

LOCAL AREA CASE STUDY

The AV1 Robot Project, is being delivered as part of the **Alternative Provision (AP) SEND Change Programme**, aims to **improve educational access and inclusion** for children and young people who cannot attend school due to **medical needs, mental health challenges, or emotionally based school avoidance (EBSA)**

Aim

AV1 Robots are transforming access to education by virtually transporting children into the classroom, enabling full participation despite illness or emotional challenges. Many children, in areas across the Yorkshire & Humber Change Programme, miss school due to these barriers - but the AV1 project is helping to change that.

The AV1 Robot **Project** is all about making sure children and young people who can't physically attend school - because of illness, recovery from medical treatment, or anxiety - don't miss out on learning or friendships. These small, portable robots act as the child's "eyes, ears, and voice" in the classroom, so they can join lessons, chat with friends, and feel part of school life from home or hospital. They can also be used in schools for when pupils are unable to access the lessons.

By using AV1, pupils can **see, hear, and speak in real time**, giving them a sense of normality and belonging even when they can't be there in person. This helps reduce isolation, maintain confidence, and keep education on track.

What we aim to achieve:

- **Keep learning going:** AV1 robots are being used across Wakefield, Bradford, Leeds, and Calderdale so pupils can take part in lessons and school activities remotely.
- **Reduce absence:** Support children in Alternative Provision (AP) or those at risk of exclusion to stay engaged with education.
- **Stay connected:** Help pupils maintain friendships and social links, which is vital for emotional wellbeing.
- **Ease the return to school:** Use AV1 as a gentle, supportive step towards coming back to the classroom when the time is right.

Impact

The AV1 Robot Project is making a real difference for children and young people who can't attend school because of health or emotional needs. Here's what we've seen so far:

- **Over 127 hours of learning delivered** that would have been lost without AV1.
- **Back to Learning:** Some pupils who were completely out of education are now joining lessons every day through AV1. For many, this has been the first step back into learning.
- **Staying Connected:** AV1 helps children keep in touch with friends and teachers, reducing feelings of isolation and anxiety. They can take part in lessons, group work, and even social activities like lunch or school trips – all from home.
- **Confidence and Wellbeing:** Families tell us AV1 has boosted their child's confidence and sense of belonging. Teachers say it helps classmates understand and support their peers.
- **A Bridge Back to School:** AV1 is being used as a gentle way to help children return to school when they're ready, especially those with anxiety or medical needs.
- **Working Together:** Wakefield, Bradford, Leeds, and Calderdale are sharing learning and good practice to make sure more children benefit from this technology.



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Activities

Here's what we've been doing to make AV1 robots a success for children and families:

- **Rolling out AV1**
We are introducing AV1 robots in schools across Wakefield, Bradford, Leeds, and Calderdale. These robots are helping children who can't attend school in person to join lessons and stay connected with their classmates.
- **Training and support for schools and families**
Teachers and school staff are being trained to use AV1 confidently and safely. Families are also being supported so they know how to help their child use the AV1 app from home or hospital.
- **Making AV1 part of everyday school life**
AV1 isn't just for lessons – it is also joining in with group work, social time, and even school trips. This means children can still feel part of the class and keep friendships going.
- **Listening and improving**
We are gathering feedback from pupils, parents, and teachers to understand what's working well and where we can make things even better. This helps us make sure AV1 is used in the best possible way for every child.
- **Planning for the future**
The project is part of the AP SEND Change Programme, so we are sharing learning across all four local authorities to make sure more children benefit from this technology in the future.

Feedback

Families and schools have told us AV1 is a game-changer. Parents say it's helped their child feel included and less isolated, even during long periods away from school. Teachers have noticed that classmates are more understanding and supportive, and pupils love being able to join lessons and chat with friends in real time. One parent described AV1 as “a lifeline” that kept their child connected to learning and friendships when they needed it most.

Initial feedback reports that the AV1 pilot is being very well received: *“The feedback we are receiving is very positive. The children are engaging every day with their lessons, whereas previously they struggled with that face-to-face tuition. The robot has supported them to be able to access some education every day.”*

Safeguarding reassurance: Schools were initially cautious, but feedback confirms that AV1's security features (no recording capability) have helped build confidence.

Impact on inclusion: Teachers describe AV1 as “almost like having a walkie-talkie but a lot more sophisticated,” making pupils feel present and part of the class.

