



WDSG GLASGOW 2018

The World Down Syndrome Congress is coming to Glasgow, 24 – 27 July 2018



Down's Syndrome Scotland

helping people realise their potential



Down's syndrome is caused by an extra copy of chromosome 21 inside some or all of the body's cells and it is estimated that about 41,700 people with Down's syndrome live in the UK.

Approximately 700 babies a year are born with Down's syndrome in the UK - children are likely to have delays in speech and language skills which will affect their communication, interactions and education.

People with Down's syndrome have the same feelings and moods as everyone else. We can help ensure that the congress delegates experience a warm Glasgow welcome by positively including those with Down's syndrome by being aware and, above all, patient.

Below are hints and tips on how we can positively support people with Down's syndrome (Ds).

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WELCOME

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Communicating:

- Do use “People First Language”, and don’t refer to people with Ds as “Downs people”. Their disability isn’t who they are;
- Speak directly to the person, not their carer/support worker;
- Speak clearly, using short sentences and don’t assume they won’t understand you;
- Avoid using metaphors, acronyms, jargon or slang;
- Keep “Face to Face” during conversations;
- Treat people appropriately for their age;
- Allow extra time to listen, to think, and to respond;
- Using visual supports such as simple gestures, photos or real items will support their understanding of what you are saying;
- Repeat things back for confirmation and to check understanding.

Hotels and restaurants:

- Provide visual cues or pictures if you can, and use easy read format with large text, especially on menus;
- Offer to help carry trays;
- Note that there is a higher incidence of dairy intolerance and coeliac disease;
- Pointing to the items on a menu helps to support understanding;
- Offer to help with luggage;
- Ensure signage is clear and obvious (this applies especially to toilets), using internationally recognisable symbols;
- It’s helpful if you can provide toilet facilities to change someone, including a table if at all possible – the “Changing Places Initiative” is an example of good practice.

Getting Around:

- Low muscle tone, poor balance and coordination can affect walking and distance ability;
- Poor focus of the eye can cause difficulties with looking down and depth perception, such as going down stairs/ steps;
- Handrails and steps can positively support people with Ds to get in and out of taxis and on and off of buses;
- People who have Ds can often take longer to do things and can feel anxious if they are rushed;
- Allow extra time to move around physically, such as not driving off until they are in their seat with their seat belt on.

In general, don’t automatically assume that the person needs your help - offer it, but if someone refuses, don’t feel offended.