

**I'm not  
laughing**

## **Matthew's Story**

I'm Matthew and I am 22 years old and I'm from Horwich.

When I was born I was diagnosed with Downs Syndrome, and also had two holes in my heart. The doctors said I wouldn't live above 2 years old – but I defied those odds.



I had open-heart surgery when I was 9 months old at Liverpool Children's Hospital. The surgery has left me with a leaky heart valve that makes me tire easily; I have also had other problems over the years.

Just because things have been tough, it doesn't mean I don't enjoy my life. In fact people say I am always smiling.

Growing up I went to our local parish church schools, and then Rumworth School.

I now help out at the local butchers, and collect empties in the pub.

I like to go out for a pint (or five) with my friends, and I've got loads of hobbies. I like playing football, swimming, and I especially like playing on my X-Box.

I have heard that people have made fun of people with disability when they go out for a drink, that's not funny.

When I go out all I want to do is enjoy myself, and maybe make new friends.

I hope my story helps people see my ability, not my disability, and makes people think that everyone can go to Bolton for a night out and enjoy themselves.

I'm not laughing.