



CIPFA Northern Ireland Public Finance Live 2025

Programme

Date: 14 October 2025
Venue: Hilton Hotel Belfast
Address: 4 Lanyon Place, Belfast BT1 3LP

TIME	SESSION	SPEAKER
09.00	Registration and refreshments	Venue: Lagan foyer
09.40	Welcome	Venue: Lagan Suite Louise Long CIPFA Northern Ireland President Mark McBride CIPFA Junior Vice President William Crawley Broadcaster and Journalist
10.00	Keynote Address	John O'Dowd MLA Minister of Finance, Department of Finance, Northern Ireland
10.30	State of the State 2025 The State of the State annual report explores what currently matters most to the public and what this may look like in the future but also looks at how do public sector leaders envisage their institutions in 10 years' time. This session will provide an overview of the findings in the 2025 report.	Marie Doyle Partner, Deloitte
11.00	Refreshments and exhibition	Venue: Lagan foyer
11.30	Public sector transformation A Focus on Public Sector Transformation is a welcome intervention as it challenges current thinking and focuses our minds on the future role of AI and the fact that there few incentives to grow the economy and generate and retain additional revenue for our public services. Prof Stephen Farry will provide an overview of the report published by him and Prof Jodie Carson on their views on changes/transition in public service.	Prof Stephen Farry Professor of Strategic Policy in Practice at Ulster University
12.05	Workshops	
	<u>WORKSHOP ONE</u> suite	Venue: Brookfield
	Unlocking public-private partnerships for Northern Ireland's transition to Net Zero Amit Verma, CIPFA Sustainability Policy Manager Dr Caterina Brandoni, Senior Lecturer in Energy Course, Ulster University Dr Beatrice Smyth, Senior Lecturer, Queens University Belfast Terry Waugh, Chief Executive Officer, Action Renewables Northern Ireland is leading the UK's response to the two biggest crises of 21st century – the global climate change and nature or biodiversity loss for a just transition to reach Net Zero. Northern Ireland's Draft Green Growth Strategy (Green Growth Brochure V8.pdf), published 2021 identifies key areas of strength and opportunity for Northern Ireland to grow globally competitive industries in its transition to Net Zero and outlines enabling factors to accelerate investment and growth within this area. However, there remain significant challenges in unlocking the full potential of public-private and third sector partnerships to deliver this agenda. The panel will discuss some of these challenges including how Northern Ireland organisations are supporting the government's initiatives to progress this agenda, from tangible action at the local government level, sustainable decision making to create a circular zero waste economy, supporting businesses including small medium enterprises (SMEs) and developing strong partnerships between public, private and third sector organisations to attract global business investment.	

WORKSHOP TWO

Venue: Glenbank suite

Preventative spending

Dr Eleanor Roy, Policy Manager Health and Integration, CIPFA

This session will explore the emerging framework for tracking preventative investment in local government. Based on CIPFA's project supported by the Health Foundation, speakers will provide key insights into mapping and measuring preventative spend, ensuring the sustainability of public services.

WORKSHOP THREE

Venue: Boardroom

suite

Importance of performance audit

Khalid Hamid, Director, CIPFA

Patrick Barr, Director, Northern Ireland Audit Office

In recent years, the importance of performance audit as a means of holding governments to account has been increasingly recognised. It is often said that what gets measured gets done, but even the best monitoring needs a feedback process where people are held accountable. Since any form of review is inherently a political process, this feedback depends on effective advocacy and a robust mandate to promote sound public financial management.

Performance (or value for money) auditors use rigorous scientific methods to find out how economically, efficiently and effectively money is spent by tracking inputs, activities, outputs and outcomes. Their discipline is an important part of public financial management and requires the application of advanced methodological and analytical skills in a complex – and changing – public sector environment.

This session will look at performance auditing as an important part of the governance and accountability cycle and its potential for promoting impact of public sector interventions on the lives of citizens.

12.45

Lunch

Venue: Hotel restaurant (GF)

13.40

Succeeding in the age of tech disruption

Tackling public sector workforce challenges requires careful planning, investing in staff development, and creating flexible skills to adapt to change. This discussion looks at how the public sector's workforce needs are changing and how new technologies are transforming accounting.

Our speakers will share ideas and strategies for closing skill gaps and encouraging continuous learning, helping your team stay adaptable and prepared for the future.

You'll leave with practical tips to help public sector finance professionals succeed in today's fast-changing tech landscape.

Chair:

Florence Bastos

Public Finance Advisor, CIPFA

Panelists:

Lucy Batley

Owner, Traction Industries

Hamant Bharadia

Associate, CIPFA

Scott Robinson

Human Resources Officer, Northern Ireland Commissioner for Children and Young People

Venue: Lagan Suite

14.35

Workshops

Venue: Brookfield suite

Sponsors WORKSHOP ONE

Beyond the bottom line: embedding social value in public services with TechnologyOne

Emma Foy, Local Government Lead, Technology One

Public Services in Northern Ireland are under growing pressure to deliver not just efficient services but also meaningful social value for communities. This presentation shares TechnologyOne's journey from a traditional ERP provider to a purpose driven partner embedding social value into every stage of procurement, delivery, and impact measurement.

Through real-world examples and alignment with evolving policy priorities, we will show you how TechnologyOne helps councils:

- Integrate social value into financial and service planning
- Leverage ERP and analytics to evidence long-term outcomes not just outputs
- Support local sustainability, equity and community wellbeing

By aligning technology with government priorities, TechnologyOne demonstrates how ERP can go beyond compliance to create measurable, lasting impact for Northern Ireland communities.

Sponsors WORKSHOP TWO
suite

Venue: Glenbank

The talent futurist: hiring humans in an AI world

Louise Smyth, Group Chief Commercial, MCS

Forget robots taking over. This is about humans stepping up. In this fast-paced, interactive session, a Talent Futurist explores how public finance teams can thrive through transformation. As AI reshapes how we work, deliver value, and make decisions, the real drivers of progress remain: people with curiosity, resilience, and purpose.

We'll dive into:

- The quirky truth about the future of work in public finance
- What to look for when hiring in the AI era (hint: it's not just Excel skills)
- How to build flexible, future-facing talent pipelines that serve the public good
- Why so-called "soft skills" are now mission-critical superpowers
- Expect provocations, polls, practical tools—and a radically human take on future-ready teams in the public sector
- The shift to skills-based hiring and how it can unlock new talent or bring new talent into the public sector.

WORKSHOP THREE
suite

Venue: Boardroom

Details coming soon

15.15 Refreshments and exhibition

Venue: Lagan foyer

15.45 The future of the finance professional

With rapid changes in societal demographics, technology and a growing focus on sustainability, what does this mean for current and future finance practitioners?

Iain Murray
Director of Public Financial Management,
CIPFA

Venue: Lagan Suite

16.20 The importance of the workforce

This session will explore the benefits of developing a workforce strategy aligned to organisational objectives and the importance of developing a culture where staff can flourish, underpinned by leadership that is inclusive and collaborative. It is within this environment that employers will get the best from their workforce, increase productivity and develop greater financial sustainability.

Marie Mallon OBE
Independent Consultant

16.55 Conference close

William Crawley
Broadcaster and journalist

Louise Long
CIPFA Northern Ireland President