



## **YouthLink Scotland Statement on Disability Assistance in Scotland**

1.

### **Introduction**

YouthLink Scotland is the national agency for youth work. We are a membership organisation, representing regional and national youth organisations from the voluntary and statutory sectors. We champion the role and value of youth work and represent the interests and aspirations of our sector. Youth work is part of the wider grouping of informal and non-formal learning which is known as Community Learning and Development. Our sector has a workforce in excess of 75,000 – including over 70,000 adult volunteers. We reach in excess of 380,000 young people in youth work opportunities each week. YouthLink Scotland supports the submissions made by individual members of the organisation.

2.

This consultation asks questions on whether the policy intent set out in the Scottish approach to Disability Assistance will meet the needs of the children and adults it is intended to help. We agree that Delivering Disability Assistance gives Scotland an opportunity to have a positive impact on many young people who contribute significantly to our communities.

3.

YouthLink Scotland is supportive of removing barriers to help people secure the financial support that they need to contribute towards their daily existence. We note the Scottish Government's intention to achieve a social security system in Scotland that treats people with dignity, fairness and respect.

4.

We are content to defer to the experience of the members of the Disability and Carers Benefits Expert Advisory Group (DACBEAG), the Ill Health and Disability Benefits Stakeholder Reference Group and individuals who shared their experiences of navigating the disability benefits system through the Scottish Government's Experience Panels in advance of this consultation.

5.

### **Young People and Disability Assistance in Scotland**

We seek assurances that where there are system changes, this is communicated appropriately and timeously with those concerned to minimise any anxieties for young people. This will help disabled young people live a life of their choosing, participate equally in society, with the support they need.

6.

The success of any plan should be measured alongside wider proposals in this area so we are accountable to Scotland's disabled people. This should include explicit reference to the role of the youth work sector in advancing disability equality, and in particular, in supporting people through key transitions in their lives - especially from school into volunteering and work.

7.

We urge policy consistency with The Scottish Government Delivery to 2021 for the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, Scotland's Learning Disability Strategy, and the Scottish Strategy for Autism, the Fairer Scotland Action Plan, the Mental Health Strategy for Scotland, and the British Sign Language National Plan.

8.

Scotland's Social Security system should be delivered in a way that is rights-based and helps meet the additional living and mobility costs of disabled young people, treating them with dignity and respect throughout the process.

9.

We recommend that the system is reviewed soon after its inception and that it is tested by the broadest range of young disabled people to ensure the system is working effectively for them.

**ENDS**