

In Wakefield, The EHE-SEND Events Project aims to provide targeted support for Electively Home Educated (EHE) children with Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities (SEND) and those with emerging SEND needs.

Aim

The EHE-SEND Events Project aims to strengthen engagement, inclusion, and support for Electively Home Educated (EHE) children with Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities (SEND), including those with emerging needs, across the Wakefield district.

Through the SEND AP Change Programme, three providers were commissioned following a co-produced selection process involving EHE/SEND parents and a voluntary sector representative. The project aims to:

- Deliver **six accessible, inclusive family events** by March 2026.
- Build **trust with EHE/SEND families**, especially those reluctant to engage with local authority services.
- Create **safe, low-pressure environments** where children can explore new experiences at their own pace.
- Provide opportunities for families to **connect, share experiences, reduce isolation**, and feel listened to.
- Increase awareness of support pathways and early help options through **gentle signposting**, without overwhelming families.
- Lay foundations for future engagement, including **reintegration into education** where desired.

The first round of events took place in **October–November 2025**, with the next cohort between **January–March 2026**.

Impact

The first events delivered by **Camphill Wakefield, Grow Wakefield, and SWS Sports** were **well-received**, with families expressing enthusiasm for returning and participating in further sessions.

Across all three providers, families consistently reported:

1. Increased Confidence & Achievement

Children tried new experiences — including horse riding, woodland activities, pottery, biking, and skating — many for the first time. Parents frequently noted that children exceeded expectations, with some making significant personal steps such as:

- Engaging socially.
- Participating in group activities.
- Regulating better due to small group sizes.
- Showing improved confidence in unfamiliar environments.

2. Trust, Safety & Low-Pressure Environments

The decision for the first events to be **family-only** (with no professional's present helped build trust.

Families valued:

- Calm, welcoming settings.
- No pressure to participate.
- Freedom to choose activities.
- Staff who were patient, reassuring, and supportive.

This approach helped reduce anxiety and allowed children to participate at their own pace.



Impact

3. Reduced Isolation & Stronger Social Connection

Parents reported meeting other home-educating SEND families for the first time.

One parent captured this powerfully:

“We only live one street away from another attendee and didn’t know.”

4. Value of SEND-Friendly Environments

Camphill’s campus was repeatedly described as:

- Calming
- Different from school
- Safe
- Supportive

Two families have already returned to use the café area for English and maths work - a sign of strong sustained engagement.

5. Families Feel Listened To

Themes from the sessions reinforced that:

- Families felt genuinely heard.
- They appreciated being involved early in provider selection.
- They valued co-production and the freedom to choose future professional involvement.

6. Clear Demand for Ongoing Support

Many families highlighted challenges around:

- Diagnosis pathways
- EHCP processes
- Navigating local authority systems

This shows clear opportunities for gentle signposting at future sessions.

Activities

Grow Wakefield - Family Forest Explorers Programme

- Sensory woodland exploration
- Fidget spinner making
- Conker drilling
- Nature-based crafts and exploration
- Activities adapted for different needs and abilities

The sessions focused on confidence-building through flexible, creative outdoor experiences



SWS Sports - Inclusive Biking & Roller Skating

- Roller skating
- Biking (indoor and outdoor)
- Choice-based movement sessions
- Multi-station physical activity zones
- High staffing ratios to ensure individual support

The environment was active but low-pressure, with staff encouraging participation without forcing activities.

Activities

Camphill Wakefield – Equine, Animal Care & Creative Sessions

- Horse riding (RDA-based approach)
- Small animal handling
- Pottery
- Small group sessions tailored to sensory needs
- Indoor alternative activities due to weather

Camphill's therapeutic setting played a major role in helping children relax and participate.



Feedback

I just wanted to pop in and say how much we enjoyed it! The activities were well thought out for all abilities. My son struggles socially, but I came away yesterday saying he had made two friends and is looking forward to seeing them again next week. He really enjoyed the fidget spinner and conker drilling.



Thank you so much for a lovely afternoon, we are already looking forward to next week.

Very organised – plenty of staff helping out. Lots of different activities and something for everyone. Very relaxed and friendly... I hope they start to run regular groups.



Today helped to build my son's confidence by trying new things and meeting new people. It was great to see him socialising with other children.

We were surprised by how much our child engaged. They achieved things they've never done before.

