



LocalEd 2025 Pilot 1: Support for vulnerable pupils

A summary of the “granular approach”
30 January 2025

Pilot 1: Taking a “granular approach” to understanding and addressing vulnerability

Why is it needed?

Young people who are “vulnerable” are not vulnerable in uniform ways. Addressing a young person’s vulnerabilities requires an understanding of why that young person is vulnerable (which one cannot get from a macro level).

What is it?

A virtuous cycle for practice improvement – (a) pick a lens, “hold up the mirror” to an area of practice; (b) work with individual cases (both retrospectively and pro-actively); (c) draw out learning and embed in practice.

What difference can it make?

Individual children and families – improved attendance, engagement, wellbeing, and relationships.
Local area and setting practice – inform changes to practice and routines, “ripple effect” and focused CPD.

Can it be scaled up?

Yes – the cycle of focusing on a sample of cases to test an area of practice is repeatable; and the learning from each cycle can be embedded in the work of existing practitioners.

‘The granular approach is licence to do things in a small steps way, and it shows that small steps can have a huge impact.’

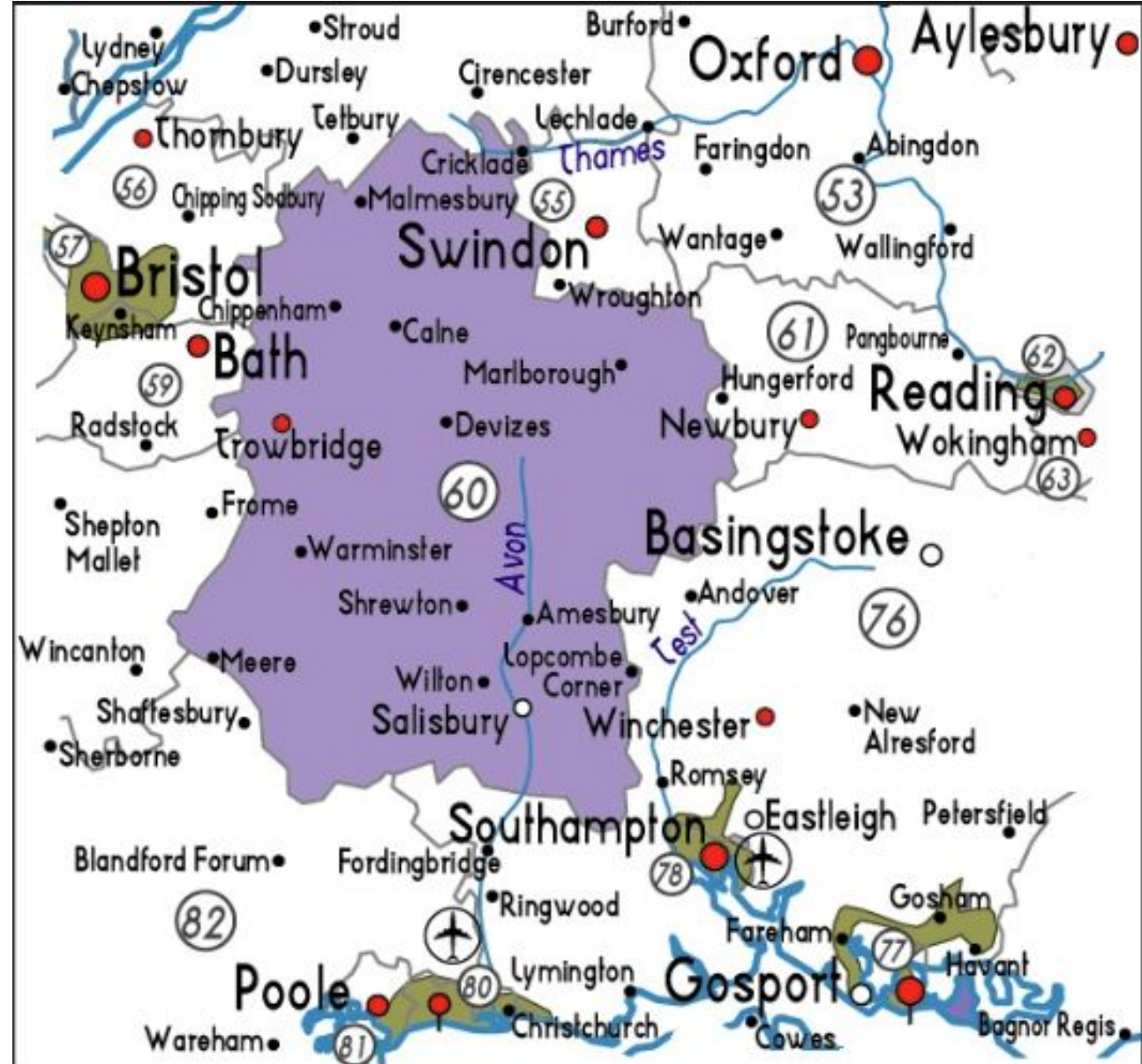
(Pilot lead)

‘We have seen significant impact from looking at a small sample of cases ... The methodology of focusing on acute areas of an issue provides opportunities for system leaders to grapple with the issues in a completely different way.’

(Pilot lead)

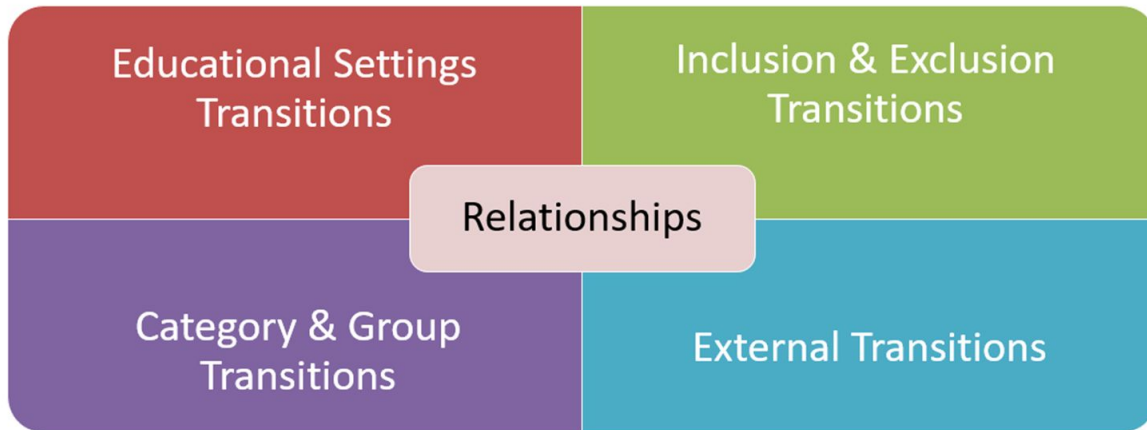
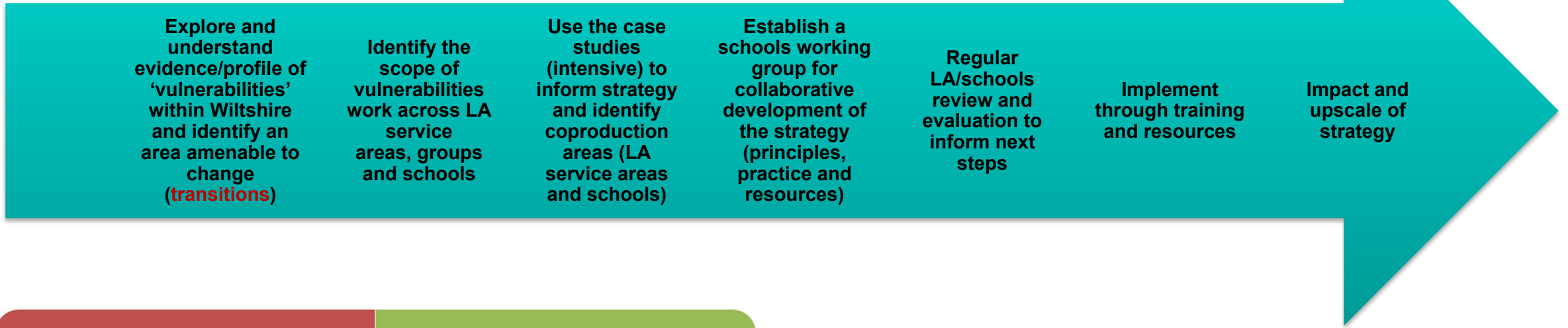
AEC WILTSHIRE

Improving outcomes for vulnerable pupils



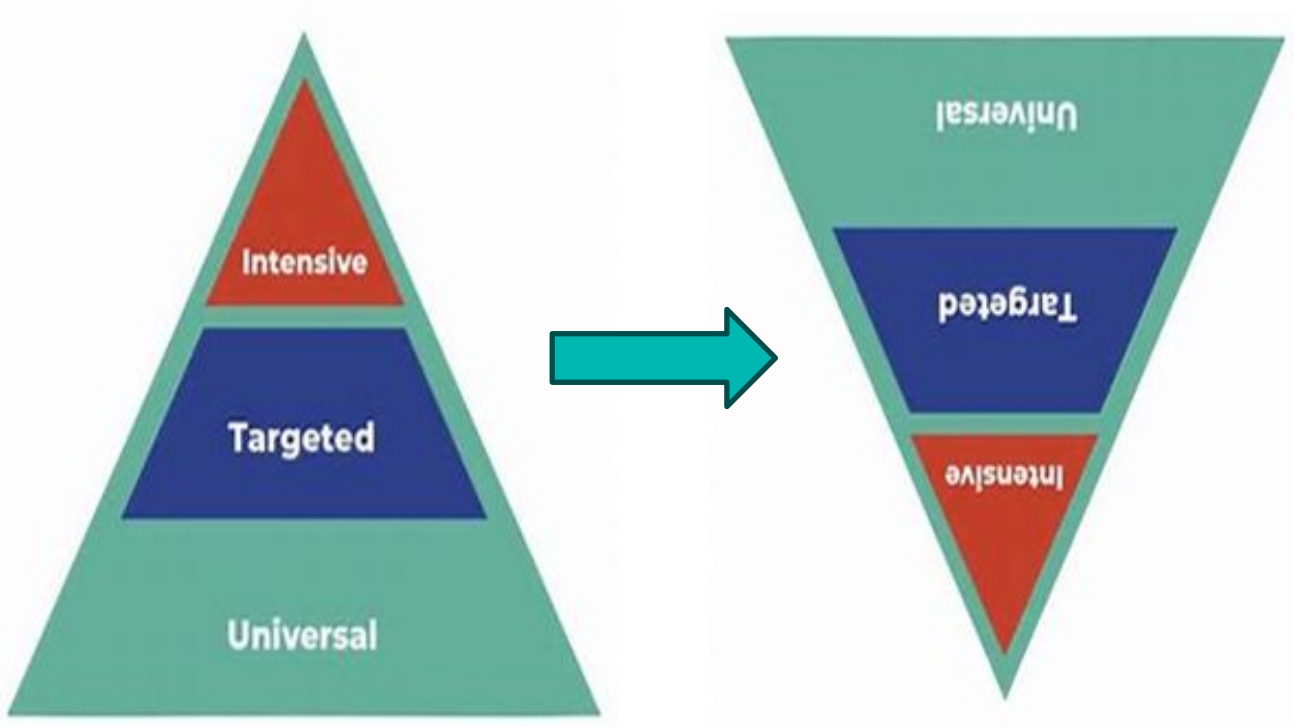
Wiltshire Council

Vulnerabilities and strategic approach



Transitions, especially irregular transitions, exacerbate vulnerabilities for a child/young person and the way in which transitions are identified and managed is central to the child or young person's development, social/emotional well-being and outcomes.

Turning the triangle



- **Intensive** – begin with case studies and understanding the lived experience
- **Targeted** – locality-based projects and collaboration with schools
- **Universal** – roll out of transition strategy to all Wiltshire schools to share outcomes of the intensive and targeted work, best practice and resources

Vulnerable Pupils Case studies: what we did

Collaborative pupil focused adaptive planning and action: focused on cohesive, consistent cross-service adaptations


Approach

1. Specific Profile
2. Set of planning tools
3. Key relationships starting point
4. Child focused small step plans
5. Home and school actions were fluid and coordinated / went beyond boundaries

- **What are the main barriers to educational engagement?**
- **What does the young person / parent / carer say are the barriers? What has already been tried?**
- **How can we build on pupil voice to build the actions?**
- **How can all stakeholders support the actions?**


Case study 1

Barriers




Y7, previous SA & AP in Y6
split family
parental MH and lack of engagement with education
behaviour system @ school – negative points
3 periods of suspension this year
Attendance 64% and declining

Adaptions /involvements




Joint professional reflection time built on openness trusted relationships
Adaption of behaviour system
Building on dad's engagement with school – FKW & school unified approach
Rewards built on what know motivates young person – walking in woods with dog and dad
Mitigation of negative impact of mother – understanding can't change everything

Impact



Engagement with classes increased (most)
Attendance improved by 30%
No further suspensions
Increased communication between father and school

How we built trust and relationships



Started with **professionals who already trusted and knew each other**
Willingness to **flex and adapt**
Used ATRCM tool – enabled **objective reflection** by all and action planning
Were **forensic**
Understanding **takes time**
Small changes made
Started with what we knew worked and what **child's interests and motivations** were

Impact:

CYP			
1			
2 & 3			
4			
5			
6			
7			
8			
9			
10			
11			
12			

Case studies: What we found

Shared understanding of:

- the importance of the individual
- tailoring responses to meet individual needs (prioritise vulnerable pupils, personalised approach,
- 'on purpose' activities, root causes, right support at the right time)



ESAs / CP/CIN plans have key focus on transition and planning for this longer, earlier. Training for social care colleagues planned.



Finding the thing that the YP values, and breaking down big issues into very practical steps that people think "I can do that"



Being realistic about timescales and building these into plans



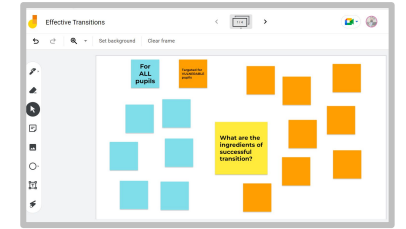
Persistence and tenacity is key Is it possible to say something about cases where it has been difficult to get the YP's or family's engagement, and how you have tried to tackle this (without pretending that there are any easy answers)?

The plan has been successful due to the patience and time F provided the family. She has created trust with K and mum, which has given them the confidence to be able to move forward.

The impact H has had on L's life has been invaluable. He has gone from a virtual recluse to having the confidence to leave the house when supported.

Primary and Secondary Schools Collaboration

Schools going beyond integrating pupils into existing systems to bring about levels of institutional change which will meet the needs of individual pupils.



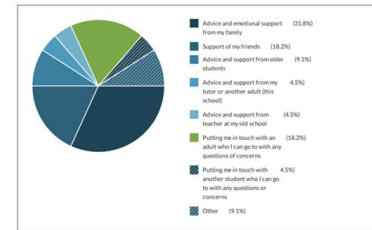
Collaboration sessions

- Transition principles
 - Current transition practice and identify improvements – how are we meeting the needs of all pupils/vulnerable pupils
 - Case Studies
 - Rationale (levers of effective transition)
 - Guidance materials and resources
 - Present at networks
- **What are the ingredients of successful transition?**
 - **What are the challenges of transition? What could be improved?**
 - **What solutions might you have to address these identified challenges?**
 - **How do we prioritise vulnerable pupils?**

Transition strategies and sharing practice

- Levers of effective transition - preparing for institutional adjustments, relationships and social interactions, continuity of curriculum and provision, communication
- What will you do for everyone? What will you do 'on purpose' for your most vulnerable learners? What tools do we have to support?

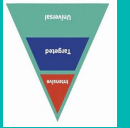
VULNERABLE PUPILS TRANSITION SURVEY					
Thinking back to when you were at primary school in Year 6, please rank how worried you felt about each of these things when moving to your new secondary school, from not at all worried (1) to extremely worried (5).	1 Extremely worried	2 Very worried	3 Worried	4 A bit worried	5 Not at all worried
Getting on with other students in the year group (friends/ peers/ classmates)	0.0%	4.5%	18.2%	36.4%	40.9%
What older students might be like	4.5%	18.2%	13.6%	31.8%	31.8%
The routine in lessons and the school day	0.0%	4.5%	22.7%	13.6%	59.1%
The rules and expectations at the new school	4.5%	9.1%	13.6%	40.9%	31.8%
My family being able to support me/my work/homework	0.0%	4.5%	18.2%	22.7%	54.5%
Going to a school where people don't know my family and situation	13.6%	9.1%	22.7%	22.7%	31.8%
Having the right equipment and uniform	4.5%	0.0%	31.8%	13.6%	50.0%
Travel/transport and how I would get to and from school	0.0%	0.0%	9.5%	14.3%	76.2%
Keeping up with the work and how difficult the work would be	4.5%	18.2%	13.6	40.9%	22.7%
Whether teachers would know about and understand the challenges I face	9.1%	13.6%	18.2%	31.8%	27.3%



PRIMARY SCHOOL TRANSITIONS CASE STUDY TEMPLATE	
SCHOOL	
e.g. name of school and school context such as UoR, catchment, % SEND/%PP	School Image of choice
<div style="text-align: center;"> </div>	
PUPIL PROFILE	
strengths, vulnerabilities (DI/SP/FC etc) attainment, personality, parental support, behaviour, attendance, external agency support,	
TRANSITION RISKS AND ACTIONS	
potential risks you identified for the pupil on transition and actions you took to mitigate	
IMPACT	
the success of the actions	
REFLECTIONS AND HOW THIS INFORMS NEXT STEPS	
reflections on what you would do differently this year and what steps you might need to take for this to be successful e.g. with the receiving school/outside agencies etc	

What has been our key learning?

INTENSIVE, TARGETED, UNIVERSAL



- Take time to thoroughly explore the evidence and accurately identify a specific area of practice which is amenable to change;
- Turning the triangle – intensive (lived experience), targeted then universal approach – highlights strengths and vulnerabilities in the system and informs effective actions
- Be well prepared with a structure, key information and ‘hooks’ to engage schools in a practical way so they see the relevance and value of the work to them
- Be genuinely collaborative and responsive to the range of views and experiences
- Ask school leaders to share reflections, strategies and what works when moving to universal application
- Where cases are stuck, a neutral person to unite services, schools and families, develop consistent action
- A strong focus on pupil voice promotes professional empathy and promotes coordinated child focused actions that encourage services working together as a team with a family.
- Find strengths that can be built on, establish shared goals, foster trust, agree small, brave and practical steps that can make a significant difference.

Influencing wider developments

Embedded the learning from the case studies in wider developments across the council and practice across the local system

Development of new initiatives like the School & Family Practitioners, Mainstream Inclusive School Advisers, Behaviour Support Mentors

Training, CPD, projects always involve case studies to capture hearts and minds, bring to life, enable that sense of 'we can do that'.

Rolling out the transitions pilot model of a 4-session programme building on case studies and collaborative practice.

Contact details

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AECT Pilot One

Support For Vulnerable Young People.



Coventry City Council

coventry.gov.uk

Context & Background

**Collective moral purpose -
children and young people at the
heart of our decision making**

**The Vulnerable Pupil pilot outcomes
strongly aligned with our Education
Partnership priorities**



**“One Coventry”
Matches Coventry’s ambitions**

Integrated Service Community Prototype.

- High levels of unmet need
- High levels of deprivation
- Vast amount of community assets
- Iterative approach with organisations

WEHM & Bell Green

Coventry

What We Did



ENGAGEMENT



Workshops with school leaders, Council Officers, family hubs and community partners.



ATTENDANCE



Timing of government reforms, and hypotheses that poor attendance is main symptom of family vulnerability.



AREAS OF FOCUS



Enhanced Transition Support for vulnerable cohorts

Aspiration

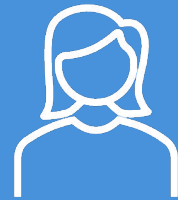
Enhanced support within school and navigation – school link worker

Parental Engagement

Enhanced Transition Support (TW)



Cohort One
9 Students
Cohort Two
17 Students



SEMHL
Practitioner



Year 6 students
with
Social Workers



Secondary
Support into
Autumn term



Virtual
School
Extension

Evidence of impact

- 44% had maintained or improved attendance in Y7 (cohort 1)
- Professionals felt confident they had identified needs of child and family
- Too low a response rate from young person and family to draw conclusions
- Lessons were learnt from 1st cohort and implemented for 2nd
 - Increased secondary involvement and wider agencies
 - Secondary support – scheduled at various points
 - Recognition from schools of the variability of impact for different cohorts

School Link Worker (SLW)



West London
Zone Model



School
based Role



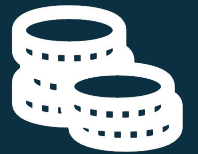
Bridge between
support



1:1 & Holistic
Support



Students close
to permanent
exclusion



Funded by
Community
Partner

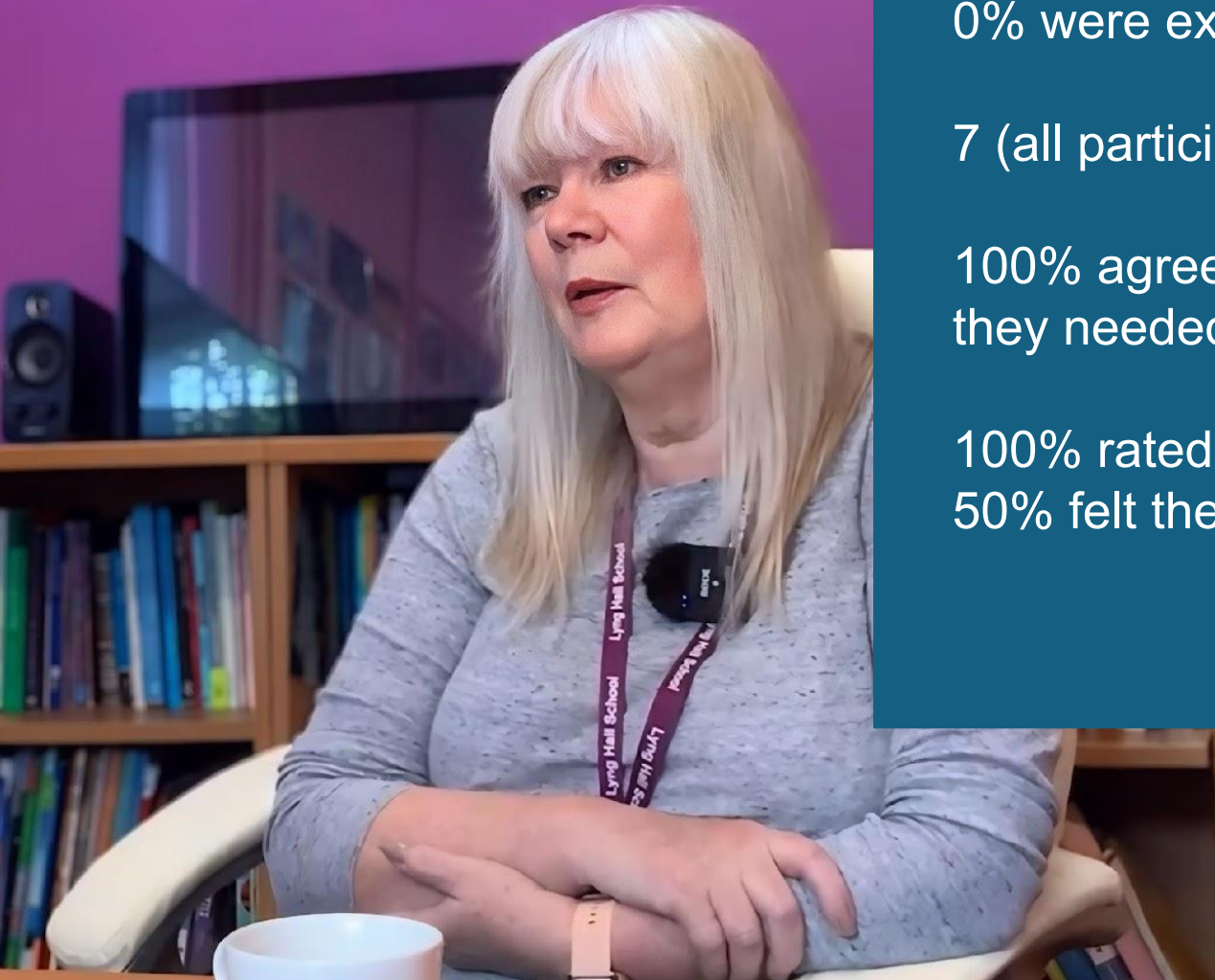
Evidence of impact

0% were excluded – all at risk of exclusion

7 (all participating year 11s) completed their GCSEs

100% agreed that the support they received was what they needed and helpful

100% rated their relationship with SLW as positive and 50% felt they could talk openly with SLW



Key Learning

TRANSITION WORKER

- Primary colleagues often express frustration where they have supported and nurtured a pupil throughout primary with additional support for them not to succeed in Secondary
- Different approach/style between primary and secondary, and heightened impact for vulnerable pupils
- Importance of attachment with adult and relationships can make pupils feel safe
- Successful transition is important for all, and parental role in that is also key
- Lower attendance in Children with a SW (not LAC)

SCHOOL LINK WORKER

- Fixing Family methodology' with time-limited intervention does not work for all (including most entrenched)
 - Relationships are key
- Multi-disciplinary approach and support with navigation
 - Young person needs an advocate
 - Feeling of belonging
- Family engagement is equally important



Wider Impacts

SLW model continues, funded by the school to provide holistic support to children and their families

Transition worker model is being considered by Virtual School as part of extended duties

Citywide strategies have been impacted by the work – Primary Aspirations

Enhanced and wider understanding of education and the wider Early Help system and the impact of holistic family support



Further Developments

Children's Well-being & Schools Bill and changing funding for Supporting Families

Agreed Strategic Approach for Early Help Strategy 25/26 - recognising attendance as common thread

Aspirations Week – Bigger and better event planned for 2025

Secondary Behaviour Pathway Pilot including a multi-agency panel approach is underway, and plans to implement in Primary



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