

Open Call for Social Partners for the Mid and East Antrim Borough Council's PEACEPLUS Partnership

Guidance Pack

Mid and East Antrim Borough Council established a PEACEPLUS Partnership for the PEACEPLUS Programme in July 2022. Currently the Partnership have vacancies for 3 Social Partners from PEACEPLUS target groups from across our area.

We are seeking applications from community representatives, including volunteers, from constituted Community and Voluntary Sector organisations who provide services within our council area and who could represent PEACEPLUS Target groups i.e. gender, age, disability, religious belief, LGBTQIA+

We would like to achieve a balanced and representative PEACEPLUS Partnership and welcome applications from a wide range of individuals. Those with and without previous experience of PEACE programmes are welcome to apply.

This pack gives you background information about the PEACEPLUS Programme, what we mean by a social partner and our social partner application process.

Documentation relating to this process can be requested in accessible formats by emailing: peace@midandeantrim.gov.uk

This project will be funded by the European Union's PEACEPLUS Programme, managed by the Special EU Programmes Body

What is PEACEPLUS?

PEACEPLUS is a new a €1.14bn European Union funding programme designed to support peace and prosperity across Northern Ireland and the border counties of Ireland, building upon the work of the previous PEACE and INTERREG Programmes. The design reflects the importance of peace-building activity, but also the importance of actions that will contribute positively to the economy, building prosperity and adjusting to the new environment and challenges we face. The PEACEPLUS Programme represents investment in the social, economic and environmental development of Northern Ireland and the border counties of Ireland.

The PEACE PLUS programme comprises six themes, which include 21 individual investment areas as outlined in Fig 1 and approved by the NI Executive, Irish Government and North South Ministerial Council.

Figure 1: PEACEPLUS Themes

Councils have developed and will deliver PEACEPLUS co-designed Action Plans under **Theme 1 – Building Peaceful and Thriving Communities – Investment Area 1.1 - Co-designed Local Community PEACEPLUS Action Plans** against which €110m has been allocated across the 17 council areas in Northern Ireland and the six border counties.

Co-designed PEACEPLUS Action Plans have been produced for each of the 17 local council areas across the Programme area. They have been devised to complement community planning structures and plans.

The PEACEPLUS Action Plan will enable diverse partnerships to establish and invest in key actions for their local areas and collectively address these in a manner which will result in improved, shared and inclusive local services, facilities and spaces, and make a significant and lasting contribution to peace and reconciliation. The co-design process itself should enable cross community engagement and collaboration.



The Thematic Strands within the PEACEPLUS Partnership Action Plan under Theme 1.1

Three thematic strands have been selected upon and have been included within the PEACEPLUS Action Plans. These are:

- (i) Local community regeneration and transformation
- (ii) Thriving and peaceful communities
- (iii) Celebrating cultures and diversity

These thematic strands provide scope to incorporate projects which span a range of different sectors and activities including health and wellbeing initiatives; children and young people; community regeneration including redevelopment and re-imaging of existing community facilities for shared usage; initiatives to build positive relations; social innovation; social enterprise; education and skills and community education. All supported projects should be designed to address issues of racism and sectarianism, increase social inclusion, and promote civil leadership.

Mid and East Antrim Borough Council PEACEPLUS Partnership

The PEACEPLUS Partnership will oversee the implementation of the co-designed PEACEPLUS Action Plan following approval of the PEACEPLUS Action Plan by SEUPB.

Our Mid and East Antrim Borough Council PEACEPLUS Partnership comprises of the following four pillars –

Mid and East Antrim Borough Council PEACEPLUS Partnership (27 Members)	
Pillar 1: 11 nominated Elected Members	Pillar 2: 5 nominated Statutory Representatives
Pillar 3: 7 Social Partners representing Geographical/ Community/ Civil Society	Pillar 4: 4 Social Partners representing PEACEPLUS Target Groups selected through this open call process

As per the table above, we are seeking to recruit a total of 3 Social Partners under pillar 4.

- Under pillar 4 we wish to recruit 3 social partners who can represent Section 75 interests or other PEACEPLUS target groups. Please note that 1 social partner representing this area is already on the PEACEPLUS Partnership. Social Partners will be chosen through this open call selection process.

What is a social partner?

A social partner includes those within the community, voluntary and social enterprise sector; those from special interest groups or those representing Equality Groups; individuals from civic society; and those from PEACE target groups, trade unions and businesses. The role of a social partner is to represent the sector from which you have been nominated (not your individual organisation) and to represent the interests of the wider community.

What are PEACE PLUS target groups?

PEACE PLUS target groups include women, young people, older people, those living with a disability, members of the LGBTQI+ community, those particularly impacted by the legacy of the Conflict, such as victims and survivors and those dealing with legacy issues such as ex-prisoners and former members of the security forces as well as ethnic minorities, migrants, asylum seekers and members of the Traveller Community.

What are Section 75 groups?

All public authorities must have due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity between different Section 75 groups ¹. There are nine groups which include persons of different: religious belief, political opinion, gender, racial group, age, marital status, sexual orientation, persons with a disability and those without and persons with dependants and those without.

What is a good relations duty?

This recruitment process will also have regard to the desirability of promoting good relations between persons of different religious belief, political opinion or racial group.

¹ Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 provides that: (1) A public authority shall in carrying out its functions relating to Northern Ireland have due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity- (a) between persons of different religious belief, political opinion, racial group, age, marital status or sexual orientation; (b) between men and women generally; (c) between persons with a disability and persons without; and (d) between persons with dependants and persons without. (2) Without prejudice to its obligations under subsection (1), a public authority shall in carrying out its functions relating to Northern Ireland have regard to the desirability of promoting good relations between persons of different religious belief, political opinion or racial group.

Time commitment for social partners

- The role is a voluntary, unpaid role
- Travel expenses and caring expenses will be available for each member
- It should be assumed that the partnership will meet 6-8 times per annum and each meeting would require a time commitment of approximately 2 hours per meeting. Preparation time for meetings is not included.
- During assessment periods this commitment may increase facilitated through an Assessment sub-committee.
- While the programme commenced in 2022 and runs to 2027 the commitment will lessen in the latter years as the programme winds down. The Partnership tenure for each member is likely to be 3 years when members can step down or step back for the last two years.
- Meetings will be a mix of virtual and face to face.
- Any person who requires support with IT connectivity etc. will also be supported.
- Training will be supplied for all partnership members in all aspects of the programme.

PEACEPLUS Social Partner Specification

We are seeking applications from community representatives including volunteers, from constituted Community and Voluntary Sector organisations based within or who provide services within our council area and those representing PEACEPLUS Target groups; or from individuals nominated by other recognised local organisations e.g., community & voluntary; rural development and agriculture; trade union; business; arts; sports but with a demonstrable interest in peace building.

The individuals and organisations should have expertise relevant to the PEACEPLUS programme or represent a target group of the PEACEPLUS Programme.

The partnership will consider applications from traditionally under-represented groups, including women, young people 18-25 and those with a disability.

We are also requesting that each applicant completes an equality form. This will assist the Partnership to ensure a balanced membership representative of the area.

- As far as possible, we would like to draw our social partners from the voluntary members of organisations rather than the paid employees of organisations (although either can apply).
- We would like at least 50% of our partnership overall and of our social partners to be women
- We would like some of our social partners to include young people (18-25) or their representatives
- We are striving to ensure that our Partnership is balanced in terms of cross community membership

Pillar		Number of Social Partner Places
Pillar 4:	PEACEPLUS Target Groups / Section 75 groups	Vacancy for 3 representatives

All social partner applicants will be required to meet **all four pre-selection Mandatory Criteria** plus at least one of the following **Other Pre-Selection Criteria** before their application can be assessed:

Pre-selection Criteria (Mandatory) - Applicants will be required to meet **ALL FOUR Mandatory Criteria**

- A resident within or working within the Mid and East Antrim Borough Council area **(Mandatory)**
- Submitted an equality form **(Mandatory)**
- Must be nominated by a nominating body and the form must be signed by the chair or other office bearer of said body; **(Mandatory)**
- Capacity to commit the time required to the work of the Partnership **(Mandatory)** min 6-8 meetings per annum plus sub-committees- c.2 hours per meeting)

Pre-selection Criteria (Other) - Applicants will be required to meet **at least ONE Other Criteria** from this list below

- Represent a Community and Voluntary Sector organisation from one of the 7 DEAs in Mid and East Antrim Borough Council: Ballymena, Bannside, Braid, Carrick Castle, Knockagh, Coast Road and Larne Lough
- Are they an individual nominated by a recognised local organisation e.g., community & voluntary; rural development and agriculture; trade union; business; arts; sports but with a demonstrable interest in peace building

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- c) Represent a Section 75 / Equality group e.g., Gender - women or men, Age, Disability, Race, Religious belief, LGBTQIA+, marital status, persons with a disability and those without and persons with dependants and those without
- d) Have experience either through work or volunteering in the field of Good Relations / Race Relations/ Peace and Reconciliation / Dealing with the Legacy of the Past
- e) Represent a sector of specific relevance to the PEACEPLUS programme e.g., Irish or Ulster-Scots culture; Church/ Faith / Minority Faith/ Inter-faith-based organisations; those most impacted by the legacy of the past (such as victims and survivors and those dealing with legacy issues such as ex-prisoners and former members of the security forces;
- f) A young person under the age of 25 (linked to a local youth group) or their representative (must be over 18)

Essential Criteria

All social partner applicants will be required to meet **at least three** of the following **essential criteria**:

1. Level of **knowledge and understanding** of local issues in particular around **sectarianism and racism** issues facing Mid and East Antrim Borough Council area
2. Level of **skills and experience gained** through professional and /or community and voluntary endeavours, which are directly applicable to the PEACEPLUS Programme
3. Relevance of the applicant's **skills / experience / knowledge of the PEACEPLUS Programme and its three core themes**: Local community regeneration and transformation; Thriving and peaceful communities and Building respect for all cultural identities
4. Level of experience of **partnership working and /or co-design/ co-production** involving a range of partner organisations e.g., community organisations, statutory bodies, local councils etc.
5. Relevance of **working knowledge in the project appraisal process** including assessing funding applications, or in the monitoring and evaluation of projects
6. The ability to **promote and participate in the PEACEPLUS Programme** and encourage uptake and involvement of all sides of the community

The applicant must score at least 3 in each of these 3 (or more) essential criteria.

Desirable Criteria

7. Qualifications/ training of specific relevance to the PEACEPLUS programme and the role of Partnership Member
8. Good oral and interpersonal communication skills
9. The ability to work in a team-oriented, collaborative environment

Scoring Matrix

Note scores will be determined either by reviewing the application only, or if a tie break, then through **an interview**. The scoring matrix against which the essential and desirable criteria will be assessed is outlined in the table below.

Score	Rationale	
0	Unacceptable / No Response	Response fails to address the question in virtually all areas.
1	Very Poor	A response with serious reservations. Limited detail and supporting evidence.

Score	Rationale	
2	Poor	A response with some material reservations. Response does not convincingly demonstrate that the applicant understands the requirement and/or the response lacks detail and/or evidence.
3	Acceptable	Response generally meets requirements but with minor reservations in one or more areas. Demonstrates reasonable understanding of the requirements.
4	Good	A good response that meets the requirements with good, convincing supporting evidence. Demonstrates good understanding and ability to meet the requirements.
5	Excellent	Excellent response. Response is clearly explained and provides detailed, supporting evidence and no weaknesses. Demonstrates strong understanding and ability to meet the requirements.

Assessment and Selection Process

Social Partner places on the Partnership can only be selected on the basis of information provided on the application form. Please assume no prior knowledge of yourself or the organisation you represent. A Selection Committee comprising Council Officers and an independent member will assess all applications.

Applications will be assessed based on the information in the application.

Applicants will be notified in writing of the final decision of the Selection Committee.

The Council will also maintain a reserve list of successful applicants.

A public information online meeting to explain the process of nominations, time commitments etc., will take place on **Wednesday 16 October 2020 at 2.00 pm via Teams**.

Completed application forms including the monitoring form should be returned via email to peace@midandeastantrim.gov.uk no later than **12 noon on Friday 25 October 2024**.

Late submissions cannot be accepted.

Queries

If you have any queries about the information above, please **contact Janice Cooper** on email Peace@midandeastantrim.gov.uk

Review Process

Applications ruled out following the assessment of applications will be offered the opportunity to appeal against the decision affecting them. They will be allowed two weeks from the date of the rejected decision letter to submit an appeal. Appeals will be considered by a Panel which is independent of the Selection Panel.

An appeal should be considered only under the following criteria:

- that the outcome was a decision that no reasonable person would have made on the basis of the information provided in the application; and/or
- that there was a failure in adherence to procedures or systems.

Appeals on any other grounds will not be considered. A request for an appeal should not include additional information/documentation in support of the application.

The Appeal Panel should receive all the documentation considered by the Selection Panel, including signed documentation relating to all stages of the selection process including the record of the reasons for the selection decision and a copy of the appeal request. The Appeal Panel will consider whether the applicant has demonstrated sufficient grounds for review to be upheld. The Appeal Panel will inform the applicant in writing of its decision and whether or not it has recommended to uphold the original decision or asked for it to be reconsidered.

An Appeal Panel cannot re-assess or re-mark an application, nor overturn a Selection Panel's decision. It can, however, conclude that a Selection Panel's decision was unreasonable or that procedures were not properly followed, and require a Selection Panel to reconsider its decision in the light of those findings.

In coming to its final conclusion, the Selection Panel should have regard to the Appeal Panel's findings and recommendations but may not be bound to follow all or part of these. However, unless there are over-riding legal or other relevant and defensible considerations the recommendations of the Appeal Panel will be accepted. The Selection Panel should not substitute an acceptance decision for a rejection unless the Appeal Panel has indicated grounds for doing so. This should be clearly stated in the documentation to the applicant.

Having considered the Appeal Panel's considerations, the decision of the Selection Panel will be binding on the applicant and the Council/PEACEPLUS Partnership will not be subject to any further appeals.

The appeal process must be completed within 2 weeks of receipt of the request for appeal unless it is impractical to do so.