Scottish Mentoring Network

National Event 2026

Reflections & Insights

The Ripple Effect

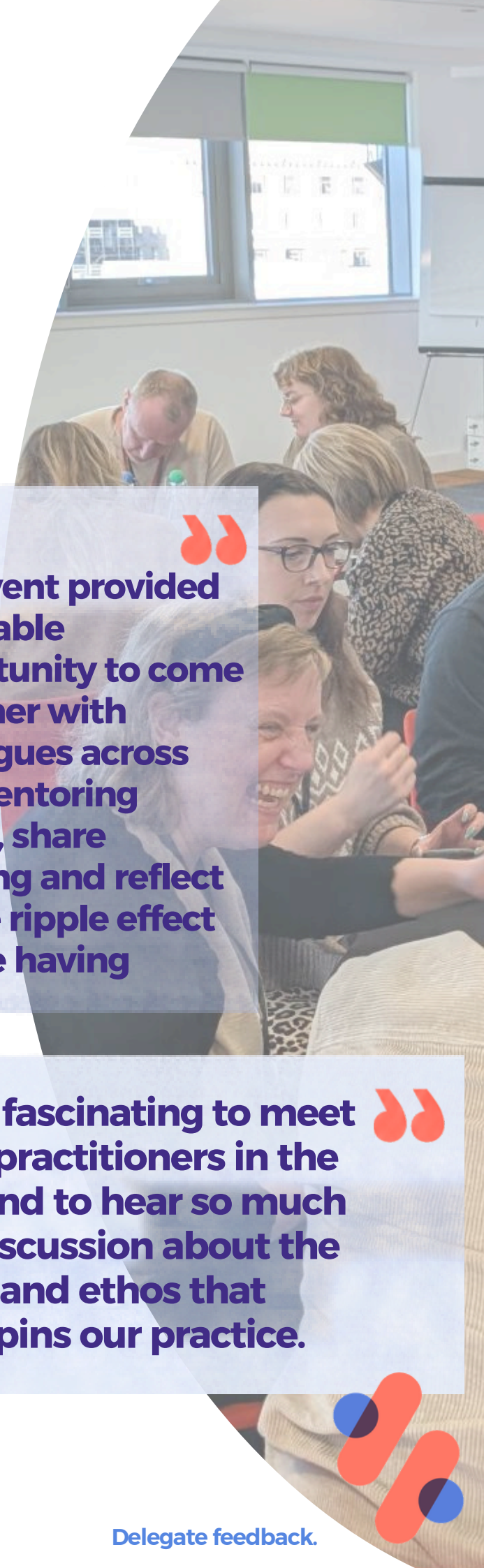
Creating connections. Sharing learning. Strengthening mentoring across Scotland.



Scottish Mentoring Network

Event Highlights

2026 by the delegates.



These chances to network provide a great opportunity to hear how other organisations work, I've found this so beneficial today.

The event provided a valuable opportunity to come together with colleagues across the mentoring sector, share learning and reflect on the ripple effect we are having

Really engaging and helpful event today.

It was fascinating to meet other practitioners in the field and to hear so much rich discussion about the vision and ethos that underpins our practice.

Being new to our organisations mentoring programme this has been insightful and given lots to think about,

Delegate feedback.



Scottish Mentoring Network

CEO Reflection

Every Action Creates Change.

During the opening address, Clair Smith reflected on her first six months as CEO of Scottish Mentoring Network, sharing observations from listening to members, meeting organisations across Scotland and learning about the challenges and opportunities facing the mentoring sector.

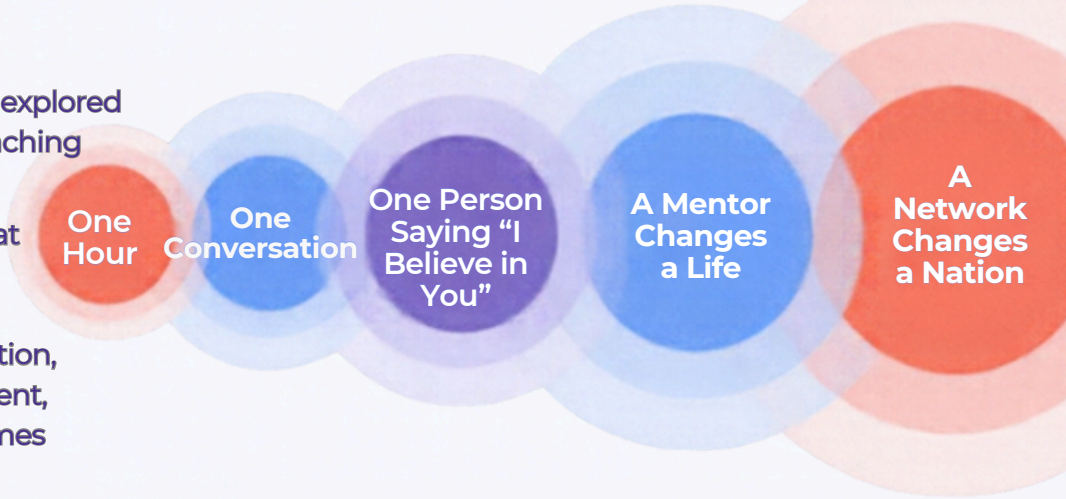
A key message was that the future of mentoring will be shaped through collaboration. Supporting members, strengthening quality, increasing impact and ensuring mentoring receives the recognition and investment it deserves can only be achieved by working together.

> **"The answers will come from working together."**

The Ripple Effect

The event theme, The Ripple Effect, explored how small actions can create far-reaching change.

The speech reflected on the idea that mentoring's impact is often not immediately visible. While we may celebrate milestones such as education, employment or personal development, some of the most significant outcomes happen quietly through increased confidence, stronger connections and a renewed sense of possibility.



Why Mentoring Matters

Human Connection

Mentoring is built on something simple but powerful human connection.

Quality

Effective mentoring relies on trust, safeguarding, training, supervision, quality assurance, and continuous improvement.

Collective Impact

When organisations improve and share learning, the benefits extend beyond individual programmes and create positive change across communities.

Looking Forward

- Build new partnerships
- Share knowledge
- Strengthen collective voices
- Learn from one another
- Take pride in the contribution to mentoring in Scotland

The message was clear: every participant has a role in creating the next ripple.

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The Ripple Effect in Action

A shared belief in the power of human connection.



Throughout the day we heard how mentoring empowers people to recognise their strengths, develop confidence and reach their potential.

> Mentoring creates a safe space learn, make mistakes and Develop Skills + Knowledge ”

> “What we do for one person changes the world. We change families, communities, Scotland and beyond.”





Celebrating Excellence

Recognising quality across the network.

SMN Quality Award

Quality Award Highlights

- **High-quality mentoring practice**
- **Innovation**
- **Continuous improvement**
- **Shared learning**
- **Sector leadership**

Find out more about our Quality Award and what it can do for your mentoring service on our website.

You can also read more about the work of our Quality Award holders my finding them on our website Mentoring Map

> Going through the quality award process has made me think even more deeply about the structure and procedures of our Mentorship Programme, helping me to ensure we provide the best possible support and experience for those engaging with it.

Organisations recieving their certificates at this years event



Charity Leadership Scotland

Charity Leadership Scotland supports voluntary sector leaders based in Scotland, including CEOs, senior leaders, Chairs and Vice-Chairs. The organisation's mission is "To bring leaders together and develop deep relationships, providing support and challenge to help create change." The Mentoring Programme aims to build participants' confidence and resilience.

KIRKCALDY YMCA

YMCA Kirkcaldy work with trained volunteers to build a positive, trusting, supportive and secure relationships. These relationships are expected to last for the long term, with frequent and regular meetings. They also support children and young people experiencing the care system, or at risk of care.



TRACS
TRADITIONAL ARTS+CULTURE SCOTLAND

TRACS (traditional arts mentoring) supports musicians, singers, storytellers, dancers and practitioners working with local languages. This programme offers confidential, support through mentoring partnerships. With mentors, participants set goals and put them into practice to sustain and develop their work,



TCA



TCA' work with both women and men who have been involved with the criminal justice system. The mentoring service enables clients to believe in their worth and reach their potential with help and support. They also work with children and young people experiencing the care system, or at risk of care. Mentoring helps clients to feel empowered, and work toward their goals.



MOVE ON

Move on support young people aged 14-25 in Edinburgh and Glasgow.
The young people they support display "at risk" signs. They match volunteer mentors to young people to achieve a goal together.
A consistent and trusted adult in a young person's life can support them to take part in new experiences, develop skills, and increase their confidence.

aberlour
scotland's children's charity

Aberlour's mentoring services are for vulnerable and care-experienced children and young people. Through mentoring and early intervention, the programmes help them overcome challenges at home, in school and in their wider lives. They aim to improve wellbeing, confidence and educational attainment, helping each child flourish.



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Keynote Address: The Power of Connection, Reform and Lasting Change

Dr Jim McCormick, CEO The Robertson Trust

The keynote highlighted how mentoring, meaningful relationships and shared responsibility can create lasting change for people, organisations and communities.

One of the highlights of the conference was the keynote address from Dr Jim McCormick, CEO of The Robertson Trust, who explored how Scotland can create lasting change by putting people and relationships at the heart of services, communities and decision-making.

Reflecting on the challenges and opportunities ahead, including tackling poverty, public service reform and keeping The Promise, Jim emphasised that progress depends on building strong, trusting relationships alongside effective policy and investment.

He also highlighted the important role of funders in supporting innovation, collaboration and inclusive, person-centred approaches such as mentoring that help create positive, lasting outcomes.



Delegates described the keynote as both thought-provoking and inspiring, offering a hopeful vision of what can be achieved when services, funders, policymakers and communities work together.

KEY MESSAGES

- Relationships build lasting change
- Person-centred support unlocks potential
- Collaboration turns ideas into action

Jim's message was clear:
If Scotland is serious about addressing inequality and creating better outcomes, we must continue to invest in the power of human connection and the relationships that enable lasting change.

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What We Heard

Key themes from discussions and insight activities.



Recruitment & Retention Challenges

- Recruiting enough mentors
- Recruiting men as mentors
- Volunteer retention
- Mentor engagement
- Getting the Right Match
- Appetitie for volunteering has decreased

Sustainability & Capacity Challenges

- Funding pressures
- Staff capacity
- Rising demand requiring
- Service growth
- Managing Expectations
- Supporting Mentors Wellbeing

How can we Improve Demonstrating Impact

- Evaluation
- Storytelling & Statistics
- Evidence gathering
- A Collective Impact
- Evidence Social Return on Investment

What do We Need?

- Training and Skills Development
- Access to expertise
- Increase accesibility of Mentoring
- Shared Resources
- Communities of practice

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The Network Speaks

Real voices. A stronger Network.



What you told us is Important

Ideas
Opportunity
People
Change
Human Connections
Community
Partnership
Inspiration
Innovation
Quality Practice
Collaboration
Support
Progress

Featured Feedback

> "Meeting other organisations is invaluable."

> "Networking and meeting so many wonderful and like-minded people."

> "I loved hearing the different perspectives and new ideas."

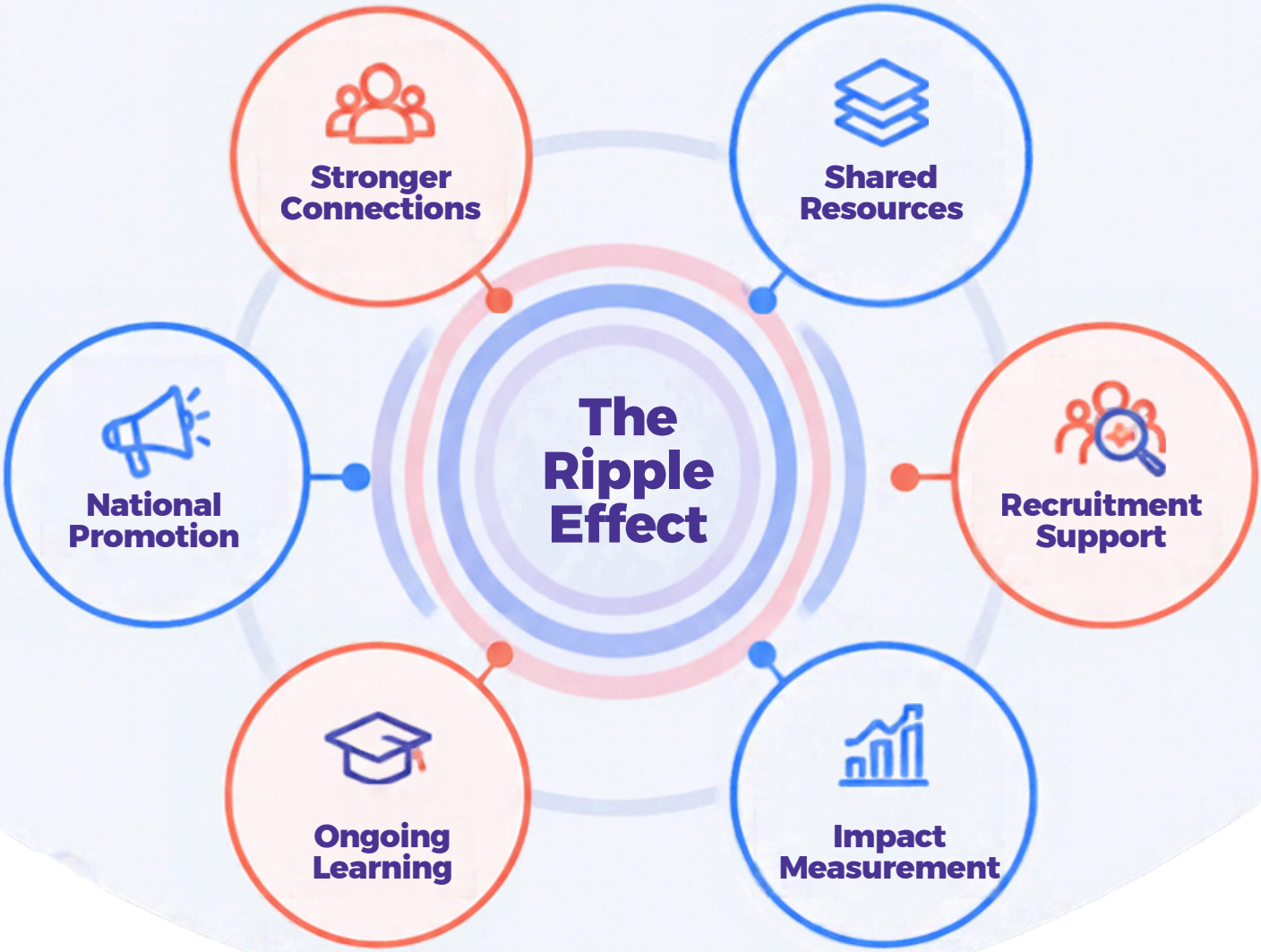
CONNECT
LEARN
SHARE
GROW
ADVOCATE

Derived from event feedback and participant insights.

Looking Ahead

Scottish Mentoring Network

What Members Told Us They Need





"These events are great! More opportunities to link with other organisations delivering mentoring would be welcomed.

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Ripple Makers who Joined us on the Day

TMD THE MARKETING DEPARTMENT

sserc

children's hearings scotland

Befriending Networks

KIRKCALDY YMCA

SCAPP

CUTTING EDGE THEATRE CO WE ARE LIMITLESS

my academic family

MOVE ON

YMCA Tayside

WISE Mentoring DEVELOPING CHILDREN'S CHARACTER

Intandem

NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde

Working Rite

FourSquare Preventing homelessness Promoting inclusion

University of Glasgow

NHS Lanarkshire

Charity Leadership Scotland

The Robertson Trust

TRACS TRADITIONAL ARTS+CULTURE SCOTLAND

INSPIRING SCOTLAND

SPS SCOTTISH PRISON SERVICE

LINK living improving lives

Humanist Society Scotland For an ethical future

MCR Pathways

wisegroup inspiring social enterprise

YMCA Edinburgh

GrowBiz Towards Net Zero

abm

Renfrewshire Council

aberlour scotland's children's charity

TCA

Scottish Mentoring Network

Thank You

Thank you to every delegate, speaker, contributor and volunteer who helped make National Event 2026 such a success.

Every connection matters.
Every conversation matters.
Every ripple matters.

#TheRippleEffect



Keep the Ripples Going - Connect with Us.

info@scottishmentoringnetwork.co.uk

www.scottishmentoringnetwork.co.uk

www.linkedin.com/company/scottish-mentoring-network