

# British-Irish Council

## What is the British-Irish Council?

The British-Irish Council is a Ministerial Council bringing together Ministers from the UK and Irish Governments, the Devolved Administrations in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales and the Isle of Man Government, Government of Jersey and Government of Guernsey.

The Council is a forum for members to exchange information and reach agreement on matters of mutual interest.

The Council is unique in that it is the only international forum in which these eight members participate. All members act in accordance with their own democratic procedures and remain accountable to their respective elected institutions.

## What does the British-Irish Council do?

The British-Irish Council is a practical forum where Member Administrations work together on issues of common interest to citizens across these islands. The Council allows Ministers to consult, share expertise and build strong partnerships. Member Administrations meet regularly throughout the year, including when Heads of Administration and Ministers come together at biannual Summits.

The Council remains responsive to evolving policy priorities and its current work programme prioritises twelve specific work sectors where it can deliver for citizens and stakeholders. In these work sectors Ministers, civil servants and, when relevant, invited stakeholders, are collaborating across a diverse range of social, economic and environmental topics. The current work sectors are:

Collaborative  
Spatial  
Planning



Creative  
Industries



Demography



Digital  
Inclusion



Early Years  
Policy



Energy



Environment



Housing



Indigenous,  
Minority &  
Lesser-Used  
Languages



Misuse of  
Substances



Social  
Inclusion



Transport



The Council also hosts conferences, seminars and study visits for experts in particular fields related to the Council's current work programme. Updates on the activity of these work sectors and the Council's programme of work are published on the Council's website.

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## Why was the British-Irish Council established?

On 10 April 1998, after two years of intensive negotiations, the UK and Irish Governments and the political parties in Northern Ireland approved a comprehensive political agreement – the Agreement reached in the Multi-Party Negotiations, the ‘Multi-Party Agreement’. One of the institutions created under that Agreement was the British-Irish Council.

The Council was formally established when the British-Irish Agreement (the Agreement which gave effect to the provisions of the Multi-Party Agreement) signed by the two governments came into force on 2 December 1999. The aim of the British-Irish Council is to ‘promote the harmonious and mutually beneficial development of the totality of relationships amongst the people of these islands’.

## Member Administrations



## Find out more

If you would like to find out more about the Council, its work programme or its history, you can visit the Council’s website at:

[www.britishirishcouncil.org](http://www.britishirishcouncil.org)

Or you can contact the British-Irish Council Secretariat at:

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You can also follow the Council on Twitter & Flickr:

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