



Introduction

Welcome to the next issue in our 'keyworker series', where each issue focuses on one of the eight domains of quality of life (QoL) and how you can support them through your weekly keyworker sessions. This issue focuses on **material wellbeing!**

Material wellbeing refers to having access to the financial and practical resources needed to live a stable life. This includes; employment, financial independence, and the ability to meet everyday needs without ongoing stress or uncertainty.

From page 2 onwards, you can read about some great keyworker practice from school staff across the trust.

Research Summary - Ashworth et al (2023) & Pellicano et al (2024)

Ashworth et al explored autistic young adults' experiences of a supported internship programme. Participants reported increased confidence, independence, and workplace skills when given structured, ongoing support. A key finding was that success depended on supportive environments, flexible approaches, and employers adapting their practices. However, sustained support before, during, and after employment was essential for maintaining work and building long-term stability.

Pellicano et al examined how autistic adults experience financial wellbeing. Participants described financial wellbeing as having stability, control, and reduced anxiety about money. Financial wellbeing was shaped not only by income, but also by access to support systems, particularly family support. Many autistic adults felt underprepared to manage money, highlighting a lack of teaching or practice around financial skills during their time in school.



**Maria
Ashworth**



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The Reality

1. Explore Environments They Thrive In

Support pupils to identify the environments and structures that help them feel calm, confident, and successful.



2. Normalise Accessing Support

Reflect on how support needs can change over time and help pupils identify who can support them now and in the future.



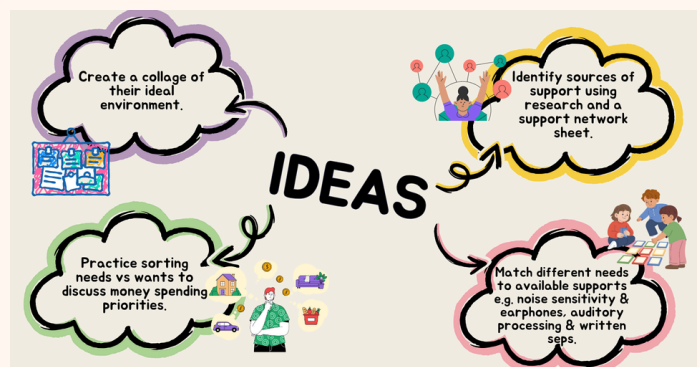
3. Teach & Practise Money Management

Provide opportunities for pupils to practise real-life money decisions, such as budgeting, spending, and planning.



4. Build Understanding of Workplace Adjustments

Teach pupils about reasonable adjustments, exploring what might help them succeed in a workplace and how to communicate this.



Further Reading & Links

[Autistic adults' experiences of financial wellbeing: Part II](#)

[Evaluating a new supported employment internship programme for autistic young adults without intellectual disability](#)

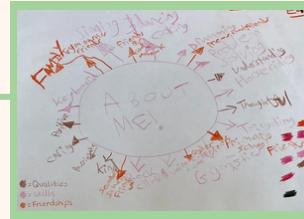
[LAT Liberty Quality of Life Home](#)

INTRODUCTION: Inspired by the latest Research to Reality Newsletter on self-determination, Pupil T's keyworker sessions have focused on developing her self-determination. This has included exploring how she learns best and maintains focus, identifying her strengths, and building confidence in communicating.

Implemented a focus checklist for Pupil T to tick off during lessons.

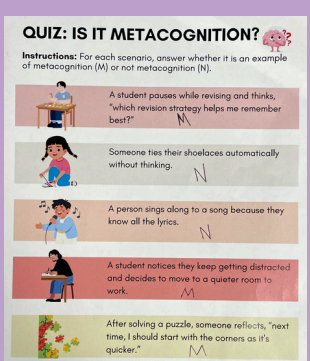


In a session on positive self-talk, Pupil T said "I can do things no one knows about! I'll always be different but that's ok!"



1. LEARNING AND FOCUS
Pupil T had low engagement during lessons, so the aim was to improve this by exploring how she learns best and what helps her focus. Keyworker sessions have therefore worked on developing her metacognition skills (her ability to think about and understand her own thinking).

Pupil T has done various activities to develop her metacognition, such as exploring strategies that help her learn, metacognition quizzes, and a guided metacognitive reading task with before-, during-, and after-reading questions on an animal extract.



2. STRENGTHS AND POSITIVE SELF-TALK
Pupil T has expressed negative self-beliefs, such as saying, "I'm useless at everything". Therefore, the aim was for her to be able to identify her strengths and practising positive self-talk.

After role-playing assertiveness, Pupil T said saying no made her feel "powerful".

3. CONFIDENCE COMMUNICATING
Pupil T said that she doesn't like saying "no" to her friends. Therefore, the aim was to explore assertiveness and help her practise and build confidence in communicating her needs and saying "no."

Pupil T practised using "no" scripts and role-played a range of scenarios involving peer pressure. During these role-plays, Pupil T was able to articulate appropriate and assertive responses.

Passive	Assertive	Aggressive
Letting others make decisions for you	Standing up for yourself respectfully	Putting others down to get your way

PUPIL OUTCOMES

1. Engagement in lessons has increased (recorded via engagement trackers).
2. Pupil T can identify her strengths and interests and give examples of positive self-talk.
3. Pupil T said she would feel confident saying "no" if she was asked to do something she's very uncomfortable with, while overall she is 5/10 confident in being assertive with her friends.

NEXT STEPS

1. Continue to monitor Pupil T's engagement in lessons.
2. Practise applying her strengths to new tasks.
3. Continue to cover assertiveness to increase her confidence in saying no.

DESCRIPTION

This student's keyworker sessions were informed by the findings of Cristescu et al. (2025), which emphasise the role of structured learning combined with meaningful, real-world experiences in developing self-determination.

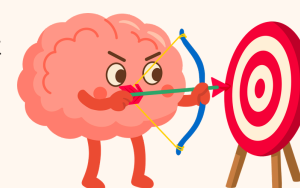
At the start of the new term, the student struggled with acceptance, particularly in situations where they had limited control or where expectations were imposed by others. This was impacting their ability to regulate, make choices, and engage independently. In response, keyworker sessions were intentionally designed to promote self-determination by prioritising student voice, offering low demand activities, and creating structured opportunities to practise acceptance within a safe and supportive environment.



GOALS

The keyworker sessions aimed to:

- Support the development of acceptance by providing structured, explicit teaching alongside low demand, experiential and fun activities.
- Increase the student's self determination by prioritising student voice.
- Enable the generalisation of skills learned in keyworker sessions into classroom and wider school contexts.



PROGRESS / EVIDENCE

When something is out of my control, I can tell myself:

- I can get through it even if it is difficult.
- I can't change what happened.
- I will get through this no matter what.
- I can choose to do something different even if I feel bad.
- It's better to take the right actions than keep judging or blaming.

Initially, the student was supported to understand what acceptance means. The learning was reinforced through the creation of a visual aid, which was placed on their desk to support independent reflection, promoting autonomy rather than external prompting.

To further introduce decision making and support development of self-determination, chess was incorporated within sessions.

This meant the pupil needed to manage times when a planned move is unsuccessful or accepting the loss of an important piece.



Low demand, choice activities provided practical opportunities for the student to exercise agency while tolerating uncertainty. One activity involved cooperative, open ended drawing. The student and keyworker took turns drawing a single line using a colour of their choice, without discussing or planning the outcome. The process allowed them to make choices within clear boundaries, providing a low risk experience of practising acceptance, supporting the student to notice, name, and reflect on how feelings of uncertainty presented in their body and how they could manage these responses.



PUPIL OUTCOMES / VOICE

"My key worker sessions have helped me understand when I need to accept changes and transitions."

OUTCOMES

These sessions led to observable progress in the student's ability to tolerate delay and act with increased independence, making adaptive choices with reduced support.

NEXT STEPS

Incorporate parental voice to ensure future scenarios relate to any current challenges with home life. This will be achieved through focused weekly communication home.

INTRODUCTION

- Following the latest research newsletter about self determination, this case study explores how we can support this by enabling our learners to reflect on their strengths and achievements in a structured way.
- You can read more about this in the research to reality newsletter, issue 8 from **Martino et al(2025)**!

BACKGROUND

Self-determination theory (Deci & Ryan, 2000) highlights three core psychological needs:

- Autonomy – feeling in control of one’s actions
- Competence – feeling capable and effective
- Relatedness – feeling connected and understood

GOALS

A student at CLS was struggling with low self esteem which was impacting both their learning and general well being. Reflection sheets were used during keyworker sessions to directly support **autonomy** and **competence**. The student began identifying what went well, what was difficult, and what they want to work on next with support from a familiar adult.



PROGRESS / EVIDENCE

Through regular structured self reflection, the student was able to:

- Recognise their own strengths
- Make choices about their goals
- Take some ownership of their learning and wellbeing

How was my week? 

What was your favourite moment from this week?

What did you find difficult this week? What could we do to help?

Name 1 thing you are proud of from this week

Name 3 positive things about yourself (your values, achievements etc.)

PUPIL OUTCOMES / IMPACT

The student has engaged well each week and began to share more and more reflections with time.

KEYWORKER REFLECTION

The student has shown a really positive attitude towards these sessions. They have also recently began to accept a few compliments!

NEXT STEPS

Share practice with teachers & parents. Continue reflection sheets - acknowledging strengths/ difficulties identified