

New public policy think tank for Northern Ireland

25 September 2019

Pivotal, a new public policy think tank for Northern Ireland, has launched today. Pivotal aims to help Northern Ireland prosper by encouraging better public policy and involving a wider range of people in policy debate.

Pivotal will promote policy solutions that improve the lives of people across Northern Ireland. To do this it will engage a wider range of people in public debate, particularly those whose voices are rarely heard. Pivotal will use evidence-based research about what works to help develop better public policy.

Think tanks are a common feature of public life elsewhere, providing a constructive challenge to government on policy issues. No broadly based think tanks exist in Northern Ireland, and Pivotal aims to fill this gap.

Pivotal's Chair Peter Sheridan said, "Today we are pleased to launch Pivotal, a new independent public policy think tank for Northern Ireland. Northern Ireland faces many economic and social challenges, but serious discussion of these is often limited. Pivotal is ambitious in its aim to use research and evidence better, and to involve a wider range of people in public policy debate."

Ann Watt, Pivotal's first Director said, "I am delighted to be leading Pivotal. I look forward to working with a broad range of people on issues that affect day to day lives. I am excited about the positive contribution Pivotal will make to public policy in Northern Ireland."

Pivotal is independent of government and is not linked to any political party.

Pivotal's first report in October will be an overview of the economic and social challenges facing Northern Ireland. Its first event will look at education, the economy and equality.

Pivotal is grateful for the help provided in its development so far by a range of supporters and funders.

Notes for Editors

1. Pivotal's Board of Trustees provides oversight of its work. They are Peter Sheridan (Chair), Chief Executive of Cooperation Ireland; Lisa Faulkner Byrne, Project Coordinator, EPIC; Richard Good, public policy consultant; Olwen Lyner, Chief Executive, NIACRO; Seamus McAleavey, Chief Executive, NICVA; and Alan Whysall, Honorary Senior Research Associate, Constitution Unit, University College London.
2. A wider Reference Group has helped steer the development of Pivotal and will provide ongoing guidance.
3. Pivotal's Director Ann Watt was the Head of the Electoral Commission in Northern Ireland from 2014 to 2019. Ann is a former senior civil servant with 20 years' experience in public policy development and delivery.
4. Pivotal has received funding and in-kind support from Belfast Harbour Commissioners, The Community Foundation Northern Ireland, the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust, NICVA, Queen's University Belfast and Ulster University.
5. Further information is available on Pivotal's website pivotalppf.org or by contacting Pivotal's Director Ann Watt on 07932 043835 .
6. Follow Pivotal on Twitter @pivotalppf .