



**Media release – Embargoed until 1am 9 November 2012**

## ***Speakers for Schools* launches across Scotland**

Charity *Speakers for Schools* is being launched in Scotland (**the week of Friday 9 Nov to Friday 16 Nov**) with a series of talks in state secondary schools around the country (from the Scottish Borders to Aberdeenshire). Leaders in Scottish business, media culture, academia and politics have pledged to give a talk to students in a state secondary school once a year to raise aspirations and broaden horizons. Launch week begins Friday 9 November with talks in schools by First Minister, Alex Salmond and Michael Moore, Secretary of State for Scotland.

It is the idea of BBC Business Editor, Robert Peston, who wants young people in disadvantaged state schools and colleges to have the same opportunities to hear from inspirational speakers as those who attend top independent schools. The idea is to level the playing field and for it to become the norm for leaders in their fields to give talks in state schools and colleges. *Speakers for Schools* was launched in England in October 2011 and is administered by small charity the [Education and Employers Taskforce](http://www.employers-taskforce.org/). Please visit: <http://www.speakers4schools.org/> for a full list of supporting speakers and more about how it works.

**Speakers involved in the Scottish launch include:** Keith Anderson (CEO, ScottishPower Renewables), Ken Barclay (Head of Corporate Banking Scotland, RBS), Nick Barley (Director, Edinburgh International Book Festival), Maggie Barry (Sunday Mail & Daily Record), Sir Peter Burt (Chairman, Promethean Investments), Prof Muffy Calder (Chief Scientific Officer for Scotland), Prof Ian Diamond (Vice Chancellor, University Aberdeen), Prof Peter Downes (Vice Chancellor, University Dundee), Prof Dina Iordanova (Film Studies profess & Provost, University St Andrews), Sandy Nairne (Director, National Portrait Gallery), Prof Sir Timothy O'shea (Vice Chancellor, Edinburgh University), Stewart Regan (Chief Executive, Scottish Football Association), Meryn Somerset Webb (Editor in Chief, Moneyweek), Prof John Wallace (Principal, Royal Conservatoire of Scotland), Andrew Wilson (Director, WPP) and Rob Woodward (Chief Executive, STV).

***Speakers for Schools* has cross party support. Taking part in the launch from the world of Scottish politics:** Douglas Alexander (MP Paisley, Renfrewshire South & Shadow Foreign Secretary), Michael Moore (Secretary of State for Scotland & MP for Berwickshire, Roxburgh & Selkirk), Willie Rennie (Leader, Scottish Liberal Democrats), Lord George Robertson (House of Lords), Michael Russell (Cabinet Secretary for Education and Lifelong Learning, SNP), Alex Salmond (First Minister, Leader SNP) and Anas Sarwar (MP Glasgow Central & Deputy Leader Scottish Labour Party).

The week has been chosen to coincide with the annual Scottish Leaders Conference which is taking place on Friday 16<sup>th</sup> in St Andrews. Across England and Scotland over 800 people have so far agreed to participate including many leading CEOs, politicians, media and arts people, scientists, entrepreneurs and academics. Speakers will address the big topical issues: technological, scientific, political, economic, historical, cultural, artistic, ecological and ethical.

**First Minister Alex Salmond says:** *"I am delighted to lend my support to Speakers for Schools on its launch day across Scotland. This is an innovative charity that seeks to raise the aspirations and dreams of our young people, especially in disadvantaged areas, helping them to learn from a range of leading figures from business, academia, the media and politics."*

*"I am particularly heartened to see so many business leaders lining up to speak to pupils right across the country. It is vitally important to the future economic prospects of Scotland that all of our young people are able to draw inspiration and knowledge from people at the very top of their chosen profession, be it finance, the arts, energy or politics. I hope that each of the pupils that will be lucky enough to attend one of the speeches takes something from it as they begin to make their own way in the world."*

**Michael Moore, Secretary of State for Scotland says:** *"It is a great honour to give one of Scotland's first Speakers for School talks, and I am sure we can build on the success of this great initiative elsewhere in the UK. I am particularly happy to help launch the charity at Jedburgh Grammar School - where I was at school - in my own Borders constituency. Young people today face many challenges and in a world full of uncertainties it is essential we give them the benefit of our collective experience to help guide their decisions for the future. The list of speakers is both distinguished and broad and I have no doubt pupils across Scotland will benefit from the advice on offer."*

**Robert Peston, BBC Business Editor and founder of Speakers for Schools says:** *"Our future prosperity depends in part on raising aspirations for young people, which can be helped by securing access for them to brilliant and inspirational minds. I am thrilled that so many great speakers are participating in Speakers for Schools Scottish launch."*

**Ken Cunningham CBE, General Secretary, School Leaders Scotland says:** *"School Leaders Scotland is delighted to help launch the Speakers for Schools initiative at their annual national conference. This is a hugely encouraging development which, as Robert Peston acknowledges, goes some way to levelling the playing field. It is so good to see national major players in the life of our community being willing to take the time out to share their life experiences with our young people. It sits exceptionally well with our current drive to deliver a curriculum for excellence. It is also, however, a great opportunity for these leaders to see for themselves at first hand the quality of the teaching and learning going on in our secondary schools. I would like to think they may find themselves as impressed by our students as they will be with them. We hope many more will offer their support to this welcome partnership in the years to come."*

**Rob Woodward, Chief Executive STV says:** *"I'm thrilled to be participating in the Speakers for Schools programme. Promoting links between business and schools is vital for the future and it is a great opportunity to engage directly with tomorrow's leaders. I am therefore delighted to be part of the Speakers for Schools programme particularly in bringing it to Scotland for the first time."*

**David Cruickshank, Chairman Deloitte and charity Education and Employers Taskforce says:** *"I was lucky to have had some inspirational teachers at Maud Primary School in Aberdeenshire and Waid Academy in Fife. However, pupils were really on their own when it came to linking their*

*education to the working world. When I was at school, careers guidance was literally a filing cabinet in the corner of a classroom. The world has changed a lot since then and there are a bewildering number of work opportunities, very many of which didn't exist when I was at school! The Education and Employers Taskforce seeks to create a bridge between schools and the world of work by getting people at all levels (Chairmen, Chief Executives through to junior staff) to talk in schools about their lives, work and other areas of interest to inform and inspire school students so that they are better informed about the life and work choices ahead of them."*

## **Media contacts**

A selection of Scottish speakers is available for interview and we can also put you in touch with head teachers who have experienced *Speakers for School* talks. **We can also supply a list of speaking times, dates and venues across Scotland.** Please contact Carol Glover, Communications Manager, Education and Employers Taskforce, mobile: 07939 061 850 or [carol.glover@educationandemployers.org](mailto:carol.glover@educationandemployers.org)

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## **Notes to Editors**

### **1) About *Speakers for Schools***

*Speakers for Schools* is an initiative to get inspirational speakers who are leaders in their field to give talks for free in state schools and colleges, prioritising the most disadvantaged. Such speakers commonly visit independent schools, but many state schools and colleges lack the networks to approach them. *Speakers for Schools* is the idea of Robert Peston, the BBC's Business Editor, and is being administered by the charity, the Education and Employers Taskforce.

Speakers will address the big subjects: technological, scientific, political, economic, historical, cultural, artistic, ecological and ethical. Over 800 speakers have already accepted invitations to participate. The aim is to broaden the horizons and raise the aspirations of young people.

### **2) About *Inspiring the Future* - launching in Scotland this academic year**

*Inspiring the Future* is a free service which will see people volunteering to go into state secondary schools and colleges to talk about their jobs, careers, and the education routes they took. This sister programme to *Speakers for Schools* is launching in Scotland this academic year.

The aim is very simple – to encourage people from all sectors and professions to agree to give up an hour of their time during the year, at a time which suits them, to visit a state secondary school or FE college near where they live or work and talk to young people about their jobs, careers, and the education routes they took, perhaps for example as part of a careers fair.

Everyone from CEOs to apprentices. Recent graduates, school leavers and people in the early stages of their career can be inspirational to teenagers - being close in age they are easy to relate to; while senior and recently retired staff have a wealth of knowledge and experience to share. Volunteers and schools/colleges are connected securely online, and volunteering can take place near home or

work as you specify the geographic locations that suit you. Criminal Records Bureau checks are **not** needed for 'career insight' talks.

Hundreds of people who are involved in business and enterprise (including many who have set up or run their own business) have already volunteered. These '*enterprise champions*' are making a real difference to our young people, helping them to realise the vast range of jobs that exist and inspiring them to consider options they have not yet thought about. Positive, local role models are essential to show young people that enterprise is not just exciting and rewarding but is a viable option. By building enterprise ambition in young people from an early age, they are more likely to think about starting a business or social enterprise when they are older. *Inspiring the Future* has been developed with support from J.P. Morgan. Visit *Inspiring the Future* at <http://www.inspiringthefuture.org/>

### **3) About the Education and Employers Taskforce**

The Education and Employers Taskforce was launched as a small independent charity on the 15<sup>th</sup> October 2009, and has seven staff. Its aim is to ensure that every school and college has an effective partnership with employers which provides young people with the inspiration, motivation, knowledge, skills and opportunities they need to help them achieve their potential and so secure our national prosperity.

The Taskforce's Partnership Board comprises the leaders of the main representative organisations from education and employment and the Trustees are principally senior business leaders with an interest in education. For more details please see [www.educationandemployers.org](http://www.educationandemployers.org)

### **4) For further information**



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