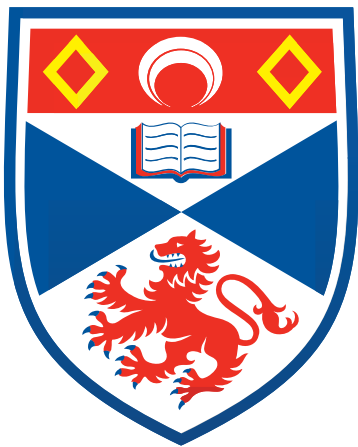


# Everyone Deserves a First Chance



## University of St Andrews

### Setting the Scene

The University of St Andrews is a prestigious world-renowned university. On analysing their enrolment data, they identified an emerging demographical trend, highlighting that they needed to do more to attract students from underrepresented backgrounds to St Andrews.

### The Challenge

The university wanted to readdress this balance and tackle this educational inequality. To do this they needed to reach and communicate with users of secondary school age from all backgrounds and identified that a digital solution would achieve this.

### The Solution

eCom was delighted to develop an online mentoring solution called First Chances, based around the principles of social/informal learning. Within First Chances, existing university students are paired with one or two local children who have no history of higher education in their family. Mentors are selected based on the academic interests of the school pupil to make the experience engaging from the outset.

Within First Chances, mentees can:

- have a conversation with their mentor and receive advice, guidance and coaching;
- upload evidence, e.g., documents to share with their mentor;
- access a library of resources and useful links; and
- view events in their calendar, e.g., university open days.

Schools have been accessing the StAN Website, used for delivering the First Chances programmes, for over 10

years to deliver the mentoring scheme. With eCom being a recognised cyber-security safe supplier and trusted through Fife Council network, users can have confidence that all their communication within First Chances is taking place in a protected environment.

Originally for users aged 14 and over in S3 – S6, It is now possible for users who are under 13 to participate, helping secondary school children begin the conversation about life at university at an early stage. For security reasons, parents of users can see all communication

**“I would say that the most impressive part of the system has been the support and advice offered almost instantly from eCom whenever we have had any questions.”**

*Laura Houston,  
Access and Widening  
Participation Manager,  
University of St Andrews.*



with their child, enabling them to have constructive conversations about the options open to them.

Following the success of First Chances, the University of St Andrews secured funding to expand the system to include student mentors at Fife College. This expansion has opened possibilities for secondary school pupils who are considering further education to get an appreciation of what life is like at Fife College.

To ensure convenient access for all, eCom continually innovates in response to changes in the way technology is used. In support of the trend towards greater use of mobile devices, First Chances is now available as a mobile app, for both Apple and Android devices, through the respective stores.

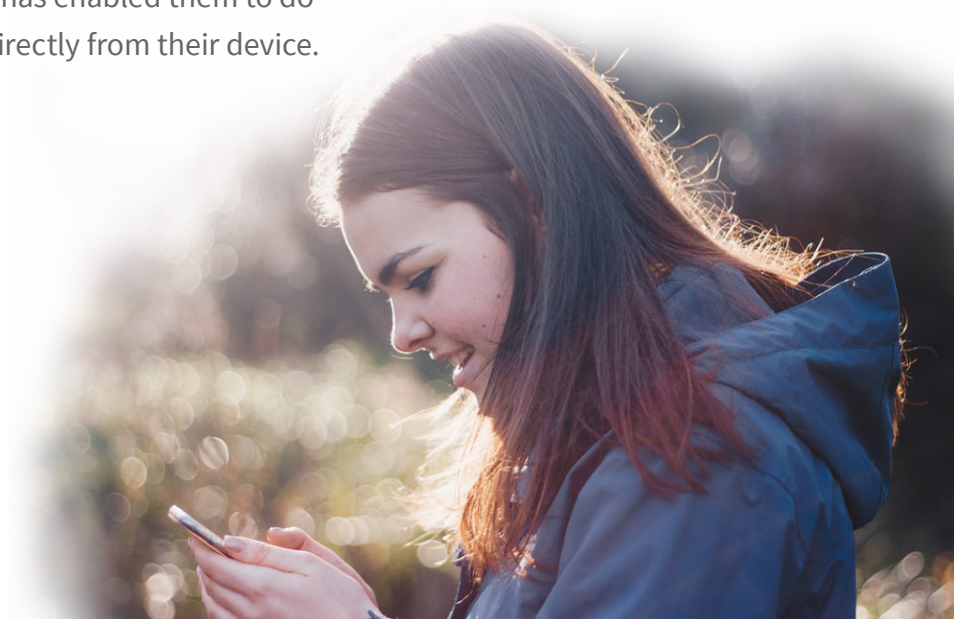
## The Benefits

First Chances is a secure, convenient way for the pupils to make secure connections with mentors in further and higher education, giving them an insight into life at college/university that previously wouldn't have been available to them.

Having a secure system for all communications, has enabled users to feel confident about using the system and the convenience of the mobile app has enabled them to do so directly from their device.

The knowledge they gain from using First Chances will inspire them to consider going to college/university and to work to the best of their ability whilst at school to ensure they gain a place at their chosen institution.

**If you would like to discover how our Learning Solutions can help your company, please contact eCom on 01383 630032.**



eCom Scotland

Customised Learning  
Technology Solutions

18 Dickson Street  
Dunfermline  
Fife, UK  
KY12 7SL

☎ 01383 630 032  
✉ info@ecomscotland.com  
🌐 www.ecomscotland.com