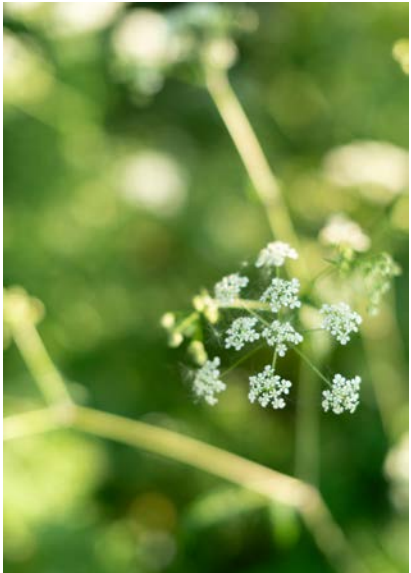


What
keeps
you
well?



Sometimes me
and my friends
come here to
watch the Sun
Set.

Margaret Jones - Sefton Director of Public Health



This report is an opportunity for us to look at what keeps our young people well. This is an opportunity to take a strength based approach to explore how we can keep ourselves well and prevent low levels of wellbeing. In a change to how my reports are normally presented, I wanted this report to be more creative and based in the art of photography. It is well known that taking part in a creative process can also make us feel good. Please enjoy some case studies exploring what local young people have told us they like doing to protect their mental wellbeing, all through interviews and working with a local photographer to create some powerful imagery. I look forward to everyone getting a chance to look at the amazing photographs they have helped produce and read these positive stories of growing up and thriving in our borough. I would like to thank everyone for their enthusiastic involvement in the preparation of this report.

Councillor Mhairi Doyle - Cabinet Member for Public Health and Wellbeing



This report provides an opportunity to review and reflect on, and in many cases celebrate the lived experience of our young people in Sefton. Our young people have been through a lot and continue to thrive despite numerous challenges they may face. I hope through this report we can better understand what it is that keeps our young people well in Sefton and work together to promote the opportunities to experience these things locally in our borough. As the Cabinet Member for Health and Wellbeing I commend this report and hope you enjoy reading it.

Wellbeing in Young Adults in Sefton

Wellbeing is a term used to describe a person's happiness and satisfaction with their life, which encompasses physical, psychological, emotional and social aspects. Wellbeing is influenced by internal factors as well as wider social, economic and environmental factors. Health and wellbeing are closely intertwined, with wellbeing contributing to health and good health to positive wellbeing. Young adults in Sefton aged 18 to 25 years have lived through challenging times in their formative adolescent years and early adulthood, including austerity policies, the COVID-19 pandemic, and the cost-of-living crisis. The negative effects of these challenges have been disproportionately felt by those on low incomes. This may have impacted their mental health and emotional wellbeing. The transition to adulthood is a time of key physical, cognitive, social and emotional changes which impact on wellbeing. There is often a lack of focus on health and wellbeing in young adults as they are viewed as having fewer health problems than children and older adults. Promoting health and wellbeing in young adults can have benefits for health and wellbeing now and in the future.

A strengths-based approach to health and wellbeing focuses on what generates positive health and wellbeing. Factors that help health and wellbeing flourish in young adults can be both internal and external. Individual characteristics can lead to wellbeing, including having good social skills and empathy, optimistic thinking, being able to regulate and rationalise emotions, having a sense of purpose, and a sense of humour. Family wellbeing, education and work also contribute towards good health and wellbeing. Community engagement and volunteering can contribute towards both individual and community wellbeing. Creative activities, caring for animals and physical activity, including sports, can improve health and wellbeing. Access to green spaces, such as is abundant in Sefton, can contribute towards positive wellbeing. Social media can have both positive and negative effects on mental wellbeing.



Sefton Statistics

- People aged 18 to 25 years make up 7.3% of the population of Sefton.
- The number of young adults in this age group is projected to increase by 16% in the next ten years.
- 94.2% of young adults in Sefton identified as being from the United Kingdom.
- Six percent of young people aged 16 to 24 years in Sefton identify as a sexual minority group.

Work and education

- 73% of young adults in Sefton aged 18 to 25 years are economically active.
- 11.5% of young adults in Sefton are not in education or economically active.
- 14.5% of young people in Sefton are in funded further education, including apprenticeships. This is above the England and North West averages.
- 7% of young adults in Sefton aged 18 to 25 years provide unpaid care work. The majority of whom provide more than 20 years of unpaid care work each week.

General health and disability

- Twenty percent of people aged 18 to 25 years in Sefton have a long-term physical or mental health condition. This affects day to day activity in three quarters of young adults with a long term condition.
 - More than half of young people aged 17 to 25 years in Sefton feel safe everywhere.
 - Over half of young people aged 17 to 25 years in Sefton report listening to music, being with friends, using social media and gaming in their spare time.
 - More than a third of young people in Sefton aged 17 to 25 years report eating a balanced diet, exercising and sleeping well regularly.
 - Common things which impact young people aged 17 to 25 years' mental health and emotional wellbeing in Sefton include tests and exams, body image, cost of living, family problems and loneliness.
- This report aims to investigate the strengths and assets which young adults in Sefton are using to help achieve their wellbeing goals. Through this investigation, we can learn lessons on how to empower young adults to improve their wellbeing.



Name Gubby

Location Southport

Where do you live Southport

Favourite food

Pasta dishes

Favourite music

depends

What do you do to take care of your mental health?

go to the horses or spend some
time on my own or with friends it really
depends

I Always Knew



One day when I was only two years old I visited my cousins so my mum was sitting with my aunty and they went 'Oh look outside' and I was walking around on one of her horses and that started it all. Cos I've always been an animal lover, always have been and always will be. And that just started everything and it was a bit of an obsession really(laughter) A lot of people when they first start out, they can be quite selfish and they want to do things for them, rather than for the horse but once you get more into it you realise 'this horse needs me to be like this, for its health'. It's a big responsibility because a lot of things can go wrong with horses, they have a lot of diseases, they can go downhill. But I do think it's been a big help for me to realise, actually 'this thing relies on me so I need to go and do it'.

Say if you want to lay in bed all day cos you're feeling a bit down, horses rely on you so you need to be there for them. And it does get you up and going even if you don't want to. And once you're there, you realise 'Oh no, it wasn't actually that bad' it's just the whole getting there, cos it can become a huge thing if you're feeling.....not great. And to be in the fresh air as well, it builds up a tolerance to things. I don't know what it is but it hardens you up a bit. It makes you think 'No, come on, you're not gonna let this stop you from doing something you love' cos I know some people when they're ill they're like..... UHHH. But I'm not like that, I just get on with it and I think part of that is because of the horses, cos once you do it, you're fine and then you can lay in bed.





It's also getting
you out in the
fresh air



Name: Brandon

What dreams do you have?

Working in the Mental Health industry
University, Family.

How would you describe happiness?

Being happy in yourself and
Satisfied with what you have

Favourite food: PIZZA

Favourite music: The Beatles

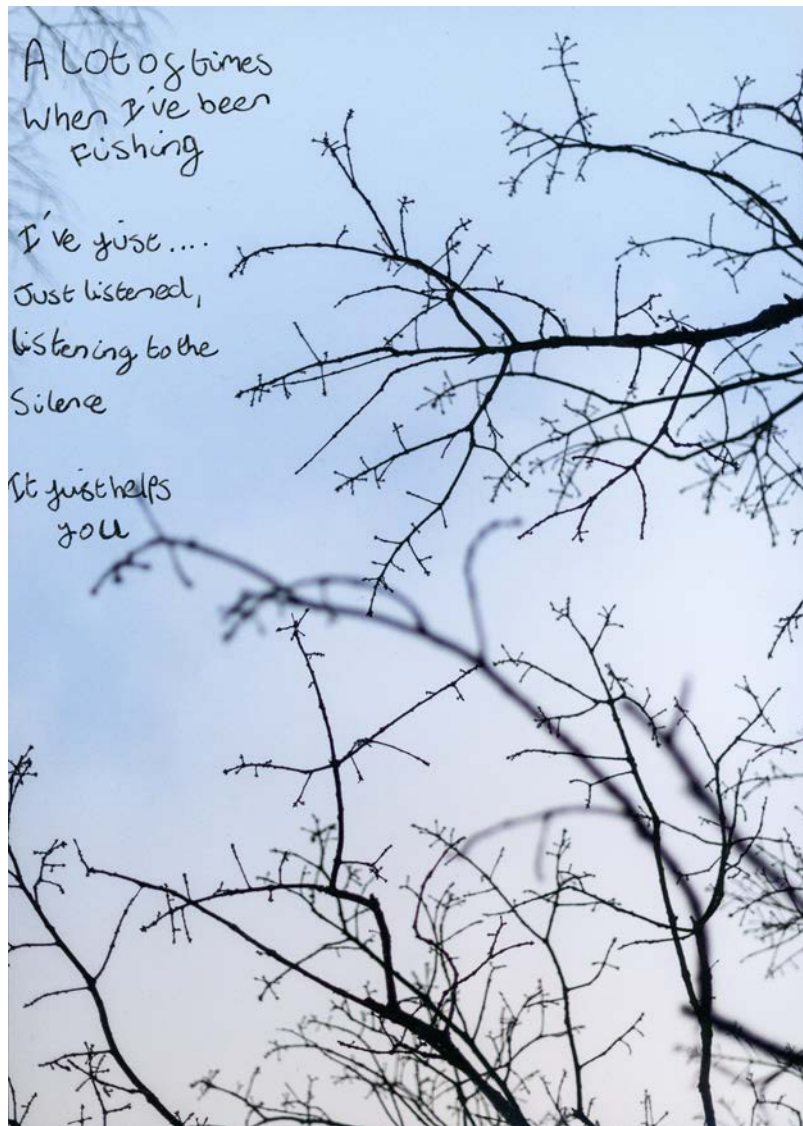
Favourite memory?

Coming to Sean's place

If you could bring any celebrity to Sefton, who would it be and why?
Paul McCartney, One of the Beatles
Fantastic Musician

Do you feel young person's voices are heard?

Yes but not as much as we should be.

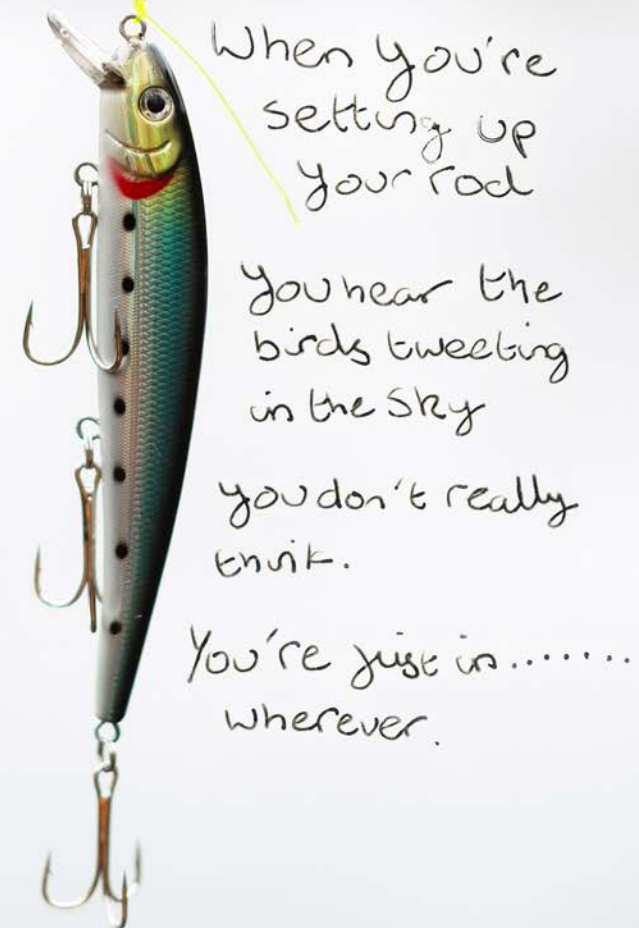


I've only been going fishing since April last year so I'm not been fishing long but with fishing I find it dead peaceful and calming even. You know there's a lot of people my age and they mightn't get up at 4 o'clock in the morning to go fishing. So sort of the reason it helps me is that I'm doing something that I like but the reason that I'm doing it is that I'm with lads that I get along with and I enjoy spending time with. Do you know when you're setting up your rod, you hear the birds tweeting in the sky, you don't really think. You're just in.....wherever, I don't know how to word this. You're just in that space, in that surrounding and you're just taking it in and you're enjoying it as well. A lot of times when I've been fishing and I've just.....just listened, listening to the silence, it just helps you sort of just, chill.

The fishing helped me sort of you're not within your thoughts but you're also..... there are times when you can be in your thoughts and it helps you sort of, think about them. You know you're looking out onto the lake and you're just sitting there, you're thinking. It helped me a lot.

We usually leave here about half six and then we go to where we need to go and start fishing about eight o'clock at the latest and pack up at three and then we're on the road again.

The day before we cycle down to the dock road to get everything ready like the bait and the maggots. The last time it was terrible because it was really raining, it was terrible. It was pouring down with rain. We got totally drenched, we could hardly see, Tez came off his bike but it was fun and we all had a laugh.



When you're
setting up
your rod

You hear the
birds tweeting
in the sky

You don't really
think.

You're just in.....
wherever.



Name: Martha and Iris

Location: Crosby (Northern Hockey club)

Name three things you are grateful for?

- My friends
- Living in a safe area.
- Our health

If you were Prime minister for a day, what would you change?

- Nationalise transport and water.

How would you describe happiness?

- Feeling seen and heard

If you could bring any celebrity to Sefton, who would it be and why?

- David Attenborough to take him to Rimrose Valley

What dreams do you have?

- Be able to travel the world.
- See and learn as much as I possibly can.

What do you do to take care of your mental health?

- Spend time in nature
- Socialising
- Taking time on your own if necessary



All through our childhood, we did a lot of sports. When we finished playing football, we'd been playing for maybe 10 years and then we were thinking 'we've got to do another sport and another way to keep us fit' but not individual sports as we wanted to do a team sport. Because in a team sport you progress yourself but you also have others to lean on and other people to rely on. And then coming down, you'd train on a Thursday and play a game on a Saturday, so they were the days we would come down and then we would stay and watch the other games. So you were active, but active in a fun way so it didn't seem like a chore. It never felt like that, if it did, I don't think we would have stayed as long as we did.

Everyone always talks about endorphins when you're doing exercise and at the end of a run, I always feel fabulous but you don't have anyone to share that with when you've been running on your own. Whereas if you've just played a hockey match, you've got all those endorphins and whether you win or lose you've still got people to talk about it. In the run up to our cup games everyone was boosting each other up. We had to play two games back to back and when we played the first game, everyone was still trying to keep each other riled up and make sure everyone pushed and tried their hardest. We didn't win but we came second(laughs). I think we were all proud of that.



Sometimes I think, it makes me
happy to think that I'm doing
stuff that makes other people
happy, do you know what I
mean?

And I'm not going out of my
way to do it, we're all just
enjoying ourselves together and
I like that.

It like, warms my heart.



Name: Kath

Where do you live: Bootle

Favourite food: Crab

If you could bring any celebrity to Sefton, who would it be and why? Toby Fox because it would be funny.

Do you feel young person's voices are heard? Only if they are pretty enough and rich. Disabled voices should be heard too and not just for sympathy points.

If you were Prime minister for a day, what would you change? Make everything accessible for disabled people.

How would you describe happiness? Bursts of energy, that make me fuzzy.

What dreams do you have? To make horror movies.

What do you do to take care of your mental health? Remember I'm only human and I can't try harder than my hardest.

In the event of a flood, what three things would you take with you?
My family (it's three people)

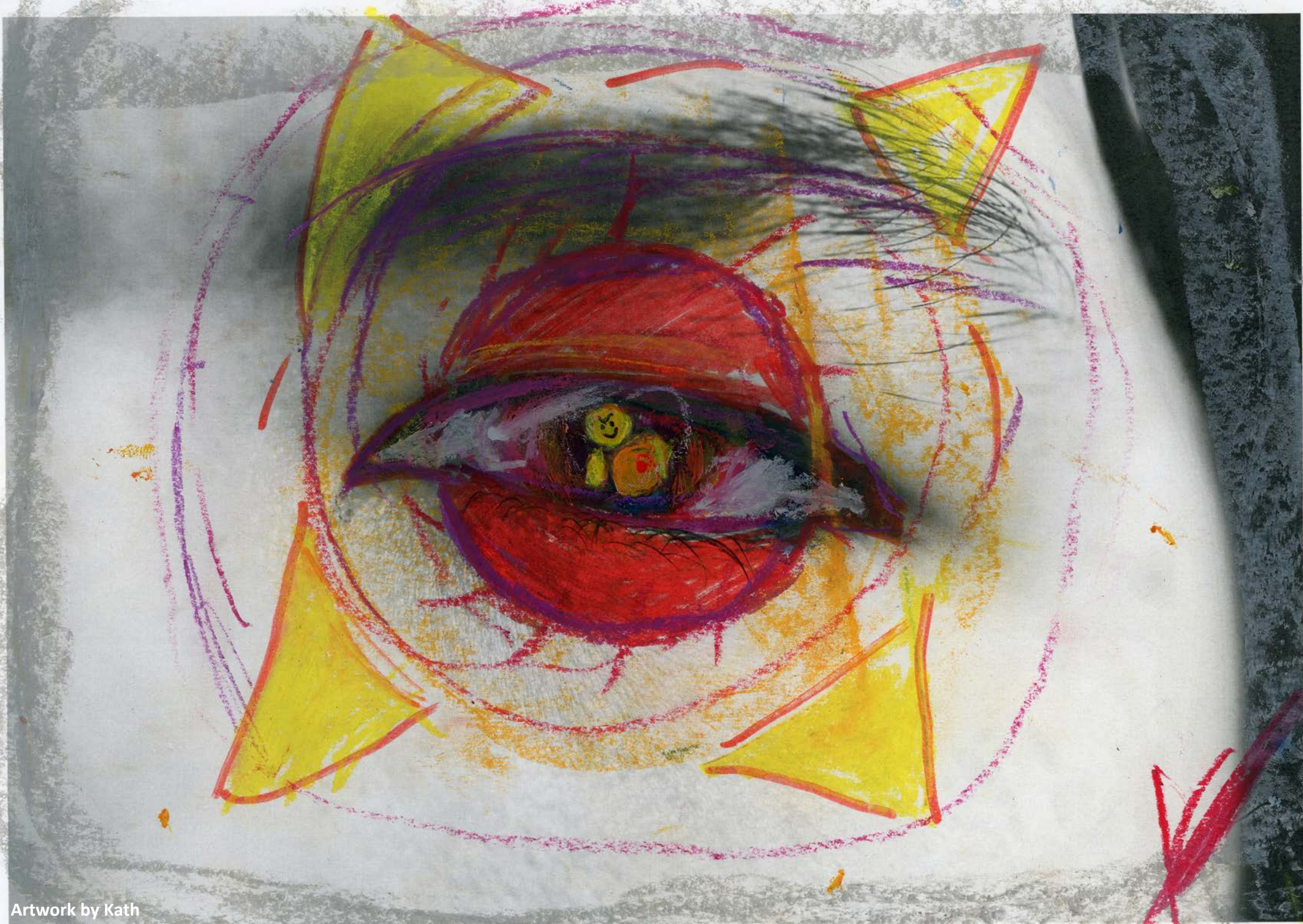
I don't think about the negatives much, I try to keep myself open and talk to everyone. I normally try and support and cheerlead everyone because I know a lot of people don't do that. I normally try and give myself the role of cheerleader to make sure everybody is happy but other than that, I just remind myself that I'm trying my hardest and that's all I can do.

I'm a digital artist, I draw for a living. I post online and stuff, I also post to some friends. I'm normally known for drawing video game characters and that's about it but I'm also known for my photo editing. I've said characters and I also do layouts, profile pages and banners for people for their profiles. And I also make music it's digital, 8-bit music kind of like retro music. I don't do it very much, only when I'm in the mood for it really.

Some people call me a jack of all trades. I'm kind of just in the zone when I'm doing creative things and I go into a sort of zone and I kind of just lock in and do the things that make me happy. I like doing things that make me lock in because it makes all the worries in my head go away. I especially like drawing horror stuff, I love horror.

I feel like being online and social media is a good thing but it can negatively affect people mentally. I've come to learn that you should stop making things for other people and just start making it for yourself because if you make things for other people, you just stop enjoying it. I also feel like the Internet is like a very big eyeball and it will look at you under a microscope to find any flaws so I've just stopped caring about what people think on the Internet because at the end of the day, they're just a bunch of people on computers and I'm outside. (Laughter)

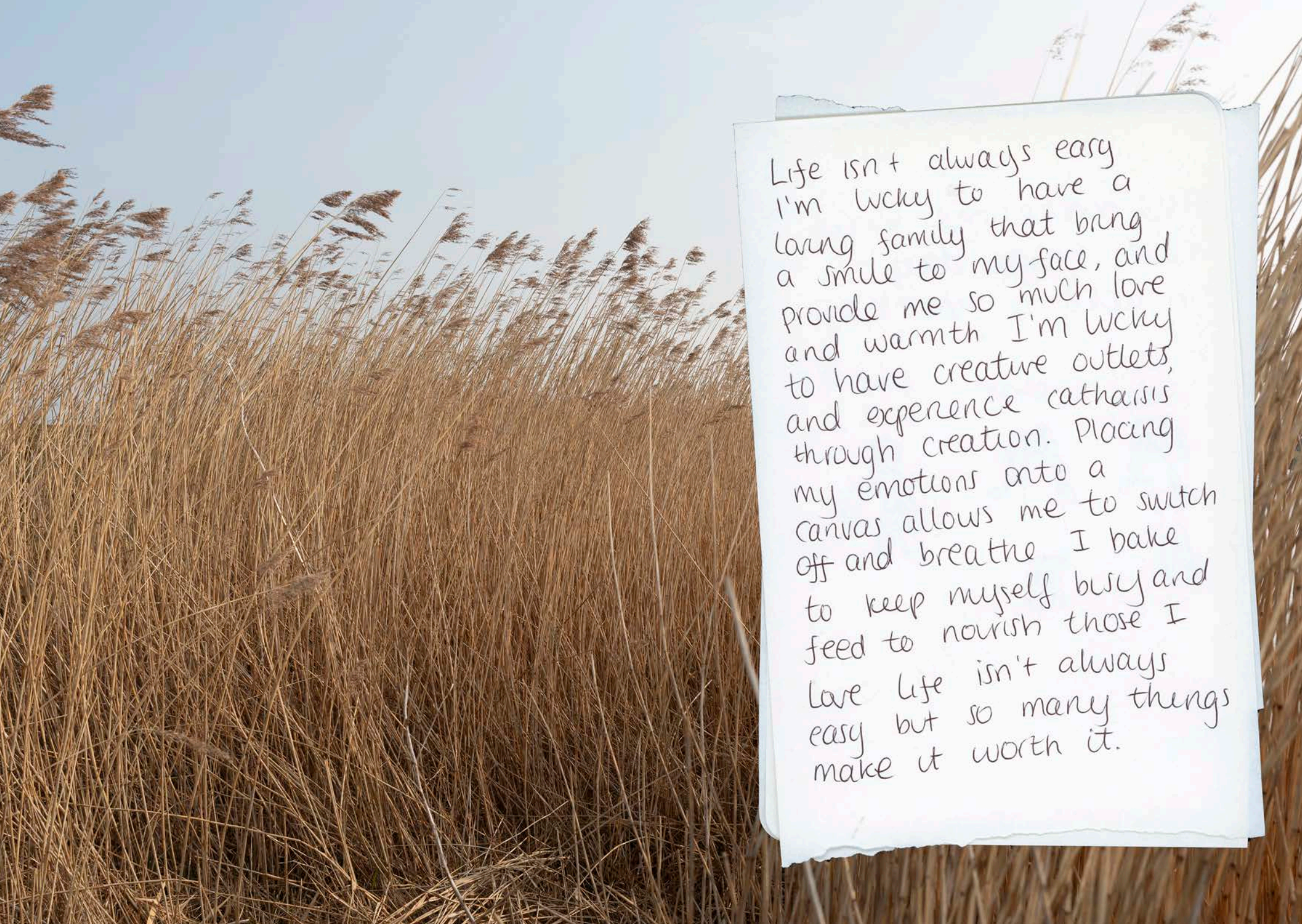
On the news when you hear about young people talking, it's always the attractive ones or the smart ones and the only time you hear about disabled people is for like sob stories or a sympathy point. And half the time it's someone else talking on their behalf and I'm kind of sick and tired of it since I'm autistic and I'm ADHD and I have a physical disability. I feel like disabled people's voices should be heard but not in a sense of "oh feel sympathy for me" I feel like disabled people's voices should belong. I'm sick and tired of this world treating disabled people like they're just nothing and that's my experience of the past seven years of being disabled, they don't really treat you like a human.



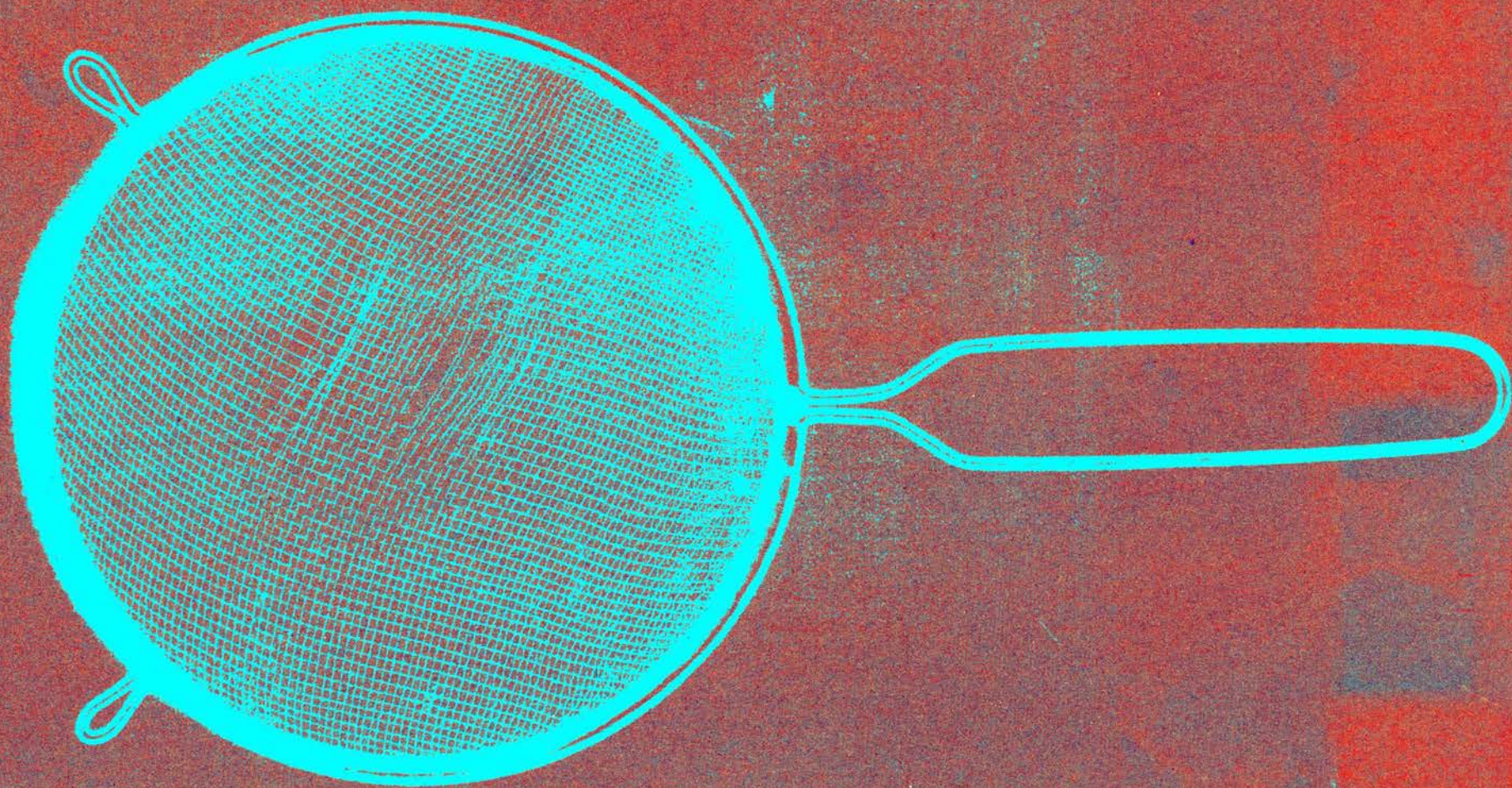
Artwork by Kath



Life isn't always easy.



Life isn't always easy
I'm lucky to have a
loving family that bring
a smile to my face, and
provide me so much love
and warmth I'm lucky
to have creative outlets,
and experience catharsis
through creation. Placing
my emotions onto a
canvas allows me to switch
off and breathe I have
to keep myself busy and
feed to nourish those I
love Life isn't always
easy but so many things
make it worth it.



This is Mark who spends his time working with his hands. He enjoys being able to spend time creating things from materials and seeing it all come together. Mark told us “having this job has meant I can enjoy my life and not worry as much as I used to about money. That frees my head up a bit”.







Name: Shannon

Location: Bootle

Where do you live: Bootle

Name three things you are grateful for?

family Partner , friends

If you were Prime minister for a day, what would you change?

Finance and more support

Favourite food:

Pasta

Favourite music:

2000 R&B

Favourite memory?

meeting my little sisster for
18th time

If you could bring any celebrity to Sefton, who would it be and why?

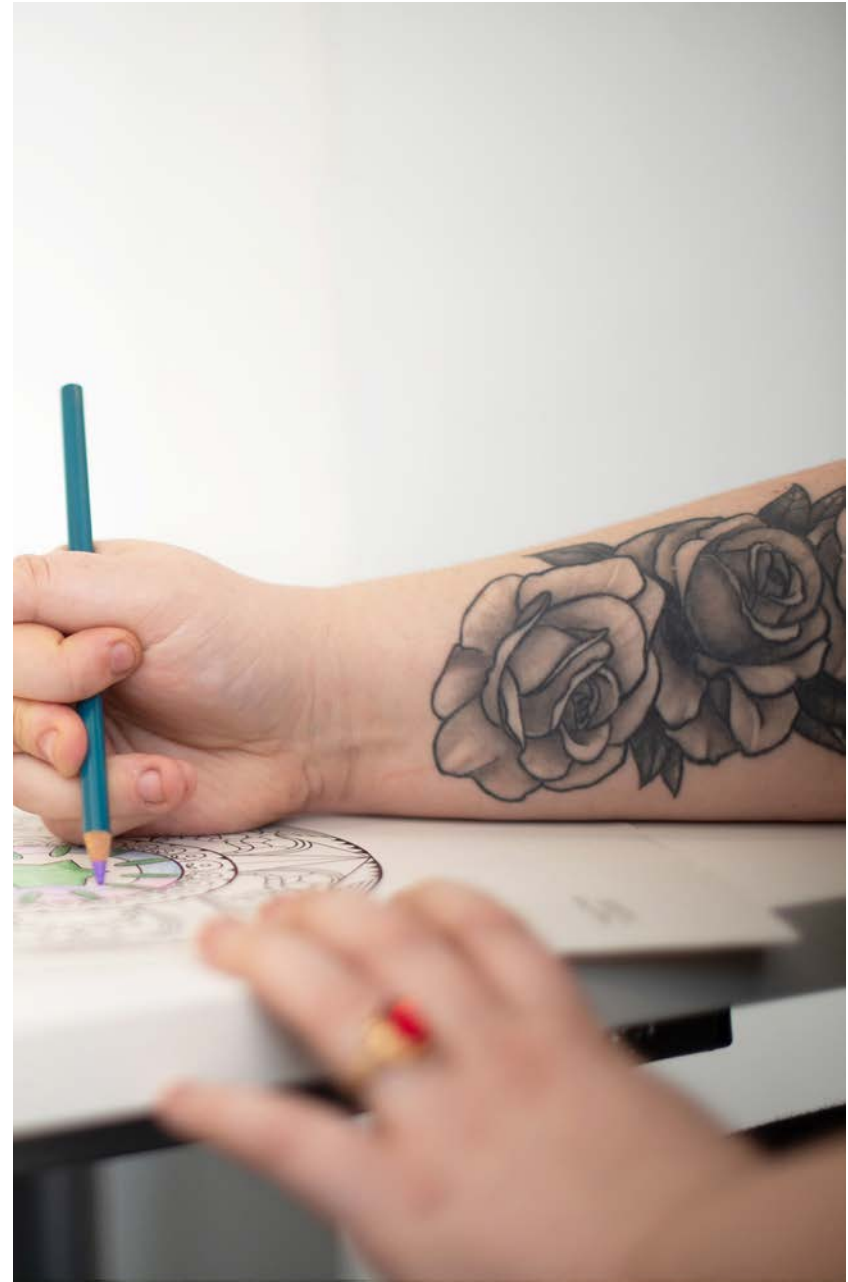
Pink as she has loads of
Confidence

What dreams do you have?

to spread awareness how
important mental health is

Being a young girl I grew up on social media quite a lot of it was fake but I was looking at it like it was real because it was my life

Basically it's not good for you because you start to overthink



I think mental health is quite important but people express theirs differently so as a person when I'm doing my art I like to be unique. I like to explore bright colours, I don't like doing plain simple drawings because I like to express how I'm feeling when I'm drawing so I use a lot of bright colours and glitters just to show that this is how I felt while doing this. Some days I use a lot of dark colours but it just helps me express how I feel and it shows that I'm doing okay. When growing up I thought social media was basically true and everything you heard on it was true and you had to basically rely on your life around social media. So when I experienced that not all things are..... basically it's not good for you because you start to overthink, your mental health starts to get a lot lower so I now enjoy having me time.

Covid was a lot harder for me. I was a care home assistant for five years and I had seen a huge change since lockdown. I had 153 residents pass on me due to Covid. Seeing people deteriorate just by one little disease was really hard and mental health wise, I was working 8 til 8 Monday to Friday so I was very much work, work, work, work; I never had me time and seeing the residents pass it was very emotional and I never had to experience so much of a hold back of emotions because you just had to carry on with it being a job but deep down inside it was heartbreaking.



Name Lewis

Location Southport

Where do you live: Sefton

What do you like most about where you live:

Quiet and peaceful

Worst thing about where you live:

?

Favourite food

Corned beef hash.

Favourite music

Pop music

Favourite memory?


Passing my driving test or settling my job.

What dreams do you have?

To be able to work my way up in my job and to become more successful

What do you do to take care of your mental health?

Listen to music, drive my car and go on walks



See where
I go tomorrow

One of my teachers mentioned that there was a job opportunity in the IT department of the college. I thought "You've gotta take the chance" so amazingly with all the references and my experience in my course, they offered me the opportunity to be their IT, first and second line technician to then become now, their IT service desk co-ordinator.

I do, when I'm not too busy, like to go on walks, sometimes with and without music, I prefer going out to Crosby Beach for instance and walking with headphones, just watching people go by and getting a breath of fresh air cause I don't usually go out in the day I usually just work in the office so it's good getting out of the office to have a bit of space and a bit of time to think and process what's gone on in the day, helps a lot. Just so I can say 'Right that's it for today, see where I can go tomorrow'.



Summary and Recommendations

From reviewing the scientific evidence base, looking back at what our local young people have told us and listening to some local young people regarding what keeps them well there are some common themes that we need to pay attention to. We were pleased to see that our young people were already tapping into what keeps them well in ways that really connected with what the scientific research told us. That accessing blue and green spaces can help connect us with nature. That creating art, digital photography and baking can help pull us outside ourselves by creating something that didn't exist before and give us more purpose. That caring for others and animals can give us a positive feedback loop that we can make a difference. That social media has the potential to connect us to others but comes at the cost of being a potentially damaging space for those who are still figuring out who they are. That accessing the means to start our careers can give us freedom to not worry about how to make ends meet and to just enjoy being in the moment and planning for the future.



Some recommendations based on the findings of this report are:

- Working alongside young people in more creative ways can help bring what they say to life. It can help them feel like they have helped create something meaningful - more novel consultations like what has been presented here should be considered using local creatives
- The protective themes highlighted to help benefit our young people cover a range of activities that are free at the point of access and should be encouraged when thinking of how we encourage our young people to stay well e.g. accessing outdoor spaces, connecting with peers, caring for others, engaging with the arts etc.
- The work of this Public Health Annual Report intersects with the culture strategy for Sefton. This shows the importance of a connected approach when writing future strategies for Sefton and linking in with other sectors when considering how best to impact wider health limiting or generating impacts.
- Keeping young people well includes messaging around how normal low mood and stress can be as part of growing up. Messages to reassure and signpost to lower levels of support should be included when working to prevent poor mental health in our young people.
- When creating services for young people, try to incorporate more novel therapeutic approaches as part of your suite of opportunities as this report shows these can have longstanding positive impacts on their wellbeing
- Access to facilities and groups which can enable young adults to undertake physical activities and sports which can have positive impacts on mental and physical health and wellbeing should be equitable to all
- Where possible, offer the possibility of paid for apprenticeships in your organisation. These can be the first stepping stone to independence that can help our young people explore who they are in a way that helps them worry less about making ends meet.



Sometimes me
and my friends
come here to
watch the Sun
Set.

Thanks

Sefton Council: Tim Martin, Rory McGill, Helen O'Reilly, Martin Driver, Ella Fleetwood

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