



Introduction to Upmo

Who We Are



Upmo is a charity that provides support and opportunity to adults with learning disabilities and autism in Edinburgh and the Lothians.

Our vision is an inclusive world in which adults with learning disabilities and autism receive the respect, protection, support and opportunities they need to develop their potential and play an equal, rewarding and contributing role in society.

Upmo's mission is to develop the skills of our students and capabilities of our organisation to become recognised leaders in the provision of support and learning opportunities for adults with learning disabilities – and make a difference to their lives.

Our headquarters are in Leith, and we provide services for our students in sites across Edinburgh, Midlothian and East Lothian. Including two community cafes and four outdoor learning projects.

What We Do

We combine tailored support services delivered through a workshop structure that nurtures creativity, progresses skills, builds positive relationships and provides active learning.

Whilst at Upmo, our dedicated team endeavour to support students in reaching their individual goals and ambitions for their future.

Areas of learning activity include:

- Performing Arts
- Visual Art
- Digital & IT
- Outdoor Learning
- Employability

Through these activities, students will learn about different themes and topics and develop life skills. To provide meaningful experiences to our students, we often work in partnership

with other organisations and are proud to employ a team with a wide range of skills.

We aim to engage all students in Upmo's programme, regardless of ability, and will offer tailored support to encourage active participation and learning. Building and nurturing confidence is central to Upmo's vision for the future.

We are proud to have fostered a supportive community of staff and students over the years, and we encourage peer development and socialising while at Upmo.





Learning Activities

Our dynamic programme of workshops and activities nurture creativity and self-expression, while students work with facilitators and each other to learn new skills.

Using different mediums and themed projects, our facilitators engage students in a variety of topics.

Performing Arts

Drama

Through workshops, we encourage self-expression and build student's confidence as they learn about drama and performance techniques. Workshops span from planning, performing and spoken word produced with the students.

With our partners at Cutting Edge Theatre, we have worked on a newly commissioned project that will end with a performance by our students. Plus, this important partnership expands the skills of our drama facilitators to offer future workshop programmes.

Music

Our music workshop spaces are well stocked with a range of instruments for our students to try. Furthermore, we have custom made string instruments by one of our skilled Project Workers, which allow wider student involvement in creating harmonies. Previously, students have held public performances with our in-house band.

We are delighted to be working with Nordoff Robbins, who over the course of six months will work closely with Upmo that allows our staff and students the opportunity to work with qualified music therapists.



Visual Art

During Visual Art workshops, students participate in a variety of projects using different mediums. Using the creation of artwork, students can explore different subjects, going through three stages: researching topics or techniques, developing their ideas and producing an outcome.

Students work in a variety of media with our multi-skilled team of facilitators, spanning from sculpture, photography, textiles,

printmaking, drawing and more. Themes and topics span from exploring the eight wonders of the world, to character development for comic book making and considering environmental issues through making sculpture with recycled materials.

Previously, student artwork has been presented in exhibitions on Upmo sites, and this will continue with exciting new projects for collaborative making.





Digital & IT

We recognise the importance of digital competency in our society. In IT Workshops, students will take part in activities that teach them about new subjects using digital resources such as iPad table and Virtual Reality hardware.

Upmo's IT Workshops are held in our customised digital suites, where students can use iPads to access a selection of applications and programmes. Workshop content is tailored to student's digital capabilities, and spans from creating PowerPoint presentations to

locating different places using Google Maps and making animations.

In digital workshops, students also learn about digital photography, often visiting external sites to observe new places through their lens.

In partnership with Dynamic Earth, a group of digital students will learn the fundamentals of astronomy, the solar system and outer space using digital media. The custom course content, produced by Connect, will lead to a major public outcome.

Outdoor Learning

Through our Outdoor Learning programme students can enjoy and learn about our local environment and nature.

We currently have two dedicated Upmo Grow Garden sites, one in Jock Tamson's Garden, Duddingston and another in North Berwick. In Prestonpans and Gorebridge, we participate in maintaining the community gardens. Through Upmo Grow, students participate in the rewarding experience of growing fruit, vegetables, and flowers – with some produce being used by Upmo Eat – while

gaining knowledge of our natural world and hands-on gardening skills, all explored together with their peers and facilitators.

Students also participate in outdoor visits and activities; this can include learning about a specific topic through a visit to a place of interest, or connecting with new outdoor environments to promote wellbeing.

During Outdoor Learning, students are encouraged to be physically active and develop social skills, whilst also motivating them to be more environmentally conscious.





Employability

Employment can be an important part of participating in society. We support students who aim to enter the workplace through three initiatives: Upmo Eat, Upmo Grow and Upmo Retail, where we facilitate learning for working environments. Learning is adapted to the needs of the individual through workshops and placements.

Upmo Eat teaches students the necessary skills to work in the catering or hospitality sectors, from cooking to customer service. With thanks to our partners at Edinburgh Leisure, we currently have an established café at Leith Victoria Swim Centre, and a new branch at Drumbrae Leisure Centre.

Upmo Grow, which is featured in 'Outdoor Education', offers students the opportunity to learn hands-on skills for roles in gardening and landscaping.

Upmo Retail is a workshop in which students learn to develop new products for sale. Currently, students attend markets to sell handmade products to the public – this has included the popular Out of the Blue Christmas Market and Edinburgh Social Enterprise market. This is a developing programme that will teach students skills that apply to working in the retail sector.



“The café is amazing. I love it very much. I enjoy working at Leith Victoria Upmo Eat because I can make lots of friends and talk to customers.

I work hard serving the customers teas and coffees. I help to keep the place clean and tidy. We do our cleaning tasks. I am building my skills, confidence, eye contact and listening ears so I can listen to Lesley when I am working in the café. I am getting lots of training from Lesley.”

- Upmo Eat Student



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