

# WINNERS OF NORTHERN IRELAND EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY AWARDS 2018 ANNOUNCED

*These awards recognise and celebrate diversity in the workplace.*

The winners of the Northern Ireland Equality and Diversity Awards 2018 were recently announced (23 March 2018) at Titanic Belfast.

The awards provide companies with an opportunity to showcase their commitment to advocating equality and diversity in their organisations. They are organised by Legal-Island, a local independent multi-award-winning workplace compliance company, in association with NICVA and sponsored by Diamond Recruitment Group and Jones Cassidy Brett. Private sector (SMEs and large employers), charities, not for profit organisations and public sector bodies were all eligible to apply. The winners were:

## **Best Employer for Diversity and Equality in Northern Ireland - Small Company:**

Winner - Northern Ireland Office

## **Best Employer for Diversity and Equality in Northern Ireland - Large Company:**

Winner - Clanmil Housing Association

Highly Commended - Deloitte



**Clanmil Housing Association was the winner of the Best Employer for Diversity and Equality in Northern Ireland - Large Company category.** The judges said that they were impressed by Clanmil's creative approach to delivering equality and diversity initiatives to meet the needs of both their employees and the community, particularly the activities that celebrated their 40th anniversary, where ten community good deeds were organised to celebrate the positive impact of diversity in the community. Pictured are (l-r) Barry Phillips, Chair of Legal-Island, organisers of the awards, Karen Gilmore and Bernadette O'Donnell from Clanmil

Housing Association.

**Best Gender Initiative:**

Winner - Belfast Health and Social Care Trust

Highly Commended - Pinsent Masons

**Best LGBT Initiative:**

Winner - Pinsent Masons

Highly Commended - Queen's University Belfast

**Best Disability Initiative:**

Winner - NOW Group

Highly Commended - Belfast Health and Social Care Trust

**Individual Diversity Champion:**

Winner - Teresa McDonough from Habinteg Housing Association

Highly Commended, Adele Davidson, HR Manager - Equality, Inclusion & Legal, Northern Ireland Fire & Rescue Service.



**Individual Diversity Champion category, sponsored by Diamond Recruitment Group.** Teresa McDonough from Habinteg Housing Association, was the winner of the Individual Diversity Champion

category, sponsored by Diamond Recruitment Group. Teresa has been championing diversity for over 30 years. A mother of four adults, two with learning difficulties alongside a disability herself Teresa has been a long-time campaigner of the rights of others in a sphere of life with which she is fully conversant. Working alongside a multitude of groups and companies to raise awareness and develop opportunities for others, Teresa continues to be a beacon of hope for those not only with a disability for the community as a whole. Pictured (l-r) are Darren McKinney, Chief Executive, Habinteg Housing Association; Tina McKenzie from awards sponsor Diamond Recruitment Group; award winner Teresa McDonough from Habinteg Housing Association; and event host Sarah Travers.

### **Individual Diversity Champion - Education Sector:**

Winner - Professor Tom Millar, Queen's University Belfast

Highly Commended - Dr Philip McDermott, Ulster University

Congratulating all of the winners and highly commended entrants, Barry Phillips, Chair of Legal-Island, organisers of the awards, said: "This year's Northern Ireland Equality and Diversity Awards have been a great success. They recognised that organisations such as Northern Ireland Office, Clanmil Housing Association, Belfast Health & Social Care Trust, Pinsent Masons and the NOW Group are pioneering new standards of equality and diversity practices and driving the diversity agenda in Northern Ireland. The awards also provide a wonderful opportunity for sharing best practice and acknowledging the efforts of staff that are working consistently to further organisational objectives in this area."

Barry Phillips added: "There are legal requirements associated with equality and diversity due to the importance of the issue. However, it is essential that employers view equality and diversity as much more than just a legal tick box exercise. Valuing diversity and recognising the multi-faceted benefits that it brings will help businesses and organisations to thrive. Driving diversity in the workplace will help drive it into the community outside too. This can only be good for Northern Ireland."

Legal-Island, which is headquartered in Antrim, is the go-to place for expert workplace compliance. It helps HR professionals understand employment law and

how it applies to their workplace.

Award sponsor, Tina McKenzie, Group Managing Director for Diamond Recruitment's parent company Staffline Group, congratulated all the entrants:

"I think it is extremely positive that so many companies have entered the awards this year. That in itself serves as an indication that they recognise the importance of equality and diversity. We live in a global market with our local companies competing on a global scale so Northern Ireland is increasingly becoming recognised as having highly skilled people in a range of specialist areas.

"Employers need the right person with the right skillset to help them deliver their organisational objectives, and that means having a diversity of skills, perspectives and backgrounds in their teams. They value diversity and the Northern Ireland Equality and Diversity Awards are a fantastic channel for recognising what employers are doing to maintain an equal and diverse workplace. The awards also allow the wider community to celebrate in the success of individuals, groups and companies."

Award sponsor Jones Cassidy Brett, a niche employment law firm based in Belfast, which is renowned for its expertise in employment and equality law, remarked on the innovation within the winning applicants: "We are seeing employers being creative and consultative in relation to equality and diversity. They are speaking to their employees, drawing on best practice and establishing programmes and activities that support their staff and meet the legal requirements. It's really encouraging to see. Well done to all the applicants."

### **About the Judges:**

- **Ciara Fulton is a Senior Partner in Jones Cassidy Brett**, a niche employment law firm based in Belfast, which is renowned for its expertise in employment and equality law. □Ciara is dual qualified and advises on all aspects of employment law in Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland. She has significant experience of advising clients on the full range of employment issues including complex discrimination issues, bullying and harassment claims, disciplinary and grievance matters, business reorganisations, senior executive severances, restrictive covenants, employment related litigation and TUPE.
- **David Johnson is Head of Attendance and Wellbeing at Police**

**Service of Northern Ireland.** David was born in England to a Jamaican father and Northern Irish mother. A Human Resources professional for over 24 years, and interested in equality and diversity matters, most of his career has seen him working in complex and high profile public service organisations, including: Inland Revenue, Police Ombudsman's office, Northern Ireland Tourist Board, and the Police Service of Northern Ireland.

- **Lori Gatsi Barnett is a business owner, social entrepreneur and the Chair of HAPANI, Horn of Africa People's Aid Northern Ireland,** with a vast array of skills in management, marketing, sales, events management and public relations. Lori hails from Harare, Zimbabwe and lived and studied in the United States.
- **Maciek Bator is the Founder and Project Coordinator for the For Your Freedom & Ours CIC,** a social enterprise that designs and provides shared history programmes using creative forms of education and storytelling. He is responsible for designing and delivering interactive bespoke and accredited educational programmes combining historical events with a modern learning approach to foster a wider understanding of shared history and to celebrate positive relations between communities, focusing mainly on the history of the Polish Airmen in the Second World War who were based in Northern Ireland during that period.