

Terms of Reference

Northern Ireland Advisory Committee

1. General

- a) The British Council builds connections, understanding and trust between people in the UK and other countries through arts and culture, education and the English language. To help us with the quality and independence of our thinking, we draw on the expert advice of our UK country advisory committees and sector advisory groups.
- b) There are three country advisory committees to reflect our work in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales.
- c) The country advisory committees are forums for advice. They have no decision making or executive powers.
- d) The authority to form or disband a country advisory committee lies with the Board of Trustees.

2. Purpose

The Northern Ireland Advisory Committee:

- a) provides advice to Director Northern Ireland
- b) contributes to the development of the British Council's vision, strategic objectives and corporate priorities on behalf of Northern Ireland
- c) reflects the needs of the British Council's target communities within Northern Ireland
- d) appraises the Global Leadership Team, through the Regional Director UK, or the Board of Trustees, through the Country Advisory Committee Chair serving on the Board, of matters within its remit which it considers significant.

3. Objectives

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- a) Support the British Council in its mission to build connections, understanding and trust between people in the UK and other countries through arts and culture, education and the English language
 - b) Act as an advocate for the British Council's work in Northern Ireland in the UK as a whole and globally.
 - c) Provide advice on the development of the British Council's strategy, with the Secretary ensuring that the committee is consulted appropriately during the corporate strategic planning process.
 - d) Ensure that British Council Northern Ireland is kept informed of major developments in the public, educational, economic and cultural life of Northern Ireland
 - e) Serve as a channel of professional advice within the areas of expertise represented on the committee, offering fresh insights and identifying new opportunities and trends
 - f) Provide access to communities within Northern Ireland for whom the British Council's work has particular relevance.

4. Membership

- a) The Northern Ireland Advisory Committee will consist of a maximum of fifteen members, including the Chair.
- b) The Chair and the members will serve a term of three years, renewable once for a further term of three years.
- c) Director Northern Ireland acts as Secretary to the committee but is not a member.
- d) The Regional Director UK is invited to attend all meetings but is not a member.
- e) The Secretary may nominate another member of staff to assist them in carrying out their functions, with the exception of signing letters of appointment.
- f) Four places are reserved for civil servants representing relevant devolved areas (typically education, culture, external affairs and/or economic development). A further two places are reserved for representatives from Ulster University and Queen's University Belfast.
- g) With the exception of civil servants representing key devolved areas, the members are invited to join in a personal capacity rather than as a representative of their employer.
- h) The British Council seeks to secure a complementary range of experience, knowledge and backgrounds on the Northern Ireland Advisory Committee and to ensure that the committee reflects the diversity of Northern Ireland's society.
- i) The members and the Chair of the Northern Ireland Advisory Committee are recruited through an open, fair and transparent process and are not remunerated.

5. Meetings

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- a) The Northern Ireland Advisory Committee will normally meet three times per year and may also hold an away day. The number of meetings called is at the Secretary's discretion in consultation with the Chair.
 - b) In the absence of the Chair, the members present at the meeting will elect one of their number to act as a Chair for that meeting only.
 - c) The committee will be provided with a meeting schedule and a forward plan of agenda items prepared by the Chair and the Secretary.
 - d) The papers should be circulated at least one week before each meeting.
 - e) After each meeting of the committee, minutes will be prepared by the Secretary and reviewed by the Chair before they are circulated to the members, no later than one month after the meeting.
 - f) Minutes should be sent as soon as possible after approval to the Secretary of the Board of Trustees to be shared with the Board of Trustees and the Senior Leadership Team.

6. Communication channels

- a) The Secretary is the principal recipient of the committee's advice and is responsible for providing feedback to the committee on how its input has influenced thinking on the strategy for Northern Ireland and the wider organisation. The feedback will be captured in the minutes.
- b) The Northern Ireland Advisory Committee has access to the Board of Trustees through the country advisory committee Chair serving on the Board of Trustees.
- c) The Chair and Secretary of the committee are responsible for maintaining links with the British Council's other advisory bodies and with its business units. It is expected that the Chairs or relevant members of other advisory bodies will be invited occasionally to join Northern Ireland Advisory Committee meetings to contribute to appropriate agenda items.

7. Review

- a) The terms of reference of the Northern Ireland Advisory Committee will be reviewed annually by the Secretary and the Chair of the committee, in consultation with the Secretary to the Board of Trustees.

These terms of reference were approved by the Northern Ireland Advisory Committee in December 2025 and are due for review by December 2026.