

The London Sexual Violence Programme: Improving attitudes in adolescent dating and relationships

Submission date 03/07/2026	Recruitment status Not yet recruiting	☒ Prospectively registered ☐ Protocol
Registration date 28/07/2026	Overall study status Ongoing	☐ Statistical analysis plan ☐ Results
Last Edited 03/07/2026	Condition category Other	☐ Individual participant data ☒ Record updated in last year

Plain English summary of protocol

Background and study aims

The main aim of this study is to change young people's attitudes towards harmful behaviours in adolescent dating and relationship contexts. There is evidence indicating that dating and relationship violence (DRV) increases during adolescence, which means early intervention is fundamental. The LSV intervention is specifically designed to improve young people's attitudes, helping them establish positive peer and social expectations and strengthening their ability to reject harmful behaviours in the short and long term.

Who can participate?

Pupils attending mainstream secondary schools (both independent and non-independent) and aged 11-16 years (i.e., Key Stages 3 and 4) in the Greater London area will be recruited. Only schools that are completely naïve to the intervention will be considered (i.e., schools that have already been the site for delivery of this intervention are excluded).

What does the study involve?

The LSV intervention is comprised of four 50–60-minute young person education sessions, delivered in each participating school over an approximately 6-month period (e.g., spring and summer terms of a given academic year), to enable all classes in the target year group to participate in the four taught sessions. These sessions are integrated into the school's relationships and sex education (RSE) provision and therefore timetabled as part of personal, social and health and economic education (PSHE). The sessions focus on 1) healthy/unhealthy relationships and equality, 2) youth-produced sexual imagery, 3) harmful sexual behaviours, and 4) understanding and responding to sexual violence and harassment. Schools allocated to the control arm of the trial will continue their business-as-usual, i.e., delivery of standard, RSE content in line with government guidance, usually taught by school staff.

What are the possible benefits and risks of participating?

Regarding benefits, at the end of the intervention, participants should be able to identify the

qualities of healthy relationships and their associated positive benefits. As for risks, despite limited risks associated with participation, there are adequate safeguarding procedures in place should participants experience distress.

Where is the study run from?

A research team at the Manchester Institute of Education, University of Manchester, leads the evaluation strand of this trial. Brook, which is a national charity, is responsible for recruitment and delivery of the intervention.

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

October 2026 to December 2028

Who is funding the study?

Youth Endowment Fund (UK)

Who is the main contact?

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Contact information

Type(s)

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Study information

Scientific Title

The London Sexual Violence Programme to improve attitudes towards harmful behaviours in adolescent dating and relationship contexts: a two-armed cluster randomised controlled trial

Acronym

LSVT

Study objectives

The trial's research questions (RQs) are classified as confirmatory (C: where research design and /or existing evidence permits hypothesis generation) or exploratory (E: where hypotheses are inappropriate or premature due to insufficient existing evidence and/or research design), drawing on quantitative (QT) data, qualitative (QL) data, or both (QT/QL):

Primary research question.

RQ1. What is the difference in attitudes towards harmful behaviours in adolescent dating and relationship contexts (measured by the MADVA) of young people aged 13-14 who participate in the London Sexual Violence Programme (LSVP) in comparison to those of young people who receive the standard statutory relationships and sex education curriculum?

Hypothesis 1 (C, QT): We will observe improvement in attitudes towards harmful behaviours in adolescent dating and relationship contexts from pre (T1) to post (T2) intervention for schools implementing LSVP (intervention arm) compared to those delivering the standard statutory relationships and sex education curriculum (control arm).

Secondary research questions.

RQ2. What is the difference in knowledge of healthy relationships (2a), informal (2b) and professional (2c) help-seeking intentions and pro-social behaviour (2d) of young people aged 13-14 who participate in LSVP in comparison to those of young people who receive the standard statutory RSE curriculum?

Hypothesis 2 (E, QT): We will observe improvement in knowledge of healthy relationships (2a), informal (2b) and professional (2c) help-seeking intentions and pro-social behaviour (2d) from pre (T1) to post (T2) intervention for schools implementing LSVP (intervention arm) compared to those delivering the standard statutory RSE curriculum (control arm).

RQ3. Is any intervention effect on the primary outcome noted in RQ1/H1 moderated by socio-demographic characteristics?

1. Sex, gender identity and modality
2. Sexuality
3. Ethnicity
4. Special educational needs
5. Free school meal eligibility

Hypothesis 3 (E, QT): Intervention effects on attitudes towards harmful behaviours in adolescent dating and relationship contexts will vary by sex, gender identity and modality (H3a), sexuality (H3b), ethnicity (H3c), special educational needs (H3d), and free school meal eligibility (H3e).

RQ4. Is LSVP delivered as intended, and what factors appear to influence this (E, QT, QL)?

RQ5. In the event of any non-compliance, is any intervention effect on the primary outcome noted in RQ1/H1 moderated by implementation variability?

Hypothesis 4 (E, QT): Intervention effects on attitudes towards harmful behaviours in adolescent dating and relationship contexts will be larger in the context of compliance (i.e., complete delivery).

RQ6. What are the experiences and perceptions of LSVP Education and Wellbeing Specialists, school staff, and young people in either delivering or engaging with the intervention (E, QT, QL)?

RQ7. By young adulthood (specifically, ages 18-25 years), does LSVP lead to reductions in perpetration and/or victimisation for relevant criminal offences (e.g., domestic abuse, sexual offences)?

Hypothesis 5 (E, QT): Lower levels of perpetration (5a) and/or victimisation (5b) for relevant criminal offences (e.g., domestic abuse and sexual offences) recorded in the Police National Computer (PNC) will be observed for young adults who attended schools implementing LSVP (intervention arm) compared to those who attended schools delivering the standard statutory RSE curriculum (control arm) (by age 25 years, given evidence that intimate partner violence peaks during the 18-25 period).

Ethics approval required

Ethics approval required

Ethics approval(s)

Approved 25/06/2026, University of Manchester Research Ethics Committee 3 (University of Manchester, Oxford Road, Manchester, M139PL, United Kingdom; +44 (0)1613066000; research.ethics@manchester.ac.uk), ref: 2026-25313-46597

Primary study design

Interventional

Allocation

Randomized controlled trial

Masking

Blinded (masking used)

Control

Active

Assignment

Parallel

Purpose

Prevention, Treatment

Study type(s)

Health condition(s) or problem(s) studied

Attitudes towards harmful behaviours in adolescent dating and relationship contexts

Interventions

This is a two-armed parallel cluster randomised controlled efficacy trial with random allocation at the school level and stopping rules between trial waves (there are two cohorts) pertaining to recruitment and compliance.

Randomisation process. Upon completion of the baseline pupil online surveys at T1, which will allow for the collection of data on relevant outcome variables, participating schools will be randomly allocated to the intervention or to the control arm of the trial. Schools are the unit of randomisation, with two stratification variables considered during the allocation:

1. School size (above vs below national average)
2. School type (mixed vs single-sex)

LSV intervention:

The LSV intervention comprises four 50–60-minute young person education sessions which are delivered using PowerPoint and prewritten facilitator session plans. These sessions are delivered by Brook, a national charity founded in 1964 by Helen Brook, and reflect findings that efficacious school-based dating and relationship violence interventions are curriculum-based and aim to provide students with the knowledge, attitudes, and skills to prevent victimisation and perpetration.

The LSV intervention uses a spiral approach with a logical progression, with key ideas revisited in increasing complexity, as well as clear themes that are built on across the four sessions. For example, help-seeking is a consistent theme across all 4 sessions. The sessions focus on 1) healthy/unhealthy relationships and equality, 2) youth-produced sexual imagery, 3) harmful sexual behaviours, and 4) understanding and responding to sexual violence and harassment. Sessions also all include general sexual health signposting and ad hoc safeguarding support as required. The sessions have been refined through discussions with Brook's Participation Advisory Groups and evaluation feedback generated through the original LSV programme. The LSV intervention explicitly addresses the gendered nature of DRV. Sessions acknowledge that while anyone can experience abuse, women, girls, and minority genders are disproportionately affected. The programme explores power dynamics, coercion, and societal norms and includes content on online misogyny, harmful relationship expectations, and barriers to reporting (particularly for boys and young men, who may delay disclosure due to stigma). In addition to the student-facing sessions, participating schools receive 2 hours of workforce training, which focuses on managing disclosures of sexual harassment and encouraging schools to develop a whole school approach. As a result, it is primarily aimed towards those in the school who are responsible for behaviour, PSHE Leads and safeguarding personnel. The training is interactive and so aimed at groups of no more than 20 to allow for discussion and active engagement. The training aims to equip staff with the skills to identify, intervene, and support students experiencing or perpetrating sexually violent behaviours by confidently teaching consent and related topics, addressing incidents of sexual harassment, and responding effectively to disclosures of sexual assault. This helps schools create a culture of safety and respect by encouraging them to embed a whole school approach to preventing sexual harassment and sexual violence.

Control schools:

Schools allocated to the control arm of the trial will continue their business as usual, i.e., delivery of standard Relationships and Sexual Education (RSE) provision in line with government guidance, usually taught by school staff. Given research indicating that standard RSE provision is patchy and variable (Youth Endowment Fund, 2024), we will gather data on usual practice as part of the trial's implementation and process evaluation (IPE) strand.

Intervention Type

Behavioural

Primary outcome(s)

1. Attitudes towards harmful behaviours in adolescent dating and relationship contexts, measured using the Modern Adolescent Dating Violence Scale (MADVA) at two separate timepoints (T1 and T2) separated by approximately 12 months

Key secondary outcome(s)

1. Knowledge of healthy relationships measured using a bespoke measure to be developed, scoring will be 0-100%, with higher scores indicating greater knowledge of healthy relationships, at two separate time points (T1 and T2) separated by approximately 12 months

2. Informal and professional help-seeking intentions measured using a measure to be adapted from Hedge et al, 2018 (<https://doi.org/10.1002/jcop.21862>) at two separate time points (T1 and T2) separated by approximately 12 months

3. Prosocial behaviour measured using a Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire subscale at two separate time points (T1 and T2) separated by approximately 12 months

Completion date

20/12/2028

Eligibility

Key inclusion criteria

Recruitment will take place at the school level, meaning most inclusion criteria will apply to schools. These are:

1. Must be a non-independent or dependent mainstream school in the Greater London area
2. Must be a secondary school
3. School must be completely naïve to the intervention (i.e., schools that have already been the site for delivery of LSV programme are excluded)

Pupil-level inclusion criteria:

4. Pupils must be in Year 9 at the time of the baseline online surveys
5. Pupils must attend a participating school in the 2026/27 (Wave 1) or 2027/28 (Wave 2) academic years at the time of the online surveys
6. Pupils cannot have been opted out of the study by their parents/carers

Healthy volunteers allowed

Yes

Age group

Child

Lower age limit

13 Years

Upper age limit

14 Years

Sex

All

Total final enrolment

0

Key exclusion criteria

Schools and participants that do not meet the inclusion criteria

Date of first enrolment

05/10/2026

Date of final enrolment

20/12/2027

Locations

Countries of recruitment

United Kingdom

England

Study participating centre

Manchester Institute of Education

The University of Manchester

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Sponsor information

Organisation

University of Manchester

ROR

<https://ror.org/027m9bs27>

Funder(s)

Funder type

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

Individual participant data (IPD) sharing plan

The datasets generated during and/or analysed during the current study will be stored in the Youth Endowment Fund (YEF) Data Archive for future research purposes

IPD sharing plan summary

Stored in publicly available repository