scored top marks for the quality of its features which, combined with eye-catching looks and a great driving experience, has made the EV3 a massive hit with its owners. One told us: 'This was my first ever electric car, and it really stood out among all

the other EVs, particularly within my price bracket. It's quirky, futuristic, packed full of brilliant features, and it's really easy to drive. Plus, I can get the whole family in it with room to spare. We absolutely love it.' Congratulations Kia on a very well-deserved win."

Kia is no stranger to success at the Autotrader Drivers' Choice Awards. Last year, the Kia EV6 was named 'Best Car for

Families' and 'Best Car for Dog Owners', whilst in 2023 the Soul EV collected 'Best Value Electric Car', and EV6 was named 'New Car of the Year'.

The EV3 is soon to be joined by the EV4 and EV5. Both models will embark on a nationwide tour of 'Kia Electric Experience' events across the Kia UK dealer network, starting 8 July, and showcasing the latest of Kia's electric offerings to customers.



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# How to find a good tradesperson!

The majority of tradespeople are hard-working, reliable and will do a good job, but we've all heard of the cowboy horror stories.

Let's help you to avoid the bad eggs with this guide that looks at how to find a good tradesperson in your area.

Request quotes from at least 3 tradespeople

With all home improvement projects, we always recommend obtaining at least three quotes from different tradespeople in your area. You'll want to shop around to make sure you're paying a fair price for the work.

Make sure they have the relevant qualifications

To get the best results, it's important to hire tradespeople who are dedicated to their trade. Look for a tradesperson with relevant qualifications and accreditations, and check if they're part of national trade schemes.

Choose tradespeople with local experience

Hiring a tradesperson

with a lot of local experience can be really valuable. They'll have a working knowledge of local planning permission, have access to a local network of suppliers and labour, and will be close at hand should you need them during the course of your project.

Ask for customer references (and contact them)

We do this to make sure a tradesperson's reviews on our website are real, but there's certainly no harm in you following up on customer references.

When you've found a tradesperson (or tradespeople) you think could be right for the job, ask them to provide you with references from previous customers about the quality of the tradesperson's work, what it was like to work with them, and would they hire them again.

Ask these 10 questions...

Before you hire a tradesperson, it's a good idea to meet with them in person to discuss the work you need them to do. That way, you can find out more about their experience and approach to their trade.

If you want to know how to find a tradesperson you can trust, ask potential candidates these questions:

1. How long have you been working in the business?

2. What qualifications and/or accreditations do you have?

3. Have you done many projects like this before?

4. Can you show me examples of previous projects that you've worked on?

5. Do you have appropriate insurance, and can you provide valid certificates?

6. Could you provide me with references from previous customers for me to contact?

7. Do you offer a customer satisfaction

guarantee?

8. How long will it take you to complete the work?

And when can you start?

9. How much will it cost, and what are the payment terms?

10. What steps do you take to keep your work on schedule and within budget?

The average cost of a tradesperson will depend on the trade, the nature of the work, and where they are located (labour costs in London tend to be higher than in the North).

To help you plan a

budget, here are some average rates you can expect to pay:

• Plumber costs – £40 - £60 Per hour or around £350 per day

• Carpenter prices – £30 - £45 per hour

• Builder rates – £50 per hour or £400 per day

• Electrician rates – £50 per hour or £400 per day

• Painter and decorator prices – £250- £400 per day

For more info see <https://www.checkatrade.com/blog/hiring-guides/find-good-tradesperson/>

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