



Queen's University Belfast Social Charter Newsletter

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Business Forum launched to improve productivity across Northern Ireland as part of national network

Eight Regional Productivity Forums have been launched across the UK as part of the £32 million ESRC-funded Productivity Institute. Each will inform and shape the development and implementation of the Institute's research agenda and practical business interventions.

Queen's University Belfast is leading one of the research hubs and overseeing the setup and running of the Regional Forum for Northern Ireland. It includes representatives from the area's key sectors including manufacturing and technology as well as from the public sector and academia. Part of The Productivity Institute, the Forum is one of eight across the UK that will work to better understand and address regional issues of productivity and improve the UK's overall performance.

The majority of the Institute's research activities and outputs will be developed in collaboration, and in some instances through co-production, with business and policy users.

"The first meeting of the Forum produced a consensus that to address Northern Ireland's productivity problem the future focus of the Forum should be on culture, workforce skills and the managerial skills gap. There was also a realisation that we need better data to help ascertain where appropriate interventions can be made"

John Turner, Northern Ireland Forum lead, Queen's Management School, Queen's University Belfast

Research with Impact:

Queen's researchers investigating the impact of COVID-19 on Northern Ireland's older population

Researchers from Queen's University are studying how people aged 50 years and older across Northern Ireland have been affected by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Over the past year, people over 70 years of age with underlying medical conditions were more susceptible and as such were directed to stay indoors, curtail social visits with friends and family, and limit outdoor exercise and activities which for many older adults are part of their everyday routine, wellbeing and quality of life.

Researchers working on the Northern Cohort for the Longitudinal Study of Ageing (NICOLA), from the Centre for Public Health at Queen's University are analysing data from 5,000 of its participants aged 50 years and over living in Northern Ireland.

The information gathered will determine the full scale of the impact of COVID-19 on a wide number of outcomes including physical and mental health, caring responsibilities, health behaviours, social contact and loneliness.

"The COVID-19 pandemic has been a challenging period worldwide and has impacted us all in some way across Northern Ireland, especially the lives of older people. This research provides a unique opportunity for older adults from across Northern Ireland to document their experience during the period of the pandemic"

Dr Charlotte Neville, NICOLA's Scientific Officer and Senior Research Fellow, Centre for Public Health, Queen's University Belfast

Education with Social Purpose:

Centre for Educational Development and Science Shop: Opportunity for Academics

Academic staff wanting to offer their students real-world community-engaged learning, to support local communities through collaboration, and to build their local and international network, are invited to apply to join the second Erasmus+ funded CIRCLET international learning community.

The Science Shop at Queen's University, along with the Centre for Educational Development, has promoted the opportunity for professional development opportunities in Community Engaged Research and Learning is for staff who wish to:

- Offer students real-world community-engaged learning
- Support local communities through curriculum-based collaboration
- Explore how to best use educational technology to support community engagement
- Address Sustainable Development Goals with students and partners at local level
- Build local and international network
- Turn practice into publications

The closing date for applications is **Sunday 9 May 2021**. For more information:

[CLICK HERE](#)

Breaking Boundaries to Produce New Knowledge: Astronomers detect new chemical signature in an exoplanet's atmosphere

An international collaboration of astronomers led by Queen's University Belfast has discovered a new chemical signature in the atmosphere of an extrasolar planet, a planet that orbits a star other than the sun.

Such advances are important if, in the future, we ever want to probe atmospheres of smaller rocky planets that resemble the Earth.

The results have been published in the Astrophysical Journal Letters and involved researchers from Queen's University Belfast, the Astrobiology Center (ABC) of the National Institutes of Natural Sciences in Tokyo, and Trinity College Dublin.

"The discovery is the first direct evidence of OH in the atmosphere of a planet beyond the Solar System. It shows not only that astronomers can detect this molecule in exoplanet atmospheres, but also that they can now begin to understand the detailed chemistry of this planetary population"

Dr Stevanus Nugroho, lead researcher based at the ABC and the School of Mathematics and Physics, Queen's University Belfast

Equality and Excellence: 'Early Childhood Development and Peacebuilding - Making the Links' International Conference

'Early Child Development and Peacebuilding – Making the Links' is a global conference that will be hosted virtually by the LINKS Network from **24th to 27th May 2021**. The Conference will showcase the work conducted by the LINKS network over the last four years.

The conference will explore the impact of early childhood development programmes in contributing to sustainable development and peacebuilding and social cohesion in low- and middle-income countries affected by conflict.

Registration is now open - click on the image below to find out more.



LINKS | Lancaster University | QUEEN'S UNIVERSITY BELFAST

NIHR Global Health Research Group on Early Childhood Development for Peacebuilding at Lancaster University and Queen's University Belfast

Early Child Development and Peacebuilding - Making the Links

LINKS International (Virtual) Conference

24th - 27th May 2021

SPEAKERS

Dr Rima Salah, Chair of the Early Childhood Peace Consortium
Prof Hiro Yoshikawa, Global Ties for Children, New York University
Prof Paul Connolly, Director of LINKS, Lancaster University
And many more...

For more information including details on how to register, visit:
www.lancaster.ac.uk/links

NIHR | National Institute for Health Research | ukaid

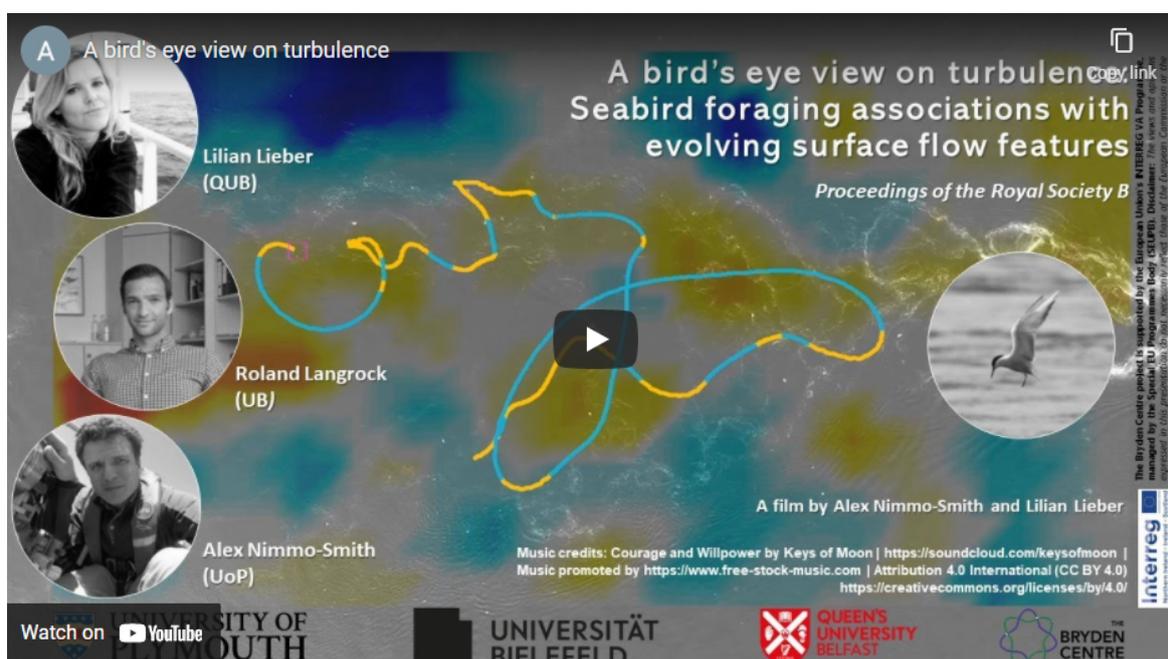
Sustainability:

Drones track tidal flows and seabirds in synchrony

Drones were used for the first time to track dynamic tidal flows and seabirds in synchrony, new joint research by Queen's University Belfast, Bielefeld University and the University of Plymouth found.

Previously identified as a foraging hotspot for terns, the research focused on the wake of a tidal turbine structure set in a tidal channel, Strangford Lough, Northern Ireland.

For this new study, the researchers used drones to map surface water flows and extracted localised turbulence features to investigate physical foraging cues for terns.



'How to build back better, new thinking for post-pandemic Northern Ireland'

Friends of the Earth NI, QUB's Centre for Sustainability, Equality and Climate Action and Climate Coalition NI invite you to a gathering to discuss how a new FoE report *Climate Action Plan for Northern Ireland: A Green and fair Recovery for People and Communities* can inform Northern Ireland's post-pandemic recovery.

'How to build back better, new thinking for post-pandemic Northern Ireland' will take place on **Friday 14th May 2021, 1.00pm - 2.30pm.**

To find out more, and to register for the event, please click **HERE**

Civic Culture and Intercultural Dialogue: Independent Human Rights Act Review Roadshow

The Human Rights Centre in the School of Law at Queen's University Belfast is hosting an online roadshow event as part of the Independent Review of the Human Rights Act.

The Independent Human Rights Act Review (IHRAR), launched in December 2020, has been established to examine the framework of the Human Rights Act 1998 (HRA), how it is operating in practice and whether any change is required.

The review is being conducted by a Panel of eight members, chaired by Sir Peter Gross, a former judge of the Court of Appeal of England and Wales. Members of the IHRAR Panel are participating in a series of public events hosted by universities across the United Kingdom.

The IHRAR Panel and Queen's University Belfast would like to invite members of the public to join this conversation on the Human Rights Act and their Review on **Thursday, 13 May 2021, 17:00 – 19:00 BST**

For more information, please click **HERE**

Recognising and Rewarding Contributions from Staff and Students: Mental Health Awareness Week

Mental Health Awareness Week will take place from **10-16 May 2021** and is an opportunity for all of us to really focus on raising awareness of mental health issues and advocate against social stigma.

The theme for this year is 'Nature and the Environment' and a programme of events have been organised for the week to explore how staff can access nature, whatever their circumstances, and experience its mental health benefits.

More information is available by clicking on the image below.

