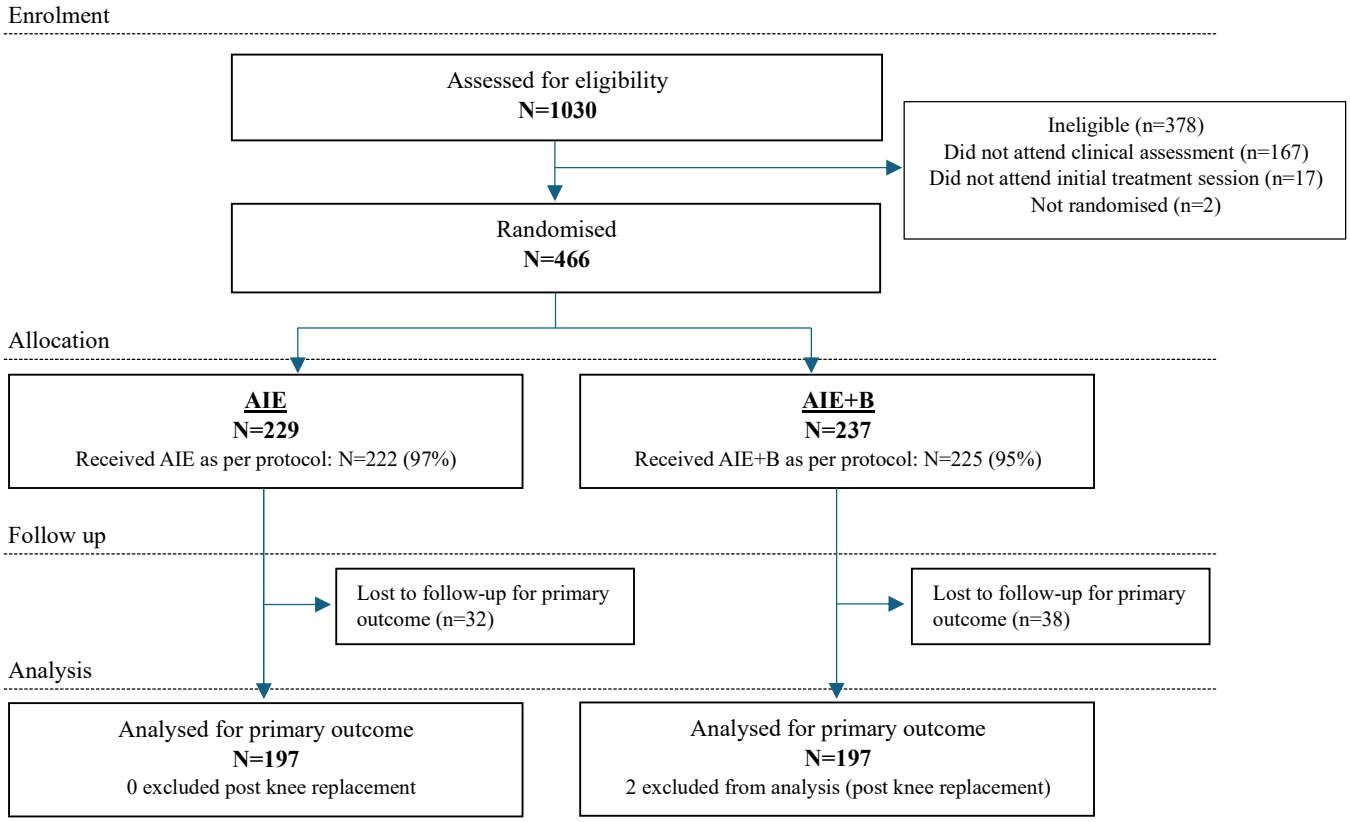
Participant Flowchart



AIE Advice, written information, and exercise instruction.
AIE+B Advice, written information, and exercise instruction plus knee bracing.

Baseline characteristics

	AIE N=229*	AIE+B N=237 *
Age (years): Mean (SD)	64 (9)	64 (9)
Female sex	113 (49%)	100 (42%)
Ethnic group		
Bangladeshi	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Black – Caribbean	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Black – African	1 (0%)	0 (0%)
Black – Other	0 (0%)	2 (1%)
Chinese	2 (1%)	1 (0%)
Indian	1 (0%)	3 (1%)
Pakistani	1 (0%)	1 (0%)
White	221 (97%)	228 (96%)
Other – stated as North African	1 (0%)	0 (0%)
Prefer not to say	1 (0%)	2 (1%)
Left school to attend full-time education or university	86 (38%)	109 (46%)
Currently in paid employment (full or part-time)	92 (41%)	101 (43%)
Lives in most deprived quintile of neighbourhoods	28 (12%)	28 (12%)
Has long-term (>12 months) physical or mental health condition, disability or illness	101 (45%)	109 (47%)
Body-mass index (BMI) (kg/m^2): mean (SD)	29.0 (5.7)	29.0 (5.5)
Last 7 days, knee pain during activity in the knee (0-10): Mean (SD)	6.4 (1.7)	6.3 (1.8)
KOOS-5 (primary outcome) (0-100): Mean (SD)	44.9 (13.5)	45.7 (14.2)
Kellgren-Lawrence (KL) highest grade per knee		
0	7 (3%)	9 (4%)
1	4 (2%)	2 (1%)
2	57 (25%)	65 (27%)
3	107 (47%)	108 (46%)
4	54 (24%)	53 (22%)

Figures are numbers (percentages in brackets) unless otherwise stated.
All outcome measures completed in reference to the knee to be treated.
High score indicates better outcome for KOOS. X-rays were scored for Kellgren-Lawrence grade at the end of the trial and were the highest grade given to a compartment (or compartments when there was no predominant compartment involvement), so may not directly align with the clinical judgment of the x-ray that was used to guide brace allocation.
AIE Advice, written information, and exercise instruction; **AIE+B** Advice, written information, and exercise instruction plus knee bracing; **KOOS** Knee Osteoarthritis Outcomes Score
* baseline questionnaire data is missing for one participant, so baseline questionnaire variables are based on 465 participants with data.

Primary outcome

KOOS-5 (0-100)	**6-months**
AIE: Mean (SD)	52.3 (17.3)
AIE+B: Mean (SD)	55.3 (17.0)
	Treatment effect: AIE vs AIE+B: Adjusted* mean difference (95% CI)
Longitudinal mixed models	3.39 (0.96, 5.82)

AIE Advice, written information, and exercise instruction; **AIE+B** Advice, written information, and exercise instruction plus knee bracing; **CI** confidence interval; **KOOS** Knee Osteoarthritis Outcomes Score; **SD** standard deviation.
* Adjusted for PROP-OA clinic site, predominant compartmental distribution based on clinical and radiographic presentation, presence/absence of instability (buckling), age, sex, baseline anxiety, baseline depression, baseline KOOS-5 score.

Adverse events

There were no suspected unexpected serious adverse reactions to either intervention.

Participant self-report		
	6-months	
	AIE (N=185†)	AIE+B (N=185†)
Last 3-months experienced any of the following in or around your knee		
Irritation/redness of skin	10 (5%)	29 (16%)
Blisters	0 (0%)	2 (1%)
Increased swelling	50 (27%)	18 (10%)
Temporary increased soreness	51 (28%)	33 (18%)
New or abnormal symptoms*		
Joint clicking/crunching	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Joint locking/giving way	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Pain in other joints	1 (1%)	0 (0%)
Raised/irritated veins/arteries	0 (0%)	3 (2%)
Cruciate injury	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Numbness/pins and needles	1 (1%)	0 (0%)
Stiffness	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Injury	0 (0%)	1 (1%)
Fall	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Shingles	0 (0%)	1 (1%)
New or abnormal symptoms indicated n.e.c.	0 (0%)	0 (0%)

Figures are numbers (percentages in brackets).
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* Derived from coding of text data into categories.
† Denominator relates to full questionnaires returned as adverse event data was not collected on the minimum data collection form.