

REGIONAL SUMMARY

SOUTH SCOTLAND

FEBRUARY 2026





ABOUT THIS SUMMARY

Dear Scotland's Future is SYP's manifesto 2026-2031. It has been developed by young people, for young people and sets out the agenda for the changes they want to see over the next five years. Based on a consultation with nearly 5,000 young people across Scotland, this summary highlights the responses from young people in South Scotland.

The region of South Scotland is based on the regional groupings used within the Scottish Parliament and contains the following constituencies:

- Ayr
- Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley
- Clydesdale
- Dumfriesshire
- East Lothian
- Ettrick, Roxburgh and Berwickshire
- Galloway and West Dumfries
- Kilmarnock and Irvine Valley
- Midlothian South, Tweeddale and Lauderdale

DEMOGRAPHICS

This summary is based on 213 responses, 50 of which were from group responses.

- 50 respondents were from a group session held in Dumfries and Galloway at a youth work session.
- The majority of individual respondents were from **Dumfries and Galloway**.
- The vast majority (97%) of individual respondents were **aged between 12-17**.
- Most individual respondents identified as **female**.

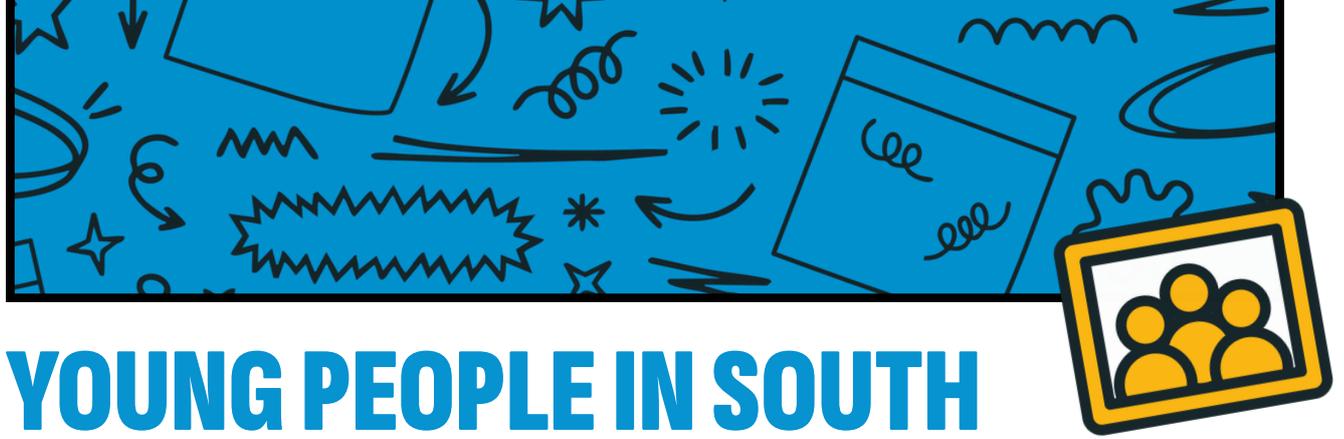




TOP 10 MOST AGREED POLICIES

The following ten policies received the highest agreement by young people in this region. Percentages were rounded to two decimal places. Note, this does not equate to being the most urgent issues for young people.

- **Reduce time for prosecution of sexual assault crimes - 94% agree**
Compared with 90% Scotland-wide
- **Barriers to accessing further and higher education - 92% agree**
Compared with 91% Scotland-wide
- **Prevention and early intervention for mental health - 91% agree**
Compared with 91% Scotland-wide
- **Respect the views of children and young people - 90% agree**
Compared with 83% Scotland-wide
- **Maintain and expand free travel for young people - 89% agree**
Compared with 87% Scotland-wide
- **NHS protected from privatisation - 87% agree**
Compared with 83% Scotland-wide
- **Misogyny as a hate crime - 87% agree**
Compared with 78% Scotland-wide
- **Address prejudice, discrimination and bullying - 86% agree**
Compared with 89% Scotland-wide
- **Universal free school meals - 86% agree**
Compared with 70% Scotland-wide
- **Inclusive youth mobility scheme - 84% agree**
Compared with 84% Scotland-wide



YOUNG PEOPLE IN SOUTH SCOTLAND SAY...

"People might be less scared to report [sexual assault] if it's over faster."

- Young person aged 14-17, East Lothian

"The current mental health services have two categories: low risk and emergency. Neither of these address root causes of mental health problems or aid young people. This gap means that young people will not receive support until they reach crisis point and have to be hospitalised. More funding is needed."

- Young person aged 18-21, Kilmarnock and Irvine Valley

"Many places aren't suitable for young people, there aren't many 'activities' so we end up just sitting. Other people also assume all teenagers are drinking/high/causing trouble, which makes us feel unwanted."

-Young person aged 14-17, Midlothian South, Tweeddale and Lauderdale

"I appreciate my bus pass as I live on the other side of town to all my friends, because of my bus pass I can go out multiple times a week without costing my mum an arm and a leg."

-Young person aged 14-17, Dumfriesshire

"It is horrible how ingrained misogyny is in our society and how little it is talked about as it affects so many women every day all because of the gender they were born as."

-Young person aged 14-17, Midlothian South, Tweeddale and Lauderdale

"I didn't have access to any sports as an 18 year old who lives in a rural town until I moved to a city for university. At home clubs are restricted to children or people who have been playing sports since they were kids."

-Young person aged 18-21, Clydesdale



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