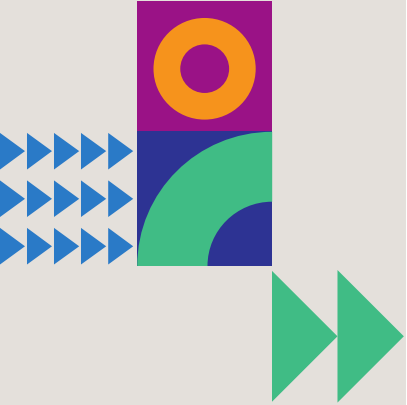


SASW Annual Conference 2025

From the Frontline: Activism, Action and the Future of
Social Work

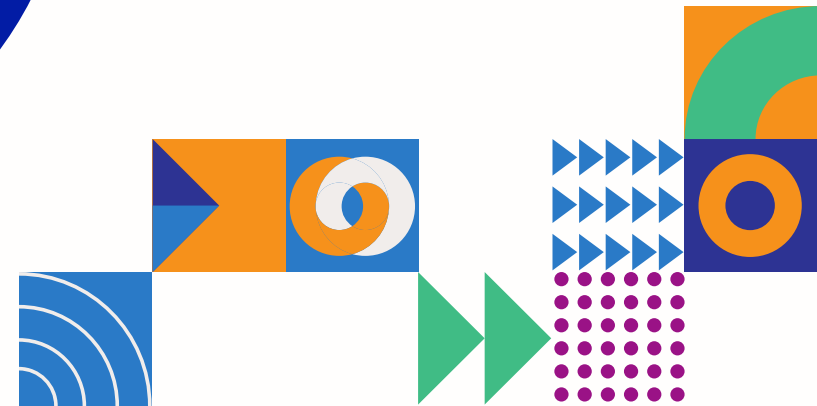


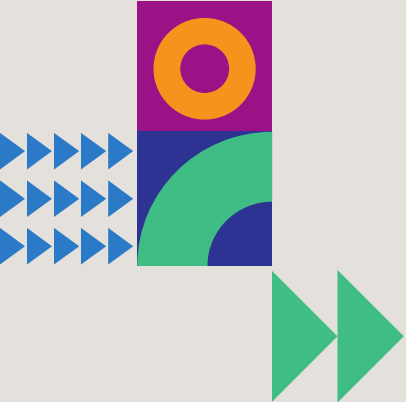
#SASWConf25



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Be **SASW**

SASW, part of BASW UK, is the Scottish Association of Social Work, offering services that protect and support your social work career, and helping you shape the profession in Scotland.

1 Be recognised

Show your commitment to professional practice and use MSASW after your name.



2 Be protected

£5 million of professional indemnity insurance as part of the working membership package.



3 Be represented



Get advice from BASW Advice and Representation, a team of qualified social workers, for professional and regulatory help. Opt in to the Social Workers Union from £1.66 per month for full, tailored employment help and protection services (subject to terms and conditions).

4 Be connected

Meet like-minded colleagues, through branches, events and special interest and other groups to share ideas, discuss practice, policies and develop our profession together. Join our community of social workers online - through Twitter, Facebook and LinkedIn.



5 Be informed

Professional Social Work (PSW) magazine - the UK's only printed social work magazine - delivered free to your door 10 times a year. Member only free access to select resources online.



6 Be progressing

Develop your career. Learn about the latest social work practice developed by and for social workers. Log your CPD from a range of free or discounted training, online resources and events. Be listed as a specialist in our directory to acquire business as an Independent member.



7 Be ethical

BASW's Code of Ethics along with a full range of guidance and policies, upholds the highest professional standards and practice.



8 Be heard

The powerful voice of more than 21,000 members, building the strength and influence of social work and calling for urgent action on issues that really matter. Be active in campaigns for improved working conditions for social workers and anti-poverty. Join one of our member committees, groups and networks to shape policies.



9 Be supported

Create your personalised wellbeing programme with the online POWR resource. Apply for financial support grants for education, hardship or international work.



10 Be saving

Save up to 75% on social work journals as well as discount shopping deals at major retailers. Plus heavily discounted and free CPD and events.



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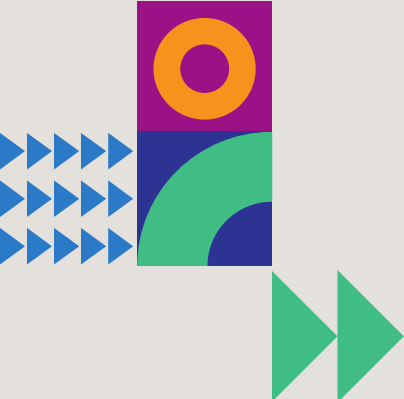


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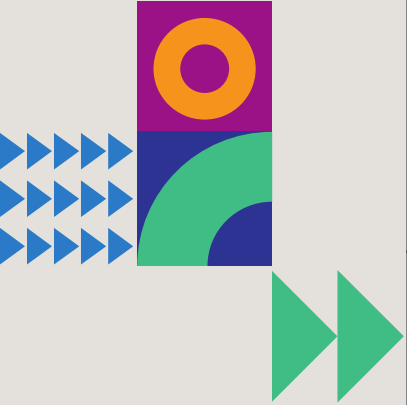


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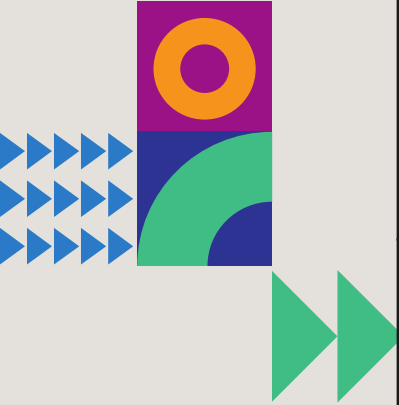




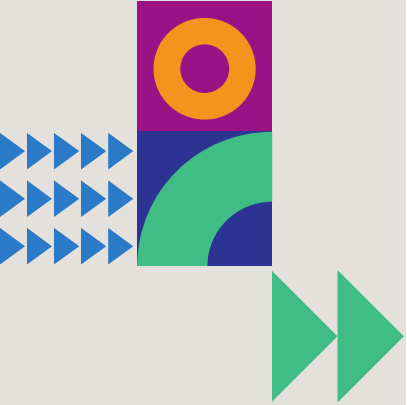
PROGRAMME			
Welcome & Introduction	Dr Jane Shears	National Director BASW NI & SASW & Conference Chair	10:00
Can activism drive forward rights-based, inclusive, and equitable social work practice?	Charlie McMillan	Director, Humans Rights Consortium	10:10
The Power threat Meaning Framework – Implications for Social Work and for Activism	Phil Wilshire	Social Worker, Avon & Wiltshire Mental Health Partnership NHS Trust	10:30
Break	All		10:50
National developments in social work	Iona Colvin	Chief Social Work Adviser, Scottish Government	11:05
Panel - Voices from the front line. What's working, what's not.	Iona Colvin, Chief Social Work Adviser; Charlie McMillan, Humans Rights Consortium; Phil Wilshire, Social Worker; Caroline McDonald, Co-chair SASW National Committee		11:25
Lunch	All		12:00
Workshops	All	See full details on next pages	13:00
Workshops	All	See full details on next pages	14:00
Break	All		14:50
Prospects for the 2026 Scottish Parliament Election	Prof. Sir John Curtice	Professor of Politics at the University of Strathclyde	15:05
Panel - Building campaigns for change	John Dickie, CPAG; Monica Lennon MSP; John McGowan, SWU; Alison McGrory, NHS Highland		15:30
Final thoughts and close	Toyin Adenugba & Caroline McDonald	Co-Chairs SASW National Committee	15:50



WORKSHOPS A - F Choice 1 from 13:00 - 13:50 * 10 min break * Choice 2 from 14:00 - 14:50		
Workshop A	Anne-Marie Monaghan, <i>Community Brokerage Scotland Lead & Linda Riley, Advisory Member of SASW's National Committee</i>	What I wish my social worker had asked me? <i>A powerful workshop that puts service user voices at the heart of reimagining social work practice. Drawing on real experiences and insights, this session will support practitioners to use innovative, relationship-based practice that meets people's needs.</i>
Workshop B	Susanne Machin-Autenrieth, <i>Social Work Lecturer, Robert Gordon University & Susan Dobson, Professional Officer, Scottish Association of Social Work</i>	International Social Workers: thriving or surviving? <i>Exploring the experiences of international social workers who live and practice in Scotland. Drawing on Induction Standards for Diaspora social workers created by the BASW Diaspora SIG we will look at best practice in supporting international social workers moving to the UK, and celebrate all that they bring to social work practice.</i>
Workshop C	Dr. Neil Thompson, <i>Avenue Consulting – SWU Ambassador</i>	Social Work, Activism and Influencing Skills <i>Giving the opportunity to explore one of the main linking threads between social work and activism, namely influencing skills. He has long believed that greater emphasis on influencing skills needs to be given in social work education. An enhanced level of influencing skills can have a positive effect on both social work practice and activism.</i>



WORKSHOPS A - F Choice 1 from 13:00 - 13:50 * 10 min break * Choice 2 from 14:00 - 14:50		
Workshop D	Geraldine Graham, <i>Social Work Lecturer, University of the West of Scotland</i>	Climate Justice, Radical Practice and Social Work <i>A discussion-based workshop to consider the implications of environmental challenges for social work practitioners. Engaging participants in examining three case studies to help us think about how social workers might respond to the climate crisis in practice. The session aims to identify activist approaches into everyday practice.</i>
Workshop E	Claire Longmuir, <i>Director of Operations, The Simon Community</i>	Making services fit for people: Inspiration for change <i>An interactive workshop exploring harm reduction not just as a service delivery model, but as a radical political stance that challenges punitive systems and fights for human dignity. Far from being a 'soft option', harm reduction represents a fundamental rejection of criminalisation, stigma, and moral judgement for care and compassion.</i>
Workshop F	Alison McGrory, <i>Associate Director of Public Health, NHS Highland</i>	Managing Cats: Activism, Health and social work <i>Exploring how local authority, health and third sector organisations supported community-led activism to improve local health and wellbeing outcomes. As austerity continues to impact public services, communities are increasingly organising their own solutions - from food banks and community gardens to mental health support groups and neighbourhood safety initiatives.</i>



Dr Toyin Adenugba

Social worker and social work academic, Co-chair, Scottish Association of Social Work National Standing Committee

Dr. Toyin is an academic and practicing social worker. I have worked in Social Care and Social Work for approximately 25 years in the Republic of Ireland, Northern Ireland, and Scotland.

My interests include people living with Dementia, Mothers with a care experience, Self-Directed Support, Minoritised practitioners in social work practice, and the Practicalities of working in adult support and protection social work.



Caroline McDonald

Team Leader, Glasgow H&SCP & Co-chair Scottish Association of Social Work Organisation

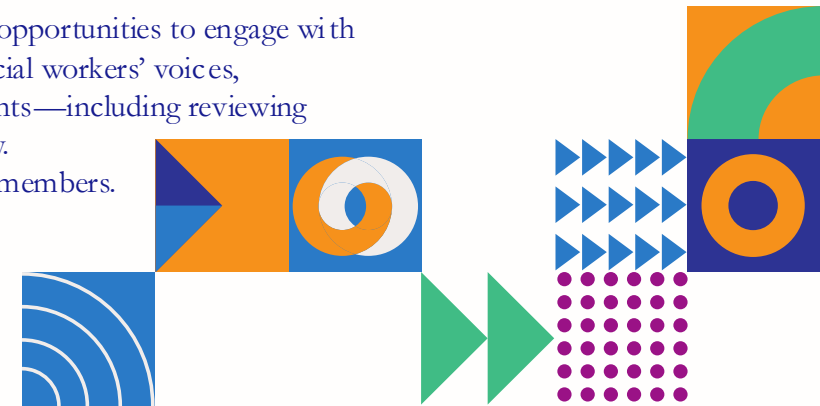
Caroline is a 'home grown' social worker, having started in her local authority 26 years ago. She initially worked in housing and social care before qualifying as a social worker in 2016. Since then, she has worked in a children and families team and is now a team leader. Caroline is a qualified practice educator and holds a Postgraduate Certificate in Child Welfare and Child Protection.

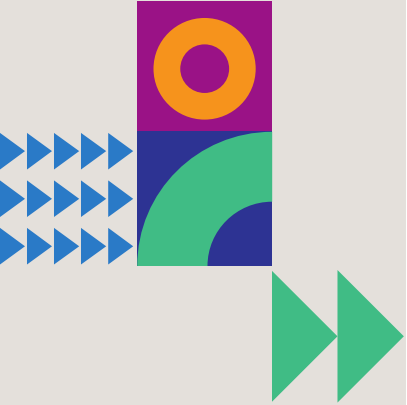
Her key interests include practice learning and development, child protection, pre-birth work with families, domestic abuse approaches, and safeguarding children and young people. She is passionate about social justice and anti-poverty practice.

Elected to the National Standing Committee in Scotland (SASW) in early 2020, Caroline has embraced opportunities to engage with policy and legislation affecting social work and society. She actively participates in forums to amplify social workers' voices, contributes to government consultations, and has represented the profession at Scottish Parliament events—including reviewing mental health legislation and speaking at the CPG Festival of Politics on social work's role in democracy. Now Co-Vice Chair of SASW, Caroline works closely with the SASW team, committee colleagues, and members. She joined the BASW Council in October 2022 as an appointed director.

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Charlie McMillan

Charlie McMillan is the Interim Director of the Human Rights Consortium Scotland which is Scotland's civil society network organisation and a human rights defender which promotes human rights awareness, compliance and incorporation.

Charlie trained as a social worker and has worked in wide range of roles supporting people on the margins of society including alternatives to custody, HIV/AIDS support and advocacy, mental health support and provision of support services for disabled people. Other than three years with the Scottish Government, he has worked in the Scottish voluntary/charity sector throughout his career.

Charlie joined the Human Rights Consortium in September 2024. He is co-chair of the Scottish National Action Plan for Human Rights Leadership Panel (SNAP 2). Previously, he founded and was Chair of Restraint Reduction Scotland, and the Scottish Gender-Based Violence and Learning Disability Steering Group. Charlie has experience in designing and delivering support services, lobbying, campaigning, policy development and is an advocate for participation and co-production. He is Chair of the Board of Trustees for Dates'n'Mates Scotland which supports people with learning disabilities to develop friendships and relationships and Chair of the Global Leadership Exchange's Advisory Group for Disability. Charlie is an individual LGBT+ activist and has a wide range of other personal interests including a mindfulness-based meditation practice.

Phil Wilshire

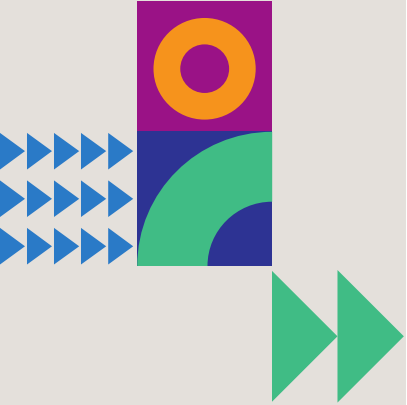
Social Worker, Avon & Wiltshire Mental Health Partnership NHS Trust

Phil Wilshire has been a mental health social worker for 28 years and an ASW/AMHP for 25. He has managed a variety of community mental health teams in the South-West and was the Social Work and Social Care Lead for Avon and Wiltshire Mental Health Trust from 2014 to 2022.

He was on the committee of the mental health streams of work both for the short-lived College of Social Work and BASW and has organised conferences for the Social Care Strategic Network (SCSN) and for the Movement for Social Approaches in Mental Health.

He was Social Work and Social Care advisor to the BPS Division of Clinical Psychology "Power Threat Meaning" Project and has been involved in teaching the approach in various forums. Currently he is the "Head of Care Planning Transformation" for AWP and is part of a team working locally to support care planning to be more personalised.





Iona Colvin

Chief Adviser to Scottish Ministers, responsible for advising on social work and care policy across adult, children, families, and justice sectors.

Led the development of the National Social Work Agency (NSWA) and contributed to the Care Reform Bill and to the establishment of the Social Work Education Partnership and served as sponsor for the Scottish Social Services Council.

A former Director of Social Work and Chief Officer for North Ayrshire Health and Social Care Partnership where she oversaw integrated services across health and social care, including mental health for NHS Ayrshire and Arran.

Iona worked 27 years in Glasgow City, including as Community Health Care Director for South West Glasgow. Iona was the first joint general manager for addiction services city-wide, developing integrated models for drug and alcohol treatment.

Iona is an Honorary Professor of Social Work at Edinburgh University and has recently received an OBE for services to social work.

Dr Jane Shears

National Director, Scottish Association of Social Workers & British Association of Social Workers NI

Jane is a registered social worker who took up post with the British Association of Social Workers as Head of Professional Development in August 2018. She also maintains current practice as an Approved Mental Health Professional in England and a Best Interests Assessor.

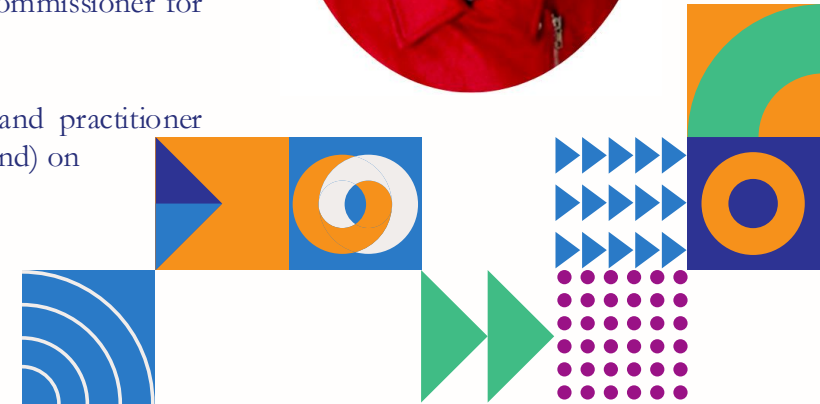
Jane has previously been the chair of BASW's International Committee and is currently the Global Commissioner for the International Federation of Social Work Global Ethics Commission.

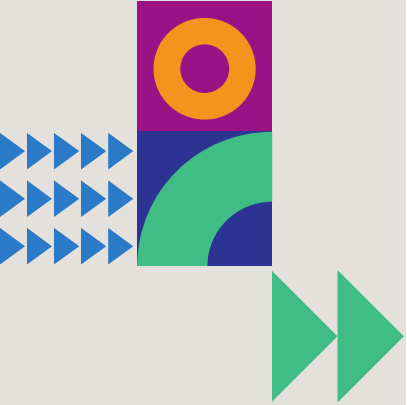
Her research interests include the integration of social care with health services, co-production and practitioner research. Jane began her current role with BASW as the National Director (Scotland and Northern Ireland) on October 1st, 2025.



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Anne-Marie Monaghan

Community Brokerage Scotland Lead

Anne-Marie has worked in various roles in social work over the last 40+ years. This includes leadership in commissioning, managing a joint health and social work team and a head of service role. She led the first SDS Scottish Government test site.

Anne-Marie was a non-executive director on GGCNHS Board, a member of Glasgow IJB and Chair of East Renfrewshire IJB. She worked in an advisory role with Social Security Scotland on the Adult and Child Disability Payments and lead with SASW on the National Care Service. She developed the SQA Community Brokerage Award and National Framework in conjunction with SDSS and the Community Brokerage Network. She is Chair of the Independent Living Fund Scotland who nominated her for the National Care Service Interim Advisory Board that she currently sits on.

Anne-Marie is currently doing her PhD at Strathclyde University on the topic of community brokerage and care management. Anne-Marie is disabled and a permanent wheelchair user giving her a unique perspective on the challenge and from both her professional and her personal experience.

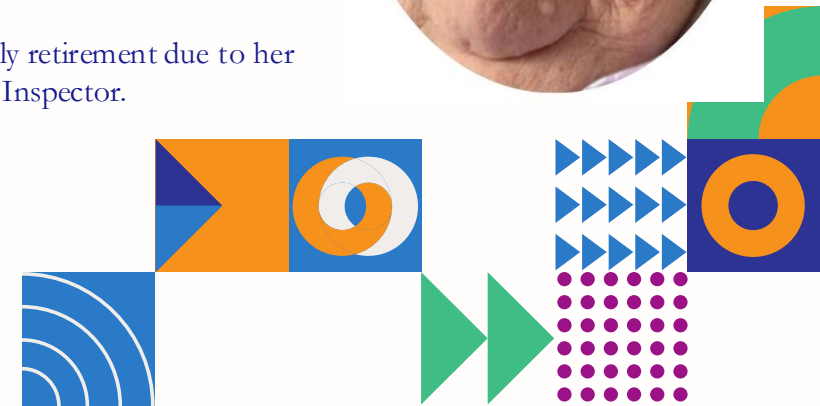


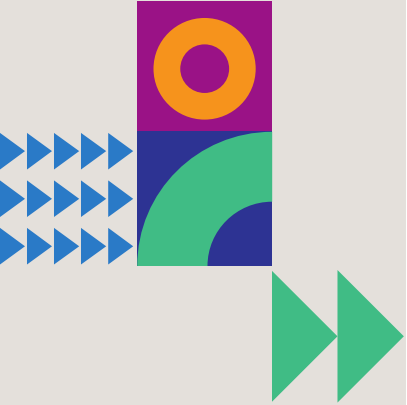
Linda Riley

Advisory Member of SASW's National Committee

An expert by experience, Linda is disabled and has employed a wonderful PA for about 17 years. At age 75, she has a sight impairment and a few other health issues.

Linda has decades of experience of working with disabled children and adults in a variety of settings. Early retirement due to her declining health opened up other opportunities in roles such as the SASW Committee and as a Voluntary Inspector. She works to ensure better support for disabled people and to weave a thread of understanding throughout the work force of Social Services.





Susanne Machin-Autenrieth
Social Work Lecturer, Robert Gordon University

Susanne Machin-Autenrieth is a lecturer in Social Work at Robert Gordon University and the current course leader for the BA (hons) Social Work programme.

She has an extensive social work practice background, and experience as a social worker, senior practitioner, consultant social worker and Team manager in front line Child Protection teams across different local authorities.

Her research interests are around AI in social work practice and its impact on social work education, preparing students for AI supported practice, online child protection such as online facilitated sexual / criminal exploitation and abuse and anti-discriminatory practice.

Susanne is the co-chair of the BASW Special Interest Group for Diaspora Social Workers and a keen advocate for social justice.

Susan Dobson

Professional Officer, Scottish Association of Social Work

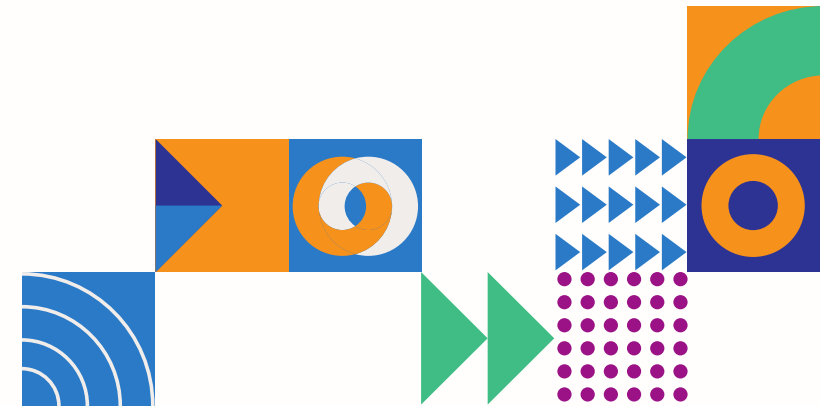
Susan Dobson is a registered social worker and Professional Officer with SASW. She has over 20 years experience working in child protection in the public and third sectors.

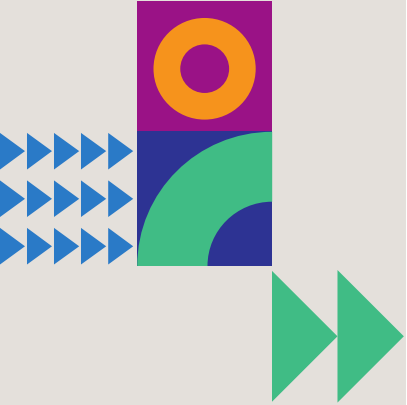
Susan is also an experienced learning and development professional, with extensive experience in practice development in public protection. She has a keen interest in anti-racist practice and co-chairs the national Social Work Anti-racism Oversight Group.



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Dr Neil Thompson

Avenue Consulting – SWU Ambassador

Dr Neil Thompson is an award-winning author and producer of online learning resources.

Very many people have come to see Neil as a guide and mentor, not only on their learning journey, but also on their whole outlook on life, people, problems and potential. With an impeccable academic pedigree, an outstanding publications record and a wealth of direct experience of making a positive difference in a number of ways, he stands out as a source of invaluable wisdom and guidance.

He has held full or honorary professorships at five UK universities and is currently a visiting professor at the Open University and Wrexham University.

He has well over 40 years' experience in the helping professions as a practitioner, manager, educator and consultant. He is now the director of studies at the Neil Thompson Academy (www.NeilThompson.info) which offers a wide range of online learning opportunities, including Chartered Management Institute qualifications in leadership in social care.

Alison Bavidge

SASW Member

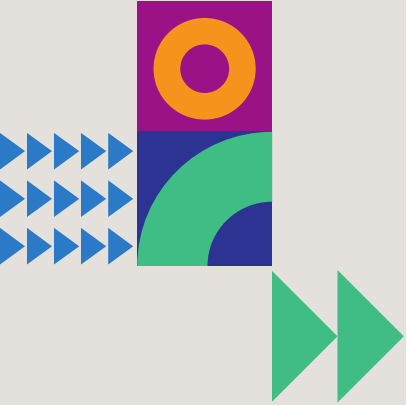
Alison's social work background includes working with children in care, people in the justice system and a wide range of work with adults with disabilities. She's particularly keen that social work in the future enables social workers to use the whole range of relational skills to support individuals and enhance community resilience.

Alison enjoys a wide variety of dance forms and is a member of a local choir - no jokes about making a song and dance of things!



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Geraldine Graham

Social Work Lecturer, University of the West of Scotland

A Social Work Lecturer with professional experience as a qualified social worker across adults' services, learning disabilities, social care and housing. These practice-based insights inform her teaching and research.

Geraldine is interested in the intersection between social work and environmental justice. Having published a paper considering climate change in social work education, she is researching the knowledge base of social work practitioners in this area. This work highlights the essential role of social workers in responding to the climate break down and in shaping sustainable, justice orientated practice for the future.

Her interests extend to wider questions of justice for people, animals and ecosystems, recognising the interdependence of social and ecological wellbeing.



Claire Longmuir

Director of Operations, The Simon Community

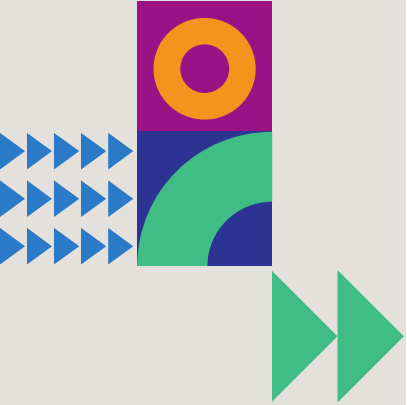
Claire Longmuir is Director of Operations with Simon Community Scotland. For the last 5 years she has lead on the organisations harm reduction approach - driving forward change in policy into practice to reduce drug related deaths and harms for people experiencing homelessness, embedding evidence based practice and centring people voices and experiences in service design and delivery.

She has over 14 years experience working in a range of areas including working with children, young people and families, justice, harm reduction, housing and homelessness and employability. She is a member of the Change Team for the National Collaborative, working to embed the rights of people who use substance into models of care across Scotland.

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Alison McGrory

Associate Director of Public Health, NHS Highland

Alison has spent 30 years working in the NHS in Scotland, mostly in various Public Health roles. Her current position is Associate Director of Public Health with NHS Highland. In 2010, she returned to her hometown of Campbeltown giving her the opportunity to bring up her family in a tight knit rural community with extended friends and family close by.

Public Health is about improving health and wellbeing outcomes for the whole population and Alison's passion is what keeps people well and able to live a good life. Rather than solving health problems once they have arisen, Alison prefers to utilise assets-based community development to influence the social determinants of health – this includes things like the economy, housing and community-based support. In recent years, Alison has led a collective leadership approach for health and wellbeing under the banner of the Living Well Strategy for Argyll and Bute.

Outside of work, Alison's first love is the sea and she will usually be found exploring the beautiful beaches or paddleboarding around the coastline of Kintyre.

Professor Sir John Curtice

Professor of Politics at the University of Strathclyde, and Senior Research Fellow, National/Scottish Centre for Social Research and the ESRC's 'The UK in a Changing Europe' initiative

He has written extensively about voting behaviour in elections and referendums in the UK, as well as on Scottish and British political and social attitudes more generally.

He has been a co-editor of the National Centre's annual British Social Attitudes reports series for over thirty years, a co-director of the Scottish Social Attitudes series since 1999, and is a regular contributor to Scottish, British and international media coverage of politics in the UK.

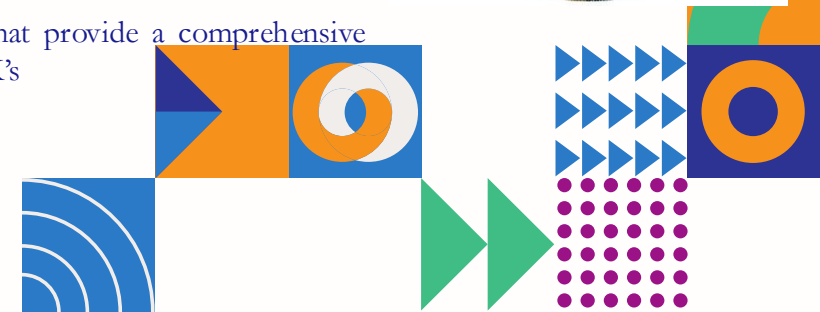
Curtice is Chief Commentator at two websites, whatscotlandthinks.org and whatukthinks.org/eu, that provide a comprehensive collection of materials on public attitudes towards (i) how Scotland should be governed, and (ii) the UK's relationship with the EU.

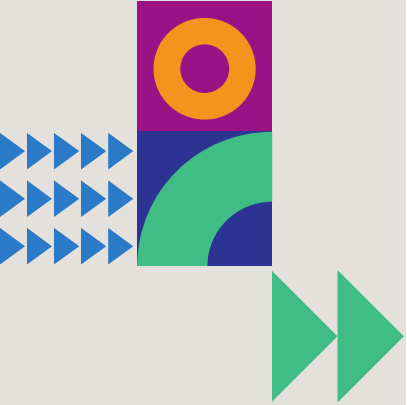
He is a Fellow of the British Academy, the Royal Society of Edinburgh, the Academy of the Social Sciences, and the Political Studies Association. He is also an Honorary Fellow of the Royal Statistical Society and the Market Research Society.



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John Dickie

Director of the Child Poverty Action Group (CPAG) in Scotland

John is responsible for promoting and influencing policies that will contribute to eradicating child poverty in Scotland. He was previously Head of the Youth Unit at Scottish Council for Single Homeless. Before that he worked directly with young people experiencing homelessness, both as a volunteer and professional.

He is a graduate from Aberdeen University in Sociology and Social Anthropology, and holds a postgraduate diploma in Housing Studies from Stirling University. He lives in Edinburgh and enjoys spending time with his family, walking and cycling among other things.

John McGowan

General Secretary of the Social Workers Union

John served on the UK Council for BASW as a Non-Executive Director (2008–2012) and on SASW's Executive Committee as Depute Convenor. He was elected as General Secretary of the Social Workers Union in 2016 and re-elected unopposed in 2021. This year, he became Vice President of the General Federation of Trade Unions (600,000 members) and currently sits on its National Executive Committee.

John is Programme Tutor for the Open University Social Work Degree in Scotland and previously served its UK Council. He now sits on its UK Board of Studies. Since qualifying as a social worker in the 1990s John has predominately worked in the field of Children and Families, Fostering and Adoption and as a training officer/ practice teacher. John is proud of his working-class upbringing in a housing estate in Edinburgh regarded as one of the most deprived areas in Scotland. His parents were active foster carers, fostering over 100 children in total.

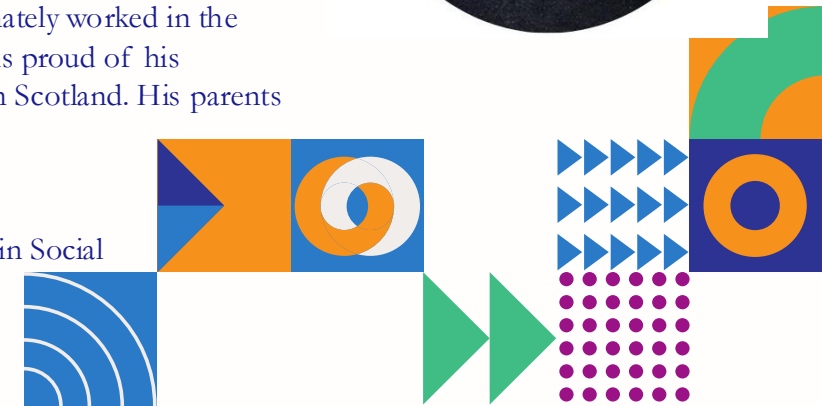
He has contributed widely to UK Parliament forums, presentations, media, publications, journals, and ongoing research and co-authored (with Dr Neil Thompson) the published JKP book 'How to Survive in Social Work'.

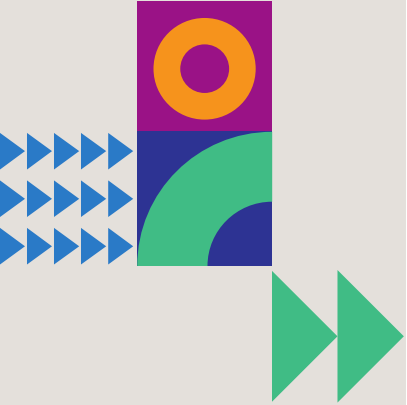
John also served as a professional consultant for the Ken Loach movie 'Sorry I missed you'.



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Monica Lennon MSP

Scottish Labour and Co-operative Member of the Scottish Parliament for Central Scotland

Monica Lennon is a Scottish Labour and Co-operative Member of the Scottish Parliament for Central Scotland, first elected in 2016.

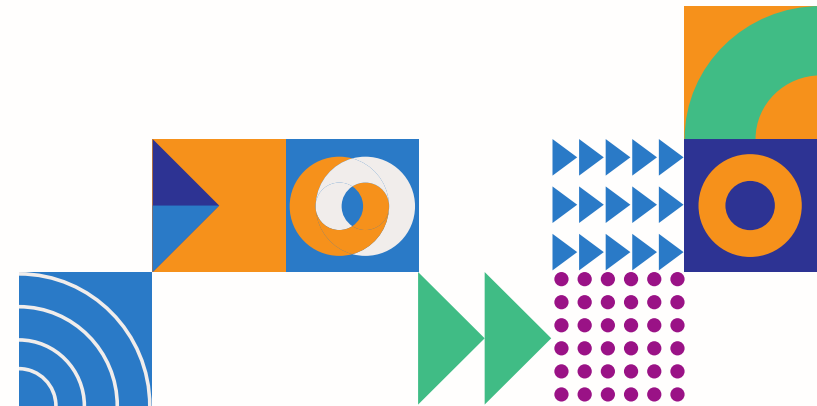
A committed advocate for social justice, Monica has worked to tackle inequality, poverty and discrimination throughout her political career. She is a member of the Net Zero, Energy and Transport Committee and brings a strong focus on environmental and social equity to her parliamentary work.

Passionate about gender equality and women's health, Monica spearheaded the campaign to combat period poverty and introduced the ground-breaking Period Products (Free Provision) (Scotland) Act.

A supporter of Stop Ecocide International and passionate advocate for the environment, she has introduced her second Member's Bill, the Ecocide (Scotland) Bill, which proposes to make severe environmental harm a criminal offence in Scotland.

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