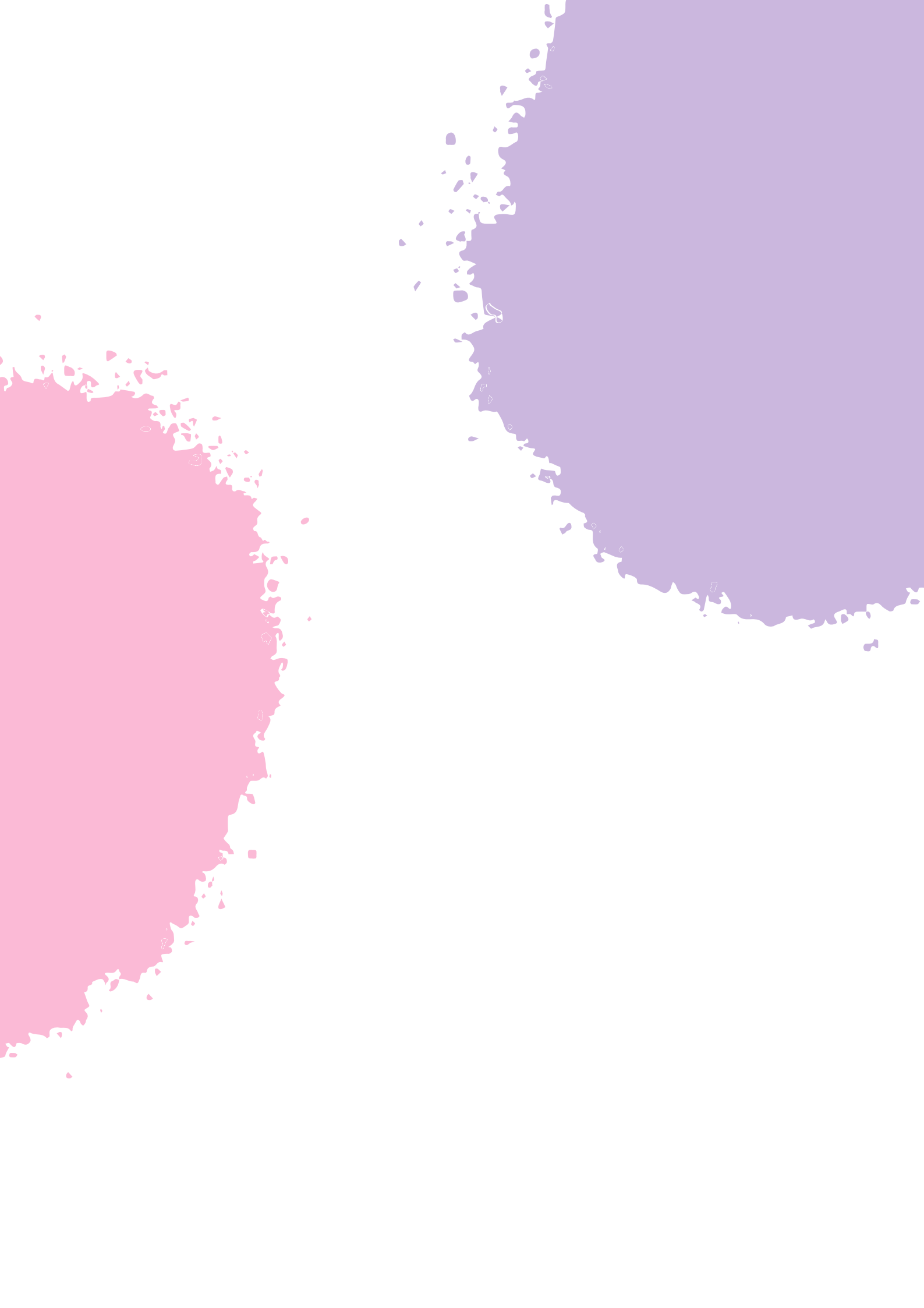


DUMFRIES AND GALLOWAY COUNCIL

# YOUTH PARTICIPATION & ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY 2022-2027



# FOREWORD

In Dumfries and Galloway Council, we are committed to ensuring that young people feel confident to express their voices and feel a sense of belonging in their communities.

This strategy demonstrates the progress made by our Council in ensuring young people's voices are heard and renews our dedication and commitment to listen to young people, and act on their views.

We have taken steps to ensure that the views and aspirations of young people are reflected in how we develop priorities and plans at a service and strategic level and I look forward to being a part of the next chapter of Youth Democracy in Dumfries and Galloway.

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.

**Dawn Roberts**  
Chief Executive - Dumfries & Galloway Council



I am delighted to introduce our region's second Youth Participation and Engagement Strategy which will shape how young people are involved in decision making at every level for years to come.

The progress made since the launch of the initial strategy in 2018 cannot be underestimated. The Youth Council was initially established in 2019, and within a year everyone was trying to find their feet in a new world of the pandemic. Despite the disruption, there has been a lot of progress to ensure that young people have a seat at the table when it comes to decision making.

Youth participation and engagement is about more than the Youth Council, and there is a role for all services to take on to ensure that young people are included, listened to and their voices acted upon.

**Elli Wadsworth, Chairperson of Dumfries and Galloway Youth Council**

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## GLOSSARY

- YPES:** Youth Participation & Engagement Strategy
- DGYC:** Dumfries and Galloway Youth Council
- UNCRC:** United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child





# 2022 - 2027

## WHO IS THIS STRATEGY FOR?

The refreshed Youth Participation and Engagement Strategy 2022 – 2027 is for young people, professionals and decision makers to use.

It sets out clearly what progress we have made, our ambitions for the future, the ways in which young people can get involved and guidance for any person looking to engage with young people in Dumfries and Galloway.

This strategy has been co-produced with young people, with support and contributions provided by a range of Dumfries and Galloway Council services across all Directorates

## WHAT'S IT ALL ABOUT?

In 2018, Dumfries and Galloway Council agreed the regions first Youth Participation and Engagement Strategy (YPES) which covered 2018 – 2021. The strategy outlines our Council's commitment to listening to the voices of young people and agreed a new approach to Youth Democracy with the development of a regional elected Youth Council for young people aged 12-25 who live, work and study in D&G.

Involving young people in the development and review of priorities, plans and services, and including young people in the decision making related to services that affect them is a clear expectation of all public bodies. This commitment has been further strengthened by the upcoming incorporation of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) into Scots Law.

Dumfries and Galloway Council recognises our role in ensuring young people have the space and information required for them to become involved at every level of decision making.

## WHAT'S THE POINT?

Article 12 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) states that children and young people have the right to be listened to, and for the views shared to be taken seriously by decision makers, on the issues that affect them.

There are recognised and evidenced benefits to meaningfully involving children and young people when it comes to decision-making at an individual and strategic level.

The goal of our youth democracy structures is to reduce the gap between **policy intention and practice reality**. These structures exist to ensure that young people can influence and shape services.

**Dumfries and Galloway Council's commitment is clear:**

- We will ensure 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 are given choices to actively and meaningfully get involved in the decisions that affect their lives
- Act on the views of young people by reviewing and changing Council services as required

Head to page 11 to find out about where this strategy fits in with other policy.

**"CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE HAVE THE RIGHT TO BE LISTENED TO, AND FOR THE VIEWS SHARED TO BE TAKEN SERIOUSLY BY DECISION MAKERS, ON THE ISSUES THAT AFFECT THEM"**

# WHAT DO WE MEAN BY PARTICIPATION AND ENGAGEMENT?

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 (1-3) are classed as non-participation and there are no benefits to young people or decision makers in participating in these.

It is important to recognise that different types of decision making may not allow for Youth Initiated Leadership or Youth Initiated Partnerships to fully occur due to the statutory duties, governance arrangements and processes in place. However, that does not mean that meaningful participation and engagement cannot take place.

ON PAGE 12 THERE IS A CHECKLIST OF QUESTIONS THAT HAS BEEN DEVELOPED BY DGYC FOR ORGANISATIONS TO CONSIDER BEFORE INVOLVING YOUNG PEOPLE



# THE HIGHLIGHTS 2018 - 2021

From 2018 – 2021, there has been a lot of progress locally in how we involve and include young people. This section of the strategy outlines just some of the highlights that have taken place over the last 3 years.

## YEAR OF YOUNG PEOPLE

It was during the Scottish Government's Themed Year of Young People (YOYP) that Dumfries and Galloway Council approved the regions first Youth Participation and Engagement Strategy.

YOYP acted as a spotlight on the power, voice and influence of young people within Dumfries and Galloway and our region was proud to host several local and national Signature Events that brought young people together from throughout Scotland to have their voices heard.

## 10,000 VOICES

In addition to events focussed projects during Year of Young People, Dumfries and Galloway embarked on a mission to gather the voices of 10,000 young people aged 10-25 who lived, worked, or studied in the region. This research remains the largest collection of young people's voices (based on population) than any other local authority area in Scotland with 46.9% of the youth population contributing. The findings from 10,000 Voices were used as a tool to inform community planning priorities and service delivery by a wide range of partners across D&G.

## DUMFRIES AND GALLOWAY YOUTH COUNCIL

Now in its second term, there's more information about the work of Dumfries and Galloway Youth Council on page 7.

## LGBT YOUTH GATHERING

The gathering was initially a Signature event that brought together 200 LGBT young people and their allies from across Scotland. The Chameleon Youth Steering Group was formed as a result of the 2018 event and since then the group have gone on to deliver an annual LGBT Gathering for young people in Dumfries and Galloway.

## ROOTS ACTIVIST AND VOLUNTEER GATHERING

An event that focussed on providing young people with the opportunity to develop their activist and volunteer skills. The ROOTS event has been committed to be delivered bi-annually with Dumfries and Galloway Youth Council taking the lead in the programming of the gatherings.

## YOUTH ACTION GROUP

A participatory budgeting project with young people at the centre. The Youth Action Group are responsible for the delivery of the project which has seen £120,000 invested in local youth groups, projects and events across all 12 Ward areas that aim to address the issues highlighted through 10,000 Voices.

## #WE CARE

An event for care experienced young people, organised by the Listen2Us Youth Advocacy group. Using the infrastructure from Youth Beatz, #WeCare took place for the first time in June 2019. The event brought together young people from Stranraer to Langholm who had lived experience of care.

The programme for the day was a combination of consultative and activity-based workshops that were focussed on hearing the voices of young people, and improving relationships between young people and professionals with a clear Corporate Parenting responsibility.

The event was supported by Who Cares? Scotland '1,000 Voices' Independent Care Review team with young people having the chance to share their experiences and ultimately shape the Independent Care Review. As a result of this engagement, additional events were set up by the 1,000 Voices team in partnership with the Listen2Us Youth Advocacy Group for children and young people.

## THE LEGACY OF THESE EVENTS IS EVIDENCED WITHIN THE PROMISE

## IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON YOUNG PEOPLE

In 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic impacted everyone and everything. Dumfries and Galloway Youth Council, supported by a wide range of Council and Third Sector partners led the way in gathering the experiences of young people in Dumfries and Galloway through the 'Impact of COVID-19 on Young People in D&G' research.

The consultation was live for a 3-week period with just over 530 young people sharing their experiences and concerns in this time. The findings were turned around by DGYC within 2 weeks with information then shared with decision makers at every level to inform their planning and service delivery.

## YOUNG WOMEN'S NETWORK

a network for young women in the region, providing safe places to talk about their lives, and address the issues they are facing and take positive action to address these issues.



# OUR STRUCTURES

We are proud to have two key youth democracy structures that young people can get involved in directly; Dumfries and Galloway Youth Council and Dumfries and Galloway Champions Board Project

## DUMFRIES AND GALLOWAY YOUTH COUNCIL (DGYC):

DGYC was established on 1st April 2019 and is a group made up of 35 young volunteers who have been elected by their peers to speak up on behalf of young people. Elections take place every 2 years with any young person aged 12-25\* who lives, works or studies in Dumfries and Galloway able to stand as a candidate. There are 3 types of role on the Youth Council:

### 24 WARD YOUTH COUNCILLORS

2 young people are elected per Ward area to represent their local community. This includes working with young people through secondary schools, youth groups and community organisations.

### 7 NOMINATED YOUTH COUNCILLORS

1 young person is elected per nominated group to represent a community of interest (marginalised group). There are 7 nominated representatives in total covering; care experienced young people, young carers, young people with additional support needs and disabilities, young parents, gypsy / traveller young people, young people with ethnic minority identities and LGBT youth. Their role includes working with Council and Third Sector services that provide targeted support for marginalised young people.

### 4 MEMBERS OF THE SCOTTISH YOUTH PARLIAMENT (MSYP)

2 young people are elected per Scottish Parliamentary constituency. Their role is to work alongside young people in their constituency, in partnership with Ward and Nominated Youth Councillors, and represent the views of young people on a national level.

\*Candidates for the Scottish Youth Parliament roles must be aged 14 – 25.

Young people elected to Dumfries and Galloway Youth Council:

- Meet weekly online and bi-monthly in person
- Lead on the delivery and planning of a regional Young Activist and Volunteer gathering
- Work alongside Elected Members on a Ward level at least 3 times per year
- Lead an annual Joint Full Council meeting themed around young people
- Participate in an annual Joint Community Planning Partnership Board meeting themed around young people
- Report their progress to Dumfries and Galloway Council's Communities Committee yearly
- Represent the Youth Council on Dumfries and Galloway Council's:
  - Education, Skills and Learning Committee
  - Area Committees
  - United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) Member-Officer Working Group

In addition to the above, the Modern Apprentice for Youth Democracy has a role to represent the opinions, priorities and voices of young people on behalf of Dumfries and Galloway Youth Council on the following strategic partnerships and forums:

- South of Scotland Regional Economic Partnership
- Young Person's Guarantee Partnership
- Third Sector Dumfries and Galloway's Children and Young People Forum

The Youth Council generally has an interest in a broad range of issues that affect young people including:

- Mental Health & Well-being
- Transport
- Young People's Rights (Involving them in decision making)
- Sport & Leisure Opportunities
- Improving Parks & Outdoor Spaces
- Libraries & Museums
- Climate Change & Environmental Issues
- Creative Opportunities (Art, Music, Drama)
- Sexual Health Information & Access to Services
- Support for Young People to do with Alcohol, Drugs & Gambling
- Money, Budgeting & Independent Living
- Education (High School, College & Uni)
- Employment Opportunities & Support
- Support for people with Minority Identities inc. accessibility

Each term of the Youth Council, they will use the results from 10,000 Voices consultation as a starting point to engage with young people in their local communities to find out what they want to see achieved for young people.

During the lifetime of this strategy, there will be Youth Council Elections taking place on a two-year cycle with new cohorts of young volunteers elected in November 2023, 2025 and 2027.



# CHAMPIONS BOARD PROJECT

The Champions Board Project is the overarching term used to describe the engagement between care experienced young people and Senior Officers and Elected Members through the targeted services delivered by Council Youth Work Services for care experienced young people aged 12-25 throughout Dumfries and Galloway.

'Care experienced' are words used to describe children and young people who are (or have been at some point in their life) in kinship (raised by grandparents, aunts and uncles or family friends), foster, residential or secure care. It also includes people who are (or have been) looked after at home meaning they have extra support from social work and have a compulsory supervision order - Who Cares? Scotland

The Listen2Us Youth Advocacy Group is a group of young people with lived experience of care (sometimes referred to as care experienced young people or looked after children and young people) – it's open to any young person who is interested in getting involved and there's no referral or election process to join the group.

## THEY AIM TO:

- Make sure that more young people know about and understand their rights
- Challenge people's perception of young people
- Increasing awareness about the barriers faced by young people
- Speak up on behalf of young people and work with decision makers to improve how services are delivered and making them more accountable to young people
- Be an opportunity for young volunteers to develop their confidence, skills and leadership skills

## THEY DO THIS BY:

- Holding an annual event (previously delivered as the #WeCare event) for care experienced young people across the region to get involved in. The programme is co-designed by young people and professionals with a Corporate Parenting responsibility.
- Having Champions Board Meetings twice a year with Senior Officers, Leaders and Elected Members whose job it is to deliver on Corporate Parenting responsibilities. The purpose of these meetings is to bring together young people who access services with the 'big bosses' to give young people the opportunity to be heard by the highest levels of decision makers in Dumfries and Galloway.

In addition there will be 6 monthly check ins between the Listen2Us Youth Advocacy Group and the below groups to make sure young people have a clear way to communicate with professionals, learn more about changes to service delivery and have the opportunity to challenge the progress of:

## THE PROMISE PARTNERSHIP

This group is responsible for Dumfries and Galloway's approach to delivering on The Promise for Children and Young People. There will be 2 joint sessions per year between the Partnership and the Listen2Us.

## THE CORPORATE PARENTING GROUP

This group is responsible for ensuring services and organisations with Corporate Parenting duties under the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 work collaboratively to meet the needs of 'Looked After' children and young people in Dumfries and Galloway. There will be 1 joint session per year between the Corporate Parenting Group and Listen2Us.

Corporate Parents are the public bodies named in law as having responsibilities to children and young people who are looked after and young people who are care leavers.

The Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 says that organisations with Corporate Parenting duties have a responsibility to understand the lives of looked after children and young people, and respond to their needs as any parent should.

The Independent Care Review aimed to identify and deliver lasting change in Scotland's 'care system'. Starting in 2017, the review took place with over 5,500 children, young people and adults engaging throughout.

'The Promise' was one of several reports published in February 2020 based on the review findings and it outlines the vision for a new approach on all aspects of the care system. Scottish decision makers have pledged to #KeepThePromise and implement the recommendations made.

The Promise is relevant to all care experienced young people, not only looked after children and young people and care leavers.

# WHAT CAN PARTICIPATION & ENGAGEMENT LOOK LIKE IN DUMFRIES & GALLOWAY

Below are details of the ways that young people can get involved in Dumfries and Galloway, both within our Council and with partners. A key feature of meaningful participation and engagement is that it is voluntary with children and young people having a choice on taking part.

## INDIVIDUAL PLANNING

Involvement in decision making directly or with support through advocacy services inc. Hear4U (Barnardo's), User & Carer Involvement (UCI for 16+), Dumfries & Galloway Advocacy Service (18+) when it comes to decision making around their life and personal circumstances i.e. Children's Hearings, Health (inc. Mental Health), Education, and Housing.

## COMPLIMENTS & COMPLAINTS

Using organisation compliments and complaint procedures or completing pre/post evaluations, although this is mostly re-active, it is a mechanism for young people to become more involved and have their say on their experiences with service providers directly. These interactions can and have resulted in changes to how services are delivered, promoted and evaluated.

## CONSULTATION & FOCUS GROUPS

Contributing to consultations (surveys) or focus-groups, for example the Health and Well-being Census (school pupils), 10,000 Voices, Community Conversations, Impact of COVID-19 Research, Bright Spots, Youth Council Postcard Priorities etc. that enable professionals or groups to get a clear direction on the issues impacting young people that should then inform the development of policy, strategy or priorities.

## EVENTS

Events are a key way to engage with young people in D&G, events can be put on in order to:

- Identifying issues affecting young people.
- Generate discussion and actions that would help to reduce the barriers faced by young people.
- Communicate with decision makers directly.
- Develop their skills for community action. Examples of this include the annual LGBT Gatherings, annual #WeCare Event (for care experienced young people), Youth Matters (for young people with additional support needs or disabilities), ROOTS, Youth Beatz etc.

## VOLUNTEER PROGRAMMES

A number of our partner organisations deliver young volunteer programmes that support people to become leaders, develop their skills for the future, improve relationships between young people and organisations, and awareness of key issues affecting the community through peer education. This includes Police Scotland Young Volunteers (PSYV), Scottish Fire and Rescues Youth Volunteer Scheme.

## PANELS & VOTING

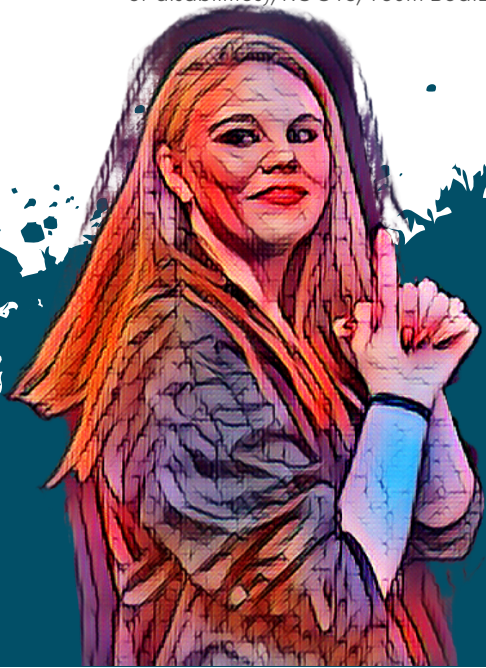
Voting and youth representation on scoring panels are a regular form of participation in the region too through Council and Third Sector organisations. For example, in Youth Council or Scottish Youth Parliament Elections, or through participatory budgeting projects such as 10,000 Voices in Action or Tackling Poverty Participatory Budgeting.

## FORUMS, BOARDS, COMMITTEES, COUNCILS - REPRESENTATIVE ROLES

Establishing or getting involved in a forum, group or organisation that aims to represent the opinions, needs or aspirations of people (or young people specifically) on issues relevant to their community. This could be to campaign for improvements, advocate on behalf of a marginalised group, highlight a particular issue, take action or become involved in a decision-making process.

Examples of this include Champions Board Project and Listen2Us Youth Advocacy Group, D&G Youth Council, Pupil Councils, Tackling Poverty Reference Group, CAMHS Participation Group, DG Voice, Student Associations, Community Councils, Citizens Panels, as well as Trusts, Initiatives and Organisations with steering groups, boards or user-forums etc.

**This should always be voluntary, with people signing up to participate, being nominated or to participate or being elected to participate.**



# WHO IS RESPONSIBLE?

Whilst responsibility for the lead support to our Youth Democracy structures sits with the Youth Work Service, there is a wide range of work taking place out-with these structures to ensure that young people engaging with services are involved in the planning, development and review stages at a service level. All Council services have a role to play.

## EVERYONE HAS A RESPONSIBILITY TO PROMOTE AND ADVANCE CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S RIGHTS TO BE HEARD

### EDUCATION

How Good Is Our School? (4th edition) is the national framework used by schools for self-evaluation and improvement. The involvement of children and young people is not optional when it comes to improvement planning and whilst there's no set way to determine how students, parents, carers and teachers are involved, the How Good Is Our School framework is clear that good self-evaluation and improvement planning must involve children and young people and the wider school community.

All 16 secondary schools also have in place a pupil voice or student council forum with a commitment from Education services centrally to create a regional Pupil Council Charter with students that outlines the role, responsibility and influence of Pupil Councils.

Funding has also been committed for every primary and secondary school in Dumfries and Galloway to gain UNICEF's Rights Respecting Schools accreditation. There are 3 levels to the Rights Respecting Schools programme:

- Bronze demonstrates that schools are Rights Committed.
- Silver demonstrates that schools are Rights Aware.
- Gold demonstrates that schools are Rights Respecting.

### CHILDREN'S SERVICES STRATEGIC PLANNING PARTNERSHIP

The multi-agency Children's Services Strategic and Planning Partnership are committed to the involvement of children and young people.

They have changed how they work to make sure it is inclusive of children, young people's and families experiences and voices. Work is already underway to develop the new Children's Services Plan for 2023-2026 with young people involved at every level - from the design, development and review of services.

### EMPLOYABILITY AND SKILLS PARTNERSHIP

The employability and skills service, in collaboration with the wider Employability and Skills Partnership have made the commitment to involve young people from the design through to the review stages of service delivery.

The partnership carries out regular research including focus groups with young people to identify areas for improvement in how young people access services.

### CHILDREN & FAMILIES SOCIAL WORK

Children and young people who are care experienced or looked after have ongoing contact with children and families social work services. Children and young people are included in all aspects of assessment, care planning and support. The service does this by having conversations with children and young people without professional jargon.

Support plans are regularly reviewed in a way that includes children and young people with their experiences and views used to plan future support. Children and young people who are looked after are able to access advocacy services if they want or need an advocate. An advocate is a person who supports a child or young person to express their experiences, opinions and their goals to the people who make decisions i.e. Children's Hearings.

There has also been a commitment to create a specific Youth Justice engagement strategy which will be co-produced with children and young people engaging with Youth Justice.

In 2022, Dumfries and Galloway Council was a pilot area for the Bright Spots survey. Bright Spots is focussed on learning from looked after children and young people, and care leavers, experiences of the 'care system' and using this data to inform all strategic and service level planning. The 'Our Life, Our Care' surveys for children and young people aged 4-18 had a response rate of 62%, and the 'Our Life, Beyond Care' survey for care leavers up to the age of 26 had a response rate of 43%. The findings will be used to shape services delivered with children, young people and care leavers moving forward.

The Bright Spots findings will be embedded within improvement plans and service priorities, with young people having the opportunity to find out more about the work undertaken and scrutinise progress through the Listen2Us group.

### CHILDREN'S RIGHTS AND WELLBEING IMPACT ASSESSMENT

The Child Rights and Wellbeing Impact Assessment (CRWIA) is a tool that organisations and services can use to identify, research, analyse and record the anticipated impact of any proposed law, policy or measure on Children's Rights and well-being. Our Council is reviewing how we can integrate this into our Impact Assessment process

A CRWIA should be used on all new legislation and policy that impacts on children, not just children's services.



# THE POLICY CONTEXT

Below is a break-down of where our approach, outlined within this strategy, fits in with **local** and **national** policies, strategies, priorities, and legislation.

## NATIONAL

### CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE (SCOTLAND) ACT 2014

The Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 put the UNCRC into a Scottish statute for the first time. It encourages Scottish Ministers and public bodies to consider children's rights and requires them to prepare reports on what they are doing to progress children's rights – this includes developing ways of working that ensure rights are understood by children and young people.

This YPES strategy outlines the key engagement work undertaken by Dumfries and Galloway Council in relation to Article 12 of the UNCRC.

### GETTING IT RIGHT FOR EVERY CHILD (GIRFEC)

Getting It Right For Every Child (GIRFEC) is the national approach to how services work with children, young people and their families to make sure they are involved, informed and at the centre. The SHANNARI well-being tool includes 8 indicators including:

- Respected – being involved in and having their voices heard in decisions that affect their life, with support where appropriate.
- Responsible – having opportunities and encouragement to play active and responsible roles at home, in school and in the community, and where necessary, having appropriate guidance and supervision.
- Included – having help to overcome inequalities and being accepted as part of their family, school and community.

### CURRICULUM FOR EXCELLENCE

Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) is the national curriculum framework that helps our children and young people gain the knowledge, skills and attributes needed for life in the 21st century. The CfE has 4 main ambitions for children and young people to become:

- Successful learners
- Confident individuals
- Responsible citizens
- Effective contributors

### NATIONAL YOUTH WORK STRATEGY

The 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.

An ambition of the strategy is to put young people at the heart of policy with a requirement for Youth Work providers to develop and support participative approaches that empower young people to engage in decision making.

## LOCAL

### CHILDREN'S SERVICES PLAN

The 2020–2023 Children's Services Plan has a clear vision for all children and young people to be "Safe and achieve their full potential. We will listen to children, young people and their families and work together to make sure they get the right help at the right time."

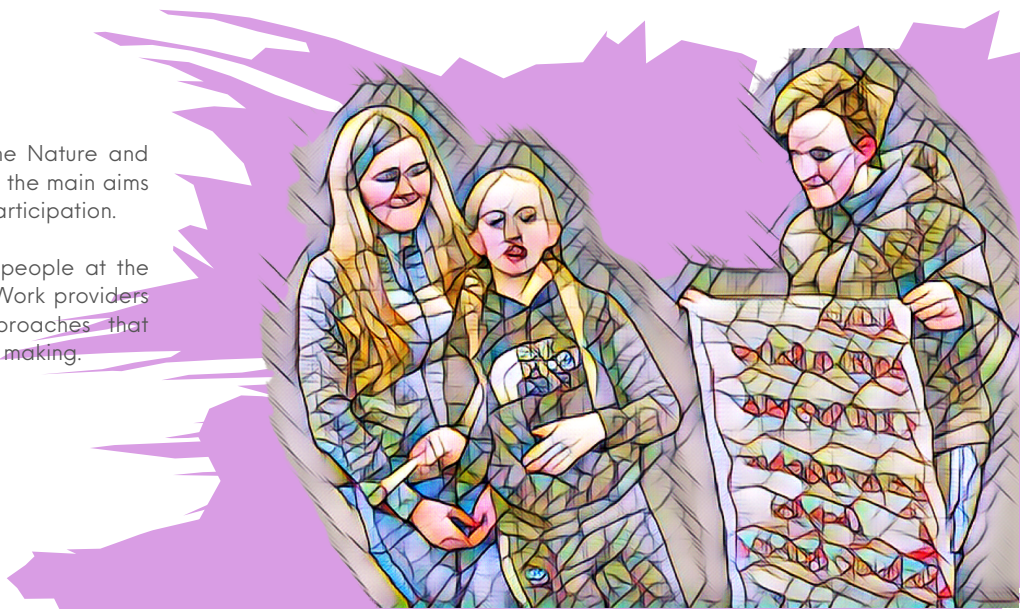
Engagement with children, young people and families is a fundamental feature of the Children's Services Plan with the new plan for 2023 – 2026 adopting a more pro-active approach in working with children, young people and families from the initial planning stage.

### COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY

The YPES sits underneath Dumfries and Galloway Council's over-arching Community Engagement Strategy and directly contributes to the following objectives:

- **Objective 1:** To ensure our decision making structures and processes are understood and accessible for individuals and communities.
- **Objective 2:** To increase opportunities for individuals and communities to participate and engage in our Council's services and projects.
- **Objective 3:** To provide opportunities for individuals and communities to engage with Elected Members at a local and strategic level.
- **Objective 4:** To review and implement effective engagement opportunities for Community Councils, MSPs, MPs and MSYPs.
- **Objective 5:** To provide support for those seldom heard to enable them to be involved in our participation and engagement opportunities
- **Objective 6:** To improve the quality of engagement activity across all Council services.

At the time of writing this strategy, the Council was in the process of agreeing new Council priorities and strategic plans.





# HOW TO GET YOUNG PEOPLE INVOLVED IN DECISION MAKING

This checklist was created by Dumfries and Galloway Youth Council and is intended to be used by organisations, services or decision makers looking to involve young people in service planning.

- What is the ask? Is it a one-off or regular, longer term commitment, and is it an appropriate ask for a volunteer.
- What is the relevance to young people, and can young people's views change things? Will they have voting power?
- Why do you want a young person (or young people) to be involved? Is it because the group doesn't have youth representation, is it because you have been told to? Is it because there is a meaningful role for them to fulfil?
- Is everyone else in attendance there in a paid capacity? How many attendees would volunteer to participate if they were not there as part of their job? Is there a way to contribute without attending a meeting or could a worker attend on behalf of young people?
- Are there travel expenses or transport available?
- Have young people already communicated their views? How much time has passed and what has changed since this information was last gathered?
- Are the group prepared to challenge young people, or be challenged by young people?
- What is your expectation? Having a young person attend a meeting or event does not automatically mean that the views of young people have been included, is there a requirement to consult before taking part, if yes, how far in advance will the information be shared?
- Who are the right people to ask? Is it a youth democracy group, young people within your own organisation, young people who you want to engage but don't currently work with or all of the above?
- Is the time, venue and format appropriate? Is there a way to have an input remotely? Is there any movement in when and where the meeting takes place?

## 7 GOLDEN RULES OF PARTICIPATION

Scotland's Commissioner for Children and Young People (SCCYP), alongside children and young people, established these 7 Golden Rules to remind adults of what participation means from the point of view of children and young people, and to encourage children and young people to think about what they need from adults to support them to participate.

1

**Understand My Rights:** adults should learn about Children's rights and understand why it's important to listen when making decisions that affect children and young people. For children and young people, it's important that their rights are known and understood.

2

**A Chance To Be Involved:** adults should only ask for children and young people's opinions if it can make a difference. Children and young people should be able to be honest about their experiences.

3

**Remember It's My Choice:** adults should work with children and young people to make sure the ask is clear and understood. Children and young people should be aware that they can withdraw their participation at any point.

4

**Value Me:** adults should work with children and young people from the start to make sure they are part of the process. There should be honest communication between adults, children and young people about what is and isn't achievable.

5

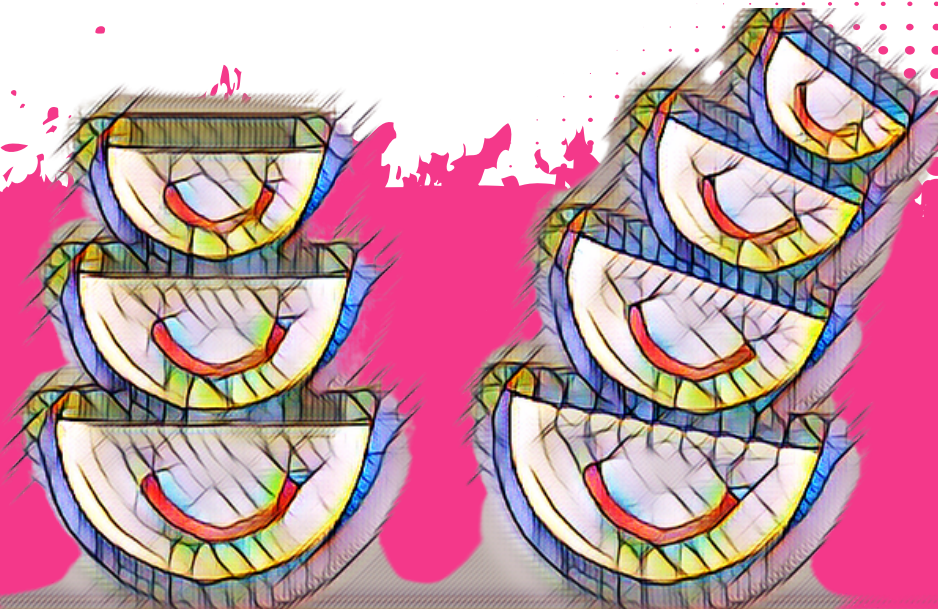
**Support Me:** adults should consider the risks involved with children and young people expressing their honest view and give them the chance to ask questions.

6

**Work Together:** adults should never lead children or young people to what they want them to say. If there's uncertainty, just ask, and if we disagree, that's okay too.

7

**Keep In Touch:** adults should be clear about the difference children and young people's views have made, or not, no matter how much time has passed.



# #youthworkchangeslives

National Performance Framework

National Youth Work Strategy

Curriculum for Excellence

Getting it Right for Every Child – Wellbeing Indicators



## Youth Work Outcomes

1. Young people are confident, resilient and optimistic for the future
2. Young people manage personal, social and formal relationships
3. Young people create, describe and apply their learning and skills
4. Young people participate safely and effectively in groups
5. Young people consider risk, make reasoned decisions and take control
6. Young people express their voice and demonstrate social commitment
7. Young people broaden their perspectives through new experiences and thinking

## Nature and Purpose of Youth Work

Young people choose to participate

The work must build from where young people are

Youth work recognises the young person and youth worker as partners in a learning process

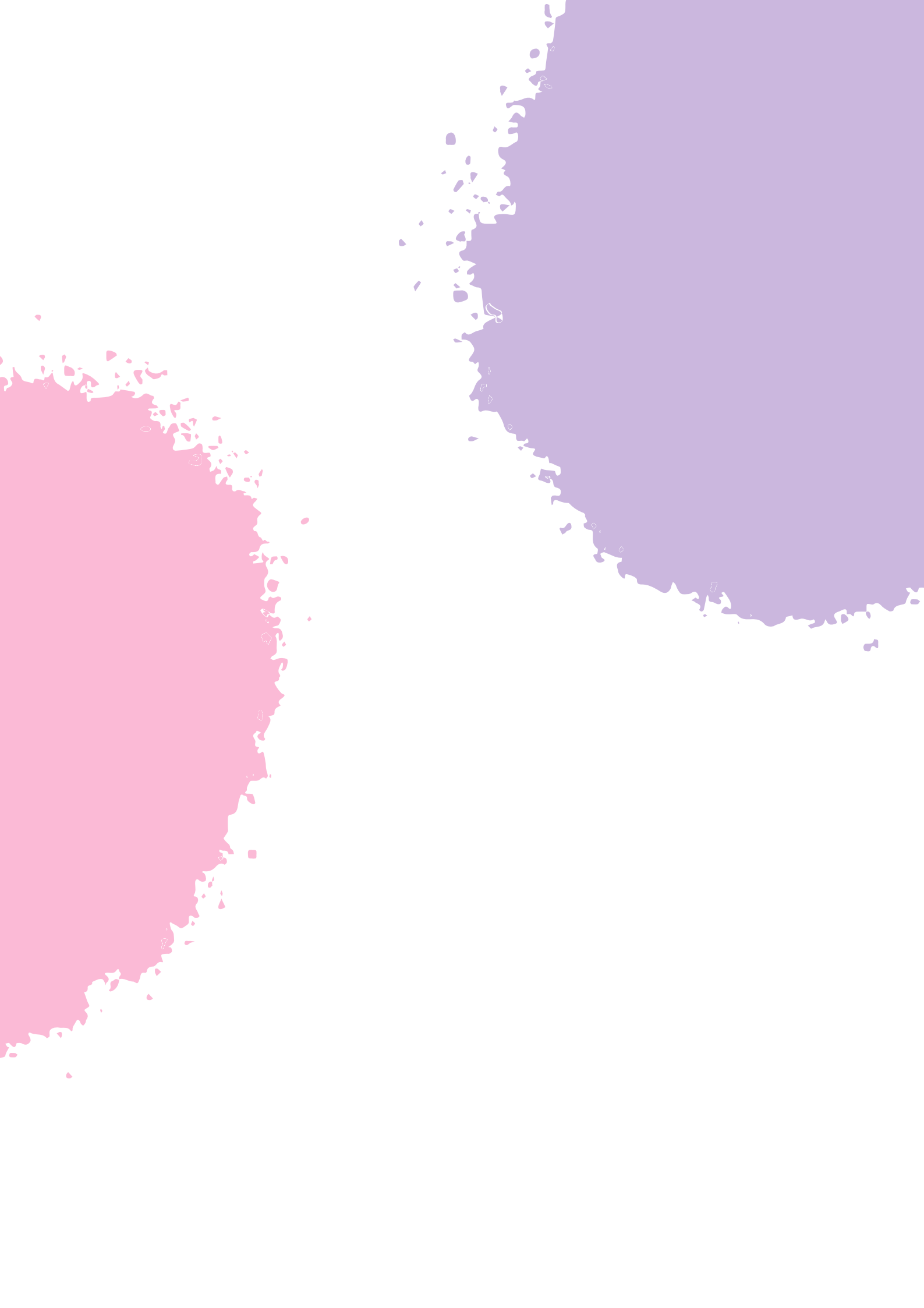


Youth Work National Occupational Standards

The Competence Framework for Community Learning and Development

Values of Community Learning and Development

Code of Ethics for Community Learning and Development



DUMFRIES AND GALLOWAY

# YOUTH PARTICIPATION & ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY 2022-2027

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON THIS STRATEGY,  
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