

Government appoints new Chief Entrepreneur

The Scottish Government has appointed businesswoman Ana Stewart as its new Chief Entrepreneur until July 2026.

Ms Stewart, who has chosen to take up the role on an unpaid basis, will be expected to act as the chief adviser to Government on growing the start-up and scale-up economy. This role includes key priorities such as implementing the [Pathways](#) report which Ms Stewart authored with the first Chief Entrepreneur, Mark Logan. The 2023 paper sets out ways of supporting women in entrepreneurship and began with the brief to “address the root causes of female under-participation in entrepreneurship”.

The Chief Entrepreneur will work on optimising the existing programmes and initiatives, growing Scotland’s risk capital market and working with universities to increase the number of spinout companies who reach scale.

She will collaborate closely with investors and entrepreneurs, ensuring that Government policy and delivery is shaped by business, and making sure entrepreneurship is instilled in the education and skills systems, with clear routes established to setting up a business.



L-R Ana Stewart, Chief Entrepreneur and Deputy First Minister
Kate Forbes PHOTO The Scottish Government

The appointment was announced as Ms Stewart accompanied Deputy First Minister Kate Forbes on a visit to Inspirent, a social enterprise based in Hamilton. The body will help the government deliver the new £700,000 round of The Scottish Government's Ecosystem Fund. This pot of money will help to strengthen Scotland's start-ups.

The application process for the fund is to be fully digitised this year with a bespoke online portal. This will enable faster decisions and expanding opportunities for community led projects in Scotland. Since the launch of the fund in 2021-22 the Ecosystem Fund has awarded £2.6 million to 75 projects.

The Deputy First Minister, Kate Forbes, said: "It is vital to Scotland's economic resilience that we support our business community – particularly those taking their first steps. Ana Stewart is an exceptional talent with deep experience of starting, scaling and investing in some of Scotland's best companies, and will ensure we are well-placed to deliver this

support.

“Scotland is home to some of the world’s brightest business minds, ideas and innovators. The Scottish Government is committed to helping deliver an end-to-end support network that nurtures this talent and helps this and future generations of business founders to thrive.

“To deliver truly meaningful, strategic support, it is vital we continue to listen to and learn from entrepreneurs and the wider business community. Ana Stewart brings the insight, lived experience and connections needed to shape and accelerate our policies and deliver for Scotland’s start-up talent.”

Ms Stewart’s decision to take up the £130,000 role on an unpaid basis is linked to the resignation of the first Chief Entrepreneur Mark Logan amid criticism surrounding his pay packet.

Ms Stewart said: “Leveraging my own lived experience as an entrepreneur and investor, I am looking forward to contributing to the development and optimisation of the Scottish Government’s entrepreneurship strategy.

“Entrepreneurship is the engine room for economic growth and it’s essential that we provide more pathways, increased access and accelerated funding to current and future founders, whilst ensuring private and public sector are aligned in making that happen.”

Founder of Ecosystem Builders Network, a previous Ecosystem Fund recipient, Bruce Walker said: “The Ecosystem Fund has been a vital catalyst for Scotland’s entrepreneurial community, enabling grassroots organisations to provide meaningful support to founders. It has allowed us to deliver targeted programmes to help entrepreneurs build resilient businesses, scale their impact and connect with global networks, as well as strengthen ecosystem builders across Scotland.

“For many early-stage founders, this support comes at a critical time, bridging the gap between ambition and action. Beyond individual ventures, the fund has helped strengthen the connective tissue of the wider ecosystem, empowering local leaders to foster inclusive, sustainable growth across sectors. Its impact continues to ripple through the community, creating a more collaborative, vibrant entrepreneurial landscape in Scotland.”

The application portal and further information can be found on a new dedicated Ecosystem Fund website: www.ecosystemfund.co.uk.

Ms Stewart set up a non-profit Pathways Forward and The Scottish Government will award a grant of £50,000 to the body to support the organisation while the Chief Entrepreneur takes up her new position.



Ana Stewart in discussion on a visit to Inspirent with the Deputy First Minister PHOTO The Scottish Government



Deputy First Minister Kate Forbes at the National Robotarium announcing funding for start up businesses with Mark Logan right and Ana Stewart his successor in the red jacket behind May 2024 PHOTO ©The Edinburgh Reporter