



Speaker Biographies

Richard Meade, Director of Carers Scotland and Carers Northern Ireland

Richard leads the team at Carers Scotland & Carers NI. He has extensive experience working in the third sector in senior leadership roles, including recently as Head of Policy and Public Affairs at Marie Curie, where he led award winning campaigns to change legislation and influence public policy. He has a proven track record in managing departments, teams and projects covering public affairs and stakeholder engagement plans, research projects, corporate communications activity and strategy development. He has worked for a range of organisations including Barnardo's Scotland, Fleishman-Hillard, NHS Quality Improvement and the Home Office.

Claire Stevens, Chief Executive, Voluntary Health Scotland

Claire is proud to lead a highly committed and skilled staff team at VHS and to work with an excellent Board of Trustees. Since joining VHS in 2012, Claire has led its journey to becoming an influential intermediary for all those voluntary organisations with a shared commitment to address health inequalities and make Scotland a healthier and fairer place for everyone. She is a Fellow of the Association of Chief Officers of Scottish Voluntary Organisations, Secretary of Arts Culture Health and Wellbeing Scotland, and newly appointed to the Executive Committee for Neurological Alliance of Scotland. Her voluntary sector career and involvement spans nearly 40 years and in 2021 the Faculty of Public Health elected her as an Honorary Member.

Michael Matheson MSP, Cabinet Secretary for NHS Recovery, Health and Social Care

Appointed to his current health role in March 2023, Michael was born and educated in Glasgow. A graduate of the Queen Margaret University and Open University, Matheson worked as an occupational therapist in local government, before his election to Holyrood as an MSP in the 1999 Scottish Parliament election.. Before being appointed Minister for Public Health and Sport, he was Vice Convenor of the European and External Relations Committee. He also sat on the Scottish Parliament's Health and Sport Committee, and previously served on the Justice and Enterprise and Culture Committees. He was appointed Cabinet Secretary for Justice in November 2014, reappointed in May 2016, and appointed Cabinet Secretary for Transport, Infrastructure and Connectivity in June 2018. Immediately prior to his current health role he was Cabinet Secretary for Net Zero, Energy and Transport.

Lord Nigel Crisp, independent crossbench member of the House of Lords, co-chair the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Global Health

Nigel is an independent crossbench member of the House of Lords in the UK and works and writes mainly on global health. He was Chief Executive of the English NHS and Permanent Secretary of the UK Department of Health, from 2000 to 2006. He had previously been Chief Executive of the Oxford Radcliffe Hospitals, one of the UK's leading academic centres, and Regional Director for the NHS in London. His earlier career was in industry and charities. He has subsequently worked in health globally, mainly pro-bono in low- and middle-income countries in Africa and Asia. Nigel founded the UK Parliament's All-Party Parliamentary Group on Global Health and the global campaign on nursing, Nursing Now, both of which he co-chaired. He is an Honorary Professor at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, a Senior Fellow at the Institute for Healthcare Improvement and a Foreign Associate of the US National Academy of Medicine. He was formerly a Distinguished Visiting Fellow at the Harvard School of Public Health and Regent's Lecturer at Berkeley. His books include *Health is Made at Home, Hospitals are for Repairs – Building a Healthy and Health-Creating Society* and *Turning the World Upside Down Again – global health at a time of pandemics, climate change and political turmoil*.

Paul Okroj, Director of Stakeholder Engagement and Service Development, Chest Heart & Stroke Scotland (CHSS)

CHSS is Scotland's largest health charity supporting the one in five people affected by chest, heart and stroke conditions. More than one in three people experience isolation and loneliness as result of their condition. Paul is a member of the Scottish Government Advisory Group on Isolation and Loneliness and co-chairs the Third Sector Action Group on Isolation and Loneliness. He is passionate about ensuring that people with lived experience are involved in the design and delivery of healthcare in Scotland, embedding the support of the essential question: what matters to you? Paul is also Chair of Volunteer Scotland and a passionate advocate for the importance of recognising the vital contribution that volunteering makes to tackling isolation and loneliness.

Kevin McGowan, Strategic Lead for Equality and Inclusion, Scottish Government

Kevin works for the Scottish Government where he is currently Strategic Lead for Equality and Inclusion: LGBTI+ Equality, Ending Conversion Practices Bill, Disability, Older People and Social Isolation and British Sign Language. His role includes involvement in the plan to take forward the delivery of *A Connected Scotland*, the Scottish Government strategy for tackling social isolation and loneliness and building stronger social connections.

Adam Stachura, Head of Policy and Communications, Age Scotland

Adam joined Age Scotland in February 2018 after twelve years of senior roles working with politicians in Holyrood, Westminster and Brussels, latterly heading up campaigns and elections for a political party. He oversees Age Scotland's communications, policy development, campaigns, and influencing work, supporting a team dedicated to improving the lives of older people in Scotland. Adam and the team have been working on a wide range of issues identified by older people

including tackling loneliness and isolation, pensioner poverty and low income, boosting social security uptake, energy costs, access to health and social care, housing, financial independence, ageism, and digital exclusion.

Susan Hunter, CEO, Befriending Networks

Susan Hunter is the Chief Executive Officer of Befriending Networks, the national intermediary association for befriending services across the UK. She took up this role in March 2023, and within this role co-chairs the Action Group on Isolation and Loneliness. Susan believes in the transformative impact of befriending. She is committed to models of practice which promote and foster collaboration and partnership. She has worked in several membership organisations, regionally and nationally, and brings a breadth of relevant experiences to Befriending Networks. More widely, Susan is a passionate advocate within the third sector, having worked in senior leadership roles since 2014. She has a professional background in Community Education, with more than 20 years of experience working with young people with a particular focus on community-based youth work, youth participation and children's rights. Susan is the Vice-Chairperson of Together (Scottish Alliance for Children's Rights) and has been a supporter of their work as a trustee since 2015. Susan was appointed as an External Trustee of Girlguiding Scotland in July 2023.

Rob Murray, Scotland Director, British Red Cross

Rob has held the role of the Scotland Director for British Red Cross since February 2023. He was previously Chief Executive Officer of Cancer Support Scotland. Rob has a background rooted within the Third Sector, having worked for both national and local charities. He has also spent some time working within Scottish politics. Rob was appointed Chair of VHS in 2019, having previously served as VHS Treasurer, and 2023 marks his sixth year as a VHS trustee. In his free time Rob is a very active volunteer for The Scouts Association where he is currently the lead volunteer for supporting 'Community Impact' in Scotland and across the UK. He is also reading in a Masters of Business Administration, reflecting his strong interest in organisational culture and leadership.

Mark MacPherson, Audit Director, Audit Scotland

Audit Scotland is an independent public body responsible for auditing most of Scotland's public organisations. These include the Scottish Government, local councils and NHS Scotland. An experienced public sector audit leader, Mark has overseen a wide range of performance audits of policy, best value audits and statutory reports. He has also undertaken international audit assignments as part of the United Nations Board of Auditors, and was a member of the small team that worked on the independent review of scrutiny arrangements in Scotland ('the Crerar Review'). Immediately prior to joining Audit Scotland, Mark worked as a clerk in the Scottish Parliament and, before that, in various public sector management and delivery roles.

Angiolina Foster CBE, Chair, Public Health Scotland

Public Health Scotland is the national public health body for Scotland. It is a Special NHS Health Board, and it is jointly accountable to the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities and the Scottish Government. The organisation leads and supports work across Scotland to prevent disease, prolong healthy life and promote health and wellbeing. Angiolina is a respected public service leader who has extensive experience of local and national government. She has worked in a range of key policy areas including health and social care, communities, and housing. Angiolina has served as Chief Executive of NHS 24 and Healthcare Improvement Scotland and is a Board Member of the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service. In 2011 she was awarded a CBE for her contribution to Scotland's public services.