

# Northern Ireland investment conference planned to woo investors

The Department for the Economy is holding a one day investment conference in Belfast despite recent curbs on the support offered by investment agency Invest Northern Ireland.

The Northern Ireland Showcase will hear from indigenous businesses and current investors about their experience of doing business in the province at an in-person event in the International Conference Centre and via a live stream.

Invest NI is delivering the event at a time when it is coming under pressure after bringing to an end two of its early stage support programmes, Ignite and Propel, and suspending new offers of support as a result of budgetary pressures.

However, Mel Chittock, Interim CEO of Invest NI, said the conference is important.

“Northern Ireland has a proud history of world class innovation, entrepreneurship and a strong talent base. We are well established as global leaders in new and emerging fields like cyber security, fintech and advanced manufacturing. This event will be a fantastic opportunity to showcase these strengths and promote our world class excellence and business growth to a global audience.”

The Department for the Economy said the event will include panel discussions with business leaders from throughout Northern Ireland, including Paul Armstrong, Commercial Director of Foods Connected in the North West, and Keith Farley, Managing Director of US Fortune 500 Company Aflac.

“We’re delighted to be participating in the Showcase,” Paul

Armstrong said. “Over the last number of years, we have thrived as a North West business with over 10,000 suppliers using our software to communicate with their customers globally. During the panel, we will discuss how we have achieved this and have grown to become a market leader in supply chain management, traceability and procurement tools for the food sector globally.”

Keith Farley also welcomed the conference.

“We are excited to participate alongside some of Northern Ireland’s best businesses, where we will share our story of how we came to Northern Ireland in 2019 and the positive impact that this decision has had on our company’s global capabilities. Our Belfast operations have quickly become part of Aflac’s story of innovation, technology and cyber security excellence, powered by the talents of the 130 dedicated professionals that comprise our Northern Ireland team.”

Economy Minister Gordon Lyons welcomed the conference.

“The global competition for investment, talent and trade has intensified as we recover from the impact of the pandemic. For the last two years, our businesses have shown remarkable resilience and adaptability. This has not gone unnoticed by many of our existing and potential investors and trading partners. I believe there is now a unique opportunity for Northern Ireland to grasp this opportunity to become a stronger and more vibrant economy which will lead to a wealthier, healthier society, where everyone benefits.”