** 10.04.18**

**Glasgow welcomes 13th World Down Syndrome Congress**

Glasgow is getting set to host the 13th [World Down Syndrome Congress](http://wdsc2018.co.uk/speakers/), a global event attended by over 1200 families and people with Down’s syndrome, as well as health care practitioners, education professionals and experts at the forefront of research and best practice in the care and development of people with the condition. Hosted by [Down’s Syndrome Scotland](https://www.dsscotland.org.uk/world-down-syndrome-congress-2018/) on behalf of [Down Syndrome International (DSi)](https://ds-int.org/), the Congress takes place at the Glasgow SEC’s Scottish Event Campus between 25th-27th July.

Held every two years, the Congress provides a once in a lifetime opportunity for families, professionals and people with Down’s syndrome to access the latest medical research, educational developments and best practice related to the condition.

Congress will also offer a unique environment for families to share their personal experiences and learnings with a global community, as well as connect with people from diverse cultures, backgrounds and communities who face similar challenges and concerns.

Focusing on four core pillars; Research, Lived Experience, Practice and Performance, the congress encourages delegates to learn and share experiences through a detailed programme of over 150 plenary sessions, selected practice workshops, Meet the Expert sessions, presentations, performances and exhibitions that take place over the course of two days.

There will also be a dedicated programme for delegates with Down’s syndrome, including The Gathering, which takes place on the 24th July. The Gathering is a special day where delegates with Down’s syndrome come together to share conversations and ideas about what they each bring to their communities, how to speak up, self-advocacy and about their human rights.

This year, the Congress will host 12 plenary speakers working across the health and education sectors as well as the unique stories of parents, families and people with the condition. These include 36 year old Fiona Dawson who has Down’s syndrome and has represented the Scottish swim team at the Special Olympics since 2001; Elaine Scougal, who in 2013 gave birth to twins with Down’s syndrome and Andy Merriman, full-time author and television and radio scriptwriter, who is co-speaking with his daughter Sarah, who has Down’s syndrome. A full list of plenary speakers can be found [here](http://wdsc2018.co.uk/speakers/).

As well as being a hub for learning and development, the Congress celebrates the creative achievements of people living with Down’s syndrome through the ‘performances’ sessions, two days of art, theatre and music for delegates to enjoy.

Other highlights include a welcome civic reception hosted by The Lord Provost of Glasgow at the Glasgow Science Centre on the 25th July, ‘A Family Scottish Night’ at the Hilton Hotel on 26th July, where delegates get the chance to learn some of Scotland’s iconic ceilidh dances and a special ‘Gala Dinner’ on the 27th July at the Hilton, a formal sit down dinner that precedes the Down Syndrome International Awards ceremony.

This year’s World Down Syndrome Congress Lead Commissioners are Andrew MacIntyre, Sam Ross and Stuart Campbell, all of whom have Down’s syndrome. The commissioners play an important role in organising the event as well as developing their own leadership, event management and public speaking skills.

Back in 2014, Andrew, Sam and Stuart played an integral part in winning the bid to host the Congress in Glasgow, Sam and Stuart attended a colourful handover ceremony which took place in Chennai, India in August 2015. Andrew also took part in a special promotional film, in which he interviewed Scotland’s First Minister, Nicola Sturgeon. In the film, the first Minster explained the importance of hosting the Congress to Glasgow and the people of Scotland.

Mental Health Minister Maureen Watt said:

*“I am extremely proud that Scotland is hosting the World Down Syndrome Congress, the first time the congress has met in the UK for more than 30 years. We want Scotland to be seen as a global leader in the care and development of people with learning disabilities. Scotland’s commitment to inclusion and respect is reflected in the fact that Glasgow taxi drivers and hoteliers are enthusiastically taking part in special training to provide high quality service for people with Down Syndrome and their families ahead of the congress.”*

Pandora Summerfield, CEO of Down’s Syndrome Scotland said:

*“The World Down Syndrome Congress is one of a very few global events which brings together researchers, practitioners, children, young people and adults with Down’s Syndrome and their families to share ideas and consider not just the cutting edge developments, but how research and practice can actually improve lives.”*

To register and book tickets for the World Downs Syndrome Congress 2018, please visit [here](https://confpartners.eventsair.com/wdsc-2018/mainregistration/Site/Register) or call us on 0131 306 0120. A full conference programme can be found [here.](http://wdsc2018.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/WDSC-2018-Conference-Programme-as-at-14-March.pdf)

-ENDS-

**Organiser information**

The Congress is hosted by [Down’s Syndrome Scotland](https://www.dsscotland.org.uk/world-down-syndrome-congress-2018/) on behalf of [Down Syndrome International (DSi)](https://ds-int.org/).

DSi is a UK based international charity, comprising a membership of individuals and organisations from all over the world, committed to improving quality of life for people with Down syndrome worldwide and promoting their inherent right to be accepted and included as valued and equal members of their communities.

Down’s Syndrome Scotland are the only charity in Scotland focused solely on the needs of people with Down’s syndrome and their families. They provide information, support and services for people with Down’s syndrome, their families, carers and those with a professional interest. They also seek to improve awareness, knowledge and understanding within society.

**Press Guidelines:**

As an organisation we are very conscious about the language that we use. In the interests of accuracy, we would appreciate it if you could refer to our Press Guidelines when writing editorial:

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| --- | --- |
| **Don’t say** | **Say** |
| Down’s baby/child/person; Mongol | baby/child/person with Down’s syndrome (Ds) or who has Down’s syndrome (Ds) |
| Down’s/Downs/Down/Down’s Syndrome | Down’s syndrome |
| Suffers/ victim of Down’s syndrome | has Down’s syndrome |
| Backward/mentally handicapped/retarded/slow/mong | learning disability |
| Handicap/illness/disease | genetic condition/condition |
| The risk of having a baby with Down’s syndrome | the chance of having a baby with Down’s syndrome |
| Abbreviate as DSS (Down’s Syndrome Scotland) | DS Scotland |
| Abbreviate as DSS (Down’s Syndrome Sports) | DSSports |

**People-first language**

It is important to reiterate that we practice “people first” language. A person with Down’s syndrome is NOT a Down’s child. They are ARE a person with Down’s syndrome.

We know “people with Down’s syndrome” is a higher word count than “Down’s child”. However, you can abbreviate Down’s syndrome to Ds after the first mention of “person/child/adult with Down’s syndrome.”

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| --- | --- |
| **British English** | **American/International English** |
| Down’s syndrome | Down syndrome |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Myths** | **Facts** |
| People with Down’s syndrome are always happy and enjoy art, theatre and music. | Just like anyone else, people with Down’s syndrome are all unique individuals with different gifts, abilities and personalities. |
| People with Down’s syndrome will all have health issues. | Health conditions vary depending on the individual’s genetics and many people may not have any issues at all. |
| People with Down’s syndrome all look the same. | Certain physical characteristics can occur but people with Down’s syndrome may have some, all or none of these characteristics. People with Down’s syndrome look more like their family members than other people with Down’s syndrome. |
| People with Down’s syndrome cannot achieve normal life achievements. | Many children with Down’s syndrome attend mainstream school and many adults can live independently and hold down jobs with support. |
| Only older mums have babies with Down’s syndrome. | Although the chance of a woman having a child with Down’s syndrome increases with her age at the time of conception, 80 per cent of children with Down’s syndrome are born to women younger than 35. |
| People with Down’s syndrome will not have a long life. | People with Ds can now live into their 70s. |

**Further Information about Down’s Syndrome Scotland:**

* Down’s Syndrome Scotland (DSS) was established in 1982
* We are the only charity in Scotland dedicated solely to supporting people with Down’s syndrome (Ds) and their carers
* Down’s Syndrome Scotland provides “all through life” support nationally across Scotland
* We work to help people with Down’s syndrome reach their full potential by providing information and support to them, their families, carers and professionals at whatever age and stage of life
* We also work to influence government policy to ensure that the society in which we all live reflects the needs of people with Down’s syndrome.

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