

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

September 2019

Overall The Back on Track project has successfully supported engagement and participation at school, through the support they provide for children, young people and their families'. This was always a temporary project and the Local Authority took the opportunity to end the project in July 2019 to enable the embedding of the lessons learnt in the newly created SEND multi-disciplinary hubs. The key principles of Back on Track have been embedded in the development of these locality hubs which will be implemented across North Yorkshire. The decision was made to mainstream the multi-disciplinary support for children and young people with Social, Emotional and Mental Health needs (SEMH) so that it continues post 2020.

Success Stories:



When Back on Track first started with Rosie she was not attending school and her attendance for the academic year was 3%. A recent attempt at a phased return to school had failed and Rosie felt very negative about school and became overwhelmed and anxious at the thought of theory or written work. Rosie had also experienced significant bullying in the past.

Rosie's Back on Track designated worker worked alongside school to identify alternative provisions in the area and then delivered a smooth transition to these. The worker acted as an advocate for Rosie and their mum and at times a mediator. They ensured that Rosie's needs were at the centre of every decision which has meant Rosie is now accessing a provision which is not too overwhelming for her.

The interventions have had a massively positive impact on Rosie and her family. Rosie has gone from being isolated at home, spending most of the time in bed, with very low self-confidence, to being out of the house 4 days a week, and engaging in learning and life.

Rosie's mum has said "I was struggling until Back on Track came on board. They were the first to listen to me and make people take responsibility. I can't thank them enough" and "I cannot praise everyone enough. I've got a lovely wee daughter. Life is so much better for me".

Rosie has completed a level 2 award and is starting on a certificate. Her tutors report that she is very meticulous in her work and that she is gaining in confidence in her maths and English. Rosie is now able to articulate that she can't understand something or that she needs extra help, and show persistence and resilience in her learning. Rosie's attendance has been 80%, most of



her absences were earlier on when she was finding it hard, and also due to a physical health need. Rosie's confidence has improved exponentially. Her parents have reported "On Fridays she used to come home sobbing saying she can't do it, now she is excitedly saying to Mum "guess what I did today?"

Rosie's tutor has said: "Rosie has completely turned a corner... She is doing her work, she is like a different child. It is such a change from the scared, angry, defensive little girl at the start"

Rosie is attempting tasks that previously she would have refused to contemplate. Rosie's mum has reported "Before she just used to say "I'm useless", "I can't do that" Now I am watching her blossom" Rosie is much more resilient when things don't go to plan. Rosie will now open up about what is troubling her rather than dysregulating or fleeing the situation. Rosie is excited about the future, Mum reports "in her mind she has some sort of future now". Rosie's Thrive assessment has gone from 27% to 42% showing significant progress.

Rosie has made friends at her provision and she has been open to new experiences, for example she participated fully when members of the Fire Service visited her school.

Mum reports that life at home is so much better. Previously Mum wasn't able to leave the house because she was so worried about Rosie being at home all the time, now she is able to volunteer with the homeless 2 days a week and is feeling much more positive and fulfilled herself.



What do our young people say?

"I haven't felt brave enough to talk to anyone about it until now. Not even my social worker". "I like talking to you because when you're in school you help me calm down"

What do our parents say?

After a Back on Track worker accompanied a young person and her mum to a health appointment the mum said *"thank you so much for coming with us. My mind just goes blank, and I get flustered. It's really good to have you there to remind me of stuff. I'm so pleased people are finally listening, it's such a relief".*

What do our schools say?

Our Back on Track worker has been working with numerous pupils in year 8. The pupils were identified at risk of exclusion and had challenging behaviour at the time of uptake. The worker has been consistent with her delivery in supporting and educating approach to help direct these pupils in a positive way. These pupils have reduced their exclusion rate, demonstrated that the conflict resolution covered by Back on Track has been educational and helped gain positive outcomes and prevented many escalations and fights... if this worker from Back on Track had not been involved with my year group we could have been potentially looking at permanent exclusions for some of these children.

"In terms of Georgina's input from Back on Track - I think that she has been a key player in preventing further escalation of the Sally's SEMH needs. She has been a constant, grounding force in his very chaotic world and I know this child has always talked about his sessions with her positively afterwards. Via Georgina, Sally has had a regular opportunity to explore some of his emotional difficulties/trauma in a very safe, therapeutic way so her input has been invaluable. In addition to the important direct work that Georgina has carried out, she has also supported professionals (in school and from outside agencies) in addition to working with Sally's Mum. Her support is very much appreciated! I personally feel that Georgina has 'gone the extra mile' on this case. She has liaised with the LEA and Children's Social Care as an advocate for Sally in order to ensure the best outcomes for him".

Success Figures:

- The number of fixed term exclusions the cohort have received since working with BoT have fallen by **40%**
- **37.2%** of the cohorts attendance has improved since the beginning of the project
- At the start of the project the cohort received an average of **9.8** fixed term exclusions each school year whereas by the end this had fallen to **6.6 days**



"What is mental health? We all have mental health, just as we all have physical health. Being mentally healthy means that we feel good about ourselves, make and keep positive relationships with others and can feel and manage the full range of emotions. Good mental health allows us to cope with life's ups and downs, to feel in control of our lives and to ask for help from others when we need support". Mental Health Foundation

Feedback:

NatCen Social Research has been commissioned by the **Department for Education** (DfE) to carry out an evaluation of the **Back on Track** project. If you have been involved with the project and can spare just 30 minutes of time for a telephone interview please contact **Anna Marcinkiewicz, Senior Researcher, NatCen** – backontrack@naten.ac.uk, Tel: 0207 549 8527.

