



A · D · E · S

5TH - 6TH NOVEMBER

2026

ADES CONFERENCE



LEADERSHIP
— AND —
EQUITY

I can now confirm further details for our Conference on 5th and 6th November to be held at the Westerwood Hotel Cumbernauld.

Once again, over the course of the past year, ADES has sought to play a leading role in Scottish education as we have driven forward the aspirations we set out within our Framework for Improvement. This framework will continue to define and shape our work as we continue with our ambition to ensure Scotland has a world-class education and learning system, as outlined in our 2030 vision.

Over the past year, collaboration and partnership have been at the heart of our work, and our ADES networks have continued to play a pivotal role in leading improvement across the system and I am very grateful to everyone for their collaborative efforts across so many diverse policy areas.

The theme for this year's conference is ***"Leadership and Equity"***.

The recent Scottish parliamentary election has provided a refreshed political context and no doubt a renewed set of priorities for the period ahead. Education will continue to sit at the centre of public debate, and it is essential that we, as ADES, stay focused on what is right for children and young people in terms of their educational experiences, and that we continue to advocate passionately for the services we provide across our diverse communities. By leading together as ADES, and with our partners, we are in a powerful position to help shape what happens next for Scotland's education system.

In that spirit, earlier this spring, ADES published our position paper *Looking to the Future: Issues for Consideration by the Scottish Education System*, setting out a clear, evidence-informed view of the key challenges and opportunities facing Scottish education and where coherent national action can make the greatest difference. The paper deliberately calls for greater stability and coherence (rather than further structural churn), and highlights a small number of areas where we believe collective leadership matters most now – including demographic change and planning ahead; the sustained rise in additional support needs; poverty and equity; and the need for a clear, aligned approach to curriculum, assessment and the opportunities and risks presented by AI. These themes align strongly with our conference focus on *Leadership and Equity*, and will help frame our discussions over the two days when we come together.

The programme over the two days seeks to provide a balance between opportunities for you to have space and time to reconnect with colleagues, hear from our lead postholders and also benefit from input from keynote speakers and from some workshop inputs.

Speakers

We are delighted to confirm that Simon Breakspear will join us on day one as the keynote speaker. Simon, whose work will be known to many in ADES, brings a wealth of international experience and expertise. He will speak to us about systems leadership and implications for next steps in Scotland. On Day 2 will have inputs from Khadija Mohammed on Equalities and Marion Burns on the strategic picture around Early Years. In addition, there will be presentations from our President and Vice President, strategic discussions led by ADES colleagues and we will look to have an address from (or a panel with) new political leads in the national Education arena and national agencies. We will also have an input from our sponsors, and as ever we are grateful for their ongoing support.

Sessions

There will be ample opportunity for professional discussion with colleagues as well as strategic workshops led by our networks.

Please visit <https://thestaffcollege.uk/adesconferencebooking/> to secure your place.

The full programme, details and aims of each session will be sent to you well in advance.

In the meantime, I offer my best wishes and look forward to seeing you in November.

Laurence Findlay
President
ADES