

# NOMO app and teenage social media use: a randomised controlled trial in England and Wales

<b>Submission date</b> 31/10/2025	<b>Recruitment status</b> No longer recruiting	<input type="checkbox"/> Prospectively registered <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Protocol
<b>Registration date</b> 18/11/2025	<b>Overall study status</b> Completed	<input type="checkbox"/> Statistical analysis plan <input type="checkbox"/> Results
<b>Last Edited</b> 27/02/2026	<b>Condition category</b> 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 whether a smartphone app called NOMO can help teenagers in UK schools use social media less. Research suggests that too much social media can affect young people's learning, happiness, and sleep. The app encourages pupils to spend less time on their phones by using peer support, shared challenges, and rewards. The study will test how well the app works by comparing schools that use it with schools that don't.

### Who can participate?

Pupils in Years 9 and 10 at participating UK secondary schools can take part. Teachers and parents may also be invited to share their views.

### What does the study involve?

Pupils in schools chosen to use the app will be invited to download NOMO and take part in its challenges from November 2025 to March 2026. All pupils will be asked to complete short anonymous surveys before and after the trial, looking at things like how much time they spend on social media, how distracted they feel, how satisfied they are with life, and how well they sleep. Some pupils, teachers, and parents may also be invited to take part in voluntary interviews or extra surveys to share their experiences.

### What are the possible benefits and risks of participating?

Using the app may help pupils reduce screen time, feel more focused, sleep better, and feel happier. There are no known risks, but pupils can choose not to take part in any part of the study if they don't want to. All responses will be kept anonymous.

### Where is the study run from?

Behavioural Insights Team (UK)

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

The study starts in November 2025 and will run until March 2026.

Who is funding the study?  
National Endowment for Science Technology and the Arts (UK)

Who is the main contact?  
niall.daly@bi.team

## Contact information

**Type(s)**  
Scientific

**Contact name**  
Mr Niall Daly

**ORCID ID**  
<https://orcid.org/0009-0009-8378-4261>

**Contact details**  
Behavioural Insights Team, Victoria Embankment  
London  
United Kingdom  
EC4Y 0DS  
+44 (0) 207 438 2500  
niall.daly@bi.team

**Type(s)**  
Principal investigator

**Contact name**  
Mr Lal Chadeesingh

**Contact details**  
Behavioural Insights Team, Victoria Embankment  
London  
United Kingdom  
EC4Y 0DS  
+44 (0) 207 438 2500  
lal.chadeesingh@bi.team

**Type(s)**  
Public

**Contact name**  
Mr Callum O'Mahony

**Contact details**  
Behavioural Insights Team, Victoria Embankment  
London  
United Kingdom  
EC4Y 0DS

+44 (0) 207 438 2500  
callum.omahony@bi.team

## **Additional identifiers**

**Protocol serial number**  
TP2023025

## **Study information**

### **Scientific Title**

Changes in social media usage among teenage smartphone users in the UK: a randomised controlled trial of the NOMO app

**Acronym**  
NOMOSM

### **Study objectives**

The primary objective of the research is to evaluate the effectiveness of NOMO in reducing social media use in UK schools. This evaluation seeks to generate evidence to inform potential scale-up of the NOMO app, and aims to answer three research questions. The primary research question is: "How effective is the NOMO smartphone app in reducing social media usage of Year 9 and 10 pupils?". The study also seeks to address one secondary research question: "How effective is introducing the NOMO smartphone app in schools, and encouraging pupils to use it, in reducing distraction for Year 9 and 10 pupils?". The study also seeks to address two exploratory research questions: "How effective is the NOMO smartphone app in improving life satisfaction for Year 9 and 10 pupils?"; and "How effective is the NOMO smartphone app in improving the quality of sleep of Year 9 and 10 pupils?"

**Ethics approval required**  
Ethics approval required

**Ethics approval(s)**  
approved 13/10/2025, Behavioural Insights Team internal ethics review (58 Victoria Embankment, London, EC4Y 0DS, United Kingdom; +44 (0) 207 438 2500; info@bi.team), ref: TP2025023

**Study design**  
Interventional randomized controlled trial and implementation and process evaluation (IPE) using mixed methods

**Primary study design**  
Interventional

**Study type(s)**  
Efficacy

**Health condition(s) or problem(s) studied**  
Social media usage, distraction, life satisfaction, sleep

## Interventions

**Control (comparison arm):** The comparison group is a waitlist control arm. Pupils in schools assigned to this arm are expected to continue with their business-as-usual social media practices during the trial period. They will not be invited to use the NOMO app by the research team or their school during the intervention period (November 2025 to February 2026). They receive the intervention (invitation to use the app) only after the trial period ends, starting in March 2026. The total duration of the active intervention for the control group during the study period is zero months, with a three-month follow-up (endline survey in February 2026)

**Treatment arm:** The treatment arm is invited to download and use the NOMO smartphone application. The intervention involves school staff introducing and encouraging all eligible and consenting pupils to download and use the app. The NOMO app uses collective action principles (peer support, shared challenges, positive reinforcement) to help users reduce the time they spend on social media, for example, by earning points redeemable for rewards. The total duration of the active intervention is approximately three months, running from November 2025 to February 2026. Follow-up occurs immediately after the intervention ends, with the endline survey administered in early-mid February 2026.

**Randomisation process:** This study employs a two-arm waitlist design RCT where randomization occurs at the school level (cluster randomisation). All participating pupils within a school are placed in the same trial arm. Once all schools are recruited and have completed their baseline surveys, they will be randomised by the Behavioural Insights Team (BIT) into one of the two trial arms (Treatment or Control). Schools will be randomly allocated to arms using a cluster-level randomisation procedure performed in Stata 16.0 software, with the process secured by a reproducible seed for complete transparency.

## Intervention Type

Behavioural

## Primary outcome(s)

Social media usage measured using a self-report 9-point scale questionnaire item at baseline (November 2025) and endline (February 2026). The specific item wording is: "Thinking about your last full school day, how much time in total do you think you spent using social media apps (like TikTok, Instagram, etc.) over the entire 24-hour day?"

## Key secondary outcome(s)

1. Distraction is measured using a self-report 7-point Likert scale questionnaire item, adapted from the Online Homework Distraction Scale (ODHS) at baseline (November 2025) and endline (February 2026). The specific item wording is: "I stop my homework to check my social media (e.g., Instagram, TikTok)".

Exploratory outcome #1: Life Satisfaction is measured using a self-report 7-point Likert scale questionnaire item from the Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS) at baseline (November 2025) and endline (February 2026). The specific item wording is: "I am satisfied with my life".o

Exploratory outcome #2: Sleep quality is measured using a self-report 11-point scale questionnaire item from the Single-Item Sleep Quality Scale (SQS) at baseline (November 2025) and endline (February 2026). The specific item wording is: "Thinking about the past 7 days, how would you rate the quality of your sleep overall?". The scale ranges from "Terrible" (0) to "Excellent" (10).

## Completion date

07/03/2026

## Eligibility

### Key inclusion criteria

Being a Year 9 or Year 10 pupil in a participating UK secondary school

### Participant type(s)

Learner/student

### Healthy volunteers allowed

No

### Age group

Child

### Lower age limit

12 years

### Upper age limit

16 years

### Sex

All

### Total final enrolment

0

### Key exclusion criteria

Withdrawal from the evaluation by a parent or guardian

### Date of first enrolment

03/11/2025

### Date of final enrolment

14/11/2025

## Locations

### Countries of recruitment

United Kingdom

England

Wales

### Study participating centre

**Chessington School**  
Chessington School  
Garrison Lane  
Surrey  
England  
KT9 2JS

**Study participating centre**  
**Seven Kings School**  
Ley Street  
Ilford  
England  
IG2 7BT

**Study participating centre**  
**The Academy, Selsey**  
School Lane  
Selsey  
Chichester  
England  
PO20 9EH

**Study participating centre**  
**Laurel Park School**  
56 Wilmer Way  
London  
England  
N14 7HY

**Study participating centre**  
**Ribston Hall High School**  
Stroud Road  
Gloucester  
England  
GL1 5LE

**Study participating centre**  
**Barking Abbey School, a Specialist Sports and Humanities College**  
Sandringham Road

Barking  
England  
IG11 9AG

**Study participating centre**

**Reach Academy Feltham**

Fern House  
53-55 High Street  
Feltham  
England  
TW13 4AB

**Study participating centre**

**Towers School and Sixth Form Centre**

Faversham Road  
Kennington  
Ashford  
England  
TN24 9AL

**Study participating centre**

**Ebbw Fawr Learning Community**

Lime Avenue  
Ebbw Vale  
Blaenau Gwent  
NP23 6GL  
Blaenau Gwent  
Wales  
NP23 6GL

**Study participating centre**

**Chetwynde School**

Rating Lane  
Barrow-in-furness  
England  
LA13 0NY

**Study participating centre**

**Brookvale Groby Learning Campus**

Ratby Road  
Groby

Leicester  
England  
LE6 0FP

**Study participating centre**

**Marriotts School**

Brittain Way  
Stevenage  
England  
SG2 8UT

**Study participating centre**

**Cramlington Learning Village**

Highburn  
Cramlington  
England  
NE23 6BN

**Study participating centre**

**Bridgemary School**

Wych Lane  
Gosport  
England  
PO13 0JN

**Study participating centre**

**Willows High**

Willows Ave  
Cardiff  
South Glamorgan  
CF24 2YE  
Cardiff  
Wales  
CF24 2YE

**Study participating centre**

**Baysgarth School**

Barrow Road  
Barton-upon-humber  
England  
DN18 6AE

**Study participating centre**

**Trinity Academy Halifax**

Shay Lane

Halifax

England

HX2 9TZ

**Study participating centre**

**Werneth School**

Harrytown

Romiley

Stockport

England

SK6 3BX

**Study participating centre**

**Buxton School**

234 Cann Hall Road

Leytonstone

E11 3NN

Leytonstone

England

E11 3NN

**Study participating centre**

**The Friary School**

Eastern Avenue

Lichfield

England

WS13 7EW

**Study participating centre**

**The Academy of St Nicholas**

Gardners Drive

Liverpool

L6 7UR

Liverpool

England

L6 7UR

**Study participating centre**  
**Chancellor's School**  
Pine Grove  
Brookmans Park  
Hatfield  
England  
AL9 7BN

**Study participating centre**  
**Cowbridge Comprehensive School**  
Aberthin Road Cowbridge  
Vale of Glamorgan  
Wales  
CF71 7EN

**Study participating centre**  
**Clacton County High School**  
51 Walton Road  
Clacton-on-sea  
England  
CO15 6DZ

**Study participating centre**  
**Havelock Academy**  
Holyoake Road  
Grimsby  
England  
DN32 8JH

**Study participating centre**  
**Alsager School**  
Hassall Road  
Alsager  
Stoke-on-trent  
England  
ST7 2HR

**Study participating centre**

**Langdon Park Community School**  
Bright Street  
Poplar  
London  
England  
E14 0RZ

**Study participating centre**  
**Applemore College**  
Roman Road  
Dibden Purlieu  
Southampton  
England  
SO45 4RQ

**Study participating centre**  
**St Peter's Catholic School**  
Horseshoe Lane East, Guildford  
Surrey  
England  
GU1 2TN

**Study participating centre**  
**Lampton Academy**  
Lampton Avenue  
Hounslow  
England  
TW3 4EP

**Study participating centre**  
**The Cornerstone Academy**  
Blandford Close  
Poole  
England  
BH15 4BQ

**Study participating centre**  
**Coundon Court**  
Northbrook Road

Coventry  
England  
CV6 2AJ

**Study participating centre**  
**Court Fields School**  
Mantle Street  
Wellington  
England  
TA21 8SW

**Study participating centre**  
**Albany Academy**  
Bolton Road  
Chorley  
England  
PR7 3AY

**Study participating centre**  
**The Bishop of Hereford's Bluecoat School**  
Hampton Dene Road  
Hereford  
England  
HR1 1UU

**Study participating centre**  
**Enfield County School for Girls**  
Holly Walk  
Enfield  
England  
EN2 6QG

**Study participating centre**  
**St John Bosco Arts College**  
Storrington Avenue  
Liverpool  
England  
L11 9DQ

**Study participating centre**

**Lode Heath School**

Lode Lane  
Solihull  
England  
B91 2HW

**Study participating centre**

**St Hilda's Church of England High School**

Croxteth Drive  
Sefton Park  
Liverpool  
England  
L17 3AL

**Study participating centre**

**Sir William Borlase's Grammar School**

West Street  
Marlow  
England  
SL7 2BR

**Study participating centre**

**Westfield School**

Eckington Road  
Sheffield  
England  
S20 1HQ

**Study participating centre**

**La Retraite Roman Catholic Girls' School**

1-4 Atkins Road  
London  
England  
SW12 0AB

**Study participating centre**

**Eaton Bank Academy**

Jackson Road

Congleton  
England  
CW12 1NT

**Study participating centre**

**Thamesview School**

Thong Lane  
Gravesend  
England  
DA12 4LF

**Study participating centre**

**Harris Church of England Academy**

Harris Drive  
Rugby  
England  
CV22 6EA

**Study participating centre**

**South Chingford Foundation School**

Stadium Close  
Chingford  
London  
England  
E4 8ES

**Study participating centre**

**St John the Baptist School**

Elmbridge Lane  
Woking  
Surrey  
England  
GU22 9AL

**Study participating centre**

**Llswerry High School**

Nash Road  
Newport  
Wales  
NP19 4RP

**Study participating centre****Saracens High School**

Corner Mead  
London  
England  
NW9 4AS

**Study participating centre****Middleton Technology School**

Kenyon Lane  
Middleton  
Manchester  
England  
M24 2GT

**Study participating centre****Waseley Hills High School**

School Road  
Rubery  
Rednal  
Birmingham  
England  
B45 9EL

## Sponsor information

**Organisation**

The Behavioural Insights Team

**ROR**

<https://ror.org/03mk5b468>

## Funder(s)

**Funder type**

Charity

**Funder Name**

National Endowment for Science Technology and the Arts

### Alternative Name(s)

National Endowment for Science, Technology and the Arts, National Endowment for Science, Technology & the Arts, Nesta (charity), NESTA, NESTA

### Funding Body Type

Private sector organisation

### Funding Body Subtype

Trusts, charities, foundations (both public and private)

### Location

United Kingdom

## Results and Publications

### Individual participant data (IPD) sharing plan

#### IPD sharing plan summary

Not expected to be made available

#### Study outputs

Output type	Details	Date created	Date added	Peer reviewed?	Patient-facing?
<a href="#">Protocol file</a>			10/11/2025	No	No