



## Sam – age 20

### GOVAN YOUTH INFORMATION PROJECT

#### Having and Being a Role Model

I was 13 when I first started volunteering at GYIP. I could see young people I knew going down the wrong way - I saw where bad decisions could lead you and I wanted to do something to change that. Volunteering felt like a choice. It was a chance to be more grown-up.

To begin with, my job was just to help out at sessions - I didn't have to solve any problems - just look out for the younger ones and be there to listen to them. Slowly, I began to take on more, first supporting sessions alongside the youth workers and then leading my own sessions with my own groups. The youth workers helped me to take small steps forward as a volunteer, but they didn't put a lot of stress on my back. They let me go at my own pace. They never told me what to do but they watched over me. It's not that they were doing it for me, but they'd give me feedback, and that gave me motivation to keep trying and improving.

Gradually, I felt confident to talk more. I had to open up if I was going to lead a group of young people through a session! In school, I would have been the last person to do that. But here, you're not doing it for a mark in a test, you're doing it to help other young people to learn, so it makes you want to do it.

My experience of volunteering made me think hard about the decisions I was making for myself. I thought more about the consequences of my decisions and how my behaviour was coming across. I tried to be reliable. Working with the youth work team, I started to see adults as people who are there to help you. And then, when I started volunteering, I wanted to be helpful in my relationships with young people too. The experience of volunteering made me look at myself and the young people I was supporting at the same time.

From the very beginning, when I started attending GYIP in primary school, the youth workers made me feel like they believed in me. They've known me since I was young, so we're very close. Over the years, they've shown me I can do things that I never thought I could.