

Report outlines youth-centred framework to build a more confident and inclusive Northern Ireland

Press release

Wilton Park publishes report reflecting on the dialogue between participants at a special conference looking ahead to the 25th anniversary of the Belfast (Good Friday) Agreement.



- Youth-focused recommendations published following first-of-its-kind conference on achieving a more confident and inclusive Northern Ireland, looking forward to the Belfast (Good Friday) Agreement's 25th anniversary.
- Conference highlighted importance of supporting a culture of empathy, continued and sustained integration in all aspects of society, and entrepreneurial ambition to achieve a brighter future for Northern Ireland's young people.
- Participants agreed that the public, third and private sectors should better involve young people in decision making, so they have a greater say in Northern Ireland's future.

Wilton Park today published a report reflecting on the open and constructive dialogue between participants at a special conference on a more confident and inclusive Northern Ireland, held in partnership with the Northern Ireland Office and the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office.

The conference was convened looking ahead to the 25th anniversary of the Belfast (Good Friday) Agreement in April 2023. It brought together young people with politicians and representatives from the public sector, academia, peace-building organisations, and youth workers to consider the conditions needed to build a fair, prosperous and vibrant future for all.

Participants reflected on the extraordinary transformation Northern Ireland has undergone over the last quarter century, and shared ideas on how Northern Ireland can reach its potential, with a focus on the role of young people.

These ideas included:

- Ensuring that children and young people from all backgrounds are included in decision-making processes – participants also called on business and civic society to be more proactive in their youth engagement.
- Longer-term investments and improvements in education, in particular to support greater integration through education.
- Developing empathy skills, including via the education and skills system to support a more stable and just society.
- Work to attain a more confident and inclusive society is something that begins in very early stages of life, and can be supported by early years interventions.
- Instilling a sense of entrepreneurial ambition within young people would retain talent and support Northern Ireland's future economic prosperity.

Looking forward, the conference concluded that the Belfast (Good Friday) Agreement's upcoming 25th anniversary presents a strong opportunity to share Northern Ireland's success story with the world – with a particular focus on promoting its innovative economy, cultural prowess and creativity, and areas of natural beauty.

Minister of State for Northern Ireland, Conor Burns, who attended the conference, said:

This report really captures the positive and uplifting discussions that were had at Wilton Park.

Bringing together young voices and decision makers is so crucial in political debate, and I was inspired to hear fresh thinking to help us achieve a more confident and inclusive Northern Ireland with long-term peace and prosperity.

As we move closer to the 25th anniversary of the Belfast (Good Friday) Agreement, it is more important than ever to encourage individuals from all walks of life to engage in dialogue so that we may build an even brighter future.

In support for greater integration through education, the UK government has recently announced a [£1.9m funding package](#) to support schools through the transformation process towards integrated status.

Notes to editors

- The report is available to download. As the conference was held under the Chatham House Rule, conference participants are not identified: <https://www.wiltonpark.org.uk/reports/>
- Wilton Park was established as part of an initiative inspired by Winston

Churchill to help re-establish peace and democracy in Europe in the aftermath of the Second World War. Discussions on how to promote peace, reconciliation and understanding have been a core mandate of Wilton Park ever since. Find out more about the conference at: www.wiltonpark.org.uk/event/a-more-confident-and-inclusive-northern-ireland/

Published 4 August 2022

[Stoke angler fined £461 for illegal fishing](#)

Kieran Hall, 29, of Saturn Road, Stoke, admitted the offences at Northampton magistrates on 1 August 2022.

He was fined £146 for fishing without a licence and a further £146 for failing to give his name and address when asked. He was also ordered to pay £135 costs and a £34 victim's surcharge.

The offences took place on 12 March 2022 when Hall was fishing at Holden Lane Pool, Milton, near Hanley, Staffordshire.

A spokesperson for the Environment Agency said:

This case shows we will pursue offenders through the courts and won't hesitate to take enforcement action where anglers break rules.

This offender did not have a valid licence, but he was also unhelpful when questioned by our officers.

We will not tolerate abusive behaviour towards our officers who routinely undertake licence checks, and we urge anyone with information about illegal fishing to contact us on 0800 807060.

Background information

All anglers need a valid Environment Agency rod licence.

The money raised through the sales of rod licences is re-invested back into

the sport and illegal fishing undermines the Environment Agency's efforts to make fishing sustainable.

Anyone found fishing illegally may face prosecution and a fine of up to £2,500.

The Environment Agency carries out enforcement work all year round and is supported by partners including the police and the Angling Trust.

Fisheries enforcement work is intelligence-led, targeting known hot-spots and where illegal fishing is reported.

Any angler aged 13 or over, fishing on a river, canal or still water needs a licence.

A 1 day licence costs from just £6 and an annual licence costs from just £30 (concessions available). Junior licences are free for 13 to 16 year olds.

Licences are available to purchase [online](#) or by calling the Environment Agency on 0344 800 5386 between 8am and 6pm, Monday to Friday.

[Future stars create fusion energy machine at school](#)

School children from Waverley Junior Academy, near Rotherham, have combined science with art to create a fusion energy machine of the future.

Year 5 students took part in two workshops to learn about fusion – based on the same processes that powers the sun and stars – which has great potential to become an environmentally responsible part of the world's future energy supply.

Before taking to their pens and pencils to design a star-making machine, the students discovered what fusion is and let-off steam by running around to create energy of their own.

The fun and interactive sessions were delivered by a team from the UK Atomic Energy Authority (UKAEA) based at the neighbouring technology park in Catcliffe.

Jordan d'Arras, graduate development engineer at UKAEA, said: "The children were really enthusiastic and asked so many good questions. They learned the importance of safe, low carbon energy in the fight against climate change and heard about the variety of career opportunities we have at UKAEA that will help make fusion happen. We hope to have inspired our engineers, scientists and communicators of the future!"

The students went head-to-head in a design competition and impressed the UKAEA team with their interpretation of what a future fusion energy machine could look like.

Waverley Junior Academy's Year 5 teachers, Patrick Selkirk and Holly Peace, were very proud of the scientific knowledge and artistic talent of their classes.

Patrick said: "It was a great experience for the children to fully engage with. They had previously learnt all about renewable energy and the effects of non-renewable sources. The UKAEA workshop was enlightening and well-pitched to the children. The workshop began conversations that sparked debate about fusion energy."

Based on the same process that powers our sun and the stars, fusion has long been considered the ultimate energy source:

- When a mix of two forms of hydrogen (deuterium and tritium) are heated to extreme temperatures (10 times hotter than the core of the sun) they fuse together to create helium and release vast amounts of energy in the form of heat.
- This superheated material forms a plasma, the fourth state of matter found in lightning and neon signs. Plasma has incredibly complex, but fascinating, physics akin to weather systems, and predicting its behaviour is just as difficult.
- There is more than one way of achieving fusion. At UKAEA, we hold this hot plasma using strong magnets in a doughnut-shaped machine called a tokamak.
- The energy created from fusion can generate electricity similar to existing power stations.

For further information about UKAEA's fusion technology facility in Rotherham, visit: ccfe.ukaea.uk

Scotland Office Minister inspired by island innovation ahead of Levelling Up Islands Forum

Levelling up was top of the agenda as UK Government Minister for Scotland Iain Stewart visited innovative island businesses and community projects on a five-day visit to Skye, Lewis and Harris, ahead of the inaugural Islands Forum later this year.

Starting his visit in Skye, Minister Stewart met with the Staffin Community Trust and local fishermen to discuss plans to redevelop Staffin Harbour and consider ways the UK Government could support the project. He then headed to Skye's largest town, Portree, to host a roundtable discussion with representatives from local community groups, where he invited views on how levelling up could enhance the area.

The Minister then made his way to Harris where he paid a visit to the Harris Distillery. He enjoyed hearing about how the island-based enterprise has grown through training and employing young people from the local area, meaning they don't have to leave the island for work.

In Lewis, Minister Stewart's busy itinerary included meeting Comhairle nan Eilean Siar – Western Isles Council – to talk about how levelling up could benefit the local community. He visited the headquarters of Gaelic Media Service MG Alba to learn about how they are creating premium Gaelic language content, and also paid a visit to Charles Macleod butchers, makers of the world-renowned Stornoway Black Pudding, to discuss their success in exporting from the island.

He also met with Lewis-based Horshader Community Trust, a charity taking forward green initiatives including decarbonising transport and nurturing trees to create woodland. The trust has received more than £70,000 from the Community Renewal Fund to help local residents gain new skills, support the development of two green projects, and work with business partners to strengthen the island's renewable energy sector.

Minister Iain Stewart said:

It was a pleasure to visit Skye, Lewis and Harris. From discussing plans to regenerate Staffin Harbour, to seeing how the Horshader Community Trust is making Lewis more sustainable, to hearing how the Harris Distillery is supporting jobs for young people, it's clear these islands have talent, innovation and resourcefulness in droves.

It's also clear that the Islands Growth Deal and investment through the UK Government's Levelling Up Funds are making a real difference in these places, for the benefit of people who live here.

However, while our island communities have unique strengths, they also face unique challenges. Infrastructure, transport and depopulation are issues that islands often have to contend with, and must be addressed for our rural areas to truly thrive.

The Islands Forum was set up to discuss these problems. It will give a platform for those who understand remote communities and their needs best, putting islands at the heart of our Levelling Up agenda which has so far resulted in more than £2 billion being

invested directly in Scottish projects.

The UK Government's first [Islands Forum](#) will take place in Orkney later this year. The forum will put islands at the heart of the Levelling Up agenda, with island communities across the UK invited to discuss common challenges including connectivity, infrastructure and demographic trends.

[Dstl and UKSA plan closer collaboration](#)

News story

The Defence Science and Technology Laboratory (Dstl) and the UK Space Agency will investigate ways to collaborate more closely.



Dstl Chief Executive Paul Hollinshead (left) and UK Space Agency's Chief Executive Paul Bate at Portsmouth West.

The initiative follows the first visit by the UK Space Agency's Chief Executive Paul Bate to Dstl's space facilities at its Portsmouth West site near Portsmouth, where he met Dstl Chief Executive Paul Hollinshead and senior members of its Space Systems Programme.

The 2 organisations are responsible for separate but complementary UK government activities in space under the National Space Strategy. Dstl's [Space Systems Programme](#) has expanded significantly in recent years, supporting UK Space Command and the Ministry of Defence (MOD) more generally with research and development (R&D), particularly in space domain awareness (SDA) and intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance (ISR).

The [first satellite launch from the UK](#) later this year by Virgin Orbit from Spaceport Cornwall has resulted in increased contact across many levels of both organisations, which is expected to continue as the UK grows its

commercial satellite launch market and builds additional capabilities.

There are benefits to working together to develop new technologies and deepen the specialist expertise found across Dstl and the UK Space Agency, which were discussed at the meeting.

Dr Paul Hollinshead, Dstl Chief Executive, said:

This is an ideal time to deepen the collaboration between two of the UK's leading space research organisations. Many of the space innovations being developed today will have dual-use application for both the defence and civil sectors.

Pooling our expertise could widen the adoption of these technologies to bring them into use faster and cheaper while fuelling the growth of our specialist suppliers.

Dr Paul Bate, CEO of the UK Space Agency, said:

It was a privilege to visit the advanced facilities at Dstl and discuss areas of mutual collaboration, to inform the development of new space capabilities.

The National Space Strategy recognises the huge potential for dual-use applications in areas such as secure communications and Earth observation, and we value the support of our defence partners in the preparations for the first satellite launches from the UK.

We also share a common desire to inspire the next generation to reach for the stars and support the talent of tomorrow.

Published 4 August 2022