

- MA (Hons.) Geography and International Relations, St Andrews University (1996); M.Litt. (International Security Studies), St Andrews University (1998). Political advisor to Anne Begg MP (1997-1999).
- Member of Unite trade union. Member of the Co-op Party.
- In the Labour Party: Youth representative on the Scottish Executive Committee (1993-1995); Youth representative on the National Executive Committee (1995-1997); Parliamentary Candidate, Angus constituency (1997). Labour candidate, Dunfermline and West Fife by-election (2006).
- In the European Parliamentary Labour Party: health spokesperson (1999-2004); fisheries spokesperson (1999-2004); fisheries and regional development spokesperson (2004-2009); Deputy Leader (2004-2006).
- Editor of the Parliament Magazine (2002-2011 ).