



National Youth Justice Conference 2021 Speaker Biographies

DAY 1: June 16

CHAIR: Bruce Adamson, Scotland's Commissioner for Children and Young People

Bruce is a lawyer who has over 20 years of experience in children's rights. A Member of the Children's Panel for 13 years, he worked directly with vulnerable children and their families, listening to their experiences and making decisions about their safety and wellbeing.

Mr Adamson has been on advisory boards for several public authorities and civil society organisations and is a former Chair of the Scottish Child Law Centre. While working for the Scottish Human Rights Commission, he was central to the development of law, policy and practice covering the broad spectrum of children's rights.

In 2013, he was the United Nations Representative for the Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions, representing institutions from over 100 countries to improve human rights in Scotland and across the world. Mr Adamson has acted as an international expert for the Council of Europe, the European Union and the OSCE. *Follow Bruce on Twitter @Bruce_Adamson*

KEYNOTE SPEAKERS

Clare Haughey MSP, Minister for Children and Young People

Clare Haughey MSP is the Scottish Government's Minister for Children and Young People. She has represented the Rutherglen constituency since her election in 2016.

Born and raised in Rutherglen, Clare is a mental health nurse with over 30 years' experience. For the past 15, she has specialised in perinatal mental health and helped set up Scotland's first Mother and Baby Unit in Glasgow in 2004 as clinical nurse manager. *Follow Clare on Twitter @haughey_clare*

Dr Anthony Charles, Swansea University

Dr Anthony Charles is Co-ordinator of the Innovative Youth Justice Team at Swansea University and Criminology Lead for the Observatory on the Human Rights of Children. His main research interests are youth justice and the promotion of children's rights within the criminal justice system.

At Swansea University, Anthony is Programme Director for Criminology Postgraduate Taught provision and teaches on youth justice courses at undergraduate and postgraduate levels. He also teaches criminological theory at postgraduate level and zemiology at undergraduate level as well as supervising PhDs in youth justice-related areas of enquiry.

Follow Anthony on Twitter @DrAntCharles

Professor Jennifer Davidson, Institute for Inspiring Children's Futures

Jennifer Davidson is a Professor of Practice, and Executive Director of the *Institute for Inspiring Children's Futures* at the University of Strathclyde, an international research, policy and practice



implementation group with a collective vision that children and young people have what they need to reach their full potential, particularly those facing adversity.

Building on her work as the Founding Director of CELCIS (on secondment), Jennifer works with others to embed children's human rights into the delivery of the UN Sustainable Development Goals, with a sharp focus on the mechanisms that promote meaningful and sustainable impact, from policy into children's day-to-day lives.

Jennifer's leadership of international children's human rights projects has driven change for children over several years, through the implementation of the *UN Guidelines for the Alternative Care of Children*, and more recently as Project Director of the *Justice for Children, Justice for All Global Initiative* with the UN Pathfinders for Peaceful, Just and Inclusive Societies.

Follow Jennifer on Twitter @JenniferIICF

Juliet Harris, Together Scotland

As Director of Together (Scottish Alliance for Children's Rights), Juliet leads the organisation in promoting and monitoring the implementation of Scotland's international human rights obligations to children and young people, including the UNCRC. She works with Together's membership of over 450 children's organisations and professionals to produce an annual State of Children's Rights report, liaises with government and parliamentarians to further children's rights in policy and practice, and reports on progress to the UNCRC. She sits on the Taskforce for the UN Committee's Day of General Discussion on Children as Human Rights Defenders, as well as on a number of advisory groups with the Scottish Government and Scottish Human Rights Commission. She is Vice Chair of the Children's Parliament and Chair of the Rights of the Child UK Coalition.

Juliet's previous experience includes six years spent tackling the destitution and poverty of refugees and asylum seekers, alongside several roles working in the field of health and homelessness. Juliet has an LL.M in International Human Rights Law and regularly lectures at the University of Edinburgh on children's human rights law and policy. *Follow Juliet on Twitter @Ulgrid*

Iain Smith, Keegan Smith, Keegan Smith Defence Lawyers

Iain Smith has been a Lawyer for almost 28 years and is founding partner of Keegan Smith Defence Lawyers in Livingston. He co-founded the Trauma Aware Lawyers in 2020. Iain sits on the Committee of West Lothian ACEs Hub since 2018, is an active member of Aid & Abet, and contributor to the RRT Sub-group.

In 2019 Iain was the Runner-up Herald Solicitor of the Year, and in 2020 he was awarded the Scottish Lawyer of the Year at the Scottish Legal Awards. *Follow Iain on Twitter @KeeganSmith_Law*

LIGHTNING TALKS

Good Shepherd Centre

The [Good Shepherd Centre \(GSC\)](#) supports young people aged 12 to 21, who have experienced significant difficulties in their lives, including traumatic situations, psychological distress, conflict with others and problems with managing feelings. The GSC offers a place of safety and nurture, with a positive, holistic and strengths-based approach. The team support young people and their families, alongside the professionals involved in their lives, to make sense of their experiences and to build



hope, coping skills and goals for the future. Young people are referred through the Children's Hearing System and sometimes the Criminal Justice System.

The GSC campus, just outside the village of Bishopton, is set in extensive grounds including gardens, an outdoor Sports Facility and wildlife trails. The GSC offers secure care, intensive residential care (close support) and semi-independent care across four care houses and two cottages, with integrated education and health and wellbeing supports. They are committed to Keeping The Promise and having achieved the [UNICEF Rights Respecting School Bronze Award](#), the GSC is currently working towards Silver. The GSC recently launched their Service Improvement Plans for 2021-2024, which put the voice of young people, families and their people and partners at the start and heart of [The GSC Promise](#). *Follow the Good Shepherd Centre on Twitter @GSCBishopton*

Hannah Snow

As a care experienced young person, Hannah has not always been aware of her rights and is passionate about sharing her story and views with professionals in the hope that this enables improvement in practice. Hannah is an inspiring young lady who has raised awareness of the gaps in our systems via The Scottish Dug Death Task Force and is keen to continue with her message at this conference. Ultimately, Hannah wasn't aware of her rights as a child and surmises that without knowledge of them, they are impossible to claim.

Saughton Sonnets: Hidden Voices Project

Saughton Sonnets was a creative arts project, ostensibly a simple poetry competition, run through the Hidden Voices platform of First Time Inside in collaboration with HMP Edinburgh and the Scottish Prison Service. This initiative invited those living their experiences of the justice system within HMP Edinburgh to share their thoughts and feelings of life in lockdown amidst a tough regime driven by accepted necessity and the COVID-19 pandemic, with a volunteer community drawn from criminal and community justice, academia and the arts, and citizens with relevant experience. This panel quickly morphed into a Hidden Voices community, giving feedback to the poets and sharing their thoughts on social media.

If you'd like to purchase a hard copy anthology of the Saughton Sonnets, please email ghamill@firsttimeinside.co.uk.

Follow Hidden Voices on Twitter @FirstTimeInside

DAY 2: June 17

CHAIR: Fiona Dyer, Director (Interim) CYCJ

As Director (Interim), Fiona leads CYCJ in its work to improve children's lives through improving policy, practice, participation and research. This involves supporting professionals from all disciplines who work with children and young people on the cusp of or involved in offending by promoting best practice based on up-to-date evidence and research.

Before joining CYCJ Fiona was seconded to the Scottish Government youth justice team for three years, and prior to this worked for ten years as a social worker and social work manager within the fields of youth and criminal justice. *Follow Fiona on Twitter @fifidyer*



KEYNOTE SPEAKER

Gillian Mawdsley, Criminal Defence Solicitor

Gillian is a Scottish qualified practising solicitor, with a range of policy and practical experience from the Scottish criminal justice organisations including COPFS, SLAB, and SCTS and secondment to the Scottish Government. She also teaches in a variety of legal subjects at under and postgraduate level at various UK universities including Strathclyde, Edinburgh and the Open University.

LIGHTNING TALKS

Project Return

Scotland's choir for the care community utilises music and relationships as a supportive resource to overcome trauma and is run by Project Return, Staf's national trauma project. The aim is to bring together those with experience of the children's care and/or the justice system and their workers, giving them a voice and way of connecting through music. For more information contact tommy@staf.scot. Follow Project Return on Twitter @Project_Return_

Ross Gibson, Practice Development Advisor, CYCJ

After qualifying from Strathclyde University in 2009, Ross worked within a Youth Justice area team at Glasgow City Council. Ross joined CYCJ in July 2017 as a Practice Development Advisor and focuses on Diversion from Prosecution and Participation. Currently he is involved in examining the potential for the Children's Hearing System to be available for all 16 and 17 year olds; supporting the Staf and CYCJ project Youth Justice Voices; disseminating the findings of two secure care censuses; and supporting Debbie Nolan in considering the implications of the Independent Care Review's conclusions. Ross is also undertaking a part time PhD at the University of Strathclyde.

Youth Justice Voices

[Youth Justice Voices](#) is a national creative participation project for young people aged 16-25 which aims to influence change and amplify the voice of care-experienced young people within the justice system. It is led by the Youth Just Us steering group, and supported by Ruth Kerracher, as Youth Justice Participation Worker. The project is funded by the Life Changes Trust.

In just two years, Youth Just Us have helped influence the Disclosure (Scotland) Bill, been commissioned by the Scottish Government to work on Scotland's new Vision and Action Plan for Youth Justice and created a digital exhibition of issue-based artwork for the Artivism project. Youth Just Us members Kevin and Chris will present this talk and share the Artivism video.

Follow Youth Justice Voices on Twitter @YJVScotland.

#YJconf21