



## Alyssa – age 16

### DUNDEE CITY COUNCIL YOUTH WORK

#### HER CONFIDENCE BOUNCES ONTO ME

I was 12 or 13 when I first started coming along to youth work activities. I got involved regularly during the Covid lockdown – a youth worker contacted me at home and I was glad to have a way of keeping connected with more people online. When the lockdowns were over, I started going regularly to the Community Centre.

When I was 15, I knew I wanted to be a volunteer, but I wasn't brave enough to ask in the beginning - my friend asked for me! Volunteering has made me a lot more confident – it's pushed me to do things that I wouldn't have done otherwise. We get opportunities to take part in regular training in Dundee. I've done training on child protection, adverse childhood experiences, dealing with challenging behaviour and vaping. I also have a food hygiene certificate I got through school that is useful for youth work sessions. We're working in areas of high deprivation, so we prepare food for the young people who come to sessions, and I like to help with that.

I want to study Community Learning and Development at uni, so I'm still at school, studying for my Highers. I think the organising and planning that I have to do as a volunteer is helping me to manage my time better in school, especially around exams. I never really used to speak in class but I've got more confident with that too – I speak a lot more now even if I'm not sure I have the right answer to something.

The youth workers here are funny and that makes everything more welcoming. It might seem like a small thing, but I've got better at taking a joke – just feeling more comfortable and having a laugh. My youth worker tells me that I'm my own worst critic, but she believes in me and that really helps. I see how confident she is in her work and I feel like somehow her confidence bounces on to me. It's the same with resilience – she never gives up on anything or anyone. I think that shows us all there's nothing to be afraid of.