

# ANNUAL REPORT

01.04.24 – 31.03.25



*Enriching Young Lives*



# Welcome

Welcome to the Dumfries and Galloway Befriending Project Annual Report for 2024-2025; a year which has seen more internal changes for the charity, with the appointment of Gary Small as chair, Fiona Jessiman leaving after a period spanning over 25 years and the welcome introduction of Laura Shaw, who was appointed as co-ordinator for the Wigtownshire area.

The last year has yet again demonstrated the positive impact that our charity has delivered across the region; with an increase in referrals, undoubtedly due to our partners understanding of what we deliver; positive testimonials about our one-to-one matching process and the difference that 'early intervention' has made to enrich the lives of our young people, their family, and referrers.

Attendance of young people, befrienders, staff and external partners at group events has yet again improved social relationships, increased confidence, communication skills, and developed our young people at an important time in their lives and delivered a positive pathway for them after their befriending journey is complete.

Since the last AGM, we have recruited 13 volunteer befrienders, who all bring different personal skills to the charity. We thank them all for giving up their time to join and support us in making a positive contribution to the development of our young people.

Unfortunately, in March, all at DGBP were devastated when a current, well-respected befriender, Iain Macrory, lost his life in a road traffic collision.

The challenge for our charity in the year ahead is not only to recruit more befrienders to allow us to reduce our waiting list and engage with our young people at the earliest opportunity but also to ensure that funding is obtained, allowing us to continue to deliver the high level of service that we currently provide. Funding is now not as readily available as it was and for this reason localised, collaborative working is now more important than ever.

We would like to thank all of our employed staff since our last AGM – Fiona, Gill, Linda, Elaine, Beth and Laura, all our befrienders and all members of the Management Committee for their continuous commitment to our charity, as without you all, we would not be able to deliver this wonderful service and support the young people across Dumfries and Galloway.

Finally, we would like to thank all funding providers for their continuous financial support. Without you we would not be able to operate and provide the excellent supportive work that we deliver.



**Gary Small**  
Chair



**Robin Ferguson**  
Project Manager



# Management Committee

## TRUSTEES

**Gary Small** Chair  
**Derek Heron** Vice Chair  
**Alex Dickson** Treasurer  
**Frances Campbell**  
**Douglas Kerr**  
**Gerald Donnelly**  
**David Miller**

## REPRESENTATIVES

**Nicola Reynolds** Education  
**Joanne Service** Health  
**Laura O'Toole** Social Work  
**Susan Stewart** Befrienders

## Our aims, purpose and outcomes

### AIMS

- To enable our young people to develop, promoting health and wellbeing, while also improving their ability to form positive relationships.

### PURPOSE

- Identify, recruit, train and support adults over 18 years of age to become caring, supportive and active befrienders.
- Match the young person with a befriender to provide one-to-one support.
- Continually evaluate the young person's progress through the duration of the match.

### OUTCOMES

- Enrich the life of our young people.
- Promote positive relationships between the young person, their family, the referrer and the adult befriender.
- Improve the young person's ability to deal with life's challenges.
- Watch the young person transition positively through education and beyond.

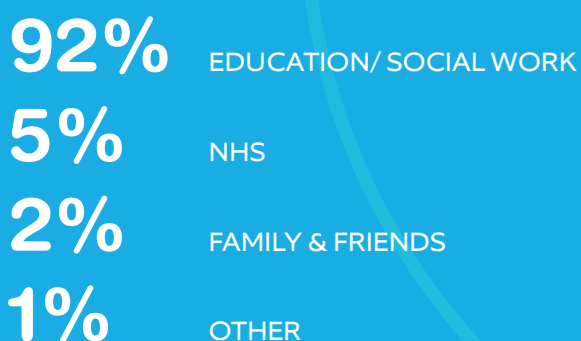


## Outputs

Our young people have enjoyed a variety of activities and events this year, including a fun filled activity day at Barcaple, visits to Horses 4 Help, Criffel Hill Climb, office-based workshops, Beach BBQ, movie nights, pantomimes and group walks.

## Referral sources

Young people are referred to the service from the following sources



## Reasons for referral

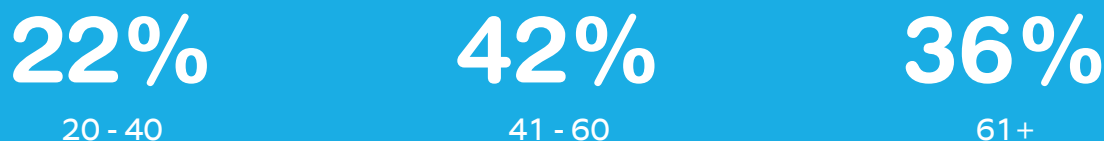
Young people are referred to the project for various reasons including low confidence, social isolation, bereavement, bullying and limited social relationship skills.







## Outcomes



Age range of our volunteer befrienders – 66 in total



## Benefits of being a volunteer befriender

-  It provides you with the opportunity to spend time getting to know a young person with the hope of making a positive difference in both of your lives!
-  You can share with your young person a wide range of fun activities either as a pair or with a wider group of other befrienders and their matches.
-  You have the security of knowing that your support of a young person is backed up by befriending co-ordinators who are always available if you need advice.
-  Being a Befriender is a privilege; it is so rewarding to help make a difference in a young person's life. It is lovely to be a part of the Befriending community which not only supports the young people but also the Befrienders.



## Case Studies

*"Befriending is a two-way thing, a partnership. The young person opens your mind to new things and shows you how to be a young person in 2024."*

**Befriender**

*"H always makes me laugh. She is kind, caring and a joy to be around. I have loved our walks. I can't believe she beats me at card games every time."*

**Befriender**

*"Throughout the duration of his befriending experience his relationship with his parents seemed to improve. It also gave him the opportunity to mix with other young people."*

**Referrer**



## Alanna and Sally

Fifteen-year-old Alanna was referred to the Project by a school nurse. She was struggling with anxiety and poor mental health and often became overwhelmed in school. As a young carer, she had a lot of responsibilities at home, which added to her becoming very socially isolated.

Alanna was matched with Sally, and they began meeting weekly. Alanna very quickly responded to Sally's care, kindness and acceptance. Sally provided a safe space for Alanna to speak about her concerns, her interests as well as just having fun together. As an active, outdoor person, Sally introduced Alanna to walking in forests and beaches, discovering that being in nature helped to calm her down. They also enjoyed baking, crafts and creating a scrapbook of their activities. Alanna gradually felt confident enough to participate in a few small group events. She and another young person got on well, chatting throughout and bonding and creating a friendship over their very niche shared interests.

As the match came to an end Sally commented that "Alanna is more settled, lighter, more smiley and laughs more easily". She thinks that Alanna is more confident and more resilient. While she still feels low at times, overall, she copes better. Alanna described her befriending experience as "having a great friend you can hang out with, talk to and have a nice time with."

*"A great service for your child to get to do things they haven't done before and explore their interests on a 1-2-1 basis"*

**Parent**





## Ella and Hazel

Ella was referred to the project when she was in primary 7. Ella had a diagnosis of ASD and spent most of her spare time in her room at home. Ella's teacher felt she would benefit from having someone to talk to and to spend time out of her house. Ella met with her befriender, Hazel and quickly discovered their favourite activity together was to go to a café and do some art.

Quite early in the match, Ella was diagnosed with Type 1 Diabetes. This was a huge shock for Ella, but she managed to slowly learn to deal with injecting herself with insulin and counting her carbohydrates. Hazel was not fazed by this diagnosis and provided Ella with support. When they started seeing each other again they took it slowly but eventually Ella's confidence grew. Having a befriender helped Ella's independence in a gentle and supportive way.

During all of this, Ella transitioned from Primary 7 into secondary school. Ella was very apprehensive about this change as she worried about moving between classes, in particular navigating the stairs. Hazel and Ella started attending the befriending office more so Ella could get used to using stairs. By the end of the match, she was happy to walk up and down the stairs by herself with no support. This small goal increased Ella's confidence and enjoyment of secondary school.

*"Befriending helped me get back outside and doing things. After Covid I just wanted to stay inside but my befriender encouraged me to go out."*

Young Person

*"It's very special and valuable - can make a difference to the child and family's experience."*

Parent

*"My befriender is lovely, and I would describe her by using all the positive adjectives in the dictionary"*

Young Person

## Sophie and Julie

Sophie had moved from Glasgow and was struggling to make friendships. With a complex medical background and significant developmental delays, SC was a prime candidate for a Befriending match.

Referrer and Headteacher said, "She is a lovely girl who can tend to have a glass half-full type of perspective but with positive praise and attention can easily be motivated."

Sophie is an only child who lacked experiences due to financial concerns within the family home. She had very low self-esteem and lacked confidence.

The aim of the match was to help improve her coping strategies, increase her self-confidence and to support her through move to High School.

She was matched with Befriender Julie, a very experienced Primary Teacher who is currently on Secondment in another role which has given Julie time to volunteer.

Julie is warm and funny but also firm and fair which is exactly what is required to be a befriender, demonstrating patience, understanding and willingly giving her time to others.

Following Befriending, Sophie has successfully moved to the High School, her outlook is more positive and she communicates well with peers and adults. Sophie is also now part of a Curling Team, which is as a direct result of attending a group outing with Julie and the Befriending Project.





# Financial information



Statement of financial activities for the year ended March 31st 2024

Income	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	Total funds 2025
Donations	£7,394	–	£7,394
Grants receivable	£147,302	£47,500	£194,802
Other trading activities	£408	–	£408
Investment income	£5,593	–	£5,593
<b>Total income</b>	<b>£160,697</b>	<b>–</b>	<b>£208,197</b>
Expenditure	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	Total funds 2025
Raising funds	£24,172	–	£24,172
Charitable activities	£134,033	£50,856	£184,889
Governance	£2,593	–	£2,593
<b>Total expenditure</b>	<b>£160,798</b>	<b>£50,856</b>	<b>£211,654</b>
Net income / expenditure	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	Total funds 2025
Movements in funds	(£101)	(£3,356)	(£3,457)
Funds brought forward	£202,559	£3,884	£206,443
<b>Total funds forward</b>	<b>£202,458</b>	<b>£528</b>	<b>£202,986</b>

A full breakdown of our accounts are available online or upon request to the charity.



# Thank you

Everyone at Dumfries and Galloway Befriending Project would like to thank all our supporters and funders for their continued support.



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 D&G Befriending Project



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