

Back on Track with Social and Emotional Mental Health (SEMH)

Summer Term 2018

Back on Track with SEMH is a team covering North Yorkshire who support children and young people (CYP) with SEMH (Social Emotional and Mental Health). We aim to help these CYP and the people in their lives, including their families and staff at their school, to maximize their SEMH, prevent permanent exclusions and wherever possible ensure they access education local to where they live.

Team Profile



Hi there. My name is Kirsty Basnett, and I work on the Back on Track team in the East as a Communication Support Worker. Originally from Leeds I moved from the North of Scotland to join North Yorkshire County Council in August 2017. I qualified as a Speech & Language Therapist in 2006 and really enjoy the work – before that my

“patchwork quilt” of a CV included roles in telesales, teaching, research, sales and admin support, both in the UK and abroad.

My Back on Track role involves screening young people to identify any speech, language and communication need (SLCN) and providing support where appropriate, including working with schools and families to develop a communication-friendly environment. I also act as a Key Worker to identified young people.

I see a strong parallel between SLCN and SEMH in that a young person with need in either/both areas may be seen as having behaviour difficulties without the underlying need being considered or looked into. My Back on Track role allows me to support communication in a more holistic, extended way than a traditional Speech & Language Therapy job. I view this as an exciting opportunity, especially if we consider that “All behaviour is communication”.

On a personal level I am really enjoying exploring North Yorkshire, both coastal and rural. I am interested in languages, mindfulness, books, crafting and enjoy walking my dog.

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The completion of THRIVE practitioner training

On the 15th of March 2018 almost all of the team completed their Thrive training and qualified as registered Thrive Practitioners. This will be an invaluable addition to the skills and qualifications amongst our multi-disciplinary team allowing the use of an additional methodology which can be used to support young people at risk of school exclusion across the county.

The Thrive Approach combines elements of neuroscience, child development, attachment theory and arts & crafts to assess the needs of a child and inform suitable action plans for teachers and carers, enabling them to provide developmental support strategies for the children in their care.

The Thrive Approach will form a significant element of the Back on Track project, being used to support some of the children and young people who are referred to us. It has been an interesting and engaging learning experience for all concerned. It is an approach which complements our philosophy of educative inclusion for all young people while at the same time further enabling us to develop a variety of systemic strategies to support schools in their understanding of the social, emotional and mental health needs of young people.

Success Figures:

- We are beginning to see a correlation between the number of exclusions a young person has and the amount of contact time, with the number of exclusions slightly decreasing as contact time increases.
- Since the responsive arm cases have started to be engaged with we have seen the exclusions rate decrease from almost 40% (38.9%) to just over 10% (11.1%)
- 25% of pupils within the preventative group received an exclusion in the autumn compared to 37% for the Comparator cohort. This is indicative that the support that these young people are receiving is reducing the number of pupils receiving fixed term exclusions.

Success Stories:

- Child one has increased attendance at school from zero to 4 days per week
- Child two has increased engagement in education from a part-time time table to full time provision
- Child 3 hasn't engaged in education for two years and is now attending on a part time basis

Quote of the Term:

"When Back on Track first became involved with X we thought that we would have to permanently exclude him. Speech and language sessions with x give us direct support and tools we can use in class. Now we have a better understanding of X speech and language needs, there have been no exclusions since Back on Track become involved"
(head teacher)

Useful information:

'Future Learn' is an on-line learning network of Universities from around the world that offer short on-line courses. Many of which are related to education and mental health.

Quote from The Guardian:

'Four in Five 12 to 16 year olds experience 'emotional distress'. Theresa May has announced that all secondary schools in England are to be offered mental health first aid training to ensure children and young people get the help and support they need'

The Guardian

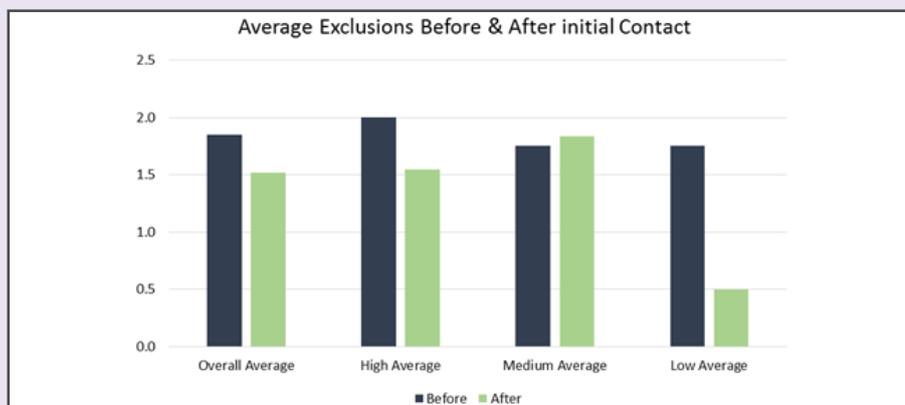
Mental health linked to expulsions

The institute for Public Policy Research has published a report showing that half of all children expelled from schools suffer some sort of recognised mental health problem. The study also shows that just one in a hundred permanently excluded pupils go on to achieve five good GCSEs, and the majority will end up spending time in prison. Indeed, the think-tank estimates that of the current 86,000-strong prison population, more than 54,000 were excluded at school.

The Guardian

Systemic approach to support SEMH within schools:

We are developing ways of working with schools to support systemic ways of working more effectively with children and young people with SEMH. Our Educational Psychologist from the team has been delivering emotion coaching to a primary school, which has three of the children we are supporting, along with individual drop-in sessions for staff to do consultation and individual coaching with a specific child focus. This has been a huge success with the head teacher stating it was a fantastic session for the staff and has already had a positive impact. This head teacher has gone on to recommend the emotion coaching to other schools.



Overall we have seen a net reduction in the average number of exclusions per excluded pupil following their involvement in the Back on Track Programme. There has been an encouraging decrease in the number of exclusions for High Priority cases and Low Priority cases, although the average for Medium Cases has increased. It is worth noting that this the higher numbers of medium cases will be likely to impact the averages.

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