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Thornleigh Salesian College, Bolton. Case Study

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THE CHALLENGE

Bolton Public Health chose KCA as the training and consultancy provider to develop a Trauma Informed Schools framework for Secondary Schools in Bolton in response to higher than national average suspension and exclusion rates in the area and the prevalence of ACEs and trauma and the impact these have on life chances. The aim of the work was to disrupt the pipeline from adversity to classroom disruption to exclusion. The programme focused first on a large Bolton Secondary School as a pilot and is currently being extended to reach all secondary schools in the Local Authority.



OUR APPROACH

KCA worked closely with school staff to co-design a training and consultancy programme that would meet needs and build on the excellent relational practice in place. This began with a whole staff survey, staff and student interviews and relationship building with the senior leadership team.



Three training strands were developed: trauma informed for all staff, trauma enhanced for pastoral staff and leadership consultation on policies, practices and procedures. Flexibility and responsiveness were key throughout the 18-month pilot, training inputs were adjusted to fit with other demands on professional development time, and additional consultancy around the learning and teaching framework and the inclusion unit were included together with inputs on stress, co-regulation and the teenage brain for parents.

THE IMPACT

The impact on the knowledge and understanding of staff of trauma and its impact on behaviour, their role as co-regulators, and the need for emotionally available adults to form connected relationships to promote trauma recovery has been significant. At the beginning of the work only 22% of staff felt they could recognise the signs and indicators of trauma and by the end of the project all staff could. There was also a 10% increase in the number of staff who felt they could work in ways that promoted recovery. The school's attendance and suspension figures have bucked national trends by either improving or remaining stable against findings in other establishments.

Following the success of the work at the pilot school the programme is in its second phase with two members of staff from every secondary education provider in Bolton being trained to become a light touch Trauma Informed Practice trainer to build sustainability into the project.