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The Harry Ferguson Heritage Festival returned recently to the Harry Ferguson Farmstead

HARRY FERGUSON HERITAGE FESTIVAL

The Harry Ferguson Heritage Festival enjoyed a successful return recently attracting visitors from across Northern Ireland and beyond to celebrate the life, work and legacy of local engineering pioneer Harry Ferguson, with a special appearance on the day by Harry's granddaughter.

Held at the Harry Ferguson Farmstead, the festival showcased a packed programme of family-friendly activities, heritage displays, vintage vehicle exhibitions, live demonstrations and entertainment, highlighting the achievements of one of the region's most influential inventors

while boosting tourism and supporting the local economy.

The organisers received a Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council Tourism Major Event Grant which helped support the delivery of the festival. The funding forms part of the Council's commitment to developing high-quality tourism events that

attract visitors, enhance the area's reputation and generate economic benefits for local businesses.

Visitors had the opportunity to learn more about Harry Ferguson's groundbreaking contributions to engineering and agriculture, while enjoying a range of

attractions designed to appeal to all ages. The event provided an excellent platform to showcase local heritage and strengthen community pride in one of the area's most celebrated historical figures.

Continued on page 4

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Age-Friendly Summer Scheme a great

We're celebrating the success of our recent Age-Friendly Summer Scheme, which brought local residents aged 55 to 85 together to build relationships, enjoy new experiences and take positive steps towards improved health and wellbeing.

The six-week programme offered a varied schedule of activities designed to support social connection, physical activity and confidence. Participants took part in gardening workshops, ten pin bowling, a tour of Balance House, a visit to Royal Hillsborough Palace and Gardens and a trip to the Ulster Aviation Society.

The scheme also complemented the council's wider Age-Friendly programme, including the recent 50+ Five Steps to Wellbeing event in Market Square, where participants enjoyed armchair aerobics, a ukulele taster session and walking opportunities at Castle Gardens.

Our Age-Friendly Champion, Councillor Gretta Thompson, praised the programme, saying: "The Age-Friendly Summer Scheme is a



wonderful example of how meaningful activities can bring people together, encourage friendships and support healthier, happier lives. It is fantastic to hear that participants enjoyed the programme so

much, with feedback showing that 100% of those who took part said they would recommend it to a friend."

We're now planning further Age-Friendly activities as part of Positive Ageing Month

in October. If you or someone you know would like to find out more about upcoming activities and events, email agefriendly@lisburncastlereagh.gov.uk to be added to the Age-Friendly mailing list.

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Free Community Training Calendar launched for local groups

Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council has launched its Community Training Calendar for September 2026 – March 2027, providing free practical training for local community and voluntary groups across the council area.

The programme is designed to help local volunteers and representatives build skills, confidence, and knowledge to support their work in local communities.

Councillor Sharon Lowry, Chairperson of the Communities and Wellbeing Committee, said: "Community and voluntary groups play a vital role across our



2026 Drayne's Farm Lisburn & Castlereagh Sports Awards

Sport Lisburn & Castlereagh has opened nominations for the prestigious 2026 Drayne's Farm Sports Awards.

The aim of the awards is to celebrate the outstanding sporting achievements of individuals and teams from across the Lisburn and Castlereagh area.

The awards evening will take place at a special ceremony at La Mon Hotel & Country Club on Friday 20 November. The event will highlight the sporting achievements of individuals and teams either through direct participation in sport or contributions as a coach or administrator.

Nomination categories are now open for the Sports Club of the Year, Sports Coach of the Year, Senior Sports Team of the Year, Junior Sports Team of the Year, School Team of the Year, Junior Sports Personality of the Year, Senior Sports Personality of the Year and Disability Sports Team of the Year.

Junior and Senior Merit Awards are also available to commend volunteers for their dedication and essential backroom support to their club.

council area. This free training calendar is a practical way to support them with accessible opportunities to develop skills and sustain their important work."

For more information and booking details see <https://www.lisburncastlereagh.gov.uk/w/community-group-training-services@lisburncastlereagh.gov.uk> or ring 028 9244 7713.



(L-R) John Drayne, Production Director at Drayne's Farm, Councillor Sharon Lowry, Chair of the Community and Wellbeing Committee and Jimmy Walker, Chairperson of Sport Lisburn & Castlereagh, launching the 2026 Sports Awards at La Mon Hotel & Country Club.

to local communities here in Lisburn & Castlereagh. We have many athletes who have achieved amazing results in their sport, so it is important to take the time to celebrate their success.

"The evening will be a fantastic opportunity to shine a light on a diverse range of sports and hear about the achievements of many rising stars and experienced athletes over the past 12 months. I know their sto-

ries will inspire many others to focus on their personal goals to reach their potential in their sport.

"I am particularly looking forward to meeting our special guest Sam Madden, who is Irish Freestyle Football Champion and seeing firsthand his amazing talent. Sam's experience performing at major sporting tournaments and his coaching skills with young people will no doubt add to the

evening's accolades."

"The closing date to make a nomination for the Drayne's Farm Lisburn & Castlereagh Sports Awards is Wednesday 30th September at 5pm. I would encourage everyone to visit the council website and apply online today."

Nominations are welcome from schools, clubs and individuals, residing or based in the Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council area.

Nomination forms can be completed online by <https://www.lisburncastlereagh.gov.uk/w/sports-training-courses-and-events#drayne-s-farm-lisburn-and-castlereagh-sports-awards-2026>

Further information if required can be obtained by emailing faron.morrison@lisburncastlereagh.gov.uk

The closing date for applications is strictly Wednesday 30 September 2026 at 12 midnight.

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Retail NI High Street Hero Awards 2026.

Last year saw some great achievements for some of Lisburn's independent retailers, including Greens Food Fare of Lisburn being named Overall Independent Retailer, Richard Kyle from Greens being named Independent Retail Employee of the Year, Rosie's Emporium entering the Hall of Fame after multiple wins for Best Homeware Retailer, and Lisburn taking Silver for High Street of the Year.

Now you can vote for them and other great retailers in Lisburn in the upcoming Retail NI High Street Hero Awards 2026. Whether it's your favourite coffee shop, butcher, bakery, homeware store, post office... nominate and vote now on BelfastLive.

Alderman James Baird, Chair of the Regeneration and Growth Committee, said: "Lisburn is

fortunate to have many dedicated businesses that serve our residents and visitors throughout the year. The High Street Heroes Awards provide an opportunity for the public to recognise those businesses and their contribution to our local economy. I would encourage people to support the awards by casting a vote and helping to showcase the excellent

businesses we have across the Lisburn area."

Ruth Young, President of Lisburn Chamber of Commerce, said: "Our independent retailers are the heartbeat of Lisburn's city centre, and last year's success at the High Street Heroes Awards was thoroughly deserved to celebrate their dedication. Every vote is a way of saying thank you to the businesses and teams who

go above and beyond for our community every day."

Nominations and voting are open now on Belfast Live, closing early September.

Vote here - <https://www.belfastlive.co.uk/.../high-street-heroes-2026...>

#HighStreetHeroes #LoveLisburn #shoplocal Sorcha Eastwood David Honeyford Mccalls of Lisburn

Continued from page 1

Alderman James Baird, Regeneration and Growth Committee Chair, said: "The Harry Ferguson Heritage Festival is a fantastic example of how

local events can celebrate our rich heritage while bringing significant tourism and economic benefits to the area.

"Through our Tourism Major Event Grant programme, the Council is proud to support events that encourage

visitors to explore our destinations, spend time in our communities and contribute to local businesses.

Congratulations to the organisers and volunteers whose dedication made this year's festival such a

success."

Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council continues to support tourism events that enhance the visitor experience, promote local heritage and culture, and encourage economic growth across the city council area.

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Inclusion at the heart of summer fun

Inclusion is at the heart of service provision in Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council, and two recent pilot summer schemes are showing how the Council is stepping up to support children and young people with additional or complex needs.

The Council's pilot Inclusive Summer Scheme programme has helped create more welcoming, accessible and enjoyable summer opportunities for local families, with Sensability and Stepping Stones NI delivering activities designed around the needs, interests and confidence of participants.

Sensability, a local charity supporting young people and adults with severe learning disabilities, received funding for a week-long summer scheme at The Grove Activity Centre in Lisburn for young people aged between 5 and 19, from 10 to 14 August 2026.

From fun, sensory play based activities for the young people taking part, to opportunities for parents and carers to connect, socialise and try activities and therapies, the scheme has been developed to make summer provision more inclusive,



Councillor Sharon Lowry visits Stepping Stones NI's summer scheme

supportive and enjoyable.

Stepping Stones NI, which supports and creates opportunities for people with a learning disability or barrier to learning, received funding support for its six-week Youth Service Summer Scheme, running from 20 July to 28 August 2026.

Participants have already enjoyed

bowling, gardening, baking, crafting, circus skills, drumming workshops and a visit to the Ulster Aviation Society, with many more summer adventures still to come.

The young people at Stepping Stones were keen to share some of the colourful art they were enjoying making together, and even

presented Councillor Sharon Lowry with one of the group's hand-painted mugs as a present.

Councillor Lowry, Communities and Wellbeing Chair, visited both summer schemes this week and saw first-hand the difference the pilot programme is making for young people, parents, carers and delivery partners.

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Mayor leads Emergency Services Day flag Emergency Services Day flag raised in honour of those who serve

Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council marked Emergency Services Day on Wednesday 9 September with an official flag raising ceremony at Lagan Valley Island to honour the dedicated men and women who serve in the emergency services and the NHS.

Emergency Services Day, also known as 999 Day, is an annual opportunity to recognise the vital work carried out by emergency personnel and volunteers who provide lifesaving support to communities across the United Kingdom.

The day encourages the public to use emergency services responsibly and highlights the essential role played by the six main branches of emergency response including police, fire and rescue, ambulance, NHS,



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maritime services and search and rescue teams.

Speaking at the event, Mayor of Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council, Councillor Brian Higginson, said: “As Mayor, it is a privilege to stand with our emergency services and express the gratitude of everyone in Lisburn and Castlereagh. This day reminds us of the extraordinary commitment shown by those who respond in moments of crisis. Their professionalism, compassion and courage protect our residents every single day.

“My Mayoral theme this year is centred on service and there is no greater example of service than the work carried out by our emergency services. I am also proud to support Air Ambulance

Northern Ireland as my Mayoral Charity. Its lifesaving work, carried out from right here in Lisburn, demonstrates the profound impact that dedicated teams can have on people across Northern Ireland.

“I want to offer a sincere thank you to every member of our emergency services for the remarkable work they do and for the difference they make to so many lives.”

During the ceremony, a two-minute silence was observed to remember more than 7,500 members of the emergency services who have lost their lives in the line of duty over the past 200 years.

To mark this special day, flags were raised across Northern Ireland on Wednesday 9 September at government, emergency services and local authority buildings.

RESIDENTS ENCOURAGED TO DONATE LEFTOVER PAINT FOR REUSE

Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council has launched a new paint reuse initiative in partnership with Habitat ReStore Lisburn, giving residents the opportunity to donate unwanted or leftover paint for reuse instead of throwing it away.

The scheme aims to reduce waste, encourage reuse and help local people access affordable paint for home improvement projects.

Alderman Sharon Skillen, Chair of the Environment and Sustainability Committee, said: “I’m excited to see the introduction of this paint reuse scheme. I would encourage everyone to check their cupboards, garages and sheds for any good quality leftover paint that they no longer need.

“By donating unwanted paint, residents can help reduce waste, protect the environment, promote sustainability and support the circular economy.

“We are pleased to be partnering with Habitat ReStore Lisburn. It is a fantastic social enterprise that promotes reuse, reduces waste and supports the local



community.”

David Morrow, Manager of Habitat ReStore Lisburn added: “We are delighted to be part of this initiative, helping to make good-quality paint more affordable and accessible for local people while reducing unnecessary

waste.

“Working with the Council, we can give usable paint a second life, helping local people improve their home at a low-cost, while supporting a greener, more sustainable community.”

Find details of your

nearest Household Recycling Centre here: www.lisburncastlereagh.gov.uk/bins-and-recycling/recycling-locations/household-recycling-centres

Visit Habitat ReStore Lisburn at Riverside Centre, Young Street, Lisburn, BT27 5EA

The next generation of conservation craftspeople

Communities Minister Gordon Lyons has met participants in the All-Ireland Heritage Skills Programme and apprentices who are helping to safeguard Northern Ireland’s historic environment for future generations.

The Department for Communities is participating in the All-Ireland Heritage Skills Programme alongside The King’s Foundation, National Museums NI, the Construction Industry Training Board NI (CITB NI) and the Heritage Council; the UK participants are funded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund.

Eight participants are undertaking a 12-month programme of formal skills training and on-site work placements with experienced craftspeople. The programme will lead to a National Vocational Qualification (NVQ)

certification through the Department’s Northern Ireland Heritage Skills Centre at its Moira Depot.

During the visit, the Minister also met apprentices and staff from the Department’s Conservation Works Team (CWT), which is delivering specialist conservation and maintenance work at State Care Monuments.

Part of the work included repairs on two cannons removed from Carrickfergus Castle in July 2025. The work was completed by conservation specialists based at Moira and also some of HEDs

new apprentices. These cannons are the first to receive conservation work but all those within Carrickfergus Castle have repairs planned, which it is hoped will be completed by March 2027.

The Minister heard how investment in the Conservation Works Team has enabled the recruitment of eight apprentices, the first intake in 25 years, with a further three apprentices due to be recruited shortly.

The intake includes the team’s first female apprentice, stonemason Jennifer West and joinery apprentice Caoimhe Sherlock. The Conservation Works Team has also recruited its first female qualified tradesperson, Erin McKnight, a painter and

decorative finisher and graduate of a previous All-Ireland Heritage Skills Programme.

The Department has worked with organisations including the CITB NI and Women’s Tec to promote career opportunities for women in construction and heritage conservation trades.

The Minister also viewed new plant and equipment purchased through departmental capital investment. The upgraded equipment has improved operational efficiency and supported the delivery of urgent health and safety works at sites including Enniskillen, Slieve Gullion and Movilla Abbey, reducing the need for external contractors and delivering better value for money.

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Young athlete reaches new heights with double gold success!

A young Lisburn and Castlereagh athlete has reached new heights in her sporting career after winning two gold medals at the UK Trampoline Championships in Birmingham, with support from the LCCC's Community Bursary Grant.

Nine-year-old Ayah Campbell, who regularly attends Ballyoran Community Centre in Ballybeen, was crowned Northern Ireland Champion in the FIG Level Age 9-10 Girls category earlier this year, earning her a place on Team Northern Ireland at the Regional Cup Challenge in Birmingham.

Behind Ayah's success is a remarkable story of determination and resilience.

Ayah was born with developmental dysplasia of the hips (DDH), a condition in which the hip joint does not develop normally. As a baby, she required treatment in a Pavlik harness, which she wore 24 hours a day for 12 weeks. Due to her condition, she was also unable to use a baby walker or bouncer.

At the age of six, Ayah discovered trampoline and began training at North Down Trampoline Academy. She now trains for up to nine hours a week and has been selected for the Northern Ireland pathway squad for the past two years, progressing to the developmental squad this year.

Her success on the trampoline has continued to grow. Last year, Ayah qualified to represent Team Northern Ireland in



Trampoline and Double Mini Trampoline at the Inter Regional Cup Challenge in Birmingham, where she won a silver medal in Double Mini Trampoline with support from an LCCC Sports Grant.

This year, she has taken another significant step forward, becoming Northern Ireland Champion before going on to secure her two gold medals in Birmingham.

The council's Community Bursary Grant helped make this year's trip possible, providing valuable support towards the cost of Ayah's competition kit and travel.

Chair of LCCC's Communities and Wellbeing Committee, Cllr Sharon Lowry, said: "Ayah's

achievements are a fantastic example of what can be accomplished through determination, hard work and a real passion for your sport.

"Her journey from facing significant challenges as a baby to representing Northern Ireland and winning two gold medals is truly inspiring. We are delighted that the Council's bursary support has helped Ayah take part in this competition and we are incredibly proud to celebrate her success."

Ayah's family said: "We are incredibly proud of everything Ayah has achieved. She has worked so hard and her determination has been

amazing to watch.

"The support from the council's bursary made a huge difference, particularly with the cost of her kit and travel, and helped Ayah have this fantastic opportunity to represent Northern Ireland. Seeing her come home with two gold medals was an incredibly proud moment for all of us."

Ayah's achievements highlight the talent and determination of young people across the Lisburn and Castlereagh area, while the support provided through the Community Bursary Grant helps local individuals pursue opportunities and compete at the highest levels.

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AUTUMN: SEASON OF MISTS AND MELLOW... FRUITING BODIES?

In his famous line of poetry, John Keats used the word 'fruitfulness', but besides all the apples, pears, rosehips and other fruits of autumn, there are also what scientists call the 'fruiting bodies' of lots of fungi (or funguses if you prefer), particularly in woodland.

What we mostly call mushrooms and toadstools which appear at this time of year in a multitude of shapes, sizes and colours, are for fungi reproduction including a simple mechanism to spread far away from the original organism, with tiny spores (the equivalent of plant seeds) falling from their undersides to blow away on a breeze.

But of course, there are variations, and for instance, puffballs (pictured) lack an opening below the cap, so that when they break or are kicked emit clouds of dust-like spores, hence their name. An average Giant Puffball (not common here) can produce seven trillion spores. Thankfully, very few geminate, because, if they all did, it has been calculated that they



would produce a mass of fungi 800 times the volume of the earth!

There are about 5 million fungi species in the world (an estimated 9,000 in Ireland) and they are hugely important underground where their main 'bodies' live, extensive thread-like masses called mycelium, which, we're learning,

connect trees and other plants, exchanging nutrients and even carrying chemical or electronic messages which appear to be understood by plants. This phenomenon has been termed 'the wood wide web'.

So, when you're out walking in the countryside this autumn,

keep a lookout for puffballs, and many other fungi fruiting bodies, bearing in mind that what you're seeing are only the short-lived reproductive organs and that what the network parents are doing under your feet is amazing, and possibly vital for plants and all natural life on earth.

JVA

Join the Pet Set at Apex K9!

Apex K9 Health Club at 2 Lissue Road in Lisburn is the perfect place for pooch health, happiness and play! The club lives by a simple promise of healthier dogs and happier lives, offering a safe, welcoming environment for dogs of all breeds and sizes.

The centrepiece is a professional canine hydrotherapy pool, providing dogs with a fun and enjoyable way to exercise, stay active and build confidence in the water. Fun swims are a fantastic way for dogs to keep fit while having fun. Controlled treadmill sessions provide measured exercise to help support strength, fitness and conditioning. Prices for swim sessions start from £25 for 30 minutes, with other packages available.

Grooming is a speciality through the Apex K9 Grooming and Spa. Treatments are designed to enhance coat health and hygiene using natural hypoallergenic shampoos. Services range from a simple tidy-up to breed-standard show cuts. Bath and brush prices start from £20 for small breeds. Every appointment includes nail clipping, ear cleaning and breed-specific styling, while puppy introduction grooms help young dogs become comfortable with the grooming experience. Quality pet supplies are

also available in-store and to order, including Nutriment natural treats, Wilder products, Taggarts salmon oil and cosy pet bedding.

Raw Feeding for Healthier, Happier Dogs

Raw feeding is a key part of the product range at Apex K9, with Nutriment and Wilder available for owners looking to provide their dogs with a natural, nutritious diet.

A well-balanced raw diet can provide high-quality sources of protein and essential nutrients to support your dog's overall health. Many owners choose raw feeding because they notice benefits such as healthy skin and coat, good energy levels, improved digestion and smaller, firmer poops.

Feeding a quality raw diet can also be a great way to give dogs nutritious food made with carefully selected ingredients, while supporting their everyday wellbeing. Every dog is different, so choosing a complete and balanced food that is appropriate for their age, size and individual needs is important. At Apex K9, the team



can help owners explore the range of Nutriment and Wilder products available, alongside a selection of natural treats and supplements.

A new on-site coffee pod means owners can relax while their pups enjoy their session. X Coffee Xcellence serves freshly ground Warbler and Wren coffee alongside speciality teas and soft drinks, with pastries, traybakes, sausage

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With fitness, fun, grooming, nutrition and wellbeing all under one roof, Apex K9 Health Club is a place where dogs can feel their best — and their owners can enjoy the experience too.

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FRONT DOOR IS BURGLARS' FAVOURITE WAY IN

The front door is by far the most common recorded entry point for burglars breaking into homes across Northern Ireland, new data has revealed.

Research by CompareNI.com has found that thieves used the front door to gain entry in at least 420 burglaries last year, while the back door was used in 286 break-ins. Lower rear windows were the third most popular method of entry recorded, accounting for 104 incidents.

Figures also show homeowners are most at risk of burglary between the hours of 6pm and midnight, with almost a third of home break-ins last year taking place during the evening, making it the most common time of day for criminals to strike.

The findings come as the PSNI launches its 'Safer Summer Together' campaign, warning people across Northern Ireland to avoid making their homes easy targets for opportunistic thieves.*

Burglaries are particularly common during the summer months as criminals take advantage of empty houses while families are on holiday, or gain easier access as doors and windows are left open during hot weather.**

Data obtained by a Freedom of Information request to police reveals there were 1,854 residential burglaries recorded across Northern Ireland last year, with 31% happening in the evening.

Just over a quarter (26%) occurred during the day between midday and 6pm, while a further 22% took place overnight between midnight and 6am. Morning was the least likely time for homes to be targeted, with break-ins between 6am and midday accounting for 18%. Unsurprisingly, Belfast

had the highest number of burglaries with 665 incidents, a rate of 189 break-ins per 100,000 people.

Newry, Mourne and Down recorded the second worst burglary rate at 110 per 100,000 people, with Derry City and Strabane coming a close third (107).

At the other end of the scale, Mid Ulster had the lowest burglary rate at 43, followed closely by Ards and North Down (50) and Fermanagh and Omagh (51).

While the overall number of burglaries across Northern Ireland have dropped by 3% year-on-year (down from 471 in Q1 2025 compared to 455 during the same period this year), over half of the region's 11 council areas have seen a rise in break-ins.***

Residents in Lisburn and Castlereagh saw by far the biggest increase, up by 67%. Burglaries in Fermanagh and Omagh also rose sharply by 45%, as did incidents in Mid Ulster (35%).

With these figures in mind, home insurance experts from CompareNI.com are sharing some cost-effective tips to help households stay safe and reduce the risk of burglaries.

Homeowners should be particularly vigilant against thefts from gardens during the summer months, with tools, furniture, barbecues, children's toys and bicycles frequently left out on patios and lawns when the weather is warm.

Budget-friendly tips to protect your home from burglars:

1. Don't forget the basics
- Padlocks, deadbolts and window locks are simple



and relatively inexpensive security measures that can deter opportunistic thieves and help reduce chances of a break-in.

2. Solar-powered motion lighting

Motion lights draw attention to any potential intruders, and when triggered can scare off burglars. Fitting solar-powered motion lighting is a great cost-effective alternative to installing hard wired lighting and can be easily moved around the property when needed.

3. Fit window and door sensors

Contact sensors are one of the most budget-friendly ways to improve home security. These battery-powered devices are easy to install on doors and windows throughout the property and will sound an alarm if someone attempts to break in.

4. Join the Neighbourhood Watch

Being part of a Neighbourhood Watch program signals to insurers that your home is in a community that actively looks out for security threats and is less likely to be broken into. It is free to join, and some insurers offer a small discount just for participating.

5. Reduce opportunities

Keeping valuable or expensive looking items out of sight is one of the easiest, most effective ways to deter burglars. Installing frosted glass or net curtains around the front door can make it harder for thieves to spot opportunities. Also, lock gardening tools, bikes and other outdoor equipment away in the shed and out of sight when not in use, especially during the summer months.

CompareNI.com can help households across Northern Ireland compare and find savings on their home insurance.

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two people sharing midweek and £190 per person based on two people sharing on Friday and Saturday nights, the Winter Warmer package includes two nights' accommodation, a three-course dinner on both evenings in the hotel's elegant 1836 Ballroom Restaurant, breakfast each morning and complimentary access to the Giant's Causeway Visitor

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Whether you are planning a romantic getaway, celebrating a special occasion or simply craving a change of scenery, The Causeway Hotel offers the perfect opportunity to leave the everyday behind and enjoy a memorable coastal escape for two.

For more information or to book, call 028 2073 1210 or visit www.thecausewayhotel.com.

Autumn skies should delight with celestial wonders

As summer fades, stargazers can look forward to spectacular celestial displays across night skies.

The Royal Observatory Greenwich notes autumn offers exceptionally clear conditions for observing planets and shooting stars. Early October brings Saturn to opposition, making the ringed giant appear at its brightest. According to the Planetary Society, this provides the best opportunity of the year to view Saturn using binoculars. Outer

planet Uranus also reaches opposition in late autumn, presenting a rare target for keen observers.

Meteor enthusiasts also have plenty to anticipate during coming months. Space.com reports the Draconid meteor shower peaks in early October, offering evening shooting stars. Later in the month, the Orionids take centre stage. The Royal

Observatory Greenwich highlights that debris from Halley's Comet produces this reliable display, generating twenty meteors per hour.

November brings further astronomical highlights for night sky observers. NASA celestial guides confirm the Taurid meteor shower will deliver slow-moving fireballs across the darkness.

Shortly afterwards, the Leonids peak with fast streams of bright streaks, as documented by the Planetary Society. Finally, a magnificent Beaver Supermoon will illuminate late autumn nights, according to astronomical calendar updates. The upcoming season promises an extraordinary show for anyone looking upwards.

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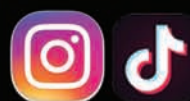
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Glasgow is a vibrant, stylish city with something for everyone. From world-class culture and nightlife to outstanding restaurants and bars, it's a destination that never disappoints. Shoppers are particularly well catered for—Glasgow is widely recognised as the UK's top shopping destination outside London, with its famous 'Style Mile' offering unbeatable retail therapy.

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just £49, including ferry travel and luggage, the Belfast-Glasgow Express delivers outstanding value. With no hidden costs and flexible travel options, passengers can pick and mix dates and times to suit their plans—making it ideal for a spontaneous spring getaway or a longer city break.

The service operates twice daily from Belfast Grand Central Station (Stand 18) and drops passengers at Glasgow Buchanan Bus Station, close to the Style Mile and a wide range of excel-

lent city-centre hotels.

Company Director Aodh Hannon says the service's popularity comes down to convenience and simplicity.

"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."

Bookings can be made online at www.hannoncoach.com, or by phone through HANNON's friendly booking team on 028 9265 0700 (Monday-Friday).

Milne adds two more sites to Holiday Park Portfolio

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

One Park is 12x months holiday and the other is Residential Park Homes, 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 Holiday & Residential, Mourneview Newcastle, Silvercove, Pebble Beach Kilkeel, Cranfield House and Shanlieve / Cranfield on Carlingford Lough All 12x month 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, and the ability to rent out your home by the sea for up to £1200 per week making holiday home ownership more accessible and attractive 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 for Aug / Sept free site fees for 2026 & 2027 Seasons on home purchases, representing a significant £6000 saving for new owners. This limited-time offer presents a compelling reason to explore the opportunities available of purchasing a self-financing home at their six beach-front locations.

Owners at Milne Holiday Parks can enjoy or rent 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. Additionally, individuals can text "HOLIDAY HOME" to 07860617616 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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Knit + Stitch returns to Northern Ireland

The UK's largest craft show is returning to Northern Ireland and will once again be bursting at the seams with creativity and innovation.

Knit + Stitch returns to the Eikon Exhibition Centre outside Lisburn from November 12–15, bringing the show back to the heart of Northern Ireland's rich linen heritage. Craft fans are in for a real treat with over 100 textile craft brands and a jam-packed line-up of more than 150 hands-on workshops in partnership with Janome, plus stunning curated textile art galleries.

Knit + Stitch Event Manager, Fatima Naqvi said last year's show at the Eikon Exhibition Centre exceeded all expectations, and organisers are determined to make this year's event even bigger.

Shoppers can stock up on everything they need for their next big project, from gorgeous yarn, fabric and

thread, sewing machines, patterns, embroidery supplies and cross-stitch kits.

Crafters will be thrilled to see the return of popular exhibitors from England, including Brian's Best Wools, The Black Sheep, Italian Buttons, Jewellery Craft, Roy's Material World, and many more.

The workshop programme is not to be missed, led by some of UK's most skilled textile crafters and designed to inspire makers at every level, from absolute beginners to seasoned experts.

Now in its second year at the Eikon Exhibition Centre, visitors can expect a great day out with significantly improved facilities including easy access from both the Republic of Ireland and



Northern Ireland, free on-site parking, a free shuttle bus service from the Lisburn train station and modern catering facilities with a variety of options and plenty of seating.

Amongst the highlights at this year's show are the Textile Art Galleries, showcasing inspiring work from artists across the UK and Ireland.

Included in the ticket price, the galleries feature work by Amanda

Vencatasamy, Derry Factory Girls Quilts, Wild Art Textiles: Riptides, the Belfast School of Art Graduate Showcase, and the EQA Challenge: The Fantastic World of Insects, an eye-catching quilt competition hosted by the Irish Patchwork Society.

Don't miss the Prima Live Stage, where talks, demos and catwalk shows will take place with well-known sewing personalities and knitting experts.

Keep an eye out for the Made by Me Dressmaking Competition, which invites makers to showcase garments they've created themselves, with shortlisted entries displayed and featured on the catwalk at Knit + Stitch Northern Ireland 2026.

To purchase your ticket and to find out more about Knit + Stitch Northern Ireland 2026 visit www.knitandstitchshow.co.uk/northernireland/

HIDDEN UNDERGROUND NETWORKS

Warm damp autumn soil triggers the sudden emergence of mushrooms across UK woodland floors.

These visible structures are merely the fruiting bodies of expansive underground fungal systems. According to researchers at Kew Gardens, vast networks of microscopic threads called mycelium stretch beneath the soil surface. Mycelium connects directly to tree roots, forming a mutually beneficial partnership known as mycorrhiza.

Studies published by the British Mycological Society show that trees and fungi exchange crucial nutrients continuously. Trees provide sugars generated through photosynthesis in exchange for essential minerals gathered by fungal networks. Research from the University of Aberdeen suggests that this subterranean system allows plants to share resources across distances. Fungi even help transmit chemical warning signals between plants when pest threats arise nearby.

Autumn dampness provides optimal moisture levels required for fungal



reproduction and spore dissemination. The Woodland Trust highlights that thousands of distinct mushroom species thrive in native British woods. These organisms break down fallen timber and dead leaves, recycling vital nutrients back into woodland soil. Without fungal decomposition, forest floors would quickly become overwhelmed by accumulated plant debris.

Foragers must exercise extreme caution when

identifying wild autumn mushrooms in local natural habitats. The NHS warns that consuming toxic fungi can cause severe illness or fatal poisoning. Species like the Death Cap look deceptively similar to edible wild mushroom varieties. Experts recommend joining guided foraging walks led by certified mycologists before collecting wild mushrooms independently.

Protecting delicate woodland soil structures

remains essential for preserving these delicate underground biological networks. Heavy foot traffic off designated forest paths can crush fragile fungal threads beneath the earth. The Forestry Commission advises walkers to remain on established tracks when exploring local forests this autumn. Preserving fungal networks ensures local ecosystems remain healthy and resilient for future generations.

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Embrace the Autumn Splendour: Tips for Your Next Walk

Autumn is arguably one of the most beautiful seasons for outdoor exploration. Here are some tips to make your autumn walks even more enjoyable:

- 1. Time it Right:** The peak of autumn colour varies each year and by region, but generally, late September to mid-November offers the best chances in many temperate climates.
- 2. Seek Out Deciduous Woodlands:** While urban parks can offer glimpses of colour, dedicated woodlands and forests will provide the most immersive and spectacular autumnal experience. Look for areas with a variety of tree species for a diverse palette.
- 3. Go on a Sunny Day** (with a bit of chill): Bright sunshine will make the colours pop and truly glow.
- 4. Look for Water Features:** Lakes, rivers, and ponds create stunning reflections of the colourful foliage, doubling the beauty.
- 5. Dress in Layers:** Autumn weather can be unpredictable. Layers will allow you to adjust to changing temperatures throughout your walk. Don't forget waterproofs in case of an unexpected shower.
- 6. Wear Sturdy, Comfortable Footwear:** Trails can be wet, muddy, or covered in fallen leaves, which can be slippery. Good walking shoes or boots are essential.
- 7. Bring a Camera:** You'll want to capture the breathtaking beauty. Experiment with different angles and lighting to get the best shots.
- 8. Pack a Flask and Snacks:** A warm drink (tea, coffee, or hot chocolate) and some autumnal treats (like apples or flapjacks) can enhance your walk, especially on a cooler day.
- 9. Engage Your Senses:** Beyond the visual feast, autumn offers a symphony of other sensations. Listen to the satisfying crunch of leaves underfoot, breathe in the earthy scent of damp soil and decaying leaves, and feel the crisp air on your cheeks.
- 10. Leave No Trace:** Remember to stick to marked paths, take only photographs, and leave the natural environment as you found it for others to enjoy. So, as the days shorten and the air grows crisp, pull on your walking boots and head outdoors. The fleeting, vibrant beauty of autumn's foliage is a spectacle not to be missed, a true celebration of nature's artistry before winter's slumber.

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GO SUCCEED AND YOUNG ENTERPRISE NI SCHEME

Northern Ireland’s enterprise support service Go Succeed and Young Enterprise NI are teaming up for a second year to inspire young people across the region to explore entrepreneurship through their ‘Future Founders’ programme.

Delivered in partnership with all 11 councils across Northern Ireland and the region’s six further education colleges, the Future Founders programme launched in September 2025 and reached more than 2,500 young people during its first year.

The programme is designed to encourage young people to take their first steps into entrepreneurship, building the confidence, skills and mindset they need to turn their ideas into opportunities and become part of the next generation of business leaders.

Future Founders is delivered through three key stages: an introduction to entrepreneurship, an Innovation Camp and an Entrepreneurship



Hub. Through these sessions, participants are given the opportunity to explore what it means to be an entrepreneur, develop their own ideas, work collaboratively to solve challenges and gain practical insight into starting and running a business.

During its first year,

students heard directly from entrepreneurs and business leaders, who shared their own experiences of starting and growing a business, the challenges they faced and the lessons they learned along the way.

Mayor, Alderman Thomas Gordon of Mid and East Antrim,

which is leading the programme on behalf of Go Succeed, said:

“We are delighted to see Future Founders return for a second year following the fantastic response to the programme in its first year.

“The feedback we received from both students and educators

was excellent and demonstrated just how much potential there is among young people across our communities.

“We know there are many young people with brilliant ideas and entrepreneurial ambition, but they may not always

have the confidence, knowledge or support to know where to start.

Programmes like Future Founders play an important role in giving young people those first opportunities to explore their potential, develop practical skills and see

entrepreneurship as a realistic and exciting career path.

“We look forward to welcoming even more young people to the programme this year and seeing the ideas, creativity and ambition they bring with them.”

Future Founders will take place on campuses

across all six further education colleges in Northern Ireland: Belfast Metropolitan College, North West Regional College, Northern Regional College, South Eastern Regional College, South West College and Southern Regional College.

Hello Hygge: Why Winter Wins

Winter gets a bad press. Yet darker months bring quiet rewards that summer cannot match. Planning ahead gives you something to look forward to and lifts mood.

Sleep becomes deeper when nights lengthen. Researchers found people get more rapid eye movement sleep in winter than summer. That extra rest supports cellular repair and clears metabolic waste overnight. It also explains why a cosy lie-in feels so natural.

Cosiness itself is good for wellbeing. A study of 2,000 adults found more than two thirds believe relaxing nights in are good for their wellbeing. Think thick socks and soft blankets and mugs of soup. Heart FM notes that big coats and scarves and favourite spots with a book are central to winter joy.

The season also turns

social in a smaller and kinder way. Psychological research describes winter social hibernation as health protective behaviour. You gather with fewer people but with more warmth. You talk longer and listen better.

Outside there is plenty to enjoy. Many towns hold winter festivals and parades and outdoor markets. You can wrap up warm and gather by firepits and lose yourself in the night sky. Northumberland and the Yorkshire Dales hold stargazing safaris and events throughout the winter months.

Winter light is rare and beautiful. Low sun paints long shadows and frost



brightens every hedge. Cold air makes you breathe faster and walk brisker and feel more alive. Experts say any activity that raises heart rate benefits the heart even in winter.

Embrace the season

rather than endure it. Mayo Clinic experts suggest that embracing winter helps make it healthier and happier. Light a candle and book a dark skies night and let winter do its quiet work.

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info@pipscharity.com | pipscharity.com

Scan to register or visit pipscharity.com to learn more.

AN UNFORGETTABLE NIGHT OF MUSIC AND SONG TO LAUNCH ACTION CANCER CAMPAIGN

Action Cancer's Paint the Town Pink fundraising campaign will officially launch this year with an unforgettable evening of music and song in the magnificent surroundings of Stormont's Great Hall on Friday 25 September.



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www.peterspatchdaynursery.com

For one night only, Comber Silver Band and Fortwilliam Musical Society will join forces in a special musical collaboration to mark the beginning of Action Cancer's annual Paint the Town Pink campaign, supported by Action Renewables.

Taking place annually during Breast Cancer Awareness Month in October, Paint the Town Pink raises vital funds for Action Cancer's unique, free breast screening service - the only one of its kind available in the UK and Ireland. Every £120 raised funds one potentially life-saving breast screening appointment for well women aged 40-49 and 70+, groups not covered by the NHS screening programme.

Businesses across Northern Ireland are encouraged to 'go pink' and host fundraising events throughout October, from coffee mornings and bake sales to dress-down days and pink-themed pub quizzes. Action Cancer will provide



PAINT THE TOWN PINK: Representatives from Fitzwilliam Musical Society, Action Renewables, Action Cancer and Comber Silver Band pictured at Stormont for the launch of Action Cancer's Paint the Town Pink 2026 campaign, which raises vital funds for the charity's breast screening service.

participating businesses with a fundraising pack including pink bunting, balloons, collection boxes and creative fundraising ideas.

As the charity receives no government funding for its breast screening programme, it relies heavily on support from the local community and business sector to continue delivering

this vital service.

Breast cancer is the most common cancer among women in Northern Ireland, accounting for 30% of all female cancer diagnoses.

On average, 1,516 women are diagnosed each year and 310 die from the disease.

Action Cancer has been at the heart of cancer prevention, detection and support in Northern Ireland

for more than 50 years. Its services are free to the user but cost the charity £4 million annually to deliver. These include an early detection breast screening clinic, therapeutic support for people living with a cancer diagnosis and those supporting a loved one, and a range of health improvement programmes.

Services are available

at Action Cancer House in Belfast, at 13 regional locations and onboard the Big Bus, supported by SuperValu and Centra, which visits 175 locations each year.

If you or your workplace would like to take part in Paint the Town Pink, please contact Mark Irwin-Watson in the fundraising team on 07580 133752 or email ptp@actioncancer.org



Are you a small business, partnership or sole trader struggling with debt?

The Independent Advice Network provides free advice & information on the following:

- Free and confidential tailored business debt advice
- Budgeting advice
- Solutions to deal with the debt
- Negotiating with creditors on your behalf

Contact our FREEPHONE helpline to speak to an adviser
0800 915 4604
Monday to Thursday 9am - 5 pm & Friday 9am to 4pm
Email: advice@adviceni.net
For further information or to find your local advice centre visit www.adviceni.net
@AdviceNI

Funded by:  Department for Communities

SUPPORTING SOLE TRADERS THROUGH A CHALLENGING CLIMATE

Sole traders are a vital part of our economy. They contribute to the social DNA of local communities, create employment, and provide essential goods and services.

From tradespeople to retailers to hairdressers to graphic designers, sole traders bring skills, entrepreneurship, and investment to towns and communities throughout Northern Ireland. According to the government micro businesses (10 employees or less) make up 89.4 per cent of all business.

However, despite their value, sole traders are now operating in a challenging economic landscape. Rising cost pressures due to increasing wages and tax, and changing customer demand, has placed significant

strain on these small businesses.

For sole traders, the pressures are particularly difficult. They are personally responsible for their business's debts, meaning financial difficulty can affect both their business and their personal finances, often placing a toll on their mental health too.

Advice NI is committed to supporting sole traders.

Its Business Debt Service provides free, independent, and confidential advice to help business owners understand their financial position, and the steps they can take to improve their

situation.

In 2025/26, the Service, which is funded by the Department for Communities, successfully dealt with 154 businesses accumulatively in over £5 million of debt.

If you are a sole trader experiencing financial pressure, do not wait until the situation becomes unmanageable. Contact Advice NI's Business Debt Service:

0800 915 4604
advice@adviceni.net
adviceni.net/money-debt/business-debt

Sole traders do not have to face financial difficulties alone.

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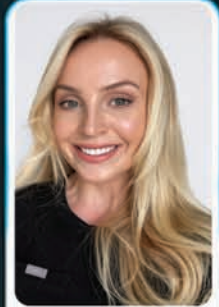
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Down Royal Day Care: An Award-Winning Nursery with a Big Heart

Nestled in the idyllic surroundings of Down Royal, Maze, Down Royal Day Care is a family-owned day care nursery and after-school club with a strong sense of community at its heart.

Now celebrating two years in business, the nursery has grown into a trusted local childcare provider, supporting families from across the Lisburn, Maze, Hillsborough, Maghaberry and Moira areas.

Offering day care, wraparound and after-school care and pre-school wraparound care to and from local schools, Down Royal Day Care provides children with a warm, welcoming environment where they can learn, explore and simply enjoy being children. Within homely rooms and large garden areas, safe spaces are provided for children to investigate, discover and develop through play every day. A nutritious menu of three fresh meals and snacks are cooked on site daily and the nursery welcomes children from 7am until 6:15pm; recognising the needs of working families.

The nursery day is packed with activities such as music and movement, sports, cookery, pilates, performing arts and dance. Keep an eye out for the nursery's outdoor decorative displays at Easter, Halloween and Christmas – they have become renowned within the community! The nursery recognises how busy family life can be and hosts an

annual Easter Egg hunt, Pumpkin Patch and visit from Santa Claus, ensuring that every child is given the opportunity to participate in the seasonal festivities during their nursery days.

At the heart of the nursery is its family ownership; the business is owned and run by husband and wife Greg and Ashleigh, alongside Ashleigh's mother Zana, creating a close-knit family team that brings warmth, continuity and a personal touch to the setting.

Family is also at the heart of Ashleigh and Zana's wider story. The mother-and-daughter duo have previously worked together building family businesses, making Down Royal Day Care another chapter in their shared journey.

Their hard work has already been recognised through a number of awards and nominations. Ashleigh and Zana were jointly nominated as a mother-and-daughter duo for the Trailblazer Award at the Mighty Women NI Gala Awards, before the nursery went on to receive Highly Commended recognition at the Mighty Women Awards. The nursery was also nominated for Best New Nursery at the Families First NI Awards, and in



2025 was delighted to be named Families First Best Newcomer Nursery.

For families, however, it is the combination of a homely atmosphere and professional standards that makes Down Royal Day Care a truly special place to be. The nursery is proud to offer a setting where children are known, valued and cared for within a warm and welcoming environment.

As Down Royal Day Care celebrates its second year, Ashleigh and nursery manager Suzannah are

proud of how far their nursery has come – and of the relationships they have built with the families within community they serve.

Down Royal Day Care
18 Cockhill Road, Maze,
BT27 5RS
028 9252 8918
office@downroyaldaycare.com

Families interested in reserving a space for their children can email the nursery for an information pack and to arrange a viewing.

Frost, Fun and Flawless Plans

Planning a Winter Break? – Whether its Christmas Shopping in Prague, soaking up the winter sun or skiing on Italian slopes or even a break closer to home - start with a clear purpose.

Do you crave rest, adventure or festive cheer? Set a realistic budget early and stick to it. Good planning helps you enjoy shared experiences without stress. Shared experiences are crucial. Confirm your travel documents and dates before you book anything, including passport validity and return details. A favourite drink and a quiet moment can help you focus on decisions.

Choose a destination that matches your energy and weather tolerance. A city break offers markets, galleries and cosy cafes within walking distance. For central exploration book accommodation as centrally as possible. Research suggests the location of your accommodation makes a big difference to your break. Compare hotels, vacation rentals and hostels for value



and warmth before committing. Once you have a gauge on flight costs look at available areas and costs. Consider restaurants you want to visit beforehand to avoid disappointment.

Packing smart is essential for cold weather comfort and confidence. Choose versatile layers, waterproof boots and a polished evening outfit. Experts advise

planning outfits in advance so you pack less and feel polished every day. Keep your confirmations and driving licence in hand luggage for easy access. Build a loose itinerary with one main activity per day. Leave space for spontaneity, hot chocolate and long lunches. You can also create a schedule that organises your area and sets new objectives.

A Winter break is

a time for relaxation and recharging from a busy term. Balance sightseeing with sleep, books and gentle walks. Take regular breaks to rest and recharge using short focused bursts. Take time to organise quality programmes that make everyone feel important. With documents checked, bags packed and plans loose you will return home refreshed.

Calling all young women female Creatives!

Are you interested in textiles, fashion and creative technologies (16-25years)?

We would love you to join – Wear Her Story: Co-Creating Cultural Identity and Wellbeing with Seldom-Heard Girls and Young Women through Heritage-Inspired Digital Fashion, Digital Fabrication and Immersive Storytelling. This is a cross border project funded by PeacePlus, led by Dundalk Institute of Technology in partnership with Glow NI.

If you are aged 16-25 years and have an interest in fashion, textiles, and a keen interest to explore new creative technologies such as 3D printing, digital fabrication, laser cutting, creating Digital fashion for animation, 3D scanning, create Virtual try Ons – filters, try on your fashion and create a virtual design gallery.

You will take part in a series of bootcamps, cultural visits to museums, showcase your work, participate in wellbeing activities, and over 15 months and learn new skills, make new

friends, meet inspiring female role models in this industry, co-create artistic artefacts and have opportunity showcase these in a final exhibition and showcase in 2027.

It is a chance to be part of exciting community of practice and build career ready skills for the creative industries.

Irish textile and fashion heritage belongs to communities on both sides of this border and offers genuine common ground for meaningful cross-community contact and relationship building. Creative arts and digital technologies, including digital fashion and digital fabrication, support self-expression, confidence, and identity. Many young women lack digital skills, confidence, and opportunities to explore identity, and remain underrepresented in creative and digital sectors.

This project responds by combining heritage,

creativity, digital fashion, and digital fabrication through co-production, enabling participants to build confidence while developing skills that support wellbeing and future opportunities. It also builds digital capacity and employability skills, increasingly important given the growth of the creative economy in Ireland and Northern Ireland.

What we are offering

- Creative workshops in design thinking recycled fashion with paper, digital fashion, digital fabrication – 3D printing, laser cutting, virtual augmented reality (AR) try Ons, 3D scanning immersive worlds and creating galleries.

- Co-create creative artistic artefacts, all resources provided.

- Wellbeing and entrepreneurship days
- Co-curate an exhibition of your creative work and showcase this.

- Youth led by young women, you will have your

voice and input to drive these workshops.

- Trips to museums in Belfast and Dublin to explore Irish textile, fashion and cultural heritage.

- Meet new people, make new friends, work with artists and facilities, forge bonds and be part of community of practice.

- Inspiring female role models in fashion, entrepreneurship and creative technologies

- Develop new skills in teamwork, problem solving, future thinking, exhibition creating, crafting artistic creations.

- Transport all provided to Belfast, Dundalk and the Dublin museum visit.

- All lunches and refreshments provided.

- Certificate of participant of your Curriculum Vitae.

- Branded "Wear Her Story" Sweatshirt.

To find out more information about this project and for details for registering please contact treasa.mcclure@glowni.com

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- ♥ Local to Lisburn, Hillsborough, Maze, Maghaberry and Moira areas

Families First Best Newcomer Nursery 2025

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Breaking down business barriers

Northern Ireland continues to undergo a dramatic economic evolution driven by dynamic corporate leadership.

Female founders play a pivotal role in shaping local commerce and driving innovation across diverse sectors. Research from The Gender Index indicates that female led companies account for roughly eighteen percent of active businesses locally. This reflects continuous growth in regional entrepreneurship. Despite this upward trajectory, representation at the highest levels of corporate leadership still shows a distinct imbalance. Historical data from major regional business rankings reveals that women consistently make up fewer than twenty of the top one hundred successful business leaders. Female entrepreneurs face ongoing structural challenges when scaling operations and securing venture capital. However, dedicated local networks such as Women in Business NI actively work to bridge this persistent gender gap.

Among the standout figures leading successful commercial enterprises today is Tina McKenzie. She expanded Staffline Ireland into a powerhouse recruitment firm before taking on high profile UK wide advocate roles. Her strategic vision transformed local workforce development and placed her firmly at the forefront of regional commerce.

Property titan Lesley Herbert represents another major force in the regional commercial landscape through Mussenden Properties Limited. Alongside her husband Michael, she has spearheaded vast investments including the high profile acquisitions of major retail hubs like Lesley Forestside and Lesley Bloomfield. Her expansive portfolio continues to redefine prime retail and commercial property across Northern Ireland.

Another remarkable success story belongs to Judith Totten MBE. She founded Upstream Working Capital to provide essential alternative finance solutions for growing local firms. Her contribution to financial services has earned her widespread acclaim and significant influence within the commercial property and funding landscape.

Finally, Eleanor McEvoy remains a standout figure in manufacturing and export sectors. Known for her impressive venture history including Budget Energy, she remains a prominent investor and enterprise mentor. Her career provides a clear blueprint for sustainable commercial scaling.

These key figures demonstrate that female entrepreneurship in Northern Ireland is expanding rapidly. Their continued commercial achievements provide crucial momentum toward achieving genuine gender parity across the top one hundred business rankings.



Northern Ireland.

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These key figures demonstrate that female entrepreneurship in Northern Ireland is expanding rapidly. Their continued commercial achievements provide crucial momentum toward achieving genuine gender parity across the top one hundred business rankings.

AI Care That Feels Like Family!

Believing that “There is no place like home” A1 Care strives to ensure that individuality and the personal touch are not forgotten in their client care.

A1 Care is bringing award-winning home care to Northern Ireland. The provider offers quality domiciliary and live-in care services with a compassionate personal touch.

The company serves Lisburn, South Belfast and County Down from its base at 24 Castle Street in Lisburn. This branch sits within the city’s Conservation Area and reflects a commitment to heritage as well as people.

A1 Care began as a family business at heart in Dorset. Its head office remains in Bournemouth with satellite offices in Dorchester and Lisburn. For years the organisation supported clients across Dorset and Hampshire before coming to Northern Ireland.

The Lisburn team is led by Registered Manager Sorina Puscas who has been part of the A1 Care family for over six years. Sorina brings a strong health and social care background across public and private sectors. She is joined by Tiffany who brings medical experience earned in hospitals and trusts, both were carers themselves and share a combined 42 years in the sector.

Quality is recognised nationally. A1 Care has been named a Top 20 Home Care Provider in South West England by homecare.co.uk for four consecutive years. The rating is based solely on verified client feedback and the company holds a score of 9.9 out of 10 for overall experience.

Every care package is personalised and family centred. Support ranges from personal care and medication management to dementia and Alzheimer’s care, palliative care and 24/7 live-in services. Staff are fully trained and AccessNI vetted with flexible support tailored to individual needs.

Innovation is central to future plans. In England the company has rolled out a Virtual Care Companion that combines AI technology and human support for safer and more compassionate care. Lisburn will be one of the first places in Northern Ireland to offer this system.

Community matters too. The Lisburn branch hosts free local events. Free assessments are available and the on-call line operates 24 hours a day. For more information see www.a1care.co.uk/lisburn.





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Medication support & management	Palliative & end-of-life care
Hydration & meal preparation	Respite care for families
Companionship & community access	Hospital discharge support
Household support & light cleaning	24/7 live-in care services

The Regulation and
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Authority

Our partners:
Alzheimer's
Society

Homecare
Association

A1 Care,
24 Castle Street,
Lisburn

02892 900 001

lisburn@a1care.co.uk

THE CHRISTMAS COUNTDOWN THAT SAVES YOUR PURSE

Christmas costs creep up fast when you count down without a plan.

British households spend about £106 on going out, £172 on food and £76 on experiences during the festive period. A clear countdown budget stops that spend turning into January debt and stress.

Start eight weeks out by listing income and fixed bills to find your festive pot. Check last December statements to spot pinch points like parties or travel. Split what you can afford into food, gifts and activities rather than wish lists. That pot must include personal extras that often get forgotten.

Book your pre Christmas hair and beauty slots now and set the budget aside. A wash, cut and blow dry is the most popular treatment amongst UK adults before Christmas. Research shows adults in Northern Ireland budget £171.50 on average for festive hair and beauty appointments. Lock in your cut, colour or up-style early and set aside £40 to £60 for it. Add

nails, brows or beard trims into the same beauty pot so you avoid last minute panic spends.

At six weeks tackle home decoration with a tight limit. You do not have to spend a lot on decor to make your home look festive. Check what you already own before buying anything new. Thread ribbon through cookie cutters and hang them from hooks for a cheap touch. Shops like The Range, B&M and Ikea offer good Christmas decorations at low cost. Use clear vases filled with baubles, greenery or fairy lights to create cosy displays. Save gift bags, tissue paper and ribbons from earlier purchases to reuse for wrapping.

Five weeks out plan food, travel and social life. Book trains early and look at split tickets to cut fares. Freeze essentials bought on offer and use up store cupboard items like stock cubes. December is the most popular month for overdraft use with



Brits borrowing £178 on average. Prioritise needs over fear of missing out and budget for each social event separately. Create a present pyramid with special gifts at the top and cards at the bottom to keep it fair.

Work extras need their own small pot. The national average for Secret Santa is £13 with many spending £21 to £25 in generous trades. Suggest a £10 cap to keep it friendly for everyone.

Thoughtful under £10 gifts can feel personal without breaking the limit. Budget for the office party outfit, taxi and contributions to collections too. Hunt real bargains on voucher sites but avoid buying just because something is in a sale.

In the final three weeks go granular with separate pots for presents and socialising. Remember buy now pay later can push debt forward and

a quarter of users miss repayments. Keep long term goals in sight so a spontaneous meal does not derail savings. In the last week wrap with saved bags and ribbons and use labels to cover old logos. Embrace staying in with films and homemade gifts to cut credit card debt into the new year. Seek free guidance from your bank if you feel overstretched and protect your future budget.

Ways to warm up this Winter

Winter shuffles in and turns your nose pink. You can outwit it without drama or a huge bill.

First master the art of layers. Several thin layers trap heat better than one chunky jumper. Think thermal vest plus fleecy mid layer plus woolly outer. Add socks and slippers with grip and you become a walking duvet. It looks eccentric but it works.

Next treat your house like a biscuit tin. Close curtains at night and keep windows shut after dark to keep heat inside. Use draught excluders around doors and window frames and keyholes. Open curtains by day for light then draw them before darkness falls. Simple steps like closing curtains and checking your boiler help keep homes warm and efficient.

Move a bit. Staying active boosts circulation and generates body heat. Move around at least once an hour and avoid sitting still for long periods. Try chair exercises or a hallway strut. Keeping active



at home and moving every hour helps you stay warm.

Feed your inner furnace. Eat at least one hot meal each day and enjoy regular hot drinks. Porridge and stews and soup warm you from inside while tea or coffee lifts morale. Having hot drinks like tea or coffee will warm you from

inside during a cold snap.

Finally be clever with heat. Keep the room you use most at around eighteen degrees if you can. Heat one room and spend time there and turn off radiators in unused halls. A hot water bottle or electric blanket keeps the bed cosy without heating the whole house.

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Great People
Brighter
Christmas
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Every Wednesday, we'll also be offering our Senior Menu, giving everyone the opportunity to get out, get together and enjoy Christmas with us.

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Brings
People
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Ronnie will be bringing a touch of country to Christmas at The Drumlins!

Book your table, enjoy the music and make a night of it!

FRIDAY 18TH DECEMBER

Gary Lockhart will be performing live at The Drumlins!

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SATURDAY 12TH & 19TH DECEMBER

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Email: thedrumlins26@gmail.com

New Look for Anderson's Traditional Fish & Chip Shop

If you are searching for the perfect golden batter and fluffy hand-cut chips in Lisburn, look no further than Anderson's Traditional Fish & Chips.

Located at 26 Grand Street in Hilden, this local favourite has built a reputation for serving high-quality meals that stay true to the classic chippy experience. Whether you are a lifelong resident or just passing through the Hilden area, Anderson's offers a menu filled with fresh ingredients and traditional flavours.

Now there is something different about your favourite chippy! Not just a new look shop but the recent renovations include new state of the art fryers, a refreshed modernised shop and well as a new counter and brand new menu!

The secret to the success of Anderson's lies in their commitment to freshness. The team takes great pride in sourcing the best local produce. Their fish is prepared with care to ensure a crispy finish and the potatoes are peeled and chipped fresh on-site every day. This dedication to quality extends across their entire menu which includes everything from succulent cod to battered sausages and savoury pasties.

Exclusive Savings This Month There has never been a better time to visit than right now. Anderson's is currently running a special promotion for their customers. You can receive 20% off your order by presenting their latest advertisement. This limited-time offer is a great way to enjoy a family feast or a quick lunch while making a significant saving on your total bill.

Opening hours are:

- Monday – Thursday: 12:00 pm – 2:00 pm and 4:00 pm – 9:00 pm
- Friday & Saturday: 12:00 pm – 9:00 pm
- Sunday: Closed

Anderson's offers an easy collection service. You can browse their full range of burgers and chicken dishes and sides at www.andersonschipshop.co.uk to decide on your meal in advance. Call them at (0)28 9262 9873 to place your order for pickup.

Next time the craving for traditional fish and chips hits, head down to Grand Street and experience the warm service and delicious food that makes Anderson's a standout destination in Hilden. Don't forget to bring your advert along to claim your 20% discount!

WOOL IS A NATURAL CHOICE FOR WINTER

Wool has kept us warm through centuries and remains a natural choice for winter. Its fibres trap air and regulate temperature without reliance on synthetic layers.

Wool breathes, resists odour and feels soft against skin in cold weather. Every year sheep produce a new fleece making wool a completely renewable fibre source. When disposed of wool will naturally decompose in soil in a matter of months. It slowly releases valuable nutrients and carbon back into the soil. Wool also uses less energy and water than many other fibres during production. Its durability counters fast fashion and encourages longer active lifespan for clothing. Natural fibres also avoid plastic shedding that harms oceans and waterways. Wool offers natural beauty that synthetic fabrics struggle to match. Its texture holds rich colour and keeps shape after long wear. From chunky cables to fine merino layers wool brings warmth and elegance together. The soft drape and natural lustre of wool elevate everyday winter outfits. It layers beautifully over shirts and under coats without bulk.

Choosing British wool supports local farmers and rural communities directly. British Wool supports research into new markets and subsidises shearing training across the UK. Projects like the Clapdale Wool Project create a circular economy and feed profits directly back to local farmers. Buying traceable British yarn helps maintain flock numbers and rural skills. It keeps value within local supply chains rather than overseas factories.

Wool is naturally odour resistant and requires significantly less washing than synthetic fibres. This resistance means garments need less frequent washing and retain their look for longer. When washing is needed lower temperatures reduce energy use and carbon footprint. Experts recommend a wool cycle at a low temperature of 30°C or a maximum of 40°C. Washing less frequently reduces water and energy consumption across the wardrobe. Airing garments after wear often refreshes them without a full wash. Less washing and cooler cycles save money and extend garment life with ease.



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The Power of the Local Pound

Walk down any thriving high street and you will feel the energy of a real community.

From the smell of freshly baked bread to the warm greeting at the corner greengrocer, local businesses form the backbone of our towns. Yet as digital convenience expands, these vital independent shops face an unprecedented challenge. Choosing to shop locally is far more than a simple errand. It is a vital investment in our shared future.

Boosting the Regional Economy

When you buy from an independent retailer, a significantly higher percentage of your money stays within the local economy. Small business owners buy from local suppliers, hire local staff and pay taxes that fund essential community services. A single purchase at a neighbourhood butcher or bookshop creates a ripple effect. It directly supports local families, drives regional growth and keeps high streets vibrant.

Unmatched Quality and Expertise

Independent traders offer specialized knowledge that algorithms and giant supermarket chains simply cannot match. A local cheesemonger or florist takes deep pride in their craft, offering personal recommendations and tailored service.

Furthermore, local food traders often source produce from nearby farms. This reduces transit times, cuts plastic packaging and ensures fresher, better-tasting food on your table.

Preserving Community Identity

Beyond the economic advantages, independent shops give our towns their unique character and charm. Unique storefronts turn bland streets into welcoming places to gather and connect. Shopkeepers know their customers by name, fostering a strong sense of safety and belonging.

Every time you choose a high street shop over a massive online retailer, you vote for the kind of community you want to live in. By spending locally, we preserve our town centres and secure a resilient future for everyone.





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BAC LISBURN REVS UP AFTER OFFICIAL OPENING

Boucher Auto Centre has just opened a second site in Lisburn! The new branch trades as BAC Lisburn, the city's newest one-stop-shop for car and light commercial vehicle work.

The official opening of the new centre was marked with a special celebratory event on 11th September offering an opportunity to view the state-of-the-art workshop and equipment and meet the talented team.

Located at 19 Enterprise Crescent, Lisburn BT28 2BP BAC Lisburn is convenient to Lisburn MOT Centre. It couldn't be handier if you require MOT servicing and repairs before your test!

BAC Lisburn offers mechanical and accident repair under one roof. This includes accident and insurance repairs, re-sprays and dent and scratch repairs. Customers

can be assured of a top quality finish offered by the Junair paint mixing facility and drying booth. Further mechanical services include diagnostics, MOT prep, routine servicing and engine and gearbox work, chains and wet belts, as well as air conditioning servicing and refills.

The original Belfast business was established in 2024. It was founded by partners Paddy and Jan who share over 25 years experience in the motor trade. They worked side by side in a well-established business for 10 years before launching Boucher Auto Centre.

A strong focus on



dealer-level diagnostics equipment is matched with independent prices! You will also find honest advice, quality workmanship and no hidden charges. No work is initiated until customer approval is given!

The expansion gives drivers two locations to choose from. The

Belfast base remains on Boucher Road while Lisburn now serves County Antrim and beyond. The firm covers all makes and models and light commercial, fleet maintenance, hybrid and electric cars.

Customers can contact BAC Lisburn on 028 9202 7065. See www.boucherautocentre.com

RENAULT 5 TURBO 3E AND TWINGO E-TECH ELECTRIC WIN AT CAR GENIUS AWARDS

Renault's latest electric models have come top of the class at the inaugural CAR Genius Awards, with the spectacular Renault 5 Turbo 3E named 'Idea of the Year' and the new Renault Twingo E-Tech electric crowned 'Small Car of the Year'.

The two awards recognise very different expressions of Renault's approach to electric cars. Renault 5 Turbo 3E turns one of the brand's most celebrated performance icons into a phenomenal 555 hp electric 'mini-supercar', while Twingo E-Tech electric brings clever technology, character and accessible pricing to the heart of the small-car market.

Created by the extended editorial team at CAR, the new Genius Awards recognise "innovative thinking, brilliantly implemented", celebrating standout ideas across the industry.

Renault 5 Turbo 3E praised for performance and concept

Renault 5 Turbo 3E secured the 'Idea of the Year' title after impressing the judges with both its extreme performance and the ambition of bringing such an uncompromising car to production.

Reimagining the spirit of the legendary Renault 5 Turbo and Turbo 2 of the 1980s, Renault 5 Turbo 3E combines dramatic retro-futuristic design with cutting-edge electric performance. Two rear-mounted in-wheel motors produce a combined 555 hp and 4,800 Nm of torque,

making it the most powerful road-going Renault ever created.

Custom-made to order and priced from £140,000, Renault 5 Turbo 3E is limited to 1,980 individually numbered examples, referencing the year in which the original Renault 5 Turbo was launched. Reservations are open now, with customers able to select from an extensive range of exterior liveries, interior materials and finishes.

At the other end of the electric-car spectrum, Renault Twingo E-Tech electric was named 'Small Car of the Year', with CAR praising the personality, value and sense of occasion it brings to an increasingly important part of the market.

With its bright green paintwork and expressive, wide-set headlights, Twingo E-Tech electric has already earned the nickname "Le Frog". Its cheerful design is combined with a compact, city-friendly footprint and modern electric technology, creating a small car designed to be as useful and accessible as it is characterful.

Targeting a starting price below £20,000, Twingo E-Tech electric offers a WLTP driving range of up to 163 miles* from its LFP battery and is powered



by a lively 60 kW electric motor. Features associated with larger cars include One Pedal driving and the availability of the OpenR Link multimedia system with Google built-in (depending on version).

Customers keen to secure early access can now purchase a Twingo R Pass for £100. This provides priority ordering ahead

of the general public, exclusive model updates, a dedicated concierge service, a miniature Renault Twingo E-Tech electric model and a distinctive green Renault key cover.

For more information about Renault Twingo E-Tech electric, visit:

<https://www.renault.co.uk/electric-vehicles/twingo-e-tech-electric.html>

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Autumn Motoring Guide

Autumn brings stunning golden landscapes but also introduces treacherous driving conditions.

Sharper chills, fallen leaves and sudden downpours test both drivers and vehicles. Preparing your car beforehand ensures safety throughout this unpredictable transition period.

Routine maintenance becomes critical as temperatures drop. According to the RAC, battery failures spike dramatically during colder months as heating and lights draw extra power. Drivers should test their battery strength early to avoid unexpected breakdowns on chilly mornings. Tyres also require urgent attention before wet weather sets in. The AA recommends maintaining a tread depth well above the legal 1.6 mm limit to guarantee proper grip. Checking tyre pressure regularly is equally vital because cooler air causes pressure drops.

Visibility drops significantly during autumn due to shorter daylight hours

and low sun glare. Drivers should clean windshields thoroughly inside and out to eliminate streaks that worsen glare. The Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency advises replacing worn wiper blades immediately if they smear water across the glass. Keeping screenwash topped up with a suitable winter additive prevents fluid from freezing on frosty mornings. Checking that all exterior bulbs operate correctly ensures you remain visible to other road users.

Fallen leaves pose a hidden hazard that many motorists underestimate. Damp leaves create a slick surface with traction comparable to ice. The Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents warns drivers to reduce speed when approaching leaf-covered bends. Sudden braking on wet foliage can easily cause skid risks and loss of control. Clearing leaves from the base of the windscreen prevents blocked



air intakes and drainage channels.

Navigating heavy rain and sudden autumn floods requires patient driving technique. Entering standing water at high speed risks severe engine damage and aquaplaning. National Highways urges drivers to double their stopping distance on wet surfaces. Extending the gap to the vehicle ahead provides vital extra time to react to hazards. When driving through large puddles, choose the highest point of the road and move slowly in a low gear.

Low autumn sun creates blinding glare that severely

impairs forward vision. Keeping a clean pair of sunglasses in your glovebox helps maintain clear sight during early morning commutes. Drivers must slow down immediately if dazzled rather than continuing blindly forward. Keeping your distance from cyclists and pedestrians remains essential as poor light makes vulnerable road users harder to spot.

By performing basic vehicle checks and adapting driving habits, motorists can safely navigate autumn roads. Thorough preparation prevents costly mechanical repairs and protects everyone on the road.

All-new Toyota Hilux now available with two-seat conversion

The all-new Toyota Hilux is now available as a two-seat model, offering more versatility and load-carrying capability for people wanting a pick-up that's tailor-made to meet their business needs.

Launched earlier this year, the ninth generation of Toyota's world-renowned Hilux is presented exclusively in a Double Cab body style, in line with the market's strong preference. Customers now have the option of a new factory conversion that removes the three-seat bench from the rear section of the cabin and creates a large, flat and secure load area. Measuring 1,290mm wide and 640mm deep, it's suitable for carrying tools and equipment, easily accessed via the Double Cab's rear doors.

The conversion in no way compromises performance, safety or standard equipment specifications. Hilux also remains compatible with Toyota's extensive range of accessories and customisation options.

In addition to the convenience of extra load space, the conversion brings potential

savings in ownership costs for business users. It also enables flat rate benefit-in-kind taxation and a 100 per cent plant and machinery allowance, where applicable. There's further peace of mind with Toyota's market-leading warranty which provides cover for up to 10 years or 100,000 miles, subject to an annual vehicle service at a qualifying Toyota workshop*.

This latest development strengthens Hilux's market appeal, founded on its fundamental Quality, Durability and Reliability and its legendary ability to take the toughest driving environments in its stride.

In line with Toyota's multi-pathway approach to giving customers powertrain options that meet customers needs and help reduce carbon emissions, the all-new Hilux range includes both

a Diesel 48V engine and a battery electric system. The BEV version has been designed and engineered to ensure authentic strong performance, with permanent all-wheel drive and the ability to tackle a wide range of off-road conditions, including wading through water up to 700mm deep.

Commercial vehicle on-

the-road prices (excluding VAT) are from £36,815 for the Diesel 48V and £49,356 for the battery electric model, including a £5,000 discount funded by the Government's OZEV large electric van grant.

*Terms and conditions apply; for details visit <https://www.toyota.co.uk/owners/toyota-warranty>.

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Start with the basics that often get missed. Follow this checklist to diagnose the problem with your broken boiler. Check the electricity supply and check the gas or oil supply and check the water supply. Look at the fuse box and the boiler switch and make sure the gas meter has

credit. Low pressure is a common cause so check the boiler pressure and top up if the gauge is below one bar. Next check the controls. Check the thermostat and programmer and make sure timers have not reset after a power cut. Many modern units have

a fault code display so check for boiler fault codes and note them for the engineer. Does the boiler have a reset button and if the boiler has a permanent pilot light has it been extinguished. Press reset once and wait to see if it relights. In freezing weather check for frozen pipes

as this stops the boiler firing. The condensate pipe outside often freezes and you can thaw it with warm water. Listen for gurgling and look for dripping. Clear the blockage and reset the boiler again. If nothing works call a professional. Have your boiler inspected



and serviced by a Gas Safe registered engineer ideally before the cold weather kicks in. An annual service is part of healthy boiler maintenance and will

help reduce the risk of a breakdown when you need it the most. Regular checks clean main components and ensure the boiler is ready for use.

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WAKING UP TO WET WINDOWS?

If you wake to dripping windows every winter morning you are not alone. Condensation forms when warm moist air touches a cold surface like window glass.

In winter this is worse because glass stays much colder while heating and daily life create more moisture inside.

The problem is simple physics. Cooking and showering and drying clothes indoors all add vapour to the air. When that moisture has nowhere to go it settles on the coldest surface in the home which is often your windows.

That is why condensation appears in the morning and why only interior glass is wet. Condensation issues always increase during winter when external temperatures are low and internal temperatures tend to

be high.

Left alone it causes more than a wet sill. Lots of condensation can lead to dampness which can cause mould growth on blinds and walls and ceilings. When a surface has condensation on it this can provide ideal conditions for growth of mould spores.

You can reduce it without major work. Open windows each day to ensure good airflow and try to do this in the morning. If your home is not well ventilated that moisture settles on cold surfaces and eventually causes mould and damp. Use extractor fans when cooking or bathing and





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dry clothes outside whenever you can. Wipe condensation off windows and surfaces each morning to stop

moisture sitting. Heat also helps. It is important to keep rooms heated to prevent condensation

as this keeps water vapour from cooling too much. Keep heating on low and steady and keep trickle

vents open. Doing this while keeping windows or vents open will help excess moisture escape

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