National Schools Programme
Strategic Advisory Group Membership

October 2026

We are fortunate to have colleagues representing a range of expertise across the sector on this group. Membership has been selected to ensure a balance of perspective across tertiary and school sectors, and with consideration for coverage across all four NSP regions and both rural and urban areas.

The student voice is central to the work of the National Schools Programme (NSP), and we are delighted to have four alumni of the programme on the Strategic Advisory Group to share their experience as participants and student volunteers.

We are also pleased to be joined by the Commissioner for Fair Access, Professor John McKendrick, who will attend the Strategic Advisory Group as an observer and 'critical friend'.

Committee role	Member	Title
Co-chair	Erica Russell-Hensens	Interim Director, Institutional Performance, SFC
Co-chair	Helyn Gould	Deputy Associate Principal, University of Strathclyde
SFC Member – Senior Policy Officer	Steph Kirkham	Senior Policy Officer, National Schools Programme
SFC Member – Corporate Services	Ffion Heledd	Assistant Director, Policy Evaluation
SFC Member – Finance & Funding	Gordon Craig	Deputy Director, Tertiary Education Funding
Tertiary Sector Member – Widening Participation and Admissions	Neil Spiers	Widening Participation Manager, University of Edinburgh
Tertiary Sector Member – Widening Participation	Gemma Burnside	Partnership Manager, Open University in Scotland

Committee role	Member	Title
Tertiary Sector Member – Student Support & Wellbeing	Jonathan Staal	Assistant Director (Wellbeing), University of Dundee
Tertiary Sector Member – Researcher	Prof. Edward Sosu	Deputy Head of School (Research), University of Glasgow
Tertiary Sector Member – Further Education	Jackie Andrews	Head of Academic Partnerships, UHI Moray
Tertiary Sector Member – Further Education	Dr. Lindsay Snodgrass	Vice Principal (Curriculum, Student Experience and Quality), UHI Inverness
School Sector Member	Peter Bain	Executive Head Teacher, Oban and Tiree High Schools
Schools Sector Member	Murray Watson	Quality Improvement Officer, Falkirk Council
Third Sector Member	DonnaMarie Steel	Project Development Manager (Scholarship), The Robertson Trust
Third Sector Member	Patricia Anderson	Development Manager, Scottish Community of Access and Participation Practitioners (SCAPP)
Student Member	Moryam Akanji	Alumni: Reach Glasgow, Reach Aberdeen
Student Member	Wiktoria Karbowniczek	Alumni: LEAPS, Reach Edinburgh, Reach Dundee
Student Member	Alsadeg Bilal	Alumni: Reach Edinburgh
Student Member	Codie Walton	Alumni: Aspire North, Reach Aberdeen
SFC Secretariat	Mary Macgowan	Policy Officer, National Schools Programme
Observer	Prof. John McKendrick	Commissioner for Fair Access