

LOCAL AREA CASE STUDY

Helping Every Child Thrive: Wakefield's Alternative Provision Specialist Taskforce

Aim

Every child deserves the chance to thrive in education. Some pupils need extra help because of challenges with mental health, communication, or family circumstances.

Wakefield and Calderdale are introducing a new way to support children who attend **Alternative Provision (AP)** schools. These schools help pupils who can't currently attend mainstream education.

Our aim is simple:

Bring expert support directly into AP schools so children get the right help, at the right time, in the right place.

Impact

The APST will make a real difference by:

- **Improving wellbeing and confidence:** Children feel safe, supported, and ready to learn.
- **Boosting attendance and engagement:** Fewer exclusions and more positive experiences in school.
- **Strengthening families:** Practical advice and emotional support for parents and carers.
- **Opening doors for the future:** Helping pupils return to mainstream education or move on successfully.

Additional benefits:

- **Joined-up working:** Stronger collaboration between schools, health, social care, and youth services.
- **Upskilled staff:** AP teachers gaining confidence and new strategies through specialist input.
- **Early intervention:** Quick responses prevent issues from escalating.
- **Community voice:** Feedback from families shaping the way support is delivered.

Progress so far:

- The project started in September 2024 and is on track to complete by December 2025.
- Early evidence shows improved collaboration between AP schools and specialist services.



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Activities

Families play a vital role in shaping this project. We've listened to parents and carers, and here's what they've told us:

- They value having **specialist support in schools**, making help easier to access.
- They feel more **included in decisions** about their child's education.
- They appreciate **quick responses** to challenges, reducing stress at home.

This feedback helps us keep improving and ensures the APST model works for children and families.



Feedback

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Next Steps

As we move forward, our priority is to fully embed the specialist team in **Wakefield's Alternative Provision schools** and continue monitoring the impact on attendance, wellbeing, and reintegration. We're planning for sustainability beyond December 2025 by exploring long-term funding options, strengthening partnerships with health and social care, and building capacity within schools so the benefits last well beyond the life of the project. A post-project review will ensure lessons learned are captured and shared, helping us shape future support for children and families.