

# CONOR HOUSTON

## LAWYER AND STEERING TEAM MEMBER OF YOUNG INFLUENCERS

**What are your thoughts, in general, to charitable giving?**

I have always been a big supporter of charities - at home my parents always encouraged us from a young age to fundraise and give time for charities through school and youth clubs. My mother has been a campaigner and volunteer for charities throughout her life. In business, my dad always promoted doing good deeds in the local community.

**Is your giving personal or corporate or both?**

It has been both - often I have used my personal connection with a charity to persuade corporate giving.

**How do you give to charity: monetarily, your own time as a volunteer or your own specialist skills?**

It's a mixture of all of these! I give a fixed amount each month to two charities based in Northern Ireland. I also support a number of events each year. As a young professional, I can give my time, energy and skills to charities and have done this by sitting on boards and providing pro bono advice to charities.

**What type of causes do you favour and why?**

I am interested in charities that transform childhoods. As a lawyer, I understand that providing every child with a safe childhood, in which they have opportunity, is an essential starting point in challenging many of the issues that exist within our society. Any charity which empowers

young people or provides opportunity to young people interests me.

**Are there any specific charities or causes that you give to regularly? How do you choose which to support?**

I support the work of the NSPCC in Northern Ireland as they are committed to transforming childhoods and offer cutting edge and bespoke services. For this reason, I also support HomeStart as my mother has been a volunteer with the charity for almost a decade and I have seen the positive impact it has in assisting families. I also give to my alma mater, Queen's University Belfast and in particular the new School of Law - I am so fortunate to have had so many opportunities as a result of my time there, so it's important to ensure others have the same chance.

**Do you believe that companies and individuals have a duty to help others? If yes, why?**

Absolutely. Not only from a moral point of view, but a compassionate society that provides assistance and opportunity to those less fortunate can make a huge impact in terms of creating upward social opportunity, which economically benefits us all.

**What is your message to business people who may be thinking about becoming more involved in strategic philanthropy?**

Go for it! People feel good from helping others. It encourages teamwork and the synergy that can flow from supporting a charity cannot be underestimated.



**Giving NI was set up last year to champion Philanthropy. Why do you think it is important that there is an organisation that helps businesses and individuals think more strategically about giving?**

Firstly, we need to understand philanthropy is not just for millionaires. Giving NI is redefining philanthropy and trying to foster a culture of giving in NI - this is a really great thing. Whether it is a monthly donation, giving your time to a volunteer or providing pro bono services to charity - this is all philanthropy. It's good to have an organisation thinking about this strategically and hopefully creating NI as a model for philanthropy around the world!

**Eye**

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