



# Putting the "I" in Individual

Henry Fitcher and Lauren Scott

SEND Participation Team

Practice Week – May 2026



## Session schedule

- Start 12.30
- Introductions 12.30 - 12.35
- Part 1 – All About Participation 12.35 - 13.00
- Part 2 – Individual 13.00 - 13.25
- Wrap up and Questions 13.25 - 13.30
- Finish 13.30

# The SEND Participation Team

- We provide opportunities for SEND children and young people (aged 0 - 25) across Norfolk to share their opinions, in order to shape services and improve practice across the county.
- We work with children and young people in a range of settings including schools, alternative provisions, SEND events, youth groups, and our own participation groups.
- Over 30,000 SEND CYP in Norfolk, 60% increase since 2016.



Henry Fletcher  
Participation  
Officer



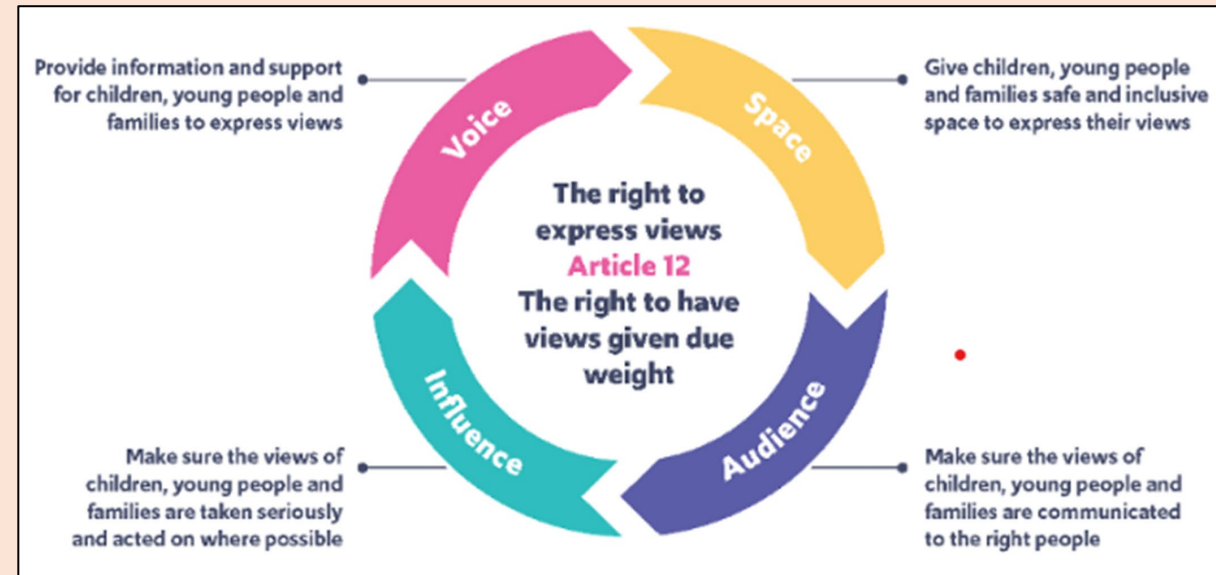
Lauren Scott  
Participation  
Officer



Karla George  
Participation  
Coordinator

# All about participation

- UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, Article 12:
  - "Every child has the right to express their views, feelings and wishes in all matters affecting them, and to have their views considered and taken seriously..."
- Our role is to facilitate SEND CYP exercising that right.
- NCC follows the Lundy Model of effective participation.
- Voice – Space – Audience – Influence



# Maslow's hierarchy of needs

A classic psychological framework from Abraham Maslow.

**BiteSize** Learning



**Self-actualization**

Finally, now our core needs are met, we're ready to pursue our deepest desire for **self-actualisation** - to become the most complete and authentic version of ourselves. With the fundamentals taken care of, we're free to act as we choose, aligned with our values and higher purpose.

**Self esteem**

Once we're secure in our social needs, our primal desires for **status and self esteem** come into play. We want to feel not only 'part of the group' - but an admired and respected part.

**Social**

If we feel safe, then our **social needs for love and belonging** come into play. We feel secure when we're part of a tribe we can trust and unworried about rejection or alienation.

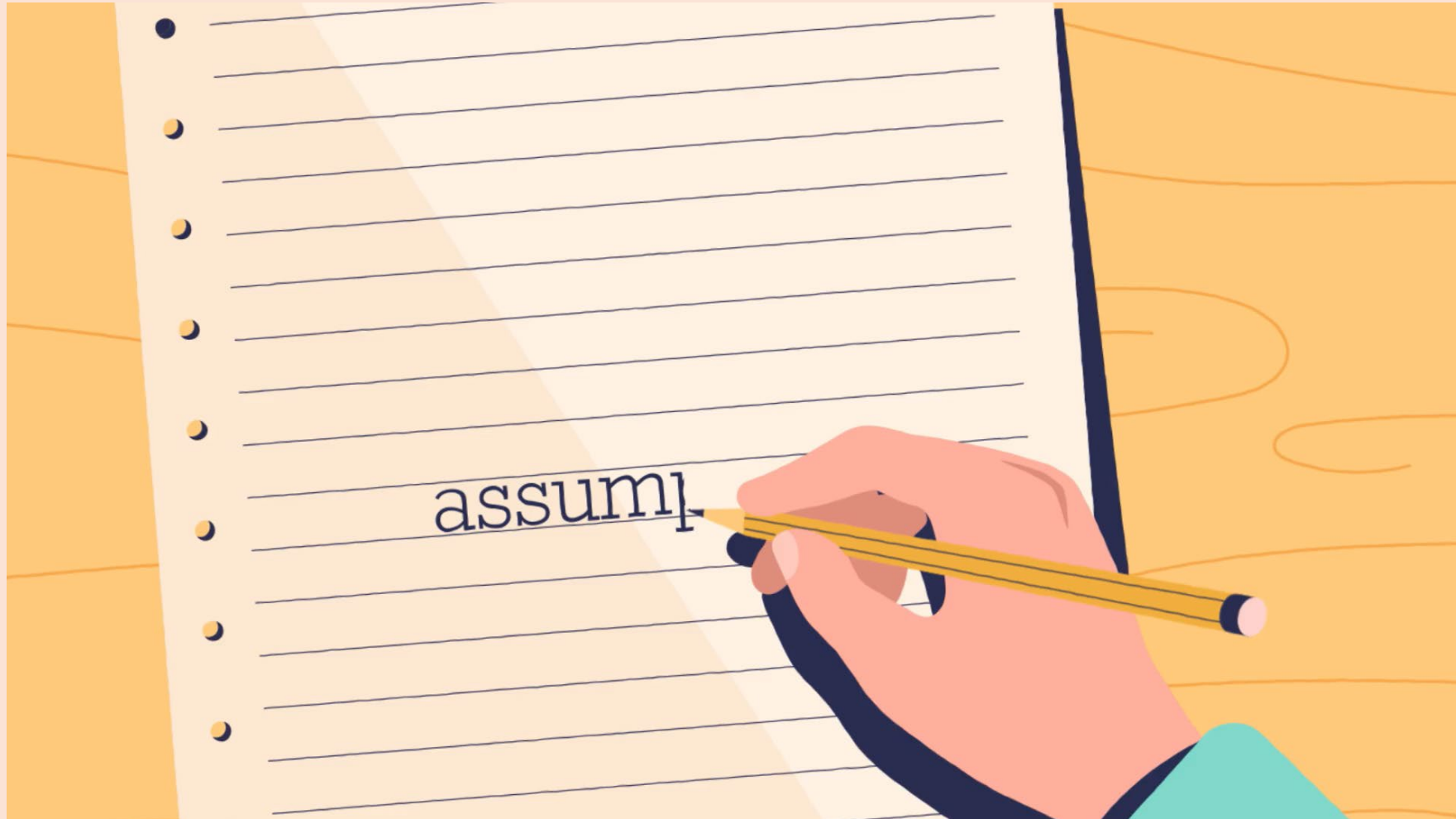
**Safety**

If we feel OK in this exact moment, we then also want to **feel safe**: confident we can avoid pain, hunger and other dangers for the immediate future.

**Physiological**

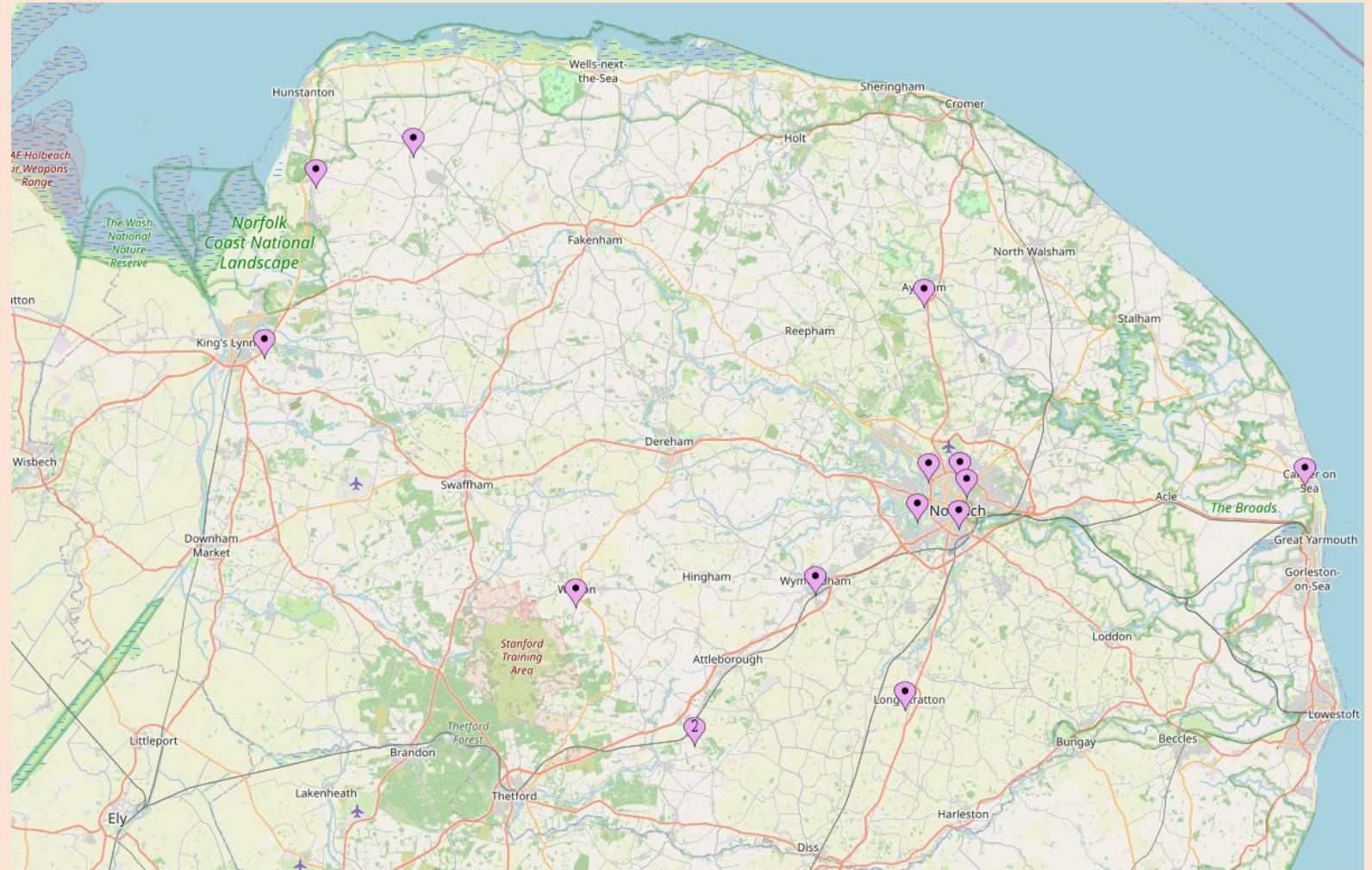
At the very least, we don't want to be hungry, thirsty, exhausted, freezing, overheating, sick, or in pain.

# The Lundy Model



# Voices Through Art

- Sessions in schools – mainstream, special, complex needs, SRBs
- Using art as a creative medium for self-expression
- Themes of artwork include: All About Me, Dream Schools, Dream Catchers





# ALL ABOUT ME

I LOVE

- Trampoline
- Kopyca

I LIKE

- Horror Movies
- Sport Basketball
- Seeing family members
- playing with friends
- I Like Seeing my iPad
- Saying 67
- Gymnastics (YAY)
- I Like some books like Horrid Henry
- Music

I HATE

- Anger
- people Annoy me
- people waking me up
- Brocity
- School
- ASUNOL
- Rats (Siblings)
- Smelly Poo
- Smelly Feet

# Voices Through Art

I like going on holiday

I have a pet Lizard called Arlo.

I like going on walks

I like going out with my mates

I like Art.

I have a dog

I Like the Summer

I love my Cousins and grandparents

I love listening to music

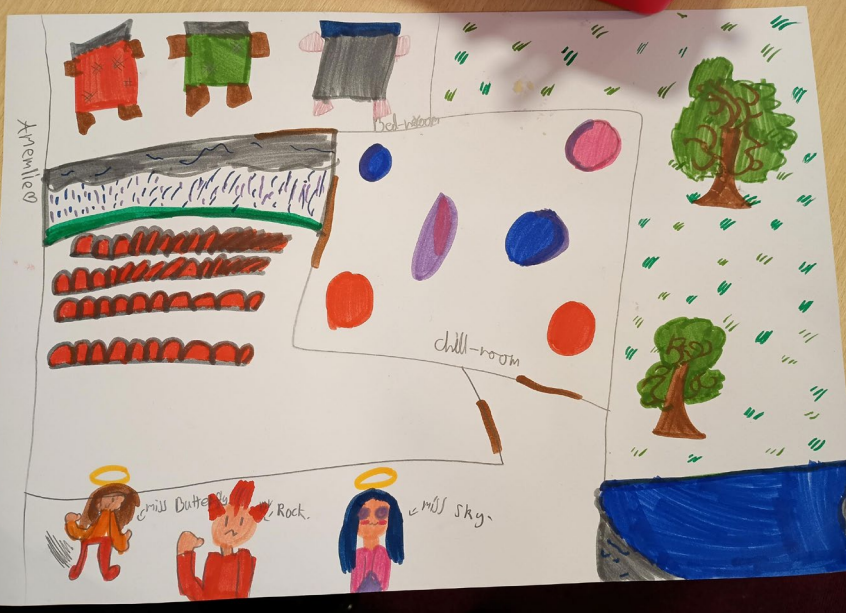
I like dying my hair

My favourite Colour is Navy blue/dark red.

I have a younger brother.

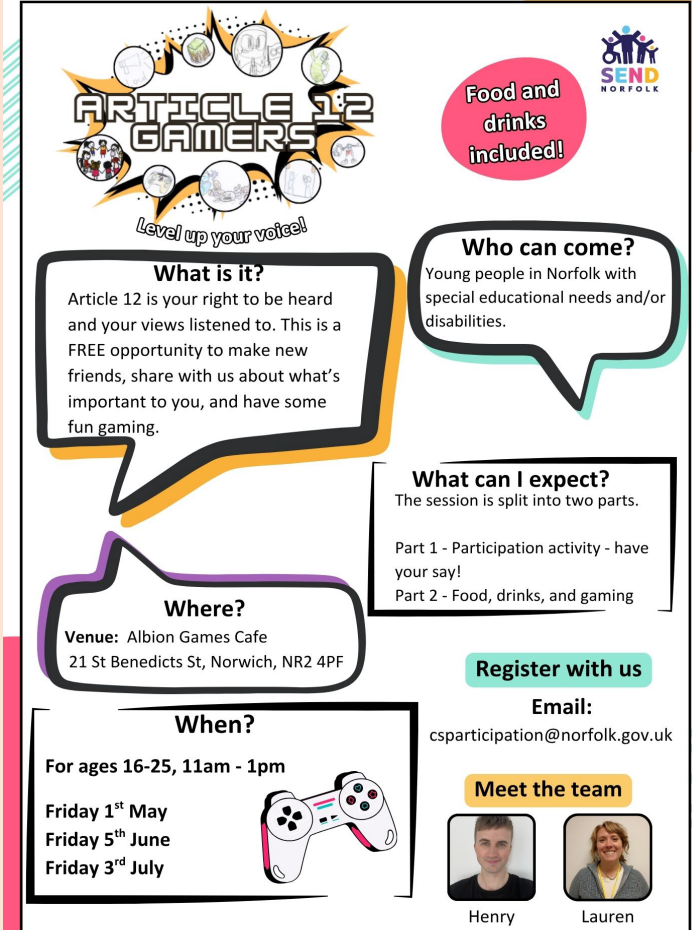
My birthday is in december

## EVIE



# Article 12 Gamers

- Group founded and run by the Participation Team
- Group sessions for 6 – 11, 12 – 16, and 16 – 25 year olds
- Participation activities
- Community space for meeting and interacting with young people with similar interests
- Opportunity to game!



**ARTICLE 12 GAMERS**  
Level up your voice!

**Food and drinks included!**

**Who can come?**  
Young people in Norfolk with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

**What is it?**  
Article 12 is your right to be heard and your views listened to. This is a FREE opportunity to make new friends, share with us about what's important to you, and have some fun gaming.

**What can I expect?**  
The session is split into two parts.  
Part 1 - Participation activity - have your say!  
Part 2 - Food, drinks, and gaming

**Where?**  
Venue: Albion Games Cafe  
21 St Benedicts St, Norwich, NR2 4PF

**When?**  
For ages 16-25, 11am - 1pm  
Friday 1<sup>st</sup> May  
Friday 5<sup>th</sup> June  
Friday 3<sup>rd</sup> July

**Register with us**  
Email: [csparticipation@norfolk.gov.uk](mailto:csparticipation@norfolk.gov.uk)

**Meet the team**


Henry      Lauren

# We Learn Best When & Dream TA













## We learn best when our school

-  Helps us with friendships and makes sure we have time with our friends
-  Provides separate spaces for younger and older children so we can all feel safe
-  Has time-out areas or calm zones where we can reset or share our worries
-  Offers different clubs for us to take part in
-  Makes sure we have learning outside the classroom like school trips
-  Has tidy and calm classrooms
-  Makes lessons fun with games
-  Gives us a space for our voice to be heard on how the school works
-  Gives us a choice to stay in or go outside at break and lunch and makes sure there are adults around
-  Takes time to get to know us and the support we need to learn



## Dream School Staff



-  Sees me as an individual
-  Is kind and respectful and has a nice tone when talking to me
-  Notices when I'm having a bad day and lets me reset myself
-  Asks for my views, listens to them and acts on them
-  Puts my adjustments in place so I can do well
-  Helps me find out what I am good at so I believe in myself
-  Asks me if I am okay rather than telling me off if I misbehave or make a mistake
-  Is supportive, calm and gives me space when I need it
-  Is friendly and available for me so I can ask for help




# Other work...

- Stalls at engagement events: Making Sense of SEND; Family Voice Norfolk; Visible Fest; Now That's What I Call Autism
- SEND Survey 2025 - Easy Read consultation
- SEND Information Report – CYP voice
- SEND Reform engagement workshops
- Early Years cafés @ Family Hubs
- Presentations: PINS; SEND Spring Forum; City College Norwich




 

Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Survey 2025 Results











What children and young people told us

1. About Your Experiences in Education

What helps you feel happy and safe in your place of learning? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Trusted adults x2</li><li>• High gates around the school – safe and protected, keep people out and pupils in</li><li>• Sometimes feel unsafe with some of the adults, if strict or unkind</li></ul>
What are the top 3 things that help you learn? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Adapted work to meet level, helping to catch up</li><li>• Making lessons fun and engaging</li><li>• Trusted adults</li><li>• "Flashback four" – reviewing and going over content at the start of the lesson</li><li>• Adapting difficulty of questions to make sure don't fall behind</li></ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Silence and quiet in the lessons – use loops as if too loud can't concentrate</li><li>• Fidgets – some teachers have said not to use them though, need teachers to be consistent</li></ul>
If you could change one thing about your learning environment, what would it be? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Classrooms – too cramped with too much stuff, makes me feel uncomfortable</li><li>• Classrooms in the library, tidy classrooms</li><li>• Don't like strict teachers</li><li>• Being able to read while having lunch</li><li>• Spending more time outside, calm and not too loud</li></ul>

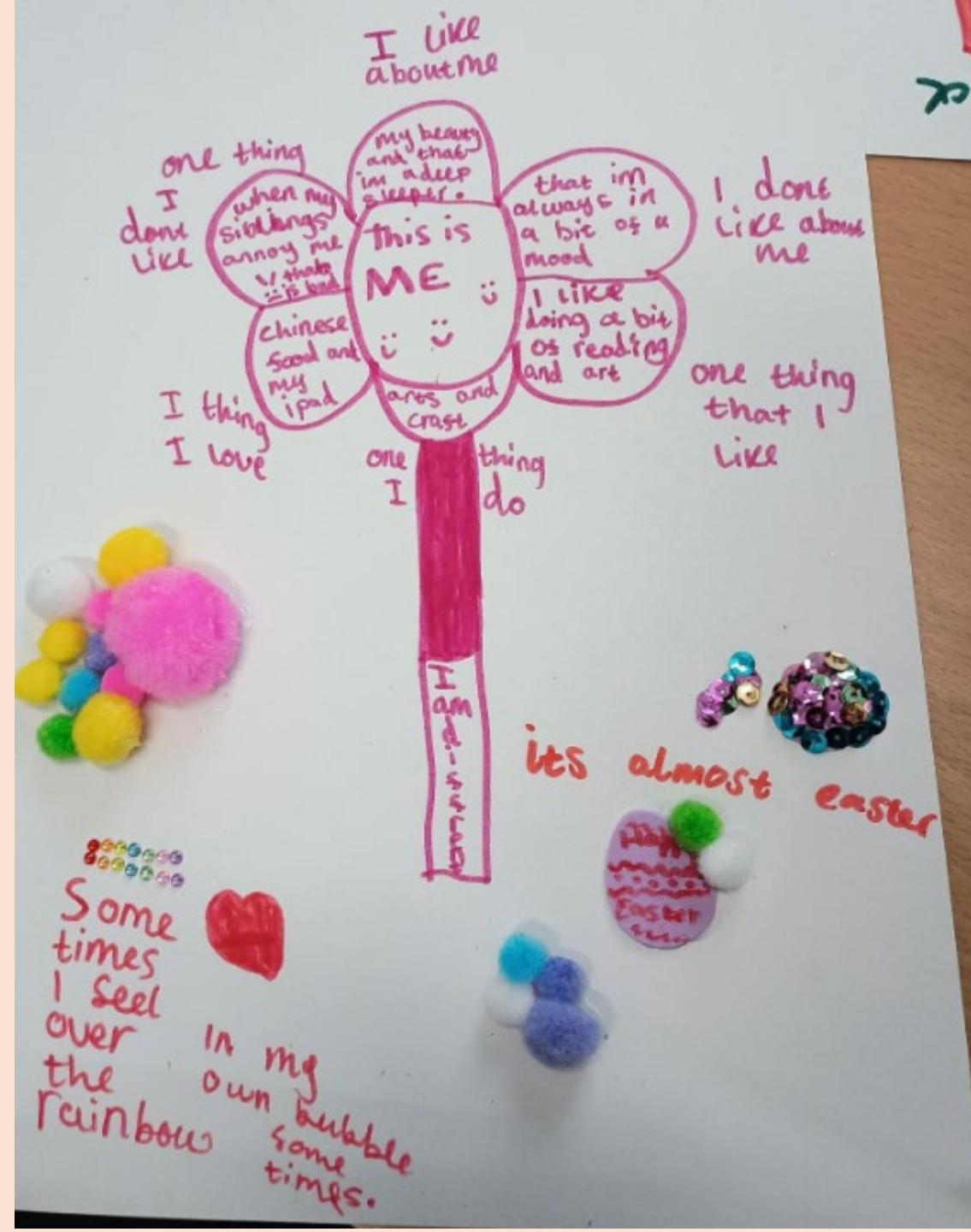
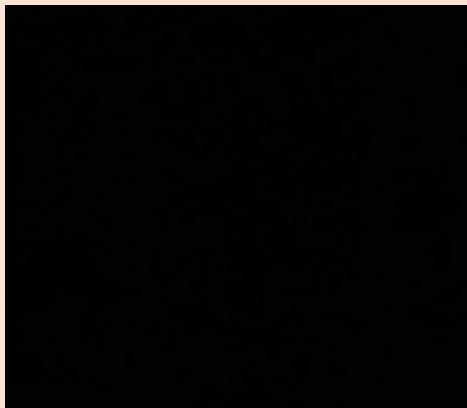
# Part 2- Exploring the theme of individual with CYP with SEND

<p>How I feel today</p>	<p>Happy (positive)</p>	<p>Angry/sad (negative)</p>	<p>How other people see me</p>
			
<p>A picture that interests me</p>	<p>A picture that represents me</p>	<p>A picture I like</p>	<p>A picture I don't like</p>
			

# Primary

The Participation team ran our Voices Through Art sessions at a rural primary school. One session focused on the theme of individuality. We created accessible prompts to support young people to explore their individual strengths. Common themes across the group included being kind and being a good friend.

The older of the two groups were more reserved. However, some of the older group completed the maturity matrix questions and were passionate about sharing their views on their SEN Support, including how it could be improved to better fit their needs.

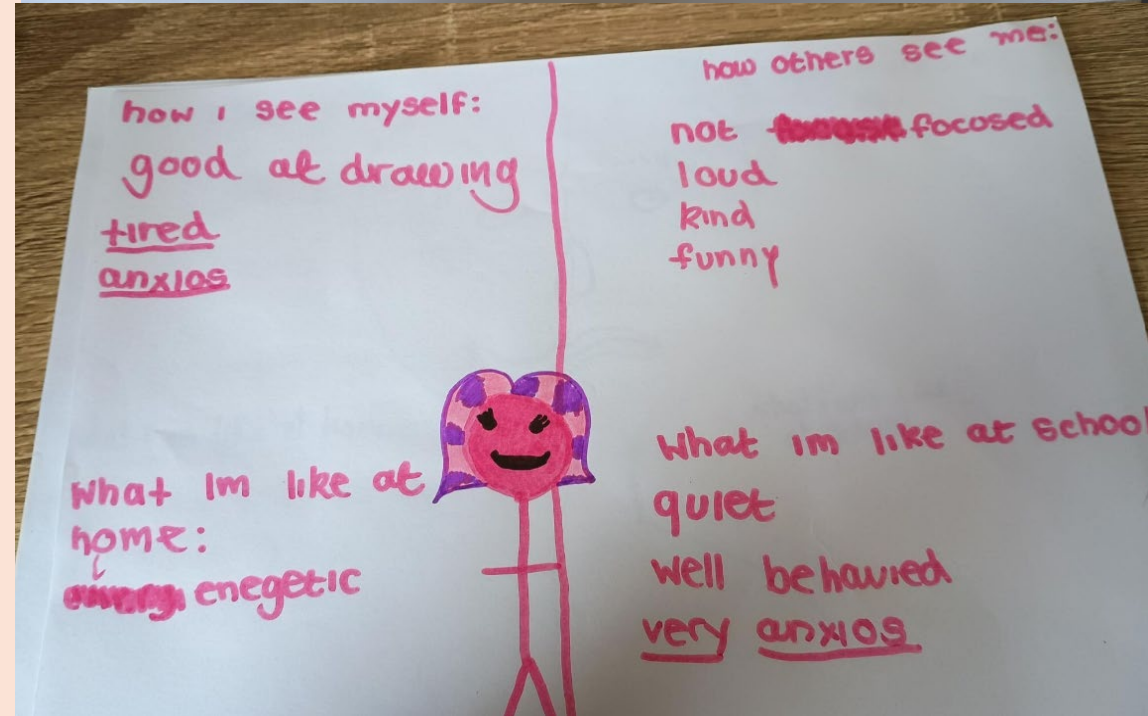
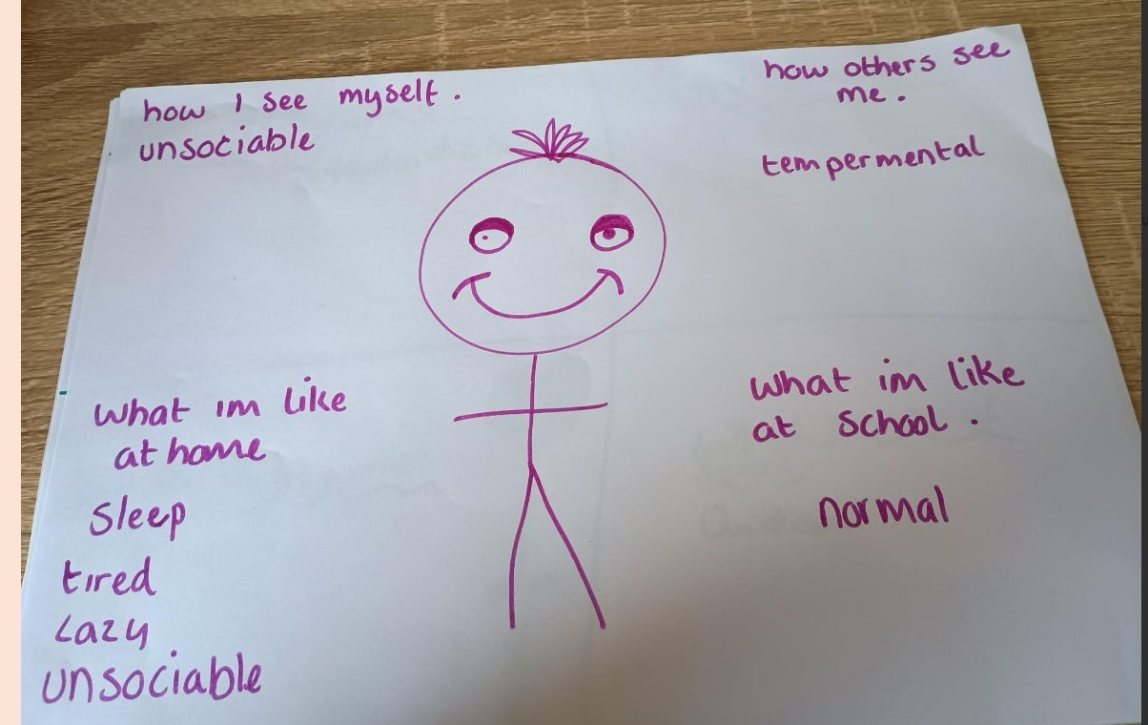


# Secondary

Most of the young people in this group of high school students completed the maturity matrix questions. Throughout the whole programme the young people were keen to share their views and advocate for themselves which was great to see.

The young people created posters based on how I see myself/how others see me and what I am like at home/ what I am like at school. We talked about the power of being an individual and how labels affect us. The young people shared the following feedback:

- One YP shared he is labelled as disruptive, which he does not like as he feels it is used too quickly.
- One YP shared they are labelled as SEND due to dyslexia and anxiety but they like the label as it helps people/staff know how to help them.
- One YP shared they have epilepsy- which they have mixed feelings about- as it stops them doing certain things outside of school, but they are allowed to sit next to their friend in class!
- One YP shared they have autism and they do not like it when people define them by their autism or point it out when it does not need to be pointed out.

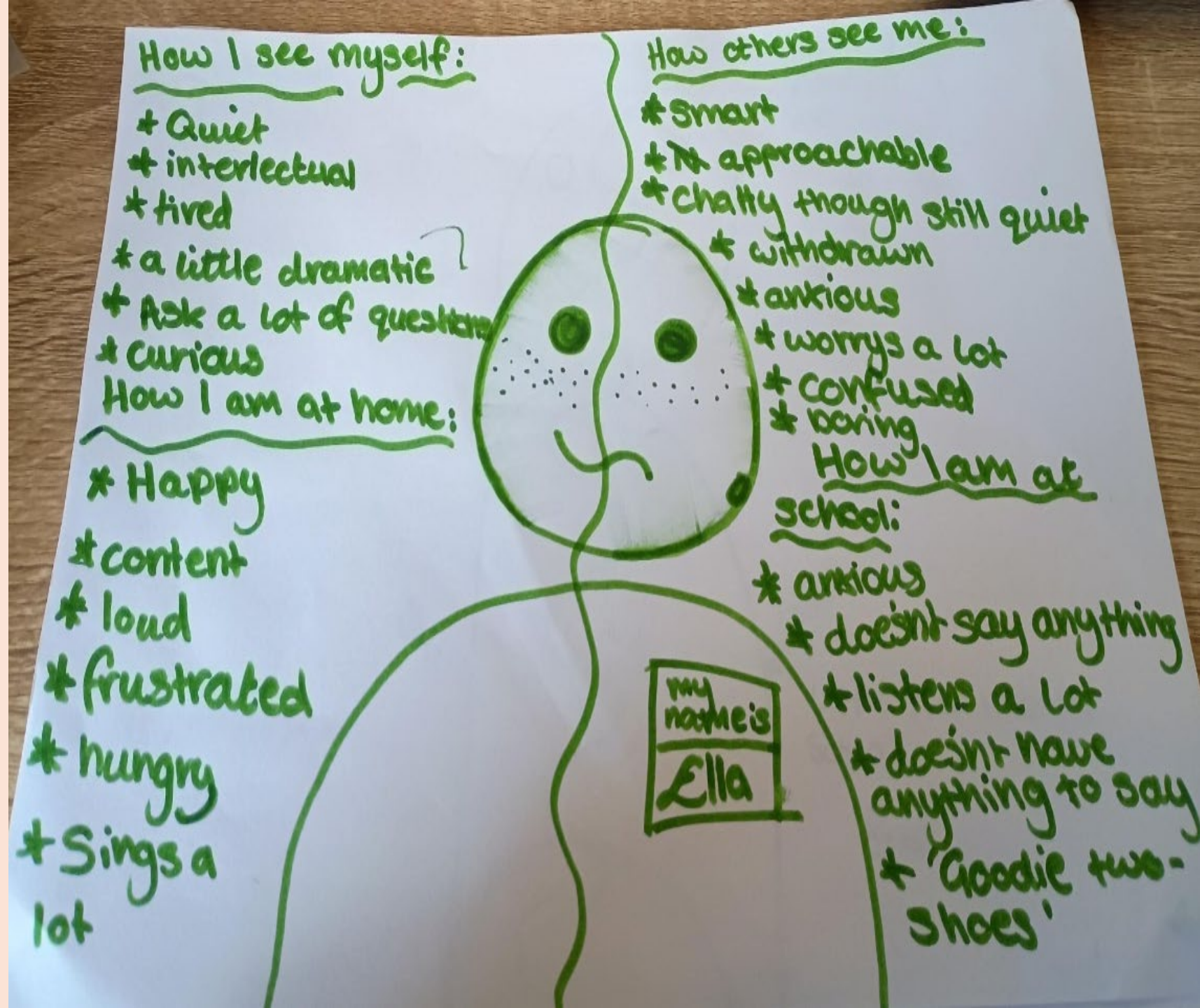


# Case Study

One young person at a high school we worked with showed a real appetite for participation. They engaged extremely well throughout the session and were keen to share their views on how SEND support could be improved, both for herself and for others.

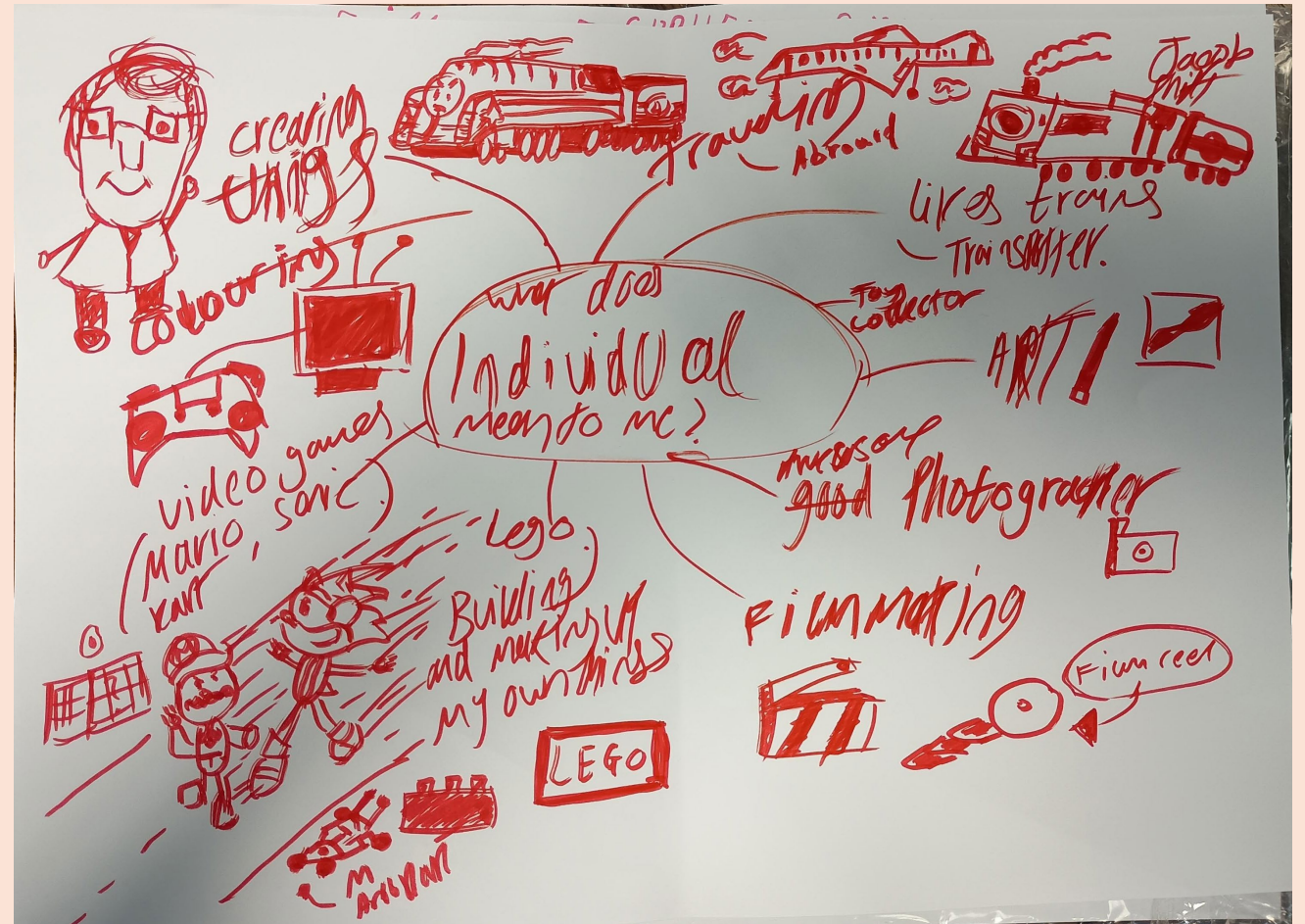
They completed a piece of artwork and chose to share it with the group. Through this, they explained what it feels like to have autism, as well as the things they like and do not like in relation to how people treat them. This opened up a wider conversation within the group.

Another young person asked what autism is and what it feels like to experience it. In response, they explained confidently and advocated for themselves extremely well. This was a powerful and positive moment, showing both self-advocacy and peer learning, and it was great to see how supported and listened to they felt within the group.



# Article 12 12-16

The Article 12 Gamers group interviewed each other on 'What being an individual means to them'.

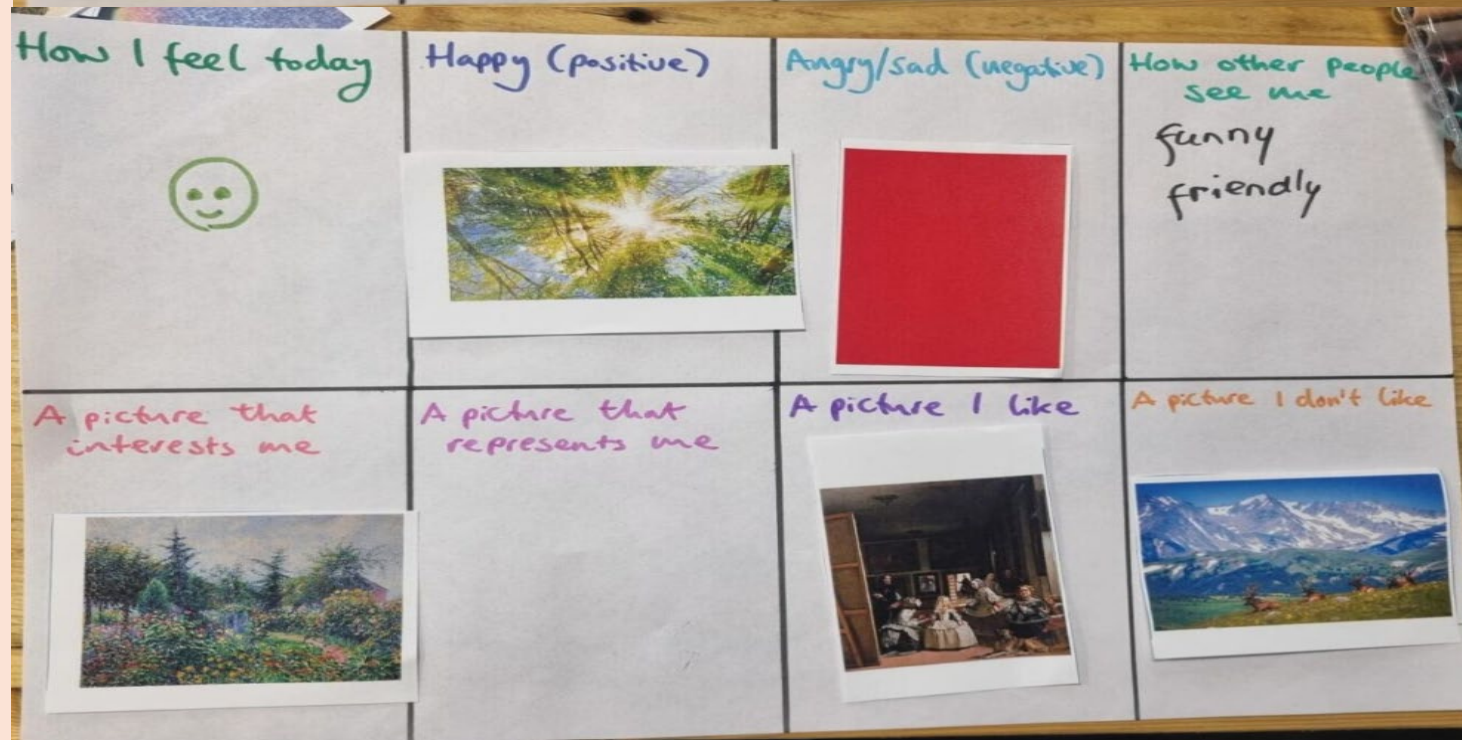
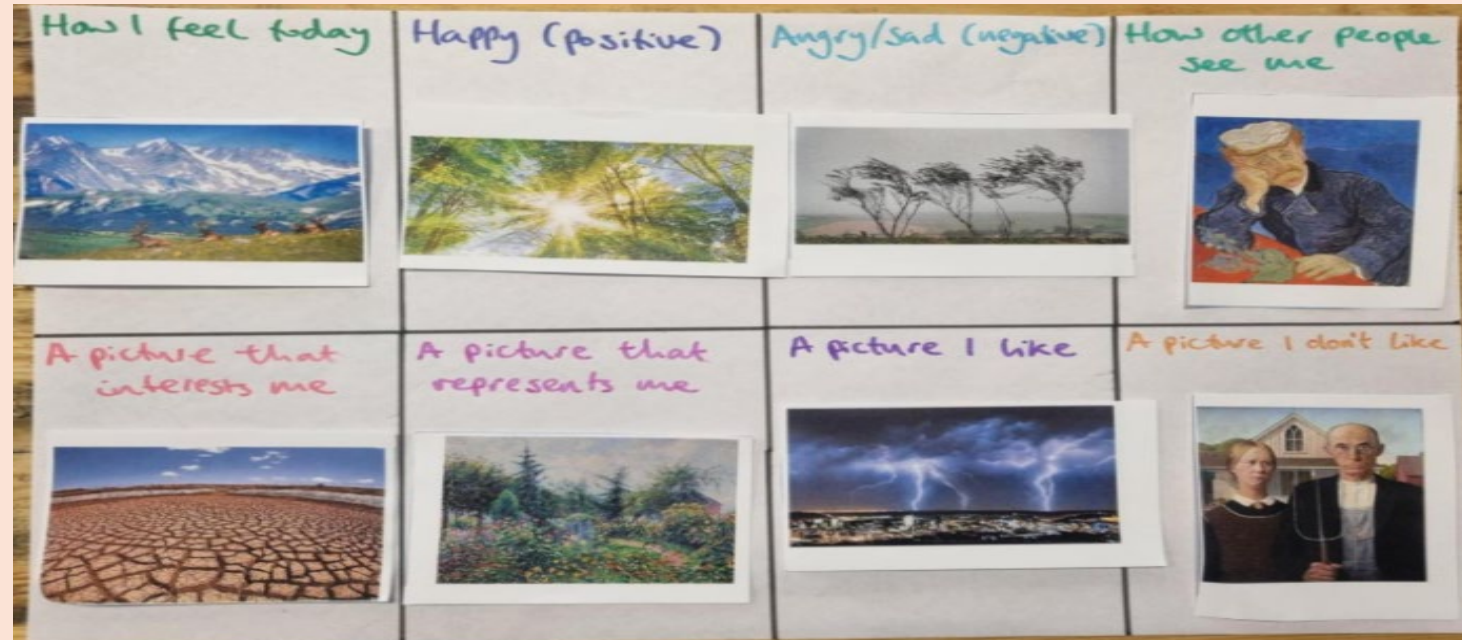


# Article 12 16-25

The Article 12 Gamers group completed an activity focused on photographic expression. This activity worked well for some young people, but not as well for others. One young person who is passionate about photography was very engaged throughout. They are usually very shy, but this activity gave them a way to express themselves confidently and meaningfully.

For some young people, the activity felt too abstract and they struggled to link the photographs to emotions. With support, they chose to use words and colours instead, adapting the task in a way that worked better for them.

This activity highlighted how we are all different, and how different approaches work for different people with SEND. It reinforced that there is no single way for young people to express themselves, and that not one approach suits everyone and that's okay.



# Complex Needs School

The POs recently worked with a complex needs school, where all the young people had different needs and most were working within the EYFS. We knew that we needed to make adaptations to our usual VTA programme to ensure it was accessible for everyone.

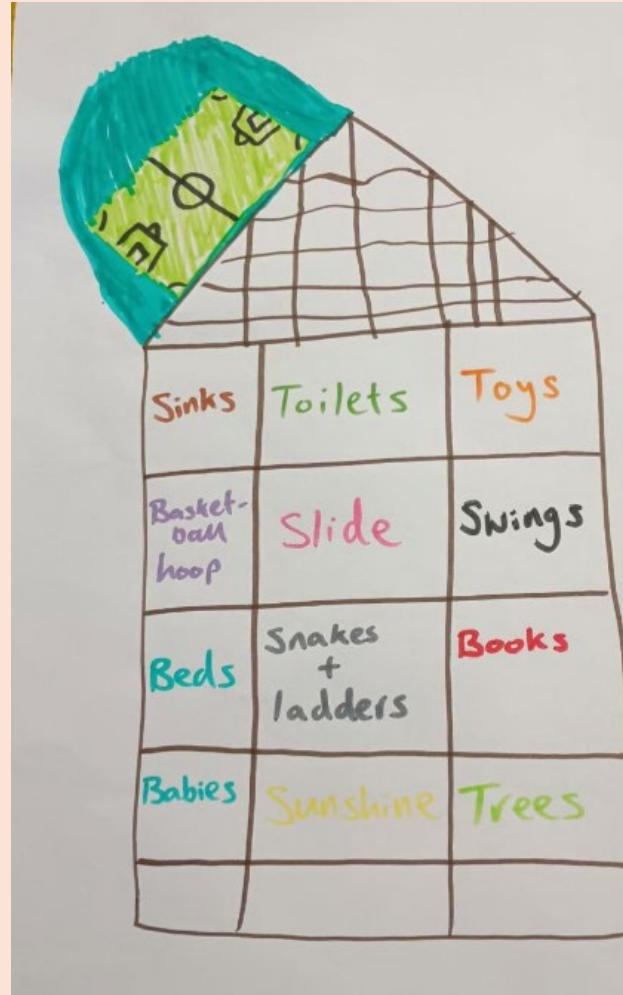
We created an I like / I don't like activity, working one-to-one with the young people to explore things they liked and did not like within the classroom. The young people responded very positively to this and were keen to show us around their classroom. They also really enjoyed taking their own photographs of different objects.

It was valuable to give the young people this level of autonomy, allowing them to communicate their preferences in a way that worked for them and ensuring their voices were heard.



# SRB

This term the Participation team have been working with a specialist resource base. We are halfway through running our 'Voices Through Art' Programme. On Friday, we worked with the young people on a Dream Schools activity. We encouraged them to think about what they like about where they are, what they like about their home school and if they could have anything they want in a school- what would it be?



# Conclusion

In conclusion, we hope today has highlighted just how important it is to recognise and value individuality when working with children and young people with SEND.

Through our work, we have seen that there is no “one-size-fits-all” approach, every young person communicates, engages, and expresses themselves differently. By creating the right space, adapting our methods, and listening, we can ensure every voice is heard.

Participation is powerful. When young people feel listened to and understood, it builds confidence, supports self-advocacy, and leads to better, more inclusive practice.

If you want to learn more about Participation please see the following training-



# Questions and contact us!

- [CSParticipation@norfolk.gov.uk](mailto:CSParticipation@norfolk.gov.uk)
- [henry.futcher@norfolk.gov.uk](mailto:henry.futcher@norfolk.gov.uk) - 01603 222778
- [lauren.scott@norfolk.gov.uk](mailto:lauren.scott@norfolk.gov.uk) - 01603 495149
  
- Training links:
- Empowering CYP with SEND to participate: [Empowering children and young people with SEND to participate \[External - NCCv1\]](#)
- For more information on pupil participation: [Pupil participation - Norfolk Schools and Learning Providers - Norfolk County Council](#)



# Feedback QR code

