

Evaluation of the Reach Programme. A randomised control trial of a mentoring intervention aimed at young people in secondary schools aged 11-16 years

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Registration date 17/09/2025	Overall study status Completed	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Statistical analysis plan <input type="checkbox"/> Results
Last Edited 17/09/2025	Condition category Other	<input type="checkbox"/> Individual participant data <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Record updated in last year

Plain English summary of protocol

Background and study aims

This study is looking at how well a school-based mentoring programme called Reach helps prevent young people from getting involved in violence. It's funded by the Youth Endowment Fund, which supports projects that aim to keep children and teenagers safe. The Reach Programme is being tested in schools across Leicester and Leicestershire, especially in areas with high crime, school exclusions, and other challenges. Researchers want to find out if this kind of support makes a real difference for young people who are vulnerable and at risk.

Who can participate?

Young people aged 11 to 16 years (school years 7 to 11) who are at risk of being suspended from school and have at least three signs of vulnerability (such as being in care, living with domestic violence, or substance misuse at home) were invited to take part.

What does the study involve?

Participants were randomly chosen to either receive the Reach Programme or continue with the usual support their school provides. Those in the Reach group were matched with a youth worker who helped them create a personal plan. They met regularly in school, at home, or in the community for one-to-one mentoring, fun activities, and support with social skills and behaviour. Researchers also asked young people and teachers to fill out questionnaires and collected school records to see how things changed over time.

What are the possible benefits and risks of participating?

The Reach Programme offers tailored support to help young people stay out of trouble and feel more confident. Youth workers and school staff also get a chance to reflect on their work and training. For those not receiving the programme, there may have been some disappointment, but schools were fully informed about how the study works. All young people were told they

could choose not to take part, skip any questions they didn't want to answer, and leave the study at any time. If anyone had a negative experience, they could speak to researchers and were offered extra support if needed.

Where is the study run from?

The study is taking place in secondary schools across Leicester and Leicestershire (UK).

When is the study starting and how long is it expected to run for?

October 2023 to September 2025

Who is funding the study?

Youth Endowment Fund (UK)

Who is the main contact?

Anna Stevens, a.stevens@shu.ac.uk

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Study website

<https://youthendowmentfund.org.uk/funding/evaluations/the-reach-programme/>

Contact information

Type(s)

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Additional identifiers

EudraCT/CTIS number

Nil known

IRAS number

ClinicalTrials.gov number

Nil known

Secondary identifying numbers

Nil known

Study information

Scientific Title

Evaluation of the Reach Programme. A randomised control trial of a mentoring intervention aimed at young people in secondary schools aged 11-16 years

Study objectives

RQ1 What is the difference in behavioural difficulties measured using the externalising score from the teacher report Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ) between the intervention group, when compared to a 'business as usual' control?

RQ2 What is the difference in emotional regulation measured using the internalising score of the teacher report SDQ between the intervention group, when compared to a 'business as usual' control?

RQ3 What is the difference in behavioural difficulties measured using the externalising score from the self-report Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ) between the intervention group, when compared to a 'business as usual' control?

RQ4 What is the difference in emotional regulation measured using the internalising score of the self-report SDQ between the intervention group, when compared to a 'business as usual' control?

RQ5 What is the difference in offending behaviours measured using "variety of delinquency score" from the self-report delinquency scale (SRDS) between the intervention group, when compared to a 'business as usual' control?

RQ6 What is the difference in offending behaviours measured using "volume of delinquency score" from the self-report delinquency scale (SRDS) between the intervention group, when compared to a 'business as usual' control?

RQ7 What is the difference in attendance at school measured using administrative data between the intervention group, when compared to a 'business as usual' control?

RQ8 What is the difference in number of suspensions measured using administrative data between the intervention group, when compared to a 'business as usual' control?

RQ9 What is the difference in offending behaviours measured using administrative data between the intervention group, when compared to a 'business as usual' control?

RQ10 Are any differences in the primary outcome (externalising score teacher report SDQ) observed with regards to the ethnicity of the YP?

RQ11 Are any differences in the primary outcome (externalising score teacher report SDQ)

observed with regards to the sex of the YP?

RQ12 Are any differences in the primary outcome (externalising score teacher report SDQ)

observed with regards to the age of the YP?

Ethics approval required

Ethics approval required

Ethics approval(s)

Approved 18/12/2023, Sheffield Hallam University Research Ethics Committee (Sheffield Hallam University, Howard Street, Sheffield, S1 1WB, United Kingdom; +44 114 225 5555; ethicssupport@shu.ac.uk), ref: ER61328257

Study design

Interventional cluster randomized controlled trial

Primary study design

Interventional

Secondary study design

Cluster randomised trial

Study setting(s)

School

Study type(s)

Efficacy

Participant information sheet

Not available in web format, please use the contact details to request a participant information sheet

Health condition(s) or problem(s) studied

Young people at risk of suspension or who are persistently absent from school, and where there are concerns about future involvement in anti-social behaviour and crime as both a victim or perpetrator.

Interventions

The Reach Programme is targeted intervention aimed at YP aged 11-16 in secondary schools (years 7-11) who are at risk of suspension (i.e. they have carried out behaviour in their school that would normally qualify for a suspension), have 3 indicators of vulnerability (e.g. looked after, domestic violence or substance misuse in the home) and where there are concerns about future involvement in anti-social behaviour and crime as both a victim or perpetrator. It is a six-month, evidence-informed intervention) - a context which has the potential to be a 'teachable moment'. The 'teachable' moments interventions, often called 'Navigators' programmes, make use of points in people's lives where they may be more inclined to seek help and support as a result of hitting a low point, or significant event in their lives. Navigators style programmes provide three key activities, 'reach-in' at the teachable moment, mentoring, and signposting, all of which are largely reflected within the Reach programme. It incorporates intensive and flexible mentoring, offers opportunities for prosocial activity, and addresses individual, relationship and

community risk factors through structured learning components such as social skills training. The Reach programme provides an opportunity to explore the 'teachable moment' component in a school context.

The design for the trial is a blocked Randomised Controlled Trial (RCT) design, where within each block (i.e. school), referred YP will be randomised to receive the Reach programme or BAU control (i.e. two arms). The allocation is 50:50 and fixed within each school with the aim of achieving equal numbers of YP allocated to intervention and control within each school. The control condition is "business as usual" support within schools.

Within each school the evaluation team will randomise half of referred YP to the Reach programme and the other half will form the business as usual control group. Once numbers of referrals within schools have been set, randomisation will be fixed within each school using a random number generator in Excel to determine group allocation. Two specified members of the evaluation team will undertake randomisation, this will be blind to participants and providers, and take place following the collection of baseline data. Outcome data would then be collected once the participant has completed the programme. Given the rolling nature of referrals, randomisation is conducted on a rolling basis.

Intervention Type

Behavioural

Primary outcome measure

Collected on a rolling basis given the rolling nature of the intervention:
Teacher report SDQ externalising score

Secondary outcome measures

The baseline and outcome measures are collected on a rolling basis given the rolling nature of the intervention:

1. Emotional regulation (Teacher report SDQ) measured using teacher report SDQ internalising score
2. Behavioural difficulties (Self report SDQ) measured using self-report SDQ externalising score
3. Emotional regulation (Self report SDQ) self-report SDQ internalising score
4. Variety of delinquency measured using variety of delinquency (SRDS)
5. Volume of delinquency measured using volume of delinquency (SRDS)
6. Number of suspensions measured using administrative data provided by the local councils
7. Attendance at school (%) measured using administrative data provided by the schools
8. Level of offending measured using data provided by Leicester violence reduction unit (VRU)

Overall study start date

01/10/2023

Completion date

04/09/2025

Eligibility

Key inclusion criteria

1. Young person aged 11-16 years in secondary schools (years 7-11)
2. At risk of suspension (i.e. they have carried out behaviour in their school that would normally qualify for a suspension)

3. Have 3 indicators of vulnerability (e.g. looked after, domestic violence or substance misuse in the home)

Participant type(s)

Learner/student

Age group

Child

Lower age limit

11 Years

Upper age limit

16 Years

Sex

Both

Target number of participants

600

Total final enrolment

595

Key exclusion criteria

Does not meet the inclusion criteria

Date of first enrolment

01/01/2024

Date of final enrolment

01/01/2025

Locations

Countries of recruitment

England

United Kingdom

Study participating centre

Leicestershire County Council

County Hall

Leicester Road

Glenfield

Leicester

United Kingdom

LE3 8RA

Study participating centre
Leicester City Council
City Hall
115 Charles Street
Leicester
United Kingdom
LE1 1FZ

Sponsor information

Organisation

Youth Endowment Fund

Sponsor details

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hello@youthendowmentfund.org.uk

Sponsor type

Charity

Website

<https://youthendowmentfund.org.uk/>

Funder(s)

Funder type

Charity

Funder Name

Youth Endowment Fund

Alternative Name(s)

YouthEndowFund, YEF

Funding Body Type

Private sector organisation

Funding Body Subtype

Trusts, charities, foundations (both public and private)

Location

United Kingdom

Results and Publications

Publication and dissemination plan

The final report is due to be published in May 2026. The report will be made available on the YEF website. Following this, researchers will aim to publish papers based on the study in a peer-reviewed journal.

Intention to publish date

31/05/2026

Individual participant data (IPD) sharing plan

The data sets generated during and/or analysed during the current study will be available upon request from: <https://youthendowmentfund.org.uk/evaluation-data-archive/>

IPD sharing plan summary

Stored in publicly available repository

Study outputs

Output type	Details	Date created	Date added	Peer reviewed?	Patient-facing?
Protocol file			17/09/2025	No	No
Statistical Analysis Plan	version 1.0	09/05/2024	17/09/2025	No	No