

Diversity Mark

ANNUAL SUMMIT 2025



Driving Value: Inclusion in an Ever-Changing Landscape

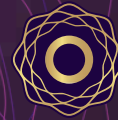
8th October 2025 | Titanic Belfast



Diversity Mark



Allstate®



Wednesday 8 October | Titanic Belfast

Summit Venue

The Summit will take place in the event suites of Titanic Belfast. On arrival at the main atrium of the museum, Titanic staff will direct you to the elevators to take you to level 5. Registration will take place in the North Viewing Gallery from 8.45am. After collecting your name badge, please proceed to the Olympic Suite, where welcome refreshments will be available. **The Summit will start at 9.30am sharp.**

British Sign Language

To support accessibility, all plenary sessions at the Summit will be interpreted in **British Sign Language (BSL)**.

Car Parking

Underground car parking is available at Titanic Belfast. Please note car parking charges are the responsibility of delegates. Charges start at £2.20 for the first hour, then £1.20 per hour thereafter. Level -1 has 4 accessible spaces and Level -2 has six accessible spaces.

Photography

Please note there will be photography and videography during the event. If you wish to be excluded from these, please let us know in advance by emailing info@diversity-mark-ni.co.uk or speak to one of our team at the registration desk.

Social Media

Throughout the event, we would encourage you to interact and share your experience of the summit on social media. The hashtag for the event is **#DMSummit25**

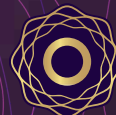
Please tag us on Twitter: @Diversity_Mark | Instagram:

@themarkofprogress | Facebook: @DiversityMark | LinkedIn:

@DiversityMark

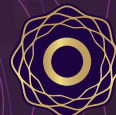
Event Contact Information

Please be aware that the Summit is fully booked, and only registered delegates will be able to attend the event on 8th October. If you are no longer able to attend, please let us know by emailing info@diversity-mark-ni.co.uk so your place can be reallocated. Should you require any additional information, please do not hesitate to contact us.



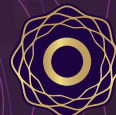
Summit Agenda

- 08.45** **Registration & Morning Refreshments**
- 09:30** **Welcome** - Carolyn Stewart, Summit Host
- 09:35** **Opening: In Every Voice, In Every Step, In Every Success**
Christine White, Director, Diversity Mark
- 09:45** **Opening** - Naomi Long, MLA, Minister of Justice NI
- 09:55** **Headline Supporting Partner's Message**
Dr Stephen McKeown, Managing Director, Allstate NI
- 10.00** **Keynote - Navigating Change: Leading Inclusive Organisations in a Rapidly Evolving World**
Richard Mihalic, Senior Manager, Inclusive Diversity, Allstate
- 10.30** **In My Shoes**
Lutfur Ali, Senior Policy & Practice Advisor EDI, CIPD
- 10.40** **Morning Break**
- 11.10** **Panel Discussion**
CEO Reflections: Inclusion and the Path to Impact
Sara Venning, CEO, NI Water
Michael Neill, Head of A&L Goodbody, Belfast
Kieran Harding, CEO, Business in the Community UK
Chaired by Lesley Miller, Strategic Project Lead, Diversity Mark
- 11.40** **In My Shoes**
Natasha Boyd, Executive Assistant, Allstate NI



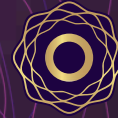
Summit Agenda

- 11.50 Driving Value Interactive Breakout Sessions: Collective Insights**
- Group 1 - **How to make meaningful progress when budgets and resources are tight?** Susan Hayman, Engagement and Employer Solutions Manager, CIPD
- Group 2 - **How do we bring everyone along on the EDI journey, especially the 'reluctant middle'?** Michelle Alexis, Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging Lead, BBC Business, Operations and Change
- Group 3 - **With shifting global narratives and rising local backlash, how do we keep EDI credible and valuable?** Jude Copeland, Legal Review Manager & Associate (NI), Cleaver Fulton Rankin
- 12.30 Session Switch**
- 12.35 Breakout Session Feedback Panel**
- Susan Hayman, Engagement and Employer Solutions Manager, CIPD
Michelle Alexis, Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging Lead, BBC Business, Operations and Change
Jude Copeland, Legal Review Manager & Associate (NI), Cleaver Fulton Rankin
Chaired by Carolyn Stewart, Summit Host
- 12.55 Lunch & Networking**



Summit Agenda

- 13.55 | Keynote - From Intention to Impact: Measuring Culture & Inclusion in Today's Shifting Landscape**
Sandra Healy, CEO & Founder, Inclusio
- 14.25 | Panel Discussion - Law Meets Machine: Navigating AI, Employment, and Ethics** featuring Filippo Sassi, Head of the AI Labs, Version 1, George Kilpatrick, Associate Director, Cleaver Fulton Rankin and Sandra Healy, CEO & Founder, Inclusio
Chaired by Don Leeson, Diversity Mark Independent Assessor
- 14.55 | Keynote - Five Generations at Work: How We Win Together for Good**
Rebecca Robins, Educator, Leadership Advisor, and Organisational Changemaker
- 15.25 | In My Shoes-** Christopher Owens, Technical Administrator, NIE Networks
- 15.35 | In Conversation -** with Babita Sharma, Journalist, Broadcaster, and Author with Carolyn Stewart
- 16.05 | Summit Close**
Judith Gillespie CBE, Co-Chair of the Diversity Mark Independent Assessment Panel
- 16.15 | Summit Ends**



Wednesday 8 October | Titanic Belfast

Meet Our Speakers

**Sandra Healy****Keynote Speaker**

Sandra Healy, CEO and Founder at inclusio, an award-winning, gamified platform that captures the real-time voice of employees to identify cultural strengths and gaps across teams and demographics. With over 20 years in the global telecoms industry and five years at Dublin City University, Sandra brings a rare blend of technical expertise, organisational psychology and behavioural data science. She is also a certified NLP Master Practitioner.

A recognised authority in workforce culture transformation, Sandra helps leadership teams leverage culture as a strategic asset to strengthen performance, accountability and trust throughout the organisation.

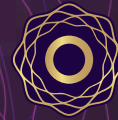
Rebecca Robins**Keynote Speaker**

Rebecca Robins is a globally recognised brand leadership expert, working at the intersection of brand, culture and leadership. Leading her own consultancy, Rebecca works with leading businesses and institutions across the world in the changemaking engine rooms of education and organisational culture. As an educator, she architects and delivers leadership and executive development programs across a range of mission-critical agendas. Her organisational and transformation work sees her partner with CPOs and CHROs to maximise the intergenerational workplace for collaborative and competitive advantage.

**Richard Mihalic****Keynote Speaker**

Richard Mihalic, Senior Manager Inclusive Diversity at Allstate is an empathic, creative professional with nearly two decades of leadership experience at Allstate Insurance Company. Currently the Senior Manager of Global Programming on Allstate's Inclusive Diversity (ID) Team, he brings a continuous improvement mindset and deep expertise in storytelling, communication, and inclusive leadership. A passionate connector and seasoned speaker, Richard has facilitated workshops and presented globally on a range of topics, often centered around effective communication and shared human experience. He has been a long-standing leader in Allstate's national PRIDE Employee Impact Group, previously serving as President and Membership Engagement Director, and now leads enterprise-wide PRIDE activations worldwide.





Wednesday 8 October | Titanic Belfast

Meet Our Speakers



Babita Sharma

Keynote Speaker

Babita Sharma is an award-winning broadcaster, journalist, and author whose career spans over 20 years at the BBC, where she reported on some of the most defining global events of our time, including the COVID-19 pandemic, the 2020 U.S. elections, Brexit, and the Black Lives Matter protests. Her exceptional contributions to media earned her the prestigious Asian Achievement Award. Babita is a passionate advocate for diversity and mental health, mentoring BAME journalists and serving as a Trustee for United for Global Mental Health and Crescent Arts NI. A Patron of the South Asian Heritage Trust and the Migration Museum. Her storytelling continues to shape cultural discourse and inspire future generations.

Michelle Alexis

Guest Speaker

Michelle Alexis works with senior leaders across Northern Ireland, Wales, Scotland and England to ensure Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging strategies are delivered. She delivers 'Inclusive Leadership' courses and works on high level projects and change initiatives which have impact across the BBC. Beyond her work in the BBC, Michelle is an EDI Associate for the Arts Council of Wales, a Board Member of the Black Welsh Music Awards, and a Board Member of youth organisation Sound Progression.

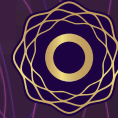


Lutfur Ali

Guest Speaker

Lutfur Ali is an internationally respected Senior Policy and Practice Advisor at the CIPD and a Non-Executive Director at the Business Continuity Institute (BCI). With over 35 years at the forefront of equality, diversity, inclusion and ethical leadership, he has been a powerful force for workplace transformation—helping organisations unlock potential, embed lasting culture change, and deliver better business and social outcomes. From advising governments to shaping regulatory reform through landmark inquiries like the Zahid Mubarak Inquiry and the Prime Minister's Prevent Task Force, Lutfur's influence reaches across public, private and third sectors. A compelling advocate for fairness, his work champions people, purpose and the kind of leadership that leaves a legacy.





Wednesday 8 October | Titanic Belfast

Meet Our Speakers

**Natasha Boyd****Guest Speaker**

Natasha Boyd has been with Allstate Northern Ireland since 2016 and currently works as an Executive Assistant, supporting the global Architecture, Computing, and Engineering teams. She is also the Chair of Allstate's Disability Support Group, where she plays a key role in promoting inclusion, raising awareness, and driving positive change for colleagues with disabilities.

Jude Copeland**Guest Speaker**

Jude Copeland is a leading lawyer in AI and emerging legal technologies at Cleaver Fulton Rankin Solicitors and serves as Chair of the Law Society of Northern Ireland Cybersecurity, Data Protection, and Emerging Technologies Sub-Group. Jude was part of the design and implementation of the first diversity and inclusion survey of the solicitor profession.

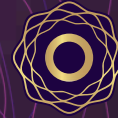
Jude has written and spoken widely on LGBTQIA+ rights and history, all over the UK and Ireland, in traditional media, and to businesses, charities and grassroots organisations. He is a trusted adviser to a number of charities and pride/sector organisations.

**Judith Gillespie CBE****Guest Speaker**

Judith Gillespie grew up in North Belfast and joined the RUC GC in 1982. In 2004, she became the first woman to serve as an Assistant Chief Constable in the RUC/PSNI and later Deputy Chief Constable in 2009. A graduate of the FBI National Executive Institute with a Master's in Applied Criminology from Cambridge, she was recognised with an OBE (2009), an Honorary Doctorate from Queen's University Belfast (2012), and a CBE (2014).

On leaving PSNI in 2014, Judith has worked as an independent leadership advisor and has served on several public bodies, including the Garda Policing Authority. She is Co-Chair of the Diversity Mark Independent Assessment Panel, a member of the Prison Service Pay Review Body, and in July 2025 became Chair of the Chief Executives' Forum in Northern Ireland.



**Wednesday 8 October | Titanic Belfast**

Meet Our Speakers



Kieran Harding

Guest Speaker

Kieran was appointed Chief Executive of Business in the Community in April 2025.

Kieran has been with Business in the Community since 1990. He took on the role of Managing Director in Northern Ireland in January 2011 and played a leading role in the organisation's growth. Kieran has been instrumental in driving the responsible business agenda in Northern Ireland, leading a team of 40 outstanding individuals who champion this work in Northern Ireland. Kieran also sits on the Diversity Mark Independent Assessment panel, having joined at the launch of Diversity Mark in 2017.

Susan Hayman

Guest Speaker

Susan Hayman, Engagement and Employer Solutions Manager at CIPD has been driving professionalism and innovation in the Northern Ireland region.

Through delivering professional services, she empowers people professionals and teams with internationally recognised standards, enhancing career success and workplace best-practice. Her promotion of CIPD standards and member benefits boosts operational efficiency and decision-making.



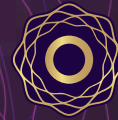
George Kilpatrick

Guest Speaker

George Kilpatrick advises on both contentious and non-contentious employment matters across a wide range of sectors, with a particular interest in disability discrimination. His expertise is rooted in his former role as Deputy Director (Legal) for Disability at the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland.

Known for delivering strategic legal advice with a strong focus on equality, workplace rights, and compliance, George will bring an array of insight to the conversation.



**Wednesday 8 October | Titanic Belfast**

Meet Our Speakers



Don Lesson

Panel Chair

Don Lesson retired as the Labour Relations Agency's Chief Executive in late 2024, and is now pursuing a portfolio career. This includes consultancy work and being a Non Executive Director on the Board of Translink and a Diversity Mark Assessor.

Don was voted the IoD NI's Director of the Year in the category of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion in 2023 and, in March 2025, was recognised by CIPD NI for his outstanding contribution to people development in Northern Ireland.

Minister Naomi Long

Guest Speaker

Justice Minister Naomi Long is an MLA for East Belfast and has been leader of the Alliance Party since 2016. After serving as Lord Mayor of Belfast from 2009 to 2010, she became the first Alliance MP elected to Westminster, MP for East Belfast in 2010. She served as Northern Ireland Justice Minister between 2020 and 2022, and from February 2024 until now.



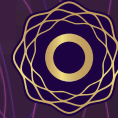
Lesley Miller

Panel Chair

Lesley Miller is an experienced leader in business growth and strategy, specialising in Equity, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI). With a background as a leader in Tech, Finance and Business Growth Lesley cemented her belief that EDI benefits both employees and businesses.

Over Lesley's 40-year career she gained experience in Tech, Finance, Manufacturing and the Service Sectors across a range of organisations, most recently 20+ years in Allstate Northern Ireland, before retiring at the end of 2023. Lesley then joined Diversity Mark as Strategic Project Lead in Q2 2024.





Wednesday 8 October | Titanic Belfast

Meet Our Speakers



Michael Neill

Guest Speaker

Michael Neill specialises in all areas of business recovery work, which includes advising local and national insolvency practitioners, major banks, and other creditors. He is also a partner in both the Restructuring and Litigation departments.

Michael also conducts a wide variety of financial services and insolvency-related litigation. He acts on behalf of financial institutions as well as life, property, pension and investment companies. He has also acted for banks, companies, creditors and insolvency practitioners in the majority of high profile corporate failures in Northern Ireland in recent years.

Dr Stephen McKeown

Guest Speaker

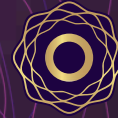
Stephen McKeown is Global Vice President at Allstate and Managing Director at Allstate NI since February 2023. Stephen previously was Divisional CIO and Director at Allstate Technology and Strategic Ventures. Prior to Allstate, he held a number of board level roles and has acted as a technical advisor to the European Commission's Horizon Research and Development program and UK Technology Strategy Board. He is an experienced senior technology executive having worked with firms from large multinationals to niche specialists in the areas of business transformation, digital product development and operations.



Christopher Owens

Guest Speaker

Christopher Owens is employed with NIE Networks and has been working with the company since May 2023. His role is customer focused dealing with connections to the electricity network. He is currently the Chair of NIE's employee resource group, Pride Connects, and his role is to help recognise and promote greater diversity and LBGTQIA+ awareness within NIE.



Wednesday 8 October | Titanic Belfast

Meet Our Speakers



Filippo Sassi

Guest Speaker

Filippo Sassi is a Chartered Engineer (CEng) and currently serves as the Head of AI Labs at Version 1, based in London. With a strong background in artificial intelligence, machine learning, and applied research.

With more than 15 years of experience in the technology sector, Filippo has held a variety of roles across software engineering, technical leadership, innovation consulting, and AI strategy. He began his career at IBM and later joined Version 1, where he progressed through roles including Software Engineer, Scrum Master, and Tech Lead.

Carolyn Stewart

Summit Host

Carolyn, a non-practising lawyer, founded Totally Hot NI in 2018 to produce Caribbean-inspired pickles and sauces. In 2022, she established her own production unit in Townsend Enterprise Park to produce Jamaican Patties. The products have won seven Great Taste Awards and several Blas na hÉireann Irish Food Awards. They are sold in Northern Ireland stores and at The Patty Shack in Belfast. Carolyn also hosts the popular Lunchtime Bistro show on U105.



Dr Sara Venning

Guest Speaker

Dr. Sara Venning has led Northern Ireland Water as Chief Executive since 2014, following her appointment as Director of Customer Service Delivery in 2010. She is known for driving operational excellence, innovation, and customer-focused transformation. A strong advocate for sustainability, she has shaped NI Water's strategic direction in infrastructure resilience and digital advancement.

A former President of the Institute of Water, she now serves as President of the WaterAid NI Committee, supporting global access to clean water and sanitation. Sara holds a Master's in Electrical and Electronic Engineering from Queen's University Belfast and was awarded an honorary Doctor of Science in Economics in 2023 for her services to business and commerce.

