

University of Bath

# *Evaluation Report:*

## **SEET Programme:**

### Imagine the Possibilities

### Somerset Council



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## Executive Summary

This second evaluation of Somerset Council's SEET programme aimed to understand young people's and Advocate's perceptions of the opportunities for connection and belonging which make a difference to engagement and progression.

It follows the interim evaluation report from March 2025 which explored the risks negatively impacting progression for the cohort: isolation, undiagnosed/unmet SEND needs and lack of access related to transport.

Survey responses and interviews with young people and their Advocates indicate a common understanding: that support for Individual Identity is most significant to progression

Other key takeaways are that young people place more importance on Peer Identity, with School or Work Identity and Social Identity support closely following.

Advocates in contrast have a broader, more ecological view of support. They view greater equivalence between Peer Identity and other Social and Place-Based domains of support.

Young people prioritise support that is personal, immediate, relational and centred on themselves and close peers. Advocates place greater emphasis on community and place.

This aligns with practitioners having an ecological perspective on development, recognising the cumulative influence of multiple interconnected environments, while young people naturally focus on the relationships and identities they experience most directly.

Rather than reflecting a misunderstanding or disconnect, this suggests a different vantage point. Young people describe where they experience support, while Advocates, who are trained to see systems ecologically, focus on the wider network of factors and places where that support is enabled.

A second key insight is that allowing time for a redefinition of self, before progression is expected, may be particularly important for young people with experience of exclusion, marginalisation, bullying and trauma.

While young people did not recognise the importance of place, this doesn't mean it doesn't matter. They may 'sense' if a place feels safe, welcoming and socially predictable. For Advocates whose focus is on enabling experiences and connections in these places, the importance is likely to be more explicit.

The findings suggests that NEET re-engagement work may be most effective when it strengthens identity through a trusted adult and building a network of connections. The process appears to be less about immediately solving education/employment status and more about rebuilding identity, supporting peer belonging, creating safe, relational spaces and using systems as support structures.

## Introduction: The SEET Programme and Evaluation

Somerset Council's SEET (Seeking Employment, Education & Training) Programme is a specialised, flexible offer for young people aged 16-25 who are NEET (Not in Education, Employment or Training). Designed for those needing extra support to re-engage, or who are not yet ready for a standard college environment or for employment, it forms part of a pathway of opportunities for young people who have fallen through the net of support and have not been able to access the support they need to engage and progress.

Young people are supported by an Advocate: experienced professionals from partner organisations who act as a dedicated point of contact, mentor and job coach. As well as offering regular guidance, encouragement and support to explore career and life goals, Advocates identify opportunities and help the young person decide on and navigate their next steps, and transition smoothly on to education, supported employment opportunities or employment.

This report follows the interim evaluation report from March 2025 which explored the risks negatively impacting progression for the cohort: isolation, undiagnosed/unmet SEND needs and lack of access related to transport. The report also considered what Advocates understood to make a difference in enabling young people to make a successful transition to employment outcomes: sufficient time, longer term support, progressing at the young person's pace, low-pressure approaches, recognising and celebrating small steps, ensuring the young person feels heard and supported, and building the young person's strategies and connections.

The next steps identified through the previous evaluation were (1) to integrate the risk review approach into the case management system (2) to continue to track and review young people's trajectories to deepen understanding of the opportunities for connection and belonging which make a difference to their outcomes and (3) to consider young people's perceptions of what makes a difference in terms of their outcomes.

This evaluation focused on understanding the young peoples' and Advocates' views of the opportunities for connection and belonging that make a difference to engagement and progression.

The report starts by outlining how the programme frameworks were developed to integrate new insights before detailing the survey findings, cohort details and progression rates. A detailed analysis of the interviews draws on young people's and Advocate's accounts of their experiences to highlight key themes and deepen understanding of the survey findings by exploring what the two groups say about the priorities for support and how the support impacted progression. The conclusion highlights key points about young people's perceptions of what makes a difference; Advocates' views on what makes a difference and the programme's impact then suggests some next steps.

## Evidence-informed approaches to intervention for engagement:

The SEET programme is informed by research into the risk factors leading to increased likelihood of NEET outcomes and early school leaving. The model of five categories of risk (Figure 1) highlights the complex interplay of risks and underscores the importance of ensuring support is based on a holistic understanding of the interconnected challenges impacting an individual.

A review tool (see Figure 2) on the case management system supports Advocates to build a holistic view of each young person's challenges and opportunities for connection.

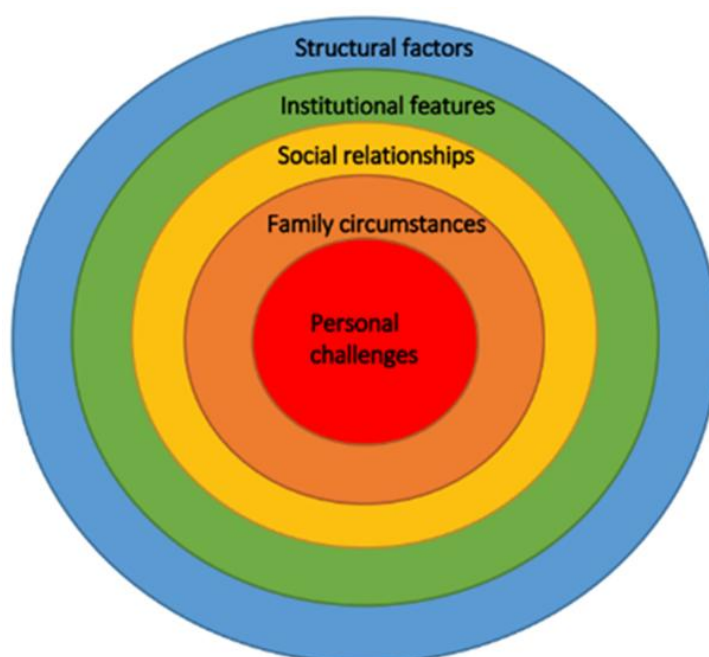


Figure 1: Model of five domains of risk to early school leaving

|                                       | RISKS: AREAS OF CHALLENGE, DIFFICULTY, BARRIERS |                                            | IDENTIFYING GAPS IN SUPPORT                         | STRENGTHS: SOURCES OF CONNECTION, BELONGING, IDENTITY                                    |                                                                         | ACTIONS AND SUPPORT                                                                           |
|---------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Risk Category                         | What RISKS do you identify?                     | Interaction with risks in other categories | What support is in place to meet these risks/needs? | What OPPORTUNITIES are there in each domain to progress towards their future self/dream? | What OPPORTUNITIES do they have for building connections and belonging? | What actions are you going to put in place to address gaps in support and build on strengths? |
| Personal Challenges                   |                                                 |                                            |                                                     |                                                                                          |                                                                         |                                                                                               |
| Family Circumstances                  |                                                 |                                            |                                                     |                                                                                          |                                                                         |                                                                                               |
| Social Relationships                  |                                                 |                                            |                                                     |                                                                                          |                                                                         |                                                                                               |
| Institutional Features of school/work |                                                 |                                            |                                                     |                                                                                          |                                                                         |                                                                                               |
| Structural Factors                    |                                                 |                                            |                                                     |                                                                                          |                                                                         |                                                                                               |

Figure 2: Risk and Opportunities Tool used by the SEET Programme Advocates

The support model is informed by the Pathway to Change model. This details five mechanisms underpinning a wide range of effective engagement interventions to tackle early school leaving. This model has been embedded in the programme's theory of change, the Support of Journey Map (see Figure 3), that enables targeted support and progress evaluation.

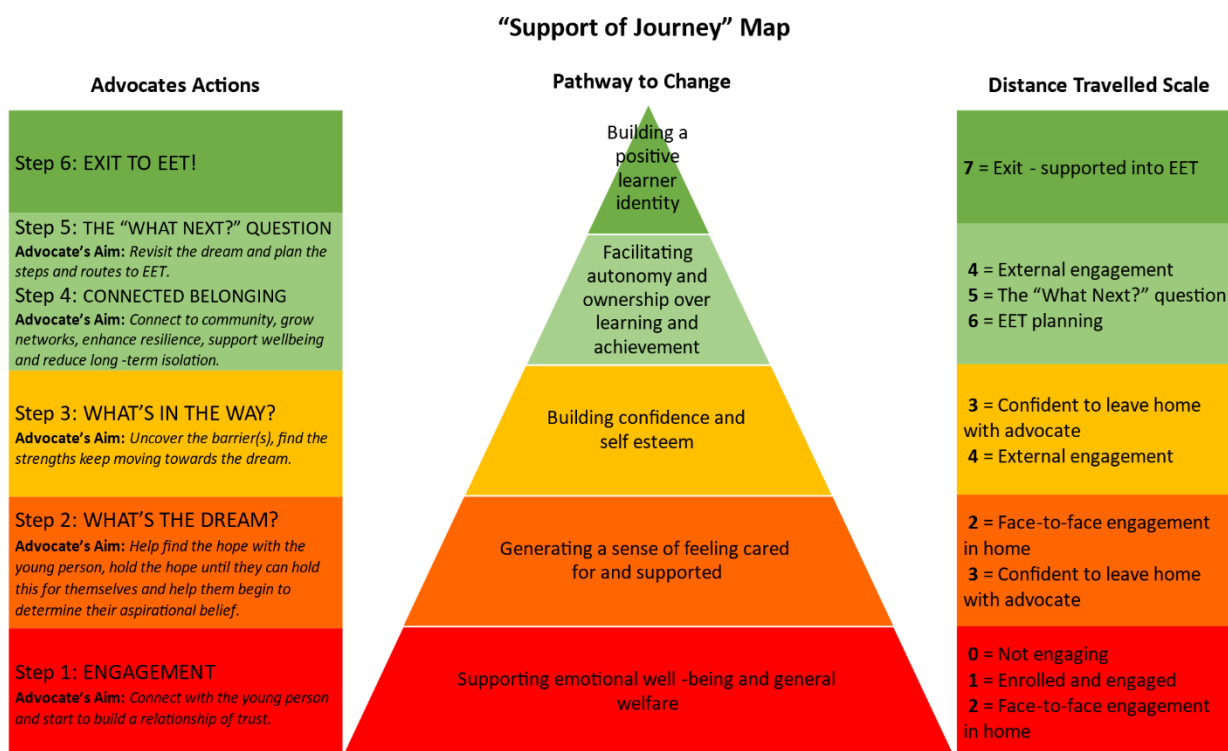


Figure 3: The SEET Programme's Support of Journey map, integrating the Pathway to Change model

The support model is also informed by the Connected Belonging Framework (see Figure 4) which highlights why strengthening young people's relationships and identity-development is important to their wellbeing and engagement.

This framework supports Advocates to think holistically about each young person's trajectory; the opportunities and challenges they face in building a sense of connectedness in each of the seven social domains in the outer ring; and how their sense of self and their possible future may be shaped by their relationships and sense of identity in these seven domains.

This evaluation used the Connected Belonging framework to explore young people's and Advocates' views on the opportunities for connection, belonging and identity-building that were most significant to their progression.

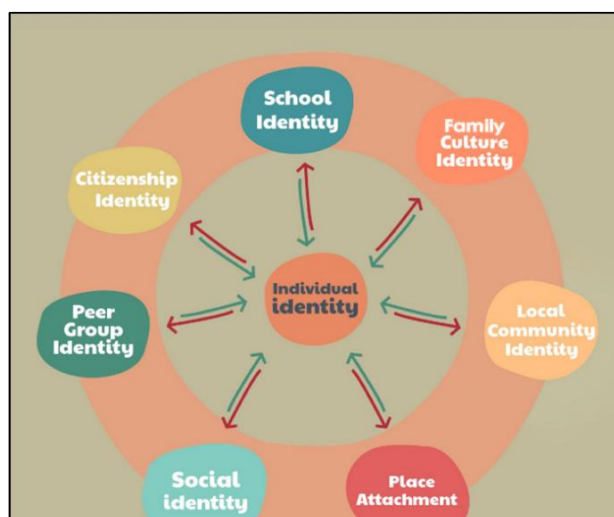


Figure 4: The Connected Belonging Model

## Survey Findings

The survey asked respondents which areas of support were most important for helping their journey into training, education or work. They had to drag and drop 8 items to put them in order with the most important at the top (1) and the least important at the bottom (8). Figure 5. show how the domains were framed for young people within the survey.

### Young People's Survey Responses

39 young people on the SEET programme completed the survey (See Table A). Support for **Individual identity** was consistently ranked first. 69% ranked support for Individual Identity as being most important to their progression. 85% ranked it in their top three.

Support for **Peer Identity** was the second most important aspect of support by young people. 26% of young people ranked it first or second. 51% ranked it in their top three.

**School or work identity** was the third most important area of support (mean ranking 3.9) when considering the whole cohort, with support for **Social Identity** closely following (mean ranking 4.1).

This prioritisation is reflected by the case young people's survey responses (See Tables D, E, F and G on page\_). The four case young people's top 3 rankings all contain **Individual identity**, **Peer Identity**, **School or work identity** and **Social Identity**.

Table A: Young People's Survey Responses Overview

| Ranking Position | Individual Identity |       | Peer Identity |       | School or work Identity |       | Social Identity |       | Family and Cultural Identity |       | Local Community Identity |       | Place Attachment |       | Citizenship Identity |       |
|------------------|---------------------|-------|---------------|-------|-------------------------|-------|-----------------|-------|------------------------------|-------|--------------------------|-------|------------------|-------|----------------------|-------|
|                  | Qty                 | Score | Qty           | Score | Qty                     | Score | Qty             | Score | Qty                          | Score | Qty                      | Score | Qty              | Score | Qty                  | Score |
| 1 <sup>st</sup>  | 27                  | 27    | 4             | 4     | 4                       | 16    | 1               | 1     | 2                            | 2     | 0                        | 0     | 1                | 1     | 0                    | 0     |
| 2 <sup>nd</sup>  | 5                   | 10    | 6             | 12    | 6                       | 36    | 10              | 20    | 2                            | 4     | 6                        | 12    | 4                | 8     | 0                    | 0     |
| 3 <sup>rd</sup>  | 1                   | 3     | 13            | 39    | 6                       | 36    | 5               | 15    | 7                            | 21    | 1                        | 3     | 4                | 12    | 2                    | 6     |
| 4 <sup>th</sup>  | 3                   | 12    | 7             | 28    | 4                       | 16    | 8               | 32    | 5                            | 20    | 3                        | 12    | 5                | 20    | 4                    | 16    |
| 5 <sup>th</sup>  | 2                   | 10    | 5             | 25    | 4                       | 16    | 8               | 40    | 5                            | 25    | 8                        | 40    | 4                | 20    | 3                    | 15    |
| 6 <sup>th</sup>  | 0                   | 0     | 3             | 18    | 3                       | 9     | 1               | 6     | 10                           | 60    | 14                       | 84    | 4                | 24    | 4                    | 24    |
| 7 <sup>th</sup>  | 0                   | 0     | 1             | 7     | 5                       | 25    | 4               | 28    | 5                            | 35    | 4                        | 28    | 11               | 77    | 9                    | 63    |
| 8 <sup>th</sup>  | 1                   | 8     | 0             | 0     | 0                       | 0     | 2               | 16    | 3                            | 24    | 3                        | 24    | 6                | 48    | 17                   | 136   |
| Avg. rank        | 1.8                 |       | 3.4           |       | 3.9                     |       | 4.1             |       | 4.9                          |       | 5.2                      |       | 5.4              |       | 6.6                  |       |

## Advocates' Survey Responses

Advocates completed a separate survey for each young person. It asked them which areas of support were most important for helping that young person's journey into training, education or work. They had to drag and drop 8 items to put them in order with the most important at the top (1) and the least important at the bottom (8). Figure 5. show how the domains were framed for young people within the survey.

47 Advocates supporting young people on the SEET programme completed the survey (See Table B).

Support for **Individual Identity** was consistently ranked first. 56% ranked support for Individual Identity as the most important to the young person's progression. 83% ranked it in the top three for the young person they were supporting.

Support for **Social Identity** was ranked as the second most important aspect of support for young people. 42% ranked it in the top two.

Support for **Place Attachment** was the third most important area of support (mean ranking 4.6), with three areas receiving very similar rankings: **School or Work Identity** (mean ranking 4.7); **Peer Identity** (mean ranking 4.8); **Local Community Identity** (mean ranking 4.8).

This prioritisation of a wider range of social domains across the cohort is reflected in the four ranking responses given by the Advocate of the four case young people (See Tables D, E, F and G on page10).

Table B: Advocate's Survey Responses Overview

| Ranking Position | Individual Identity |       | Social Identity |       | Place Attachment |       | School or work Identity |       | Peer Identity |       | Local Community Identity |       | Family and Cultural Identity |       | Citizenship Identity |       |
|------------------|---------------------|-------|-----------------|-------|------------------|-------|-------------------------|-------|---------------|-------|--------------------------|-------|------------------------------|-------|----------------------|-------|
|                  | Qty                 | Score | Qty             | Score | Qty              | Score | Qty                     | Score | Qty           | Score | Qty                      | Score | Qty                          | Score | Qty                  | Score |
| 1 <sup>st</sup>  | 22                  | 22    | 5               | 5     | 5                | 5     | 8                       | 8     | 1             | 1     | 1                        | 1     | 3                            | 3     | 1                    | 1     |
| 2 <sup>nd</sup>  | 7                   | 14    | 15              | 30    | 7                | 14    | 0                       | 0     | 3             | 6     | 7                        | 14    | 5                            | 10    | 2                    | 4     |
| 3 <sup>rd</sup>  | 10                  | 30    | 3               | 9     | 4                | 12    | 4                       | 12    | 14            | 42    | 5                        | 15    | 4                            | 15    | 1                    | 3     |
| 4 <sup>th</sup>  | 4                   | 16    | 5               | 20    | 5                | 28    | 5                       | 20    | 1             | 44    | 7                        | 28    | 4                            | 16    | 3                    | 12    |
| 5 <sup>th</sup>  | 1                   | 5     | 5               | 25    | 4                | 35    | 8                       | 40    | 12            | 60    | 7                        | 35    | 6                            | 30    | 3                    | 15    |
| 6 <sup>th</sup>  | 2                   | 12    | 8               | 48    | 3                | 30    | 10                      | 60    | 2             | 12    | 5                        | 30    | 11                           | 66    | 5                    | 30    |
| 7 <sup>th</sup>  | 0                   | 0     | 4               | 28    | 10               | 70    | 7                       | 49    | 1             | 7     | 10                       | 70    | 8                            | 56    | 6                    | 42    |
| 8 <sup>th</sup>  | 0                   | 0     | 1               | 8     | 6                | 32    | 4                       | 32    | 2             | 16    | 4                        | 32    | 4                            | 32    | 25                   | 200   |
| Avg. rank        | 2.1                 |       | 3.7             |       | 4.6              |       | 4.7                     |       | 4.8           |       | 4.8                      |       | 4.9                          |       | 6.5                  |       |

## Comparing Young People's and Advocates' Survey Responses

Young people and Advocates agree that **support for Individual Identity is by far the most important** (See Table C). This suggests a central principle: **supporting a strong individual identity is the foundation of support for vulnerable young people outside education, training or work.**

Both groups also agreed that **Citizenship Identity** was least important in supporting engagement and progression for this group of young people. While this aspect is rated highly by a small number of Advocates, only 6 young people included it in their top 3 items.

The clearest difference in views relates to **Peer Identity. Young people rated support for Peer Identity more highly than Advocates.** 59% of young people rank it in their top three in comparison to 38% of Advocates. This difference could reflect Advocates' understanding of the salience of other factors to enable access to supportive peers; an underemphasis on Peer Identity among Advocates; or be a legacy of individualised casework approaches which are necessary to build young people's trust with a trusted adult.

**School or Work Identity** was viewed as important by both groups, but young people ranked this higher (mean ranking 3.9) than did Advocates (mean ranking 4.7).

Overall, young people's responses are more polarised with a greater distinction about what matters most to them: **Individual Identity** and **Peer Identity** and **School or Work Identity.**

Advocates responses are less polarised and more equivalent with broadly similar mean rankings for **Place Attachment, School or work identity, Peer Identity, Local Community Identity and Family and Cultural identity.**

Another clear difference relates to support for **Place Attachment.** The Advocates rated this as much more significant in impacting progression than did young people. 34% of Advocates ranked it in their top three in comparison to 23% of young people.

These findings suggest that young people's responses may reflect proximal, relational support (self, friends, immediate environment) which is closer to their every day, immediate experience. Advocates, in contrast, recognise the role of broader, ecological and place-based aspects of support. Their role involves carefully planning and community-based experiences and facilitating access to locally available provisions. They are professionally trained to recognise the importance of safe, accessible environments and well-handled transitions. This offers them a different vantage point to young people who focus on the relational and emotional experiences of being in particular places.

**Place Attachment** is a more abstract, generalised concept that may be less easily understood by young people. Young people may have responded differently if attachment to specific places were mentioned within the question, rather than a more generalised notion of place

attachment. However, it should be noted that **Social Identity** is another abstract and generalised concept within the framework, but this was ranked much higher by young people.

Both groups ranked **Citizenship Identity** as the least important aspect of support for their progression. Rankings for this and **Family and Cultural identity** are almost identical, suggesting that Advocates and Young People have broadly aligned views about the priorities for support.

*Table C: Comparing Young People's and Advocate's Average Ratings*

| Ranking Position                      | Young People | Advocates | Difference                         |
|---------------------------------------|--------------|-----------|------------------------------------|
| <b>Individual Identity</b>            | 1.8          | 2.1       | Very similar. YP rate higher       |
| <b>Peer Identity</b>                  | 3.4          | 4.8       | YP rate much higher                |
| <b>School or Work Identity</b>        | 3.9          | 4.7       | YP rate slightly higher            |
| <b>Social Identity</b>                | 4.1          | 3.7       | Advocates rate slightly higher     |
| <b>Family &amp; Cultural Identity</b> | 4.9          | 4.9       | Almost identical                   |
| <b>Local Community Identity</b>       | 5.2          | 4.8       | Advocates rate slightly higher     |
| <b>Place Attachment</b>               | 5.4          | 4.6       | Advocates rate slightly higher     |
| <b>Citizenship Identity</b>           | 6.6          | 6.5       | Almost identical. Both rate lowest |

## Comparing Survey Responses for Case Young People and Advocates

Table D: Comparing Young People's and Advocate's rankings for case young person 1: Lily

|   | <b>Lily's Rankings (YP 1)</b> | <b>Leila's Rankings (Adv 1)</b> |
|---|-------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 1 | Individual Identity           | Individual Identity             |
| 2 | Social Identity               | Place Attachment                |
| 3 | School or Work Identity       | School or Work Identity         |
| 4 | Place Attachment              | Peer Identity                   |
| 5 | Peer Identity                 | Social Identity                 |
| 6 | Family and Cultural Identity  | Family and Cultural Identity    |
| 7 | Local Community Identity      | Local Community Identity        |
| 8 | Citizenship Identity          | Citizenship Identity            |

Table E: Comparing Young People's and Advocate's rankings for case young person 2: Hannah

|   | <b>Hannah's Rankings (YP 2)</b> | <b>Jenny's Rankings (Adv 2)</b> |
|---|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 1 | Individual Identity             | Local Community Identity        |
| 2 | School or work Identity         | Social Identity                 |
| 3 | Peer Identity                   | Peer Identity                   |
| 4 | Citizenship Identity            | Place Attachment                |
| 5 | Place Attachment                | School or Work Identity         |
| 6 | Local Community Identity        | Individual Identity             |
| 7 | Family Culture Identity         | Citizenship Identity            |
| 8 | Social Identity                 | Family and Cultural Identity    |

Table F: Comparing Young People's and Advocate's rankings for case young person 3: Christopher

|   | <b>Christopher's Rankings (YP 3)</b> | <b>Maureen's Rankings (Adv 3)</b> |
|---|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 1 | Individual Identity                  | School or Work Identity           |
| 2 | Peer Identity                        | Local Community Identity          |
| 3 | Social Identity                      | Individual Identity               |
| 4 | Place Attachment                     | Peer Identity                     |
| 5 | Family and Cultural Identity         | Social Identity                   |
| 6 | Local Community Identity             | Family and Cultural Identity      |
| 7 | School or work Identity              | Place Attachment                  |
| 8 | Citizenship Identity                 | Citizenship Identity              |

Table G: Comparing Young People's and Advocate's rankings for case young person 4: Owen

|   | <b>Owen's Rankings (YP 4)</b> | <b>Ena's Rankings (Adv 4)</b> |
|---|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1 | Social Identity               | School or work Identity       |
| 2 | School or work Identity       | Citizenship Identity          |
| 3 | Peer Identity                 | Local Community Identity      |
| 4 | Family and Cultural Identity  | Social Identity               |
| 5 | Individual Identity           | Individual Identity           |
| 6 | Place Attachment              | Place Attachment              |
| 7 | Citizenship Identity          | Family and Cultural Identity  |
| 8 | Local Community Identity      | Peer Identity                 |

# How does your Advocate support your sense of belonging and connection?

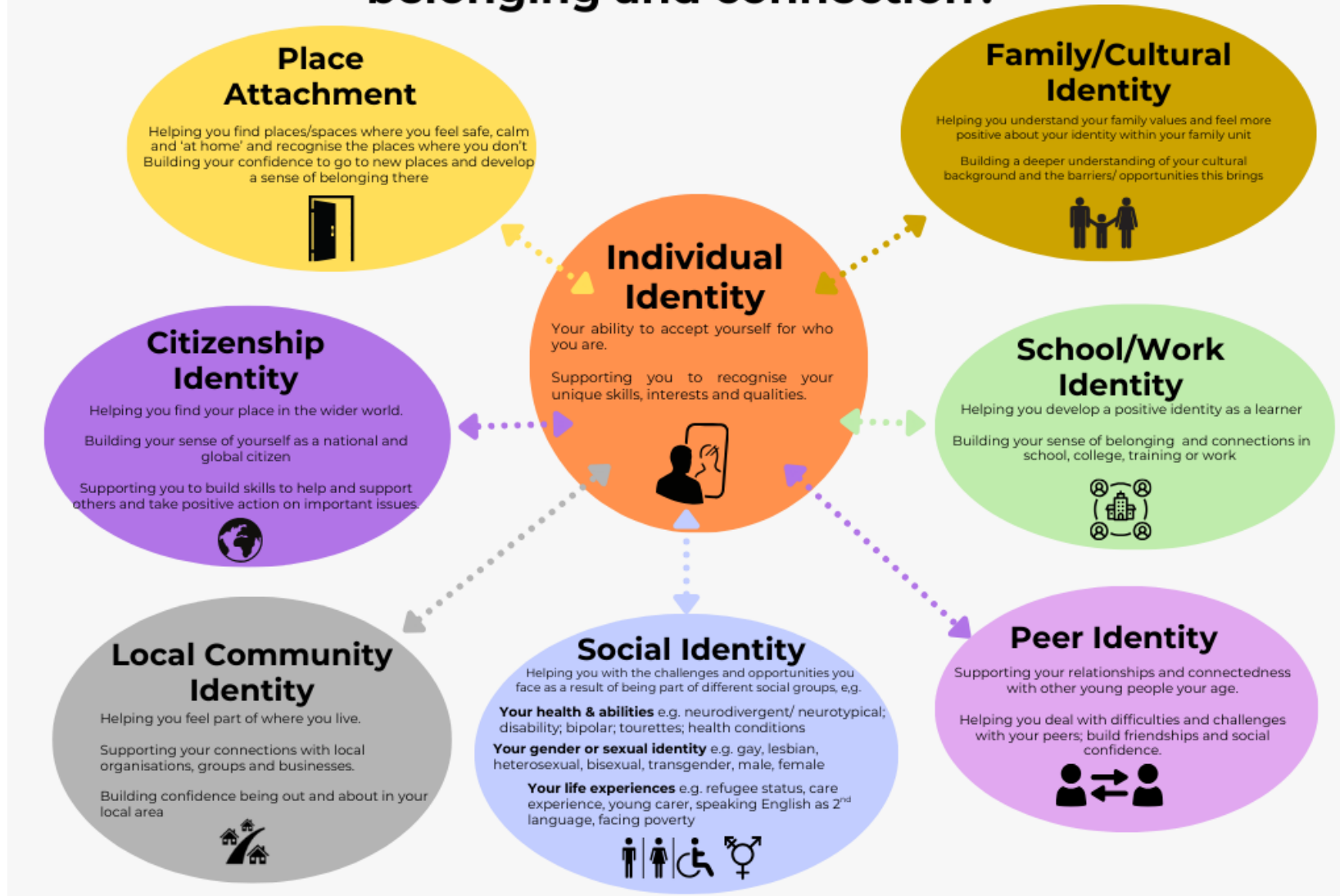


Figure 5 Descriptors of Connected Belonging Domains for Young People used to support young people's understanding by outlining ways that the SEET programme might support young people's sense of Connection and Belonging

## Cohort Details

### Cohort Sample

- The programme cohort contained 86 young people
- 45% of the cohort completed the young person's survey
- 1 was in National Curriculum Year 11
- 33 were in National Curriculum Year 12
- 25 were in National Curriculum Year 13
- 15 were in National Curriculum Year 14
- 10 were in National Curriculum Year 15
- 2 were in National Curriculum Year 16

All 86 young people faced multiple, complex and diverse barriers to engagement. They were:

- all NEET prior to the programme
- almost all White British
- 14 had EHCPs (Education, Health and Care Plans)
- 2 had CLA status (Child Looked After)

Please see Appendix A for further details on the cohort

### Cohort Progression Rates

- The cohort had a **100% retention rate**
- This doesn't account for 1 student who moved out of area.

Please see Table H for progression details.

Progression reported here is at the midpoint, during the second term of the programme's year of support. It is measured using the programme's Distance Travelled Scale (DTS): an evidence-informed scale which draws on research evidence<sup>1</sup> about steps to re-engagement and professional experience (see Figure 2). The scale is sufficiently nuanced to capture progression of those furthest from engagement in EET. The seven steps include:

- 0 – Not Engaging
- 1-Enrolled and Engaged
- 2-Face-to-face engagement in the home
- 3-Confident to leave home with Advocate
- 4- External engagement
- 5-The 'What Next?' question
6. EET planning
7. Supported into EET

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<sup>1</sup> Brown, C., Douthwaite, A., Savvides, N., & Costas Batlle, I. (2022). Five mechanisms for tackling the risks to NEETHood: introducing a pathway to change to guide educators' support strategies. *International Journal of Adolescence and Youth*, 27(1), 457–474. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02673843.2022.2130082>

At the point of evaluation (during the second term of the programme's year of support):

- 51% of the cohort remained engaged on the SEET programme.
- 22% of the cohort had completed the programme and were in employment
- 7% of the cohort had completed the programme and were in education or training
- 11% of the cohort had completed the programme and were engaged in job searching

The programme has achieved similar levels of success for the Year-11-to-13 cohort and the Year-14-to-16 cohort:

- Around 40% of both cohorts had made 5 steps of progress on the DTS
- Around 15% of both cohorts had made 6 steps of progress on the DTS
- Around 20% of both cohorts had successfully completed all steps on the programme.

Table H: Progression against Distance Travelled Scale for young people in different curriculum years.

| NCY                              | Progress against Distance Travelled Scale |        |         |         |         |         |         |         | Status/Outcomes    |                         |                           |                          |            |
|----------------------------------|-------------------------------------------|--------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|--------------------|-------------------------|---------------------------|--------------------------|------------|
|                                  | Didn't engage                             | 1 step | 2 steps | 3 steps | 4 steps | 5 steps | 6 steps | 7 steps | On-going provision | Complete: In employment | Complete: In ed /training | Completed: Job searching | Moved away |
| <b>Y11/13 Cohort (n=59)</b>      | 0                                         | 0      | 3       | 3       | 6       | 25      | 10      | 12      | 30                 | 15                      | 3                         | 3                        | -          |
| <b>%</b>                         | -                                         | -      | 5%      | 5%      | 10%     | 42%     | 17%     | 20%     | 51%                | 25%                     | 5%                        | 5%                       | -          |
| <b>Y14-16 Cohort (n=27)</b>      | 0                                         | 0      | 0       | 3       | 2       | 11      | 2       | 9       | 13                 | 4                       | 3                         | 6                        | 1          |
| <b>%</b>                         | -                                         | -      | -       | 11%     | 7%      | 41%     | 7%      | 33%     | 48%                | 15%                     | 11%                       | 22%                      | 4%         |
| <b>Whole Cohort (n=86)</b>       | 0                                         | 0      | 3       | 6       | 8       | 36      | 12      | 21      | 44                 | 19                      | 6                         | 9                        | 1          |
| <b>%</b>                         | -                                         | -      | 5%      | 7%      | 9%      | 42%     | 14%     | 24%     | 51%                | 22%                     | 7%                        | 11%                      | 1%         |
| <b>Whole Cohort Cumulative %</b> | -                                         | -      | 77%     | 82%     | 89%     | 80%     | 38%     | 24%     | n/a                | n/a                     | n/a                       | n/a                      | n/a        |

## Interviews

Four young people and their Advocates were selected from the cohort to be invited for interview to deepen understanding of their survey responses. They were selected to reflect the broader cohort and because of their readiness to engage with the researcher.

The interviews sought further detail on the aspects of support each person had ranked in the top three. Each Advocate was interviewed separately online for 15 to 20 minutes. Following this, each young person was interviewed separately for 15 to 20 minutes, either online or in person, depending on their preference.

Advocates used the information sheet (Figure 5) to support the young person's understanding of the domains and supported them to complete the survey. The researcher reviewed the descriptions of the domains with the young people and Advocates prior to interview.

This section offers a thumbnail overview of each young person and then draws across the eight interviews to identify and explore key themes.

### Case Young Person 1: Owen

Currently in Curriculum Year 13, Owen was excluded from 5 schools. Since becoming NEET, he has received an ADHD diagnosis. He does not have an EHCP. His sister has Autism and he supports her at home. He felt he would not be given a chance due to his history of exclusion and getting into trouble. Initially he would not engage with adults in authority who were trying to support him. Since joining the programme, he has formed strong relationships within the organisation, both with staff and peers. He has been given positions of responsibility to support younger children and has organised social events for his peer group. He has been invited to join the organisation as an Apprentice.

### Case Young Person 2: Lily

Currently in Curriculum Year 12, Lily's low GCSE grades left her with no accessible progression options. She has a health condition which impacts her appearance. She has ADHD and autism which has only been diagnosed since she left school and which she had no support for previously. Severe bullying at school badly impacted her mental health. Parental separation negatively impacted her family's financial situation. She works two part time jobs in her local area to contribute financially but wishes to study further to improve her life chances. She has not been able to access college due to her low grades and mental health challenges. Her advocate has supported her to explore her options, apply for a college course and build her independent travel skills.

### Case Young Person 3: Christopher

Currently in Curriculum Year 14, Christopher stopped attending school in Year 11 before sitting GCSEs. He lives in a small village in a rural area and travelled to his mainstream secondary school on the school bus. He has autism but does not have an EHCP. He was bullied at

secondary school. This left him with a fear of other young people. He does not socialise outside the home but connects with friends online for gaming. On joining the programme, he did not leave the family home and did not readily engage with the Advocate. Through the programme he has been supported to attend an intensive week-long course to gain skills in becoming an Outdoor Learning Facilitator; been supported to complete the coursework; and regularly leaves the home with his advocate to visit new settings. He is applying for a Level 2 course at college.

### Case Young Person 4: Hannah

Currently in Curriculum Year 12, Hannah moved here to join her father, alongside her mother and brother, from a different country. As qualifications from her country are not recognised, she needs to sit GCSEs but was unable to enrol to do this until the following September. Isolation resulting from missing her friends, not having made new friends, and having low confidence and no connections outside her family negatively impacted her mental health. Her advocate has supported her to access informal learning opportunities, explore her options and facilitated contact with peers her age. She has applied for a nursing course and is preparing to sit her GCSEs in the next academic year.

## Interview Analysis:

### Support for Individual Identity

#### Independence and Daily Life

*“I got better at...just like, living.” Christopher*

When discussing what their Advocate’s support for their individual identity looked like and why it was so important, the young people often highlighted the profound impact on their day-to-day experiences and quality of life.

Christopher pointed to having better daily routines and awareness of things that need to be done: *“I can remember about stuff I need to do during the day, just basic things like hygiene and stuff like that... more aware basically.”* Leaving school early would have meant a sudden change from the formal structure of a school day. Being outside education, employment or training left him with no established routines and, he implies, little sense of the daily living skills needed to go about adult life.

Lily also referred to support for independence when explaining why she ranked Individual Identity Support top: *“She’s been helping me do some travel training to be able to like go on a bus by myself so I could be more independent and confident in myself...because I haven’t been the best at being able to go anywhere by myself.”* While ostensibly about supporting access to community and places, the felt impact has been on Liv’s self-concept and sense of being an autonomous, independent person.

Similarly, Hannah referred to her Advocate helping her *“to do things I never thought I’d be comfortable doing.”* She gave examples of careers-focussed activities like applying for jobs and writing CVS, and also of leisure activities such as swimming lessons, rock climbing and gym trips.

This emphasises the deeply personal impact of support across a range of areas and how it shapes the young people’s sense of self, of their capabilities and of their ability to live an independent life. This reflects the Connected Belonging model which indicates that support for connectedness across other domains can build and affirm Individual Identity. Advocates may not always work directly on the young person’s sense of self, but the impact is felt there.

## Reframing Individual Identity

*“When we go into a garden centre there’s little cards at the back of each plant which tells us what they need to thrive, that’s very similar to people, so I asked her to create her own.”* Lily’s Advocate

Interviews suggest that conversations and targeted activities are an important mechanisms by which Advocates support young people to begin to reframe their sense of self and gain insight into what works for them. Lily’s Advocate described a specific activity which was used to encourage self-reflection in a way that side-steps self-criticism. Thinking about yourself like a plant and considering the conditions you need to thrive supports the Advocate to get to know the young person and the young person to deepen understanding of themselves.

Christopher’s Advocate also stressed that building reflection and communication was a *“huge, huge part of the work.”* It had taken a *“long, long time for him to feel confident to talk,”* As another Advocate explained, it is about getting the young person *“to look inwardly and then communicate outwardly”* to both recognise and be able to verbalise their needs, interests and feelings.

It seems that, through conversation, the young people can articulate their changing sense of identity. As Owen’s Advocate explained, *“we do chat often and he’s like, I’m not that person I used to be. I want to put things right. I’ve got a future.”*

## Building Self-Acceptance

*“I need to be able to accept myself and love myself before I could like focus on anything else.”* Lily

Advocate support helped Lily think differently, recognise her low self-esteem and develop greater self-acceptance. She described no longer feeling *“like a failure”* and now believed that *“I can do it.”* Her belief that she needed to accept herself before being able to focus on anything else implies this is a pivotal and primary focus.

Hannah’s comments build on this and imply that it is the foundation of the trusting relationship with the Advocate which make this reframing and self-acceptance possible: *“she helped me*

*with those things because I'm more comfortable with her. I've felt...trust with her...I just had to trust myself that I could do this, if anyone in the world can do it, then I can also do it."*

This reflects the Pathway to Change framework and SEET Programme's support of journey map which highlight the key mechanisms of reengagement being a trusting adult enabling the young person to feel supported. This programme adds to our understanding of these mechanisms by highlighting how support directly targeting individual identity *and* support targeting success and new experiences in other social domains both strengthen the young person's individual identity.

## **Support for Peer Identity**

### **Facilitating Contact With Peers**

*"She helped me meet other kids my age that she works with... build new friendships and gain confidence speaking to people who are in the same age group as me."* Hannah

Two of the four young people described how the Advocate facilitated contact with peers. Hannah described meeting other mentees from her Advocate's caseload at informal activities like dance classes. She described how this helped her start to engage with peers more confidently and led to her having the confidence to speak to a girl in her neighbourhood to develop a friendship independently.

Owen also spoke about how his engagement with his Advocate and their wider organisation enabled connection with peers. While Hannah valued the support of her Advocate to connect with others, Owen pointed to his Advocate's less authoritative approach enabling him to connect with peers. He described how she *"is not always by my side 24/7...if I want to go and speak to this person I can do that."* Being within the organisation's centre, alongside other people, gave him opportunity to meet peers and make friends.

The social isolation of all four young people made peer contact a top priority. It is interesting to note that the two young people who had experienced severe bullying at school and developed a fear of other young people did not really talk about Peer Connection. While Christopher rated it second most important, his interview discussion did not really relate to experiences with peers. Instead, he spoke generally about improving his social interactions. His examples tended to focus on interactions with members of the public or younger children who he supported on a work experience opportunity. Most discussion relating to this came up in Individual Identity Support. He described his social anxiety, explaining *"I used to overthink about everything , like people around me staring and stuff like that and now I realise that nobody really cares."* He described the importance of his Advocate supporting his with *"sort of experimenting with social situations."* He started the discussion of individual identity explaining, *"that's like my main problem, I'm not very good at socialising."*

Lily referred to the bullying she went through and the *"massive impact"* it had on her *"mentally and physically."* However, she did not describe any interactions with other young people,

focusing rather on interactions with her Advocate or with members of the public in her work experience.

This suggests that where traumatic experiences from bullying play a role in a young person's disengagement, that Peer Identity may be better worked on indirectly. It also implies that interactions with comparatively 'safer' others, may, as in the case of Christopher, be perceived of as support for their Peer Identity and connectedness where this is a goal that they are building towards.

*"The fact it was just the two of us could be a little bit restricting at times." Hannah's Advocate*

Facilitating contact with peers is an important consideration in relation to Advocate organisations. Owen's Advocate was part of a large organisation with a centre at which he was able to informally meet other young people. However, both Hannah and Lily's Advocate drew attention to the fact that they work one-to-one and weren't so easily able to facilitate access to a peer group. Hannah's Advocate engineered opportunities, but both Lily's and Christopher's support remained largely individualised. For both, the goal to feel able to go to college and be among peers is something that has had to be worked on indirectly and more theoretically, with slow, gradual introduction at their pace to other settings alongside peers. The careful allocation of young people to Advocates is important here, with knowledge of the young person's history and social confidence being an important consideration.

## **Connecting to Relatable Peers**

*"Meeting S in sessions with J helped me get to know other girls who also moved here. They're refugees so it's not the same but it's sort of similar." Hannah*

Both Owen and Hannah highlighted the importance of access to peers with experience of similar challenges for building their Peer Identity. For Hannah, meeting other girls who had moved to the country and were navigating cultural differences was key. She explained that it meant there were things she didn't have to 'explain' with those girls, which implies this offered a lower pressure opportunity to socialise. Being able to just be herself and not worry about cultural differences or expectations made the encounters more comfortable and less intimidating.

Owen also referred to the value of connecting with peers in similar circumstances: *"normal people, not normal, but like the average person probably isn't going to understand...like if you were to say something, they're not going to understand as much as someone going through the same thing would."* As a neurodivergent young man with a history of exclusion, the burden of having to "over-explain" every detail with "average people" was contrasted with the ease of being able to *"just say like a couple of things, and they'll be like, yeah!"*

Both examples emphasise the significance of a sense of affinity, or 'fit.' As well as broadening horizons and meeting new kinds of people, access to relatable peers is equally important for this cohort's sense of belonging and identity development. In both cases, there appears to be

strong overlap with Social identity, where experiences of not feeling ‘other’ or ‘abnormal’ validated their sense of self.

## **Social Initiation As An Indicator of Progress**

*“I used to never actually like engage like in social situations, I guess. I kind of used to wait for it to happen... (now) I also, err....initiate it” Christopher*

Initiating conversation and contact came up several times in discussion. Charlie described how support to experiment in new social situation had helped him improve his social interactions. Reduced passivity and taking more initiative in social interaction were valued improvements that helped him feel more positively about himself and more ready to engage in the world. For him the fact that his Advocate introduced the experiences carefully, slowly and manageably enabled him to focus on them in a purposeful and reflective way. He explained *“I was kind of aware that was the goal so like, instead of just being thrown into conversation...I just knew it was going to happen instead of just being blind.”* This emphasises how tailored introductions to peer connection are essential, and that an ‘expectation’ that young people can learn and thrive in a setting alongside other peers cannot be assumed. However, with well-planned support at the young person’s pace, Advocates can effectively support the development of the skills for this to be achievable in the future.

Hannah’s Advocate noted that *“she was quite quiet and wouldn’t initiate conversations”* and recognised that building her social confidence was a priority to help prepare her for connecting with her peer group successfully when she could finally access college. Hannah to referred to the support helping her *“gain confidence speaking to people who are in the same age group as me.”*

Finally, Owen’s Advocate described him taking the initiative in organising group social trips. While he didn’t face challenges in speaking up and initiating conversations, the Advocacy support enabled him to initiate social interaction on a different level, organising a bowling trip and beach trip, perhaps enabling the sorts of group outings he may have missed out on in the form of school trips and extra-curricular opportunities due to being excluded and outside of education for so long.

## **Support for School and Work Identity**

### **Overcoming negative school experiences**

*“I hated it. Everything about it. I didn’t want to be there.” Christopher*

For three of the young people, support in this area was closely linked to countering their very negative educational experiences. They had all gone through mainstream education without a diagnosis, and therefore support for and understanding of their neurodivergence. Two had experienced severe bullying and one had been excluded five times.

Lily explained how *“I didn’t get any support for my SEN needs, or academically, that’s why I flunked near enough all my GCSEs.”* Having previously felt like a failure because of these low grades, Advocate support to reframe this, not as a personal failing, but because of not having appropriate diagnosis and support, were key to her reframing her identity as a learner.

## **Active Engagement**

Young people contrasted the active approaches to learning they accessed on the SEET programme with their school-based experiences of learning. Christopher struggled initially to articulate the difference, eventually explaining that *“there’s more like...I don’t know what the word is...engagement. In school you’re sort of like just sitting there instead of actually going out and doing things.”* The opportunity to undertake practical learning activities were key to his reengagement, while school learning was experienced as a passive, non-activity.

Owen echoed this: *“this is a lot more...interactive...like there’s a lot of life...it’s not just sat down at one place doing one thing.”* As well as being practical and varied, Owen particularly valued the very social nature of learning on his volunteer placement. Being around others and having people to talk to contrasted for him with school experiences of learning as being sitting down, quietly and not enjoying or ‘doing’ anything.

This shows that the flexibility to tailor learning opportunities to the individual’s needs and motivations are key to strengthening their sense of school or work identity, and motivation to put in effort and learn.

## **Autonomy, Choice and Control: Goals Shaped By Interests**

*“Its control, I guess, if you compare it to school, like when you get to like year 10 you can still choose, but its [the programme] more control.”* Christopher

Being able to focus on an area that motivated him – Forest School – was central to Christopher’s strengthened learner identity and reengagement in learning. His Advocate’s description of her support in this area highlights how she used his goal to broaden his horizons. She explained, *“his main goal is to go and be a forest school leader...he’s very specific about where he wants to go....it’s a place that he feels very safe in.... a lot of work was also trying to expand his horizon and think about maybe other places he could go.”* A successful experience, volunteering to help young children at a Forest School at his former Primary School strongly impacted Christopher’s personal career goal and strengthened his strong attachment and desire to work in that specific school. Developing his school or work identity meant building on this passion to expand his repertoire of experiences and places around this main interest. Visiting other provisions with a related focus, helped gently broaden his focus while allowing him to retain the sense of autonomy which was key to his motivation and engagement.

Lily’s Advocate described how she helped encourage her to replicate strengths she already possessed in other areas: *“we can literally map that same strategy she has already created for herself to be able to go into education.”* Although Lily had a part time job, gained great

satisfaction there and mixed well with others, accessing education felt unmanageable and unsafe initially. Support for autonomy and control here focused rather on helping her recognise the situations where she was able to do certain things and consider how she might use those abilities in different contexts.

## **Overcoming Structural Barriers to Engagement**

A huge part of the support offered by the Advocates is in finding solutions to the structural barriers that young people and their families are unable to overcome themselves. From securing funding, providing transport to supporting the application for an EHCP, a number of critical barriers, external to the young people, required sustained, skilled support. Christopher's Advocate drove him daily to a week-long course which he had no other way of accessing. Owen's Advocate helped him get his birth certificate sorted to be able to access an opportunity. Liv's Advocate supported her to access travel training and funding to enable her to get to experiences. The flexibility and adaptability to provide whatever form of support is needed, whether that means acting as a TA to oversee coursework completion, or taking them on visits to potential providers, was a critical aspect of the re-engagement work.

Some interviews highlighted the fragility of the emergent identities young people were forming. Lily finished her interview by saying *"if I could have more time with Laura or just more of a one-to-one for however long I needed it for, then that would have been really good."* Despite having made strong progress, support was ending before the young person necessarily felt ready. Structural constraints on the duration of support were echoed by the Advocate who recognised the positive strides made but also regretted some of things which had not proved possible. Not being able to access education on the programme, unlike the Pre-Supported Internship, constrained some important routes to boosting school or work identity. Budget sizes for the education component were felt too small in her instance to give her access to the education support she really wanted. In a similar way to Hannah, Lily could not progress her education straight away despite being keen to do so. The ability to increase the degree of contact with education or work as the young person's confidence grew was suggested by Lily's Advocate as an area for improvement that could further grow the success of the programme.

## **Support for Social Identity**

### **Reframing 'difference'**

*"I guess I kind of like used to blame everything on because I'm autistic, so I used to kind of like...blame everything on that and not try and improve, like, like with anything, and say no, which it might be true, but it's not really a good way.... not really a good way to help I guess."*  
Christopher

The interviews highlighted how support for Social Identity helped young people reframe their difference, shifting this aspect of their identity from a negative. Christopher had never before discussed his autism with his Advocate. In the interview, when asked why he ranked support

for his Social Identity so high, he explained that he used to ‘*blame*’ everything on being autistic, and ‘*not try to improve*.’ He recognised that ‘*it might be true*,’ but now felt that “*it’s not really a good way*.” This represents a profound shift in his sense of self which has never been explicitly discussed or addressed with his Advocate. Instead, her consistent support to socialise, access education, leave the home, go out and start to build a life appear to have strengthened his self-concept by reducing his sense that Autism is a barrier. Empowered and no longer held back by restrictive or unhelpful assumptions about his neurodivergence, the support has profoundly impacted his sense of what it means to be an Autistic Person.

This destigmatising approach to support echoes the plant labels activity discussed by Lily’s Advocate in the section on Individual Identity. Connecting the young person with what they need to thrive appears to help them strengthen their understanding and acceptance of themselves and their needs.

Lily explained that the late diagnosis and realisation “*that I am a SEND child*” was a huge shock which had taken her a long time to process. This raises the possibility that the significant emotional and cognitive effort of re-evaluating previous experiences of schooling, interactions with peers, and understanding of themselves, means additional emphasis is put on support in those immediate relational areas by the young people. While these more proximal relational domains may already be more salient for adolescents as they establish their independent identities, the additional barriers to belonging and connectedness in these foundational areas may dominate even more for these young people with experience of marginalisation and exclusion.

## **Using Experiences of ‘Difficulties and ‘Difference’ via Emerging Work Identities**

*“If you’re working with kids, and especially SEND kinds, they do need that like sympathy and like the reassurance. Because when I was in school I never got anything like that...I would never want a child to go through what I have gone through.” Lily*

When discussing her work experience at a play centre in relation to support for School or Work identity, Lily made several references to how her past experiences of difficulties were shaping her actions, choices and beliefs now. She described in detail an interaction with a small boy having a meltdown on being separated from his mother, and her own role in supporting him. Her empathy with his struggle and the fact she received praise from a colleague for the way in which she handled the situation revealed a huge sense of pride in this achievement. This suggests that she may be starting to reframe the negative experiences as a form of wisdom that she may be able to leverage in the world of work.

Similarly, Owen described how he drew on personal experiences of additional needs in making a success of his work experience opportunity. Using the patience and empathy developed through supporting his younger autistic sister to support younger children at the Advocate organisation’s youth clubs allowed him to recognise and play to his strengths. He explained,

*“I’m quite good with her at home when she has like a funny five minutes or whatever, so I thought, why don’t I use like what I do at home for everything else and other people.”* This closely reflects the strategy articulated by Lily’s Advocate, to support young people to ‘map’ their strengths from one context to another.

It may be that reflection with their Advocate to think differently about their experiences and challenges has helped this shift in mindset and helped these young people start to see their experiences as a source of expertise or skills. This suggests that, for young people with late diagnoses or experience of a particular challenge, the possibility of drawing on this to support emergent work identities or self-concept may in some instances be a productive approach.

## Support for Local Community Identity

Every Advocate described some aspect of structured and deliberate support to access and connect with community/ communities. Two of the four young people referenced community-based connections but related this to support for Peer Identity of School and Work Identity.

Christopher’s Advocate described them discovering a park in his small village that he never knew existed, despite the tiny size of the village, because he leaves home so rarely. She organised weekly walks or trips to cafes or restaurants, encouraging him to perhaps order a drink or buy a ticket. Christopher himself did not mention any of these places or discoveries but spoke at length about his Advocates support for his social interaction.

Similarly, Owen’s Advocate described how their organisation functioned as a ‘community’ for him, and how he had built community connections through organising trips to bowling alleys and beaches. Owen however focused on the relationships experienced in the places. In discussing the support for his work identity, he explained *“at the start of it, it was just like you’re working **with** me... but now like, I come in and me and N have a little joke about... it’s quite like...I don’t know how to put it into words.. now we do it sort of all together.”* Arguably this reflects a sense of being part of a ‘community,’ albeit a community of ‘colleagues.’ His difficulty in finding the words to articulate this, and his lack of belonging at a school, mean it’s possible that this represents the first experiences of being part of a ‘community’ and so it is not conceptually very distinct. This may partially explain the young people’s focus on relationships and comparatively low ranking of broader aspects of support like ‘community.’ As an emergent aspect of their identity, this may be underemphasised in their accounts of the programme’s impact, even though it is a central aspect of Advocate’s support.

As noted earlier, this reflects a difference between what smaller and larger organisations can offer. The capacity and nature of the supporting organisation may potentially enhance or constrain the forms of support they can more readily offer. One Advocate alluded to this, explaining, Provider A and Provider X *“have programmes that they can offer within their company. I can’t necessarily provide that...although I can help someone create it externally.”* In this way, the Connected Belonging framework can offer a holistic view of the range of

opportunities for belonging and connection that need to be made available, albeit this may have to take different forms for different settings.

## **Broadening Horizons Safely**

Hannah's Advocate explained that access to the local community felt unsafe for Hannah and her family due to experiences in their home country, where it was unsafe for her and her sibling to go out unsupervised. For her, the ability to see and learn what was safe and possible was key to engaging her in progression towards an independent future.

Other young people's access to Local Community settings may also have been compromised due to safety fears. For instance, Christopher's Advocate surmised that, due to his additional needs, experiences of bullying and poor mental health, it may have felt safer to his family to let him remain at home rather than encourage him out into the world.

Lily spoke of her desire to be more independent: *"I want to be that independent because being a child, from personal experience, I've been quite needy with my parents...and I need to be more independent than relying on other people and especially my mum all the time."* While discussing the impact of boosting her independent travel skills, Lily highlighted her desire to be an independent adult in her own right who can access the world and opportunities.

In all three cases the young person's access to the community is linked to family dynamics, vulnerabilities and a fear of danger. For adolescents who have not had the opportunity to step out into the world outside school and make those initial steps towards independence, and who have experienced violence and discrimination, additional support to learn how to do this with a trusted adult is a key aspect of re-engagement and identity development.

## **Window-shopping: Low Pressure Exploration**

*"I say to people, let's go window shopping. Let's just go and have a look. Let's go and have a listen. Let's go and get lots of information and break it down and see which ones could be manageable, which ones could be enjoyable, which ones are definitely not."* Lily's Advocate

Lily's Advocate described her strategy of introducing possibilities in a low-pressure way and with low expectations as *"window shopping."* Low pressure introductions to multiple opportunities helped keep the exploration light and reduced anxiety. Being able to undertake this exploration over a longer period helps young people facing multiple barriers, anxiety or starting to re-engage to consider where they may most feel connection and belonging. Whether it is possible courses, cafes or work settings, the sense of keeping options open may be particularly useful to give young people time to re-evaluate their identities, without having to commit, or feel they are taking a definite pathway before they are sure.

Christopher's Advocate described how she worked with his very specific interest to safely try to broaden his horizons. She explained, *"If you don't know what there is then you don't know what you're looking for, and may not have such a one-track mind if you know about other places you could*

*go then you have those options, otherwise your life is quite limited to one thing.*" While never explicitly referring to Christopher's Autism, his Advocate's comments suggest she worked with his monotropism to help him to grow and progress. An indirect, gentle approach, introducing new possibilities related to his key interest introduced options, accommodating Christopher's preference to have a sense of control and safety.

## **Support for Citizenship Identity**

While this area of support was rated least important, one Advocate's discussion of this area offers insight into what support might look like here and its value.

Owen's Advocate explained that *"mum lost his birth certificate, so we couldn't DBS check him so we were like, Owen, we're going to order you a new birth certificate... then we're going to open him a bank account... because at the moment he doesn't exist in the world."* The breadth of support offered by the Advocate includes support to overcome hurdles and complete practical necessities for adult life. Finding ways forward to address these administrative barriers which individuals and families may not have been able to address themselves facilitated progression into EET.

She also described how a less authoritarian, more democratic ethos had supported Owen to thrive in their setting. *"He sees himself as like a member of our group...he has asked as well, like he enjoys being in that group ... to do more kind of group activities. He's asked if we could do one to the beach and we've taken a group of six of them bowling."* Initiating the organisation of group social trips and being treated as a 'citizen' within the group or organisation has supported independence and autonomy. Freedom to impact what happens and influencing things socially help him gain experience of social interaction within a broader community. Volunteering to support younger children has helped him have a sense of 'giving back.'

While Citizenship identity was ranked lowest for this group of young people who are dealing with more pressing, immediate relational and belonging priorities, for those who progress into wider participation, opportunity to develop some of the civic participation experiences their peers may have accessed via school will be important to support.

## Conclusions:

### Young people's perceptions of what makes a difference to their outcomes

- Young people consistently ranked support for Individual Identity as most important
- Individual Identity was supported both directly and indirectly by Advocates
- Direct support for Individual Identity was enabled by a trusting relationship with their Advocate
- Direct support for Individual Identity appears to be enabled mainly through skilled conversation with Advocates
- Indirect support for Individual Identity appears to be enabled through carefully planned experiences that support connectedness in other social domains.
- A longer time frame gives young people to reframe their Individual Identity, exploring alternative possible versions of themselves alongside the Advocate
- Young people ranked support for Peer Identity as second most important
- Facilitating contact with peers, connecting them with relatable peers and supporting their autonomy to initiate peer connections are key ways Advocates supported this
- Young people ranked support for School or Work and support for Social identity highly
- Active approaches to learning, support to overcome negative schooling experiences and exercising choice and control are ways School or Work Identity was supported
- Support for Social Identity had a profound impact on young people's sense of self
- Support to understand their own needs and experiences and reframe their sense of difference helped them move beyond restrictive or negative assumptions about their need or challenge
- Using experiences of challenge or difference as a source of wisdom and expertise could help young people leverage a work identity
- Low pressure, safe ways to broaden horizons were key to helping young people connect with opportunity and possibility.
- Young people ranked the more immediate, personal experiences of belonging and connection within their daily experiences as most significant,
- This may reflect their more limited experiences or the more pressing identity and belonging concerns given their experiences of exclusion and isolation.

### Advocate's perceptions of what makes a difference to their outcomes

- Advocates consistently ranked support for Individual Identity as most important
- Advocates recognised the importance of support across a broader range of social domains
- Advocates ranked place-based aspects of support, such as Local Community Identity and Place Attachment more highly than young people
- Advocates survey responses suggest they saw a greater equivalence between Peer, Community, School or Work, Social, Family/ Cultural Identity and Place Attachment

- This may reflect a different vantage point, with Advocates focusing on where the belonging and connectedness is generated (in contrast to young people's more experiential framings)
- It may also reflect their broad experience of young people, each with specific needs and priorities – considering the priorities for specific young people may give rise to greater diversity of response.

## **Conclusions: Programme Impact and Next Steps**

The SEET programme has a 100% retention rate, supporting all those enrolled to make progress towards EET at their own pace. It is equally successful with older learners, in National Curriculum Years 14 to 16, as with learners in the earlier Post-16 Phase.

The programme's holistic understanding of risk, proactive approach to building on opportunities for connection and structured progress monitoring significantly benefit NEET youth who have lost their support networks.

Supporting so many young people – not only to re-engage and progress, but also to take part in research surveys and interviews – shows the strength of relationships and high quality of support enabled on the programme.

The evaluation points a few areas for possible next steps. Firstly, it may be helpful to consider how and whether the size of the Advocacy Organisation impacts scope for Peer Identity development. If so, how this might be mitigated, or whether this impacts decisions around matching young people to Advocates may be further considerations.

Secondly, consideration of whether further flexibility might be beneficial and achievable, or consideration of what follow-on opportunities might be developed and how these might be funded may both be useful. Duration of support, access to education and scope to expand engagement with education if, as and when the young person's engagement grows and results in a desire for more input. As the SEET Programme is part of a planned pathway of opportunities, it may be that follow on programmes or opportunities make this possible.

Finally, consideration of whether supported reflection on Connected Belonging offers a useful learning opportunity as part of the programme and, if so, how that might be embedded and whether the tools used in this evaluation would be adequate or whether it is worth developing other ways to continue to explore young people's and Advocate's views on the impact of support and support priorities.

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Appendix A: Cohort Details (Part 1 of 3)

| Young Person | Advocate | Provider | Advocates Survey | YP Survey | NCY | EHCP | CLA | PEP | Care Order | Service Family | Young Carer | Ethnicity            | EHE | Previous Provision 24-25 | Starting Position                   | Current Position                          | Calc Prog Made | Provision /Complete | Outcome                                 |
|--------------|----------|----------|------------------|-----------|-----|------|-----|-----|------------|----------------|-------------|----------------------|-----|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------|----------------|---------------------|-----------------------------------------|
| 1            | E        | N        | N                | 12        | Yes | No   | No  | No  | No         | No             | No          | WBRI - White British | No  | NEET                     | 2 - Face to face Engagement at Home | 7- Exit with an outcome                   | 5              | Complete            | Engaged in Job Searching(Unemployed)    |
| 2            | G        | N        | N                | 13        | no  | No   | No  | No  | No         | No             | No          | WBRI - White British | No  | NEET                     | 2 - Face to face Engagement at Home | 7- Exit with an outcome                   | 5              | Complete            | Engaged in Job Searching(Unemployed)    |
| 3            | C        | N        | N                | 12        | No  | No   | No  | No  | No         | No             | No          |                      | No  | NEET                     | 0 - Not Engaging                    | 7- Exit with an outcome                   | 7              | Complete            | Engaged in Job Searching(Unemployed)    |
| 4            | G        | N        | N                | 13        | Yes | No   | No  | No  | No         | No             | No          | WBRI - White British | No  | NEET                     | 2 - Face to face Engagement at Home | 7- Exit with an outcome                   | 5              | Complete            | In Education or Training                |
| 5            | H        | Y        | N                | 13        | No  | No   | No  | No  | No         | No             | No          | WBRI - White British | No  | NEET                     | 1 - Enrolled and Engaged            | 7- Exit with an outcome                   | 6              | Complete            | In Education or Training                |
| 6            | C        | Y        | N                | 13        | No  | No   | No  | No  | No         | No             | No          | WBRI - White British | No  | NEET                     | 0 - Not Engaging                    | 7- Exit with an outcome                   | 7              | Complete            | In Education or Training                |
| 7            | E        | N        | N                | 12        | No  | No   | No  | No  | No         | No             | No          | WBRI - White British | No  | NEET                     | 1 - Enrolled and Engaged            | 7- Exit with an outcome                   | 5              | Complete            | In employment including Self employment |
| 8            | E        | N        | N                | 13        | No  | No   | No  | No  | No         | No             | No          |                      | No  | NEET                     | 2 - Face to face Engagement at Home | 7- Exit with an outcome                   | 5              | Complete            | In employment including Self employment |
| 9            | F        | N        | N                | 13        | No  | No   | No  | No  | No         | No             | No          | WBRI - White British | No  | NEET                     | 2 - Face to face Engagement at Home | 7- Exit with an outcome                   | 5              | Complete            | In employment including Self employment |
| 10           | G        | N        | N                | 13        | No  | No   | No  | No  | No         | No             | No          | WBRI - White British | No  | NEET                     | 2 - Face to face Engagement at Home | 7- Exit with an outcome                   | 5              | Complete            | In employment including Self employment |
| 11           | F        | N        | N                | 13        | No  | No   | No  | No  | No         | No             | No          | WBRI - White British | No  | NEET                     | 2 - Face to face Engagement at Home | 7- Exit with an outcome                   | 5              | Complete            | In employment including Self employment |
| 12           | F        | N        | Y                | 12        | No  | No   | No  | No  | No         | No             | No          |                      | Yes | NEET                     | 1 - Enrolled and Engaged            | 7- Exit with an outcome                   | 6              | Complete            | In employment including Self employment |
| 13           | D        | N        | N                | 13        | No  | No   | No  | No  | No         | No             | No          |                      | Yes | NEET                     | 1 - Enrolled and Engaged            | 7- Exit with an outcome                   | 6              | Complete            | In employment including Self employment |
| 14           | D        | Y        | N                | 12        | No  | No   | No  | No  | No         | No             | No          | WBRI - White British | No  | NEET                     | 0 - Not Engaging                    | 7- Exit with an outcome                   | 7              | Complete            | In employment including Self employment |
| 15           | C        | N        | N                | 12        | No  | No   | No  | No  | No         | No             | No          | WBRI - White British | No  | NEET                     | 0 - Not Engaging                    | 7- Exit with an outcome                   | 7              | Complete            | In employment including Self employment |
| 16           | G        | N        | N                | 12        | No  | No   | No  | No  | No         | No             | No          | WBRI - White British | No  | NEET                     | 0 - Not Engaging                    | 7- Exit with an outcome                   | 7              | Complete            | In employment including Self employment |
| 17           | F        | N        | N                | 12        | No  | No   | No  | No  | No         | No             | No          | WBRI - White British | No  | NEET                     | 0 - Not Engaging                    | 7- Exit with an outcome                   | 7              | Complete            | In employment including Self employment |
| 18           | H        | Y        | N                | 13        | No  | No   | No  | No  | No         | No             | No          | WBRI - White British | No  | NEET                     | 0 - Not Engaging                    | 7- Exit with an outcome                   | 7              | Complete            | In employment including Self employment |
| 19           | G        | N        | N                | 13        | No  | No   | No  | No  | No         | No             | No          | WBRI - White British | No  | NEET                     | 0 - Not Engaging                    | 7- Exit with an outcome                   | 7              | Complete            | In employment including Self employment |
| 20           | E        | N        | N                | 13        | No  | No   | No  | No  | No         | No             | No          | WBRI - White British | No  | NEET                     | 0 - Not Engaging                    | 7- Exit with an outcome                   | 7              | Complete            | In employment including Self employment |
| 21           | F        | N        | N                | 13        | No  | No   | No  | No  | No         | No             | No          | WBRI - White British | No  | NEET                     | 0 - Not Engaging                    | 7- Exit with an outcome                   | 7              | Complete            | In employment including Self employment |
| 22           | G        | Y        | Y                | 12        | Yes | No   | No  | No  | No         | No             | No          | WBRI - White British | Yes | NEET                     | 0 - Not Engaging                    | 2 - Face to face Engagement at Home       | 2              | Provision           | EHCP agreed                             |
| 23           | C        | N        | N                | 11        | No  | No   | No  | No  | No         | No             | No          | WBRI - White British | No  | NEET                     | 0 - Not Engaging                    | 2 - Face to face Engagement at Home       | 2              | Provision           |                                         |
| 24           | F        | Y        | N                | 12        | No  | No   | No  | No  | No         | No             | No          | WBRI - White British | No  | NEET                     | 0 - Not Engaging                    | 2 - Face to face Engagement at Home       | 2              | Provision           |                                         |
| 25           | E        | Y        | N                | 12        | No  | No   | No  | No  | No         | No             | No          | WBRI - White British | No  | NEET                     | 0 - Not Engaging                    | 3 - Confident to leave home with advocate | 3              | Provision           |                                         |
| 26           | B        | N        | N                | 12        | No  | No   | No  | No  | No         | No             | No          | WBRI - White British | No  | NEET                     | 1 - Enrolled and Engaged            | 4 - External Engagement                   | 3              | provision           |                                         |
| 27           | F        | N        | N                | 13        | No  | No   | No  | No  | No         | No             | No          | WBRI - White British | No  | NEET                     | 2 - Face to face Engagement at Home | 5 - The What Next Question                | 3              | provision           |                                         |
| 28           | B        | Y        | N                | 12        | No  | CLA  | Yes | No  | No         | No             | No          | WBRI - White British | No  | NEET                     | 1 - Enrolled and Engaged            | 5 - The What Next Question                | 4              | Provision           |                                         |
| 29           | H        | Y        | N                | 12        | No  | No   | No  | No  | No         | No             | No          | WBRI - White British | No  | NEET                     | 0 - Not Engaging                    | 4 - External Engagement                   | 4              | Provision           |                                         |
| 30           | F        | N        | N                | 12        | yes | No   | No  | No  | No         | No             | No          | WBRI - White British | No  | NEET                     | 1 - Enrolled and Engaged            | 5 - The What Next Question                | 4              | provision           |                                         |
| 31           | E        | N        | N                | 12        | No  | No   | No  | No  | No         | No             | No          | WBRI - White British | No  | NEET                     | 0 - Not Engaging                    | 4 - External Engagement                   | 4              | Provision           |                                         |
| 32           | F        | Y        | Y                | 13        | No  | No   | No  | No  | No         | No             | No          | WBRI - White British | No  | NEET                     | 1 - Enrolled and Engaged            | 5 - The What Next Question                | 4              | Provision           |                                         |
| 33           | E        | Y        | N                | 13        | No  | No   | No  | No  | No         | No             | No          | WBRI - White British | No  | NEET                     | 1 - Enrolled and Engaged            | 5 - The What Next Question                | 4              | provision           |                                         |
| 34           | D        | Y        | Y                | 12        | No  | No   | No  | No  | No         | No             | No          | WBRI - White British | No  | NEET                     | 0 - Not Engaging                    | 5 - The What Next Question                | 5              | Provision           |                                         |

Appendix A: Cohort Details (Part 2 of 3)

| Young Person | Advocate Provider | Advocates Survey | YP Survey | NCY | EHCP | CLA | PEP | Care Order | Service Family | Young Carer | Ethnicity            | EHE | Previous Provision 24-25 | Starting Position                   | Current Position           | Calc Prog Made | Provision /Complete | Outcome                                                 |
|--------------|-------------------|------------------|-----------|-----|------|-----|-----|------------|----------------|-------------|----------------------|-----|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|----------------------------|----------------|---------------------|---------------------------------------------------------|
| 35           | E                 | Y                | Y         | 12  | No   | No  | No  | No         | No             | No          | WBRI - White British | No  | NEET                     | 1 - Enrolled and Engaged            | 6 - EET Planning           | 5              | Provision           |                                                         |
| 36           | C                 | Y                | Y         | 12  | No   | No  | No  | No         | No             | No          | WBRI - White British | No  | NEET                     | 1 - Enrolled and Engaged            | 6 - EET Planning           | 5              | Provision           |                                                         |
| 37           | G                 | Y                | Y         | 12  | No   | No  | No  | No         | No             | No          | WBRI - White British | No  | NEET                     | 1 - Enrolled and Engaged            | 6 - EET Planning           | 5              | Provision           |                                                         |
| 38           | E                 | Y                | Y         | 12  | No   | No  | No  | No         | No             | No          | WBRI - White British | No  | NEET                     | 0 - Not Engaging                    | 5 - The What Next Question | 5              | Provision           |                                                         |
| 39           | E                 | Y                | Y         | 12  | No   | No  | No  | No         | No             | No          | WBRI - White British | No  | NEET                     | 0 - Not Engaging                    | 5 - The What Next Question | 5              | Provision           |                                                         |
| 40           | D                 | Y                | N         | 12  | No   | No  | No  | No         | No             | No          | WBRI - White British | No  | NEET                     | 0 - Not Engaging                    | 5 - The What Next Question | 5              | Provision           |                                                         |
| 41           | F                 | Y                | N         | 12  | No   | No  | No  | No         | No             | No          | WBRI - White British | No  | NEET                     | 1 - Enrolled and Engaged            | 6 - EET Planning           | 5              | Provision           |                                                         |
| 42           | H                 | Y                | N         | 12  | No   | No  | No  | No         | No             | No          | WBRI - White British | No  | NEET                     | 0 - Not Engaging                    | 5 - The What Next Question | 5              | Provision           |                                                         |
| 43           | C                 | N                | N         | 12  | No   | No  | No  | No         | No             | No          | WBRI - White British | No  | NEET                     | 0 - Not Engaging                    | 5 - The What Next Question | 5              | Provision           |                                                         |
| 44           | F                 | N                | N         | 12  | No   | No  | No  | No         | No             | No          | WBRI - White British | No  | NEET                     | 0 - Not Engaging                    | 5 - The What Next Question | 5              | Provision           |                                                         |
| 45           | E                 | Y                | Y         | 13  | No   | No  | No  | No         | No             | No          | WBRI - White British | No  | NEET                     | 1 - Enrolled and Engaged            | 6 - EET Planning           | 5              | Provision           |                                                         |
| 46           | E                 | Y                | Y         | 13  | No   | No  | No  | No         | No             | No          | WBRI - White British | No  | NEET                     | 0 - Not Engaging                    | 5 - The What Next Question | 5              | Provision           |                                                         |
| 47           | E                 | Y                | Y         | 13  | No   | No  | No  | No         | No             | No          | WBRI - White British | No  | NEET                     | 0 - Not Engaging                    | 5 - The What Next Question | 5              | Provision           |                                                         |
| 48           | C                 | Y                | Y         | 13  | No   | No  | No  | No         | No             | No          | WBRI - White British | No  | NEET                     | 1 - Enrolled and Engaged            | 6 - EET Planning           | 5              | Provision           |                                                         |
| 49           | C                 | Y                | Y         | 13  | No   | No  | No  | No         | No             | No          | WBRI - White British | No  | NEET                     | 0 - Not Engaging                    | 5 - The What Next Question | 5              | Provision           |                                                         |
| 50           | H                 | Y                | N         | 13  | No   | CLA | Yes | No         | No             | No          | WBRI - White British | No  | NEET                     | 0 - Not Engaging                    | 5 - The What Next Question | 5              | Provision           |                                                         |
| 51           | E                 | Y                | Y         | 12  | No   | No  | No  | No         | No             | No          | WBRI - White British | No  | NEET                     | 0 - Not Engaging                    | 6 - EET Planning           | 6              | Provision           |                                                         |
| 52           | C                 | Y                | Y         | 12  | No   | No  | No  | No         | No             | No          | WBRI - White British | No  | NEET                     | 0 - Not Engaging                    | 6 - EET Planning           | 6              | Provision           |                                                         |
| 53           | E                 | Y                | Y         | 12  | No   | No  | No  | No         | No             | No          | WBRI - White British | No  | NEET                     | 0 - Not Engaging                    | 6-EET Planning             | 6              | Provision           |                                                         |
| 54           | A                 | Y                | Y         | 13  | No   | No  | No  | No         | No             | No          | WBRI - White British | No  | NEET                     | 0 - Not Engaging                    | 6-EET Planning             | 6              | Provision           |                                                         |
| 55           | E                 | y                | N         | 13  | No   | No  | No  | No         | No             | No          | WBRI - White British | No  | NEET                     | 0 - Not Engaging                    | 6 - EET Planning           | 6              | Provision           |                                                         |
| 56           | E                 | y                | N         | 13  | No   | No  | No  | No         | No             | No          | WBRI - White British | No  | NEET                     | 0 - Not Engaging                    | 6-EET Planning             | 6              | Provision           |                                                         |
| 57           | H                 | N                | N         | 13  | No   | No  | No  | No         | No             | No          | WBRI - White British | No  | NEET                     | 0 - Not Engaging                    | 6 - EET Planning           | 6              | Provision           |                                                         |
| 58           | G                 | Y                | Y         | 12  | No   | No  | No  | No         | No             | No          | WBRI - White British | No  | NEET                     | 0 - Not Engaging                    | 7- Exit with an outcome    | 7              | Provision           |                                                         |
| 59           | C                 | Y                | Y         | 12  | No   | No  | No  | No         | No             | No          | WBRI - White British | No  | NEET                     | 0 - Not Engaging                    | 7- Exit with an outcome    | 7              | Provision           |                                                         |
| 60           | C                 | Y                | N         | 14  | No   | No  | No  | No         | No             | No          | WBRI - White British | No  | NEET                     | 1 - Enrolled and Engaged            | 7- Exit with an outcome    | 5              | Complete            | Engaged in Job Searching(Unemployed)                    |
| 61           | G                 | N                | N         | 14  | No   | No  | No  | No         | No             | No          | WBRI - White British | No  | NEET                     | 2 - Face to face Engagement at Home | 7- Exit with an outcome    | 5              | Complete            | Engaged in Job Searching(Unemployed)                    |
| 62           | G                 | Y                | N         | 14  | No   | No  | No  | No         | No             | No          | WBRI - White British | No  | NEET                     | 0 - Not Engaging                    | 7- Exit with an outcome    | 7              | Complete            | Engaged in Job Searching(Unemployed)                    |
| 63           | C                 | N                | N         | 14  | No   | No  | No  | No         | No             | No          |                      | No  | NEET                     | 0 - Not Engaging                    | 7- Exit with an outcome    | 7              | Complete            | Engaged in Job Searching(Unemployed)                    |
| 64           | E                 | N                | N         | 14  | No   | No  | No  | No         | No             | No          | WBRI - White British | No  | NEET                     | 0 - Not Engaging                    | 7- Exit with an outcome    | 7              | Complete            | Engaged in Job Searching(Unemployed)                    |
| 65           | C                 | N                | N         | 14  | No   | No  | No  | No         | No             | No          | WBRI - White British | No  | NEET                     | 0 - Not Engaging                    | 7- Exit with an outcome    | 7              | Complete            | Engaged in Job Searching(Unemployed)                    |
| 66           | C                 | Y                | Y         | 14  | Yes  | Yes | No  | No         | No             | No          | WBRI - White British | No  | NEET                     | 0 - Not Engaging                    | 7- Exit with an outcome    | 7              | Complete            | Engaged in Job Searching(Unemployed) -moved out of area |
| 67           | D                 | Y                | Y         | 14  | No   | No  | No  | No         | No             | No          | WBRI - White British | No  | NEET                     | 2 - Face to face Engagement at Home | 7- Exit with an outcome    | 5              | Complete            | In Education or Training                                |
| 68           | G                 | N                | N         | 14  | Yes  | No  | No  | No         | No             | No          | WBRI - White British | No  | NEET                     | 2 - Face to face Engagement at Home | 7- Exit with an outcome    | 5              | Complete            | In Education or Training                                |

Appendix A: Cohort Details (Part 3 of 3)

| Young Person | Advocate Provider | Advocates Survey | YP Survey | NCY | EHCP | CLA | PEP | Care Order | Service Family | Young Carer | Ethnicity            | EHE | Previous Provision 24-25 | Starting Position                   | Current Position                          | Calc Prog Made | Provision / Complete | Outcome                                 |
|--------------|-------------------|------------------|-----------|-----|------|-----|-----|------------|----------------|-------------|----------------------|-----|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------|----------------|----------------------|-----------------------------------------|
| 69           | C                 | N                | N         | 15  | Yes  | No  | No  | No         | No             | No          | WBRI - White British | No  | NEET                     | 2 - Face to face Engagement at Home | 7- Exit with an outcome                   | 5              | Complete             | In Education or Training                |
| 70           | C                 | N                | N         | 15  | No   | No  | No  | No         | No             | No          | WBRI - White British | No  | NEET                     | 2 - Face to face Engagement at Home | 7- Exit with an outcome                   | 5              | Complete             | In employment including Self employment |
| 71           | F                 | N                | N         | 16  | Yes  | No  | No  | No         | No             | No          | WBRI - White British | No  | NEET                     | 1 - Enrolled and Engaged            | 7- Exit with an outcome                   | 6              | Complete             | In employment including Self employment |
| 72           | F                 | N                | N         | 14  | Yes  | No  | No  | No         | No             | No          | WBRI - White British | No  | NEET                     | 0 - Not Engaging                    | 7- Exit with an outcome                   | 7              | Complete             | In employment including Self employment |
| 73           | D                 | N                | N         | 15  | Yes  | No  | No  | No         | No             | No          | WBRI - White British | No  | NEET                     | 0 - Not Engaging                    | 7- Exit with an outcome                   | 7              | Complete             | In employment including Self employment |
| 74           | E                 | Y                | N         | 15  | No   | No  | No  | No         | No             | No          | WBRI - White British | Yes | NEET                     | 0 - Not Engaging                    | 3 - Confident to leave home with advocate | 3              | Provision            |                                         |
| 75           | D                 | N                | N         | 15  | No   | No  | No  | No         | No             | No          | WBRI - White British | No  | NEET                     | 0 - Not Engaging                    | 3 - Confident to leave home with advocate | 3              | Provision            |                                         |
| 76           | B                 | N                | N         | 15  | No   | No  | No  | No         | No             | No          | WBRI - White British | No  | NEET                     | 1 - Enrolled and Engaged            | 4 - External Engagement                   | 3              | provision            |                                         |
| 77           | D                 | Y                | Y         | 14  | No   | No  | No  | No         | No             | No          | WBRI - White British | No  | NEET                     | 1 - Enrolled and Engaged            | 5 - The What Next Question                | 4              | Provision            |                                         |
| 78           | H                 | Y                | N         | 15  | Yes  | No  | No  | No         | No             | No          | WBRI - White British | No  | NEET                     | 1 - Enrolled and Engaged            | 5 - The What Next Question                | 4              | provision            |                                         |
| 79           | F                 | Y                | Y         | 14  | No   | No  | No  | No         | No             | No          | WBRI - White British | No  | NEET                     | 1 - Enrolled and Engaged            | 6 - EET Planning                          | 5              | Provision            |                                         |
| 80           | D                 | Y                | Y         | 14  | Yes  | Yes | No  | No         | No             | No          | WBRI - White British | No  | NEET                     | 0 - Not Engaging                    | 5 - The What Next Question                | 5              | Provision            |                                         |
| 81           | E                 | Y                | N         | 15  | No   | Yes | Yes | No         | No             | No          | WBRI - White British | No  | NEET                     | 0 - Not Engaging                    | 5 - The What Next Question                | 5              | Provision            |                                         |
| 82           | H                 | Y                | N         | 15  | No   | No  | No  | No         | No             | No          | WBRI - White British | No  | NEET                     | 0 - Not Engaging                    | 5 - The What Next Question                | 5              | Provision            |                                         |
| 83           | C                 | Y                | N         | 16  | No   | No  | No  | No         | No             | No          | WBRI - White British | No  | NEET                     | 0 - Not Engaging                    | 5 - The What Next Question                | 5              | Provision            |                                         |
| 84           | F                 | N                | N         | 14  | No   | No  | No  | No         | No             | No          | WBRI - White British | No  | NEET                     | 0 - Not Engaging                    | 6 - EET Planning                          | 6              | Provision            |                                         |
| 85           | D                 | Y                | Y         | 14  | Yes  | No  | No  | No         | No             | No          | WBRI - White British | No  | NEET                     | 0 - Not Engaging                    | 7- Exit with an outcome                   | 7              | Provision            |                                         |
| 86           | C                 | Y                | Y         | 15  | Yes  | No  | No  | No         | No             | No          | WBRI - White British | No  | NEET                     | 0 - Not Engaging                    | 7- Exit with an outcome                   | 7              | Provision            |                                         |

## Individual Identity Support

### Christopher's Views

#### Getting better at talking to people

"That's like my main problem, I'm not very good at socialising." Activities outside the home, going out to shops and on buses with his Advocate, built his social skills and confidence.

"I used to overthink about everything, like people around me staring and stuff like that and now I realise that nobody really cares." Regular, supported experiences reduced anxiety, helped him become less self-conscious in public and begin to talk to people.

"I used to say everything impulsively, without thinking about it and now I think before I speak." His Advocate's support helped him become more reflective about his interactions, gain greater self-control and insight into his impact on other people.

"That sort of experimenting with social situations, like when I was doing it, I was kind of aware that was the goal so like, instead of just being thrown into a conversation...I just knew it was going to happen instead of just being blind." Carefully introducing social experiences slowly and manageably helped him focus on them in a purposeful and reflective way. Interacting with people in different situations was a skill to consciously develop and build, rather than it being assumed to be something naturally and easily acquired through the course of daily life.

#### Getting better at managing daily life

"I got better at...yeah...just like, living." Wide-ranging support had a profound impact on his day-to-day experiences and quality of life.

"I can...remember about stuff I need to do during the day, just basic things like hygiene and stuff like that.... more aware basically" Leaving school early meant a sudden change from the formal structure of a school day, leaving Christopher with no established routines. Being outside education, employment or training and rarely leave home had a very negative impact on his sense of his individual identity.

### Advocate's Views

#### Improving communication

"trying to have conversations and to get him to open up about who he is as an individual ...has been a huge, a huge part of the work." Support to encourage talking and communication with his Advocate was an essential aspect of the work to initiate a connection between them which required an extended period of time.

#### Establishing trust

“I guess its maybe just like trusting adults or knowing how, yeah, to have like that verbal communication....it's taken a long, a long time for him to feel confident to talk, but maybe it's, ... come from going outside and experiencing places and me just showing up every week, being there and just like...keeping on asking, keeping on pushing.” While the foundational connection with an Advocate took a long time to establish, once trust was built, the relationship profoundly impacted Christopher's sense of self. This connection acted as a conduit to other social experiences that supported progression towards EET.

Christopher had never previously expressed the thoughts he did in this interview. The fact that he could talk so openly about himself and his experiences with a researcher shows how much progress he has made.

#### Overcoming Negative School Experiences

"I'd probably move school and work identity up now I understand what that is about." Although he ranked it seventh on his survey, during interview Christopher reviewed the domains and decided to pull it up to the top three.

**School:** "I hated it. Everything about it. I didn't want to be there." Christopher's learning on the Forest School Level 2 course and with Maya on the practical and written coursework was very different to his time at mainstream school and changed the way he felt about his ability to study and learn.

#### Choice and Control

"Its control, I guess, if you compare it to school, like when you get to like year 10 you can still choose, but its more control." Being able to focus on an area that motivated him was key to Christopher's (re) engagement.

#### Practical and Active Learning

"there's more like.....I don't know what the word is....engagement. In school you're sort of like just sitting there instead of actually going out and doing things." The opportunity to undertake practical learning activities in a different setting was key to his re-engagement in learning and progression towards EET. School learning was experienced as a passive, non-activity.

## Overcoming barriers & facilitating access

“His identity when he was in school...would have been a very negative feeling...feeling like he was not safe in school... He's like still got that barrier of like mainstream education would be difficult...he wouldn't go to college but he will go to an alternative provision.” Christopher left school early in Year 11 after experiencing bullying and wouldn't initially engage with any staff. Overcoming this barrier meant identifying options that felt safe and motivating for him and finding educational provision he could access.

“His final goal ... is to go back and be a forest school leader. So we kind of thought ...how can we get you to that point, get you some qualifications and like get you to the point where you can do it for real?” His very specific interest in forest school and the fact he lived in a remote rural location required creative thinking to overcome geographic and transport barriers.

“We helped fund that through like our internal staff funding” Overcoming structural barriers to accessing education to enable Christopher to continue to develop his identity as a learner were important parts of the Advocate's role. Identifying a provision, sourcing funding and driving Christopher to attend the initial week-long course were enabled access and helped him continue to develop his school or work identity.

“My job has been to support him to complete that coursework...it was all like coursework to do by himself ...he really did struggle to like complete it... so it was about giving him that like confidence and emotional support.....we'd like check it over....anything that was practical, we'd like go to the woods and take photos.” The breadth of support for identity development in this domain was very wide ranging. It encompassed elements of a Teaching Assistant role right through to researching provisions, negotiating funding and providing transportation.

“This helped him feel a lot more positive,...that he can learn things, he can do school, like he is like clever and like a lot more independent to do things without someone being right there and supporting him.” A high level of support in all aspects of accessing the course was necessary and has, over time, helped him develop a level of independence closer to the one needed to take his next steps to EET.

## Using the young person's goal to broaden horizons

“His main goal is to go and be a forest school leader...he's very specific about where he wants to go....it's a place that he feels very safe in.... a lot of work was also trying to expand his horizon and think about maybe other places he could go.” A successful experience, volunteering to help young children at a Forest School at his former Primary School strongly impacted Christopher's personal career goal and strengthened his strong attachment and desire to work in that specific school. Developing his school or work identity meant building on this passion to expand his repertoire of experiences and places around this main interest.

## Peer & Local Community Identity Support

### Christopher's Views

#### (Peer) Initiating and Engaging

"I used to never actually like engage like in social situations, I guess. I kind of used to wait for it to happen... (now) I also, err....initiate it" Support helped him to be more proactive and involved in social interactions with other young people. Reducing his passivity has helped him take more initiative in social interaction. However, Christopher did not refer to examples of interactions with peers, rather he referred to interactions with younger children at the Forest School.

### Advocate's Views

#### Broadening Social Contact Indirectly

"Home is his world... what's easy for him is just to be in his house, in his room, like he speaks to friends online before he plays video games and that is how he chooses to socialise." Christopher's interactions with peers were online; he had no motivation to meet in person.

"He's got a park in his village that he didn't know was there... there are local places that he didn't really know was there because before he'd just been in his house or on a bus to school." Having left home so rarely, he had very limited knowledge of what was in his village, let alone further afield. Focusing on developing his local community identity encouraged Christopher out of the house without a direct pressure to interact socially.

#### Fear of Peers

"He has a very big fear of other teenagers and other people his own age because of when he was in school being quite badly bullied.. and this led to bad mental health" Exploring the local area with a trusted adult helped him start to build a sense of identity in his local community safely without also having to worry about social interactions.

"Maybe it was easier for everyone to be like, you're safe at home, so we'll just stay home." Maya focused on trips to places around his interests. Prioritising local community identity and using his strong interest in Forest School as a focus, she broadened peer and general social contact, in a way that felt safe. Taking him to other education centres and nature-based organisations offered scope for encountering others in new settings.

## Social Identity Support

### Christopher's Views

#### Learning Neurodivergence isn't a Barrier or Problem

"I guess I kind of like used to blame everything on because I'm autistic, so I used to kind of like...blame everything on that and not try and improve, like, like with anything, and say no, which it might be true, but its not really a good way.... not really a good way to help I guess."

Advocate support to socialise, access education and go out and strengthened Christopher's self-concept by reducing his sense that Autism was a barrier. This empowered him, meaning he was no longer held back by a restrictive or unhelpful assumptions about his neurodivergence.

Although there was no suggestion that this was explicitly explored or discussed, it seems to have profoundly impacted his sense of what it means to be an Autistic Person.

### Advocate's Views

#### Supporting Monotropic Thinkers

"If you don't know what there is then you don't know what you're looking for, and may not have such a one-track mind if you know about other places you could go then you have those options, otherwise your life is quite limited to one thing." While never explicitly referring to Christopher's Autism, his Advocate's comments suggest she worked with his monotropism to help him to grow and progress. An indirect, gentle approach, introducing new possibilities related to his key interest introduced options, accommodating Christopher's preference to have a sense of control and safety.

## Individual Identity Support

### Hannah's Views

#### Trying new things

“She has helped me try new things, meet new people and engage with them ...helping me to do things I never thought I'd be comfortable in doing.” Both careers-focused activities like applying for a jobs and writing CVs, and leisure activities such as rock climbing, swimming lessons and gym trips, built confidence.

#### Building self-belief

“she helped me with those things because I'm more comfortable with her. I've felt ...trust with her...I just had to trust myself that I could do this, if anyone in the world can do it, then I can also do.i” The relationship, not just the activities, were key to the individual identity development. A trusting relationship helped Hannah change her mindset and develop more self-belief.

## Local Community Identity Support

### Advocate's Views

#### Creating opportunities for social interaction

“She was lacking social interaction.” Having moved here from South Africa, Hannah couldn't progress to college as her qualifications were not recognised in the UK. Her Advocate aimed to get her out in public as much as possible to create opportunities for interaction and build confidence.

#### Overcoming fears of danger

“Introducing her to the community and that it is actually safe for her to be able to go out and do things.” As lots of things were quite dangerous to do back in South Africa, Hannah had Lilyed a comparatively sheltered life and lacked familiarity with the new local area she found herself in. Building her local community meant helping her identify safe activities to do and places to go.

#### Developing Independence from Her Family

“She is very different to her parents in terms of what she wants out of life.” As her family's life was very work focused and they had recently arrived, they didn't have much time to give her these broader experiences. She wanted to pursue a different life path from her family, both in terms of work and leisure. Support from her Trusted Adult helped her adapt and find out what she likes to do in this new country she found herself in.

## Peer Identity and Social Identity Support

### Hannah's Views

#### Facilitating contact with peers

“She helped me meet other kids my age that she works with... build new friendships and gain confidence speaking to people who are in the same age group as me.” Organising activities like dance classes where Hannah met other mentees facilitated contact with peers and helped her start to engage with them more confidently. This led to Hannah having confidence to speak to a girl in her neighbourhood and developing a friendship independently.

#### Connecting with peers in similar circumstances

“Meeting S... in sessions with Jasmine helped me get to know other girls who also moved here. They're refugees so it's not the same but it's sort of similar.” Forming bonds with other girls who had quite recently arrived from overseas helped her form bonds with people who “understand” what it is like to adjust to a whole new culture.

### Advocate's Views

#### Building communication confidence with peers

“She was quite quiet...and wouldn't initiate conversations.” To help Hannah build a level of social confidence with peers which would help her when she could finally access her college course, facilitating social contact was a priority.

“She missed her friends so badly, I could really see that she was in pain...almost to the point of depression.” Preventing Hannah's mental health from worsening was important because this may have further damaged her self-confidence, jeopardising her transition into college a year later. Having to wait a year until she could study again with nothing to distract her from the loss of her friends in South Africa made support to build new connections a top priority.

“understanding our culture here is really important to her building relationships with other people moving forwards,” As well as engineering situations to enable comfortable contact, there was an added dimension of preparing her “culturally.” Contact with refugee peers gave opportunities to connect with peers with whom she would not have to explain the struggle of trying to adapt to these cultural differences.

## Constraints to support for Connected Belonging

### Advocate's Views

#### Peer Identity

“the fact it was just the two of us could be a little bit restricting at times.” One to one mentoring was important to build the trusting relationships but meant that her Advocate had to engineer situations to enable peer connection which is not always easy.

#### School or Work Identity

“I can't really cater for that.” Because Hannah couldn't be in college there were constraints to how much support could really be offered. She spent the year studying and revising for GCSEs to take them in September to enable her to then start on the Nursing course she wants to do. Her Advocate offered practical support like drafting a CV, getting an Indeed profile together, and setting homework to apply for jobs to keep her busy over the summer. She organised swimming lessons to support her confidence in her ability to learn new things while she waited to be able to start on her next steps.

### Hannah's Views

#### Family and Cultural Identity

“because we come from different areas.... we are completely different in a way.. I know that she wouldn't know some things, and that she knows things that I wouldn't know, so it becomes hard to explain it all sometimes.” Hannah recognised that there were restrictions to her Advocate's scope to be help her with challenges around Cultural difference. She recognised the efforts made but felt that there were sometimes things that were hard to explain or ask for help with.

## Social Identity Support

### Owen's Views

#### Connecting with peers in similar circumstances

“normal people, not normal, but like the average person probably is not going to understand...like if you were to say something, they're not going to understand as much as someone going through the same thing would.” As a neurodivergent young man, contact with peers with experience of similar challenges helped his sense of connected belonging. The burden of having to ‘over-explain’ every detail with ‘average people’ was contrasted by Owen with the ease of being able to ‘just say like a couple of things, and they’ll be like ‘yeah!’”

### Advocate's Views

#### Advocate's experience/understanding of similar issues

“he's really dyslexic as well, and I'm dyslexic, so that's kind of like helped him with like a connection with me, he understands that I'm not going to judge him if he can't spell something.” Sharing a common challenge with his Advocate was felt to be beneficial in building a connection and feeling of being accepted.

“he just wants to be given a chance.” Supporting a sister with Autism at home, being in the process of getting diagnosed with ADHD himself and having had a negative experience of schooling, being among people who accept him as he is and will find ways to work with his strengths and abilities had had a transformative effect for Owen.

#### Negative experiences of school

“school wasn’t the best thing for me at all, so I didn’t really get to like...do much of school”

Work identity, rather than school identity was Owen’s interest. Having been excluded from five schools, he wanted to be able to progress in life and saw work and volunteering as a way to do this.

#### Gaining ‘real’ experience of work

“I did a bit of like work experience back when I was supposed to be in school and I didn’t really like it...I didn’t really get a taste of like sort of work, it that makes sense. But doing this now, like the holiday club...I sort of have an idea of more like what work is going to be like and what it is actually like.” School-based work experience was some gardening around the school site, which was of little interest to Owen and was still within a school setting. Volunteering within the Advocate’s supporting organisation gave Owen a sense of doing something with purpose and impact and of having colleagues rather than teachers.

#### Practical, Active and Social Learning

“This is a lot more ....interactive...like there’s a lot of life...its not just sat down at one place doing one thing.” As well as being practical and varied, the volunteering work was highly social. Being around other people and having people to talk to contrasted for Owen with school experiences which were associated with sitting down, quietly and not enjoying or ‘doing’ anything.

#### Building on skills and experiences

“I’m quite good with her at home when she has like a funny five minutes or whatever so I though why don’t I use like what I do at home out for everything else and other people.”

Using the patience and empathy developed through supporting his younger autistic sister to support younger children attending the organisations youth clubs and holiday clubs allowed him to recognise and play to his strengths.

#### Less Authoritarian Relationships

“at the start of it was just like you're working *with me...*, but now like, I come in and me and Nick have a little joke about... it's quite like, I don't know how to put it into words... now we do it sort of all together.” Owen thrived under a less authoritative approach. Feeling part of the organisation, rather than just being somebody helped by adults within it was a powerful new experience which motivated Owen and was key to his progression and success.

#### **Being given a chance**

“we kind of gave him that opportunity and he realised that we're not going to put him back for like his mistakes he's made in the past.” Being given an opportunity to get involved in planning and running activities for younger children unlocked his sense of belonging and participation.

#### **Supported reflection on past experiences**

“We do chat often and he's like, I'm not that person I used to be. I want to put things right. I've got a future.” As well as experience and opportunity, regular conversations with his Advocate help him reflect on and articulate his changing sense of identity around learning and work.

#### **Trust, respect and persistence**

“He was on the programme last year and just wouldn't engage with anyone. But I think it's just giving him that bit of like trust and respect and like accepting him for like the mistakes that he's made before...treating him as a normal human being...and just, yeah, just opening up these opportunities that wouldn't normally be available.” Despite not engaging the previous year, persistence and exploring different ways forward have enabled significant progression for Owen. While it may have taken a long time for him to trust in the Advocate organisation, the experience of being trusted to take on volunteering within the organisation has unlocked engagement and resulted in him progressing to the point of being offered an Apprenticeship there next year.

#### **Building on skills and experiences**

“I spent a bit of time getting to know Owen at first but his younger sister is autistic and he's quite keen to support other younger people with additional needs. He helps mum out a lot...and I said I think he'll be really good helping with like the SEN youth club.” Taking time to get to know Owen's specific skills and strengths and identifying opportunities for him to develop and use those have helped him engage and make strong progress towards EET.

## Peer Identity Support

### Owen's Views

#### Supporting Social Autonomy

“Emma is not always by my side 24/7....if I want to go and speak to this person I can do that...yeah like, too much supervision....it goes back to the like whole school thing again...I don't like having someone there constantly...” A less authoritative approach enabled Owen to build relationships with his peers alongside his relationship with the Advocate. While other Case Study young people benefitted from the Advocate facilitating peer contact, enabling

## Citizenship Identity Support

### Advocate's Views

#### Supporting Social Autonomy

“he sees himself as like a member of our group...he has asked as well, like he enjoys being in that group ... to do more kind of group activities. He's asked if we could do one to the beach and we've taken a group of six of them bowling.” Initiating the organisation of group social trips and being treated as a ‘citizen’ within the group or organisation has supported independence and autonomy. Freedom to impact what happens and influencing things socially help him gain the social connection experiences he will have missed out on in school via trips and extra curricular opportunities.

#### Support for Civic Participation

“mum lost his birth certificate, so we can't DBS check him so we were like, Owen, we're going to order you a new birth certificate... then we're going to open him a bank account... because at the moment he doesn't exist in the world.” The breadth of support offered by the Advocate includes support to overcome hurdles and complete practical necessities for adult life. Finding ways forward to these administrative barriers which individuals and families may not have been able to address themselves facilitated progression into EET.

#### Accessing multiple communities

“he sees us a community....tomorrow we’re going to a support group so that’s like another community.... he’s met quite a few of our other young people, he feels like connected belonging with them and they’ve all kind of supported each other and built friendships.” Involvement with the Advocate organisation on the SEET programme acts as a local community within which the individual can build and identity, and from which they can access other communities to be part of.

“Its something maybe he didn’t experience when he was at school and he’s enjoying having that experience now.” For young people who didn’t attend school or didn’t benefit from the extracurricular activities and trips on offer there, the Advocate’s organisation can help them experience being part of a community of peers locally with whom you can do fun social activities

“he’s made friends through this because they contact each other outside of like when they’re here” Facilitated community connection through the Advocate’s work has supported social independence where young people meet up independently outside.

## Individual Identity Support

### Prioritising self-acceptance

“I need to be able to accept myself and love myself before I could like focus on anything else.”

The Advocate’s support helped Lily think differently, recognise her low self-esteem and develop greater self-acceptance.

### Supporting independence

“She’s been helping me do some travel training to be able to like go on a bus by myself so I could be more independent and confident in myself...to take myself to do different things...and get to SS&L in September, because I haven’t been the best at being able to go anywhere by myself.” While ostensibly about supporting access to community and places, travel training hugely impacted Lily’s self-concept and sense of being an autonomous individual with goals. Support to overcome her difficulty going to places by herself was vital to enable her to progress towards EET.

### Strengthening mental health

“It makes me feel like I’m not not doing anything, not making me feel like a failure, like making me feel this is me and this is what I’m here for and like I can do it.” Lower GCSEs than she had hoped for and very bad experiences of bullying meant Lily had no progression options. Advocate support during this year not only prevented her mental health worsening further which would jeopardise future engagement, but also gave Lily a sense of purpose and focus.

### Building hope

“I’m like more independent, I’m more happy in myself, but also that knowing that I can have these opportunities from Laura and other people showing me.” While transport challenges, low attainment, low income and low self-confidence combined to restrict her Post-16 options, personalised support to explore her options helped Lily build hope for her future.

### Advocate’s Views

#### Reviewing needs

“When we go into a garden centre there’s little cards at the back of each plant which tells us what they need to thrive, that’s very similar to people, so I asked to create her own.” Support to take a careful look at needs and gain insight into what works well help the Advocate get to know the individual, but also help the individual reflect on their identity and experiences.

## Individual Identity Support

### Advocate's Views

#### Support to recognise and replicate strengths

“how has she been able to create success in her life already, and how can we literally map that same strategy that she’s already created for herself to be able to go into education.”

Support to reflect on successes in her part time work and other areas of her life empowers the individual to recognise strategies they use elsewhere and gives the Advocate a personally relevant model on which to base support.

#### Building reflection and communication skills

“Really getting her to look inwardly and then communicate outwardly what it is that she would need.” Support to develop awareness of individual needs, interests and feelings is accompanied by support to be able to articulate those in order to be able to describe and articulate this to the supporting adult.

## Social Identity Support

### Lily's Views

#### Learning not to see conditions as a barrier or problem

“I always knew that I had something but I didn’t know if that was just me being myself or it was just some random thing.” The experience of growing up and going through the school system with undiagnosed ADHD and autism has negatively impacted her developing sense of self.

“I’ve got a health condition called eczema...it’s made me really insecure and like really hard to accept myself and to show people who I am and for them to accept me as well.” Her skin condition has negatively impacted the way others perceive her and her self-concept. Support with this supports progression into EET by reducing social anxiety and helping her overcome the barriers this creates to engagement.

“I struggled quite a lot with social anxiety in school and Laura and myself in general has helped me improve that social identity ...and for me to be able to be more confident.”

Crediting both herself and her Advocate for improving her social identity and growing her confidence illustrates how the support has empowered her about her social identity.

#### **Support to overcome the impact of a lack of SEN support**

[“When I was in school I didn’t get any support for my SEN needs or academically , that’s why I flunked near enough all my GCSEs.”](#) Reflection on her past negative school experiences helped Lily stop internalising her academic failure and recognise the failure to diagnose and support her learning needs. Advocate support helps her rebuild her sense of herself as a person who can learn new skills.

#### **Support to overcome the impact of bullying**

[“I went through bullying and it had a massive impact on me mentally and physically and I needed help from other people to gain that confidence and that love.”](#) Personalised support to deal with the identity impacts of bullying is key to enabling progression towards EET.

#### **Building on experiences**

[“if you’re working with kids, and especially SEND kinds, they do need that like sympathy and like the reassurance. Because when I was in school I never got anything like that...I would never want a child to go through what I have gone through.”](#) Support to overcome the impacts of bullying and negative schooling experiences brings an awareness of the impact which can in itself be a source of motivation and an experience to be drawn on in recognising your own positive qualities in the work place.

#### **Support to overcome barriers to access**

[“She’s the one who’s actually been able to help me with my driving. So money has been really tight in our family. My mum being a single mum quite recently, we didn’t like have a lot of money to be able to afford it.”](#) As Lilying in a remote rural location makes access to opportunity very challenging, creative solutions from the Advocate to overcome this barrier are key. Sourcing funding for driving lessons enabled Lily to progress towards independence despite financial difficulties at home.

[“its really important and really good for me to be that independent where I can drive because I want to have a good career...and say if I get a massive and an amazing opportunity or whatever...just being able to go on the train or on the bus isn’t very like...accessible.”](#)

Experiencing significant structural and financial barriers overcome through support from a trusted adult supports aspiration and ambitious visions of the future.

[“I want to be that independent because being a child, from personal experience, I’ve been quite needy with my parents...and I need to be more independent than relying on other people and especially my mum all the time.”](#) Support to learn the new skill of driving goes beyond impacting functional access and is connected to individual’s sense of self-esteem. Independence and not relying on others is a strong motivational driver for Lily. Learning to drive overcomes an access barrier but also supports her sense of herself as an adult in her own right who will be able to act on opportunities.

#### Exploring possibility and opportunity

“With work identity...for her it's still in the creating mode...she doesn't yet know what that looks like.” Support to explore both work and learning opportunities were key to helping Lily keep options open. Advocate support to explore different ways of building on her interests in childcare and photography gave Lily a sense of multiple possibilities.

#### Window shopping

“I say to people, lets go window shopping. Let's just go and have a look. Let's go and have a listen. Let's go and get lots of information and break it down and see which ones could be manageable, which ones could be enjoyable, which ones are definitely not.” Low pressure introductions to multiple opportunities help keep the exploration light and reduce anxiety. Being able to undertake this exploration over a longer time period helps young people facing multiple barriers, anxiety or starting to re-engage to consider where they may most feel connection and belonging.

#### Support to consider alternatives

“they all seem to have this thing about wanting to go to college...it feels like it's something that you want to be part of. You want to say that you've been able to do. And Somerset Skills and Learning, their centre is a college but is a smaller version.” Where young people may have limited experience of the opportunities open to them, or may have gained preconceptions about what they 'should' do next or what success looks like, careful consideration of the kinds of environments they will thrive in helps strengthen the chances of a secure transition, while also supporting the individuals reflection on the sorts of places that could work well for them as a learning environment.

## Constraints to support for Connected Belonging

### Advocate's Views

#### School or work identity

“SASP or Young Somerset do have programmes that they can offer within their company. I can't necessarily provide that...although I can help someone create it externally.” The capacity and nature of the supporting organisation may constrain or enhance the forms of support they can offer.

“Because she's not part of the Pre-SIP she wasn't offered any tutoring at all. She couldn't get that. And the budget we had was like £750 for each young person, so not enough to give her education.” Students who want to progress into learning can be prevented from accessing it because of the programme they are on.

“What if their ability or desire to do education and work throughout the programme increase? Like if they start off with one hour a week online, can it become two hours a week? Or do we just up it from year to year?” While lower levels of education input may work well for a young person initially, the fact that this cannot increase in line with their engagement levels might hold back their progression in some way, or cause them to have to wait to progress.

### Lily's Views

#### School or work identity

“if I could have had more time with Laura or just more of a one-to-one for however long I needed it for, then that would have been really good.” Despite having made strong progress, support was ending before the young person necessarily felt ready.



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