



Youth Matters

CONFERENCE | 2022 REPORT

Conclusions and Recommendations

What disabled young people told the Conference:

- we are unique individuals – like everyone else.
- we do not need to carry unnecessary burdens or limits on our abilities, aspirations, environments and lifestyles.
- we are aware there is a constantly changing and important balance to discover and manage in our lives. This is different for every individual and relates to aspirations, skills, motivation, environments and practical support.
- we felt safe and empowered by coming together to openly express and celebrate our unique differences and to share common concerns, goals and fears.

Disabled young people want:

- to be who we really are, and for others to know it.
- to be accepted, respected, valued and understood by our school communities and the wider communities we experience.
- to be valuable contributors to our own lives and the wider communities we find ourselves in, and which we choose to identify with.
- to continue to reach towards our full potential with targeted, relevant advice.
- to feel safe and be able to make mistakes, learn and grow.
- to be decision-makers integral to the discussions and decisions affecting our own lives.
- to be able to access appropriate support quickly when needed.
- to be able to work in worthwhile paid jobs, and continue training, education, and volunteering as we move beyond the school system.

Significantly, also:

The Steering Group, and some of the delegates, have discovered a platform through Youth Matters and want to build on the work we have done so far. We want to create new roles and to play an integral part in discussions, research and decision-making processes at policy and community planning level.





Together we can make the difference

The Steering Group for Youth Matters 2022 made the following recommendations:

- there should be an awareness-raising campaign on behalf of disabled young people in Dumfries and Galloway.
- we need acknowledgement of the impact of the cost of living crisis on disabled young people and support for those who need it.
- we need greater support for mental health difficulties among disabled young people.
- there needs to be improved access to advice, training and jobs for disabled young people.
- we want disabled young people to be enabled to claim their aspirations and the chance to lead fulfilling lives.

I enjoyed the Youth Matters Conference because I felt I belonged here and I know I am not alone with how I feel.

Young Participant

**I am strong
AND
sometimes
I need your
help**

What's Next?

The Youth Matters Steering Group, supported by DG Voice, YouthWork D&G, The Usual Place, Third Sector D&G, PAMIS, Dumfries & Galloway Council and NHS D&G, will:

- launch this report at a celebratory event
- ensure the findings of the Youth Matters Conference 2022 reach all disabled young people across Dumfries and Galloway
- ensure the recommendations arising from Youth Matters Conference 2022 reach all policy makers throughout Dumfries & Galloway and that these are used to inform policy decisions across health and social care, education and third sectors
- continue to find ways to create networks amongst disabled young people
- promote the empowerment of disabled young people by raising awareness and respect across all communities in relation to their intrinsic value, achievements, needs, desires and potential
- connect disabled young people with decision makers enabling continuous discussion and learning to ensure that their perspectives are understood and their recommendations, now and in the future, are integrated into mainstream community planning
- the partner organisations provide support to the Youth Matters Steering Group in its aims to continue its work beyond the Conference

