

# WAKEFIELD LOCAL AREA CASE STUDY

## SEND SEMH EH Pilot

The pilot is a focused SEND Early intervention offer, in the areas of Pontefract, Castleford, Airedale and Knottingley of the Wakefield district. Focused initially on the growing cohort of children with **social, emotional** and **mental health** needs.

Evidence suggested that environmental factors are driving growth for an EHCP of this need type. The children are identified and presented through the existing TAS (Team around the School) by the schools SENCO, protected time provided to discuss SEMH cases with no limit on individuals discussed. At the point that the parameters of the project are met, the family receive a holistic, intensive package of support via a Targeted Early Help Practitioner alongside partner agencies.

## Aim

A key outcome is for the pilot to enable the partnership to provide the right support at the right time for all eligible families. This supports our school's approach to quality and evidenced based assessment at the first point of entry and utilising a graduated approach. This approach also means support is both accessible and visible to parents and carers of children and young people within the pilot. Accessing learning is the shared aim for all stakeholders.

## Early adopter (November- December 2024)

The project pilot commenced in November – December 2024 as a pre-adopter, this was a condensed version of the pilot with 6 pre-selected schools. The schools were selected based on quantitative data identifying schools in Pontefract, Castleford, Airedale and Knottingley that were supporting the most children with presenting SEMH needs. Two full time practitioners employed to deliver the pilot.

Whilst measuring the demand across the 6 schools, **73** children were discussed at the multi-agency meeting. The meetings focused on **social, emotional** and **mental health** needs of the children discussed, identifying the negative impact on the children accessing education. The outcomes of these discussions were as follows:

**38** children allocated to the SEMH Targeted Early Help practitioners for a holistic family assessment and the formulation of a multi-agency support plan tailored to their individual needs.

**35** children did not progress through the pilot but were reviewed in SEMH meetings. Instead, alternative support plans were developed, incorporating services which align to the TAS partnership.



*"I am trying to be the best version of myself".*  
(Male, 9 years old.)



# WAKEFIELD LOCAL AREA CASE STUDY

## Findings from the pilot

The findings indicated the intended outcomes of the pilot could be evidenced. Many of the children identified through the early adopter had likely experienced trauma or were impacted by environmental factors. Many of those children were not accessing support and had not been discussed through the existing TAS model. It was identified that further training for schools to identify SEMH from the earliest point would strengthen the ongoing outcomes for children.

### Other findings of those discussed/ through further assessment and support:

- Attachment difficulties from birth (impacting school drop offs)
- Parental mental health/ suffering their own trauma & PND.
- Children who had witnessed domestic abuse.
- Disproportion of young Males Y5/Y6 boys struggling with dysregulation in school.
- Difficulties in maintaining peer relationships that then impacts on self-worth.
- Sleep difficulties (including co-sleeping with parents linked to attachment needs)

## Transitioning to Phase 2 (Launched 24<sup>th</sup> February 2025)

TAS meetings have been attended by the SEMH Targeted Early Help Team manager, **SENCO**, **FIM** (future in minds), **EIP** (early intervention practitioner) with health information provided. The decision was made to have protected time in the TAS meeting for the SEMH pilot. This has ensured there were no restrictions in the number of children discussed enabling the pilot to be fully utilised.

In turn the families have access and understanding of the right support available to them, with agencies working together to identify effective and timely support.

## Impact

### Families progressed to support through Targeted Early Help SEMH pilot:

As of the end of December 2025 **171** children including siblings have been identified, progressing to support.

### Quality assurance:

SEMH cases have been included in the service 6-weekly auditing cycle throughout the pilot. Audits consistently evidence impactful practice, scoring at the highest scale.

Direct feedback is captured from parents, professionals, and children to measure outcomes and impact. This approach ensures continuous learning and improvement.

### Tracking education attainment:

The SEMH pilot has enabled identification of children who have SEMH needs to receive timely support through a coordinated approach.

- Since November 2024, 1 child has been issued an EHCP plan.
- All children supported by the targeted early help service have met at least one of the supporting families' criteria.
- Most children supported by the pilot have an MSP but some have a one-page profile where it is evident they are in receipt of SEN support.
- Attendance has increased in cases that have accessed support through the pilot.



# WAKEFIELD LOCAL AREA CASE STUDY

## Impact

### Therapeutic and Adaptive Approaches:

A therapeutic approach underpins all interventions, utilizing models such as:

- **PACE** (Playfulness, Acceptance, Curiosity, Empathy)
- **Respect, Restore, Rebuild parenting**
- **Relate to Educate**

Delivery includes role modelling and adapting resources for both children and parents according to their learning levels. This flexible approach ensures engagement and promotes resilience within the family unit.

### Holistic Family Assessment and Support Approach

A holistic family assessment is undertaken to identify environmental factors and gain an understanding of the family's lived experience. This process informs the level and type of support required to achieve positive and sustainable change. Multi-agency meetings are integral to this approach, ensuring collaborative planning and shared responsibility for outcomes.

### Inclusive Practice:

The plan is centred around inclusive practice, enabling children to access education. Direct work with children is tailored to their individual needs, with particular attention to speech and language difficulties. Building strong relationships through observation in varied settings, both within and outside the family home supports accurate assessment and engagement.

### Practice guidance

- Holistic assessment to identify needs and a plan of support.
- Intensive support for parents and children.
- Co-ordinated plan of support in school alongside identified services.
- Parents access mental health support when appropriate.
- Capture children's views and future aspirations (PFA).
- Identify family networks to support the plan and contingency.
- Multi-agency meetings held on a regular basis to review the plan, capturing views and progress.

- Attendance at practitioner forums to collate feedback and themes.
- SEMH practitioners' attendance at the wider SEND practitioner lead events.
- Embedding regulation awareness and planning.
- Therapeutic parenting support offered to all parents.



## Parent/carers and school Feedback

*"Karen has been a god send. She has been C's voice and has built such good trust with him. Karen has put things in place for C that has made it easier for him in school."*

*"Thanks, Leah, for helping with the high school transition and ensuring J is Settled in school. J actually enjoys school - he wants to go which is completely different to primary school. He is a different child in school - which I am so proud of."*

*"After support Mum said the children's behaviour is more settled in school and they are getting to school on time and are not as tired in class."*

*"I think the Claire has given M some knowledge on appreciation, I have seen a difference especially at the start of her new term at school. Claire has guided me as well as M."*

*"I wish Leah could take on more children like Justin. I am glad Leah has worked with him to address the concerns of Justin and help plan for his next steps. She has worked so hard to build a relationship with him and I can't thank her enough." (St Giles primary school)*

