

Lewisham's Autistic Young Experts' Panel NewsLetter

Summer - Issue 5



What Makes Support Work

**Insights from our Young Experts Panel on
creating meaningful support in schools**

Our Young Experts Panel shared that feeling prepared makes a big difference. Knowing about visits or sessions in advance helps reduce anxiety and allows young people to feel more confident and ready. They also value independence—being able to go to a session on their own, rather than being collected, helps them feel more in control. Starting sessions in a relaxed way is important too. Taking time to chat and build a connection first helps create a more positive experience.

Young people highlighted how much they appreciate a friendly, less formal approach. Sessions feel easier to engage with when adults are approachable, flexible, and not too rigid.

Some also prefer working with professionals outside of school, where the environment can feel calmer and less judgemental.

Group work was generally seen as a positive experience, especially when it creates opportunities to build friendships and social connections. Social clubs were mentioned as particularly valuable. However, young people stressed that group work only works well when they feel comfortable with the people involved. Having some choice over group members, where they sit, and how much they share can make a significant difference. They also highlighted the importance of focusing on developing relationships and understanding social expectations, as these are key areas that support their everyday experience in school.

Young people recognised that schools often already hold detailed information about them through one-page profiles or support plans. However, they felt this information is not always shared with the right people or used effectively in practice. Sometimes staff are unsure how to apply it, or it is not followed consistently, which can lead to missed opportunities for support.

💡 **Let us know what's
happening in advance**

💡 **Give us time to get to know you
before starting**

💡 **Don't start by telling us what we're doing wrong**

💡 **Be prepared—having a plan helps us feel safer**

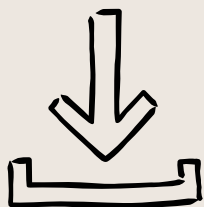
💡 **Avoid taking us out of lessons halfway through**

💡 **Give us choice about groups, seating, and sharing**

💡 **Use the information you already have about us**

**TOP
TIPS**

60 Seconds With a Young Expert...



Name: AmiStar

Year: 9

School: Sedgehill Academy

Favourite Food: Pasta

Biggest Fear: Having no Friends

What video game character would you be: John Marston (Red Dead Redemption)

Last movie you watched: The Last Emperor

First song on your playlist: The Mighty Crabjoys Theme

Best dessert item: Brownies

Best way to spend the weekend: Sitting in the Park

Shoes or barefoot: Shoes

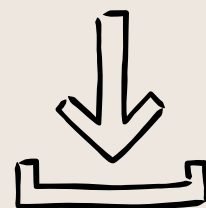
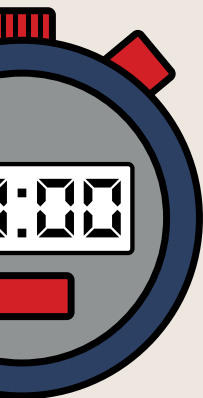
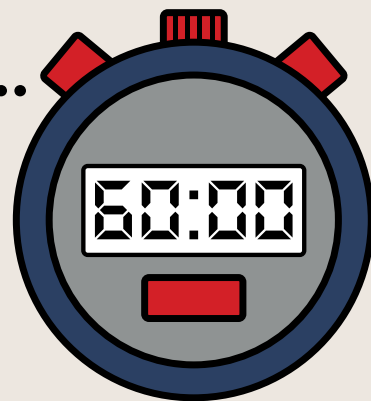
Favourite App right now: Steam

Texting or voice notes: Texting

Something that makes your day better: My friends

If you could instantly learn one skill, what would it be: Playing an instrument

One change that would make school better: Better people



Don't forget to check out Pete & Pete talking about what autism acceptance looks like in schools. You can find the full video on our YouTube channel. @drumbeatautismoutreach



How can you get involved?

- Submit questions or topics for future panels.
- Share this newsletter with staff and families.
- Implement strategies suggested by the panel to make your setting more autism-friendly.
- Read, listen and discuss!

