

# YOUTHVISION

DUMFRIES AND GALLOWAY'S  
YOUTH PARTICIPATION & ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY  
FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AGED 12-25  
2018 - 2021





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# FOREWORD

This strategy sets the ambition our Council has to see the participation and empowerment of all our young people living in Dumfries and Galloway. A tremendous amount of work has been carried out and I am positive that work will pay off when this strategy is implemented and works really well. I look forward to working with all of the young people who engage with the strategy and the new structures that will be put into place. Our legacy from the Year of Young People locally will be youth empowerment, and this Strategy is at the heart of that goal.

**Councillor Adam Wilson**  
Young Peoples Champion



In Dumfries and Galloway we are committed to ensuring all our young people achieve their potential. To do this they must feel confident and have the skills and support to make their voice heard and have their views taken seriously. Our Council and our partners are committed to work with all young people and community groups in order to deliver the best possible outcomes to make a real difference. This strategy outlines the structures in place that aim to support young people to become active citizens, effective contributors and valued partners in decision making processes.

This implementation of our vision will make a significant contribution to helping us make Dumfries and Galloway the natural place for all our young people to live, work and grow.

**Gavin Stevenson**  
Chief Executive Dumfries & Galloway Council

Having been elected to represent Dumfriesshire as a Member of the Scottish Youth Parliament in 2015, I am delighted to have been a part of developing this strategy for young people across Dumfries and Galloway. I honestly believe that launching our new Youth Council structure is an opportunity not to be underestimated. Many people do not realise that they have rights, and because of this are unable to challenge those in positions of power to demand better. Advocating on behalf of thousands of young people ensuring that they are heard is at the forefront of my volunteering role, which is why this new structure is vital for empowering young people to become leaders, activists and participants in their own communities. This strategy is underpinned by key documents and legislation that states clearly that involving young people in decisions impacting their lives is not merely a good idea, it is a necessity not only for the future but for each young person living in our area right now.

**Emily Davies**  
Member of Scottish Youth Parliament for Dumfriesshire  
*On behalf of all Dumfries & Galloway MSYP's*



# WHAT'S IT ALL ABOUT?

This strategy outlines the range of opportunities for young people to become involved in decision making in Dumfries & Galloway.

Developed in partnership with young people, this booklet outlines both the purpose and structure for youth democracy in our region.

## WHO IS IT FOR?

- Young People aged 12 - 25 who are living, working or studying in Dumfries and Galloway
- Volunteers and professionals working alongside young people
- Organisations and individuals with an interest in hearing the views of young people and acting upon them

# WHATS THE POINT?

## OUR COMMITMENT IS CLEAR

- We will make sure young people have the skills, ability and confidence to speak out
- We will talk with, listen to and value our young people
- We will make sure that young people have opportunities and given the choices to actively and meaningfully take part in decisions that affect their lives
- Respond to the views of young people by reviewing and changing Council Services as required

There's more information on how this links in with other strategies, policies and legislation on page 9

# WHAT DOES PARTICIPATION & ENGAGEMENT MEAN?

This strategy adopts the literal definition of participation as the 'action of taking part'

Engagement is defined as the genuine involvement of young people in service planning and decision making. The Ladder of Youth Participation outlines the different approaches that can be taken in how organisations and professionals work with young people.

8

## YOUTH INITIATED LEADERSHIP

Young people are peer leaders in a paid or voluntary capacity, leading activities with their peers and adults. Young people are empowered to have an equal role in service level and strategic decision making alongside adults.

7

## YOUTH INITIATED PARTNERSHIPS

Young people initiate the planning, delivery and evaluation of programmes and activities. Adults are only there in a supporting role.

6

## ADULT INITIATED, SHARED DECISION MAKING

Projects and programmes are initiated by adults but the decision-making is shared with young people. Attempts are made to use youth-friendly procedures, language, and to meet individual needs.

5

## INFORMED DIALOGUE

Young people give ongoing advice on projects or programmes designed and run by adults. They are informed about how their input will be used and notified of the outcomes of decision making by adults.

4

## ASSIGNED BUT INFORMED

Young people are assigned a role and informed about how and why they are being involved.

3

## TOKENISM

Young people appear to be given a choice, but in reality they have little or no choice about what they do or how they participate.

2

## DECORATION

Young people are used to help a cause in an indirect way on an issue not inspired by young people.

1

## MANIPULATION

Young people are used by adults to support causes under the pretence that things are inspired by young people

*\*adapted from The Ladder of Youth Engagement - R.Hart & J.Nowicki*

Manipulation, Decoration, and Tokenism are classed as non-participation.

The aim of this strategy is to work with young people to move through the different types of participation with the goal being to enter into a youth initiated leadership style through the new Dumfries & Galloway Youth Council

# YOUTH COUNCIL

Young people told us that they wanted a Youth Council that is:

Fair and Democratic

Representative of the range of identities and geographies of Young People in Dumfries and Galloway

Accessible to all young people

Able to effectively engage with Dumfries and Galloway Council

The following has been developed alongside a youth steering group, and supported by the views of hundreds of 12-25 year olds who were asked to share their views about what Youth Democracy should be like in Dumfries and Galloway.

The Youth Council will be made up of 35 young people and will include:

## 2 ELECTED FROM EACH WARD AREA

- Stranraer and Rhins
- Mid Galloway and Wigtown West
- Dee and Glenkens
- Castle Douglas and Crocketford
- Abbey
- North West Dumfries
- Mid and Upper Nithsdale
- Lochar
- Nith
- Annandale South
- Annandale North
- Annandale East and Eskdale

## 7 NOMINATED REPRESENTATIVES

- Young Parents
- Young People with Additional Support Needs and Disabilities
- Ethnic Minority Community
- LGBT Community
- Gypsy/Traveller Community
- Young Carers
- Care Experienced Young People (Listen2Us)

## 4 ELECTED MEMBERS OF THE SCOTTISH YOUTH PARLIAMENT

- Dumfriesshire
- Galloway and West Dumfries

## Young People in the Youth Council will:

- Meet every two months formally
- Participate in training regularly to develop skills, confidence and to remain informed
- Create a yearly action plan
- Identify and agree regional priorities and develop local actions and approaches
- Work alongside Elected Members in each ward area
- Work closely alongside the Young People's Champion
- Lead an annual Young Persons themed meeting with full Council
- Feed into Local Action Groups through LEADER
- Have representation on working groups including youth representative on the Equality and Diversity working group
- Report annually on progress to the Children, Young People and Lifelong Learning Committee
- Directly link in with the Children's Services Executive Group (CSEG) and Community Planning Partnerships (CPP)

A co-opted position for the Dumfries and Galloway Council Young Peoples Champion

The Young People's Service will work in partnership with Education Services through local secondary school Pupil Councils and Student Forums, organisations within the Third Sector and statutory services to support young people aged 12-25 to stand in the Youth Council elections.

# LISTENZUS & CHAMPIONS BOARD

## LISTENZUS

This project is specifically for Young People who are: Looked After (LAC) or Care Experienced (CEYP). Every six weeks Young People come together to work through their action plan, identify issues and propose solutions to improve the lives and life chances of others in care.

Young People in Listen2Us are committed to:

- Challenging the stigma surrounding young people in care
- Increasing the awareness surrounding the barriers that are faced by many
- Ensuring that young people know their rights and how to fulfil these
- Gathering young people's experiences and points of view to identify solutions alongside organisations with a Corporate Parenting responsibility through the Champions Board
- Improving LAC and CEYP life chances, aspirations and opportunities to participate

## CHAMPIONS BOARD

Every four months young people from Listen2Us join their Corporate Parents for a Champions Board meeting. At these meetings, they share their ideas, discuss issues, hear updates and make decisions. These meetings are a partnership and decision-making is a responsibility of everyone who attends.

# WHERE DOES IT FIT?

## INTERNATIONAL POLICIES AND LEGISLATION

It is important for young people, professionals, parents and guardians to know where this strategy fits in with local, national and international policies, strategies, legislation and how young peoples voices will be listened to

## LOCALLY

### Dumfries and Galloway Council

Priority Two:

'Provide the best start in life for all our Children and Young People'. This includes supporting young people to become active citizens.

Priority Four:

'Be an inclusive Council' by ensuring that local people and communities are at the heart of our decision making.

### Community Participation and Engagement Strategy Childrens Services Plan

These documents outline the importance of and commitment to working with young people on a community and individual level to design and review frontline services as well as individual care planning.

This strategy sits under both of these documents as a guide to how our Council engages with young people.

Our Council's Equality Outomes aspire to:

- Engage young people in local decision making
- Encourage the participation of young people with protected characteristics
- Raise young people's attainment and participation
- Remove barriers so that all young people have equality of opportunity

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## NATIONALLY

### Getting it Right for Every Child

GIRFEC is the National Approach to how services work with young people and families to make sure they are involved and informed and at the centre.

There's also Getting It Right for Every Looked After Child and Young Person Strategy which looks specifically at how services work with young people and families to improve outcomes for young people who are looked after.

### Curriculum for Excellence

Curriculum for excellence aims to ensure young people have the knowledge, attributes and skills needed to be:

- Active citizens
- Effective contributors

### National Youth Work Strategy

Outlines the Nature and Purpose of Youth Work in Scotland with one of the main aims being:

'To progress young people's rights and participation'

There's also:

Equality Act 2010 that states people cannot be discriminated against based on their age, young or old and the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 that lays out a responsibility for public bodies to promote awareness of Children and Young People's rights and develop ways of working that ensure these are understood.

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## INTERNATIONALLY

The United Nations convention on the rights of the Child (UNCRC) is a human rights treaty that sets out the civil, political, economic, social, health and cultural rights of those under the age of 18.

Article 3 states that adults responsible for making decisions should do so in the best interests of young people.

Article 12 states that young people have the right to have opinions and for these to matter.

For those age 18+ there is the Universal declaration of Human Rights that has been enshrined in Law through the Human Rights Act 1998.

**CHILDREN &  
YOUNG PEOPLE'S**  
Commissioner  
Scotland

unicef   
for every child

# WHO'S WHO?



## Dumfries and Galloway Council

Dumfries and Galloway Council is divided into twelve ward areas:

In total there are 3-4 Councillors elected to represent each ward with 43 elected in total.

Councillors have the following responsibility:

- Executive decision-making - Councillors attend full meetings of the council, and some councillors may have executive posts in relation to policy making, delivery of services and use of resources.
- Scrutiny of decisions taken by others within a local authority - Councillors may also serve on scrutiny panels or committees - which scrutinise existing policies and service delivery. Such groups may make recommendations to the Council Executive or to full council meetings.
- Regulatory functions - some council committees, such as those which deal with planning and licensing applications, have a quasi-judicial role.
- Representing their ward - representing and meeting with the residents and interest groups within their ward and dealing with issues that they raise. In addition councillors may attend, where appropriate, community council meetings, and serve on forums through which local issues can be discussed between elected members, council officers and the wider community.



Twitter: @dgcouncil  
Facebook: /DumfriesGallowayCouncil



## Scottish Youth Parliament Members of the Scottish Youth Parliament (MSYPs)

The Scottish Youth Parliament is the democratically elected voice of Scotland's Young People. MSYPs are elected using the same constituency areas as the Scottish Parliament and there are two representatives elected to represent Galloway and West Dumfries and two for Dumfriesshire.

MSYPs have a responsibility to work alongside MPs, MSPs, and Councillors to ensure that the views of young people are being represented to decision-makers.

Additional to this, SYP comes together three times per year to debate issues brought to the parliament by young people.



Twitter: @OfficialSYP  
Facebook: /OfficialSYP  
Facebook: /DGSYP

MPs, MSPs & Councillors have a responsibility to represent individuals living in the communities they represent, regardless of whether or not you are aged to vote or if you are but chose not to.

Our four MSYPs represent all young people aged 12-25 in Dumfries and Galloway

# WHO'S WHO?

In Dumfries and Galloway there's over 50 individuals who are elected to speak on behalf of young people and adults living in the region, this is a quick guide to their titles and responsibilities.



## UK Parliament - Members of Parliament (MP)

The UK Parliament is made up of MPs from across Scotland, England, Wales and Northern Ireland. In Dumfries and Galloway there is one MP elected to represent the Dumfries and Galloway constituency, and another elected to represent Dumfriesshire, Clydesdale and Tweeddale.

Within the Parliament, MPs come together to debate and legislate (make laws), and to scrutinise the work of the UK Government on issues related to Reserved powers. This includes: Immigration, Benefits and Social Security, Defence and Employment.



Twitter: @UKParliament



Facebook: /ukparliament



The Scottish Parliament  
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

## Scottish Parliament - Members of the Scottish Parliament (MSP)

The Scottish Parliament has two types of MSP, those who are constituency representatives and those who are regional representatives. Dumfries and Galloway is within the South Scotland region that is championed for by 7 MSPs. There's also one MSP elected to represent the Galloway and West Dumfries constituency and one MSP elected to represent Dumfriesshire.

Within the Scottish Parliament, MSPs come together to debate and legislate (make laws) issues related to devolved powers and to scrutinise the work of the Scottish Government. This includes: Education, Health, Justice and the Police and Fire Service.



Twitter: @ScotParl



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