Mark McDonald
Minister for Childcare and Early Years

Mark was born in Aberdeen, North East Scotland. He was educated at Dyce Primary School and Dyce Academy before going on to gain an MA in Politics from the University of Dundee and an MLitt in Strategic Studies from the University of Aberdeen.

From 2003 to 2011, Mark worked as a personal assistant to MSP's Richard Lochhead, Maureen Watt and Nigel Don. He was elected to Aberdeen City Council in 2007, representing Dyce, Buxtonburn and Danestone. Mark was later elected to the Scottish Parliament in 2011 from the North East Scotland regional list.

He was returned to the Scottish Parliament as MSP for Aberdeen Donside on 20 June 2013 and again on the 6 May 2016.

Peter MacLeod
Director of Children’s Services, Renfrewshire Council

Peter trained as a social worker. Since qualifying, he has worked in a range of front line social work services and has a particular interest in working with children and young people. Peter joined Renfrewshire in 1996 as an Area Manager. As Director of Social Work, Peter championed the Achieving Step Change work in Renfrewshire. This work involved a partnership with Dartington Social Research Unit to undertake the first epidemiological study of children’s need in a Scottish local authority and the introduction of evidence based programmes.

Peter was appointed as the first Director of Children’s Services for Renfrewshire Council in January 2015 bringing together the council’s education and children’s social work and criminal justice services.

Janet Goodall
Lecturer in Educational Leadership and Management, University of Bath

Janet is a lecturer in Educational Leadership and Management. She has been an active university teacher and researcher for a number of years, working on a wide range of issues, such as federations of schools, the evaluation of the impact of continuous professional development in schools, the implementation of workforce reform, and a multi-sector project looking at organisations which perform beyond expectations in education, sport and business.

Janet’s most recent work has mainly been around parents’ engagement in their children’s learning, particularly as a means of school improvement. The recent Department for Education literature review of Best Practice In Parental Engagement, on which she is first author, takes an overview of the field and suggests practical ways forward for schools. She is also leading a project for 30 schools in Wiltshire as they pilot a Toolkit for Parental Engagement.