



Athletics Trust Scotland Young People's Forum Cohort Two Report 2025



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The Athletics Trust Scotland Young People's Forum (ATS YPF) was created to advise **scottishathletics** on engaging with young people more effectively around developments within athletics and the wider sport. The ambition was for the Young People's Forum was to play an active role in **scottishathletics** initiatives, to widen their impact, coverage and assist with decision making which impacts young people within the sport.

scottishathletics is committed to supporting the Young People's Forum by giving its members the skills and initiative to progress in both athletics and sport more broadly.

In April 2024, Athletics Trust Scotland agreed to extend their sponsorship of the Forum for another two years.

Background

The second cohort was advertised in October 2023 with 50 applications received. The interviews took place in two venues and were a mix of group work and an individual interview. Members from Cohort One were involved in the interview process, including shortlisting and delivering the group work at the interviews.

15 young applicants were successful in gaining a place on the Forum. This included three young people from Cohort One who applied to stay on for another two years. Another six members from Cohort One volunteered to continue as mentors.

The members of the YPF Cohort Two were:

- Jedidah Ajala (Edinburgh AC)
- Mhairi Ballantyne (Kilmarnock Harriers)
- Danny Convery (Harmeny AC)
- Naideen Dailly (North Ayrshire AC)
- Anastacia Hinde (Victoria Park City of Glasgow)
- Hannah McGeehan (Inverclyde AC)
- Harris Morrison (Greenock Glenpark Harriers)
- Tammy Oshinowo (Aberdeen AAC)
- Erin Quinn (Victoria Park City of Glasgow / Cumbria School of Hammer)
- Katie Sandilands (Fife AC)
- Mollie Mae Scott (Cambuslang Harriers)

- Kayleigh Simpson (Arbroath and District AC)
- Orla Stewart (Victoria Park City of Glasgow)
- Abigail Strath (Lothian Running Club / Edinburgh University Hare and Hounds)
- Lidya Woldeeslassie (Shettleston Harriers / Red Star AC)

The Cohort Two mentors were:

- Jessica Robson (Law and District)
- Oscar Logan (Law and District)
- Natalie Sharp (Kilmarnock Harriers)
- Morgan McBurnie (Kilmarnock Harriers)
- Chloe Emordy (Springburn Harriers)
- Callum Ballantyne (Cumbernauld AAC)

The induction took place online in December 2023 with the first in-person meeting being held in January 2024. During the first in person meeting, the group agreed the following aims:

- **The athlete health of young people in athletics**
- **The retention of young people in athletics**
- **Inclusion**
- **Transition from school to university**

Meetings

Eight key face-to-face person meetings took place, with some additional subgroup meetings taking place online in between when required. The in-person meetings allowed the members to work together on a number of different topics which helped them to bond and share ideas. To assist the Forum with their aims, experts from external organisations were brought in to lead on several sessions. These sessions were also designed to help with the personal development of the members.

During the first in-person meeting, **James Stewart - GB Ultra runner and motivational speaker**, delivered a session on Leadership and reflecting on their strengths which would help give the young people the confidence to speak to their peers and influence decision making within their clubs. This also helped prepare the group to work on the aims of the Forum for the next two years.

Victoria Clark from **Active Advantage** delivered two very different workshops over the two years. The first one being a *Get Set, Lead and Get Set, Coach* workshop which looked at how to be creative, while the *Introduction to Mentoring* was aimed at supporting the members who were staying on as mentors and to give another personal development opportunity to the other members.

National Club Manager, Lindsay McMahon, and **Executive and Equalities Officer, Francesca Snitjer** delivered on a variety of workshops including communication and conference planning.

Opportunities

Cohort Two were offered a number of volunteer opportunities and were also consulted on the proposed changes to competitions by Ally Love - Scottish Athletics Head of Competitions and athlete health by Allan Hamilton - Scottish Athletics National Talent Manager. The Members were offered a number of opportunities to volunteer at events such as:

- **scottishathletics** National Club Conference (annually)
 - Assisting with registration
 - Delivering a workshop
 - Leading on Round Table discussions
- **scottishathletics** events, including:
 - 4J Studios West District Track and Field Championships
- World Indoor Athletics Championships – Kit carriers, presentations
- Kyniska Advocacy 'Light up the Night'
- EAP Event – Promoting the ATS YPF

As well as volunteering at events, they were also given the opportunity to:

- Apply to the SAMH and SWIS Young Women in Sport Leadership Programme 2024/25
- Deliver sessions at a mini commonwealth games night with the **scottishathletics** National Community Impact Team
- Be part of an Athlete Track and Field Vision Group delivered through UK Athletics. Four members took up this opportunity.

Achievements

One of the biggest achievements of Cohort Two was planning and delivering the second Athletics Trust Scotland Young People's Forum Conference in March 2025 at the Emirates Arena, Glasgow. The theme for the Conference was *Inspiring the Next Generation*, and it was led by young people *for* young people.

Over 30 young people aged 12-23 years, representing 20 different clubs attended a fully packed fun and educational day. **scottishathletics** Chair, **David Ovens**, opened the Conference. They took part in workshops on mental health with SAMH, Competitions with **Head of Competitions, Ally Love** and Inclusion with **Pamela Robson, Paralympic Pathway Manager** and **Paralympic athlete Maria Lyle**.

Four different groups took part in round table discussions around with changes to competitions, athlete health, transitioning to university and mental health. These discussions provided invaluable insights into the future of the sport as well as young people's reactions to this.

Father and son **Robert** (Coach) and **Callum Hawkins** (Olympian) took to the stage with Robert giving a brief presentation about the development of coaching his sons. They then took part in a Q & A session led by YPF member **Mhairi Ballantyne**.

YPF member **Katie Sandilands** led the afternoon panel session featuring an incredible panel of Olympic and Paralympic athletes, **Derek Hawkins, Maria Lyle, Lynne MacDougall**, and **Ben Sandilands**.

The young people from the forum were involved in the pre-conference planning and on the day, carried out the registration of attendees, directed the attendees to their workshops and led the focus group discussions. **Kayleigh Simpson, Tammy Oshinowo** and **Danny Convery** took to the mic as compères for the day.

A successful application to **Athletics Trust Scotland** helped to finance the conference for a second time with further sponsorship secured from **Roon the Toon**, and **Tunnocks** donated goodies to those attending.

In May 2025, **Eilidh Miller** started in a new role as Digital Content Creator and Marketing Officer for the YPF after a funding application to the National Lottery Community Young Start Fund was successful. We received over £60,000 towards a three-year part-time post. This post was identified through research that the YPF members had carried out over the last 4 years.

Through the feedback from one of the mentors to his coach and Vice Chair at UK Athletics, Olympic gold medalist **Denise Lewis** (and Chair of UK Athletics), joined the Forum members at one of their meetings. The members were delighted to meet with Denise, and she took time to ask plenty of questions around issues that young people face within the sport.

Other achievements that the Members have been involved in are:

- Tik Tok account being created to promote the work of the YPF and athletics
- Writing articles which have been transferred into Tik Tok and Instagram videos
- Producing and carrying out four surveys on athlete health, the retention of young athletes, inclusion and transition from school to university with **scottishathletics** members under the age of 23. The results of the survey were used to shape the focus groups at the YPF Conference

Benefit to Clubs

The knowledge and learning that the young people have gained from being part of the forum has benefitted their clubs:

- Members are involved with their club Committee/Board
- One member has been involved in announcing at club events
- One member is keen to become a coaching assistant to help with club sessions
- One member carries out interviews at training and events to promote the sport on social media

Personal Growth and Development

As with all new groups, when they come together initially, some were quiet and unsure of what was expected of them, while others were lacking in confidence. However, two years down the line, the change in these young people has been the biggest achievement. They are more confident and willing to get involved and take themselves out of their comfort zone. This can be seen through their interaction on social media and getting involved with the videos they have helped to create.

When they first started, they would never have dreamed of being able to stand up and talk to groups of their peers or adults but that is exactly what they have managed to do at both the National Club Conference and the ATS Young People's Forum Conference. It has been fantastic to see them all grow both together as a group and individually.

We are delighted to be retaining twelve members and mentors for Cohort Three. Three members successfully reapplied to stay on as members, six members will be Mentors for the new group commencing in December 2025, whilst three of the Mentors from Cohort Two will become Lead mentors for Cohort Three. We look forward to continuing to work with them all.

