

**Victims and Witnesses First:
VSS National Conference 2019**

Biographies

Humza Yousaf – Cabinet Secretary for Justice, Scottish Parliament



Humza Yousaf was born in Glasgow on April 7, 1985. He was educated at Hutchesons' Grammar School and the University of Glasgow, graduating with a degree in Politics. He is also an alumnus of the US State Department's prestigious International Visitor Learning Programme.

He went on to work in the Scottish Parliament as an aide to the late Bashir Ahmad MSP. He was a Parliamentary Liaison Officer to former First Minister Alex Salmond MSP, and was elected as an MSP for the Glasgow region in May 2011. He was appointed Minister of External Affairs and International Development in September 2012. Humza Yousaf was appointed Cabinet Secretary for Justice in June 2018.

Kate Wallace – Chief Executive, Victim Support Scotland



Kate Wallace joined Victim Support Scotland as Chief Executive Officer in 2017. She has thirteen years' experience of high-profile leadership roles in the public and voluntary sectors in both executive and non-executive roles.

Prior to VSS, Kate lead Visualise Scotland, a service delivery charity that provides services to people living with disabilities and complex needs from across Scotland. She has previously held the position of UK Programme Director for Barnardo's and was based between London and Glasgow.

Paul McGee – Motivational Speaker



Paul McGee is one of Europe's leading speakers on the subject of change, workplace relationships and motivation. His book SUMO became a Sunday Times Best Seller and his book on Self Confidence reached number one in the WHSmith's Business Book Chart and remained there for a further 24 weeks. He had appeared on BBC Breakfast Television and is a regular contributor on BBC Radio.

Paul's aim is to deliver a practical, relevant message that can make an immediate impact on people's professional and personal lives.

He's spoken for more than 1,000 organisations in more than 40 countries to date, from India to Italy and from Bangkok to Brisbane, Paul's messages have resonated with a global audience.

Mary Glasgow – Chief Executive, Children 1st



Mary qualified as a Social Worker in 1991, and is currently Chief Executive at Children 1st, Scotland's National Children's Charity. Mary sits on the Board of Starcatchers – Scotland's National Arts and Early Years organisation specialising in creative activity for young children and the adults who care for them. She is also on the Board of Together Scotland, the alliance of Scottish children's charities that works to improve awareness, understanding and implementation of the UNCRC.

For the past 28 years she has spent her career working across the statutory and third sector social work/social care arenas in a number of Local Authorities and organisations, as a practitioner, trainer, manager and leader. Mary has a particular interest in how family minded practice can work to protect children's rights and wellbeing as well as build strong families and communities. She works to develop teams and services which reflect this approach in practice.

Lynn Burns – Victims Taskforce



Lynn Burns is an individual member of the Victims Taskforce and an active participant within several support organisations and initiatives that focus on supporting victims of crime.

Lynn, who was bereaved of her son Sam as a result of crime six years ago, will talk at today's conference about her own family's experiences with the criminal justice system and how the system can be improved to support the victims and witnesses at the centre.

Fiona Thomson – Head of Region (West), VSS



Fiona started as a volunteer in 2003 in Inverclyde. She then applied for a post in Greenock, and then began the next 25 years as a member of staff, working in West Dunbartonshire, Argyll & Bute, Edinburgh, West Lothian and then returning to the West.

Fiona is very proud to be part of VSS, as together we really can assist everyone affect by crime.

Emma Parker – Locality Manager for Argyll, Bute and Clyde, VSS



Emma has been with VSS for over 12 years. She started as a volunteer in the VS Greenock office, helping in other services when needed and loving every minute of it. While volunteering she also worked with The Spark in Glasgow and developed her skills in helping and supporting people struggling in relationships, getting a chance to use her COSCA qualifications.

In 2017, when a job came up in VSS she jumped at it and then became the Service Delivery Officer for Inverclyde and Dunoon, working with the amazing volunteers across the area and building up a service that that we are all proud of. Every day is a privilege to work with the people that we do and help share a small part of a journey to recovery.

Tracie Kinnear – Locality Manager for Ayrshire, Dumfries & Galloway



Tracie joined VSS as an Assistant Co-ordinator with the Witness Service in Kilmarnock at the end of August 2004, as a naive youngster in her 30s who had never set foot in a court until the day of my interview. Before joining the organisation she worked for Clarks Shoes while studying Social Science at Kilmarnock College and then European Policy at Paisley University as a mature student and single parent.

During her studies she was involved in student politics, initially as President of the Student Association at Kilmarnock College and then on the Steering Group for the National Union of Students in Scotland, and her experiences there helped to ignite her passion for supporting people.

Heather Butler Smith – Training and Group Work Coordinator, Lifelink



Heather has a passion for Personal Development which began in 1993 when she moved from the UK to the USA, to live and work. She quickly became aware that self-confidence and resilience, combined with the ability to build rapport and think creatively were fundamental in achieving success.

By the time she returned to the UK in 2001, she had a greater awareness of the need for simple, yet structured development plans that would offer employees support through change and empower them to take ownership of their roles and achieve better work/life balance. This remains the focus for Heather's work today.

Heather is an experienced coach and mentor and continues to develop on her own. Now working with Lifelink, Heather and her team are responsible for creating and delivering psycho-educational courses and workshops to help people recognise the early signs of stress and provide them with tools to tackle stress head on, build greater resilience and learn the importance of self-care.

Janice Stevenson – Development Officer, LGTB Youth



Janice Stevenson has 15 years' experience in youth and community development work and graduated with First Class BA(Hons) in Community Education from the University of Strathclyde in 2015. Before joining the Programmes and Influencing Team at LGBT Youth Scotland as a Development Officer. She currently leads much of the organisation's gender-based violence work, including the LGBT Domestic Abuse Project and LGBT Youth Commission on Housing and Homeless.

In addition, Janice is experienced in providing direct support to LGBT survivors of domestic abuse having worked in the Fearless Service for four years until June 2019 and has participated in Independent Domestic Abuse Advocacy (IDAA) training.

Michelle Ritchie – Police Inspector, Police Scotland

Inspector Ritchie joined Strathclyde Police in 1992 and has worked across Glasgow City in response policing. In 2000, she transferred to the Lothian and Borders Police, posted in Edinburgh City Centre. In 2001, she was promoted to rural East Lothian and spent time in operational policing and subsequently a role in Force Professional Standards Department.

In 2013, she was promoted to Inspector and led a community policing team across Midlothian. She is an experienced event commander in policing sporting and music events and an experienced Force Negotiator and Trauma Risk Management Assessor. She represents other officers of her rank as a Police Federation Representative.

Her role in Equality and Diversity for Police Scotland started in February 2019. She works with a team across the country, working closely with the Scottish Government and partners to improve Police Scotland Service Delivery to our diverse communities.

Tirion Seymour – Service User Engagement Officer, VSS



Tirion has been working with Victim Support Scotland since April 2019 as a Service User Engagement Officer within the Performance and Quality Team. This role includes developing how we collect feedback and support service user involvement at VSS.

Tirion has also been involved with the victim engagement aspect of wider criminal justice improvement initiatives, for example, as part of the Victims Taskforce.