



Women in Tech Conference



CURATED BY



Women in Business

SPONSORED BY



Friday 9 February | 8:30am-3:30pm | Titanic Belfast

Event Information

Welcome to the **7th Women in Tech Conference** taking place at Titanic Belfast on Friday 9th February 2024.

This empowering event, sponsored by MCS Group will gather role models who innovate, challenge, and embrace technology. From inspirational women who have achieved great success within the sector, to influential entrepreneurs who will be sharing their journey throughout the world of tech from both local and global perspectives.

The day will be filled with feature speakers and panellists, providing attendees with industry-focused learning and face to face access to a high calibre of education and development experts on the conference theme of **Inspiring Giant Ambition, Fostering Talent and Igniting Innovation.**



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INTELLIGENT RECRUITMENT SOLUTIONS

Conference Programme

- 08.30 Arrival & Networking
- 09.30 Welcome from **Emer Maguire**
- 09.35 Sponsor message from **MCS Group**
- 09.45 **Opening Speaker - Maria Diffley - Sustain IQ**
Beyond greenwashing: Ambition, innovation, and impact on our Shores
- 10.05 **Panel discussion - Igniting Innovation through AI**
The panel session will explore the opportunities for innovation created by AI, at the same time as considering the challenges and risks.
- Sarah Crossan, DevOps, Version 1
 - Keith Lippert, Women in Business Board Member
 - Dr Lu Bai, Queen's University Belfast
 - Louise Doyle, Needi
- 10.50 Mid-morning refreshments break with networking
- 11.20 **Speaker - Colette Kidd**- Chief People Officer, Kainos
From engineer to C-suite: A Chief People Officer's journey so far
- 11.45 Facilitated networking session
- 12.15 **Session 1- Professional development breakout sessions**
40 min sessions – each delegate chooses two sessions to attend
Session 1: 12.15 – 13.00 and Session 2: 14.00 – 14.40

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Topic 1 – Prioritising Purpose, Elevating Talent Panel Facilitated by Emer Maguire

- Sarah Milliken, Head of Talent and Culture, Aflac
- Mairead Scott, Managing Director of MCS Group
- Faye Thomas, Chief Commercial Officer, Vyta
- Charlene Hughes, Senior Manager, Sensata

Topic 2 – Unplug, Recharge and Reconnect Workshop

- Bridgeen Rea-Kaya, Immeasurable Minds

Topic 3 – Resilience, mindset and navigating change

- Claire-Marie Boggiano, Lurig Ltd

13.00 Lunch & Browse Demos

14.00 Session 2 - Professional development breakout sessions

14.40 Welcome Back - Emer Maguire

14:45 Panel Discussion - We were made for these times - staying grounded whilst everything is shifting

The session will explore the intersection between organisational purpose and purpose-driven initiatives with strategies for promoting talent within the tech sector. It will take the form of a panel discussion with four speakers, facilitated by the conference host Emer Maguire and will consider how aligning personal and professional purpose can contribute to the advancement of both individual careers and the sector as a whole.

- Erin McFeely, Alliances and Engagement Manager, Alchemy Technology Services
- Anna McSorley, Global Head of People, EOS IT Solutions
- Caroline Pereira-Lynch, Data Engineer, Kainos
- Louise Warde-Hunter, Principal and CEO, Belfast Met

15:30 Conference Close and Announcement of Women in Tech Awards 2024, Lorraine Acheson, Managing Director, Women in Business NI

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Joining us will be:



Conference Host - Emer Maguire

Emer is Northern Ireland's brightest comedy star. As a qualified and practicing Speech and Language Therapist, Emer loves communicating in any way she can. She is an international award-winning science communicator, a four-time TEDx speaker and a musical comedian with a sold out Edinburgh Fringe run under her belt.

Speaker



Maria Diffley

SustainIQ is the all-in-one ESG Reporting Software with its vision to change the world, for good, using the power of sustainability performance data. SustainIQ was formed by its two co-founders Liam McEvoy and Maria Diffley. The pair met at an industry award ceremony in 2017 when they realised that there was a real need to create a solution that would help organisations use their sustainability performance to drive business improvement. And so, SustainIQ was born. Maria has worked in both the public and voluntary sectors and holds an MSc in Sustainability & CSR.

Panel 1 - Igniting innovation through AI



Sarah Crossan

My name is Sarah Crossan, I'm a DevOps engineer with a love for automation and infrastructure and have been in the IT industry for just over two years. I enjoy working with a close-knit team and arguing with Python. I love listening to and talking about anything social, history or anthropology. Originally, I studied graphic design and illustration, so while I'm not a huge proponent of AI for creative work, I am interested in how it can be used to help people and heighten accessibility.



Keith Lippert

Keith Lippert, a 30-year-old financial services veteran, has expertise in financial crime prevention, anti-terrorism, sanctions, money laundering, and fraud prevention. He has held positions at Barclays Bank, American Express, and other banks. Under his leadership, the Northern Ireland team has won 21 cybersecurity awards, including Cyber Business of the Year and Digital DNA Business Personality of the Year.



Dr Lu Bai

Dr. Lu Bai, a Ph.D. in electronic engineering from the University of Kent, has been a researcher, and lecturer in various fields. She has a focus on smart sensing systems, machine learning, and data analytics for digital health, smart cities, and smart homes. Her recent research focuses on remote sensing technologies and geospatial analysis for environmental monitoring.

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Louise Doyle

Louise Doyle, CEO and co-founder of needi.co.uk, is revolutionizing the corporate gifting industry with an intelligent gift-matching service. Needi uses AI and psychological principles to develop a cutting-edge algorithm, allowing it to connect businesses with perfect gifts from local independent businesses, reshaping the way businesses approach corporate gifting.

Speaker

Colette Kidd

Colette is a trailblazer in the Northern Irish IT industry, wielding over 25 years of expertise that began as a software engineer. Her journey has been an evolution of roles spanning consultancy, project management, talent cultivation, and ultimately, shaping the very heartbeat of a company's success. From igniting the spark as a software engineer to orchestrating the talent development as an Executive Manager, Colette's impact is written in the remarkable growth of Kainos. She has been the driving force behind propelling the company from a tight-knit group of 250 in 2010 to a powerhouse team of nearly 3000 today. But her influence isn't just in headcounts—it's in the DNA of the company. Colette crafted the blueprint for talent development, architecting an internal recruitment powerhouse and nurturing the Kainos Academy "MAP," a trailblazing initiative that empowers staff to reach their full potential. Colette joins us on stage as the Winner of Outstanding Woman in Tech at our Women in Tech Awards 2023.



Breakout Sessions

Topic 1

Sarah Milliken

Sarah, Head of Talent and Culture at Aflac Northern Ireland, leads the talent acquisition strategy, focuses on growth and development, and shapes the company's culture. With 18 years of experience, Sarah previously worked for Citi onsite in Belfast and AMS, managing multi-located teams across Europe, Asia, and the Middle East. She has experience in recruitment, HR, and boutique consultancy businesses. Sarah holds a bachelor's degree in Human Resource Management from RMIT University.



Mairead Scott

Mairead Scott, a respected recruitment professional with over 25 years of experience, has successfully launched MCS Group's Professional Services business unit in 2015, delivering recruitment solutions across various sectors. She was responsible for the day-to-day running of the business unit and developing a robust business plan. In 2017, Mairead launched MCS Group's sister company, Honeycomb Jobs, to provide exceptional recruitment services in the Business Support sector. As Managing Director, she developed business strategy and operational performance, growing Honeycomb to become Northern Ireland's leading business support and administrative recruitment provider. Mairead was appointed Managing Director of MCS Group in January 2024, overseeing the strategic direction and operational delivery of the agency as it enters new markets and continues to grow.



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Faye Thomas

Faye is Chief Commercial Officer of market leading IT Asset Disposal company, Vyta and has 20 years' experience in key account sales and process management. Over the past 10 years' Faye has been instrumental to the success of the Vyta Group, shaping business strategy and ensuring operations are aligned with the company's strong ethos of security, compliance, and sustainability. She is a passionate about empowering women to pursue leadership roles and make their mark on the tech sector in Northern Ireland.



Charlene Hughes

Charlene began her career in Supplier Development in Schrader Electronics in 2003 and has progressed through leadership roles in Program Management including implementing a Product Owner global team. In 2014, Charlene joined Sensata Technologies as part of the acquisition of Schrader Electronics, and since then she has continued to develop and lead Program Management teams within Sensata. These teams have included Tire Pressure Monitor Systems (TPMS) and technology incubation Project teams. Most recently leading the technical Program Management team who manage the development of full-stack IoT solutions for the Sensata Insights Business Unit.

Topic 2



Bridgeen Rea-Kaya

Bridgeen is a pioneer of mindfulness and mindful self-compassion classes for the general public in Northern Ireland. She has a Masters in Mindfulness Based Approaches (Msc) from Bangor University, Wales. She is an accredited and trained Mindful Self-Compassion (MSC) Teacher, a qualified yoga teacher (YFNI), Reiki Master and a lover of the slow down movement. Bridgeen has an MBA and a BSc in Communications, Advertising and Marketing. Bridgeen's foray into the holistic business began back in 2005 when she began teaching yoga, following a 2 year training with the Yoga Fellowship of Northern Ireland (YFNI) and one year Yoga training with Satyananda Yoga Australia. Immeasurable Minds was originally a part-time business but she gave up her safe Civil Service job and went full-time with it from January 2014.

Topic 3



Claire-Marie Boggiano

Claire-Marie is a Chartered Engineer who started her early career in Financial Services. She established her own Consultancy, Lurig Ltd over 20yrs ago; which specialises in business change and leadership development. Lurig has worked with blue chip organisations such as Rolls-Royce & AstraZeneca; public sector clients including the NHS and Greater Manchester Combined Authority; SME's and smaller high growth clients. Claire-Marie provides executive coaching, team facilitation and support to individuals making personal career transitions. She also lectures in Leadership and Change at a variety of business schools. Claire-Marie champions Women in Business and Women in STEM. She believes organisations succeed by harnessing the imagination and talents of their people. In this session she will explore the importance of mindset in developing resilience and navigating change, sharing some practical strategies to take back to your workplace.



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Panel 3 - We were made for these times - staying grounded whilst everything is shifting



Erin McFeely

Erin Mc Feely, Alliances and Engagement Manager at Alchemy Technology Services, is responsible for supporting the company's partnerships in the North West. Alchemy, a global insurance software company, was founded in 2018 with the mission of supporting the economic recovery of the region by creating sustainable career opportunities. The company's ethos is to collaborate with local charities, businesses, and academic institutions. Erin has held leadership positions in the community and voluntary sector, including Chief Executive of Developing Healthy Communities and Director of Development and Planning for a mental health charity.



Anna McSorley

A global strategic leader, working in HR, organizational design, leadership, and transformational change projects for companies such as H.J. Heinz, Ford Motor Company, Cargotec & Crane.

From County Armagh but lived and worked in Finland, Sweden, most European cities, as well as the United States over the past number of years.

I am an eternal optimist and my approach in life is to learn by doing and if it doesn't add value and doesn't feel right then don't do it!



Caroline Pereira-Lynch

Caroline Pereira-Lynch - Originally from Canada, came to Northern Ireland in 2005 after having accepted a PhD position at the Armagh Observatory. Following the successful completion of her doctorate, she transitioned into the field of education, dedicating 12 years to teaching Science, Physics (to A-Level students), and Computer Science. The pandemic paved the way for new opportunities, enabling Caroline to embark on a new chapter in Data Engineering.



Louise Warde-Hunter

An experienced senior civil servant, Warde Hunter was most recently Deputy Secretary as Head of Housing, Urban Regeneration and Local Government at Department for Communities and has had senior roles delivering policy in a range of areas including education, agriculture, environment and justice. Outside of the Civil Service, Warde Hunter was Scotland and Northern Ireland Strategic Director for Children's Services in the large UK charity Action for Children and Chief Executive of Common Purpose Ireland. In April 2020 Louise took up the role head of Northern Ireland's largest and longest established further and higher education college in Northern Ireland - right at the start of the pandemic.