

Northern Ireland's young people and community investment at the heart of UK Government's centenary programme

- An extensive young people's programme to inspire youth to shape Northern Ireland's future
- £1 million fund awarded to 39 community projects across Northern Ireland as part of a Shared History Fund with the National Lottery Heritage Fund
- A major Northern Ireland 2021 Business Showcase in London to boost investment and build back better. The Secretary of State for Northern Ireland Brandon Lewis has unveiled an extensive programme of projects and events to mark the centenary of Northern Ireland in 2021.

This includes a major Northern Ireland 2021 Business Showcase in London, a £1 million Shared History Fund, an ambitious programme for young people, tree planting projects, academic and historic events and a Cultural Programme

In addition, stakeholders from across Northern Ireland are delivering activities including a George V event in Belfast City Hall and an International church service for all denominations.

The initiatives reflect the UK Government's commitment under the New Decade New Approach deal to showcase Northern Ireland's economic, cultural and social achievements on a local, UK and international stage when marking this key anniversary. This will entail reflecting on the past and looking forward to a bright future for Northern Ireland, with the programme focusing on investment, young people, culture and the environment.

The centenary will also highlight the strength and beauty of the diverse perspectives and identities within the four nations of the UK which make our Union unique.

Secretary of State for Northern Ireland Brandon Lewis said:

"The UK Government's centenary programme of events provides an opportunity for us all to reflect on the history of Northern Ireland and to take pride in all this fantastic place has to offer the UK and the world.

"In its 100th year, the people of Northern Ireland can build on their spirit of togetherness and recognise their enormous achievements over past decades.

"I hope that these projects and events will help drive Northern Ireland's post Covid recovery forward, inspire the next generation and showcase to the world the beauty, innovation and tenacity of the people of Northern Ireland."

Prime Minister Boris Johnson said:

"2021 marks 100 years since the creation of Northern Ireland, which has paved the way for the formation of the United Kingdom as we know it.

“Our centenary programme will reflect on the past and on the people and developments that make Northern Ireland the great place it is today.

“The activities will pay tribute to all those who have worked tirelessly to support Northern Ireland throughout the pandemic, and will champion the incredible young people in Northern Ireland who offer so much to the shared success of our United Kingdom.”

Our Story in the Making programme includes;

- A Shared History Fund – working in partnership with the National Lottery Heritage Fund, £1m has been awarded to 39 community projects across Northern Ireland, to research and demonstrate what 100 years of Northern Ireland has meant to them and their community. Projects will mark the centenary in an inclusive way, giving a wide range of people the opportunity to participate and understand the key events and history which made Northern Ireland the place it is today.
- Historic Centenary Event – Belfast City Council will host an event marking the hundredth anniversary of the opening of the Northern Ireland Parliament on 22 June 1921, by King George V. This event will take place in the Council Chamber, exactly one hundred years on from this historic occasion.
- Building Back Greener – every school in Northern Ireland will be presented with a native tree, to plant in their grounds. Each school will be encouraged to video their planting ceremony and share with the world, via ourstoryinthemaking.com, their moment in marking the centenary and working towards a greener future.
- Our Future Northern Ireland – an extensive young people’s programme exploring what the future will look like in the next 100 years, and how they can shape it to become the nation they want it to be. Working in partnership with Youth Action Northern Ireland across the mediums of live performance, radio and social media the young people of Northern Ireland will engage and showcase their hopes and ambitions for Northern Ireland’s next 100 years.
- Launch of the ‘Centenary Rose’, a unique flower of reflection and hope, produced in Northern Ireland for the centenary and planted in the gardens of Hillsborough to flower throughout the summer of 2021 and beyond. A Centenary Rose will be presented to Her Majesty the Queen for her own garden, and there will be a decorative rose pin designed and produced in the UK, to be worn by VIPs at centenary events, and given to programme participants. A small number will also be available to purchase in exchange for a charity donation.
- Hosted by the Churches, an International Service for all denominations in the autumn.
- A reception at Hillsborough Castle and historic buildings across the UK will be lit to signify a bright future for all.
- Academic Events – working in partnership with an expert Historical Advisory Panel and academic institutions including Queens’ University Belfast. A Reflection of the Government of Ireland Act, through further events which seek to explore and deepen our understanding of the historical context of the centenary. Further details of the Historical

Panel's programme will be announced by Lord Bew and the Panel members soon.

- Marking the Centenary – in partnership with Royal Mail, a special postmark reading “Our Story in the Making – Northern Ireland Beyond 100’, will be applied to stamped mail sent around the world. Stamped mail across the UK will receive the postmark from 26 April to 3 May. From 3-29 May, stamped mail originating in NI will have the postmark applied. Promotion of the 2021 Northern Ireland, First and Second Class stamps will be showcased in Post Offices around the UK.
- Build Back Better – London will pay host to a Northern Ireland 2021 Business Showcase. Companies and organisations from across Northern Ireland will promote their products, services and expertise; networking and meeting with international companies, governments and investors to showcase the very best on offer to boost exports and investment into Northern Ireland.
- Born in Northern Ireland – a dedicated cultural programme showcasing the talents and contribution of those born in Northern Ireland. Encompassing communications activity and a series of live and on-line events to promote and highlight the talents and skills of people from Northern Ireland; from doctors and teachers, contributors to the Covid-19 efforts, to writers and artists, actors, singers, poets and dancers. As part of ‘Our Story in the Making: NI Beyond 100’ campaign, this strand will run from May to September, culminating in a VIP reception and public centenary concert.