

# Learning from practice: Reintegration to mainstream settings from Alternative Provision Innovation Funded projects

The Alternative Provision Innovation Fund (APIF) supported nine projects in testing new approaches to improving outcomes for young people (YP) (YP hereafter used to refer to young people or young person as relevant) in alternative provision (AP). Three focused on innovations designed to facilitate YP's reintegration from AP to mainstream or special schools.

This paper provides practical insights into how AP practitioners can collaborate to improve opportunities for successful reintegration, based on learning from the APIF projects. This paper will be of particular interest to those working in AP, mainstream and special schools, as well as local authorities, e.g. as a checklist for discussion when reviewing their provision/role in the reintegration of young people in AP.

## The APIF reintegration projects included:

- Bespoke and **individualised support** from a **key worker** (e.g. reintegration coach or mentor);
- Short term placements in AP with a clear **focus on sustained reintegration** to mainstream or special school as the end-goal;
- Strong **governance** structures typically including AP provider, partner schools, education/local authorities that "opened doors" to further opportunities and **strengthened relationships** across the local education system;
- **Holistic support** for YP from a **designated AP practitioner** (mentor/coach) that **connected** the AP offer with the reintegration setting.

## The projects were designed to:

- Ensure that YP were able to experience **high-quality, personalised placements** in AP;
- Provide access to **specialist support** relating to the **specific needs** of a YP (e.g. literacy, behaviour management, long-term illness), including innovative uses of technology;
- Broker **plans** with mainstream or special schools to **support** and **sustain** reintegration;
- Build **positive environments** for reintegration;
- **Complement** the **universal service offer** from local authority teams, or health services.

## Key outcomes

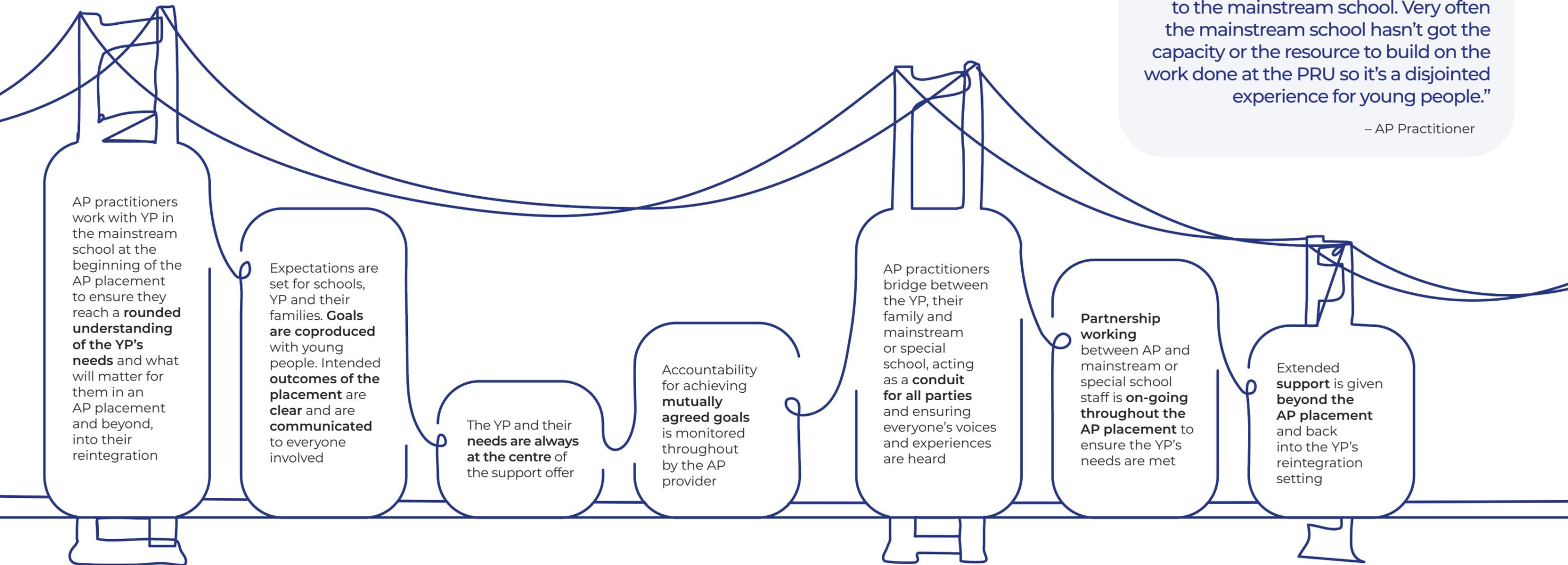


**Bespoke plans  
for reintegration  
to mainstream or  
special school**



**Bridging  
partnership  
working across AP  
and mainstream  
settings, including  
parents/carers  
throughout**

## Building a bridge between settings for successful reintegration



“The young person knows we are here for them and they value the continuity of support from the PRU to the mainstream school. Very often the mainstream school hasn't got the capacity or the resource to build on the work done at the PRU so it's a disjointed experience for young people.”

– AP Practitioner

### Good practice in reintegration involved:

- Taking on a 'key worker' role for the YP and their family, offering support in a way that fits their needs and fits the situation;
- Adopting pedagogical approaches used in mentoring and coaching e.g. being grounded in youth-focused approaches: person-centred, empowering, respectful and inclusive;
- Championing the needs of YP to schools and professionals involved in their education and care;
- Highlighting reasonable adjustments to heighten the chances of successful reintegration;
- Working in teams with diverse professional backgrounds and life-experiences;
- Setting clear goals and expectations about the duration and monitoring of reintegration support;
- Working with YP and families to sustain reintegration, via the development of coping strategies (e.g. naming feelings, asking for space, breathing exercises) and creating a network of care and understanding around the YP.

The projects and AP practitioner involvement facilitated a new relationship dynamic between schools, YP and their families, which gave opportunities for improvements and renewals, of behaviours, interactions and future prospects:

“One of the things that the project is helping to do is to change that dynamic of that relationship. It's about taking that chance with that young person, knowing there is going to be some hiccups along the way but being able to work through it.”

– AP Practitioner

# Focus on practice examples: Tools to aid reintegration

## Behaviour and inclusion audit

One APIF project developed and offered a free reflective inclusion audit for local mainstream education providers. The aim of the audit was to provide a document through which education professionals could reflect on their policies, procedures and practices surrounding behaviour and inclusion within their school.

### The strengths of the approach were that it:

- Provided a stimulus for critical reflection on current policies and procedures;
- Created an action plan based on the findings from the inclusion audit that supported future practice;
- Enabled implementation and monitoring of the outcomes from the audit, supported by project staff

## AV1 Robots provided to support children with long-term illness

One APIF project used AV1 'telepresence' robot technology to enable children and young people (CYP) in medical AP to be part of their classroom from wherever they were. AV1s are distance learning avatars that project audio and video from a CYP's classroom to them via an app on a phone or tablet. The project aimed to ensure that CYP experiencing hospitalisation were able to maintain relationships with their teachers and could receive as much education as possible to facilitate a more equal footing with their classroom peers.

### Practical advice for implementing the technology included:

- Having designated support for the day-to-day operation of AV1, for example taking on tasks such as moving it from classroom to classroom as required
- Encouraging a 'can-do' mindset that sees the benefits of wider use of technology in education;
- Support and understanding of legislation to mitigate worries about security and privacy;
- Creating systems to sustain the use of the robots into the future, including maintaining contact with home school, parents, checking if the AV1 is still being used by the young person.

The robots aided reintegration by enabling CYP to have a consistent link to their classroom and their teacher.

## The APIF reintegration projects

**Hospital and Outreach Education AP Academy** an East Midlands-based medical AP provider used iPads and a remotely-controlled robot so medical AP students could attend, and participate in, mainstream lessons virtually. They worked with 14 partners, including other hospital schools, PRUs and mainstream schools, to reduce these students' social isolation and sustain their subsequent reintegration.

**Bradford AP Academy Central** located in a DfE Opportunity Area, focused on improving and sustaining reintegration rates through trialling key worker support for YP permanently excluded or accessing intervention placements. They developed partnerships with secondary schools in the area and systems for reintegration planning to support YP and families, liaising with front line services in the local area.

**Francis Barber Pupil Referral Unit** developed partnerships with local London schools to reduce re-referrals through a literacy intervention package coupled with key worker support and focused behaviour mentoring during phased reintegration.