

CURRICULUM VITAE

J MCBEATH

Jess is an experienced executive, founder and non-executive advisor, with deep expertise in new media and harmful content online. She has worked with start-ups, local government, education, charities, privately listed and public sector organisations. Based in Scotland, Jess works across the whole of Scotland as well as the wider UK including Northern Ireland. Her broad remit includes the public sector (local authorities), charities (child protection, youth work and digital participation), education (schools and colleges) and technology (new media, digital, gaming).

Accustomed to maintaining integrity within political environments, Jess is a strong communicator and networker, capable of building relationships, advising and influencing within boards and executive teams as well as across organisational boundaries. Jess is experienced in engaging local communities to identify the views of citizens and articulate these into policy proposals which balance local priorities with public interest. She has a record of delivering transformational change to improve outcomes for individuals and communities. Her digital citizenship consultancy focuses on empowering consumers to live a good (safe) life online. A regular media contributor, podcast host and conference speaker, Jess produces an online blog, newsletter and publications including educational resources and leaflets.

Jess is adept at identifying strategic opportunities, both as a business founder and board member. As a Finance and General Purposes Committee member, she is versed in financial planning and considering strategic financial impact. She collaborates well with regulatory bodies and is proficient in creating and embedding effective governance frameworks. Jess is skilled at translating between Scottish, English and UK-wide legislation, advice and policies, particularly relating to harmful content online. She brings substantial risk management insight regarding online reputational risk (personal, professional and organisational), as well as ethical and strategic risk considerations in the digital environment.

Harmful content online | New media & communications | Policy & advisory | Governance & risk

NON-EXECUTIVE BOARD EXPERIENCE

Ofcom Advisory Committee Scotland, Non-Executive Member 2020 - present

Ofcom is the UK's communications regulator, likely to include online harms regulation:

- Member to the Advisory Committee Scotland, providing expertise to the Committee re online harms.

Borders College Regional Board, Board Member 2019 - present

Borders College is the largest provider of post-compulsory education in the Scottish Borders:

- Member of the Regional Board and the Finance & General Purposes Committee, supporting the College through a period of significant challenge and opportunity.

Scottish Government Expert Group on Healthy Relationships, Member & Advisor 2019 - present

The Expert Group is developing guidance for children's workforce professionals, on supporting healthy relationships of primary age and secondary age young people:

- Engaged and persuaded the Group to transform dated e-safety messages towards current understanding of harmful content online and empowering digital citizens. The guidance is due for publication in summer 2020, with group members enthused about the new approach.

EXECUTIVE EXPERIENCE

Jess Ltd, Founder and Director, 2016 – present

Jess Ltd provides advice, training and audit re harmful content online:

- Government level influence and engagement, including providing government staff training, membership of expert groups, presentations at round table events etc on the diverse online harms agenda including content regulation. Supporting wide range of organisations re safeguarding policies. Gained national contracts such as the Safeguarders Panel. Conducted the first school Online Safety Mark assessment in Scotland. Responsible for promoting Safer Internet Day in Scotland, resulting in a doubling of the number of Scottish supporters.
- Regular media contributor on the protection of consumers from harmful content online, including interviewee for national radio, TV and magazine. Podcast host and interviewer. Publications include educational resources and leaflets (e.g. British Council 'Digital life hacks' leaflets). Online publications include an online safety blog, the #SafeAndEmpowered newsletter and think pieces (e.g. UK Safer Internet Centre, TES, Third Force News and Children in Scotland). Significantly raised the profile of empowering consumers online in Scotland.
- Designed, developed and achieved quality endorsement (and funding) from Education Scotland for a transformational teacher training programme in digital citizenship. In 6 months, nearly 300 educators registered for the programme, which is receiving national recognition.

NSPCC, Schools Adviser, 2013 - present

Interviews and trains volunteers as well as delivering child protection workshops for pupils and online safety workshops for parents.

- Awarded NSPCC Childhood Champion Award, as Schools Volunteer of the Year Scotland, 2018.

Midlothian Council, Performance Manager (2003-15)

Developed career to senior management and member of Corporate Management Team. Direct report to Chief Executive and close working with Council Leader and partners within politically charged environment. Led three teams focused on driving transformation towards excellence. This included initiating, developing and implementing policy in areas including strategy and performance, community engagement, equalities, customer service and employee development.

- Engaged with regulatory bodies and used sound judgement to guide response to external regulation including Best Value and Joint Inspection of Services for Children & Young People, resulting in positive public reports and maintaining public trust in the Council and partners.
- Led a challenging co-production project collaborating with partners to redesign the community grants process, achieving a controversial 33% budget reduction whilst preserving politically sensitive relationships within a pressurised environment.
- Led numerous transformation projects, such as chairing a cross-functional team developing a strategy for future models of service delivery. Led extensive community engagement exercise to champion citizens' views within the context of public interest and political priorities.

Early career, 1998 – 2003

- IT Specialist, software testing and customer relationship roles with IBM Global Services and Pocket Watch Systems (a mobile software start-up).

DIRECTOR QUALIFICATIONS

- MBA (distinction) - University of Edinburgh Management School
- MA (1st class honours) Linguistics & Artificial Intelligence - University of Edinburgh