



# Making An Impact 2025





## Roseann Kelly MBE

The WiB Group CEO



**The WiB Group is many things to many people: community, charity, launchpad, network, learning hub. And that's barely scratching the surface.**

A self-sustaining charity operating for more than two decades, The WiB Group is made strong by the rich diversity of its output, which now funnels through four social enterprises: Women in Business, Diversity Mark, Timely Careers and Centre of Learning.

Together they reach a community of 250,000 across Northern Ireland through industry-leading events, the delivery of diversity accreditations across the UK and Ireland, enabling more women to re-enter the workforce on their own terms, and providing best-in-class training and development opportunities for our female leaders in waiting.

Making an Impact is demonstrable proof of how these four organisations are creating opportunities on the ground across Northern Ireland all year round. Opportunities that enrich our economy by way of inclusive growth so that every person is valued. Every voice is heard.

A 'thank you' must go to our incredible roster of partners and sponsors whose continued support empowers our teams to deliver events that live long in the memory, not to mention the bespoke programmes, best-in-class mentoring, and gold-standard accreditation.

In benchmarking our contribution on an annual basis, we are holding ourselves accountable to the goals we're working day in, day out to achieve and also wish to open the door for new partners wanting to get involved in any one strand of the Group's impact.

And as you'll see in subsequent pages, that impact is mighty impressive. The numbers speak for themselves: Women in Business surpassing 12,000 members; Diversity Mark welcoming 300+ to its flagship EDI Summit in October; Timely Careers reaching 2,200 candidates on its bespoke jobs and returners platform; and Centre of Learning delivering 700+ hours of mentoring support.

Impressive as they are, behind each of these statistics is a story. An 'a-ha!' moment. A leap of faith, however big or small, whether that manifests as a women scaling her business, an

organisation putting inclusion tip-top of the agenda, employers unlocking new talent pools through flexible opportunities, or perhaps enrolling in a management programme for women primed to begin the next chapter of their career.

The WiB Group team is active across many fronts and as you'll see in the pages to follow, we have no intention of slowing down in our collective pursuit of a more prosperous, inclusive economy for Northern Ireland.



**Roseann Kelly MBE**  
The WiB Group CEO  
roseann@womeninbusinessni.com

**250k**  
reach across Northern Ireland

**12,000**  
Women in Business members

**2,200**  
candidates on  
Timely Careers bespoke  
jobs and returners platform

**700+**  
hours of mentoring support

**300+**  
at flagship EDI summit

 The **WiB** Group



The WiB Group is  
many things to  
many people:

**community  
charity  
launchpad  
network  
learning hub**

And that's barely  
scratching the  
surface.





## Lorraine Acheson

Managing Director of Women in Business and Deputy CEO of The WiB Group

2025 proved another banner year for Women in Business. The network itself now stands at 12,000 members strong and proudly reaches businesswomen at every level, from entrepreneurs and apprentices right through to Northern Ireland's most senior women leaders.

The thinkers and the doers, united by a network alive with opportunity. Throughout this past year, the WIB team have been on the ground delivering best-in-class events and programmes – more than 100, no less – not to mention delivering targeted programmes that have supported 150 women entrepreneurs to start and scale their businesses.

Our year-round efforts to champion NI's women leaders was in full flow, too, with £20,000 distributed in business grants all the while celebrating the achievements of our outstanding female leaders across

both the Women in Business Awards, an industry flagship now primed for its 14th year, and the Women in Tech Awards which is the only ceremony of its kind here in Northern Ireland.

As you'll see on the following page, our impact not only stretched across the four corners of Northern Ireland, but extended across the island in collaboration with our partners who share our vision of creating a more prosperous and inclusive economy.

Looking ahead, the Women in Business network door is always open, and we love to see new faces – male and female – coming along to our events and programmes. Keep an eye on our website for the latest news and developments from the network as this year stretches out before us.

*L Acheson*

lorraine@womeninbusinessni.com



*"As the Co-Founder and Co-CEO of Pytilia, a Northern Irish tech company focused on innovation, joining the Women in Business group has been an incredibly valuable experience. It's great to connect with like-minded women, celebrate success (thanks for the award!) and see Pytilia's next generation of women tech leaders being equipped to thrive through WiB's Young Women's Network."*

– Angela Montgomery,  
CEO and Co-founder Pytilia



*"Our female staff have told us how much they value the Women in Business networking events, training courses and conference both in terms of confidence building and opportunities for person growth. We would recommend Women in Business to any organisation that has set goals for the development of their female workforce."*

– Ailsa McNeill, Head of Human Resources  
The Progressive Building Society



A thriving community  
of over  
**12,000**

In 2025, Women in Business continued to strengthen its position as the largest business network for women across Northern Ireland. With membership exceeding 12,000, we brought women together to build meaningful connections, develop skills and accelerate their businesses and careers.

Over  
**100**  
Development Events

Engaging more than  
**5,000**  
participants

We delivered a comprehensive calendar of personal and professional development programmes, workshops, conferences and networking events. More than 5,000 women of all ages and stages of career engaged with these opportunities—accessing the support, confidence and knowledge needed to progress.

## Celebrating leadership & achievement

Through the  
**13th**  
Women in Business Awards

**4th**

Women in Tech Awards

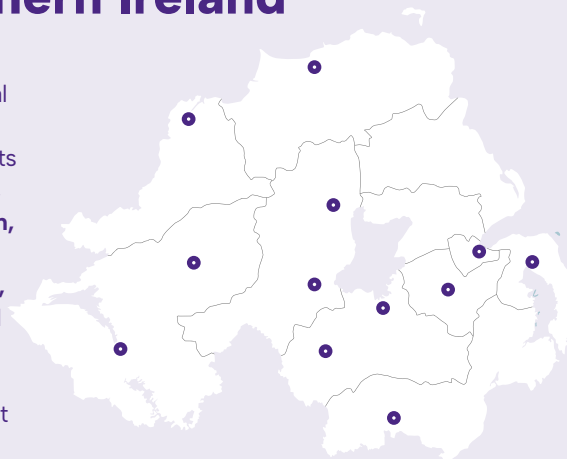
**28**

exceptional women recognised whose leadership, innovation and impact are driving growth across the Northern Ireland economy. These flagship events continue to shine a spotlight on female talent and inspire the next generation of leaders.



## A regional presence across Northern Ireland

Our commitment to regional balance remained strong. In-person training and events were delivered in **Coleraine, Derry/Londonderry, Armagh, Enniskillen, Ards, Belfast, Newry, Dungannon, Lisburn, Craigavon, Magherafelt and Omagh**, ensuring women from all parts of Northern Ireland could access support close to home.



## Supporting women to start and grow businesses

We helped over  
**150**  
women

take steps to start, scale or strengthen their businesses through a suite of tailored programmes ranging from pre-start to growth-stage support—equipping women with the tools, confidence and networks needed for long-term success.

A 12 month post programme review of the Grow It All Island Programme showed it achieved the outcomes of:

- + Combined increase in turnover of almost £10m.
- + Increase in export sales, with 78% participating businesses exporting more outside their home markets since 2023.

## Targeted financial support for women-led businesses

To help accelerate growth and resilience, Women in Business awarded **£20,000 in business grants** to women-led enterprises—providing vital investment at key points in their development.

## Collaboration to maximise impact

Partnership working remained central to our mission. In 2025, we collaborated with an extensive range of businesses as well as organisations including **Queen's Business School, Network Ireland, Techstart, Barclays Eagle Labs, Raise Ventures, InterTradeIreland, Invest Northern Ireland, Enterprise Northern Ireland, Women's Tec, Bolster Community, Innovate UK, British Business Bank, the UK Women's Enterprise Policy Group and the wider network of Enterprise Agencies**. Together, we expanded opportunities for women, fostered innovation and strengthened the entrepreneurial ecosystem.

## Creating all-island economic impact

Through our All-Island Female Entrepreneurship Programme, delivered in partnership with Network Ireland, we strengthened cross-border collaboration and economic growth. The programme continues to build a vibrant all-island community of women entrepreneurs, backed by funding from the Government of Ireland's Shared Island Enterprise Scheme for the next three years.



# Christine White

Director, Diversity Mark



2025 marked a pivotal year of progress and ambition across the Diversity Mark community. We strengthened our support for organisations, expanded our reach, and deepened our impact – driving collective action that is advancing meaningful, measurable change across workplaces in the UK & Ireland.

Throughout the year, we assessed 61 organisations and awarded 28 new accreditations, including five Silver and a new Gold Accreditation for Deloitte – the third company to reach this significant milestone. We also welcomed many forward-thinking organisations from all sectors, further broadening the influence and momentum of our mission.

The statistics speak for themselves. When analysing current gender data from organisations that joined Diversity Mark within our first 12 months and comparing it to the data at the point of joining, we found a clear shift: **senior leadership gender balance improved from 39% women to 46% women, and an additional 669 men are now working part-time or flexibly.** These outcomes demonstrate the tangible, systemic changes emerging across our community.

Our Assessor team continued to grow, reaching 24 Independent Assessors, including nine new experts joining in 2026. This increased capacity ensures we continue to deliver consistent, credible, and high-quality guidance to organisations at every stage of their EDI journey.

A significant focus this year was strengthening the resources available to our signatories. We invested in major enhancements to our Signatory Portal and launched the new Support Hub – creating a more robust, accessible, and user-centred foundation of support for organisations committed to meaningful change.

With engagement at an all-time high – including 300 attendees at our Annual Summit, we look ahead with confidence. The partnerships we have built and the investments we have made throughout 2025 will continue to deepen our support and empower organisations to create long-term, positive change across workplaces, benefiting many organisations and countless individuals and families.

*Christine White*

christine@diversity-mark-ni.co.uk



*“When our people feel valued, they do their best work for our clients.”*

*The Diversity Mark accreditation has helped us measure our progress, strengthen accountability, and reinforce our commitment to building an inclusive culture where everyone can thrive.”*

– Michael Neill, Head of Office, A&L Goodbody, Belfast



*“A really useful framework and supportive network for organisations at every stage of their EDI journey. Far more than a tick-box exercise, organisations receive constructive, meaningful feedback that helps drive real impact.”*

– Caroline Ashe, HR Business Partner, SONI and CIPD Committee Member

## Changes in gender data

When analysing current gender data from organisations that joined Diversity Mark within our first 12 months, and comparing it to their data at the time of joining, we found:

**7%**



**improved gender balance at senior leadership (from 39% women to 46% women)**

**669**



**more men working part time/ flexibly**

## Key Highlights

**27**

**Engagement Events**



**Signatory Portal enhanced and Support Hub Launched**

**24**

**Independent Assessors (9 new Independent Assessors appointed in 2025)**



**61**

**61 organisations assessed in 2025**



**28**

**Accreditations Awarded**



**5**

**New Silver Accreditations**



**1**

**New Gold (Deloitte)**



**300**

**attendees at The Annual Diversity Mark Summit**







## Laura Dowie

### Director of Timely Careers and Centre of Learning

Timely Careers is more than a social enterprise; it is a pioneering organisation dedicated to championing and advancing professional women.

Through tailored career coaching, bespoke skills development, online training, employability support, and expert-led professional events, we equip women with the tools, confidence, and opportunities to thrive and lead in the NI workforce.

Our innovative platform hosts Northern Ireland's only dedicated flexible and part-time jobs board, connecting employers and recruiters with a highly skilled, ambitious and driven talent pool ready to make a meaningful impact and contribute to the NI economy. In turn, we actively promote high-quality career opportunities that align with candidates' personal and professional commitments – helping organisations access a diverse, talented workforce while creating greater workplace balance and inclusion.

We strive for excellence on behalf of the women we support, specialising in the empowerment of skilled, experienced women to re-enter the workforce, explore new career paths or transition into flexible roles that match their expertise and aspirations. We endeavour to ensure that everyone can find the flexibility they need in their careers, without reducing their value in the workplace, a critical factor for both employees and employers.

We know:

- Global GDP would increase by US\$ 5.3 trillion within three years if we were to close the gender gap in economic participation by just 25 percent
- \$28 trillion would be added to global GDP if women participated equally in the economy to men
- The Economic gender gap has improved only 2.5 percent since 2006. It will take more than 200 years to close at this rate
- 80 percent of the gender pay gap can be attributed to maternity leave and caring responsibilities

These statistics help drive our Timely Careers team to do more, explore more ways to:

- Create awareness of the importance of flexible working for individuals and businesses
- Seek out new ways to identify more roles for our candidates
- Work with our partners and affiliates to support best practice in the marketplace

As we move into 2026, we are creating more connections with Employers, supporting Organisations, the local economy and Women who want to return to the workforce into fulfilling and challenging roles.

*L. Dowie*

[laura@timelycareers.com](mailto:laura@timelycareers.com)

### Highlights of Employer & Business Events

**Partnership with Caroline O'Neill** founder of the DIGG Podcast to highlight the work of Timely Careers

**Flexible Working**  
Celebrating the Business Impact of Flexibility, Diversity & Delivery with Diversity Mark and Belfast City Council – 70

**Director Laura Dowie was invited in May to contribute her thoughts to the Irish News on the Good Jobs Employment Rights Bill**

PLATFORM  
**2,200**  
candidates registered



**Timely Careers working with Careers & Interview Coach, Colette Leeson** to offer candidates free personalised career support



### 213 women engaged with Timely's face-to-face events including:



**Beyond the Mirror**



**Be the CEO of your own Career**



**IWD Accelerate your Comeback**



**Enhancing Personal Resilience**



**Reflect & Reset**



**Reignite Your Career**



**Confident Communication**



**Managing Mum Guilt**



**Job Search Masterclass**



**Changing Career**



**CV Masterclass**



**Festive Networking**



*"Colette helped me believe in myself and bring structure to my job search. Thanks to their support, I now feel much more confident in interviews and know how to present myself effectively to employers. I'm truly grateful for the encouragement and personal approach!"*

Timely Candidate



*"This was my first timely careers event and certainly not the last. It was refreshing to hear panel honesty, and I personally took a lot of reassurance from the conversations. Thank you again!"*

– Mum Guilt event

Timely Candidate



*"The Reignite Your Career Programme was exactly what I needed at the right time. I honestly would never have had the courage to try to get back to my career after so long away without the support, guidance and confidence it gave me."*

– Reignite your career

Timely Careers Testimonial



# Laura Dowie

## Director of Timely Careers and Centre of Learning



**"The beautiful thing about learning is that nobody can take it away from you."** B.B King

As Director for both Timely Careers and the Centre of Learning I'm delighted to be writing this message. It is invigorating to be part of a team that helps women rise through learning, support and empowerment. We don't take a soft approach to learning, we listen to our Partners & Affiliates, we listen to our delegates, and we deliver strong programmes to help people succeed.

We have seen some progress but not enough, our North Star is still to strive for a fully inclusive workforce driving the NI economy. Our mission is to be a catalyst for change, and we cater for impactful, personal and professional development for all women and allies at all stages of their careers. We continue to deliver programmes of value to build our delegates skills and connections. At the same time, we are excited to look at how the world of work is changing and how we can start to support people learn and grow within this change.

Our portfolio for learning is extensive and we offer Programmes for:

- Leadership and Management
- Digital and Data Skills
- Mentoring and Long-Term Development
- Career Transitions

We are also excited about our Schedule of Events for 2026 and new programmes that we are introducing such as 'Energy Management for Real Life' and 'Managing Self-Criticism & Stress Response'.

We ask for your feedback, your input to our portfolio, our aim is to continue to empower you with the skills, networks and professional growth to achieve great things!

For our delegates we want to see personal and professional success, career growth and satisfaction. For NI employers we want to see them recruit, reward and retain great employees, thereby enhancing their Company performance.

*L. Dowie*



*"It was great to really dig deep with other women in a supportive, safe environment. Sarah is an excellent facilitator who manages to bring the best out of everyone and pushed us to examine the topic in so much detail. It was a brilliant session and I feel armed with great strategies to apply to my working and personal life. Thanks so much for a wonderful day."*

– British Council



*"I honestly feel that it was invaluable – a great use of my time and of benefit to the company. the hours and weeks flew in. Thoroughly enjoyed the interaction and the learnings. Thank you to Una & the other participants."*

– Telestack

## Key Highlights

# 47

women-focused  
intakes in 2025

# 700+

hours of mentoring

# 92%

scored content

# 5000+

women supported  
to date

# 42%

of women successfully  
secured employment  
1 month following the  
July intake of Women  
Returners Digital Skills  
Academy

# 400+

delegates receiving  
opportunities to learn,  
connect and grow,  
including **37 women**  
through the Women  
Returners Programme



*"By far the best training programme I have attended. Camila is knowledgeable, personable and delivered a high quality and relatable training programme."*

– AFLAC



*"The training was really well delivered. As a man I felt it struck the right chord to encourage inward reflection, which can be difficult. It also helped me to recognise all forms of gender inequality and even if seemingly small how they can add up to make women feel less valued in the workplace"*

– NIE Networks





# Gallery





# Nichola Robinson

The WiB Group Chair



**Making an Impact; that's what The WiB Group is doing each and every day across Northern Ireland and further afield.**

Through the opportunities we create and the women leaders we champion. Through the organisations leading by example on equality and inclusion. Through bespoke leadership programmes designed to empower women to rise further and faster in their respective fields. Through dynamic career platforms enabling more women to return to the workforce with proven benefits for employer and employee alike.

And of course, through our brilliant partners and collaborators, whose ongoing support helps amplify our impact towards new heights and, ultimately, accelerate our collective journey towards an economy defined by inclusion and prosperity.

As you will have seen illustrated on the previous pages, The WiB Group proudly champions inclusion as our instrument for innovation. Across each social enterprise – across every

strand of delivery – we're working diligently to ensure any progress is both future-proof and long-lasting.

In the long run, everyone stands to benefit from a workplace that is truly inclusive. A workplace where progress is powered by people, and the seeds of legacy are sown for future generations.

The future of The WiB Group is nothing if not exciting, and we'd love for you to be a part of it.

**Nichola Robinson**  
The WiB Group Chair

## The WiB Group Partners

### Women in Business Partners:



### Diversity Mark Founding Partners:



### Timely Careers Founding Partners:



### Centre of Learning Partners:







## Women in Business

Email: [info@womeninbusinessni.com](mailto:info@womeninbusinessni.com)



Diversity Mark

## Diversity Mark

Email: [info@diversity-mark-ni.co.uk](mailto:info@diversity-mark-ni.co.uk)



## Timely Careers

Email: [info@timelycareers.com](mailto:info@timelycareers.com)



## Centre of Learning

Email: [info@centreoflearningni.com](mailto:info@centreoflearningni.com)

