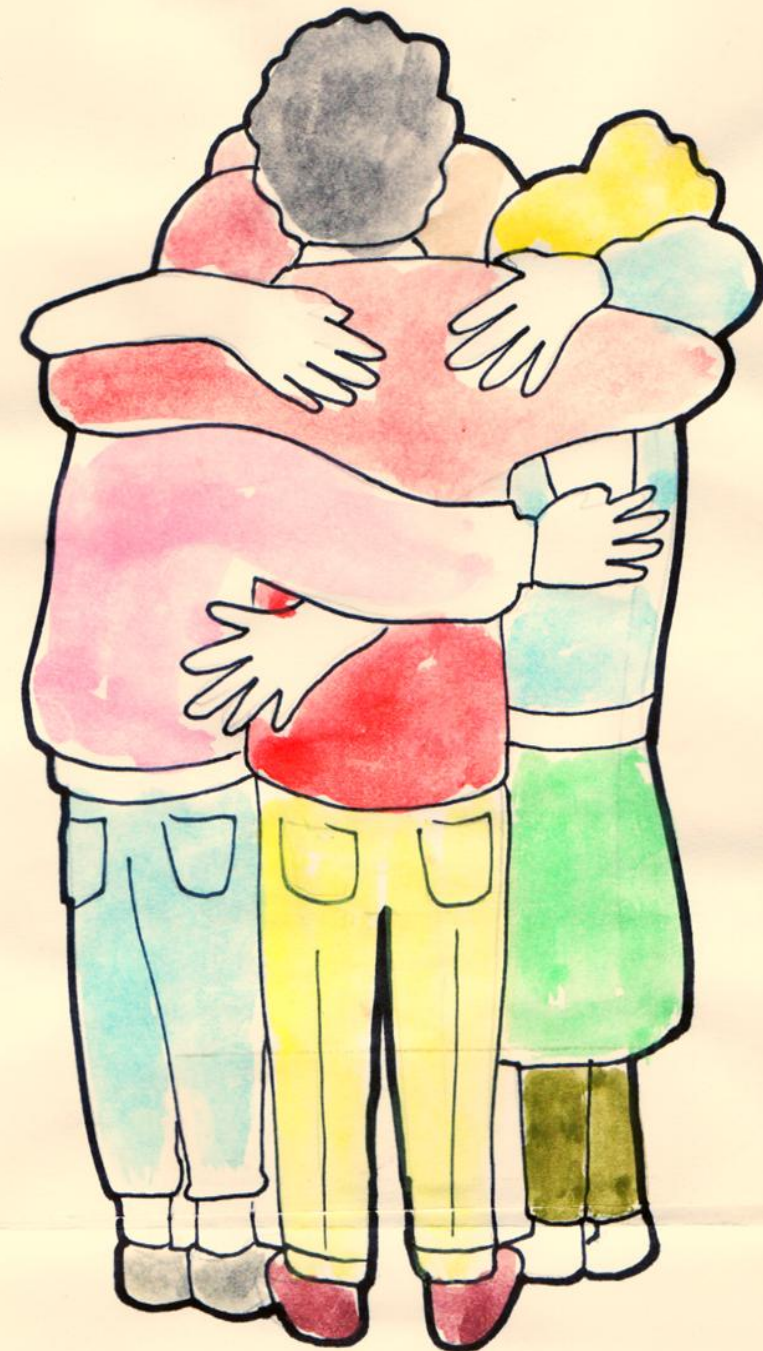




AUTHORING OUR OWN STORIES

AUTHORING OUR OWN STORIES: A NATIONAL YOUTH VOICE PROJECT, EXPLORING CIVIC IDENTITY

Empowering professionals to support young people, through youth
voice and peer research





**NATIONAL MEETING IN
LONDON, AUGUST 2026**









YOUTH FOCUS SOUTH WEST

29 Jun – 29 Sep 2024

THE TIME IS

ALWAYS NOW

Franklin





YOUTH FOCUS NORTH WEST, IN KNOWSLEY

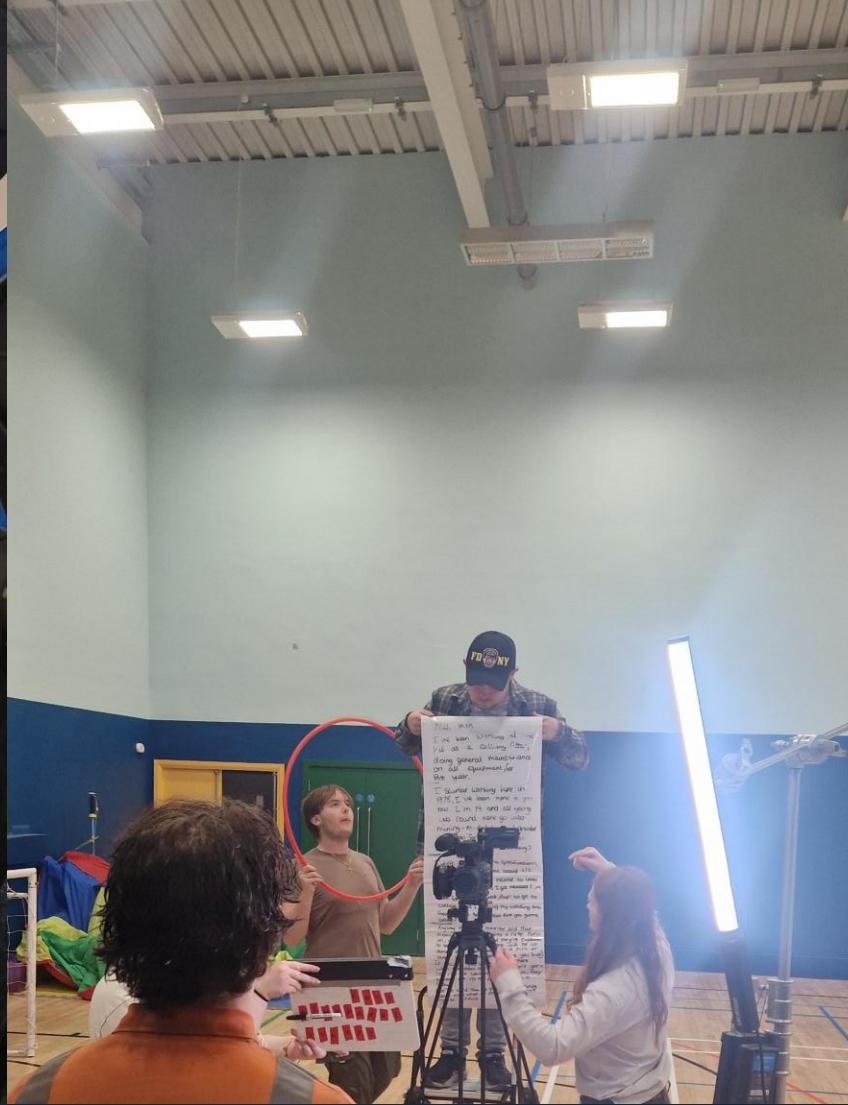


YOUTH FOCUS NORTH WEST IN LONDON



YORKS AND HUMBER YOUTH WORK UNIT





YOUNG MEN FROM YORKS AND HUMBER YOUTH WORK UNIT IN WORKSHOPS AND ON SET, FILMING THEIR 'TIME TRAVEL' VIDEO

PARTNERSHIP FOR YOUNG LONDON



**PARTNERSHIP FOR
YOUNG LONDON
PREPARING
TRAINING SESSIONS,
RESOURCES AND
DOING A QUICK
PHOTOSHOOT AFTER
CONDUCTING
FOCUS GROUPS!**

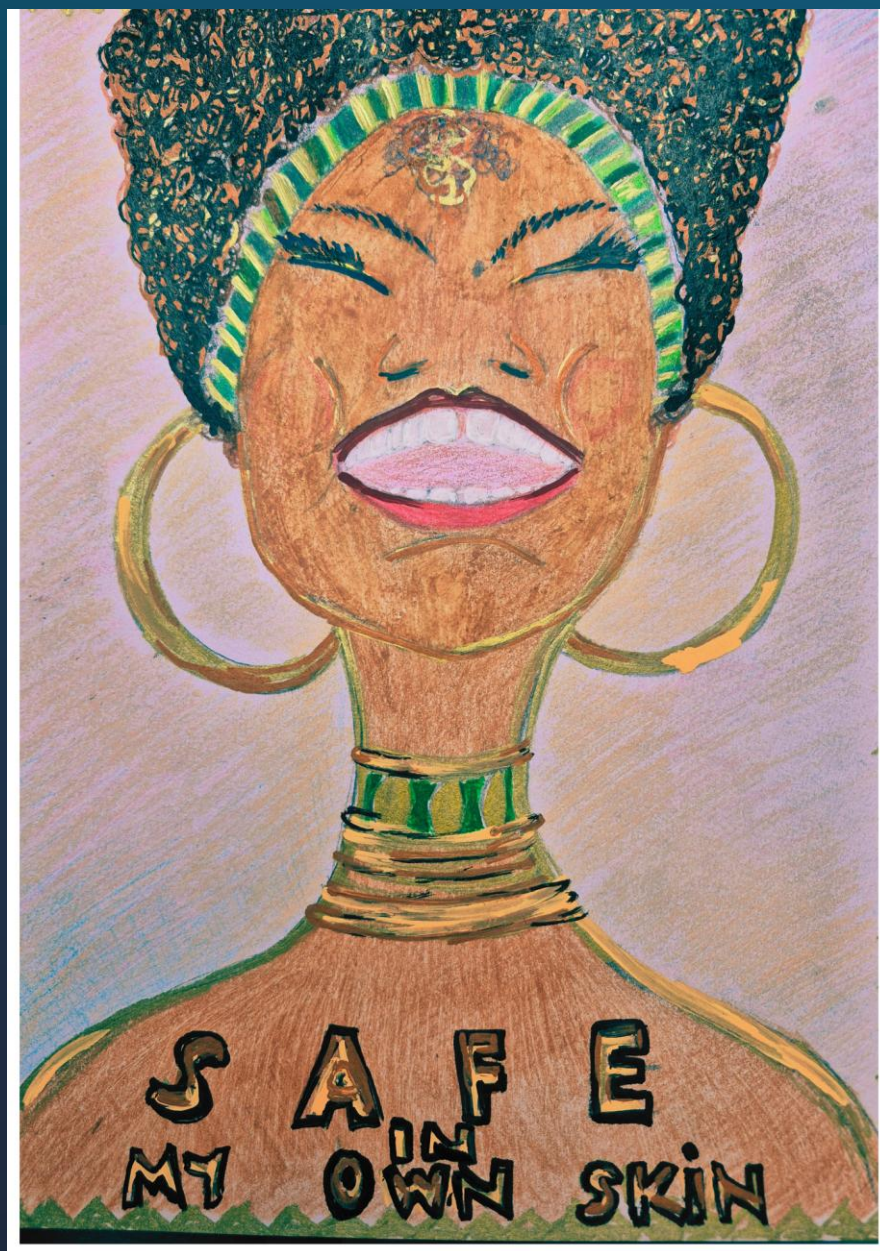




- **Co-production** means sharing power with, rather than having power over the people involved in each stage of developing the research.
- **Creative approaches** offer the potential to explore social issues from new and different perspectives.
- **Creativity** doesn't just mean making art – it's also about thinking laterally when engaging in our work.

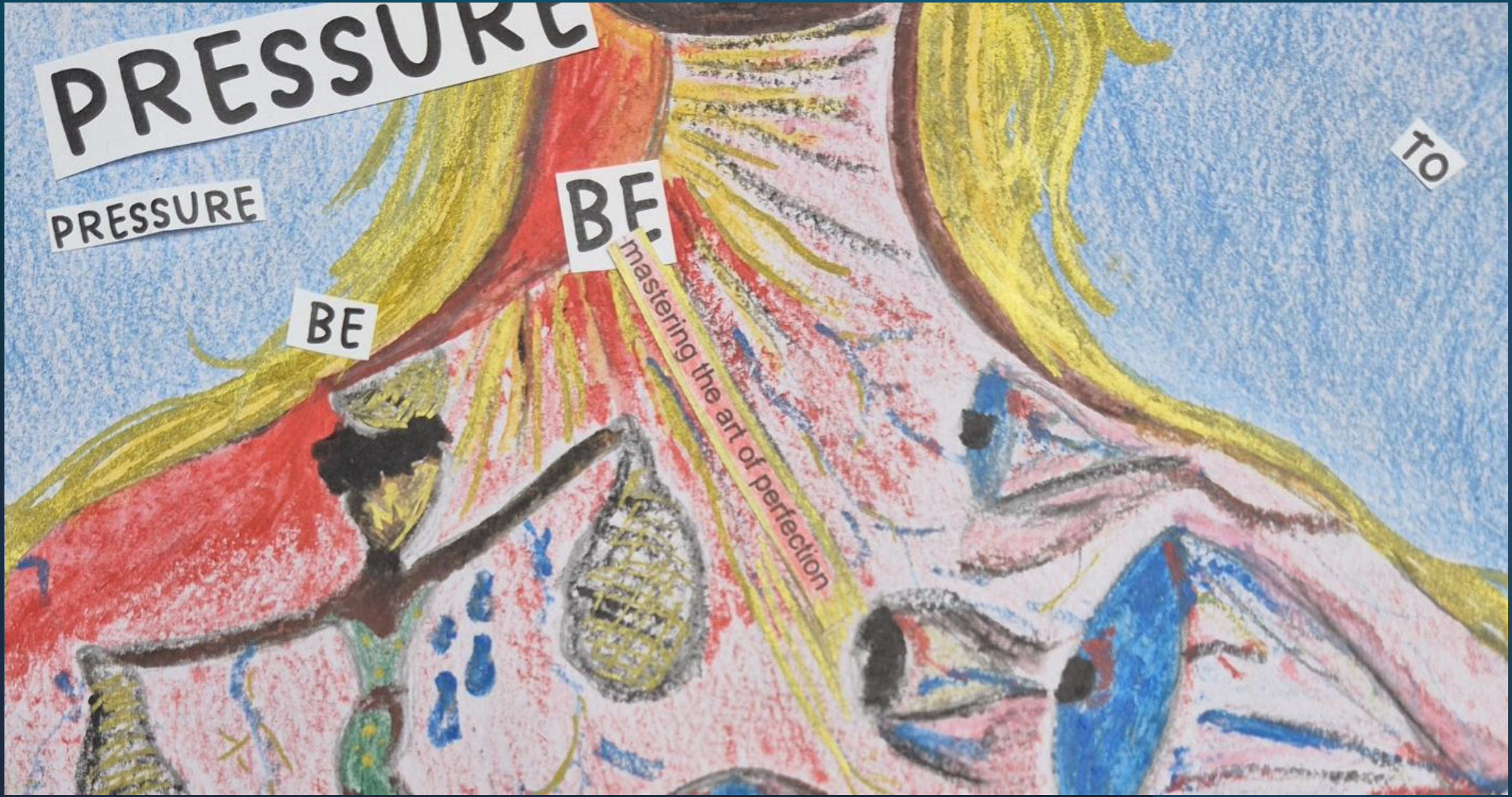












PRESSURE

PRESSURE

BE

BE

To

mastering the art of perfection



SAFETY
TO IS

CONNECT
WITH
MY

STORY

MY

FAMILY

Authoring Our Own Stories LONDON

OUR
METHODOLOGY

CO-PRODUCTION

CREATIVE APPROACHES TO EXPLORE
CIVIC IDENTITY WITH YOUNG BLACK AND
ASIAN PEOPLE

LIVED EXPERIENCE

KEY SOCIAL ISSUE

Addressing Mental Health Support and Services for young people of African, African-Caribbean and Asian heritage, living in London

KEY THEMES

Community/Isolation
Connection/Disconnection
Belonging/Unbelonging
Resilience/'Enforced Resilience'
The Ways we are Strong: Countering the Narrative
Adultification

Partnership
for Young
London



Year 1: Self - perceptions VS External perceptions, racial and gender stereotyping

There is a polarisation in terms of how young Black and Asian people see themselves and how they are seen by society. This tension affects how authentic they feel they can be in some civic spaces.



Year 2 : Adultification and safety

Many of the young people we spoke to have to take on adult responsibilities when they still need to be looked after themselves. This was reflected most often in data from young Black and Asian women in terms of roles both in and outside the home.
Often young Black and Asian people are treated more harshly than their white peers if they make mistakes. They are treated like adults.



Year 3 : Mental health, Intergenerational dialogue and resilience

"I want to be myself, but I don't really know how to be myself because of what everyone thinks of me, even though they don't know me."
(Focus group participant)

In year three we examined the taboos and stigma around emotional wellbeing and mental health in Black and Asian communities and addressed the disconnection between some young people and elders when discussing mental health within the home.



Year 4 : Gender, resilience and breaking the glass ceiling

"I have to 'put on a face', talk properly 'sit up straight' 'correct facial features' 'represent your race' and avoid making mistakes, to be taken seriously".
(Focus group participant)

In year four we worked in women-only groups. We investigated the colonial trope of the 'Strong Black Woman' and its relevance in 21st century society. We found the ideology is still prevalent. There are powerful factors to being resourceful but our data also suggested that the social expectation to be resilient is also harming mental health.
28% of our 2025 coded data sets related to experiencing external pressures to feel accepted in civic spaces.

Year 5 : A call to action - delivering our training model



"I feel it's my role to subvert these stereotypes, not conform. Once you conform everything comes crashing".
(Focus group participant)

In year five young leaders and workers are upskilling the workforce by delivering our training model. It offers practical steps professionals can take to address central issues arising from Authoring Our Own Stories.

For more information about the project contact
sandra.vacciana@cityoflondon.gov.uk



- **Recommendations for London**
- Create intergenerational networks to help break the stigma of mental health in African, African-Caribbean and Asian communities
- Explore how resources from Authoring Our Own Stories, co-produced with young people, can support adults in the community and professional settings
- The term 'mental health' can still be a barrier to getting support when needed

ELLA

**‘WHAT HAVE YOU ENJOYED
MOST ABOUT BEING
INVOLVED IN AUTHORIZING
OWN STORIES?’**





AUTHORING OUR OWN STORIES

**FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT AUTHORING OUR OWN
STORIES CONTACT**

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