

East West Forum For Civic Leadership

Residential Day #1 | 5 February 2026



Funded by
UK Government

The image has a solid blue background. Overlaid on this is a network diagram consisting of approximately 15 circular nodes. Each node contains a group of stylized human figures in various poses, representing different groups or individuals. These nodes are interconnected by a series of thin white lines, forming a web-like structure. In the center of this network, the word "Welcome" is written in a large, white, sans-serif font.

Welcome



Lucinda Godfrey
CEO, Charity Leadership Scotland



East West Forum For Civic Leadership

Residential Day #1 | 5 February 2026



Three chief executives sharing with each other building trust and being vulnerable.

Supporting each other and learning from one another



Gareth Oughton
Member Services Manager at ACEVO

acevo
imagine, inspire, improve

AGENDA DAY 1

COMPLEXITY, MISINFORMATION & SYSTEMS LEADERSHIP

09.00	Registration, Coffee and Tea	
10.15	Welcome & Framing	Host CEOs
10.45	Misinformation, Media & Civil Society's Role A provocative talk exploring misinformation, trust erosion, and the civic voice in a post-truth age. Followed by moderated discussion.	Facilitator: Maeve Connolly Raised Voices
11.40	Morning Coffee Break	
11.50	Panel Session – Leading in politically charged & misinformed environments Paul Smyth – Politics in Action NI – Panel Chair Liza Wilkinson – Tides Training – Peace Building in 2025 Seán Feenan – Convenor of the Reference Group Jamie Dunlop, CEO – Scottish Youth Parliament	Panel Chair: Paul Smyth Politics in Action NI
13.10	Lunch	
14.10	Beyond the noise: Reclaiming leadership in complex systems Session 1 – Power, responsibility and leadership in uncertain systems - A facilitated session creating space for senior leaders to reflect on how power, legitimacy and responsibility show up in complex and evolving systems. - Grounded in lived experience from across civil society (not formal inputs or prescriptive models) - Focused on surfacing patterns, tensions and leadership challenge as opposed to generating solutions.	Facilitator: Mark Rogers Leadership Centre
15.30	Afternoon Coffee Break	
15.40	Beyond the noise: Reclaiming leadership in complex systems Session 2 – The civil society landscape: current pressures and leadership demands - Participants explore a small number of live system pressures shaping civil society leadership today. - Attention is given to where power is held or shifting & what this means for leadership judgement and accountability. - Emphasis on sense-making and shared learning	Facilitator: Mark Rogers Leadership Centre
17.00 - 19.00	Personal/Wellbeing Time	

AGENDA DAY 2

REHEARSING THE FUTURE & ANCHORING COLLECTIVE CHANGE

06.00	Personal/Wellbeing Time Wellbeing - Use of swimming pool, jacuzzi, steam room, sauna and gym.	
07.00 - 09.00	Breakfast	
09.00	Future scenarios & new leadership models Session – Building Leadership Through Introspection A reflective and interactive session supporting leaders to explore their internal leadership landscape and the influences shaping their decision-making, resilience and behaviours. Outcomes: - Identify personal and organisational barriers to effective leadership - Explore how to develop resilience during periods of uncertainty and turbulence - Reflect on leadership culture within the charity sector: - Are we disruptors? Do we want to be? What needs to shift?	Zara Mohammed Z-M Consulting
10.45	Workshop – Common pressures – Shared Challenges Facilitated workshop session allowing leaders to work in smaller groups on specific challenges to identify divergence but also commonality across the four nations. Followed by Q&A.	Facilitators: Valerie McConville CO3 Lucinda Godfrey Charity Leadership Scotland
12.00	Discussion – Working Lunch Shaping the shared future Structured table discussions, led by each of the host CEOs and delivery team ; synthesising 3-5 cross-nation priorities for ACEVO, CO3 and Charity Leadership Scotland to champion	Facilitators: Host CEOs
13.15	Small Group Session – Anchoring Change Through provocation, discussion and Q&A, participants identify leadership behaviours and models required to respond effectively	
14.00	Close & Next Steps	

**Download your
Digital Media Tool Kit**

SCAN ME





Valerie McConville

CEO, Chief Officers Third Sector (CO3)







**The residential will follow
Chatham House Rules**

Baseline Evaluation

SCAN ME





Misinformation, Media & Civil Society's Role

**Maeve Connolly - Director, Raised
Voices**



RaisedVoices

Maeve Connolly



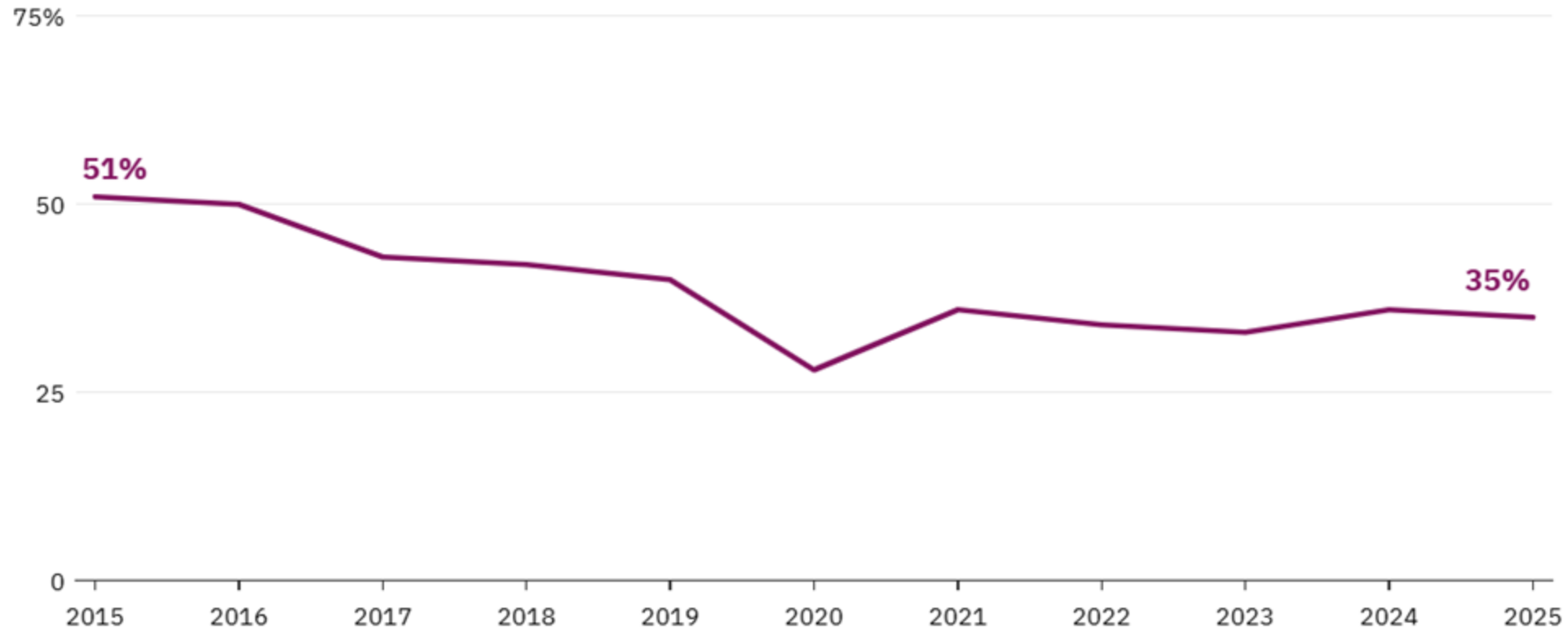
**Raised
Voices**

Trust in the media

Overall trust score

Change over time 2015–2025

United Kingdom



[Get the data](#) • [Embed](#)



Source: Reuters
Institute Digital
News Report
2025

The top social, messaging and video networks for news in the UK

70%

of people get their news
from online sources

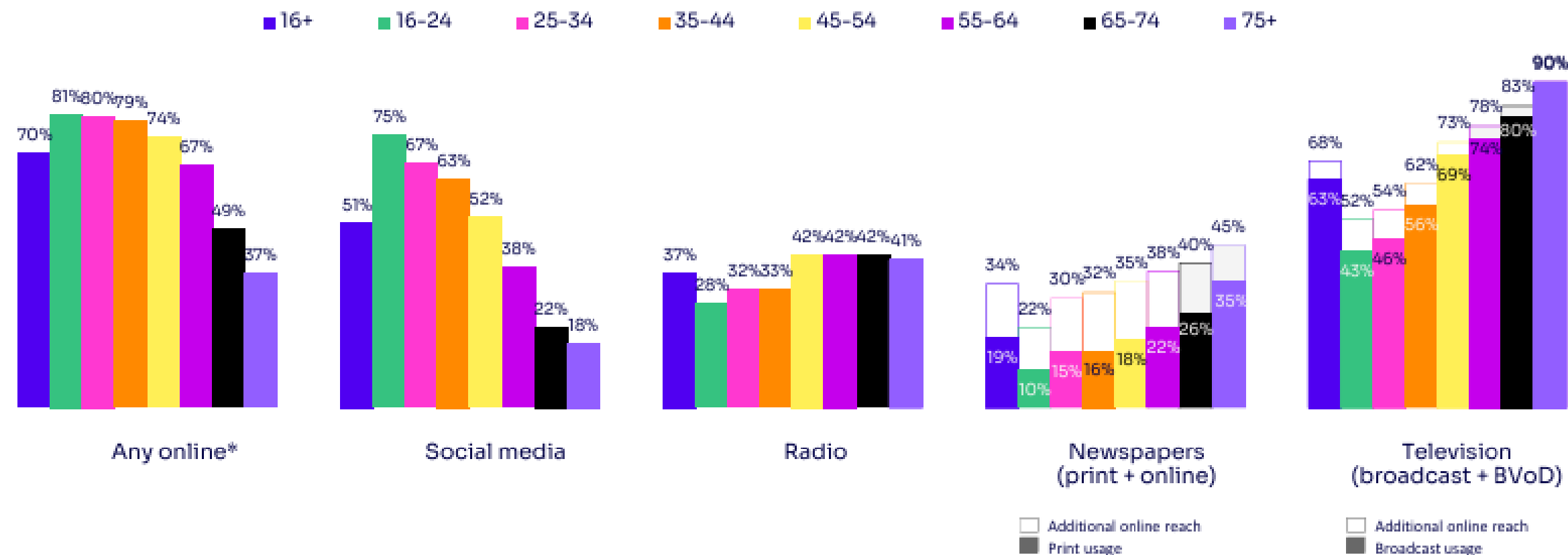
51%

get their news from
social media

- Facebook - 17%
- YouTube - 13%
- X - 12%
- WhatsApp - 10%
- Instagram - 9%
- TikTok - 6%

Sourcing news in the UK

Figure 5: Platforms used for news ‘nowadays’, by age: 2025



Source: Ofcom 2025

Misinformation creep

Menu

Full Fact

Donate

28 OCTOBER 2025

The government isn't going to slow the internet at night from November

Claims being shared in videos on social media that from 1 November the government will reduce internet speeds from midnight until 6am are

Menu

Full Fact

Donate

Read more...

25 MARCH 2025

The Irish government hasn't issued a leaflet telling girls to stay indoors after 6pm

The Irish Government and the Irish Centre for Diversity have confirmed they have never created or distributed such a leaflet.

Read more...



Health

This article is more than 1 month old

AI deepfakes of real doctors spreading health misinformation on social media

Hundreds of videos on TikTok and elsewhere impersonate experts to sell supplements with unproven effects

Denis Campbell *Health policy editor*

Follow Denis Campbell in My Guardian



Health

Social media misinformation driving men to NHS clinics in search of testosterone they don't need

Endocrinologists warn taking testosterone unnecessarily can suppress the body's natural hormone production

Sarah Marsh *Consumer affairs correspondent*

Follow Sarah Marsh in My Guardian

Sources:
Full Fact,
The Guardian

AI-generated disinformation

Deepfake AI video depicting Catherine Connolly quitting presidential race removed by Meta



An AI generated deepfake purports to show RTE reporting on presidential candidate Catherine Connolly ending her campaign.

[Source: The Irish Times](#)



Far right

Meet 'Amelia': the AI-generated British schoolgirl who is a far-right social media star

The avatar, created to deter young people from extremism, has been subverted and is breaking out of niche online silos

Ben Quinn Political correspondent

**Source:
The
Guardian**

Eroding trust reduces scrutiny



BBC BBC '100% fake news', says Donald Trump's press secretary

Comments by Karoline Leavitt follow allegations that Panorama documentary misled viewers with its editing of a Trump speech

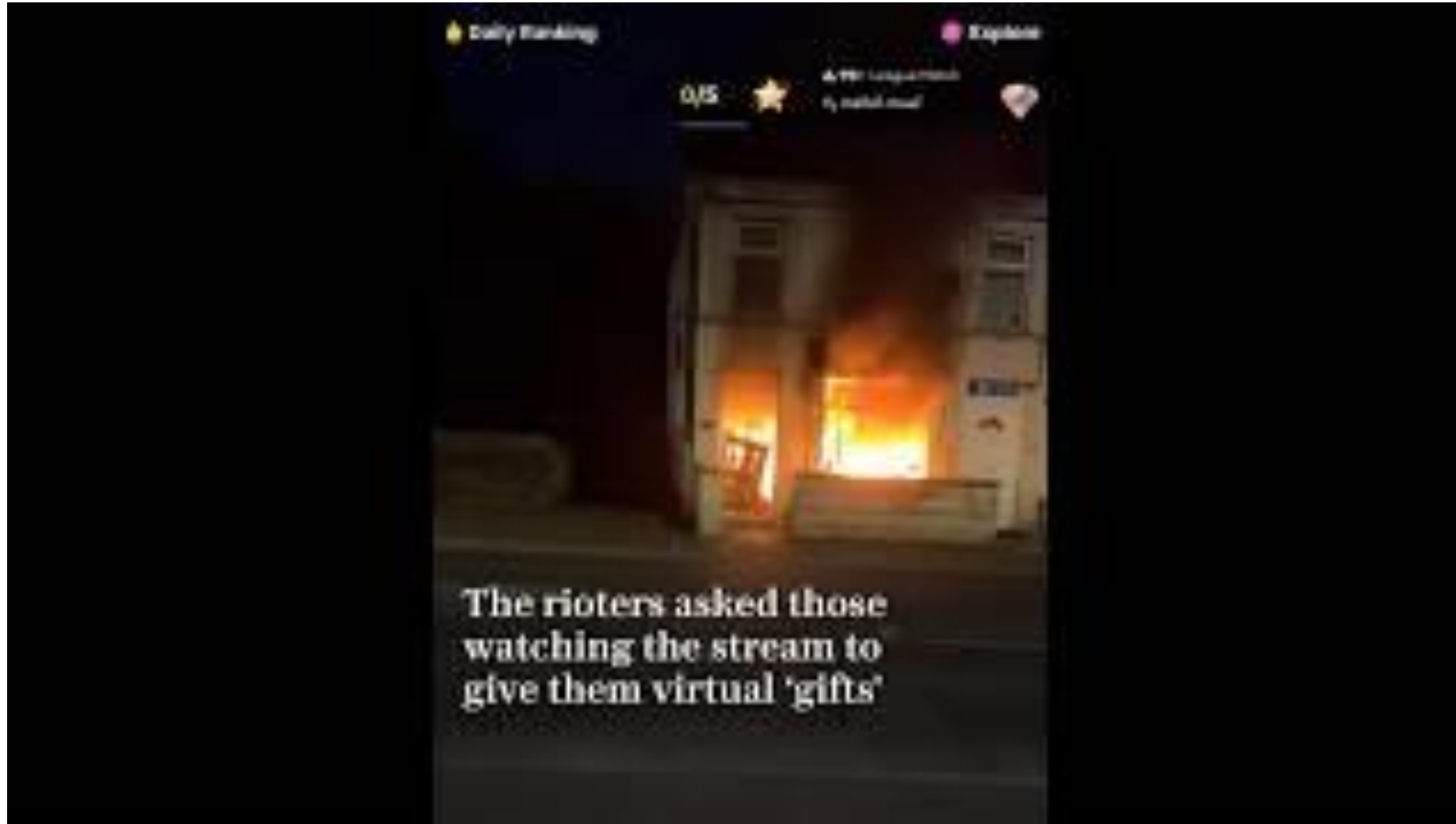
Watch: White House press secretary calls Irish journalist 'left-wing hack'

"Yeah, because you're a left-wing hack, you're not a reporter, you're posing in this room as a journalist and it's so clear by the premise of your question.

"And you and the people in the media who have such biases but fake like you're a journalist, you shouldn't even be sitting in that seat. But you're pretending like you're a journalist but you're a left-wing activist," she said.

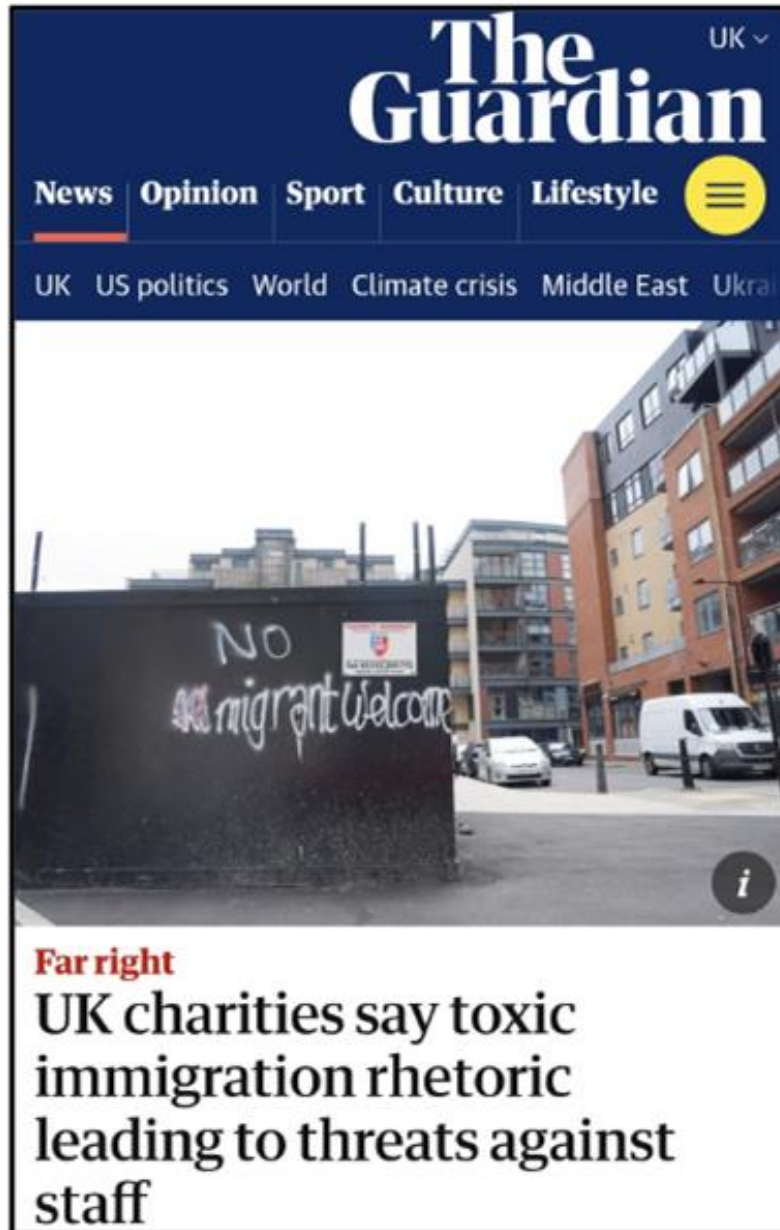
Sources: The Guardian and RTÉ News

The role of social media



[Source: The Telegraph on YouTube](#)

The result



Source: The Guardian

The result



Sources:
The Independent,
The Irish News

What to believe?

Trump administration unleashes torrent of untruths after woman shot dead by ICE

Victim-blaming began almost as soon as Renee Nicole Good was killed - we examine the claims and the reality



THE HILL

NEWSLETTERS

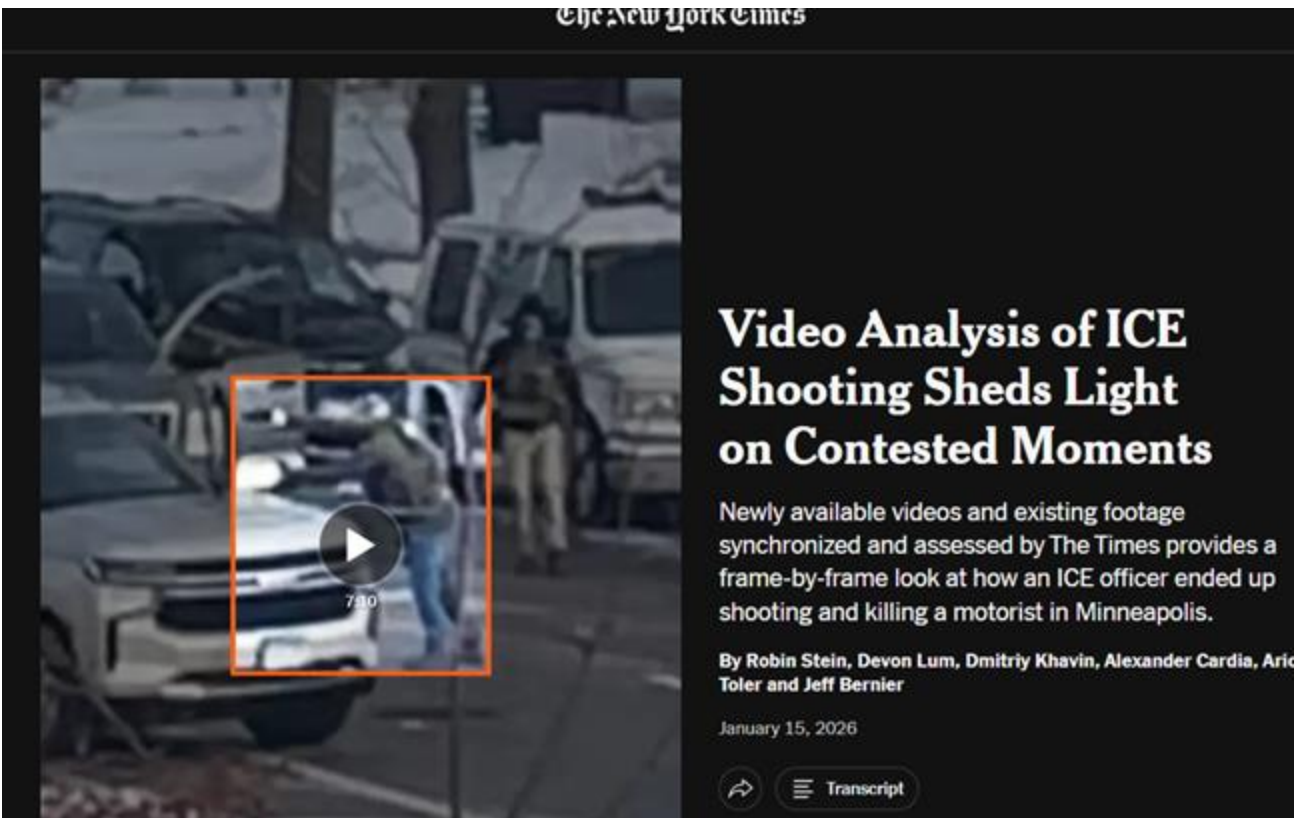
Noem doubles down on 'domestic terrorism' claim against woman in ICE shooting

BY MAX REGO - 01/08/26 1:24 PM ET



Sources: The Guardian, The Hill

Trust building



Source: The New York Times

Relevance

THE TIMES Home UK World Comment Life & Style Business & Money Sport Culture Travel Obituaries Puzzles Magazines

Top stories Money Economics Companies & Markets Entrepreneurs Technology

Money >

Five things to watch out for when picking a savings rate

The highest-paying accounts may not be the best option if you don't want to have to keep moving your money. Check the small print, says George Nixon





Imogen Tew
BAE is up 30 per cent in six months — is it time to sell?



Katherine Denham
Fraudsters stole my identity and borrowed £7,000 in my name



The true cost of motherhood? Start with £65,000 in lost earnings

Parenting



The pension deal that pays you to retire early

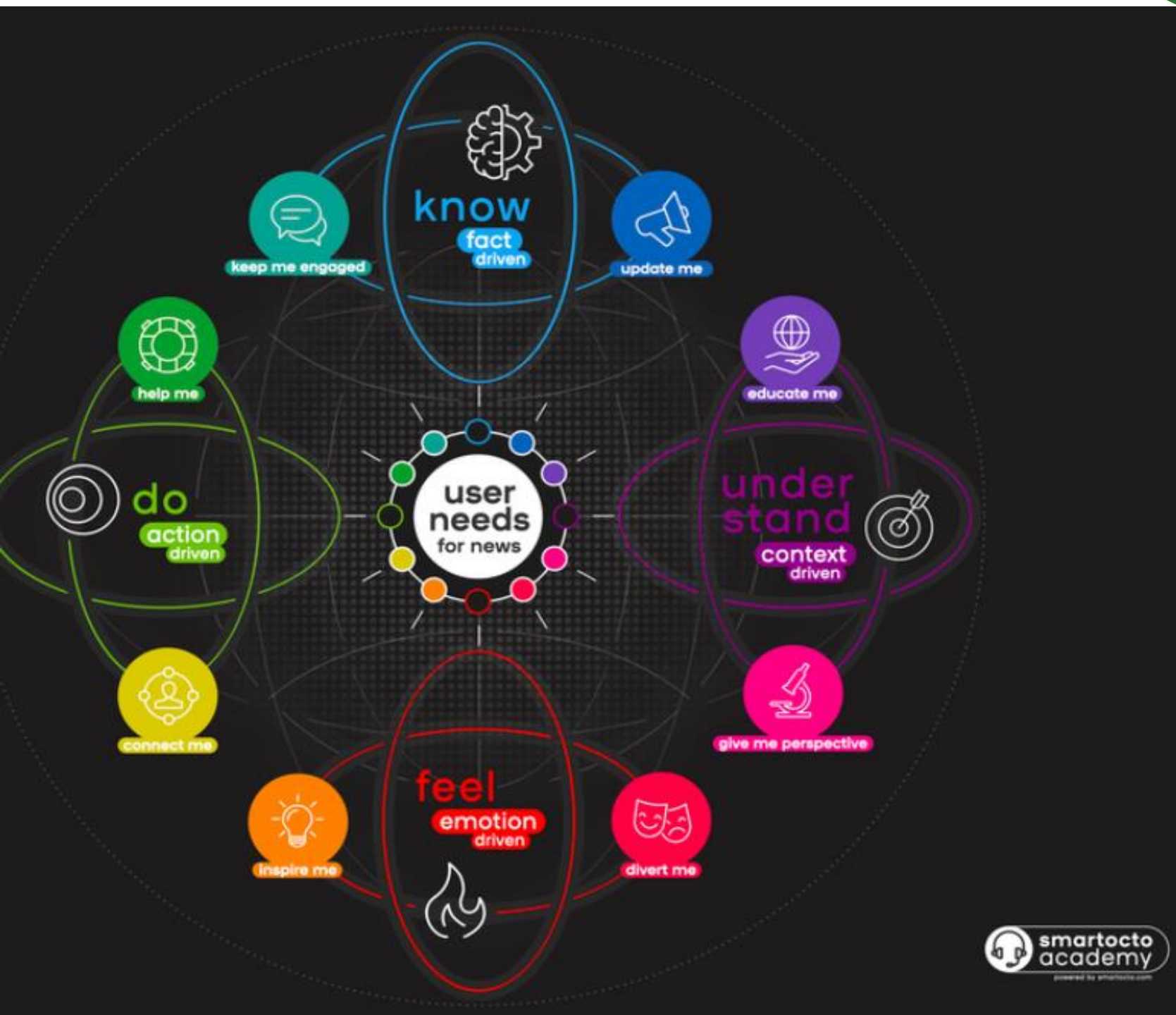


Why you should act now to grab a tax-efficient mortgage



'I saved £1,000 by using ChatGPT as an accountant'

Source:
The Times



User Needs Model

Source: smartocto

Ideal News Experience for young people

01.

Trusted Source

Credibility

"They know their stuff and I can count on them"

Affinity

"I feel connected to them"

Transparency of Intention

"I understand their motives"

02.

Personal Significance

Topic

"I am interested in this subject"

Actionability

"I can do something with this"

03.

Desired Storytelling

Convenience

"I don't want this to require more effort than is necessary"

Language

"I want words that I understand and a tone that is welcoming"

Format

"I want this in a form that works for me and my situation"

Source: FT Strategies/Knight Lab

The toolkit



The toolkit

 6	• Deepen direct relationships	• Online and offline
 7	• Think mobile-first and shareable	• Do not design for desktop
 8	• Use frameworks	• User needs • Ideal News Experience
 9	• Partner up	• Mainstream, community & independent media • Journalism students • Sector content share
 10	• Training	• Media literacy

News avoidance

TOP REASONS FOR NEWS AVOIDANCE - ALL MARKETS



39%

say news has negative effect on mood



20%

say there is nothing I can do with the information



31%

say they are worn out by the amount of news



18%

say it leads to arguments I'd rather avoid



30%

say there is too much coverage of conflict/war



18%

say it doesn't feel relevant to my life



29%

say there is too much coverage of politics



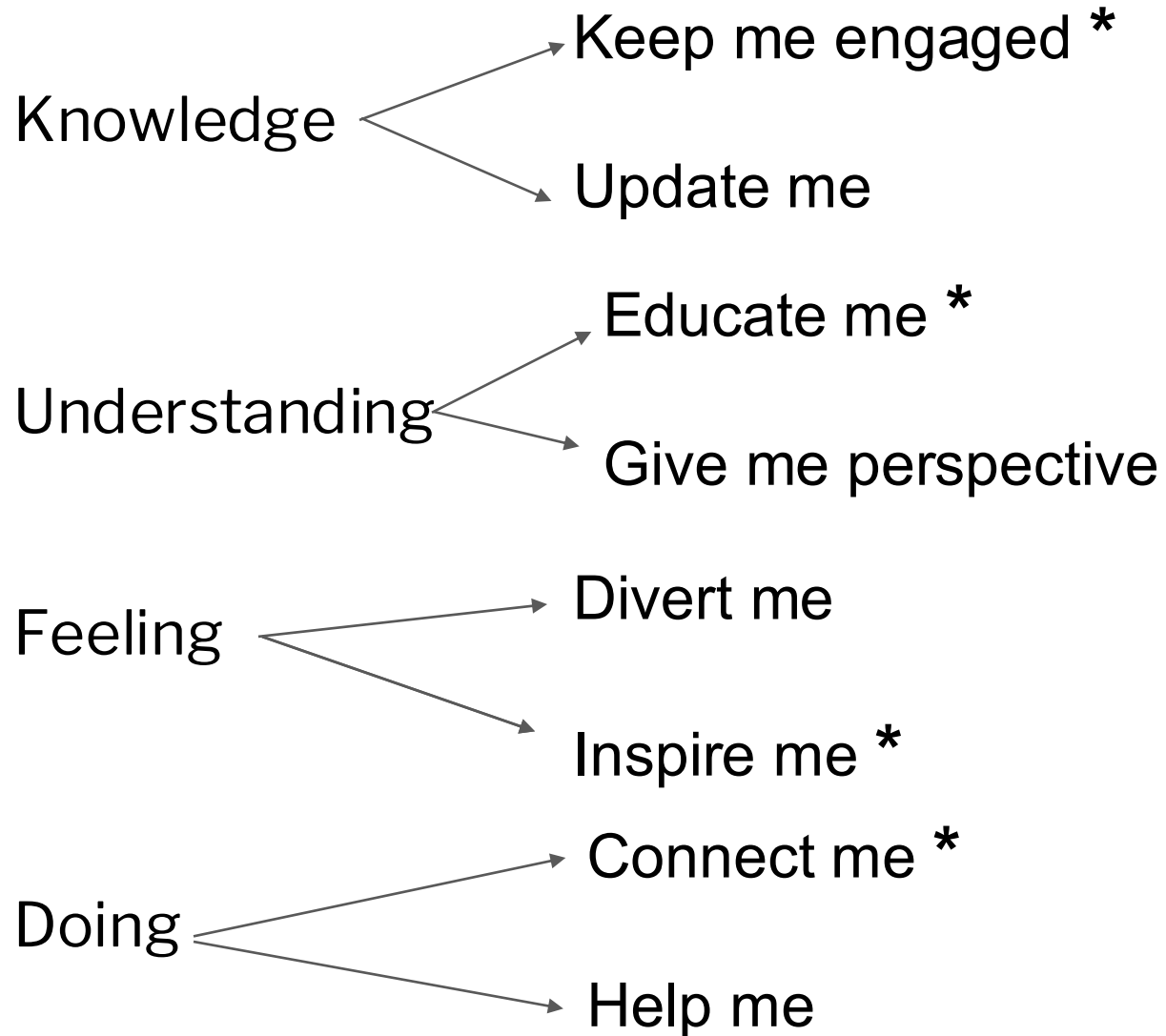
9%

say news is too hard to understand
(14% with U35s)

46%
of people in
the UK
sometimes
or often
avoid the
news

Basic need

User need



User Needs Model

Source: smartocto

Thank you



**Raised
Voices**

raised-voices.co.uk

A group of people are seated at a long table in a bright, modern room, likely a conference or meeting space. They are all looking towards the left side of the frame, suggesting they are listening to a speaker or participating in a discussion. The room has large windows in the background, letting in natural light. The word "BREAK" is overlaid in large, bold, blue capital letters across the center of the image.

BREAK

Panel Session

Leading in politically charged & misinformed environments



Paul Smyth
Politics in Action NI



Liza Wilkinson
TIDES Training



Seán Feenan
**Convenor of the
Reference Group**



Jamie Dunlop
Scottish Youth Parliament



A group of people are seated around a table in a meeting room. The image is dimmed with a dark blue overlay. The word "LUNCH" is written in large, bold, light blue capital letters across the center of the image. The people are wearing lanyards and appear to be listening or waiting. There are papers and a cup on the table.

LUNCH



Beyond the noise: Reclaiming leadership in complex systems

Mark Rogers - CEO, Leadership Centre



A group of people are seated at a long table in a bright, modern room, likely a conference or meeting space. They are all looking towards the left side of the frame, suggesting they are listening to a speaker or participating in a discussion. The man on the far left is wearing a dark suit and a blue lanyard. The woman next to him is wearing a light blue shirt and a blue lanyard. The woman in the center is wearing a light blue shirt and a blue lanyard. The woman on the far right is wearing a green patterned shirt and a blue lanyard. The word "BREAK" is overlaid in large, bold, blue capital letters in the center of the image.

BREAK



Power, voice, responsibility and the civil society landscape

Mark Rogers - CEO, Leadership Centre



WHAT'S NEXT?

Dinner
7PM

Wellbeing Time
6AM

Breakfast
7-9 AM

Day 2
9AM



East West Forum For Civic Leadership

Residential Day #2 | 6 February 2026

A close-up photograph of four hands assembling white puzzle pieces. The hands are positioned around the center, with fingers carefully fitting the pieces together. The entire image is overlaid with a semi-transparent teal color. In the center, the words "Welcome back" are written in a bold, white, sans-serif font, enclosed within a dark teal rectangular box.

Welcome back



Building Leadership Through Introspection

Zara Mohammed

Zm ZARA MOHAMMED

“Building Leadership Through Introspection”

Lead with Heart, Connect with Purpose

East-West Forum Training | Friday 6th
Feb. 2026 | 1.5hrs | Belfast



Empathetic Leadership: Building Strong Relationships, preparing for future challenges

Trainer: Zara Mohammed

About me

**Former Secretary-General,
Muslim Council of Britain,
2021-2025**

First woman, youngest and
first scot to lead the largest
Muslim representative body
in the UK

Now consulting on
leadership governance and
inclusion (UK & Int'l)



Overview

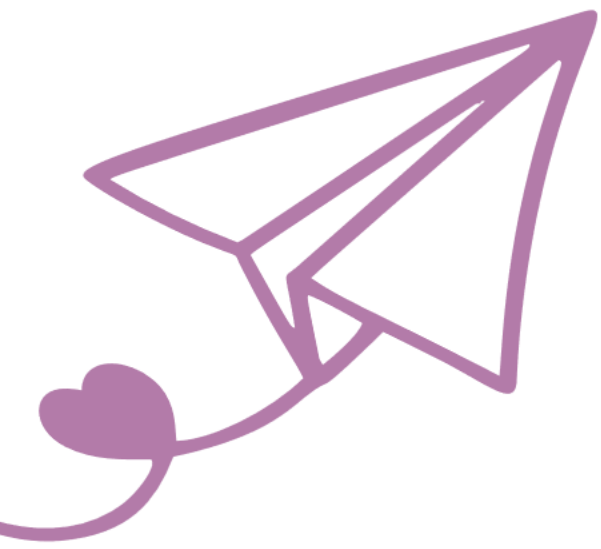
Duration 1.5hrs

Part 1: Understanding our
Leadership- Perspectives

Part 2: Group Case Studies

Part 3: Discussion &
Reflection





Today's Session: **Building Leadership** **Through Introspection**

- **Clarify the values and assumptions shaping your leadership decisions**
- **Test how you respond to complexity, risk and moral tension**
- **Identify one intentional leadership action you take forward**







“Every challenge you encounter in life is a fork in the road. You have the choice to choose which way to go – backward, forward, breakdown or breakthrough.”

— Ifeanyi Enoch Onuoha



Understanding Ourselves



Where are we...going

- I. What drives us**
- II. What holds us back**
- III. Breaking through**

Things we are dealing with regularly...



Feeling
Misunderstood



Teams falling
apart



It's lonely at the
top



STOP









Self Awareness Task

**Who am I?
What I do?
What do I stand for?**

**Who do they think I am?
What do they think I do?
What do they think I stand
for?**

What makes leaders excel, and what makes you excel...



Authenticity

Directional
thinking

Growing out
of comfort
zones

Rising to the challenge



“Courage is not only about finding
bravery for ourselves. It is also about
helping others find theirs.”

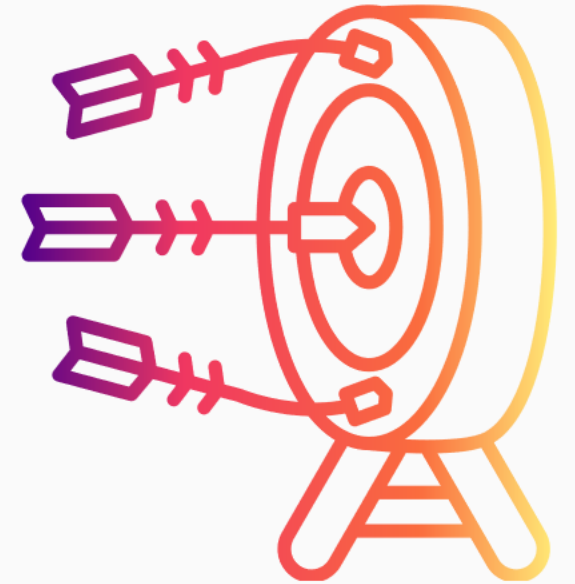
— Steve Pemberton,



Consider...

Write down your goal.

(One clear thing you want — no overthinking.)



**If success was
guaranteed, what would I
do next?**

**What am I pretending not
to know?**

**What would I do if I wasn't
worried about
disappointing anyone?**

How to navigate Case Studies

This is not about finding the “right” answer.

Use each scenario to notice:

- What emotions this triggers in you
- Which values feel challenged
- What assumptions you are making
- Where you feel risk-averse or courageous
- What future you may be shaping through your response



Case Studies

1

There has been a leaked email that the CEO plans to replace 40% of the workforce with AI and is against employing anyone with a disability. A protest is planned outside and media storm is looming.

2

A US Billionaire has quote tweeted your charity on x claiming your new campaign is harmful and part of a 'woke mind virus' and your CEO is an 'idiot' trying to promote inclusion. The story spreads rapidly and misinformation takes hold.

3

Your organisation has launched a programme supporting refugees into employment. Public feedback is mixed, with some political pressure locally. Several board members argue the programme risks reputational damage and funding loss and propose closing it and reallocating resources. Your CEO holds the deciding vote.

Case Studies

4

You are days away from delivering a high-profile national conference that significantly affects your organisation's credibility and future funding.

The project lead is exhausted, defensive and missing critical details.

She has threatened to resign before.

You suspect the delivery may fail unless you intervene directly. Stepping in may undermine them publicly and damage trust; not stepping in risks reputational harm and team burnout.

5

There has been a new local councillor and MP who have decided that funds for the local community centre will be cut as its a waste of money, although not directly impacted you have been invited to come to the community meeting and show public support.

“What leadership muscle does the future require
that this situation exposes?”

FUTURE LOADING



Navigating Authenticity

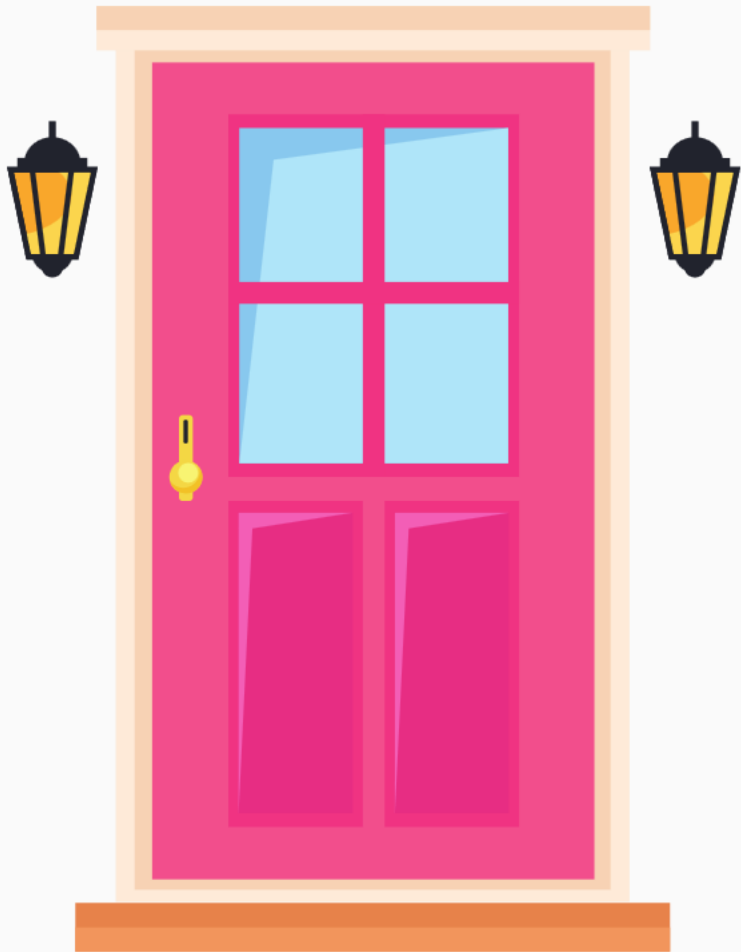




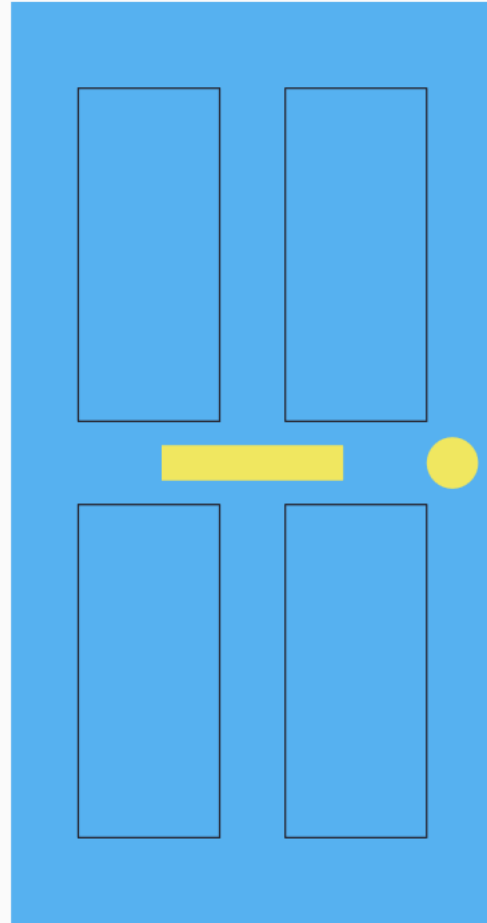
“Having uncompromising belief also means safeguarding your own spirit, defining who and what you want in your life.”

— Steve Pemberton





Door 1: Staying where you are



Door 2: Small, safe progress



Door 3: Bold breakthrough



“Whenever we take a stand, we invite others
who are sitting on the sidelines to join us.”



A woman wearing a blue hijab and a blue plaid jacket is speaking at a clear acrylic podium. She is gesturing with her hands. The podium has a microphone and a small screen. In the background, there is a green and white checkered pattern and a screen displaying "tland25" and "www.citynetwork.co.uk". The foreground shows the back of several audience members' heads.

LET'S CONNECT!

HELLO@ZARA-MOHAMMED.COM

[LINKEDIN.COM/IN/ZARAMOHAMMED1](https://www.linkedin.com/in/zaramohammed1)

WWW.ZARA-MOHAMMED.COM

A group of people are seated at a long table in a bright, modern room, likely a conference or meeting space. They are all looking towards the left side of the frame, suggesting they are listening to a speaker or participating in a discussion. The room has large windows in the background, and the overall atmosphere is professional and collaborative. The word "BREAK" is overlaid in large, bold, cyan letters across the center of the image.

BREAK

Common pressures - Shared Challenges

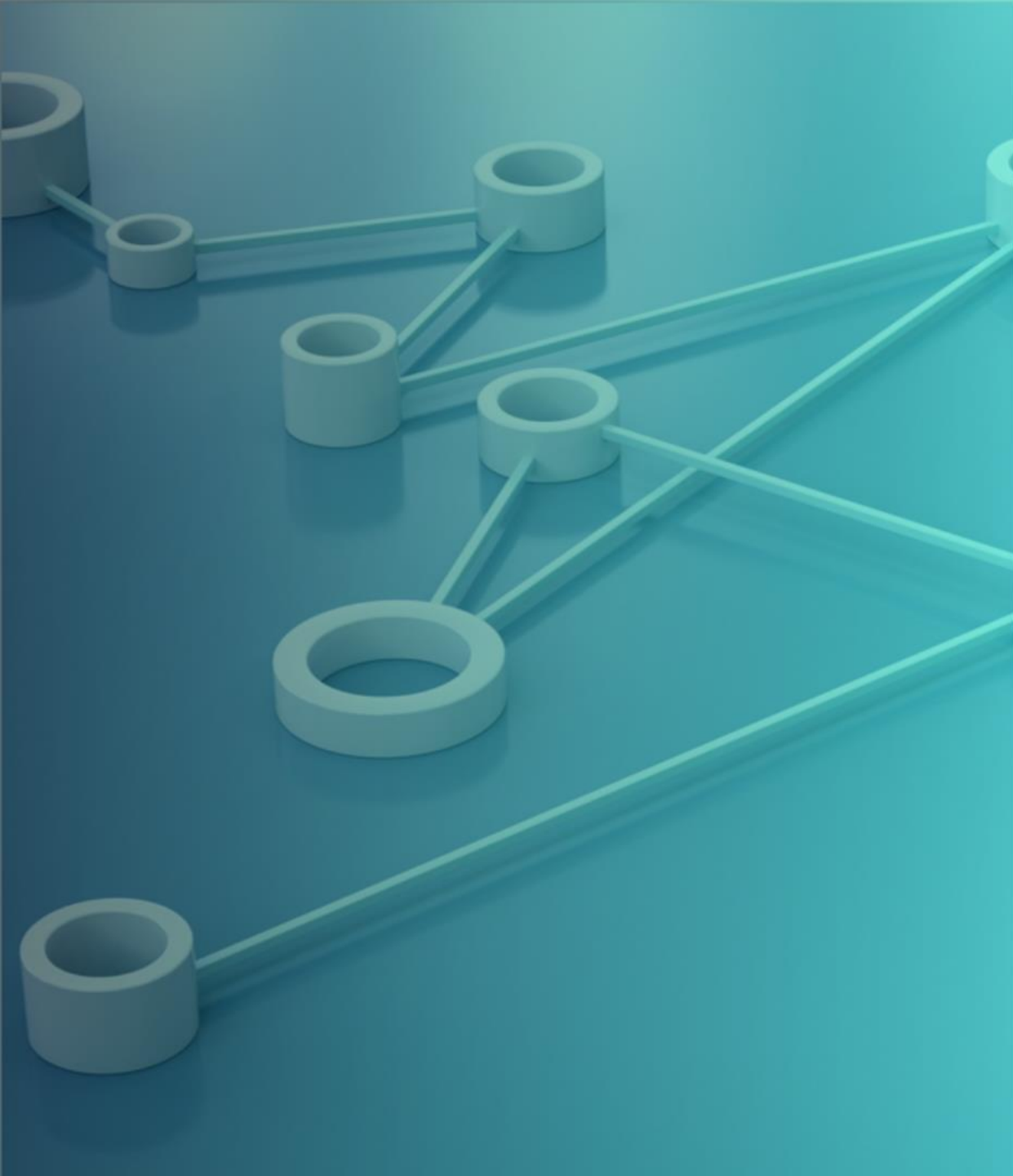


Lucinda Godfrey
Charity Leadership
Scotland



Valerie McConville
CO3





Common Pressures/Shared Challenges

Sense the system and see
yourself within it

Where are you experiencing the greatest pressure right now as a civil society leader – and what makes that pressure feel different from five years ago?

(These could be misinformation, political context, funding models, board dynamics, workforce strain)



Which of these pressures feel structurally embedded in the system, and which feel amplified by narrative, media or perception?

(What's being confused or conflated in public discourse?)



Across the four nations, where do our experiences clearly diverge – and where are the underlying challenges surprisingly similar?

(What does that tell us about what is local and what is systemic?)



What leadership responses are currently being demanded of you that your organisation or governance structures are not yet designed to support?

(Where are leaders being stretched beyond existing models?)





WORKING LUNCH

Shaping the shared future

Rehearse the future and shape collective direction

If we look ahead 3–5 years, what must civil society leadership across the UK be braver or clearer about than it is today?

Which two or three cross-nation priorities, if championed together by ACEVO, CO3 and Charity Leadership Scotland, would most strengthen trust, voice and legitimacy?

**Where could greater alignment
across the four nations unlock
disproportionate influence or
protection for civil society?**

What is one 'sacred cow' in the sector that may need to be challenged if we are serious about renewal and future readiness?



Anchoring Change



Small Group Discussion



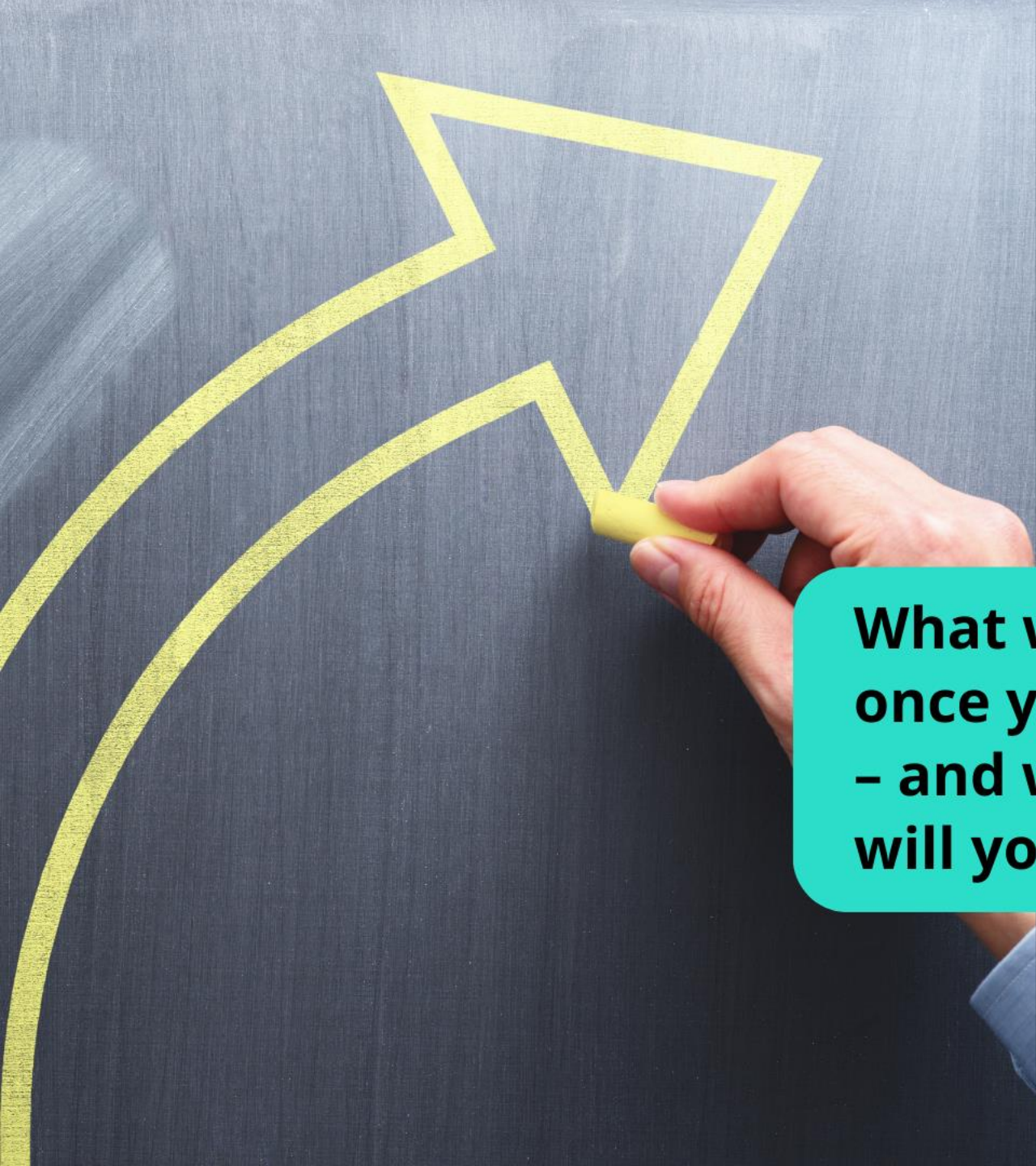
REFLECTION

What is one insight from this programme that has genuinely unsettled or shifted your thinking about your leadership role?



REFLECTION

What specific leadership behaviour, habit or stance will you commit to changing as a result?



REFLECTION

What will make this change difficult once you return to your organisation – and what support or accountability will you need to sustain it?



REFLECTION

How will you recognise, in six months' time, that this shift has had a real impact beyond yourself?

**Relax
Reflect
Reset**



WHAT'S NEXT?



Online Session 2

Thursday 26th February
10am -11.30am

Complete Evaluation

SCAN ME



A group of people are seated around a table in a meeting room. The image is dimmed with a dark blue overlay. In the center, the words "Thank you" are written in a bright cyan, bold, sans-serif font. The people in the background are looking towards the left side of the frame. A man on the far left is wearing a dark suit and a blue lanyard. Next to him is a woman with blonde hair, also wearing a blue lanyard. To her right is another woman with blonde hair and glasses, wearing a white shirt and a blue lanyard. On the far right is a woman with short blonde hair and glasses, wearing a green patterned shirt and a blue lanyard. They are all sitting at a white table with various items on it, including a laptop, a mug, and some papers. The background shows a large window with a view of a city skyline.

Thank you