Equal Potential CIC - February 2025

SOCIAL IMPACT REPORT

Trusted and supported by:

job centre plus

Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport

UnLtd

ARTS COUNCIL ENGLAND

COMMUNITY FUND

THE CLOTHWORKERS' FOUNDATION

RUSHMOOR Voluntary Services
Local support for local people

Made possible with Heritage Fund

ROTARY INTERNATIONAL

CPD The CPD Certification Service

LIONS INTERNATIONAL



Natalie Everard
Founder

We have had the most amazing first two years as an organisation, and I am so proud of the impact and community we have fostered in the first two years alone.

I am so thankful to the organisations that have funded and supported our first two years, and want to show during this report just what we have achieved with your support. We also would like to thank the local organisations that have taken us under their wing, supporting and advising us, and enabling us to broaden our community and impact to support so many families and young people. Finally, I would like to thank my co-directors and our growing team of staff, contractors and volunteers who support our day to day work in supporting neurodivergent young people.

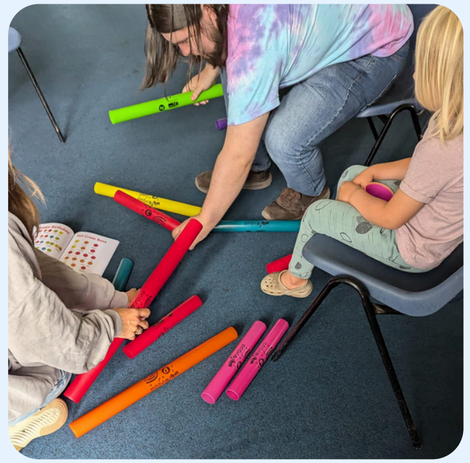
I am delighted to see our relationships with supporting organisations grow over time, so that we can support one another in raising funds and providing community support to vulnerable young people. We have provided volunteers to support the Farnborough Rotary Club in their Christmas collections, have joined the Rushmoor Accessibility Action Group panel to advise the council on neurodivergent accessibility, and have supported the Farnborough Job Centre Plus in managing their growing list of neurodivergent young people needing support into employment.

I am so looking forward to writing another report here next year and being able to look back on all the support we have provided in the year to come.



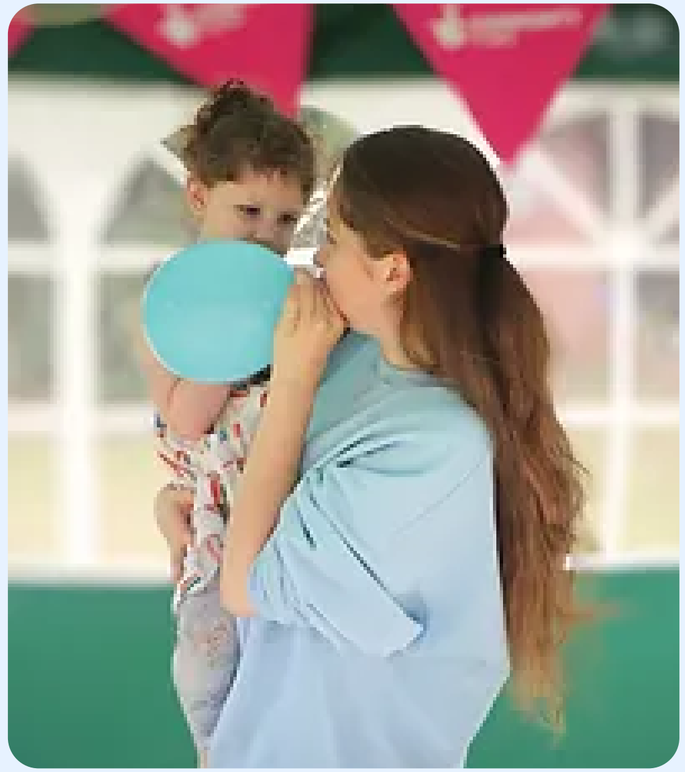






Our first two years in numbers

19 young people participated in our job club	**36** children participated in our SEN drama group	**50** free copies of our neuro-affirming book donated	**12** young people referred into additional support services
84 people attended our community STEM drop-in tent	**13** young people are now employed because of our job club	**48** free lunches given to teens in the school holidays	**33** professionals attended our training and CPD course
8 volunteers supporting our day to day work	**56** young people participated in our job club	**22** young people attended our teens gaming group	**22** families offered onward advice and signposting



Neurodivergent Job Club



The national employment rate for autistic people is thought to be between 20-30%. This is the lowest employment rate of any disability group, and is shockingly low when compared with the overall employment rate for disabled people thought to be between 50-60%, and the non-disabled employment rate at 80-90%.

To improve this statistic, we approached The National Lottery Community Fund, who agreed to fund our pilot project to run a specialist job club for neurodivergent young people in Rushmoor. We are thrilled to have achieved 68% of the young people we supported were offered suitable employment within the timescale of the pilot project. In addition, a further 15% of participants entered further education or training such as enrolling in a BTEC or apprenticeship.

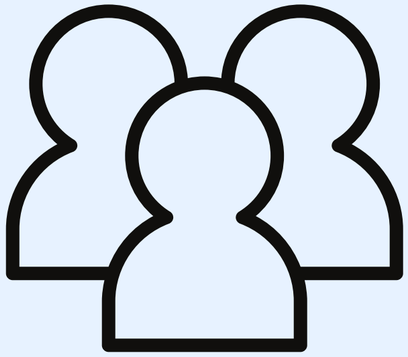
We partnered with the Farnborough Job Centre Plus, who formed a referral route into our service for neurodivergent young adults on their books struggling to find employment. We also have taken on young people who self-referred into our job club independently of the job centre. We provided weekly sessions within the job centre as well as 1-1 mentoring sessions as needed. We had guest speakers, and guest interviewers to run mock interviews for our participants.



COMMUNITY FUND

This pilot project has been funded by The National Lottery Community Fund. Thank you to all National Lottery players.

Neurodivergent Job Club



19 participants

68% offered employment

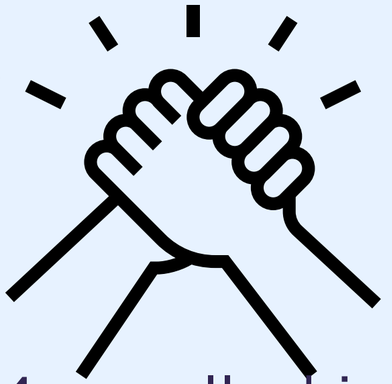
**compare to national average of 22%*



13 offered employment



2 entered further study



4 enrolled in volunteering

Job Roles our Participants Have Been Offered

Hospital Radiographer

Illustration Artist

Construction Labourer

Kitchen Porter

Customer Service

Sous Chef

Tyre Fitter

Laboratory Technician

Security Guard





Workshops offered to participants



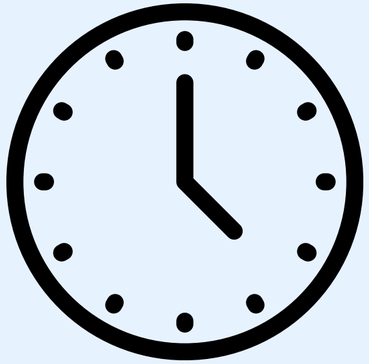
CV Writing



Mock Interviews



SMART Goals



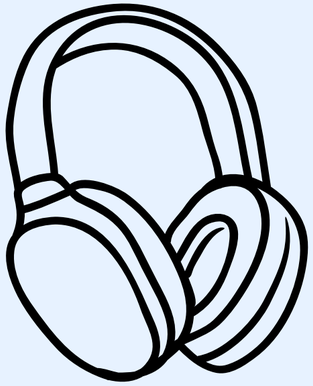
Time Management



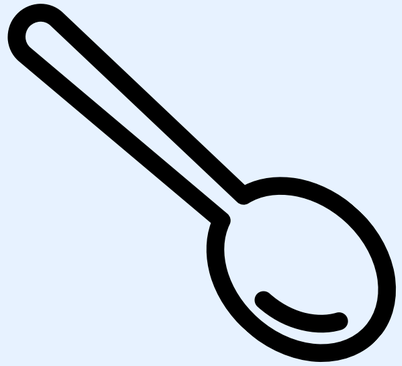
Access to Work



Networking



Sensory Regulation



Spoon Theory

Neurodivergence at a glance

The participants in our job club pilot were:

- 79% autistic
- 37% ADHD
- 21% dyslexic
- 11% dyspraxic

- 16% homeless
- 63% poor mental health
- 37% poor physical health
- 74% socially isolated



What did our participants say?

We asked participants what for the most valuable thing they had taken from our workshops. They said:

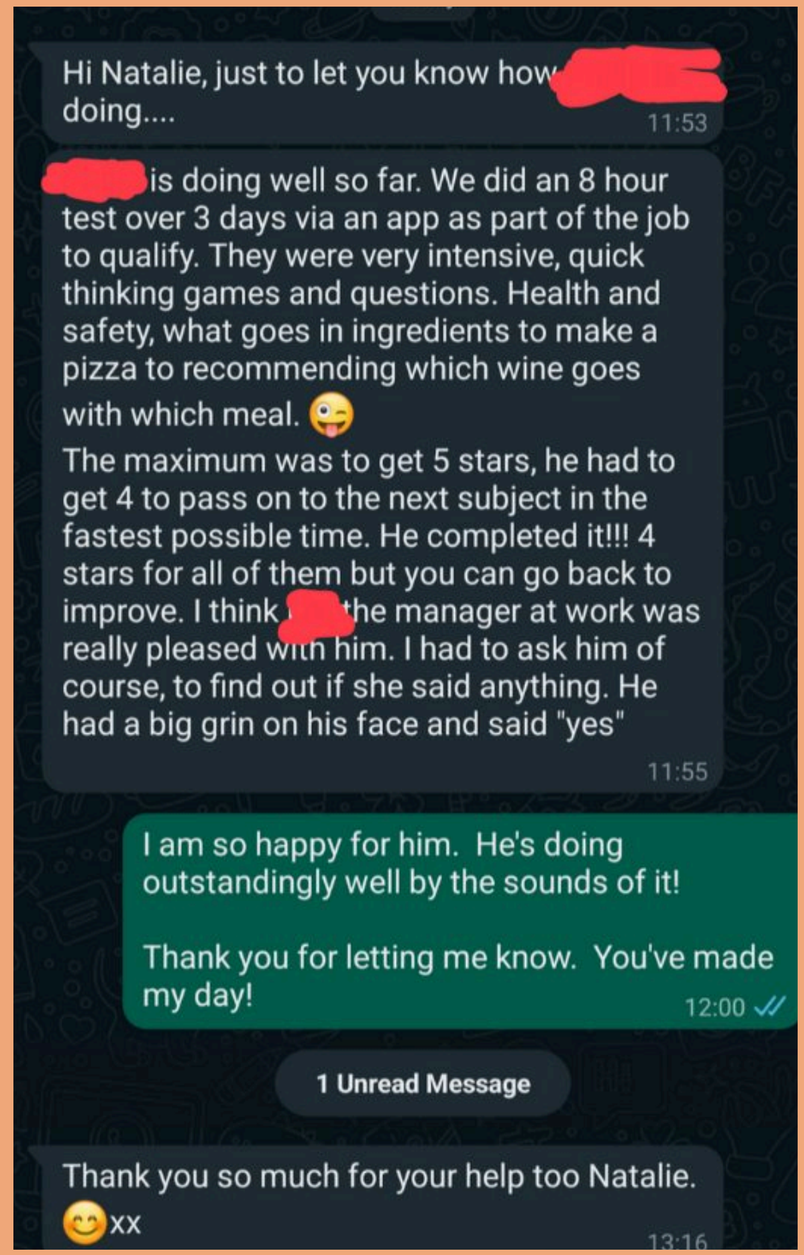
"Kindness to myself"
"I now have many useful resources I can use"
"I now know it's ok and normal to have a lapse sometimes"
"I can finally move out of my parent's house"

Sally - Job Centre Services Manager

The outcomes you posted from the last cohort were superb in supporting the attendees into moving closer to the labour market and in fact many started work.

That is an excellent outcome and we have not struggled in booking customers onto each job club cohort, which shows the demand for support for customers with a neuro diverse condition.

The attendance appears to be consistent, and Phil and I have both commented that the job club is certainly of positive value to an adult group where there is little local support.



Neurodivergence Job Club

Stories of Change

*names changed for privacy reasons



James dropped out of school aged 9 after struggling with dyslexia and ADHD. This meant he was not able to read or write which made finding a job extraordinarily challenging.

The local job centre referred James to our Neurodiversity Job Club and he has since been offered a full-time position as a tyre fitter in a local car garage. James is also now learning to read and write, with the support of a 1-1 mentor.

Jess has been diagnosed with autism and dyslexia. Jess felt this made it hard to succeed in work due to anxiety. She didn't feel employers understood her needs well.*

We have supported Jess in developing her art hobby into an illustrating business, and introduced her to a range of potential clients, many of which she now has regular work contracts with. She has developed an online portfolio and is now a professional children's illustrator.

Hannah had just finished her training as a radiographer, and during that training she was also diagnosed as autistic. The local job centre referred her to our service while she was claiming Universal Credit and trying to find employment.*

With support from our Neurodiversity Job Club and one to one meetings with our support worker, she is now on a permanent employment contract with our local hospital as a radiographer and loving it!

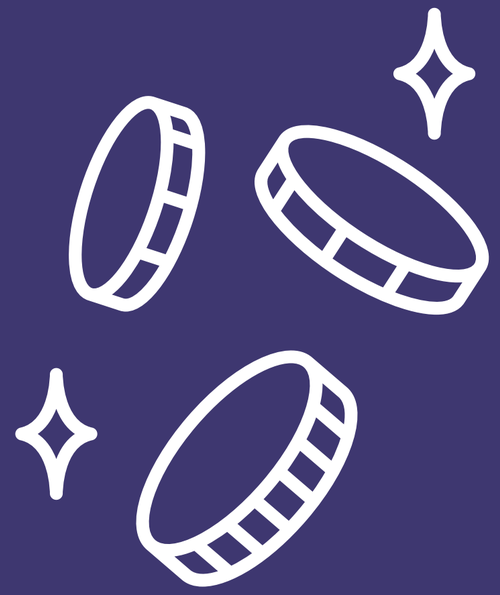
Harvey had been trying to find employment for 12 years, but due to his autism and speech difficulties employers only offered him voluntary work.*

Harvey has always wanted to work so that he can be independent and move out of the family home. He attended our job club for 3 months and now works in a local restaurant part-time as a kitchen porter and is acing all of his practical exams to progress in his career.

Lewis was referred in by the local job centre as his Universal Credit payments reduced after starting a local college course. He now needed a part-time job alongside his studies, but was struggling to get an interview due to his ADHD and dyslexia.*

Lewis had 1-1 sessions with our support coach over 2 months, including our mock interview sessions with local employers. He now works part-time in a local shop and is on target to complete his media course!

Social Return on Investment (SROI)



Job Club Social Impact Value

£504,000

based on our data of 12 FTE roles hired (11 full-time and 2 part-time), with each full-time role having a value of £35,000 economic value and £7,000 wellbeing value

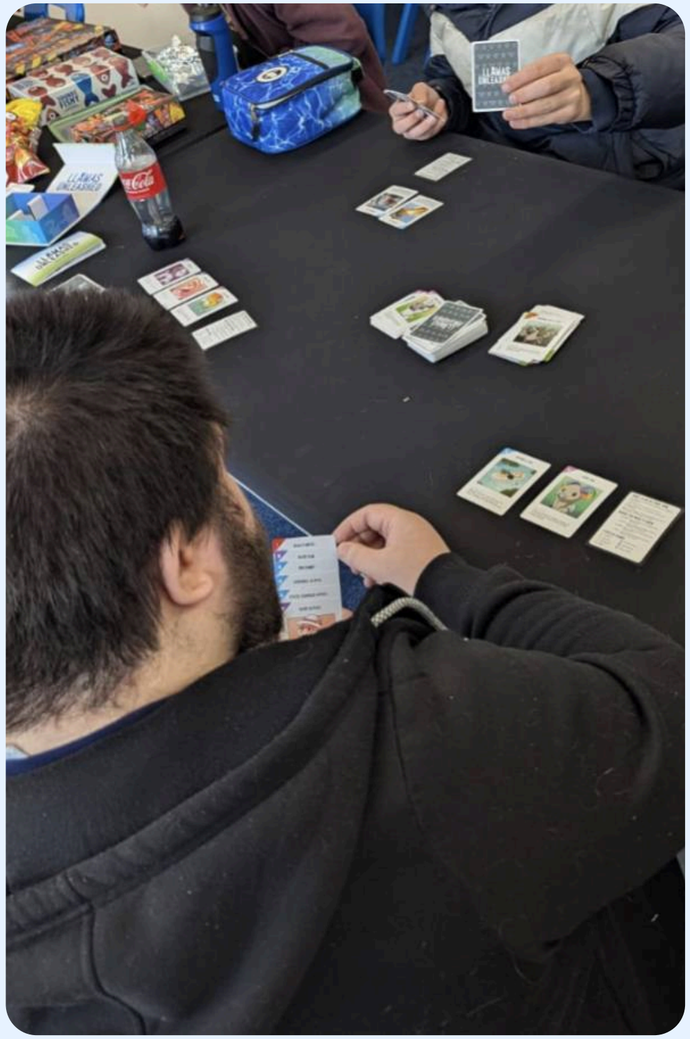
Return of 4940% on the investment into the young people we supported

The National Lottery Community Fund invested a grant of £10,000 over 12 months.



calculations have been made using the Measure UP framework, including figures from the Greenbook guidance and WELLBY method, as used by the ONS

SEN Teens Gaming Group



Rushmoor has a stark divide in household income, with simultaneously some of the most wealthy and some of the most deprived households *(lowest 20% index of multiple deprivation)* living on neighbouring streets. This leads to problems in public funding as services depended on by lower income families (such as a bus service) do not have enough people using them to make them viable. As a result, we have a gap in available services which leads to social isolation, reduced opportunities and lack of social mobility in the borough.

This challenge is further amplified for autistic and SEN young people, many of whom do not leave the house to go to school, may be home alone during the school holidays, have fewer friends to meet, or are unable to use existing public transport to partake in social opportunities).

As a result, we have set up a gaming group in collaboration with The Million Hours Fund (via The Department for Sport and Culture and The National Lottery Fund) to deliver free gaming days for SEN teens from the most deprived pockets in Rushmoor. We have had so much interest, retention and gratefulness from the community that we have opted to keep these sessions going beyond the initial funding.



Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport

COMMUNITY FUND

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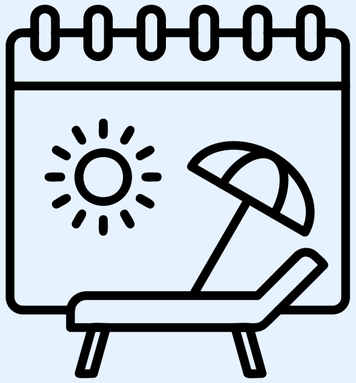
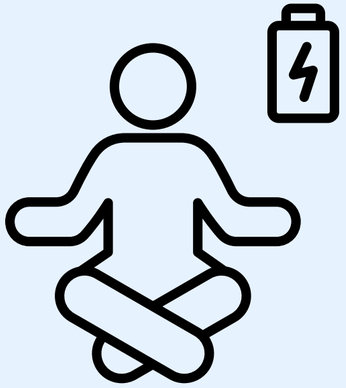
Our Gaming Days



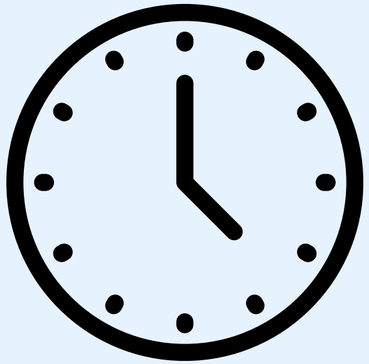
Runs during school holidays



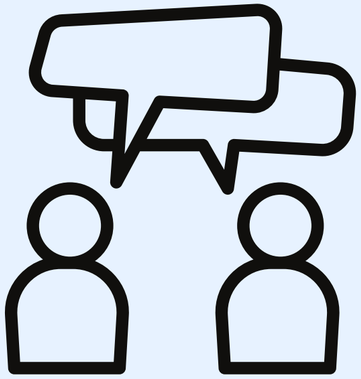
Experienced SEN Staff



Low Demand Approach



5 hour-long sessions



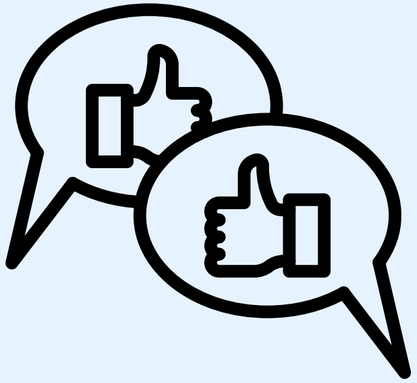
Social Opportunities



Led by Lived Experience



Sensory Supporting



AAC & PDA Safe Space

What did our participants say?

Feedback we have received from young people:

“I really like playing new games like Dungeons and Dragons”

“The adults were really nice”

“I liked making new friends, it’s easier here than at school”

“I definitely want to come again next time!”

“Lots of fun, great food, and even better friends”

“Don’t change anything. It was all amazing”

“The staff were soooooo good”

“I found it interesting and a finally made my first ever friend”

★★★★★

84% rated us 5 stars

★★★★

16% rated us 4 stars





What do parents & carers say?

Feedback we have received from parents and carers:

“Huge thank you for these sessions. My son loves them”

“It’s great to see him actually wanting to go somewhere!”

“He had an amazing time. Thank you so much for the opportunity!”

“Your gaming days are perfect for him. He is always positive and excited about coming”

I just wanted to say how wonderful these days are and how much we value them. Thank you all for the good work!”

“You have a brilliant way with young people”

“Honestly, it’s been a lifesaver”

“Sneaking in at the end and observing, I could see and hear the lively fun being had!”



Jennyfer Assis
2 reviews

★★★★★ a year ago

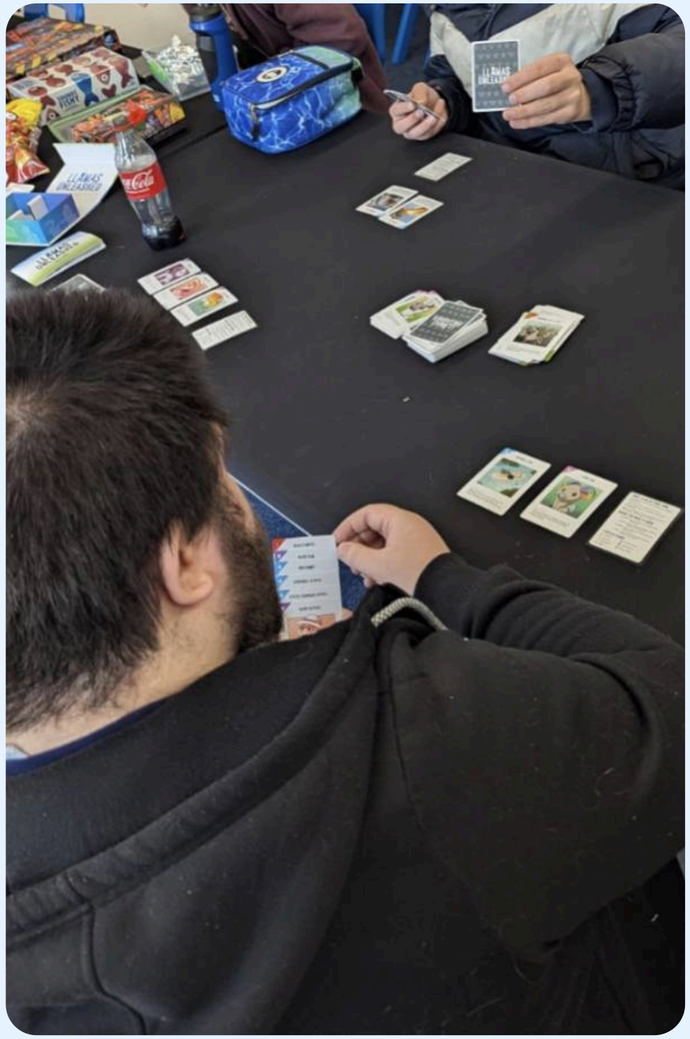
My kid had a great time during the 2 days game session. He learnt how to play new boardgames and make new friends. He's always happy to join the again. The staff are great, always given the support at the session.

Jessica Muirhead
Local Guide · 39 reviews · 20 photos

★★★★★ a year ago

My son attended a game day in Aldershot and had an amazing time. He has T1 diabetes, dysgraphia and can be very shy. The leaders were welcoming and inclusive and he can't wait to go again. Thank you!

SEN Teens Gaming Group



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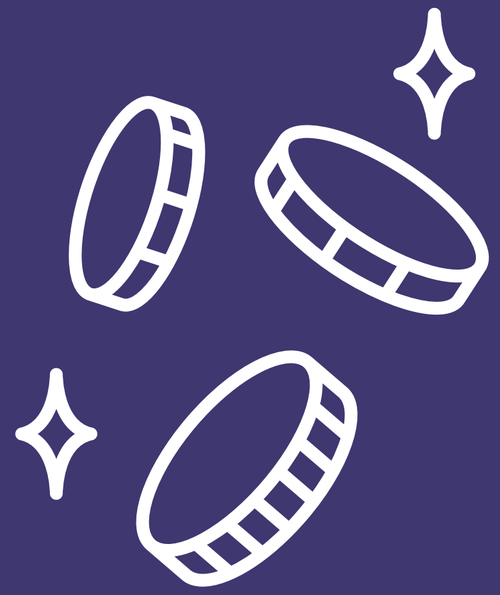
Social Return on Investment (SROI)



Gaming Group Social Impact Value

£67,680

based on our averages of 8 young people at each of our 18 event days, with each day having a value of £470 wellbeing value per young person

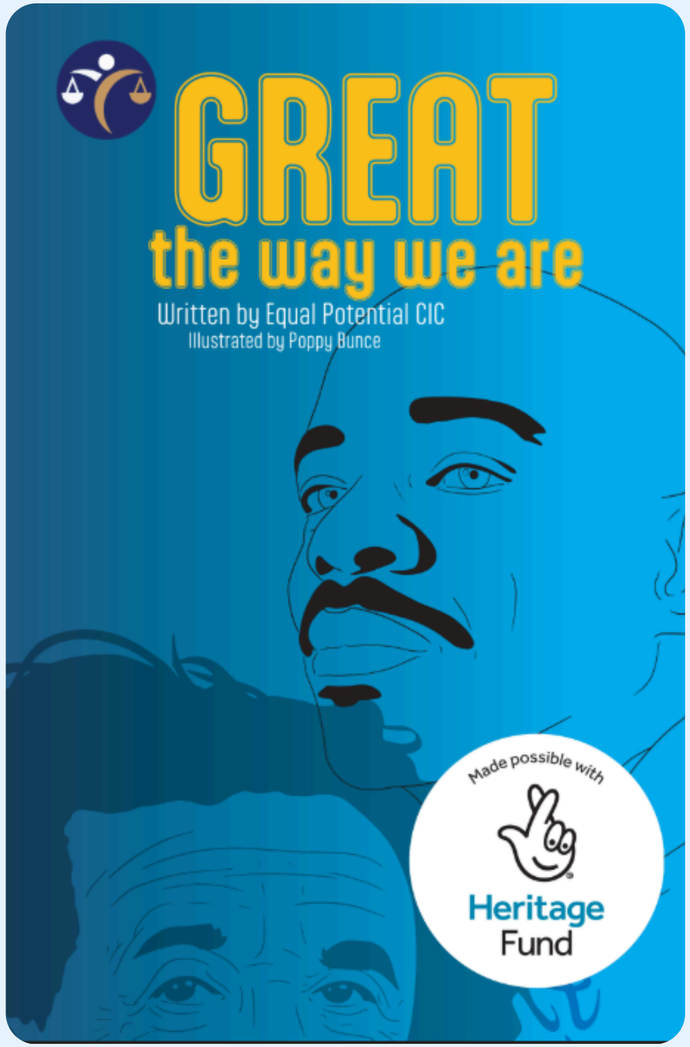
Return of 577% on the investment into the young people we supported

The Million Hours Fund invested a grant of £10,000 over 12 months.



calculations have been made using the Measure UP framework, including figures from the Greenbook guidance and WELLBY method as used by the ONS

Embracing Neurodiversity



The National Lottery Heritage Fund have funded us to grow a team of neurodivergent volunteers to work on a project entitled “Embracing Neurodiversity: Illuminating Contributions of Extraordinary Minds”. During this project, our volunteers have nominated and then researched neurodivergent public figures who they feel have made a significant contribution to today’s society. We’ve learnt about neurodivergent scientists, writers, artists, performers and more.

There are many, many challenges living day to day life as a neurodivergent young person, and it is crucial these aren’t undermined or swept under the carpet. At the same time, we often feel under-recognised in contributions the neurodivergent community, which can add to feelings of uncertainty and invisibility over our own social and career potential. As well as challenges, neurodivergence can also bring fierce creativity, innovation and passion to succeed and we would like this recognised also rather than having neurodivergence seen purely only as a deficit.

Their research has now be turned into an illustrated picture book titled “Great the way we are”, and set of posters, with fifty free copies of the book donated to local neurodivergent focused organisations (such as schools, mental health services, and charities).



Made possible with
Heritage
Fund

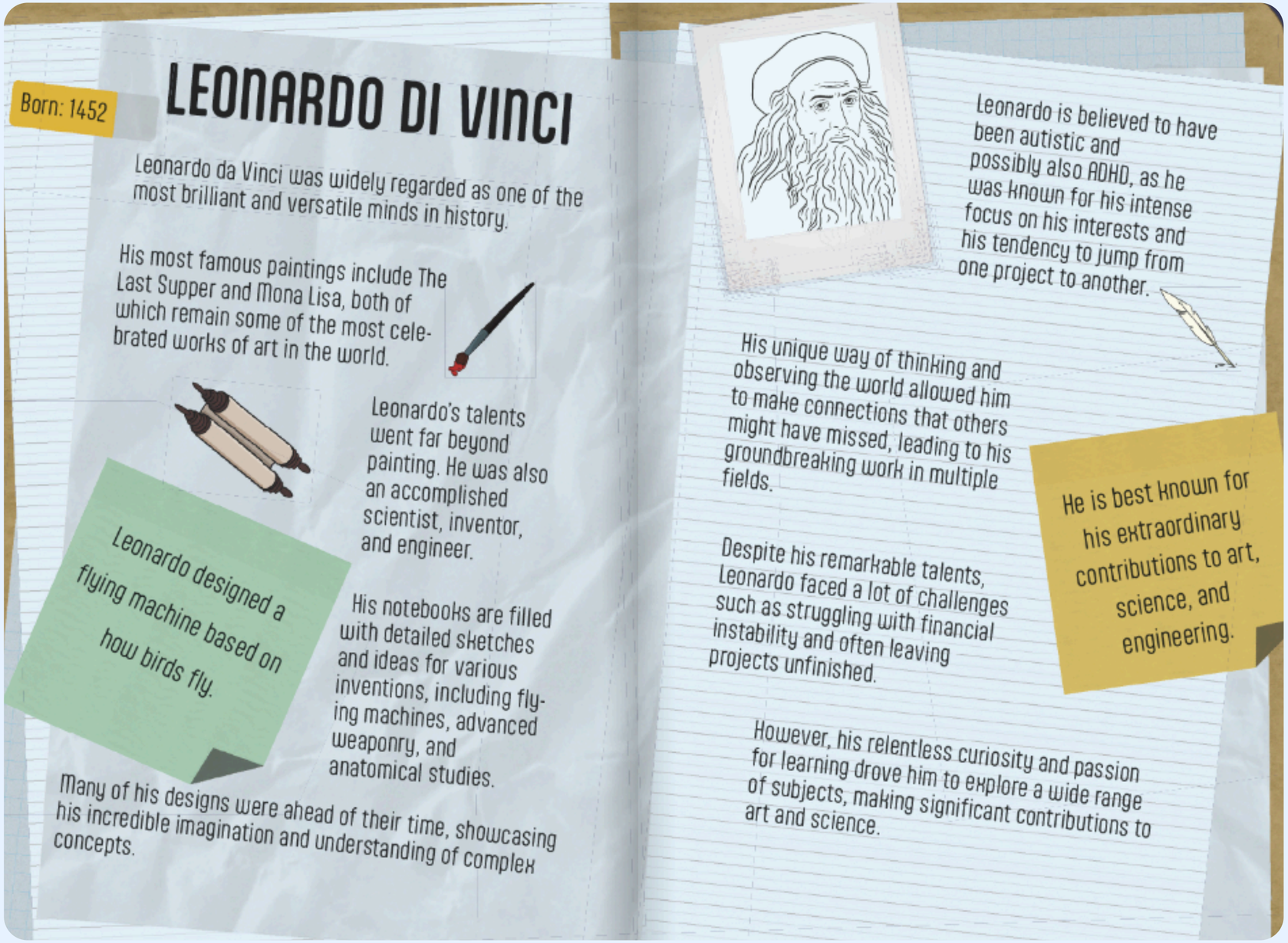
This project has been funded by The National Lottery Heritage Fund. Thank you to all National Lottery players for making this possible.

Project Outputs

We have produced an illustrated picture book, series of posters, and audio recordings of the book available via YouTube. Print copies of the book and copies of audio files can be accessed using the links below.

Book Purchase

Audio Files



Benefits to Volunteers



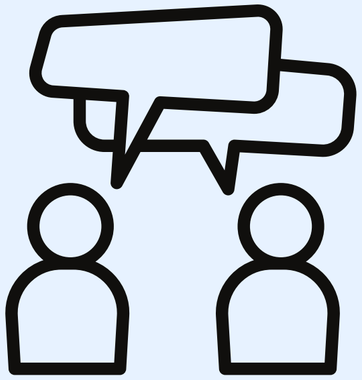
Teamwork Experience



Strengthened Community Links



Work Experience



Reduced Isolation

Feedback from Book Donation Recipients

This beautifully presented book is full of inspiration and affirming messages. We are looking forward to sharing it with the neurodivergent young people we support!

- Sarah Clements
Mustard Seed Autism Trust

The moment I opened the book I knew I was going to like it and that it would fit right into our Neurodiversity Collection

- Lucy Marshall
More House SEN School

SEN Drama Club



Arts Council England have kindly funded an SEN drama group for primary aged children currently not able to access standard performing arts classes due to their additional needs. The majority are no longer attending formal education due to unmet needs, unsuitable school placements and emotional challenges in attending the school environment. We hold weekly sessions, which have allowed the children to redevelop their confidence, feel happier working in a group environment, and become less isolated from the local community.

In the session, we work on musical theatre skills such as singing, dancing, acting, and improvisation. We will soon be taking the children on an accessible theatre trip.

This funding has allowed us to create a small but close knit community of children and parents with shared life experiences. It has allowed us to use theatre as a platform to develop peer support for both children and parents, with a parents WhatsApp group for sharing advice, to a reassuring coffee and chat while the children participate in drama sessions.

This project is ongoing until March 2026.



ARTS COUNCIL ENGLAND

This project has been funded by Arts Council England

Feedback From Parents

"It takes a while for my kids to relax and enjoy group settings, every meet up we've been to has been so patient and understanding of their needs and worked hard to help them feel included."

"My children really enjoy coming to drama classes. They think it is good fun, being engaged in different activities, conversations and games that explore their creativity and expand their imagination, in a nice, relaxing atmosphere."

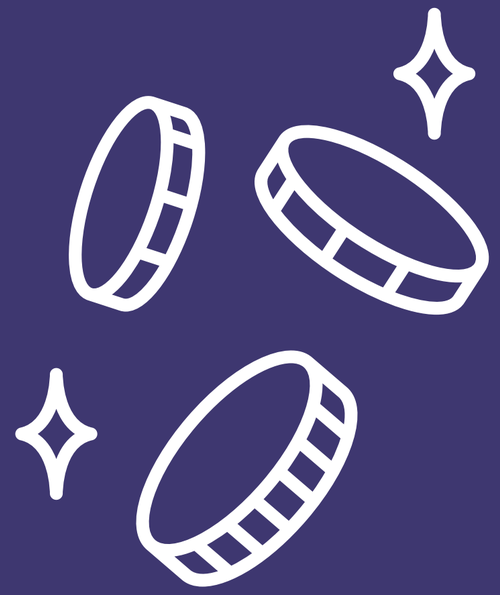
"I have never seen my child join in with a class so readily, it's lovely to see."







Social Return on Investment (SROI)



Drama Group Social Impact Value

£70,500

based on our data of 15 young people at the group at any time, attending 35 sessions per year, with each year having a value of £2350 wellbeing value per young person
This is the predicted end project value after 2 years, estimated on the assumption that the second project year runs in a similar success to the first year.

Return of 135% on the investment into the young people we supported

Arts Council England invested a grant of £30,000 over 2 years



calculations have been made using the Measure UP framework, including figures from the Greenbook guidance and WELLBY method as used by the ONS

Thank You!

We would like to extend a massive thank you to every person and every organisation that have helped and supported us in our first two years.

Please email with any queries or further questions

info@equalpotential.co.uk