Taskforce: An Overview of Impact

Saffron Valley Collegiate (SVC) is a Pupil Referral Unit (PRU) consisting of 5 provisions in Croydon, London. It runs the Taskforce programme, which uses a multi-agency approach when working with young people who attend SVC's settings. Taskforce was originally funded by the DfE to address youth violence, with 22 Taskforces being created across the country. Each one has evolved differently, to meet the needs of the young people, settings and places in which they are based. SVC's Taskforce has evolved in the last 2.5 years and has developed a joined up, multi-agency way of working that starts from a needs-led and whole-child approach. While still relatively young in its development Taskforce is already seeing significant beneficial effects of this way of working.

The Taskforce team, works with and supports the SVC teaching staff and consists of:

- Mental Health Lead
- Assistant Psychologist
- Family Support Worker
- Youth Justice Worker
- Youth Worker
- Speech and Language Therapist
- Post-16 Worker

Detailed illustrations of some of these roles can be seen in explanatory videos (Appendix H)

Taskforce Aims

Taskforce set out to change the approach to meeting the needs of the pupils in SVC's care. Moving from an approach aimed to address the behaviour or what the pupil had done "wrong", Taskforce aims to identify and address what the pupil needs. Using a multi-agency joined-up approach onsite at SVC, Taskforce addresses the whole child, which has impact beyond addressing youth violence. The table below demonstrates the difference in approach and characteristics of provision before Taskforce came into effect and after.

From	**To**
Reactive: *What have you done wrong?*	Responsive: *What are your needs?*
Piecemeal agency approach	Joined up approach with needs diagnosed together
Treatment plans for separate elements of child need	Joined up treatment plan developed together
Anonymous/faceless agencies, different individuals	Known team members who are consistent
Reliant on waiting lists, missing an appointment means longer waiting	Can respond in a timely manner, not reliant on waiting lists, interventions can be paused and resumed
Lack of whole child picture, needs fall through gaps	More likely to pick up 'new' needs
Less trust of the system from young people, parents, school, specialists	Far greater trust of the system from young people, parents, school, specialists

It should be noted that systemic change like this takes time for impact to be understood, including the longer-term ripple effect of that impact.

Pillars of Progress

SVC has identified six progression pillars for its pupils that it uses to measure its success.

- School and Learning
- Therapy
- Relationships
- Interests and Activities
- Feelings within themselves
- Pathways and Progression

The pupils are evaluated during their time with SVC, using these pillars as the framework to understand their progress. Taskforce is considered central to the delivery model in order for pupils to achieve against each pillar. A separate report on the impact of the Taskforce Therapeutic offer provides an insight into the difference made for pupils against these pillars of progress. (Hutton, 2023)

Methodology

This is a retrospective impact overview. Where possible a mixed methods approach has been used, with the collation and analysis of existing quantitative data alongside qualitative feedback collected in the form of interviews with key staff and stakeholders, and case studies of pupils provided by the Taskforce team. Each team member wrote a case study to provide illustrative impact of the interventions on pupils through the lens of their specialism (Appendices A - F).

Numbers at a Glance

The following data provides a brief overview of provision (a more detailed breakdown of data can be found in Appendix G – Data Summary). Over 15,445 hours of Taskforce support has been provided since the pilot launched. The most used services include the Mental Health team, Speech and Language Therapist, and Family Worker.

Most strikingly is data for reintegration into mainstream school.

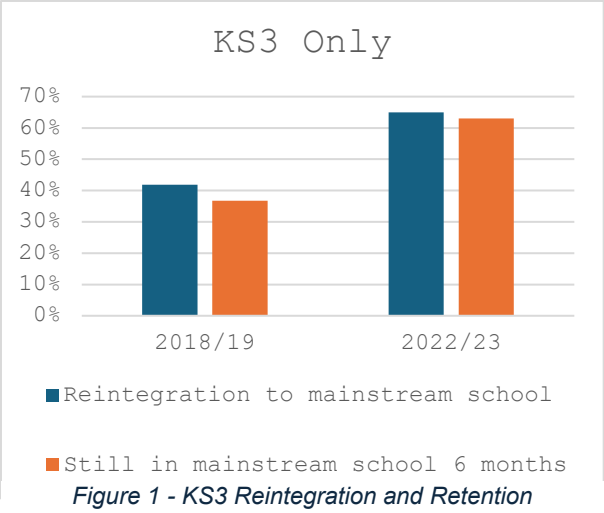


Figure 1 - KS3 Reintegration and Retention

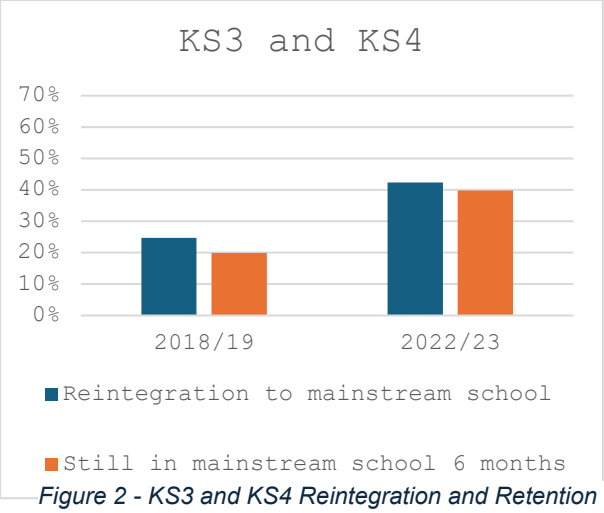


Figure 2 - KS3 and KS4 Reintegration and Retention

As Figs.1&2 illustrate, there was a significant increase in pupil reintegration and retention at mainstream school. This has been directly attributed to the Taskforce provision, and how that has enabled SVC to work with the schools using a pupil focussed needs led approach.

Impact

> *The APST project has transformed the narrative surrounding alternative provision at Saffron Valley and the schools they serve. Instead of solely focusing on behaviour, the emphasis has shifted to understanding and addressing the underlying needs of the students. This has enabled Saffron Valley to become a support and assessment hub, collaborating with mainstream schools to investigate and address the root causes of students' behaviours.* (Former Headteacher, SVC)

The indicative impact of the Taskforce programme can be summarised in the following themes.

Pupils

Transitions, Pathways and Progression Pupils are more likely and better able to transition back into mainstream school as a result of the Taskforce interventions. Additionally, at Post-16 they are more likely to transition successfully out of school.

Feelings within themselves Pupils have increased self-worth, they feel valued and seen. They are better able to understand their own needs and their own progress.

Agency Pupils feel increased agency about their progression and are better able to self-advocate for their needs. They have increased understanding of why the behaviour is happening, if they have a diagnosis what it means, and are more able to address it.

School and Learning Pupils increasingly engaged with school and learning. For many, their attendance increased.

Interests and Activities Pupils were able to make better choices about activities they engaged with outside of school.

Increased engagement with support services Pupils developed a trust for the support services and were more likely to access them. An assumption can be made that they will be more likely to engage with support services beyond their time at SVC and at school.

Families and Parents

Trust Parents and families felt listened to. For some it is the first time they felt they were being heard about their child's needs. They felt part of a support network, often for the first time.

Agency Parents felt they had more agency with supporting their child, they had a better understanding of their needs, and how they may have been able to support.

Support Some families are at crisis points, dealing with layers of challenges. The holistic approach provided care for families who were then better able to support their child's needs.

Changed Perceptions The profile of SVC has been raised. Parents and families are beginning to see that SVC is not a 'sin bin for naughty kids' but a place where their child's needs will be assessed and supported. Parents are more likely to work with SVC in supporting their strategies for the pupil.

Taskforce Professionals

Job Satisfaction The Taskforce team felt increased satisfaction in their work as they could see the effectiveness of the collaborative approach. They felt they were able to have more impact on pupils. They valued being able to share practice and benefit from the expertise of their colleagues. Additionally, as they are situated onsite, they are able to see the progression of the pupils, the impact of their interventions.

SVC and Schools

Relationships with Schools SVC has a better relationship with the local mainstream schools. Due to the assessments, they are able to make, SVC is better able to inform schools of pupils' needs, who are better equipped to address those needs more efficiently.

Changed Perceptions Schools better understand what SVC does and how Taskforce supports pupils. They now approach SVC for advice and support.

Conditions

The ongoing impact of Taskforce is still yet to be fully understood. However, indications demonstrate that it is an extremely effective intervention that has benefits not just to the pupil, but to families, schools and professionals. It is clear that the conditions created by the Taskforce team

are integral to the impact of the programme. A brief exploration of those conditions was undertaken, to understand what the team felt the enablers for impact have been. Some of these have been outlined below.

The Whole Child Taskforce's starting point is responding to need rather than reacting to behaviour. It takes a holistic approach to the child and their family and considers the child in the context of their environment and background. From that starting point a joined-up strategy is developed that is designed to best respond to the child's needs.

Relationship Building Taskforce builds relationships with pupils so they can trust they adults they are working with and feel safe in the school environment. It aims to build relationships with parents and families. This better enables parents to support the child outside of school and it allows SVC to identify underlying family needs. Taskforce builds relationships with mainstream schools so that the referral and reintegration process is based on dialogue rather than transaction.

Time The joined up multi agency approach allows Taskforce to undertake early and holistic assessment to understand and respond to need. Quite often these needs have been hitherto undiagnosed. Pupils are not dependent on waiting list times and are able to access the interventions when they are ready. This extends to being able to pause interventions when young people are struggling and then resume when they are more able to engage.

Collaboration Having professionals onsite taking an integrated multi-agency approach enables them to make internal referrals, which allows for a more efficient response to need. Together they are able to see the whole child together, rather than piecemeal parts of the child, leading to better diagnoses being made.

Consistency The Taskforce team provides consistency for the pupils and their families. They work with the same personnel, which builds trust. The consistency of the team allows them to have a deeper understanding of the pupils, what their needs are and how they might be addressed.

Representation The make-up of the Taskforce team includes some ethnic and gender diversity which for some pupils feeling represented culturally is important.

Conclusion

It is clear that while a relatively young programme, the impact it is already achieving is significant. The responses in interviews were unanimous that if Taskforce was unable to continue, the provision for pupils would regress to a more piecemeal approach that is less effective. The impact on the pupils, families and schools would be significant.

Appendix A – Data Summary

Taskforce Pilot: November 2021 – August 2023

Extension period: September 2023 – March 2025

Taskforce Specialist Workforce

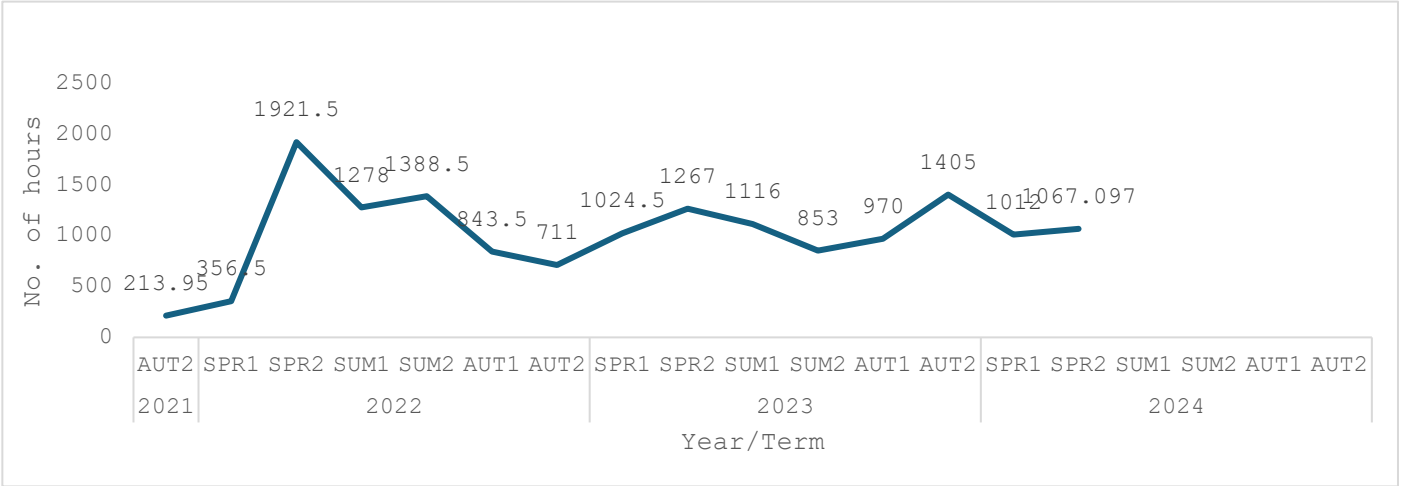
Taskforce area	Start date with Taskforce	Ceased working with Taskforce
Youth Worker	January 2022	-
Family Worker	November 2021	-
Speech and Language	November 2021	-
Mental Health	November 2021	-
Psychology	September 2022	-
Post -16 Worker (full time)	November 2021	August 2023
Post-16 Worker (1 day a week)	February 2024	-
Youth Justice Worker	November 2021	August 2023
Reducing youth offending (community provider and YJS drop in)	February 2024	-

Number of young people receiving interventions from Taskforce specialists

	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24 to spring 2 2024
Mental Health	71	160	150
Speech and Language	36	133	103
Assistant Psychologist*		112	107
Family Worker	29	34	29
Youth Worker	21	29	38
Youth Justice	69	76	*Alternative model of support*

A Post-16 Transition Worker was part of the Taskforce, full time during the first two years of the programme. For the extension period, the budget only allows for one day a week support. The role delivers a universal offer to all year 11 pupils and a specialist intervention to those struggling with post year 11 planning.

Hours of support throughout Alternative Provision Taskforce Programme



Comparison of Pupil Reintegration to Mainstream School – pre and post Taskforce

	2018/19	2022/23

KS3 and KS4		
Reintegration to mainstream school	**87**	**131**
Still in mainstream school 6 months later	**70**	**123**
Total Pupils on roll	***352***	***309***

KS3 only		
Reintegration to mainstream school	**49**	**65**
Still in mainstream school 6 months later	**43**	**63**
Total Pupils on roll	***117***	***100***

Snapshot of interventions for half term Spring 2 2024

Number of hours activity per Taskforce Specialist

Mental Health Team	**277**
Youth Worker	**125**
Family Support Worker	**249**
Speech and Language Therapist	**207**
Assistant Psychologist	**130**
Post 16 Worker	**31**
Youth Justice Worker	**48**

(Includes: 1-1 sessions, small group, staff training, out of school activities, work with families, work with external professionals directly relating to individual pupils, assessment and report writing.

Interventions delivered to 106 individual pupils

- 54% of whole pupil cohort, of these:
  - 4.7% open to social care
  - 22.6% eligible for Free School Meals

Pupil Demographic

Gender

Male	43.4%
Female	56.6%

Ethnicity	No. during this period
Any other ethnic group	0.9%
Asian - Any other Asian background	3.8%
Black - Any other Black background	1.9%
Black - Black African	7.5%
Black - Black Caribbean	17.0%
Mixed - Any other Mixed background	6.6%
Mixed - White and Asian	1.9%
Mixed - White and Black African	1.9%
Mixed - White and Black Caribbean	10.4%
Unclassified	1.9%
White - Any other White background	3.8%
White - Gypsy/Roma	0.9%
White - White British	41.5%

Appendix B – Summary of Explanatory Videos

1. Saffron Valley Collegiate - https://youtu.be/lg4aEOTHAeM
2. Jenny Adamson, AP Taskforce Project Coordinator - https://youtu.be/_X79qkAclYk
3. Alex Ramsden, Mental Health Lead - https://youtu.be/jdMdKMjEEpg
4. Bani Kohli, Assistant Psychologist- https://youtu.be/KLUz6AuN33M
5. Wayne Lindsay, Family Support Worker - https://youtu.be/mXxVYRltAyw
6. Sabrina Toubal, Speech & Language Therapist - https://youtu.be/NXMoBuOL-4c
7. Stephanie White, Youth worker - https://youtu.be/DHJzGiarmlg
8. A young person's story - https://youtu.be/4ry_D9cxZk8