

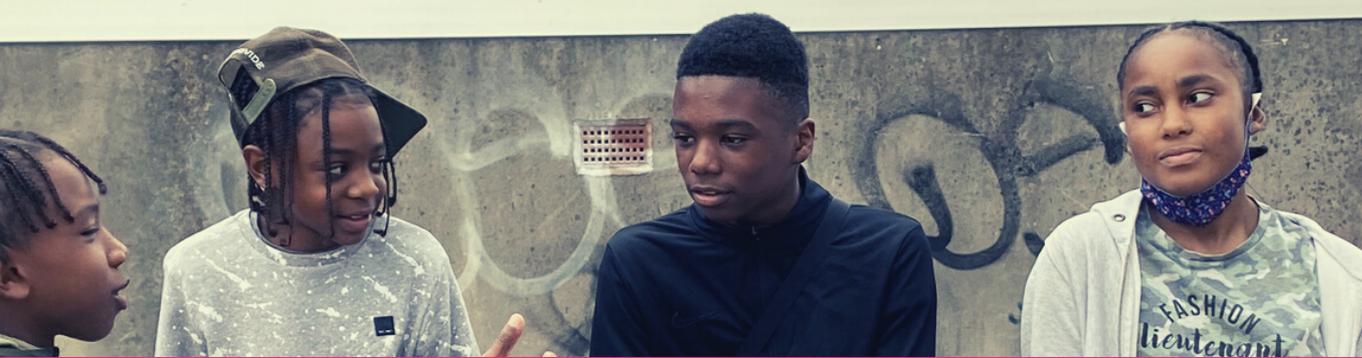
ANNUAL REPORT

SWITCH MIDLANDS



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Our Mission

Our mission is to provide schools with an evidence based, outcome driven service that enables pupils to overcome social and emotional barriers to learning by "Powering Their Potential".

This year has been both challenging and exciting for our organisation, and we are delighted to have an opportunity to share the journey over the past twelve months.

We believe our approach to social and emotional learning is the most positive way to help those who are vulnerable, or at risk, of exclusion. Early intervention is the key to our success and by working alongside pupils, families, and schools we have developed programmes that positively impact children and young people's lives.

We have centred our work around these core values for over 10 years:

- **BELIEVE IN POSITIVITY**
- **PROVIDE CONSISTENCY**
- **SHOW UNDERSTANDING**

We focus on the "WHY" before anything else.

Why do pupils behave the way they do? Why are these issues impacting their school lives? And how can we support them?

We are passionate about supporting pupils, families, and schools by developing such things as self-confidence, communication skills, and promoting a positive mindset. Our cost-effective service will improve behaviour, encourage personal development, and promote wellbeing in schools.

Our Vision

Our vision is simple. "We want to prevent children and young people from facing exclusion from their schools, families or communities."

To do this we provide:

- **Early Intervention Outreach**
- **Alternative Provision**
- **Community Support**

We truly believe that through our extensive skills and experience, we have the very best service to tackle the root causes of school exclusions. Our goal for the next twelve months is to prove this.

Our Targets

To support as many at risk children and young people as we can, we have set targets to aim for in 2022/23.

- ★ **90% of pupils who access our support will be on-roll at a mainstream school 12 months later.**
- ★ **90% of schools that access our support will see their exclusions reduced when compared to a similar previous period.**
- ★ **90% of pupils, families and schools who have had involvement with our service will report that it has positively impacted them.**

"We've had significant success with Switch Coaches in our school, their support is becoming invaluable. Early intervention to prevent exclusions has to be the way all schools move forward. The current situation is looking unjustifiable in terms of both human and financial costs."

- School Senior Leader



Why are we needed?

Excluded pupils are amongst the most at-risk children and young people in society, and the figures are rising.

In 2018/19 there were over 6500 exclusions from schools in our home city of Wolverhampton. This ever-increasing number has a significant social, financial, and economic cost.

Many excluded pupils fall into the 'school-to-prison' pipeline with Institute of Public Policy Research figures suggesting overall costs can be anything up to £370,000 per pupil, with 50% of all prisoners experiencing exclusion. Not only that, but excluded pupils are often our most vulnerable and are;

- **2 x more likely to be 'Looked After'**
- **4 x more likely to have grown up in poverty**
- **7 x more likely to have a special educational need**
- **10 x more likely to suffer recognised mental health problems**

In a review of the impact of Alternative Provision in Wolverhampton, schools said they needed:

- **Timely interventions**
- **Increased outreach**
- **Support for Primary Schools**
- **Family interventions**

As a result, over the past twelve months we have developed a range of services for each of these challenges. We believe we are now the leading service for schools' personal development, wellbeing, and behaviour needs in Wolverhampton.

The problem of exclusion is especially relevant in the West Midlands. The Department for Education figures show that 12 in every 10,000 children in our region are excluded from school. Research has suggested that part of this complex issue is that schools can effectively deal with the symptoms of disruptive behaviour – but do not address the causes.

This has raised questions around the extent to which our most vulnerable pupils are being equipped to cope in the 'real world.' Over the past year we have had the opportunity to develop, test, and evaluate our approach to these issues – and proved how successful we can be. We believe that the answer firmly lies in the targeted delivery of social and emotional coaching for pupils at risk of exclusion.

Social & Emotional Learning (SEL)

Interventions which target social and emotional learning seek to improve a pupil's interaction with others. We focus on self-management of emotions and our interventions focus on the ways pupils connect with their peers, teachers, family and the community. Social & emotional learning is essential for every child, it helps them to achieve their academic potential, build strong relationships and lead healthy, successful lives. This coaching model enables children and young people to demonstrate positive behaviours and attitudes for learning, leading towards improved achievement.

"The Switch Coaches are engaging with pupils who have significant issues in school. They are providing a unique service that our children are definitely responding to."

- School Senior Leader

Our Impact

Between August 2021 and September 2022, we have worked with 208 pupils across 25 Primary and Secondary schools in the West Midlands. Here is some of the feedback we have received from pupils:



90% of pupils said "I feel safer" as a result of taking part



88% of pupils said they were "More likely to speak to someone" about their feelings following our help



94% of pupils said they felt "Better about life" after receiving our support



87% of pupils said they "Felt more supported at school" after the programme



92% of pupils said "The support was helpful" after working with us



2020/2021

167 pupils in West Midlands primary and secondary schools



2021/2022

208 pupils across West Midlands primary and secondary schools

Our Social Value

Switch Midlands operates entirely in the interests of our social mission. We reinvest over half of our profits in our social purpose and not only offer excellent financial value, but social value too.

Switch Coaches & Ambassadors

All our programmes are an opportunity for pupils to develop their skills by working with our Switch Coaches, who are experienced in Alternative Provision and skilled in mentoring, mental health first aid and restorative practice. Pupils are coached to act as advocates for positivity, motivation and conduct.

Social Impact Pledge

Each year we will employ at least one Switch Ambassador of secondary school leaving age to train via an apprenticeship route and become a Switch Coach. There can be no one better to take our values forward than those that have experienced them first hand.

The Switchboard

We are delighted to have developed our very own online tool that helps build an evidence base to demonstrate the vital importance of improving wellbeing whilst also tackling the root causes of behaviour. We can then use this data to measure progress and evaluate the impact of interventions. This information can then be shared with schools and commissioners to inform future decision making.

Switched-On Schools

Our newest service, launching in autumn 2022, and works directly with school staff and leaders to offer vital support, in particular pastoral, safeguarding and wellbeing/mental health leads. Coaching models are proving to have a significant positive impact in schools and form a highly effective part of CPD. It enables professionals to reflect on personal challenges, whilst having conversations that unpack potential and enhance performance.



Case Studies

David

Reasons for referral:

- Unsuccessful use of school internal systems for behaviour
- Struggling to form positive relationships with peers or teaching staff
- Poor Attendance

What did we discover?

David lived at home with his parents, but his Father had worked away during the week for many years. David's routines, such as sleep and nutrition, were very poor. David had missed large periods of school through ill-health.

Approach

David was in Year 11 and so our support focussed on ensuring he transitioned positively into post-16 education or training. Interventions consisted of giving David the social and emotional tools needed to build positive relationships with others, whilst also enabling him to develop healthier habits.

Outcomes

Our staff supported David in gaining a place at a training provider and accompanied him to interviews. David also won a regional award for the progress he made after leaving school.

What did David's parents say?

"We don't know what David would have done without this support. He was at an important part of his life, and Switch helped to give him an opportunity that we didn't think he would get. Thank you."

Nadia

Reasons for referral:

- Nadia's behaviour within the mainstream environment was causing concern
- Nadia had received repeated fixed-term exclusions due persistent behaviour issues

What did we discover?

Nadia's parents felt there were underlying issues that were causing her to struggle at school. They were pursuing a CAMHS referral and ASD/autism diagnosis, but Nadia faced permanent exclusion before support could be secured. Nadia struggled in large groups and loud situations, resulting in several instances of running away and hiding from school staff.

Approach

We tailored our delivery to meet Nadia's needs. We felt that forming positive relationships with trusted adults would give her the skills needed to succeed. Her view of school was poor and her confidence low, so we aimed to provide Nadia with the nurturing environment she needed. We targeted her social and emotional skills to help her cope in a mainstream environment.

Outcomes

Following our support, Nadia returned to full-time mainstream education and was not excluded. She received a diagnosis of ASD, but she now has the tools to manage her day to day school life effectively.

What did Nadia's school say?

"If we compare this to the Nadia we saw in Year 8, it is quite a transformation! Working with Switch Midlands has enabled her to not only reconnect with education, but has given us a better understanding of her needs. Given Nadia's ASD diagnosis the support has worked perfectly for her."

New Partners

At Switch Midlands we believe in collaboration, and we know this improves the quality and impact of our work. Over the past year we have been proud to work alongside a number of fantastic individuals and organisations who have all helped in our success, including:



Department
for Education



UNIVERSITY OF
BIRMINGHAM



In Conclusion

We have been extremely proud to have grown both the quality and scope of the organisation over the past 12 months. This annual report reflects the success and hard work that has taken place during some of the most challenging circumstances we have faced, both personally and professionally.

As a result of this fantastic progress, our sights are now firmly set on continuing this into 2022/2023. We are focussed on seeing our service support even more children and young people, whilst working with a greater number of schools, commissioners and partners.

This year we have embarked on a journey of scaling our offer and have firmly positioned ourselves as the most forward-thinking, responsive, and successful support service for pupils' personal development, behaviour and wellbeing in Wolverhampton.

If you wish to work with us and believe that our approaches will have a positive impact on your pupils and school community, please do not hesitate to get in touch. I really hope we can work with you in the future.

Tim Wakefield
Founder & CEO

References

Department for Education (2020) Permanent and fixed-period exclusions in England: 2018 to 2019

Early Intervention Foundation (2019) Improving social and emotional learning in primary schools: Guidance report

Institute for Public Policy Research (2017) Making The Difference: Breaking the link between school exclusion and social exclusion

West Midlands Violence Reduction Unit (2021) Rewriting Futures; Creating better alternatives to violence and exclusion for young people

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