

Executive Council Meeting

Friday 21st November
University of Strathclyde / Zoom

AGENDA

NOTE: Pre-meeting chit-chat from 1000, meeting starts 1030

In attendance:

Jonny Pearson	(JP)
Stew Fowlie	(SF)
Ben Graham	(BG)
Ian Lowe	(IL)
Chris Sellar	(CS)
Anna Edvaldsson	(AE)
Freya Rennie	(FR)
Euan Smith	(ES)
Julia Stenhouse-Walton (Virtual)	(JSW)
Bob Wyllie - sportscotland	(BW)
Leyanne Jenkins - BUCS	(LJ)
Mark Beaumont – Presenting (Virtual)	(MB)

Apologies:

Katherine Duncan	(KD)
Liv Stevens	(LS)

Approx. Timings

- **Welcome, intro and scene setting** (5 min)
- **Homologation** (10 min)
 - Apologies for absence
 - As noted above
 - Conflicts of interest
 - No conflicts of interest were noted
 - Minutes of last meeting(s) & matters arising
 - The minutes from the previous meeting in October 2025 were accepted as a true and accurate reflection. The outstanding actions from previous meeting were discussed. JP noted opportunity to canvas volunteers at College Network meeting.
- **Equality in Focus** (30 min)
 - Welcoming SSS Equality Action Group Chair Waiyin Hatton for an update on the group's work and its implications across SSS

Welcome to WH and introduction by JP. WH notes thanks for being invited and introduced herself. She gave an overview on the decision to shift the Equality working group to more actions & outcomes

focussed. The group are looking for a way to promote EDI across the network out from just the four SSS committee leads. Moving to inclusion framework desires more contribution, ownership and tangible actions. In process from restructuring, the group heard from BUCS about how their EDI work is structured. Change in structure also included volunteer coordinators to help promote work of the leads. WH shared about progress on each of the streams of the group. Mentioned about progress with Coach like a Girl and also with Claim Your Kit, with Grace and Green.

WH noted how the group are in process of reviewing how they can provide enhanced support for Jordan against the Equality Action Plan, as such a large percentage of action sits with him, and also about the focus this year on gathering better data. WH noted that she also wanted to note about EAG helping with the culture across the organisation. WH discussed EDI UK core purposes based on both EDI UK and Moving To Inclusion, and how the EAG group can help embed & develop these across SSS.

ES asked about what the demand is for disability inclusion focus, and how to be more agile with this across the sector? Also noted importance of ethnicity piece and how this fits with internationalisation, and how these key themes should be embedded in any work shared with key decision makers at each institution. WH noted a lot of the first steps of the group will be identifying barriers, through better data collection. FR mentioned that the Sabb project this year is focussing on disability sport, and identifying current barriers.

CS asked around the connection between the different groups that SSS have. SF notes that the EAG sits as a sub-group of development, but the groups work has impact across the wider organisation. IL noted that would be helpful to receive updates from the equality working group, denoting the landscape changes from year to year.¹

- Equality Training Request (JSW)

JSW presented the paper and gave context surrounding ambition to explore level of equality understanding at leadership level to find the gaps in our knowledge^a

CS asked about whether the survey is from a standard template.²

- **Current Context** (30 min)
 - Around the network – verbal updates
 - Institutional perspectives – open forum & committee update

Strathclyde - AE noted about number of disciplinaries and issues arising from increased capacity. BG notes that increased levels of poor behaviour seem to be mostly from the emerging sports. AE noted

¹ EAG to send updates to Exec twice per year and WH to be present at least once a year as EAG Chair

² JSW to follow up with Jordan Dawson on Exec equality data gathering template

difficulties around reserving Wednesday afternoons off for sport, due to number of buildings closing. Discussion had.

BG - SSS Competitions Committee Update

Some record-breaking entries, Judo & Cross Country. But issues with some other events & leagues. Some difficulties with communication errors & changing facilities. NS volunteers have really stepped up across several programmes, and using this as an opportunity to review the functionality of the programme as a whole. CS asked about MoU timeline and perhaps a reminder to facilities to keep space free each year. SF noted that we're in year 2 of 3 and confirmed that our Head of Comps would be re-engaging departments in spring/ summer '26 so as to stay well ahead of the requirements for 27-28 onwards.

FR – Sabbs Group Update

FR noted the forum project is focussing on students with a disability & gave an update the plans for this project. Discussion had around barriers connecting disability services with sport services in individual institutions.

CS – noted the HW are doing a student membership structure review.

IL – RGU have just created a roadmap, aim to become top university for graduate employment. Sharp decline in campus students, but participation overall is up.

- **Partners in focus** **(30 min)**
 - **BUCS**
 - Regions & Nations Update (LJ)

LJ introduced herself and thanked the group for having her. Referencing the paper shared, LJ notes headlines. Over 5,000 fixtures completed by this point with completion rate of 95%. Noted ask to find a venue for the BUCS Cross Country event before 1st Dec. Conference announcement 1st Dec & Active Health & Operations Forum to be combined. Virtual AGM to be held in December. Noted clash on UK Athletics event & National Athletics event. Process of reviewing event delivery for Karate. Note well done for Scottish Surfing for winning the SGA Governance award, with BUCs runner up. Noted key staffing changes.

- **sportscotland**
 - Tertiary ed connections to current **sportscotland** work areas (BW)

Noted the change from being recognised from SGB to a Key National Partner. BW noted this creates a much more flexible partnership. Notes some headlines from the recent Active Campus, SF & Forbes Dunlop meeting:

- SSS have always had a constant ask for **sportscotland** to be more involved in tertiary ed & the hope is moving from 1-year business plan to 2-year business plan will help this
- Commitment from Scottish Government to double the investment in to Sport & National Lottery commitment, however a difficult landscape with this yet to materialise.
- Note redundancies in **sportscotland** with 90% of the vacated roles not being re-filled.
- Dialling up commitment to club & community space, with hope that DCI mark two on the horizon.
- Internally **sportscotland** are now being shifted to more of a geographical focus.
- Increased data focus

BW notes wants to look at formalise the relationships between universities with **sportscotland**. He shared some ideas which included:

- National Sport & Education Partnership Framework
- Expand PASS (Placement Arrangements for Students in Sport) pipeline
- Opportunity to collaborate on joint research programmes
- Connects through talent pathways

JP thanked BW for his work, and his support of SSS. His championing of the cause is really appreciated. Discussion had about **sportscotland**'s plans and impact across the sector. CS noted that it is refreshing to hear **sportscotland**'s plans. He shared some areas in he felt need further support, such as transitions from school to tertiary ed & then tertiary ed to community clubs. Noted also about inequalities within sport. BG noted about importance retention of students.³

- **Strong Organisation** (15 min)
 - **Finance (JSW)**
 - October figures & updated 2526 forecast

JSW gave an overview of the Oct Accounts, noting we are slightly ahead of the forecasted deficit.

- Membership Payment Overview

JSW gave an overview of the members still to pay, with only two or three still to go, but commitment from all expected.

- **LUNCH** (30 min)

³ BW to share the full list of ideas to SSS for committee to feedback on

- **SSS Exec Workstream Updates**

(60 min)

- Commercial Workstream (JSW & chums)

JSW & MB presented the SSS Showcase paper. MB noted that we need to be bold & punchy. Balance between what's punchy and what's realistic. The plan is national but has local impact. Has to be flexible to tell the story, those are things we're going to have to land. We want to avoid creating something too difficult to hold ourselves account to. We will present to a small number of high net-worth individuals & orgs. We need to produce a value statement of SSS, and demonstrate our importance of being the engine room of the network. Concept is to sell the value of an entire nation of young person continuing to taking part in sport & physical activity. ^b

- Political Influencing (SF & chums)

SF gave an overview of the paper and the context of the government influence around doubling investment into sport by 2026. SSA have been adding pressure to the budget and developing a manifesto for sport. Discussion had about the two different approaches. LJ asked around investment around major events & group discussed benefits of events being held for the cities. Wider conversation around the level of importance of sport to local authorities.

- BUCS partnership (SF & chums)

Members welcomed the update on discussions with BUCS around the draft 5-year agreement.^c The notion of a wider discussion between staff teams in both organisations was welcome, and particularly if greater clarity can be achieved on roles, responsibilities and resources in the area of competitions support. It may be helpful to consider the fixture planning function distinctly from the ongoing mediation and support, with the latter seeming easier and more productive for SSS to lead on than the latter. Separate consideration might also be given to the hosting of BUCS events in Scotland beyond the double badged golf events already being delivered.

Members also noted the importance of widespread communication of the final agreement - and broad understanding of its implications - across departments and sports unions and IAs alike so that arrangements can be implemented smoothly. The group noted its thanks to Stew and Will for the collaborative and positive manner in which discussions have been handled and underlined the desire to see the partnership flourish in the coming five years.

- **AOCB**

(10 min)

NO AOCB

- **Closing remarks, future meetings and actions**

(5 min)

JP thanked all for attending. The next Executive Committee meeting will be Friday 13th of February 2026 at Edinburgh college. Meeting closed 14:30

Decisions

- ^a Exec committee approves the SSS Volunteer & Staff EDI Audit
- ^b Exec committee endorse and accept the Showcase concept. Move this into this into the next phase of work.
- ^c Exec committee endorse the direction of the BUCS agreement and noted its support for the process to be concluded by the end of the calendar year

Actions

- ¹ EAG to send updates to Exec twice per year and WH to be present at least once a year as EAG Chair
- ² JSW to follow up with Jordan Dawson on Exec equality data gathering template
- ³ BW to share the full list of **sport**scotland partnership concepts to SSS for committee to feedback on