

LOCAL AREA CASE STUDY

Title: The Wakefield AP Specialist Taskforce (APST) provides coordinated, multi-disciplinary support for children and young people accessing Alternative Provision (AP) across Wakefield. The team works intensively with pupils, families, AP providers, and mainstream schools to stabilise placements, improve engagement and attendance, and support positive transitions back into mainstream education wherever possible. This ensures that the right support is provided at the right place and right time for our vulnerable children and young people.

Aim

The AP Specialist Taskforce (APST) is a specialist, bespoke approach to addressing the complex needs of pupils who have been permanently excluded or are at risk of permanent exclusion and are or may be accessing Alternative Provision. It improves access to specialist support and key services by ensuring a team of professionals works together to provide immediate support. The aim of the APST is to deliver targeted support using a relational approach that helps pupils overcome barriers to learning, re-engage with education, and progress toward successful reintegration or an appropriate onward destination. The APST has been CPP-funded since April 2025, with funding currently scheduled to end in August 2026.

Tier 1 – Mainstream and Targeted Support: At Tier 1, pupils remain in their mainstream school and access targeted support from specialist services, including advisory teachers, educational psychology, and Team Around the School. Multi-agency professionals, allocated via our AP Panel system, such as specialist teachers and therapy teams, contribute to early identification and preventative intervention to reduce the risk of exclusion.

Alternative Provision Specialist Taskforce (APST) – March 2026



Tier 2 – Time-Limited Step-Outs: Tier 2 provides short-term AP placements used as an intervention rather than a final destination. Pupils are dual-registered with their mainstream school, with a clear time-limited plan to identify and support their needs. Reintegration planning begins early, supported by APST staff who coordinate multi-agency input and ensure that pupils are ready and supported to return to mainstream education.

Tier 3 – Day 6 Permanent Exclusion (PEx) Provision: Tier 3 provides education from day 6 for pupils who have been permanently excluded. APST works with children and young people, AP settings, families and receiving schools, working towards a successful, supported reintegration into an appropriate onward destination.

Cross-Tier Outcome: Across all tiers, the AP Specialist Taskforce in collaboration with other services and the AP Panel system **successfully supports pupils to reintegrate back into mainstream or other appropriate settings**, providing a consistent team around the child and their family.

Tier 1 – Mainstream and targeted support	Tier 2 – Time Limited Step-outs. AP as an intervention not a destination.	Tier 3 – ‘Day 6’ PEx places
Local Offer: WISENDSS Advisory Teachers Educational Psychology Service Team Around the School... AP Panel: Educational Improvement Teachers, Education Therapy Team	AP Panel: 12-week AP placements, dual registered with mainstream school. Reintegration plan to return to mainstream	Statutory duty to provide places from day 6 of a permanent exclusion
		



Impact

Since launching in April 2025, Wakefield's APST has triaged 88 pupils and directly supported 65 pupils, with early data showing:

- Improved attendance within the first 6 weeks
- A higher number of successful reintegrations to appropriate destinations including mainstream

Early monitoring shows positive indicators across a number of areas:

Attendance

- Students supported by APST show a **notable improvement during their first six weeks**, compared to the typical AP trajectory for new starters.
- Although their starting points from previous settings are lower than the AP cohort average, progress shows **upward movement sooner**, exceeding AP cohort averages, which is a strong predictor of longer-term stabilisation.

Engagement & Readiness

- APST students demonstrate quicker readiness for reintegration than peers not receiving enhanced support.
- Every pupil receives a professional Speech and Language assessment and 'Communication Passport' with AP staff also upskilled by training in these areas. This enables communications to be clear, thus improving engagement and readiness.
- Targeted interventions (e.g., mentoring, therapeutic work, behaviour coaching, family support) show a positive impact on pupils' social, educational and emotional needs earlier in the placement.

Family Outcomes

- Families maintain consistent contact with the same professionals, leading to improved trust, shared planning, and stronger attendance strategies and a willingness from families to engage further with LA multi-agency support due to their positive experiences.
- Feedback indicates families feel listened to and more confident in how to support their child.

Student Voice

Themes from student comments include:

- increased confidence / positive relationships with APST staff / reduced anxiety / developing friendships and a sense of belonging

These reflect the relational impact of the multi-agency, child and family centred approach of the APST.

Activities

APST undertakes a structured programme of intervention, including:

1. Weekly In-Person Allocation Meeting

Professionals come together to:

- review all open cases
 - triage new referrals
 - identify and allocate to need
 - coordinate which agencies will work with the student/family
- This ensures **no duplication**, consistency, and fast response.

2. Direct Work with Students

This includes:

- 1:1 mentoring or coaching
- attendance planning and motivational support
- behaviour and emotional regulation work
- therapeutic support
- reading baselines and interventions
- speech and language support
- supporting students in the home and in the local community
- signposting to community events and free support eg gym memberships and activities
- reintegration timetable planning
- curriculum engagement work

Professionals focus on building **trusting relationships** that allow pupils to feel safe, valued, and motivated to re-engage.

3. Multi-Agency Coordination

The Taskforce convenes and leads work across:

- AP providers including providing training
- mainstream schools
- SEND services including transition support and educational psychologists
- health and mental-health practitioners including speech and language
- early help and family support
- police services
- attendance and contribution to multi-agency meetings such as AP Panel, reintegration meetings, step-out reviews and CIN/CP meetings

This reduces fragmentation and ensures everyone works toward the same plan.

4. Family Support

Practitioners provide:

- a 'neutral' support network for families
- regular messaging, telephone, home, community or on-site contact
- help with routines, boundaries, transport, and attendance
- emotional and practical advice
- mediation between family, AP, and school

This involvement strengthens relationships and improves outcomes.

Feedback

Student and family voice illustrates the effectiveness of the approach.

Student Voice Feedback



These comments reflect:

- increased confidence
- positive relationships with adults
- a stronger sense of belonging
- reduction in fear or stigma related to AP placement

Family Voice Feedback

Families report:

- improved communication
- feeling informed about progress
- greater trust in professionals
- reduced stress due to consistent support



This strengthens the home–school partnership, improving attendance and behaviour and, ultimately, educational outcomes.

Next Steps

To build on early success, APST will:

- Continue monitoring early attendance, engagement and reintegration to maintain progress.
- Consider recruitment of a mental health support practitioner to baseline, monitor and support improved mental health outcomes.
- Consider the extension of the project into tier 2 for routine APST involvement in step-out cases
- As the project becomes longer-term, opportunities will be taken to improve and monitor additional academic and vocational outcomes.

