





## What is Children's University?

Children's University seeks to provide children aged between 7 and 14 (and aged 5 and 6 with parental support) with the opportunity to take part in voluntary, out-of-school-hours learning leading to children's graduations at grown-up universities with caps and gowns.

Each participating child receives a Passport to Learning (just like a normal passport) where they record a visit to a learning destination with a stamp or sticker. There are no exams. CU members build up credits for taking part in a reading challenge, playing in a sports team, learning to play an instrument or visiting an art gallery. Learning destinations including after-school clubs, museums, libraries, leisure centres, and retail outlets have to be accredited for the quality of learning they provide; the main criteria is that the activities should be engaging, interactive and, above all, fun!

Activities can include clubs which run before school, during lunchtime, after school, at weekends or during school holidays. The learning can always be linked to higher education study, broadening a child's horizons and opening their minds to possibilities for a future career they may never have considered.

CU is open to all children, but especially those who need it most. Independent evaluation from Professor John MacBeath demonstrates that children who take part in CU attend and perform better at school and have increased self-confidence and more positive attitudes towards learning.



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## Chairman's Welcome

Children's University first started in Birmingham over 7 years ago and has now grown to have an international reach. I am delighted that Children's University has launched in Scotland, and proud and privileged to lead CU Trust Scotland. From the launch of Glasgow CU under the umbrella of University of Strathclyde, CU Scotland is set to grow over the coming months and years; we hope to have a presence that covers the whole of Scotland, from the Highlands and Islands to the Borders, and from east to west.

Learning in the broadest sense gives every young person a chance to find out what interests and excites them, and excel in a chosen field. It should encourage them to reach for the stars, aspire to great things, and realise that dreams can become reality. In the process they can take pride in contributing to society and becoming valued citizens. We have a collective responsibility to do all we can to enhance the life chances of our children, enabling them to discover and explore our rich cultural heritage, our museums and art galleries, our countryside and libraries, our sports and leisure facilities and the wealth of interactive and fun learning opportunities to be enjoyed through Children's University.

**Jock Brown,**

Chair of Board of Trustees  
CU Trust Scotland



Jock Brown and Ann Loughrey at the launch of ScottishPower Foundation, founder funder of Children's University Scotland.

## Children's Voice

Pupils from St Mungo's Academy tell the story of their journey of the past year as CU members.



I loved being part of Children's University. I really liked the Cupcake Club and the Justice and Peace Group. I liked going online to add my hours and see them build up. The best part was the graduation day as my mum got to see me and was very proud.

Tegan Malloy



During Children's University I was involved with Geo Kids, Athletics, Dance Club, the Justice and Peace Group. I really enjoyed graduating and collecting my hours as it gave me a sense of achievement. It is nice to put a lot of effort into things and get something back from it. I feel as though I have benefitted from Children's University because I have developed my social skills and gained much more confidence.

Lauren Scott



Children's University has benefited me as I feel I have matured a lot. My parents also said that the Children's University is a great chance to learn and grow. I am hoping to continue to be a part of Children's University this year.

Ross McCool



During Children's University I was involved in various clubs such as Geo Kids, the Justice and Peace Group and the Olympia Challenge. I really enjoyed Children's University because I got to hang out with and make new friends. The best part of being involved in Children's University was the graduation at Strathclyde. My mum was able to come along and watch me succeed by being presented with my certificate.

Erin Ritchie



My Children's University experience was fantastic! I was able to go to clubs and get rewarded for learning. It also encouraged me to experience a range of clubs and after school activities. During Children's University I made lots of new friends and I was able to attend a graduation ceremony at the end of the year at Strathclyde University with all my friends.

Maria Bisland



Children's University is a good experience - it gets more people into different clubs. It helped me with my timekeeping and not being late for class because I check the timetable more often to see when the clubs are running. I think Children's University is a brilliant thing to get involved in - you get to meet loads of new people and of course join in with the club.

Jordan McGowan





# ScottishPower Foundation, Our Founder Funder

Children's University Scotland could not have come into existence without the generous support of our founder funder, ScottishPower Foundation.

The ScottishPower Foundation's aim is to make an effective contribution to the public and enhance the quality of life in local communities. It provides funds to support charitable initiatives that promote the advancement of education, environmental protection, citizenship and community development, arts, culture and science as well as the prevention of poverty or disadvantage. The ScottishPower Foundation was launched in June 2013 by Glasgow schoolchildren from schools which were the first to get involved with Children's University Scotland: the first project to be awarded funding from the ScottishPower Foundation.



**The ScottishPower Foundation believes that all children and young people should be given the opportunity to make the most of their abilities and achieve their goals.**

Not only does the Foundation give essential financial resource, but it has also provided strategic guidance, networking opportunities with other charities and generally helped to raise the profile of CU Scotland.

The partnership has gone from strength to strength; within less than a year of the launch event at Kelvingrove Art Gallery and Museum Ann Loughrey, Trustee and Executive Officer of ScottishPower Foundation, took to the stage at the University of Strathclyde's Barony Hall to congratulate the first CU graduates on their achievements. In her words: "The ScottishPower Foundation believes that all children and young people should be given the opportunity to make the most of their abilities and achieve their goals, whatever they may be. We are therefore delighted to be supporting Children's University Scotland who also foster this ambition for our next generation."



## The Story So Far



Mary De la Peña, CEO

It is just over a year since I took on the role of Chief Executive of Children's University Scotland, with a simple remit to develop and implement the programme across Scotland. So much has happened during that year: four local CU centres

established, hundreds of children signed up as CU members and our first graduation ceremony hosted at the University of Strathclyde.

The story officially began when CU Trust Scotland was registered as a charity in April 2013, and the Board of Trustees set up, chaired by Jock Brown. I am most grateful to Jock and his fellow trustees for their commitment to the CU Scotland cause, their wise counsel and guidance in developing our mission - to inspire and encourage learning; to help each child realise their potential regardless of social, economic or cultural background - and delivering our vision:

“Within five years Children's University Scotland will have created and established a central infrastructure supporting a Children's University presence in 80% of Scottish local authority areas. The local centres will deliver learning opportunities to

help develop confidence, create new possibilities, expectations and life chances for children.”

The first step toward achieving that goal was to establish the first local centre in Glasgow, managed through the University of Strathclyde working in partnership with Glasgow City Council, schools and other organisations.



**Teachers provide a rich and varied menu of extracurricular clubs, societies and activities to cater for all interests and capabilities beyond the classroom.**

Despite day-to-day pressures, not to mention the challenge of introducing a new curriculum, there was a positive interest from a number of primary and secondary schools, but it was St Mungo's Academy who took that leap of faith and became the first school to sign up to Glasgow CU. On Wednesday 15 September I delivered my first presentation to their S1 pupils; over 50 joined as CU members and 8 months later received their first awards at the inspirational graduation ceremony, described further on in this review.

Children's University has been embedded in the school, thanks to commitment at senior level, with the head teacher having the vision to recognise the potential of using CU as a way of raising pupils' aspirations and broadening their horizons.

Teachers provide a rich and varied menu of extracurricular clubs, societies and activities to cater for all interests and capabilities beyond the classroom: from funky fabrics to futsal, from eco club to dance domination. Dedicated staff have the commitment, enthusiasm and willingness to do over and above their 'day job' to support their pupils.

At the same time as presenting at schools, consulting with pupils and teachers as to what they wanted out of their CU, I have visited and validated a wide variety of public learning destinations, who were willing to share resources and expertise to provide children with experiences that have the 'wow' factor, that encourage them to ask questions, explore and learn for themselves.



The Spotlight on Learning Destinations showcases examples of those opportunities, which are essential ingredients in the CU menu.

Developments in the east of the country were not far behind Glasgow, with Queen Margaret University taking the lead in East and Midlothian. CU is incorporated into the University's outcome agreement and is an integral part of its strategy for widening participation and social mobility. CU also aligns well with QMU's successful academy programme (for young people aged 14 – 18) providing sequential interventions from primary to post 16. You can read a perspective on how a university has engaged with CU and what is entailed in taking on the role of CU manager from Callum Maguire, Head of Outreach and Community Engagement at QMU.

As well as developments on a local level, the past year has given me the opportunity to meet and engage with individuals across the whole of Scotland representing a wide range of organisations that have an interest in helping children to succeed: businesses, learning providers, government bodies, other charities that share our ethos and principles. The list is endless and it would be unfair of me to single out any one in particular. I would however like to take this opportunity to say a global thank you for their generosity of time, their interest in CU Scotland and their willingness to help in whatever way they could.

## Facts & Figures

Our achievements over the past year can be captured in the following statistics:

- 4 local centres established
- 50 schools engaged in CU Scotland
- Over 600 Passports to Learning issued
- 2,500 hours of learning recorded on the E-Passport system
- 100 validated learning destinations

Those numbers are set to grow rapidly over the coming months and years, but what the facts and figures cannot reflect is the difference CU can make to individual lives:

- Maria, aged 12, who says:  
“Children’s University has really helped me develop my confidence and I’ve met lots of new people going to the clubs”
- The parents who were overcome with emotion to see their child graduate
- The father who stopped Jock Brown in the centre of Glasgow to tell him that his son had been transformed by taking part in CU



**I believe the Children’s University in Scotland can play an important role in helping all our children and young people reach their full potential, whatever their background. Through giving children a passport to a wide range of learning and development experiences, expanding their interests, activities and knowledge, the Children’s University can increase their awareness of potential careers and help them develop and realise their aspirations.**

**Therefore, I am pleased to be able to support and promote the work of the Children’s University and hope even more children and young people across Scotland will benefit in future.**

**Angela Constance**

MSP, Cabinet Secretary  
for Education and Lifelong Learning

We have exciting plans for the future and we need to build on the momentum that has gathered over the past year to enable more and more of our young people to access the fantastic opportunities available through Children’s University. Aberdeen and Dundee CUs have already set up local management groups that will drive local developments and we are starting conversations with potential partner organisations in other areas.

This has been the first opportunity to review and reflect on the early days of CU Scotland. It has been quite a journey so far, only made possible by the enthusiasm and support of individuals and organisations from all sectors. The concept of CU is not difficult to grasp, but it takes commitment, effort and resource to turn the rhetoric into reality. We appreciate all of the contributions that have been made to help establish CU Scotland so far: time, expertise, facilities, financial support, and in-kind resources. If we are to succeed and realise our ambitious plans we will need more of all of the above. If you, or your organisation, can help in any way, please get in touch; I would be delighted to work with you.

**Mary De la Peña**

Chief Executive,  
Children’s University Scotland



**Children’s University has really helped me develop my confidence and I’ve met lots of new people going to the clubs”**

**Maria**



## Glasgow CU Graduation

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Clearly the highlight for Glasgow CU in its first operational year was the graduation ceremony hosted by University of Strathclyde on 24 April 2014. The event provided the first opportunity to celebrate the achievements of our pioneer CU Scotland members in the magnificent setting of the University's Barony Hall.

The high-profile occasion (with special VIP guests from St Thomas Primary) saw over 70 pupils from St Mungo's Academy and St Andrew's RC Secondary receive their certificates in front of an audience of extremely proud (and emotional) parents and extended family.

The first graduates had been taking part in a wide range of learning opportunities outside school hours, from gallery and museum visits, to drama, crafts and sports, and recording their activities in their Passports to Learning.

Professor Sir Jim McDonald, Chancellor of Glasgow Children's University and Principal of the University of Strathclyde, presented the certificates and addressed the audience:

"Graduation is one of the great moments in a university's year and we are immensely proud of the

achievements of today's young graduates. As a leading international university, we are committed to providing access to education to all. By hosting Scotland's first Children's University, we can give young people the opportunity to develop new skills, explore the world around them, and ultimately, inspire them to consider further study at college or university level."



**I want Scotland to be the best place to grow up in, and the Children's University offers our young people a wonderful opportunity to make the most of their abilities and inspire them throughout their education. I'm delighted to be able to share this special occasion with Scotland's first Children's University graduates and I wish them all the best for their future."**

**Michael Russell**

MSP, then Cabinet Secretary  
for Education and Lifelong Learning



Professor Sir Jim McDonald congratulates the first graduates of Glasgow CU

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# Spotlight on Learning Destinations

Where could you have the opportunity to:

- 1 Find out about the use of wind power and design and make your own windsock that looks like a bunny!
- 2 Get fit, have fun and learn street dancing.
- 3 Discover the fascinating architecture and history behind the church of the Da Vinci Code fame.
- 4 Find out about the life cycle of butterflies, handle tarantulas, snakes and millipedes.
- 5 Go behind the scenes at a vast building with rooms full of fantastic objects from animals to armour, fine art to fossils.
- 6 Learn about Scotland's history from the 9th to the 21st century through story-telling illustrated with life-size figures.
- 7 Get up close and personal with Glasgow's wildlife, search for signs of otters on the river banks and look out for peregrines.
- 8 Take a tour of a pithead and experience the atmosphere and noise of a working pit.
- 9 Rock out with friends in a band and work with professional musicians to learn and rehearse a different cover or even your own original song.
- 10 Take the migration flyaway tunnel to experience the dangers and difficulties seabirds and marine mammals face during migration.

The answer is easy – at a CU learning destination!

 **I really enjoyed Children's University because it got me involved in different clubs in and out of school. I also liked it because I got a Bronze certificate and felt really proud of myself.**

Alexis



Learning destinations are places and organisations to which children can travel with their Passport to Learning. They provide high quality activities and experiences with the 'wow' factor, validated through the Children's University's own quality assurance process.

Learning destinations display the CU learning destination logo and stamp the passport to record the achievements which then build up to the CU awards. The above just gives a flavour of some of the amazing learning activities that are available to CU members across Scotland, not to mention online and nationally validated opportunities such as B&Q Kids Can Do It workshops and the Summer Reading Challenge.

1. Whitelee Windfarm
2. Dance Domination at St Thomas' Primary School
3. Rosslyn Chapel
4. Edinburgh Butterfly & Insect World
5. Glasgow Museums Resource Centre
6. Scottish Parliament
7. Kelvingrove Living Nature Project (RSPB)
8. National Mining Museum Scotland
9. Lamp House Music
10. Scottish Seabird Centre





## Perspective from a Grown-Up University



Queen Margaret University is delighted to be the first higher education institution in the east of Scotland to host the Children's University. As Head of Outreach and Community Engagement I am very excited by the potential

of this truly innovative and inspirational model of learning in helping us to take learning right into the heart of our local communities.

We have been overwhelmed by the support we have received from our local schools, pupils and families for Queen Margaret's Children's University and (conservatively!) estimate that over 1,500 pupils will be signed up to the programme by the end of 2014 with our first graduation ceremony planned for January 2015.

What excites me most about the Children's University is the potential of the programme to reach parts of our community that face significant challenges in terms of progression to higher education – and importantly reaching children and their families at an earlier stage of their learner journey than we have traditionally been able to. Although it is early days, we have already seen how effective the

programme is at helping to inspire pupils to foster an early love of learning and to become successful and confident learners and as a result we have embedded Children's University as a key component of our outreach and community engagement strategy.

As host higher education institution QMU is taking the lead in developing and establishing our local CU centre, with very positive support from our local authority partners, learning destinations and other community organisations. Schools recognise the benefits of using Children's University as a great way to support successful transition from primary to secondary so we are working with clusters of schools in delivering training, validating learning destinations and promoting the opportunities to children and their families.

With the huge interest across all school partners in our plans for Children's University, myself and my team will no doubt be faced with some logistical and resource challenges (with all those passports in circulation we may even have the Border Agency checking up on us!), however we relish a challenge - especially one that helps us to inspire the next generation of young learners.

Let the fun begin!

**Callum Maguire**

Head of Outreach and Community Engagement, Queen Margaret University

## Find Out More

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[www.childrensuniversity.co.uk](http://www.childrensuniversity.co.uk)

[Mary.DelaPena@childrensuniversityscotland.com](mailto:Mary.DelaPena@childrensuniversityscotland.com)

07801 577 880



## Meet the Trustees

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CU Scotland is supported by Brodies law firm, providing pro bono legal advice and the time and expertise of one of its consultants, **Jock Brown**, who chairs the Board of Trustees of CU Trust Scotland.

The other trustees are:

**Ken Cunningham,**  
General Secretary of School Leaders Scotland, and former head of Hillhead High School, Glasgow

**Doug Wilson,**  
UK Director of General Services and Health & Safety at Scottish Power

**Gillian Hastings,**  
Principal of Polar Horizons, accounting and tax consultancy



I joined Children's University because it looked like a lot of fun. I liked the idea of getting to graduate and learn new things along the way.

Siobhan



