



The Buzz

Written in Co-production with the voice of The SEND Children and Young
Persons Council

In this edition

Welcome

Student Blog

Christmas can be
tricky.

Friendship

Join us: North Somerset
childrens and young
persons SEND council

December Activities.

Hello everyone, and happy winter we
hope you are all having brrr-illiant days !

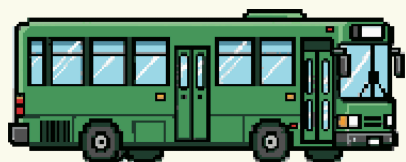


We've had an exciting start to the children and
young persons SEND Council year, welcoming
lots of new children, young people, and schools
into the Council.

Our newest members have jumped straight in
and are already making a big difference. One of
the first things they spoke up about was transport
accessibility on public buses public and some
things they felt needed changing with home-to-
school transport. They have also shared how
they travel which is sustainable and better for the
climate.

They've even created short films for senior
leaders on the SEND Partnership Board to show
what really matters to them and what changes
would make life easier.

Members also shared what they want more of
this year: clear information about volunteering,
support when moving between schools, colleges
or classes, and ideas about what they can do
after college. And of course, they're keen to find
out the best places to go and fun things to do
when they want to hang out with friends.



One of our SEND representatives at Weston College have
written us some blog for this edition and we hope you enjoy
reading it. If you would like to join the Council or would like
more information please contact [shelly.smith@n-
somerset.gov.uk](mailto:shelly.smith@n-somerset.gov.uk)



SEND Student Blog:



Hello welcome my name is J**** I am 16 years old. I have recently left my old school and now attending Weston College. I am pretty well known in the north somerset area.

I am going to tell you all about my transition from school to college and also talk about the challenges I face as: a wheelchair user and needing 1-1 support all the time due.

This is because of the to the condition I have which is called Treacher Collins Syndrome I will give you some information about it:

[Treacher-Collins syndrome | Great Ormond Street Hospital](#)

it includes all of these conditions:



- ·Choanal atresis (narrowing/blockage of the nasal airway)
- ·Cleft palate – non repairable
- ·Cerebral palsy
- ·Maxillo-facial abnormalities
- ·Unsafe/unusual airway
- ·Hearing impairment
- ·Visually impaired
- ·Unsafe swallow
- ·Balance Issues
- ·Scoliosis

I also have a Tracheostomy and a Tracheostomy tube and a Gastrostomy. I have a liquid feed 3 times a day (twice at college) and water

How does this impact my everyday life I hear you ask?

When I get a good day, I cope quite well but if I ever get a bad day it is very difficult. I feel very upset and sometimes painful and quiet.

When I'm at college I do have to someone with me all times, but it has a lot to benefits to it.

On the weekends it affects my everyday life and makes weekends a bit difficult as I get tired.

At night I have night carers so it gives my parents a good night sleep

I was at my secondary school for 5 years and believe me it was not easy at the start! this was due to covid 19. But from year 8 it was quite straight forward, and I felt very at home and safe there.

So when it was time to get ready to think about leaving it felt very hard to think about leaving school, I have made some good friends.

'but with support I got through it 😊'

There was lots of training, but we got there ! People have been very good and kind and now its all going well.

Things I like about college ??

... the subjects they better than school

... the staff are very nice

... my core team have been very supportive



I hope you have enjoyed reading my Blog

Over and out ...



*** Please note The writers of the blog's all have 'different abilities' which is the term that has been adopted instead disabilities and or additional needs. Our focus for 2025 is to use person first language. While The Buzz is subject to editing to a certain extent, we try to alter as little as possible. This means when our authors read it, they can expect to read exactly what they gave to us and feel completely free in expressing themselves*

Christmas can be tricky!

(and that's ok)

Christmas can feel really different, and that can be hard. Lots of children and young people and adults struggle with the changes. If that's you, read on



Everyone talks about Christmas being fun and happy. But sometimes, it just feels... weird. If you aren't feeling full of joy, you are not alone.



Why Does It Feel Strange?



Everything Changes: School stops. Meals are at different times. People visit your house. Your brain likes knowing what happens next, so these changes can feel like someone moved all the furniture while you were asleep!

Sensory Overload: Flashing lights, loud music in shops, and crowded places. It can be exhausting.



How It Might Sneak Up On You !

You might not realise you are stressed. These feelings often build gradually - one moment you're fine, the next you're completely done with everything. Watch out for:

- Getting cross about small things
- Feeling super tired, even if you slept well
- Finding it harder to enjoy things you usually love
- Wanting to hide in your room
- A tight feeling in your chest or tummy

Your Christmas Survival and wellbeing Kit



Here are four ways to look after yourself:

Keep Your Anchors:

Pick one normal thing to do every day. It could be your morning tea and toast, or 20 minutes on your console. Stick to it!



Plan Your Escape:

If a room gets too loud or busy, know where your quiet spot is. You can say "I just need some fresh air" or "I'm going to chill for a bit."



Pack Your Gear:

Headphones, sunglasses, a hoodie, or a fidget toy. If you need to block out the world to reset, that is fine.



Recharge Batteries:

After a social event or family visit, block out time to do absolutely nothing. You aren't being lazy; you are recharging.



Remember



It is okay not to love every minute of the holidays. Be kind to yourself. You are managing a lot of changes, and that takes strength.



At the beginning of each year the SEND Council representatives set the agenda for the year. One of the items this year was friendships, which Guy Clayton talked about and also did a powerpoint for the representatives. The representatives thought the discussion and information should be shared with everyone because not just children and young people with different abilities or additional needs struggle with friendships. Every one does at times....

You Already Know About Friendship

So this is not about teaching you how to make friends.

You already know a lot from your own life. Instead, this is about:

- Why friendships can feel hard
- Why this can be extra hard if you are neurodivergent
- What might help

Why Friendships Matter

Feeling lonely really hurts. That's not being dramatic.

Your brain reacts to loneliness in the same way as physical pain.

Long ago, our ancestors lived in groups, being alone meant danger.

Your brain learned to send a strong warning signal to push you back to people.

So if friendships feel:

- Really important
- But also really hard

That makes total sense.



Why Friendships Can Be Difficult

There are lots of hidden rules that no one explains, like:

- When to make eye contact
- How long to talk
- Knowing when someone is joking

Friendships Also Take Energy.

You might hear this called your social battery. Talking to people can drain it. It drains even faster if you are masking (trying to hide your differences).

Other hard parts can be:

- Bright lights
- Loud noise
- Busy spaces
- Bad past friendship experiences

These are real barriers.

It is not because you are “not trying hard enough”

What You Need From Friendships

You don't need lots of friends. A few real ones is enough.

Good friendships look different for different people:

- Some like deep conversations
- Some like doing things quietly together
- Some prefer online or texting friendships
- Some only want to check in now and then
- Some enjoy sitting together in silence

All of these are valid.

Your needs are real, even if they look different from TV or social media



Green Flags (Good Signs in Friendships)

Healthy friends usually:

- Are flexible if you cancel
- Care about your interests
- Accept how you communicate
- Understand when you need space
- Remember things you've said
- Check in when you're struggling



Good friends like the real you, not a pretend version. They make life feel easier, not harder.

Red Flags (Warning Signs) Bad signs



A friendship may not be safe if someone:

- Always has to get their own way
- Makes fun of your interests or stims
- Is only nice when they want something
- Pressures you into uncomfortable things
- Shares your private information
- Excludes you on purpose
- Makes you feel bad for needing space

Being careful after past hurt is not rude. It is smart !

Winter 2025

Practical Things That Can Help

1. Find people through shared interests
Clubs, gaming, art, music, animals, online groups.
You already have something to talk about.
2. Choose low-pressure ways to connect
Walking, gaming, drawing, cooking together.
You don't have to sit face-to-face and talk all the time.



3. Use simple scripts to explain your needs

You can say things like:

- “Crowds overwhelm me.”
- “I prefer texting.”
- “Eye contact is hard for me, but I’m listening.”



4. Make things easier for yourself

- Pick activities you can manage
- Set time limits
- Have a way to leave early if needed



That is not being difficult. That is looking after yourself.

When Its Really Stuck And You Need Help

Sometimes friendships feel stuck, even when you’re trying. That’s when support can help. Youth groups, CAMHS, or talking to a counsellor can make things easier. A new environment or low-pressure online groups can also help while you build connections.

Not every friendship will last, and that’s normal – it’s not failure.

Teen years are socially **tough for everyone**, especially if you’re neurodivergent. But it really can get better. As you get older, you get more choice, find people who fit you better, and differences are more accepted. These hard times won’t last forever



What does Help look like

Structured groups,
signposting to clubs,
1:1 discussions



Bridge Strategies

Leaning on trusted
adults or online
interest groups while
you build connections.



The Reality

Adolescence is socially
rough, but it genuinely
can get better as you
find your tribe.

The Last Paragraph!
(the bit you need to read)

- Friendship needs are all different, they all are valid
- The quality of friendship matter's not number of friendship's
- Digital connection counts
- It's okay to have boundaries
- **Find what works for you**



North Somerset SEND Children's and Young Person's Council

Would you like to have a say in decisions that affect you and your friends?

Join the North Somerset Children's and Young Persons Council!

- Share your ideas to help make things better for young people.
- Learn new skills and meet important leaders at North Somerset Council.
- Work as a team to support children and young people of all abilities.

Meetings are once a month during term time. No matter your school or education setting—even if you're waiting for a place—you are welcome to join us! For more information:

Email shelly.smith@n-somerset.gov.uk

Winter Holidays - Things to do



[Super Culture - Our Space](http://www.superculture.org.uk)



Exciting News! In Weston super Mare..

We're so excited to announce the launch of a NEW youth project – The Hangar Hangout.

Starting this Thursday (11th December), young people can turn up to access the free provision at The Hangar Gym, 1-2 Rectors Way, Weston super Mare. Sessions will run every Thursday, with a mix of activities and opportunities available - supported by North Somerset Violence Reduction Partnership.

Time: 3.15 - 5.15 pm

Every Tuesday (until end March 2026)

Location: The Hangar Gym, 1-2 Rectors Way, Weston super Mare, BS23 3NP

For young people age 11-16 years.