

Northern Ireland Labour Force Survey – Young People Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET) – November 2025

Statistics on young people who are not in education, employment or training (NEET) were published today by the Northern Ireland Statistics & Research Agency.

First meeting of NI Respiratory Forum held on World COPD Day

The first meeting of the newly established Northern Ireland Respiratory Forum was held this week on World COPD Day 2025.

Kimmins launches new advertising campaign to tackle drug driving

Infrastructure Minister Liz Kimmins has launched a powerful new advertising campaign aimed at tackling the growing threat of drug driving on our roads.

Minister welcomes publication of Environmental Principles Policy Statement

The Northern Ireland Environmental Principles Policy Statement (EPPS) has been published.

[A Liberal councillor who made LGBT+ history](#)

Sam Green didn't set out to make history.

In 1972, he stood as the Liberal candidate for Crossgate ward in the City of Durham for the same reason our candidates stand for their local communities across the country: because they want to get things done. As Sam put it, he wanted to "get things moving in the city".

When he decided to put his membership of the Gay Liberation Front on his election manifesto – just five years after homosexuality had been legalised for over-21s – he told his local party.

He said "I'd better not stand in Crossgate", assuming that the revelation would hurt the party's chances. But he told how a retired schoolteacher – "a little old woman" as he put it – said "Well I think Sam should stand because he lives in the ward and people know him." So he did.

And Sam won through the traditional community politics that was the hallmark of Liberal candidates – and still sets Liberal Democrat candidates apart today.

He went door to door, delivering thousands of leaflets. Canvassing tirelessly. He asked people what they thought about the local area and the local council. He listened to their concerns, and he acted on them.

But Sam did make history. In 1972, he became the first openly gay man to be elected as a councillor anywhere in the United Kingdom. Possibly even the first anywhere in the world.

And on Sunday, I was delighted to visit Sam's former home and join City of Durham Parish Councillors and local residents to unveil a blue plaque commemorating Sam Green as the trailblazer he was.

It is a testament to his courage. Because it took a huge amount of courage to come out to his whole community, to face the hostility and homophobia so prevalent in those days, and to campaign openly as who he was.

And it's also testament to the people of Durham, who – more than 50 years ago – were open-minded and accepting enough to see Sam for who he was: a dedicated local campaigner who would be a hardworking and principled councillor.

Thinking about what Sam faced then – and the fact that before 1972 no one anywhere had won election as an openly gay candidate – made me reflect on how far we've come as a society.

There are now 75 out LGBT+ MPs in the House of Commons. Just this week, our party elected one of them – Josh Babarinde – as our President. And perhaps the most remarkable thing was that no one found it remarkable that he's gay.

But there is still far more work to do.

Because, more than half a century after Sam was elected, LGBT people still sadly face far too much hostility and discrimination, just for being who they are. Too many people still don't feel they can be open about their identity. Too many candidates feel the need to hide it – despite the trail blazed first by Sam and followed by so many others.

So I hope that remembering the courage and dedication of Councillor Sam Green will also serve to spur us on to continue to champion equality, respect and the rights of all people – to be who they are, to serve their communities with pride, and to get things moving.

ITV News covered the unveiling of the blue plaque for Sam Green and interviewed Ed about it – you can watch the report [here](#).

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