

Session 2

In 2005 Scotland's Futures Forum, the Scottish Parliament's think tank, was established. It aims to look beyond the electoral cycle and promote futures thinking.



The Scottish Parliament
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Scotland's Futures Forum
Fòram Alba air Thoiseach



2005

2006

2007

2008

2009

2010

2011

2012

2013

2014

2015

Session 2

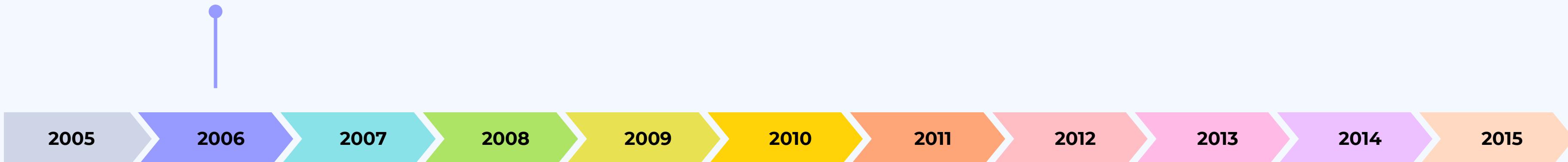


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“If we don’t think from time to time out of the box and over the horizon, and if we rely on past experience, the danger is that we shall walk into the future backwards.” - Sir George Reid, Founding Chair of the Forum



Session 2



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The first major study carried out by the Futures Forum explored Scotland's ageing population. It focused primarily on economic issues, such as drawing more older workers into employment.

“Older people are now the most powerful consumer group in society and, as will be seen, the workforce of tomorrow can only come from drawing more older workers into the workforce.”



Session 3

The Forum explored how Scotland could half the damage caused by drug and alcohol misuse by 2025.



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A 2025 view, based on what the Forum has learned and proposes

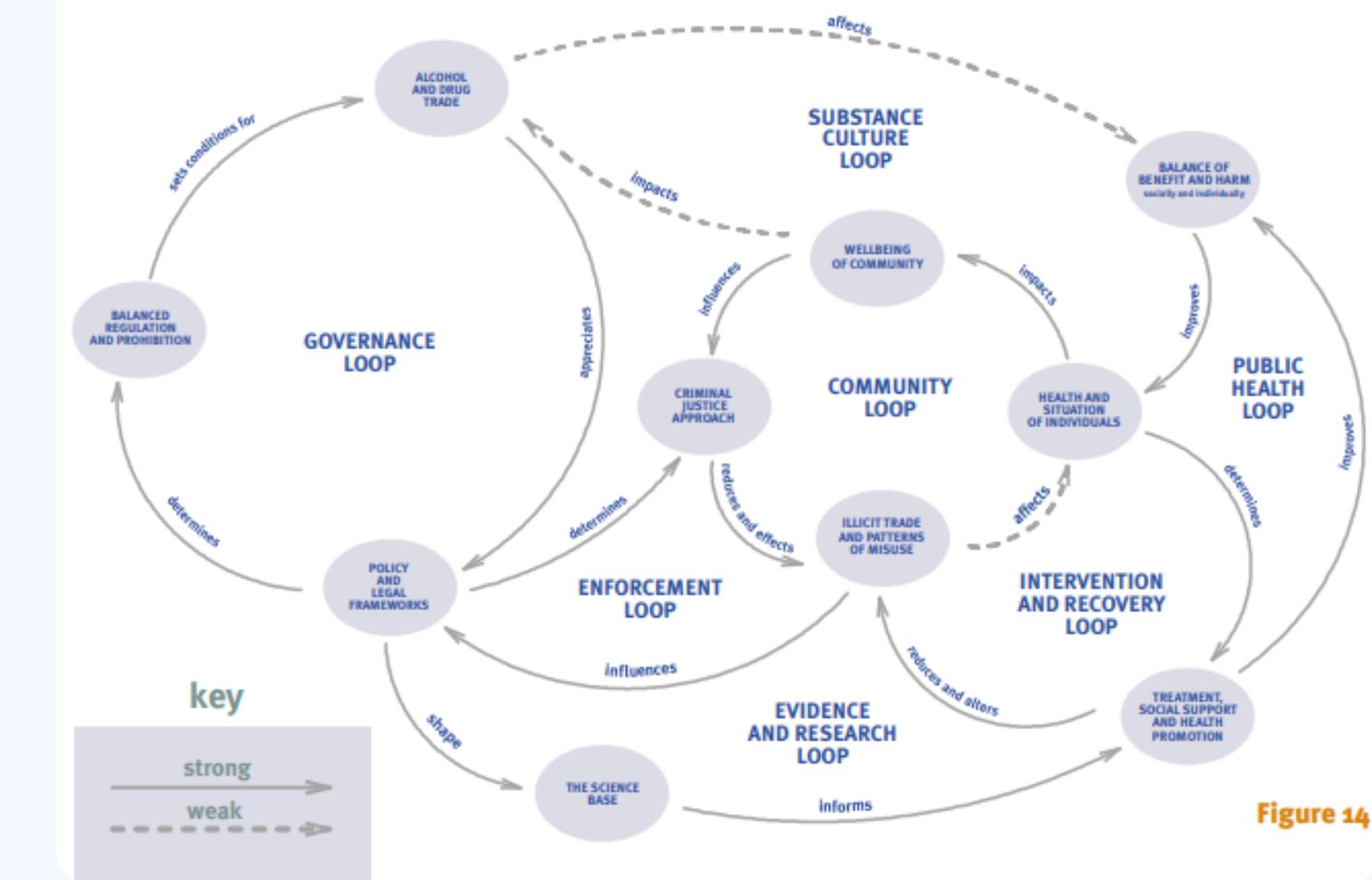
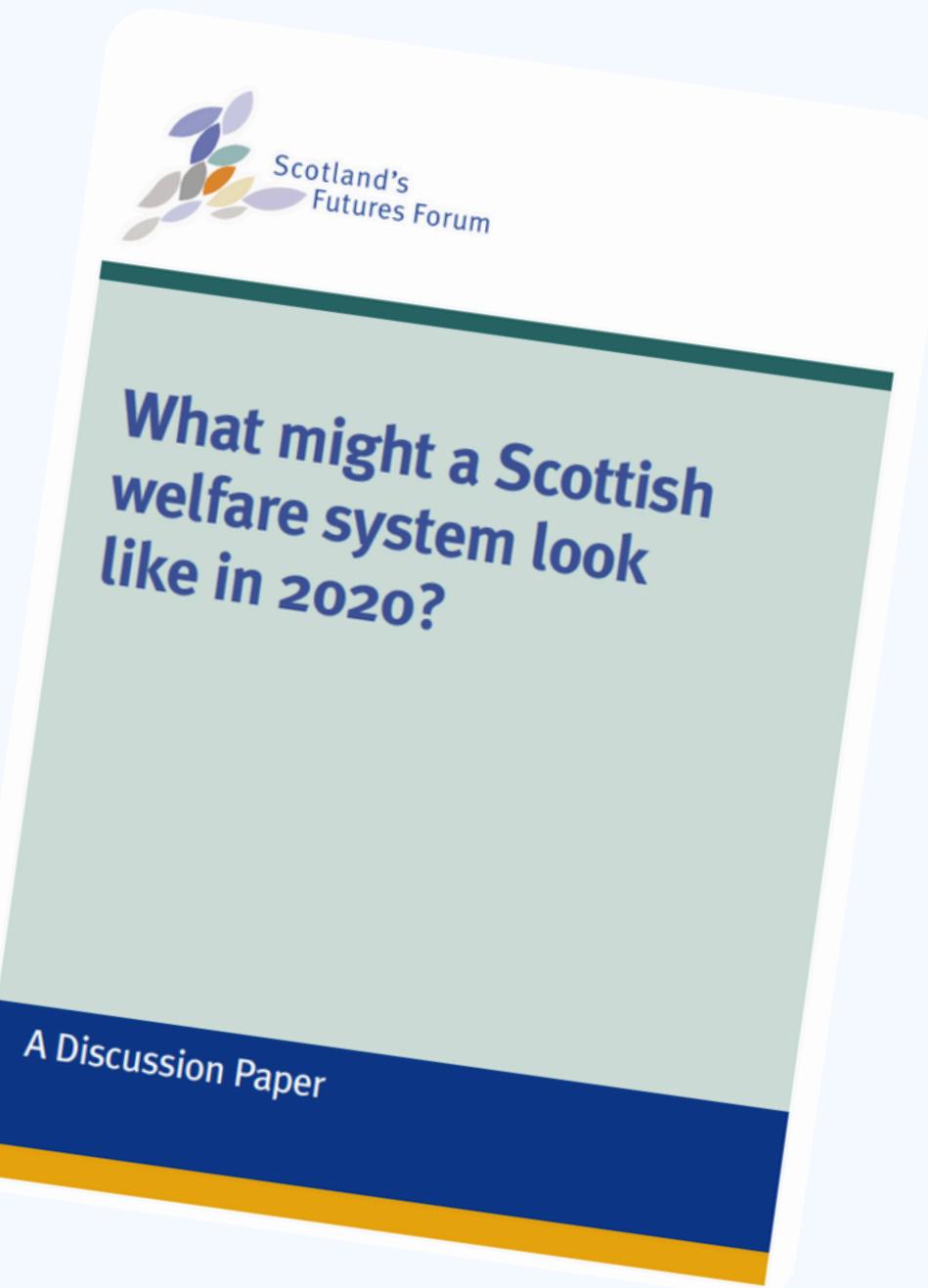


Figure 14



Session 3

A 2009 seminar examined the Swedish welfare system and what could work in a Scottish context. It focused on skills and education, health and wellbeing, political leadership and an ageing population.



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Session 3

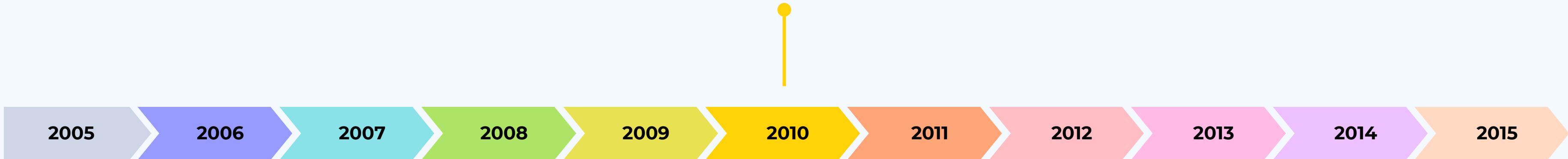
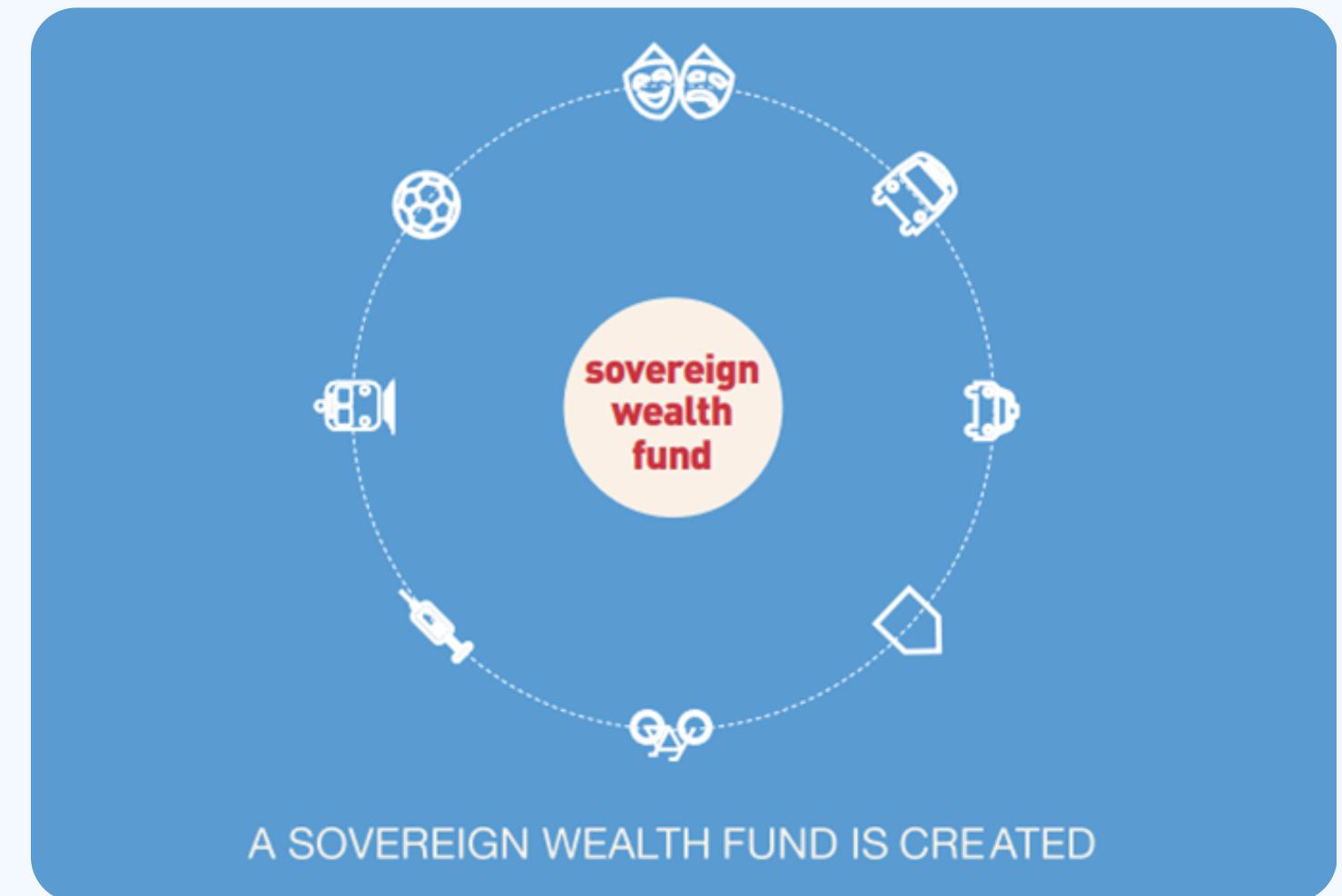
The Forum partnered with 23 other organisations to explore possible future scenarios for sustainable communities. They imagined what life in Scotland in 2030 could look like as a result of opportunities taken or missed, such as the introduction of a sovereign wealth fund.



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Session 4



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The Futures Forum partnered with the Scottish Universities Insight Institute to explore women's imprisonment. The report emphasised the need to tackle the root cause of women's offending, through interventions in health, housing and education.



“Prison is often a very expensive way of making vulnerable women’s life situations much worse.”



Session 4



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In 2012, a series of seminars were held. They aimed to challenge perceptions of wellbeing and to show the potential of thinking differently about the environment, economy and society.

“There are powerful economic arguments that our current course is unsustainable.”



Session 4



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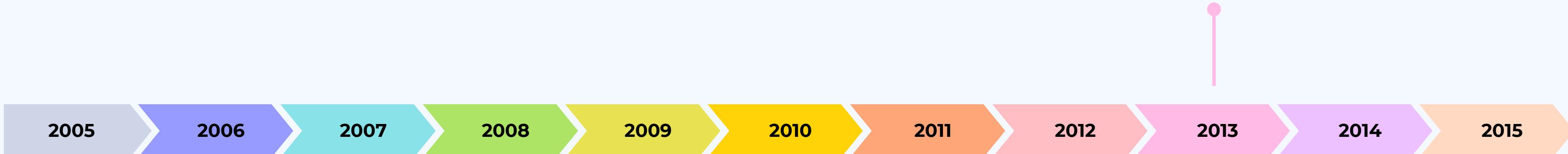


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A major horizon-scanning project explored what education might look like in 2025. It proposed actions to help Scotland become a world-leading education nation, focusing on areas such as digital literacy, international collaboration, adult learning and support for students from deprived backgrounds.



By 2025, Scotland will be regarded as a world-leading learning nation



Session 4



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Two partnership events were held with the Goodison Group in Scotland in 2014, looking at the sustainability of family businesses and SMEs. The key changes suggested included greater access to education, consultancy and external mediation.



Session 4



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The Forum explored pathways to improve educational attainment and equity. The key themes highlighted included the need for an evidence-based approach, early intervention, engagement, teacher professionalism and trust.



“We also need to remember that attainment does not stop at the end of the formal education system. We need to consider learning throughout life”



Session 5



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In 2016 Rob Littlejohn started as Head of Business:

“I found the Futures Forum a great place to step back from day-to-day business and reflect creatively about what might be ahead. It is fascinating to see what comes out from discussions that bring together people from across the Parliament and beyond. Given the pressures on us all to respond quickly and be available 24/7, I think that having space to think is invaluable for now and the future.”



2016

2017

2018

2019

2020

2021

2022

2023

2024

2025

2026

Session 5



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We hosted a seminar with Nesta on digital democratic innovation, bringing together leading innovators from across Europe - including Estonia, France, and Iceland - to share their tools, findings and best practice.

“New experiments in digital democracy are showing how digital technologies can play a critical role in engaging new groups of people, empowering citizens and forging a new relationship between cities and local residents, and parliamentarians and citizens.”



2016

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Session 5

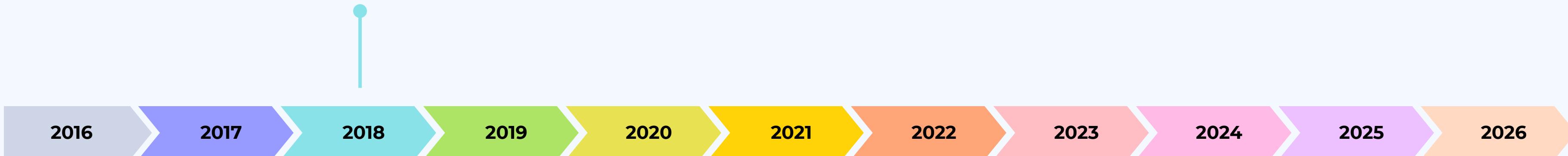


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In 2018, we continued with our 2030 programme: a varied investigation into the kind of country we want Scotland to be in 2030. For example, one strand examined the future of death and dying, considering the role of technology, religion, medicine and the state.



Session 5



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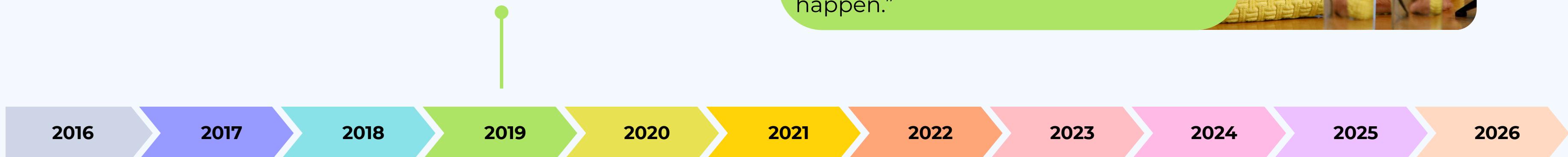


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Former Fed Cup Captain Judy Murray spoke at a Futures Forum seminar, sharing her vision for the future of sport and physical activity and how we can build a more active nation.



“I’m a huge believer in investing in people and bringing them together, and in community and making things happen.”



Session 5



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Our Scotland 2030 Programme ended with 10 ideas for 2030, for the Scottish Parliament to consider.



If we don't fail, we don't learn. Using the legend of Robert the Bruce and the spider, and more recent versions such as scientific innovations like Dolly the Sheep and sporting achievements like Andy Murray's, a national museum of failure could show the role of failure in the path to achievement and encourage people to embrace risk.



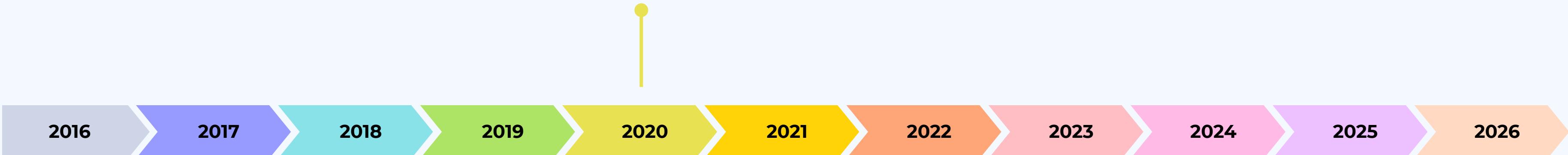
Teach all subjects through creative arts and group work



National conversation on diet



Whole-life plan for 40-year-olds



Session 6



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During the COVID-19 pandemic the Futures Forum ran a wide range of online events. In the lead-up to COP26 in Glasgow we hosted a panel of leading thinkers to examine the interconnected challenges of climate change and biodiversity loss.



Session 6

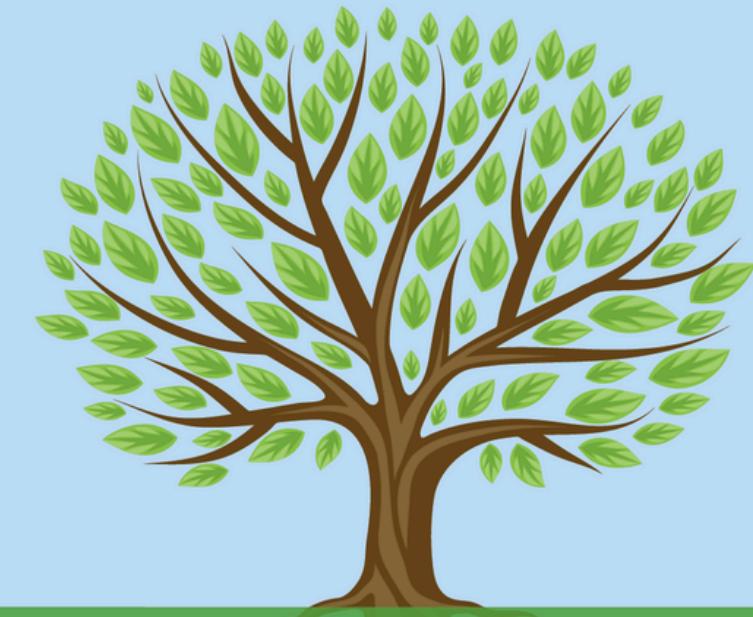


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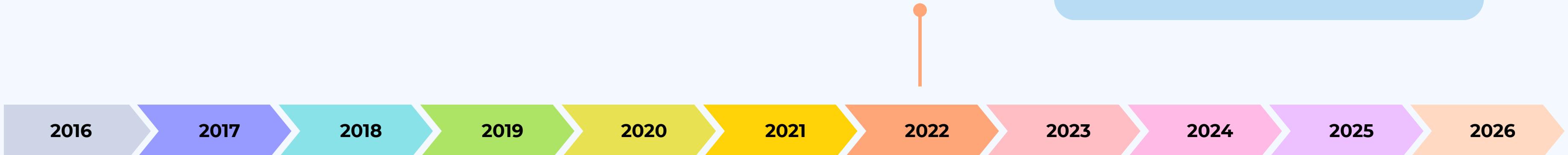


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To mark Seachdain na Gàidhlig (Gaelic Week) in 2022, the Futures Forum asked several Gaelic speakers to share their views of the future.



“ The different pieces we have (like education, media, events, and the law) are the roots of the tree of living Gaelic. The tree will not survive if we only water one root. The land under the tree is the community, and the government is the water: if the water renews the whole tree, it will be much healthier. No single root can save our language: they all need each other. **”**



Session 6

With Scotland facing the challenges of climate change, rising inequality and an ageing population, we looked at new ideas for how our economy could work. One seminar explored the idea of a wellbeing economy and what that would look like in a Scottish context.



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Scotland's Futures Forum
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Session 6

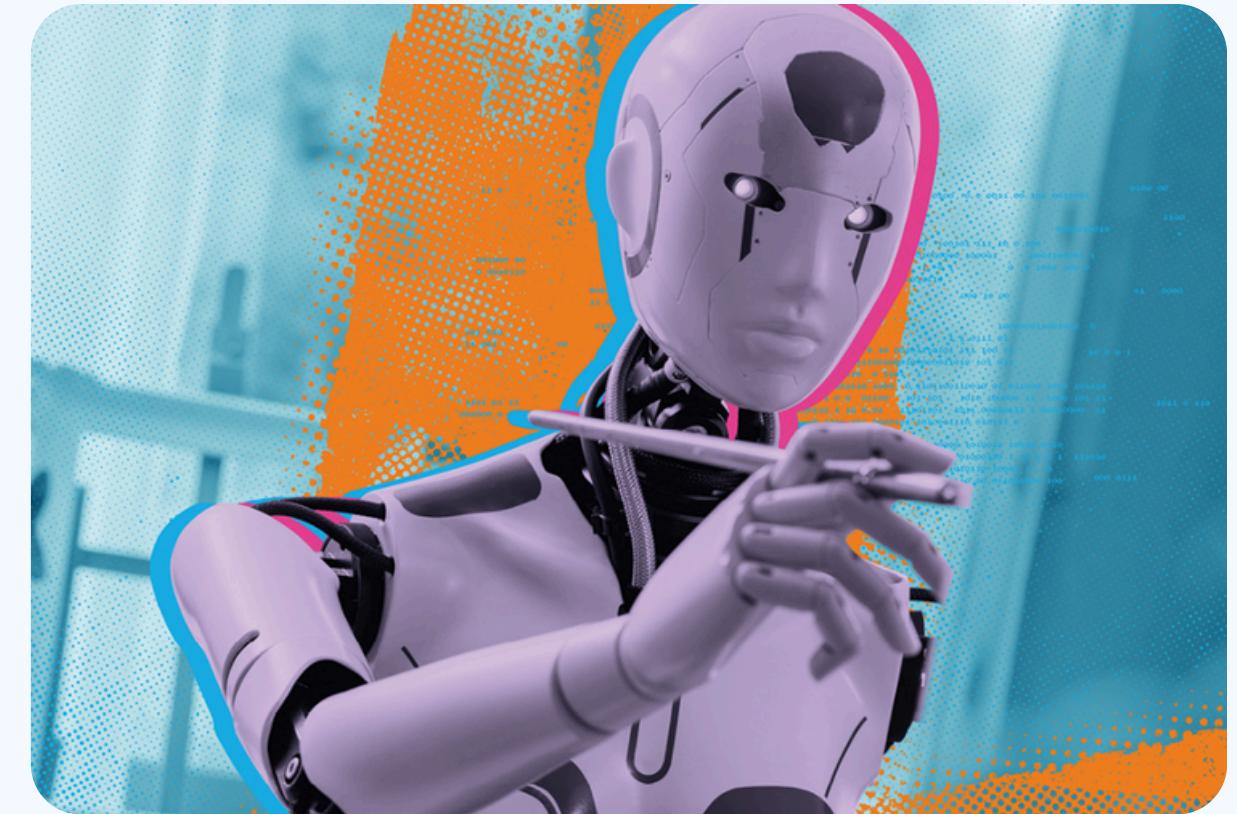


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We continued our ongoing partnership with the Scottish Parliament's Festival of Politics, with panels on AI and creativity, deepfake politics and the Scottish Parliament's 25th anniversary.



Session 6



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In 2025 Scotland's Futures Forum celebrated its 20th anniversary. We continued our work exploring the role of AI in education, partnered on four Festival of Politics events and held an event on the future of food in Scotland.



Session 6



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We are beginning 2026 with this exhibition: reflecting on the past 20 years of the Forum and the value of futures thinking. We have also recently launched a new blog series, **Looking Beyond**, where experts, policymakers and academics share futures thinking on a wide variety of topics.

