

UNIVERSITY OF THE
WEST of SCOTLAND
UWS

Centre for Culture,
Sport and Events

Annual Report 2025



Foreword

2025 has been a remarkable year at the University of the West of Scotland, seeing as it did, the launch of Strategy 2030 which sets out the institution's ambitions to create and apply new knowledge in ways which enhance our global impact and support the continued success of our students. The Centre for Culture, Sport and Events is one of our leading research groups forms a key part of the university's ability to meet these ambitions.

This year's report summarises an impressive body of work that showcases the international nature of our research and collaborations, that demonstrates our ability to work in partnership with practice to deliver both insights and meaningful change and to embed an inclusive attitude in the planning, delivery and legacy of major sporting and cultural events.

2026 promises to at least as busy with major international sporting events such as the Commonwealth Games being hosted in Glasgow and the World Cup and other events happening on the global stage. I'm delighted to see CCSE fully engaged with and supporting these major events but in the immediate short term, I am sure you will enjoy the opportunity to pause and reflect on a year of achievement as set out in the 2025 annual report.



Professor Robert MacIntosh

PVC for Research and Innovation
and Interim DVC

Director's welcome

Welcome to our Annual Report for 2025. This year has been a particularly turbulent one for the Higher Education sector in the UK, but here at CCSE we have continued to lead on impactful projects in Scotland, the UK, and internationally.

Since its inception in 2018, the Centre has built up a strong reputation for its research, consultancy and contract research work in the sport, events, culture and tourism sectors, having secured £2 million in research grants, consultancy, and other academic activities over the last 6 years in collaboration with a range of national and international partners.

With a small core team, and a growing number of Associates, CCSE is going from strength to strength, building on its members' reputations in the sport, events, culture and tourism sectors to produce impactful research and social contribution. In 2025, we have focused much of our efforts on translating our research endeavours to facilitate social change. For example, in 2025 we have been working closely with the Commonwealth Games which will be held in Glasgow in 2026. I have taken on a role on the board of Commonwealth Sport, and our colleagues Dr Briony Sharp and Prof David McGillivray, along with our PhD student Callum McCloskey, are informing the development of the Story and Change and Legacy Plan for the event. We are also drawing on our research expertise in parasport to design and deliver the pre-Games GAPS Camp where para-athletes from across the Commonwealth will come to Ayr to prepare for potential participation in the Games.

This year we have also continued to foster international partnerships, whether via collaborative research grant applications, or delivering existing projects together. In this report you'll read about projects in Australia, Switzerland, Canada, Brazil and the US. While here at UWS we have a strong place-based agenda around our five UK campuses, to help address our Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) we also need to look beyond our campus footprint and CCSE is committed to doing so through the development of strong, trusted partnerships and collaborations.



**Professor
Gayle McPherson**

Director CCSE

About the Centre

Established in 2018, the CCSE undertakes collaborative research across the social sciences, business and humanities. Research outputs produced by the Centre have been deemed 4* world leading, and our impact case study Sport Events as Agents of Change was judged as 4* internationally outstanding in the UK REF 2021 review.

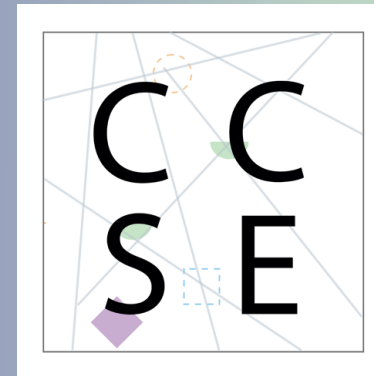
Jointly funded at the outset by UWS and Renfrewshire Council, the local authority has been a key partner. Since its inception, CCSE has provided research and evaluation support for the council but has also extended its reach to participate in research with national and international partners with a focus on three main themes: Sport, Politics and Social Justice; Leisure, Events and Culture; and Tourism Policy, Heritage, & Regeneration.

Strategically, the CCSE Mission is aligned with the **Scottish**

Government's National Performance Framework. CCSE supports multiple fields in the National Performance Framework: contributing to demonstration of the value of Scottish culture; supporting education and skills development of Scottish society; and enhancing knowledge regarding human rights within our research activities. CCSE is aligned with the **National Event Strategy 'Scotland The Perfect Stage'**. The work produced by the CCSE supports many of the key objectives of the new Scottish National Event Strategy such as 'monitoring resident perceptions and attitudes; contributing to social and cultural impact theory; studying event population dynamics over many years; producing case studies for benchmarking best practices (or failures)' (p.32).

We are also aligned with the **UN Sustainable Development Goals**. All the work produced by the CCSE is aligned to the UN SDGs, including SDG 11 Target 11.4, SDG 12 Target 12b; SDG 16 Target 16.2. We believe that our interdisciplinary research, consultancy and educational

activities are currently contributing to the alignment of the UWS Research Strategy with the UN SDGs. CCSE membership is also contributing directly to REF UoA 24. Finally, CCSE support the strategic plans of UWS Strategy 2030 and the ambitions of the School of Business & Creative Industries. To achieve our ambitions, CCSE works in partnership with the Sport and Physical Activity Research Institute (SPARI) in the School of Health and Life Sciences at UWS.



CCSE 2025 in numbers

Over the course
of 2025, CCSE
members have:

SUBMITTED
£1.3MILLION
VALUE IN
RESEARCH BIDS

**PUBLISHED
3 BOOKS**

(ONE SOLE AUTHORED
AND 2 EDITED COLLECTIONS)

PUBLISHED
**18 PEER
REVIEWED
JOURNAL
ARTICLES**

PUBLISHED
**9 POLICY
OR INDUSTRY
REPORTS**

PRESENTED AT
**10
INTERNATIONAL
CONFERENCES**

DELIVERED KEYNOTE
PRESENTATIONS AT
**10 CONFERENCES
AND PUBLIC
ENGAGEMENT EVENTS**

PARTNERED WITH
ACADEMICS IN
**11 DIFFERENT
COUNTRIES**
(IRAN, BRAZIL, CANADA,
AUSTRALIA, NEW ZEALAND,
COLOMBIA, BELGIUM, FINLAND,
CZECHIA, USA, ENGLAND)

CONTRIBUTED TO
THE EDITORIAL
BOARDS OF **13
INTERNATIONAL
JOURNALS**

**SUPERVISED 6
PHD STUDENTS
TO COMPLETION**

MADE
**4 BROADCAST
MEDIA
APPEARANCES**

GENERATED
**977
REGISTRATIONS**
FOR CCSE TALKS
ONLINE EVENTS

GENERATED
744
CONNECTIONS
ON LINKEDIN

Meet the CCSE Team



Professor Gayle McPherson is Director of CCSE and holds a Chair in Events and Cultural Policy. Her research interests revolve around the interventions of the local and national state and wider agencies in events and festivity of all types. She is particularly interested in sport and cultural events aiding inclusion for marginalised groups with a particular focus on disability rights. She has led the Centre since its inception and has been has led and contributed to many research grants and is currently conducting leading research on the Commonwealth Games 2026. She has acted as an expert advisor to the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office and British Council contributing to their International Development Strategy and Soft Power Council reports. She is the Director of Legacy and Community Engagement on the Board of Commonwealth Games Scotland. She sits on the British Council Scottish Advisory Board. She is the co-Chief Editor of *Frontiers Journal for Sport and Active Living: Leisure, Tourism, Events and Sport* (2020- present) and has co-authored books including *Leveraging Disability Sport Events: Impacts, Promises and Possibilities* (2018) and *Event Policy: From Theory to Strategy* (2012). She was also co-editor of *Digital Leisure Cultures: Critical Perspectives* (2017), *Music Entrepreneurship* (2015), *Research Themes in Events* (2013) and *National Days: Constructing and Celebrating National Identity* (2009).



Professor David McGillivray is Deputy Director of CCSE and holds a Chair in Event and Digital Cultures. His research focuses on two areas; i) the contemporary significance of events and festivals (sporting & cultural) and, ii) the affordances of digital and social media in enabling (and constraining) participation in civic life. He has led several large practice/research projects including: Digital Commonwealth exploring themes of digital storytelling, digital citizenship, participatory cultures and community development in the context of the 2014 Commonwealth Games in Glasgow; FESTSPACE, exploring the relationship between festivals, events and public space in Europe; EventRights, exploring the relationship between sport events and human rights; and Festivals Connect, exploring the role of events in promoting positive EDI outcomes. He is the co-editor of *Digital Leisure Cultures: Critical Perspectives* (Routledge, 2017) and co-author of *Event Policy: From Theory to Strategy* (Routledge, 2012), *Event Bidding: Politics, Persuasion and Resistance* (Routledge, 2017) and *Leveraging Disability Sport Events: Impacts, Promises and Possibilities* (Routledge, 2018). He is currently Deputy Editor of the *Event Management* journal and sits on the Editorial Board of the *Leisure Studies* journal.



Professor Sandro Carnicelli is Deputy Director of CCSE and a Professor of Tourism and Leisure Studies. Sandro is a member of the ABRATUR (International Academy for the Development of Tourism Research in Brazil). He currently serves on the Editorial Board of Leisure Studies Journal, and Journal of Adventure Education and Outdoor Learning and CABI Tourism Cases. He is an Associate Editor for Event Management Journal and is currently the Editor in Chief of the World Leisure Journal. Sandro is an Alumni of the Young Academy of Scotland/RSE and a member of the ESRC Peer Review Panel and the chair of the Renfrewshire Tourism Leadership Group.



Dr David Meir is a Lecturer in Sport & Physical Education in the School of Health and Life Sciences. He teaches on the BSc Sport Coaching & Development degree at the UWS Ayr Campus where he delivers the physical education modules. He has been lecturing in further and higher education for 23 years. His research publications originally focused on critical pedagogy, sport for development, community sport, participatory research methodologies, inclusive practice, and physical education policy. His most recent research has (1) explored further the role of education with sport for development and (2) analysed current sport and physical activity policy in Scotland.



Dr Masood Khodadadi is a Reader in Tourism, Culture, and Society. His expertise encompasses cultural heritage, policy, and planning within tourism studies. With a multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary research profile, Masood has an extensive publication record in top-tier academic journals. He currently serves as the Associate Editor for the Ecotourism Section of the Journal of Frontiers in Sustainable Tourism and is a member of the editorial board of several prestigious journals. In addition, Masood is the Associate Lead (Output) for UWS' UoA24 REF (Research Excellence Framework) 2029 submission. In this role, he supports the UOA Lead in managing the peer-review process and leads the selection and preparation of research outputs. His commitment extends to nurturing staff success, fostering research development, and championing the open access agenda at UWS. Drawing from over a decade of hands-on experience in the hospitality and tourism industry, he has contributed his expertise to organisations such as Gleneagles, Hilton, and the G1 Group. Additionally, Masood served as an invited expert judge on the second series of BBC's Scotland's Greatest Escape, further demonstrating his reputation and expertise within the tourism industry.



Dr Jenny Flinn is an expert in event management education, having played a fundamental role in developing the subject area across Scotland and the UK. Her work focuses on bridging the gap between industry and Higher Education by integrating industry into the curriculum, undertaking consultancy work, and the design and delivery of industry focused courses. She has extensive experience in teaching and learning at both undergraduate and postgraduate level and a strong track record in developing, delivering, and leading academic programmes. Her teaching spans a broad spectrum, from delivering Foundation Academy courses for school pupils, to leading commercial CPD modules for industry practitioners. Jenny serves as Vice Chair of the Association for Events Management Education and is a member of the Skills and Talent working group of UKEVENTS, contributing to national conversations around skills development and educational standards in the sector. She also plays an active role in supervising and assessing PhD students and regularly reviews for a range of academic journals and sits on the Editorial Advisory Board of Event Management.



Dr Kalyan Bhandari is a Senior Lecturer in Marketing, Events and Tourism. His research interests are in the sociology of leisure and tourism, tourism at heritage sites, governments and tourism public policies, the environment, and regional development. He completed his PhD on Scottish tourism at the University of Glasgow. Kalyan has published papers on tourism, leisure and identity in reputed journals like Annals of Tourism Research; Environment and Planning C: Politics and Space; Leisure Studies; and Studies in Ethnicity and Nationalism. He has published two books: Tourism and National Identity: Heritage and Nationhood in Scotland (Channel View Publications) and Tourism and Nationalism in Nepal (Routledge). Kalyan is currently investigating a British Academy/Leverhulme Trust-funded project on the Covenanting memorials in the southwest of Scotland. Kalyan sits on the editorial board of the British Sociological Association's flagship journal Sociology (Sage).



Dr Chloe Maclean joined UWS in 2020 as a Lecturer in Sociology in the School of Education and Social Sciences. She teaches across the BA Social Sciences, and MA Applied Social Sciences courses, and specialises in gendered embodiment in sport and physical activity contexts. Her research explores how gendered power relations are shaped through embodied experiences within sport and physical activity practices. She employs innovative qualitative methods such as sensory ethnography and visual methods to amplify participant voices. Her current projects include studies on embodied experiences of menstruation in sport and gender-based violence.



Dr Liz Carlin is a Lecturer in Sport Coaching & Development with over 10 years' experience in education and 20 years' experience in working with people with a disability in sport. She has an expertise in inclusion with a particular interest in research with people with a disability and people living with dementia. She has worked with organisations including Special Olympics Europe Eurasia (McConkey et al, 2019) and Alzheimer Scotland, (MacRae, Macrae & Carlin, 2020). Liz has also worked on research with Professor's McPherson & McGillivray on both Project Echo and the OSS project Understanding Disability Sport in Scotland. She has experience in conducting programme evaluations and mixed methods research whilst conducting an Evaluation of the Clinical Champions Physical Activity Training Programme for Public Health England. (Carlin et al., 2020; Carlin et al., 2021; Whelan et al., 2021).



Dr Briony Sharp is a Lecturer and Programme Leader in Marketing, Innovation, Tourism, and Events. She teaches across both undergraduate and postgraduate programmes and contributes to initiatives like the Foundation Academy for high school pupils. Briony's research primarily employs qualitative methods to explore the social impacts of events, focusing on governance, volunteering, and critical event studies. Her doctoral research investigated the social legacies of the Glasgow 2014 Commonwealth Games, and she is currently involved in a project related to the Glasgow 2026 Commonwealth Games, funded by Spirit of 2012. Her ongoing research interests include the contribution of leisure and events to well-being, event legacy, and sustainability. Her recent publications include co-editing *Creative Research Methods for Critical Event Studies* (2024), *Transforming Leisure in the Pandemic* (2022), and *Accessibility, Inclusion, and Diversity in Critical Events Studies* (2018). Briony is actively involved in the academic community, serving as Treasurer on the Executive Board of the Leisure Studies Association and as the Social Media Editor for the *Journal of Policy Research in Tourism, Leisure and Events*.



Dr Adam Talbot joined UWS in 2022 as a Lecturer in Events Management previously been a Lecturer in Sport and Event Management at Coventry University and Lecturer in Sport Development at Abertay University. His research focusses on the impacts of events on host communities, particularly the deleterious impacts of sport mega-events, while also exploring the reaction to these impacts by communities. He completed his PhD at the University of Brighton, focussing on the spatial politics of resistance to favela evictions in the context of the Rio 2016 Olympic Games. He has subsequently conducted follow-up research in Rio de Janeiro, exploring the concept of "legacy" and conducted research on human rights policy evolution in the context of mega-events. His current research focuses on the burgeoning transnational movement against the Olympic Games and mega-events more broadly.



Dr Andrew Bailey joined UWS in July 2023 as a Lecturer in Sports Management within the School of Health and Life Sciences. Since joining UWS, Andrew has represented the university and CCSE internationally on several occasions for research, teaching, and research dissemination. Andrew's research primarily uses qualitative research approaches, with a particular interest in photo-elicitation methods. Current research projects employing photo-elicitation methods include UEFA funded research exploring the barriers and enablers of female off-pitch volunteering within grassroots football; Realist Insights into Disability and Inclusion: Barriers and Enablers to Sport Participation; and Exploring the attachment Rangers Football Club supporters hold towards Ibrox Stadium. As well as photo-elicitation methods, Andrew is an expert in realist evaluation, which is particularly useful for evaluating the impact of programmes and events.



Meet the CCSE Doctoral students



Rui Jin is a second-year student, supervised by Professor David McGillivray and Dr Jenny Flinn. Her doctoral research explores environmental sustainability in the context of Olympic education. With a background in education, Rui brings a unique interdisciplinary perspective to her work. She recently presented her research at the UWS Research Festival and serves as a Postgraduate Research (PGR) Senate representative, advocating for the voices of PGR students at university level. She is also involved in the 'Energy Saving for All' project, reflecting her broader commitment to sustainability and community engagement.



Naheed Akhtar is a final year PhD student, supervised by Professor David McGillivray. Her doctoral research explores the impact of digital media on shaping political communication in Pakistan. With a background in journalism and media, Naheed brings a deep understanding of social issues and strong skills of communication with a wider range of people from different professions and backgrounds. Naheed has contributed to two CCSE research projects, utilising her communication and academic skills; FestivalConnect, working with Professor David McGillivray and Professor Gayle McPherson and The Role of Regenerative Tourism in Fostering a Sustainable for Small Heritage Sites in Post-Industrial Towns, led by Dr Masood Khodadadi. She has also co-authored a research publication about strategic messaging in events with Professor David McGillivray.



Callum McCloskey is a final year PhD student, supervised by Professor David McGillivray, Professor Gayle McPherson and Dr Adam Talbot. His doctoral research investigates how human rights commitments made in the bid for the 2026 FIFA Men's World Cup (FWC) have been embedded in planning and delivery processes, with a focus on stakeholder engagement, institutional governance, and reform. He has contributed to several CCSE-linked projects, including Sports for the Planet and the Glasgow Commonwealth Games 2026 Legacy Network, supporting research coordination, stakeholder engagement, and policy development. Recent outputs, co-authored with CCSE colleagues, include an article in The Conversation on the human rights of football fans at UEFA Euro 2024 and a forthcoming publication on the governance of human rights in a Soccer & Society special issue on the 2026 FWC.



Marlene Zijlstra is a final year PhD student, supervised by Dr Rachael Flynn, Professor David McGillivray and Professor Graham Jeffery. Her PhD explores community-led urban regeneration in post-industrial Paisley, Scotland, through Hidden Spaces Paisley—a collaborative creative project she designed and led. Using creative, participatory methods, the research examines how residents respond to spatial decay and cultural reuse. Marlene contributes to the work of the CCSE through blog content development and knowledge exchange, and co-authored Co-production in Arts & Culture: A Review of Evidence for Renfrewshire Council. She is also an active member of the SGSAH Doctoral Researcher Committee.

Stephen Mills is a second year PhD student, supervised by Dr Adam Talbot. He has returned to the world of academia after over a decade out of the classroom, having previously worked as a General Manager with over 25 years' experience working in the Sports, Health & Fitness industry. He has a passion for coaching and developing people and learning new skills and he is excitedly embarking on a new set of challenges whilst completing his research project. His PhD focuses on Olympic Games bidding reform and its effect on legacy. He has presented his work at two conferences and has co-authored a book chapter publication for Routledge.

Norman Duncan is a final year PhD student, supervised by Professor Sandro Carnicelli and researching urban tourism through a commons framework. He completed his undergraduate degree in Accounting and Finance (BAcc) at the University of the West of Scotland and his masters in Climate Change: Environment, Science, and Policy (MSc) at King's College London. He's had an eclectic career begging in the bike-messenger industry, then moving into fashion, and eventually green finance. These experiences coalesce to inform his current research using bike-messengers as a case-study for urban tourism, situating urban space within the context of finance capital.

Meet the CCSE Advisory Group

The work of the Centre is guided by an Advisory Group that give us the benefit of their experience and expertise to advise on strategic direction.



Alastair Evans (Creative Scotland) is the Head of Knowledge and Research at Creative Scotland. He has a background in social research and worked across a range of public policy areas before specialising in the cultural and creative sectors. Alastair is currently a member the Steering Group for pan-European research on the economic spillovers from the Creative Industries, sits on the UK Research Excellence Framework (REF) panel for Art and Design and the Research Advisory panel for the International Federation of Arts Councils and Cultural Agencies. His own interests include electronic music, photography and film.



Alistair MacDonald worked for many years in the UK civil service in different government departments including the Department for Culture, Media and Sport, and the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister. During his time in government he worked on a broad range of social, cultural and economic policy areas and legislation, including everything from broadcasting to local government finance. For the last 14 years he has worked at the British Council, first heading up the Council's Parliamentary and Government relations work and then leading on research and policy development on soft power. He is the author of several reports on soft power, including the Sources of Soft Power and, most recently, Global Perceptions 2025, and has also commissioned and edited research reports by academics and think tanks in the UK and around the world on cultural relations, trust and soft power.



Paul Zealey is Skills Planning Lead at Skills Development Scotland. In this role Paul is responsible for continuing the implementation of the Enterprise and Skills Review alongside senior stakeholder management and the development and implementation of regional economic strategies. Paul has leadership for Digital Economy programme and for Developing Scotland's Young Workforce, supporting 40% reduction in youth unemployment.



Marie Christie has worked at a senior level in the Events and Festivals sector for more than twenty years. She currently heads up the Development department within VisitScotland's Events Directorate, leading teams with responsibility for Events Industry Development, Events and Exhibitions, Themed Years and Growth Fund. Joining the EventScotland management team in 2003, Marie designed and ran EventScotland's successful National Events Programme, working with a wide range of events across the country. Marie also led the delivery of Homecoming Scotland 2009 – a year-long celebration of Scotland's culture and heritage which influenced an additional 95,000 visitors to travel to join the celebrations generated an estimated £53.7M additional revenue for Scotland. Prior to her current post, Marie was EventScotland's International Cultural Events Director with responsibility for leading and delivering the strategy for supporting Scotland's major cultural events and for securing new 'one-off' events such as MTV Europe Music Awards and the Turner Prize.



Julie Pearson is the Head of Events at Glasgow Life leading the events team to deliver Glasgow's Events Strategy and calendar of major annual and one-off sports and cultural events to drive economic, social and wellbeing benefits for the city and enhance Glasgow's reputation as a global events powerhouse. This involves working with partners, industry and the local community to identify, attract, create, grow, promote and deliver events that generate significant value, whilst ensuring the city continues to provide the perfect event experience. In addition to leading the delivery and animation of Glasgow's major one-off events and programmes, including the UCI Cycling World Championships 2023 in Glasgow, European Capital of Sport 2023 and World Athletics Indoor Championships 2024, Julie manages the delivery and growth of Glasgow's annual events portfolio, including the Merchant City Festival, World Pipe Band Championships, Winter Festival and Great Scottish Run.



Dr Ken Emond is the Head of Research Funding at the British Academy. Ken was born in Elderslie and went to school in Paisley. He is a graduate of the University of St Andrews with a doctorate in Scottish History. After working in the Department of Transport, Ken joined the Academy in 1992. As Head of Research Funding since 2008, Ken is responsible for the administration of the Academy's UK grants and fellowship schemes, and he has extensive experience in advising on research funding matters. His book, *The Minority of James V: Scotland in Europe, 1513–1528* was published in November 2019. He was elected as a Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries in November 2022.

Meet the New Members of Advisory Board



Alex Johnston has been working in events, sport and funding for almost 25 years. His events journey began at Spirit of 2012 where he helped set up the Trust to take forward the legacy of London 2012. Over the last 12 years he has worked with major events and commemorations to use them as a catalyst for positive change for people and communities, making them feel happier, more included and changing perceptions of disability. This includes Glasgow 2014 where he volunteered to take part in the closing ceremony and where his love affair for the Commonwealth Games began. He is currently Legacy Manager at Commonwealth Sport and works within the Glasgow 2026 Organising Company to help build a lasting legacy which goes beyond the Games. He is Chair of LEAP Sports Scotland and vice-Chair of Dennistoun and Area Community Sports Hub. Alex believes events and sport are powerful tools in bringing about change. He lives in Glasgow in the athletes village built for the Glasgow 2014 Commonwealth Games.



Daria Tuhtar serves as the Royal Society of Edinburgh's Policy Manager. Prior to this, she worked for the Scottish Government undertaking Strategic Environmental Assessments of government plans, programmes, and strategies, and has a decade of experience in environmental consulting in Canada. She has a MSc in Environmental Protection and Management from the University of Edinburgh and holds additional degrees in anthropology and environmental science. Daria is a Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland and was a founding member and current Membership Secretary for Friends of Greyfriars Kirkyard, a group dedicated to preserving and promoting the unique cultural heritage of one of Scotland's most iconic destinations. She was a contributing author to their debut book, *The Dead Centre of Edinburgh: Stories about Greyfriars Kirkyard*, published with support from Edinburgh World Heritage.



Carron Tobin runs her own consultancy ruralDimensions Ltd in Callander and is Exec Director and founder of SCOTO CIC - the Scottish Community Tourism Network. A career starting in planning and landscape architecture and experience in the public and private sectors led to an exec director role with Scotland's first National Park before branching out on her own in 2009. Carron has a sound grounding in people, place, culture and heritage - and a strong belief in community led solutions. She is on her second term as a member of the Scottish Tourism and Hospitality Industry Leadership Group and is one of five mission leads championing Community Led Tourism.



Andrew McKean is the Tourism Officer for Renfrewshire Council, and has worked for VisitScotland, EventScotland, Scottish Canals and Scottish Enterprise amongst others. He is the main Council contact on the Renfrewshire Tourism Leadership Group and represents the region on the Glasgow City Region Tourism Group. He led the development of the first holistic destination development strategy for the area, the Renfrewshire Visitor Plan 2018-2021, and leads on the current Renfrewshire's Tourism Today, Tourism Plan 2024-2027. He is Chair of the SLAED Tourism Group (Scottish Local Authorities Economic Development) and represents them on the national Visitor Management Strategy Steering Group. Andrew has postgraduate and professional qualifications, including the Scottish Enterprise and Edinburgh Napier University Destination Leaders Programme, MA (Hons) from St Andrews University and MSc from Edinburgh Napier. He has been an invited speaker, ranging from undergraduate to CPD courses, has chaired the ICOMOS-UK Cultural Tourism Committee, and published in peer-reviewed journals for work on tourism related regeneration of Scotland's Canals, which he presented at international conferences.



CCSE's Current Research Projects

Sport, Politics, and Social Justice theme

Title: EventRights. Lead CCSE Researcher: Professor David McGillivray

Team: Professor Gayle McPherson, Dr Adam Talbot and Dr Liz Carlin

EventRights was an EU Marie Skłodowska-Curie Research and Innovation Staff Exchange project concluded in late 2024 having explored, and shared knowledge, on the extent to which the landscape of major sport events (MSEs) can be improved to ensure a progressive, rights-focused agenda is pursued by awarding organisations, host governments and implemented in the formal institutions tasked with organising these events. Staff mobilities formed the main component of the project, with CCSE members travelling to partners in the US, Canada, Japan and Brazil. Including hosting an EventRights International Research Training School at Western University, Ontario, Canada, along with scholars from across Europe and internationally. The final EventRights documentary film summarises the contribution of the project.

Title: Getting the inactive active: Barriers to participation and their potential policy solutions

Lead CCSE Researcher: Dr David Meir

The project was a fellowship with the Scottish Parliament. The project has, to date, produced an evidence review, two blog posts and a final qualitative report. Our evidence has been presented to the Cross Parliamentary Group on Health Inequalities, and we have attended the Health, Social Care and Sport Committee to respond to questions relating to the conclusions and recommendations in our report.

Title: Engaging Outsiders in Sport: Transforming Major Sport Event Legacy Planning Through a Co- Creation

Approach. Lead CCSE Researcher: Professor David McGillivray.

This ongoing Australian Research Council funded project investigates intersectional inequities affecting sport participation for girls, women and non-binary people in Queensland by working with them to envision inclusive legacies for the Brisbane 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games. Using a co-creation approach the research identifies what and how benefits can be achieved through legacy planning by engaging with diverse end-users who have historically been marginalised as 'outsiders' in sport. In doing so, the project will deliver evidence-based resources to i) improve engagement with marginalized groups about inclusive sport participation and ii) build capacity to sustain meaningful change for communities and organisations.

**Title: Commonwealth Games Research Legacy Network. Lead CCSE Researcher: Professor Gayle McPherson
Team: Dr Briony Sharp, Professor David McGillivray & Callum McCloskey**

Through external funding from Spirit of 2012 and in partnership with Glasgow 2026 Organising Company, CCSE is delivering a project to understand how the Glasgow 2026 Commonwealth Games can achieve a sustainable social legacy. This involves creating a research networking group with charities, public and private sector entities, leveraging the Games for their strategic ambitions. This network will harness collective expertise to develop an evaluation framework for assessing the Games' social and cultural impact—including diversity, equity, inclusion, employment, and well-being. This initiative aims to produce a robust research legacy by strategically documenting sustained community developments collaboratively with the community stakeholders identified and involved in the formation of the Research Legacy Network.

Title: Sports for the Planet. Lead CCSE Researcher: Professor David McGillivray, Team: Callum McCloskey

The ongoing Sports for the Planet project is developing a conceptual model and indicator framework for analysing sustainability in major sports events. It is collecting data to evaluate the sustainability of a broad range of these events from 1990 to 2022 and to investigate the factors behind differential outcomes. For this purpose, it employs a mixed methods approach. The quantitative part will involve the creation of a database from official documents and public sources, containing some 60 indicators of 248 editions of 24 major single-sports and multi-sports events. This database will allow a systematic comparative analysis of the sustainability outcomes of major sports events over time. The qualitative part will use semi-structured interviews, media and document analysis to deepen the inquiry for eight in-depth case studies to develop context-sensitive explanations for observed outcomes. More information on the project can be found at the website.

**Title: FIFA World Cup 2026 and Human Rights. Lead CCSE Researcher: Callum McCloskey
Supervisors: Professor David McGillivray, Professor Gayle McPherson, Dr. Adam Talbot**

This doctoral research investigates how human rights are governed within the FIFA World Cup, focusing on the 2026 tournament. Grounded in institutional theory and stakeholder theory, it examines how competing logics, stakeholder power relations, and isomorphic pressures either enable or hinder the incorporation of human-rights standards into FIFA's event-governance architecture. Using an in-depth qualitative case study, including semi-structured interviews, document analysis, and observation in three host cities – Toronto, Philadelphia and New York-New Jersey; the research identifies key barriers: conceptual ambiguity, fragmented mandates, the persistent dominance of commercial priorities, and limited political will, while highlighting opportunities for change through coalition-building, institutional work, and the strategic leverage of the mega-event itself. The study enriches sport-and-human-rights scholarship and offers practitioners concrete pathways for embedding human-rights norms across complex, multilevel sporting ecosystems.

Title: Environmental Sustainability in Olympic Education

Lead CCSE Researcher: Rui Jin, Supervisors: Professor David McGillivray and Dr Jenny Flinn

This doctoral research critically examines how principles of environmental sustainability are embedded and communicated within Olympic education programmes. Grounded in critical Olympic studies and environmental pedagogy, the study analyses the International Olympic Committee's educational initiatives, particularly the Olympic Values Education Programme (OVEP), to understand their role in shaping young people's environmental awareness, attitudes, and behaviours. Drawing on frameworks such as the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), Olympic Agenda 2020+5, and IOC sustainability strategy documents, the research explores how sustainability discourse is interpreted across diverse cultural and national contexts. The study also addresses the gap between aspirational policy narratives and the practical realities of Olympic education implementation, especially in formal education systems. The project aims to evaluate the effectiveness of current approaches, highlight limitations in existing pedagogical models, and identify opportunities for strengthening Olympic education's contribution to long-term environmental responsibility and global sustainability goals.

Title: An analysis of the International Olympic Committee's implementation of the Agenda 2020 (+5) bidding process and its effect on the value assigned to legacy

Lead CCSE Researcher: Steve Mills, Supervisors: Dr Adam Talbot, Professor David McGillivray and Dr Chloe McClean

The first phase of this doctoral research critically analyses the effects of the implementation of reforms of the Olympic bidding process and their effects on Olympic legacy discourse by completing an archival analysis of documents obtained from the Olympic World Library in Lausanne, using Foucauldian discourse analysis. Building on this foundation, phase two of the project uses a blend of Institutional theory and Foucault's power theory, to focus on how legacy ambitions are articulated, instrumentalised, and governed in the Brisbane 2032 preparations.

Leisure, Events and Culture theme

**Title: FestivalsConnect. Lead CCSE Researchers: Professor David McGillivray and Professor Gayle McPherson
Team: Naheed Akhtar**

FestivalsConnect was a Spirit of 2012 funded investigation into how festivals and events seek to support the realisation of equality, diversity and inclusion aims at the macro, meso and micro levels. The project was part of Spirit of 2012's Moments to Connect work. And ran from 2023 to the end of 2024. The project explored how festivals and events can make a more significant contribution to bringing communities together, strengthening social capital, enhancing social cohesion, facilitating intercultural encounters and producing convivial environments that foster interaction. We produced several outputs from the project, the most impactful of which was a Playbook for Equality, Diversity and Inclusion for Festivals and Events which has been endorsed by VisitScotland, Glasgow Life and is informing the Glasgow 2026 Commonwealth Games. Check out the project video.

Tourism policy, heritage, & regeneration theme

Title: Covenanting Heritage Tourism in Scotland. Lead CCSE Researcher: Dr Kalyan Bhandari

This British Academy funded project examined the dialogues that explain the invisibility of Covenanting memorials of the southwest region in Scottish tourism. The study helped enrich the conceptual understanding of the relation between death, atrocities, religion and tourism and explore the possibility of developing Covenanting memorials as heritage tourism attractions in Scotland. The project concluded in December 2024, and the final report was submitted to British Academy in May 2025. The study has provided some interesting insights into the social values and influence the visibility of heritage and rural tourism. The findings suggested that connection to covenanter heritage is driven by family ancestry, religious ties, and interest in local history, supported by grassroots research and community-led projects. The project findings were presented at British Sociological Association Annual Conference in Manchester in April 2025. A journal article will soon be submitted to disseminate the findings.

Title: The Role of Regenerative Tourism in Fostering a Sustainable for Small Heritage Sites in Post-Industrial Towns.

Lead CCSE Researcher: Dr Masood Khodadadi, Team: Naheed Akhtar

This study explores the potential of regenerative tourism as a means of revitalising small post-industrial heritage sites in Scotland, specifically in the town of Paisley. Deindustrialisation in the late 20th century resulted in the loss of industry and community networks, leading to a crisis in Europe's industrial areas. While efforts to transition post-industrial areas into new spaces of production have been stalled or slow, tourism presents a potential avenue for development. Small heritage sites in post-industrial towns provide a unique study setting as they can provide unique experiences for visitors while promoting sustainable tourism practices that benefit local communities and the environment. The study will use qualitative research methods such as interviews with stakeholders, participant observations, and focus groups with local community residents. The findings can provide valuable knowledge transferable to other regions and countries facing similar challenges in revitalising local communities through sustainable tourism development.

Title: Settler Colonialism and Tourism in Brazil. Lead CCSE Researcher: Professor Sandro Carnicelli

Team: Sarah Minasi (Federal University of Pelotas, Brazil) and Vander Valduga (Federal University of Parana, Brazil)

Debates regarding the silencing of minorities and the marginalisation of those colonised is not new. The process of perpetuating colonialism is seen in the narratives regarding immigration of those from the global North who occupied places and spaces in the global South. This project explores the colonial narratives used in the development and promotion of tourism as a contributing factor to silencing non-European voices and perpetuating a systemic marginalisation of Indigenous and Quilombola groups.

Title: Exploring the Mediating Role of Local Government in the CSR-Financial Performance Relationship During Crisis: A Study of Chinese B&B Owners.

Lead CCSE Researcher: Weina Li, Supervisors: Dr Masood Khodadadi and Dr Xiuli Guo

This project explores, from the perspective of Chinese Bed and Breakfast (B&B) owners, how local government measures influence their ability to engage in CSR during times of crisis. I also explore how B&B owners perceive the relationship between CSR practices and their business's financial performance. The study aims to advance a contextualised understanding of CSR in emerging economies, particularly within the Chinese hospitality sector, while also offering insights for government measures that support small hotels during crises.

**Title: Developing Caring Capacity in Tourism. Lead Researcher: Professor Sandro Carnicelli
Team: Karla Boluk (Waterloo University, Canada)**

Reflecting on the unsustainable practices and inimical impacts generated by the tourism sector we turn to a feminist ethic of care as an educational approach to enhance the way we practice and engage with tourism. We contend that by creating educational opportunities to cultivate a capacity to care and by developing caringscapes we will contribute to resist hedonistic, self-centred lifestyles, and harmful behaviours. Our work responds to concerns outlined by Pritchard (2018) regarding the lack of tourism scholarship critically engaging with feminist perspectives and Jamal and Higham's (2021) Special Issue on justice and ethics to progress sustainability in tourism which misses feminist ethics all together. Recognizing this gap, the authors call for scholars to consider weaving together diverse theoretical inquiry to advance understandings of justice and care in tourism. Our analysis explicitly considers how we may educate and nurture a propensity to care amongst our students, who as graduates will inform the direction of the tourism sector.

**Title: Against the Tourist City: Reclaiming Urban Space through Commons-Based Tourism
Lead CCSE Researcher: Norman Duncan**

This research explores how tourism may be utilised in reclaiming the right to the city for urban dwellers. Rooting tourism scholarship in a worldview of relational dialectics, the research weaves together aspects of critical urban geography, commons theory, and ecological Marxism to establish tourism scholarship as a deep study of capitalism through the tourism commodity. By understanding the motion of capital through tourism, the research explores how tourism may itself be utilised in the creation of the post-capitalist city. To achieve this, it establishes a framework for 'commons-based tourism' that seeks to root tourism scholarship and practice in a pragmatic, anti-capitalist praxis that establishes, maintains, and defends the commons.

Informing and Influencing: CCSE's impact in the world

CCSE is committed to generating positive societal impact from its research work. Beyond the confines of the University, in 2025 the CCSE has generated significant impact, highlighted in two exemplar projects.

Scottish Parliament Fellowship: Getting the Inactive Active

For the last 10 months, Dr David Meir (CCSE) and Dr David Scott from Abertay University have been undertaking a fellowship with the Scottish Parliament Information Centre (SPICe). The aim of the fellowship was to determine the current challenges and the potential policy solutions for addressing inactivity. The acceptance of the proposal was based on the relevance of the subject matter to the Scottish Parliament and its capacity to build on recent reports that had focused on female participation and health inequalities in sport and PA (HSCSC, 2022; HSCSC, 2023).

In January 2025 they published an evidence review presenting what we currently know about physical activity (PA) and sport in Scotland and to determine what we need to know to address concerns around levels of inactivity. They have also published two blog posts summarising the key findings on the SPICe website. In June they presented findings from the evidence review to the Cross Parliamentary Group on Health Inequalities. Following the publication of the evidence review they interviewed 20 professionals from across PA, sport and health. These professionals worked for a variety of organisations including Education Scotland, Active Scotland, SportScotland and Public Health Scotland. These interviews enabled them to develop an in-depth report exploring the specific challenges of physical inactivity and their potential policy solutions. They published the final report in June 2025 and were invited to respond to questions relating to their conclusions and recommendations at the Health, Social Care and Sport Committee on the 11th June 2025.

Playbook on Equality, Diversity and Inclusion in Festivals and Events

As part of our FestivalsConnect project, CCSE's Professor David McGillivray, Professor Gayle McPherson and Naheed Akhtar worked with partners Spirit of 2012, VisitScotland and Glasgow Life to produce a research-informed, but practice-focused Playbook for use by the festivals and events sector, across the UK, and further afield. This Playbook is intended as a guide to inform the sector's policies and practices when seeking to build EDI into their planning, delivery and learning. The Playbook has been adopted by VisitScotland and is also informing the Glasgow 2026 Commonwealth Games organisers on how to plan and deliver a sport event with EDI considerations at its heart. The Playbook is available to download as open access on the CCSE website The recommended citation is: McGillivray, D., McPherson, G. and Akhtar, N. (2024) Playbook for Equality, Diversity & Inclusion for Festivals and Events. Paisley: University of the West of Scotland.



For Equality, Diversity
and Inclusion in
Festivals and Events

CCSE contribution to the academic field

The CCSE members contribute to advances to the field of study in various ways, including by hosting academic conferences or workshops, research seminars, leading sectoral journals, reviewing and contributing to editorial boards.

CCSE Talks hosted

In 2025, CCSE has hosted the following CCSE Talks online seminars:

- Human Rights Impacts of the Olympic Games and the Necessity of Reform
- Inclusive events: gender, placemaking & human-environmental relationships
- Future of Hospitality: From Accommodation to Gastronomy
- Menstruation in Sport: Unpacking menstrual knowledges and stigma
- Regenerative Festival Tourism and the Power of the Story
- Tourism, Youth and Care in the Global South
- Sport Events, Diplomacy and Authoritarianism

Journal leadership

Members of the CCSE have significant leadership roles across multiple international journals including:
Editor in-Chief of Frontiers Journal of Sport and Active Living, Sport, Leisure, Tourism and Events and World Leisure Journal.

Deputy Editor of Event Management Journal

Associate Editors of Event Management Journal, Leisure Studies Journal, Frontiers in Sustainable Tourism, Leisure and Tourism at Cogent Social Sciences.

Social Media Editor of Journal of Policy Research in Tourism, Leisure and Events

Editorial Board Member of Annals of Leisure Research, Leisure Studies, Tourism Analysis, Sociology, Journal of Adventure Education and Outdoor Learning, Tourism Planning & Development, Research in Hospitality Management, Tourism, Heritage and Service Marketing, CABI Tourism Cases, International Journal of Event and Festival Management.

CCSE Publications in 2025

Sport, Politics and Social Justice theme

Ilevbare, S., & McPherson, G (2025) Isomorphism in sport diplomacy: examining the nexus between international law, sportswashing and the contested role of mega events owners, *International Journal of Sport Policy and Politics*, <https://doi.org/10.1080/19406940.2025.2457755>

Meir, D., & Scott, D (2025) Getting the inactive active: Barriers to physical activity and their potential policy solutions. Scottish Parliament Information Centre. Edinburgh. Available from [Getting the inactive active: Barriers to physical activity and their potential policy solutions | Scottish Parliament](#)

Meir, D., & Scott, D (2025) Getting the inactive active: Barriers to physical activity and their potential policy solutions. Scottish Parliament Information Centre. Edinburgh.

Meir, D (2025) What is the problem? A WPR analysis of physical activity policy in Scotland, *International Journal of Sport Policy and Politics*, 17:2, 345–362, DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1080/19406940.2024.2442914>

McGillivray, D., Akhtar, N & Reid, E (2025) Strategic Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Messaging Through Sport Events: A Foucauldian Discourse Analysis of a Mega Cycling Event, *Communication & Sport*, <https://doi.org/10.1177/21674795251398>

Pavlidis, A., Kennelly, M., Bhattacharya, D., McGillivray, D., Thorpe, H., Forsdike, K., Fullagar, S. (2025). Mega-sport events, gender equity, and sport legacy planning: mobilizing performativity for deeper insights. *Annals of Leisure Research*, 1–19. <https://doi.org/10.1080/11745398.2025.2517058>

Leisure, Events and Culture

Bhandari, K. (2025) Sociability on the Leisure Realm. *Leisure Studies*. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02614367.2025.2535587>

Bhandari, K. (2025) Beyond binaries: Cārvāka materialism and reimagining Asian leisure. *World Leisure Journal*. <https://doi.org/10.1080/16078055.2025.2577339>

Tourism Policy, Heritage and Regeneration

Amore, A., Adie, B., Carnicelli, S., Lunden, A., Hall, C. M (2025) Planning for sustainable development and tourism in Biosphere Reserves: A metagovernance appraisal. *Tourism Geographies*, <https://doi.org/10.1080/14616688.2025.2590180>

Carnicelli, S., Minasi, S.M., Valduga, V., Manzoni, A. (2025) Settler Colonialism and Tourist Routes in Brazil. *Tourism Management Perspectives*, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tmp.2025.101347>

El Azzaoui, I., Carnicelli, S., Khodadadi, M (2025) Redefining heritage: the post-colonial tourist gaze and the impact of domestic tourism on Algerian identity. *Journal of North African Studies*. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13629387.2025.2492112>

Khodadadi, M. (2025). Tourism resilience in Iran: navigating sanctions, diplomacy and emerging opportunities. *Research in Hospitality Management*. 15(2), <https://doi.org/10.1080/13629387.2025.2492112>

Nematpour, M., Khodadadi, M., Azimi, A., & Mohammadkazemi, R. (2025). IoT-driven smart solutions: transforming urban tourism destinations. *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Insights*. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1108/JHTI-10-2024-1083>

Campbell, F., & Khodadadi, M. (2025). Impact of short-term let regulations on mental health in Scotland's self-catering sector: a policy-oriented framework for future resilience. *Research in Hospitality Management*, 15(1), 63-68. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1080/22243534.2024.2433001>

Askari, F., Nekooeezadeh, M., Amini, A., & Khodadadi, M. (2025). Optimising visitor engagement: the role of pre-purchase touchpoints in cultural heritage tourism. *Tourism Recreation Research*, 1-22. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1080/02508281.2025.2477706>

Khodadadi, M., & Campbell, F. (2025). External forces and sector fragility: a policy perspective on Scotland's self-catering industry. *Current Issues in Tourism*. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1080/13683500.2025.2456071>

Conference Presentations in 2025

Akhtar, N., McGillivray, D., McPherson, G. (2025) *Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion in the event sector for bringing social sustainability* 17th GEI conference, Royal Hotel London 25th February 2025

Bailey, A (2025) 'Realist Insights into Disability and Inclusion: Barriers and Enablers to Sport Participation, European Association for Sport Management Conference, Budapest

Bailey, A (2025) The love of a place: A photovoice study exploring the attachment Rangers Football Club supporters hold towards Ibrox Stadium, Football Collective conference, Belfast

Bhandari, K & Boij, H (2025) Covenanting heritage and tourism in Scotland, British Sociological Association Annual Conference, Manchester University

Carnicelli, S (2025) Regenerative Tourism: Building Bridges in a Post-Industrial town, The Academy of Leisure Sciences, Pittsburgh

Flinn, J. (2025) Resurrection Events: reanimating experience and emotion, Association for Events Management Education Annual Forum, University of Chester

Flinn, J. (2025) Working Together to Achieve Common Goals: university industry collaboration in leisure education - advancing employability and professionalism, World Leisure Congress, Breda University of Applied Sciences

Flinn, J., Frew, M. & Tzanidis, T. (2025) *Resurrection Events: Reanimating Experience and Emotion*. Association for Events Management Education Conference, University of Chester, 2nd-3rd July 2025

McGillivray, D. (2025) *Multicultural festivals and pleasure-politics: The case of Glasgow Mela*. ATLAS Conference. Vila-Sec, 17-19th June 2025

McGillivray, D. (2025) *The (Online) Micropolitics of Olympic Opposition: The Case of Brisbane 2032*, Play the Game conference, Tampere, 6th October 2025

McPherson, G (2025) *The role of Mega Sport Events in Sustainable Sport Tourism Strategies: Who leads and who governs?* (Keynote speaker)) The 10th International Sports Tourism Research Network Conference: Sustainable Governance and Destination Management, (15th October 2025) University of the Algarve, Portugal

McPherson, G (April 2025) keynote speaker AIPC Training Academy for the week in Brussels to present on Global Trends in the Event industry but also be part of the judging panel of the pitch to host an event and convention

McPherson, G. and McGillivray, D. (January 2025) Keynote speaker at Bradford City of Culture Opening Event to present our Playbook on EDI for Festivals and Events

McPherson, G. (Nov 2025) *Creative Convergence | Growth Reimagined Policy Conference: Greater Together: India-UK Creative Dialogue* Keynote Bangalore, India

McPherson, G. (Nov 2025) *Creative Convergence Spotlight on research: From Evidence to Impact; How Research in Culture, and Arts, is Shaping Our Future and Roundtable: Curating with Care*. Bangalore, India

Meir, D. (2025) *What is the process?* Defining and applying inclusive practice in Scottish sport. Political Studies Association Sport & Politics Conference. Birkbeck, University of London, 15-16 May

Misener, L; Quinn, N and McPherson, G. (2025) *Sport Events as sites of Accessibility or Zones of Exclusion?* NASSM conference – online May 2025

Sharp, B., Finkel, R. & Platt, L. (2025) *Deeper Understanding of the Social Impacts, Value and Power of Events: Creative way forward*. World Leisure Congress. Breda University, 25 – 28th August 2025



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