

Project information sheet for APST settings:

About the evaluation of Alternative Provision Specialist Taskforces (APST)

Purpose of this document

This document is designed for AP settings that are implementing the APST. It provides some information about the evaluation of the Alternative Provision Specialist Taskforce (APST) and what this means for schools.

What is the APST project?

The Alternative Provision Specialist Taskforces Project is a new pilot funded by the Department for Education (DfE). Participating alternative provision (AP) settings will embed teams of specialists (e.g. mental health workers, speech and language therapists, family support workers) in their schools. The schools have been chosen because they are in serious violence hotspots.

The APST program enables the creation/expansion of networks of specialist practitioners within 21 APs situated in serious violence hotspots. The initiative is built on the understanding that by having localised teams of specialists (such as mental health workers, speech and language therapists and family support workers) embedded within AP settings pupil outcomes (including reducing serious violence) will improve.

The Department of Education are piloting this approach over two academic years, starting delivery in autumn 2021. The Youth Endowment Fund (YEF) are working with the DfE to fund an evaluation of the APST.

Who is involved in the evaluation?

RAND Europe (a not-for-profit research institute), the University of Westminster, and FFT Education Datalab (a non-profit company specialising in education research) have been commissioned by the Youth Endowment Fund to evaluate Alternative Provision Specialist Taskforce (APST).

What is the evaluation going to do?

The evaluation team will explore:

- The impact that the APST intervention has on a number of pupil outcomes (the 'impact' evaluation)
- How the APST intervention is implemented and the experiences of those involved in it (the 'process' evaluation)
- The costs of running the APST intervention (the 'cost' evaluation).

What will we ask of your school?

We will ask you to administer the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ) survey to all your pupils in Key Stage 3 and 4 at two time points and report this data to RAND Europe. This will inform the impact evaluation: we will use the tests to understand social, emotional and mental health outcomes. We will use this data to understand the effect of APST on these outcomes.

We would like you to administer the survey to eligible pupils at two timepoints:

- Before APST delivery begins (before 1 November 2021) and (after this) when pupils enter the AP setting.
- When the APST delivery ends and (before this) when pupils leave the AP setting.

We will ask you to provide the scores for these tests along with each pupil's name, date of birth and UPN (and school LAESTAB and postcode) to RAND Europe via SmartSurvey.

We will share more guidance around how to administer the tests and how to report the data to us at RAND Europe. If you have questions, you should get in touch with us at APSTevaluation@randeurope.org.

We may also ask you to administer the Self-Reported Delinquency Scale (SRDS) test at the second timepoint. This test helps us to understand likelihood of future criminal activity. The DfE, YEF and RAND Europe are currently consulting with schools and experts about how to best administer this survey. If you have any suggestions or experiences using this scale at your school, we would be very interested in hearing your thoughts.

We will also invite you, members of your staff, and other members of the school community to take part in surveys, interviews and other consultation with the evaluation team. This will inform the process and cost evaluation. This will include:

- An interview with the SLT lead in October 2021 and at the end of the evaluation
- An online survey sent to the SLT lead and APST professionals in January 2022, June 2022 and March 2023
- Attending webinars with the evaluation team to hear about emerging findings and give your views throughout the evaluation
- We may also approach you to take part in a case study, which would involve interviews and a visit to your school, in March 2022 and again in the Autumn of 2022.

Taking part in these data collection activities is voluntary for all and we will share privacy and project information with all individuals prior to these activities. Data gathered through these activities is vital to ensure that we are able to examine the impact of APST – to better understand what works, for whom, and in what circumstances. We are very grateful for your participation in research activities to facilitate this.

What do I need to do next?

We ask that you read this form and the Memorandum of Understanding. You can get in touch with any questions or to tell us about any concerns you may have at APSTevaluation@randeurope.org.

We will also share information sheets, privacy notices, and withdrawal forms with you that are designed for parents of pupils and pupils themselves (if aged 13+ and able to understand the information included). We ask that you please share these with all pupils and parents in Key Stage 3 and 4 in the school.

After this, we ask that you begin to administer the baseline SDQ survey to all pupils in Key Stage 3 and 4 at your school. This must be completed before 1 November 2021.

Any questions?

If you have any questions, please contact the RAND Europe team and the principal investigator (Dr Emma Disley) at APSTevaluation@randeurope.org.