



TRANSFORMATIVE LEADERSHIP FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE: BRIDGING RESEARCH AND PRACTICE IN SCOTLAND.

Friday 24th April 2026

0900-1530

0900

Registration

0915

Opening Remarks: Professor Debs Robinson,
The Strathclyde Institute of Education

0930

Our Hearings, Our Voice: How schools can
support care experienced young people

1000

Keynote: Dr Charlaine Simpson, University
of Aberdeen

1040

Coffee Break & Networking

1100

Workshops (1) & (2)*

1230

Lunch Break & Networking

1300

Workshops (3) & (4)*

1430

Keynote & Close: Rosemary Grady, University
of Edinburgh

*Please see the rest of the document for conference presenters and workshop content.



<https://tinyurl.com/325nury5>



Strathclyde Business School, Cathedral
St, Glasgow, G4 0QU



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Keynote (1): Dr Charlaine Simpson, Senior Lecturer in Education, University of Aberdeen



Prior to joining the School of Education in 2022, Charlaine taught in a secondary school in Scotland for more than 20 years, this included leadership and local authority roles. Charlaine brings experience as a policy maker with the General Teaching Council for Scotland (2015-2022), the independent professional regulator and registration body for teachers, and a secondment to the Scottish Government (2016-2017), working on the National Improvement Framework policy development. Throughout her career, she has demonstrated an absolute commitment to the development of the teaching profession and teacher professionalism. Charlaine is an education policy researcher, with a particular interest in policy making, enactment and teacher professionalism.

Keynote (2): Rosemary Grady, Senior Lecturer in Educational Leadership and Learning, University of Edinburgh



Rosemary Grady is a former primary headteacher and local authority officer, she brings extensive experience of leading schools and systems through change. Her work spans initial teacher education, professional learning, coaching and school leadership development, including long standing involvement in Scotland's Into Headship programme. She is currently undertaking doctoral research into the longer-term influences of headship preparation on leadership identity and practice in Scotland.

Rosemary's leadership is grounded in strong professional values, relational practice, and a commitment to social justice. She is particularly interested in how leaders navigate tensions, establish ethical boundaries, and bring their whole selves to leadership while sustaining trust and professional integrity.

Her keynote will reflect on the recently published research report by Greaney et al (2026), to which she contributed as a member of the Scotland Advisory Group. This research explores the experiences and challenges of school leaders in contemporary Scottish education, with particular attention to leadership identity, system complexity, and sustainable practice, and informs her reflections on values-led, relational leadership and the evolving role of the headteacher in Scotland.



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Amanda Corrigan, Principal Teaching Fellow, The Strathclyde Institute of Education



Who Teaches the Teachers?: Looking for new sources of knowledge to solve wicked problems in education

Amanda has supported the education of teachers across the globe for twenty years. She is responsible for educating English teachers for Oman and for supporting teachers and education leaders in fourteen different international schools.

Amanda's research allows her to work with marginalised communities in Scotland. She established the Strathclyde Institute of Education's Engaged Scholarship Hub in the East End of Glasgow in 2024 to offer opportunities for university staff to work alongside the local community on a weekly basis.

Her presentation will tell the story of how adults who were often absent or excluded from school when they were children took responsibility for educating twenty-three teachers from across Scotland. It will demonstrate how Scotland's most marginalised communities sit on a wealth of knowledge that could help Scottish education to view its wicked problems from new perspectives if we would only listen.

Alison Weatherston, Former Head Teacher & Professional Learning Lead, Education Scotland



Exploring the Professional Wisdom of the Primary Head Teacher

Recently retired, Alison has had a career of nearly 40 years in education with a background in primary teaching, including as headteacher and local authority officer. Most recently working nationally in the field of professional learning and leadership, her professional energy and drive come from motivating, encouraging and supporting school leaders to continue to make a positive difference to young people.

Alison's doctoral research stems from a commitment to highlight the practice realities of primary headship. She has a particular interest in the professional wisdom of very experienced headteachers and how it manifests through their daily routines. During the workshop, Alison will propose a theoretical framework for professional wisdom, based on research into tacit knowledge and expertise and share some of her early insights into what it looks like in practice, from her engagement with primary headteachers across Scotland.



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Gillian Francis-McNeil, Teaching Fellow in Educational Leadership, The Strathclyde Institute of Education



When Home Hurts: Schools as a place of safety for children affected by domestic abuse

Gillian is a former primary Depute Head Teacher who has been a Teaching Fellow in Educational Leadership at the Strathclyde Institute of Education since 2022. She is part of the Strathclyde Into Headship team; Scotland's National Programme for Aspiring Head Teachers, having gained the qualification herself in 2021. She is the Co-Founder of the Strathclyde Into Headship Alumni Network who have organised this conference.

Gillian's doctoral research explores the school's role in supporting children who have experienced domestic abuse. During the workshop, Gillian will share insights from her emerging research, focussing on what children themselves say about the support they need from their schools. This workshop aims to support schools leaders reflect critically on their roles, responsibilities and practices in creating safe, responsive and child-centred school environments.

Professor Markus Klein, Professor of Human Development and Education Policy, The Strathclyde Institute of Education



The Causes and Consequences of School Absenteeism

Professor Klein's research explores how socioeconomic inequalities emerge and develop across the life course, with a particular emphasis on children's development and education. A central strand of his work focuses on the socioeconomic causes and consequences of school absenteeism.

He was Principal Investigator of the ESRC-funded project Family Background and Educational Attainment: Investigating the Mediating Role of School Absenteeism and led the Nuffield Foundation - funded project Understanding School Attendance, Education, and Labour Market Outcomes.



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Nova Lauder-Scott, Teaching Fellow in Educational Leadership, The Strathclyde Institute of Education



"They just get it": Head Teachers' Narratives of Teachers Who Champion Children in Distress

Nova is a former primary head teacher who has been a Teaching Fellow in Educational Leadership at the Strathclyde Institute of Education since 2019. She is the Course Leader for Into Headship; Scotland's National Programme for Aspiring Head Teachers and the Co-Founder of the Strathclyde Into Headship Alumni Network who have organised this conference.

Nova's doctoral research explores the stories shared by primary head teachers about their experiences of working with teachers who are especially adept at supporting children who display distressed behaviour. During the workshop, Nova will share insights from her research - not as a universal solution or magic wand, but as perspectives that may resonate with and inform school leaders' reflections on their own settings.

Gillian McConnell, Teaching Fellow, The Strathclyde Institute of Education



Gillian is the Course Leader for the Masters in Autism pathways at the Strathclyde Institute of Education. She has been at the University since 2018. Prior roles have included Senior Management positions for over 20 years across health and social care where she was responsible for the service development, design, and delivery of a wide range of services for autistic people of all ages.

Gillian's area of research considers autistic people with co-occurring conditions voice in education. During the workshop Gillian will draw on her work with autistic and neurodivergent people and support school leaders to consider how neuroaffirmative practices and approaches, can enhance the learning experience of all learners.



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Tracey McDermott, Head of Education, South Lanarkshire



Tracey McDermott is currently Head of Education at South Lanarkshire Council with a strategic remit for Inclusion. Tracey was previously a HT at Braidhurst High in North Lanarkshire, and has led strategic work across local authorities to improve learning, teaching, assessment and moderation.

An English teacher to trade, she has led work developing literacy across the curriculum and promoting nurturing approaches. Tracey believes building capacity in others is key to leading strategic improvements in schools that raise attainment and better meet the needs of learners. Her workshop will focus on how to do this in the context of your own school.

Claire McDowall, Depute Head Teacher, Douglas Academy, East Dunbartonshire Council



A whole school approach to preventing gender-based violence

Claire completed the Into Headship Qualification in session 2024–2025 with a special focus on Social Justice, specifically Gender Based Violence within Secondary Schools.

During the workshop Claire will share her experience of embedding the Equally Safe at School Framework which is a whole-school approach to preventing gender-based violence and promoting equality. She will also explore how she has used the framework to complement Douglas Academy's approach to tackling wider social justice issues.



TRANSFORMATIVE LEADERSHIP FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE CONFERENCE: PRESENTERS AND WORKSHOP INFORMATION

Jo McGregor, Depute Head Teacher, East Renfrewshire



Building Learner and Teacher Agency through Curriculum Design

This workshop explores how curriculum design can be a powerful driver of learner and teacher agency. Drawing on whole-school improvement work at Carolside Campus, Jo will share how play and enquiry-based learning has been successfully embedded across all stages to support high-quality, learner-centred practice.

A focus on developing and sustaining a shared vision for learning and teaching will illustrate how targeted professional learning, modelling effective pedagogy and ongoing professional dialogue strengthened staff confidence and coherence. The session offers practical ideas to build staff confidence, empower learners and lead responsive, inclusive curriculum design.

Alison Mitchell, Professional Learning and Policy Officer, School Leaders Scotland



Beyond Celebrating Diversity: Leading an Anti-Racist School Community

Alison is a former secondary school Headteacher and she was Headteacher in Residence and Into Headship Programme Lead at the University of Glasgow, where she also led Mentoring, Enhanced Political Awareness and Leading Anti-Racism programmes in partnership with Glasgow City Council.

This workshop supports participants to move beyond narratives of diversity and inclusion towards explicit anti-racist leadership. It explores how racism and intersecting inequalities are reproduced through systems of power, colonial legacies, and school policies and practices that shape opportunity and flourishing for all. Recognising that school leaders are navigating complex challenges around race and immigration that surface within their communities, the session aims to strengthen leaders' political acuity, critical consciousness and moral courage, offering practical strategies to advance sustainable anti-racist change in their schools.



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Rebecca Momoh, Depute Head Teacher, East Dunbartonshire



Leading as a Community for School Improvement

Rebecca has been a postgraduate student at the University of Strathclyde since 2023, where she has undertaken a Master's degree in Educational Leadership alongside the Into Headship qualification. She is also a member of the Strathclyde Into Headship Alumni Network.

Rebecca's Master's study focused on 'leading as a community for school improvement', with particular attention to the contextual and cultural conditions that support sustained improvement. This workshop will explore 'leadership for school improvement', not as a prescriptive 'how-to' guide, but by providing a space for professional reflection and dialogue to support leaders in considering their own approaches to improvement planning.

Julie Neil, Acting Head Teacher, East Renfrewshire



Embedding Inclusion: Building Staff Confidence and Improving Outcomes for All

This workshop explores how inclusive practice can be a powerful driver of both teacher confidence and improved outcomes for learners. Drawing on ongoing whole-school improvement work at St. Mark's Primary School where she was DHT, Julie will share how a shift from reliance on targeted interventions towards greater teacher ownership of additional support is being embedded across the school.

The session will examine emerging impact on classroom practice, learner wellbeing and engagement, offering practical ideas to build staff capacity and lead sustainable, inclusive change.



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Carrie Nicol & Susan Clelland, Head Teacher & Depute Head Teacher, North Lanarkshire



Equity through Inquiry: Empowering Leadership at all levels to Raise Attainment by Championing Every Learner and Removing Every Barrier

Carrie and Susan bring decades of leadership and community-driven practice to their work at Berryhill Primary School and Nursery Class. Carrie has served the community for 24 years, the last 16 as HT. Susan is the PEF DHT and has been part of Berryhill for 19 years. She recently completed her Masters in Educational Leadership and continues to champion practitioner inquiry and capacity building.

Working within a low-resourced context, both leaders are driven by a shared belief in and commitment to excellence and equity. They draw on the strengths of their pupils, families and wider community to push forward change, working relentlessly to broaden opportunities and make a lasting, positive impact.

Anne Paterson, Rural Education Researcher & Former Chief Education Officer, Argyll & Bute



Space and Place of Educational Leadership through a Rural Lens.

Anne is a Rural Education Researcher and is currently Module Lead for the In Headship Programme with the University of the Highlands and Islands. She believes that all leadership should be built on values and the ability to be reflexive.

Anne's doctoral research has examined the relationship of policy to small rural schools in Scotland and the impact on practice. In the workshop, Anne will share the research findings about the relationship to rural education policy at macro, meso and micro levels within Scottish Education. She will explore the impact on practice and draw examples from fieldwork. Whilst the workshop will draw on the rural there will be many insights for holistic leadership related to the importance of space, place and context.



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Will Quirke, Teaching Fellow, The Strathclyde Institute of Education



Leading for Local Belonging: Exploring Schools as Agents of Community Connection for Young People.

Will's teaching, research, and knowledge exchange activity focus on the areas of Learning for Sustainability, Geography Education, and Practitioner Enquiry. He is also active in a number of national and international working groups and professional networks relating to these areas.

Drawing upon recent research into urban young people's mobility within their local communities and its relationship to health and wellbeing, this interactive workshop explores how young people experience and engage with open spaces beyond the school gates. Together, we will examine what this work could mean for leadership, learning provision, and progress towards Target 2030 – the ambition for all 3-18 places of education to become a Sustainable Learning Settings by 2030. At the heart of the session is a practical question for leaders: how can schools actively cultivate young people's sense of belonging in the places where they live?

Professor Kate Wall, Professor of Education, The Strathclyde Institute of Education



Leading practitioner enquiry communities

Kate Wall is Professor of Education in the Strathclyde Institute of Education. She is a primary teacher by trade but has worked for 20+ years in the Higher Education sector, mostly in partnership with schools, teachers and children and young people. She is Director of the Strathclyde Hub for Innovative Pedagogy, a derivative of the Centre for Teaching Excellence, and leads the Doctorate of Education (EdD).

This session will focus on Kate's work facilitating practitioner enquiry orientated communities. It will make connections into the work of the Strathclyde Hub for Innovative Pedagogy but will mostly look at how these communities are initiated, led and sustained. Emphasis will be on professional dialogue with plenty of opportunities to share experiences.