

## The Donaldson Trust

### Video Transcript

Laura Watkins

“The Donaldson Trust has existed since 1854 and it has had many different faces over the years”

George Finnegan

“We’ve been going through quite a significant period of change for about two years, and we are entering our third year of our 10-year strategy. The biggest change is that we are moving away from the Donaldson School for the Deaf, to provide services and education to a much wider group of young people”

Laura Watkins

“We work with children and young people, and soon to be adults, with neurodiversities. Neurodiversities is a terminology agreed by people who have neurodiversities to describe themselves – the focus, and our focus, is very much on looking at what is positive about a person rather than what is negative; what they can do rather than what they can’t do; a move away from a medical model of viewing autism, aspergers, ADHD and Tourets syndrome to a much more social model where we look at differences rather than disability.”

George Finnegan

“We do believe that we give young people the best start in life, and that might not always be the case if young people are kept within a mainstream school, or they have a placement that is not suited to them. So we believe we give them the best start in life as they move through different stages of their life from childhood, adolescence and transition into adulthood we think we’ve given them the best possible preparation for the rest of their lives”.

Laura Watkins

“We have a small school that we call the Sensational Learning Centre; Sensational because most of the children who are in the school have sensory issues and our focus is on improving their experience of being in an environment in order for them to be able to learn.

We also have a new service called The Gate and that is an adult training centre, and the people who come to that service will be able to learn skills from baking, cooking, photography, animation, coding, horticulture and who knows what else? And the reason that I say that is because any of the services that we have are co-designed by the people who use them. We have a person-centred approach”

George Finnegan

“Working for an organisation like Donaldsons, we are a values based organisation and as a charity we have a purpose, and that purpose is to support young people, and now adults, to achieve what they can so they can fulfil their potential”

Laura Watkins

“Empathy is probably the most endearing characteristic that we would see when we are interviewing anyone for the organisation. We have lots of evidence to show the difference that an empathetic and a caring and supporting environment can make to someone with neurodiversities”

Kim Murphy

“I would recommend working at Donaldsons, and the reason I would recommend it is if you have a passion to make a difference in people’s lives then Donaldsons would be the place for you to come and work”

George Finnegan

“I think as long as people coming here recognise that we have a purpose, we have values and they want to be part of team that’s really making a difference – then everyone is welcome to come join us”

Kim Murphy

“I live in Linlithgow so people in Linlithgow and the local schools are supportive of us and they like to be involved in what we’re doing. The best thing about working here would probably be the children and the young people and getting to know them and seeing the difference that has been made in their lives; even just hearing them laughing, makes you feel you are involved in making a difference”

Laura Watkins

“The best thing about working at The Donaldson Trust is to hear and see the differences that we make in the lives of people who use our services”

George Finnegan

“We think it’s sector leading because we believe that our model ... we are delivering services co-produced with young people and a wide range of professionals, is at the forefront of what everyone should be doing, so we take great pride in being at the forefront of new service developments”

Laura Watkins

“We are a very ambitious organisation and we’ve set a very ambitious strategy, and our Board are fully behind this strategy and that strategy is to be the national body for neurodiversity, not only in Scotland and not only in the United Kingdom but internationally”

Kim Murphy

“Oh, definitely do have a pride to be working here and I would happily wear my lanyard going into the local community so that people do know I work at Donaldsons. People when they know that you work at Donaldsons start asking you a lot of questions about what you do and what things happen at Donaldsons”

George Finnegan

“Working here at Donaldsons certainly fills me with pride and when I look back, eventually, at what we’ve achieved I’ll look at how we transformed a well-known organisation in Scotland into a very modern, sector leading, forward organisation and we’ll look forward to growing those services in years to come – I take a real pride in that.”

Laura Watkins

“The pride that I have is to see the difference that were actually making, not just to the lives of the children and young people who use the services but to their families, their grandmothers, their aunties .. and that feedback we do get. And the difference is enduring and that’s something that we, I am personally very proud of, and we as a team are very proud of when we hear that kind of feedback”