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United Borders music mentoring programme pilot study

Submission date 27/06/2023	**Recruitment status** No longer recruiting	[_] Prospectively registered [X] Protocol [_] Statistical analysis plan [_] Results [_] Individual participant data [X] Record updated in last year
Registration date 28/06/2023	**Overall study status** Completed	
Last Edited 13/03/2026	**Condition category** Other	

Plain English summary of protocol

Background and study aims
The United Borders music mentoring intervention and the creation of United Borders (UB) as a whole was prompted by significant levels of violent behaviours and violent crime committed and experienced by children in London, including the areas covered by UB in North West London, primarily around Harlesden, Church End and Willesden Green in Brent borough. This violence is often characterised by territorial disputes making it difficult to bring children together in one physical location. These children are frequently at high risk of being involved in violence either as perpetrator or victim or both, and may have experienced domestic violence, gang exploitation, county lines exploitation, and/or PTSD as a result of knife crime. UB deliver a trauma-informed music mentoring programme called Building and Understanding of Self or B.U.S., centred around producing music. This is delivered weekly over 10 weeks, primarily on a specially equipped bus, containing a recording studio space. This is parked in neutral spaces (often around Stonebridge) to allow children from different areas of London to attend.

The main aim of the pilot is to establish whether a full randomized controlled trial can be run, that will evaluate the B.U.S. music mentoring intervention.

Who can participate?
Children / Young People (CYP) aged between 10-17 years, living in London, referred by Police, Local Authority, Social Services, Youth Offending Service, Schools and Pupil Referral Units, who have been impacted by violence (interpersonal, domestic, social media threats, associated with other Young People who have criminal or gang affiliations) as victims or perpetrators. CYP who have been charged with an offence but given an out-of-court disposal (no further action, community resolution, youth caution, youth conditional caution) qualify for this programme.

What does this study involve?
United Borders B.U.S. music programme: Music Programme and mentoring support last for 10 weeks. Each session lasts around 2 hours. Sessions take place up to twice a week. Emergency intervention to support CYP If needed. Soft engagement set up phase including families. Wrap around parental, sibling and peer friends' support. CYP are matched with an appropriate mentor. Support to CYP outside of the sessions. This includes 1:1 mentoring support as well as work with other professionals involved with the CYP e.g. attending meetings/court cases, referral to other

services. Ongoing support to families during the period of the programme. Graduation ceremony at the end of the programme.

Lighter touch mentoring programme:
• No Music Programme.
• Mentoring programme runs for 6 weeks.
• Weekly sessions which last around 1 hour.
• No Emergency intervention.
• Limited engagement with families to seek consent.
• No wrap around support, CYP focused intervention only.
• No individual mentor assigned
• No such support – updates to the referrer on the progress of the CYP only
• No family support
• No graduation ceremony

Where is the study run from?
United Borders Bus. This is parked in neutral spaces (often around Stonebridge) to allow CYP from different areas of London to attend (UK)

When is the study starting and how long is it expected to run for?
September 2021 to March 2024

Who is funding the study?
Youth Endowment Fund (UK)

Who is the main contact?
Dr Amy Wells, hello@youthendowmentfund.org.uk

Contact information

Type(s)
Principal investigator

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Prof Siddhartha Bandyopadhyay

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Additional identifiers

Study information

Scientific Title
A randomized controlled trial for a music mentoring intervention aimed at diverting youth with violent behaviour from the criminal justice system

Acronym
UBMPRCT

Study objectives
This trial investigates the effectiveness of the United Borders music mentoring intervention, which aims to divert children and young people aged 10-17 years who have exhibited violent behaviours from the criminal justice system.

Ethics approval required
Ethics approval required

Ethics approval(s)
Approved 13/02/2023, University of Birmingham Humanities and Social Sciences Ethical Review Committee (Edgbaston, Birmingham, B15 2TT, United Kingdom; +44 (0)121414 8825; s.l.cottam@bham.ac.uk), ref: ERN_22-0091A

Primary study design
Interventional

Study design
Single-centre interventional single-blinded randomized controlled study

Study type(s)
Prevention

Health condition(s) or problem(s) studied
Prevention of further violent behaviours and violent crimes committed by children and young people aged 10-17 years

Interventions
The intervention will be offered to children and young people aged 10-17 years who have committed a violent offence or have displayed violent behaviour identified by a local authority agency such as the police, a youth offending service, a school or other education provider. Once referred, the participants will be randomized 1:1 into the two arms of the study, the control and treatment groups. The researchers will use the statistical software Matlab to implement the randomisation. Allocation concealment will be ensured because Matlab will be operated by the University of Birmingham researchers, who will not release the randomisation outcome until the child or young person has been recruited into the trial and gone through the initial questionnaire phase, which takes place after all baseline measurements have been completed. Central randomisation will be used, as the United Borders administrators who are involved in CYP recruitment, will have to contact the University of Birmingham researchers to receive the allocation of the CYP. Participants and mentors will be blind to the randomisation procedure, while the University of Birmingham staff responsible for the randomisation will be blind to the questionnaire answers.

The control group will receive a light touch mentoring scheme which lasts for 6 weeks and does not include a music component.

The treatment group will receive the "United Borders B.U.S music programme" which includes the music programme and lasts for 10 weeks.

Intervention Type
Behavioural

Primary outcome(s)
Recruitment rate recorded as the number of eligible participants who consent to participate in the study in the months May to December 2023.

Key secondary outcome(s)
1. Response rate to International Self-Report Delinquency (ISRD) Study questionnaire recorded as the number of ISRD questionnaires completed during baseline measurement by eligible participants in the months May to December 2023.
2. Number of United Borders case management records matched to administrative data from the London Metropolitan Police in the months May to December 2023. The United Borders case management records include date on eligible participants who have consented to participate in the study in that period.

Completion date
31/03/2024

Eligibility

Key inclusion criteria
1. CYP aged between 10-17 years
2. Geographic Area: London
3. Referral agencies: Police, Local Authority (Children's Services, Youth Offending Service), Schools and alternative education providers.
4. Key Identifiers:
4.1. Violence: Young People impacted by violence as victims or perpetrators, interpersonal, Domestic, Social media threats or displaying aggressive behaviour
4.2. CYP referred from schools, who are not known to other statutory organisations, should have one of the following indicators: high level of disruptive behaviour, exclusion(s) (internal / external), under a managed move, truancy and one of the key identifiers below:
4.3. CYP Associations: Young People associated with other Young People who have criminal or gang affiliations.
4.4. CYP who have been charged with an offence and given an out-of-court disposal qualify for this programme.

Participant type(s)
Other

Healthy volunteers allowed
No

Age group

Child

Lower age limit
10 Years

Upper age limit
17 Years

Sex
All

Total final enrolment
81

Key exclusion criteria
Children who are unable to take part or who fail to engage with the intervention would be excluded from the study. In addition, children should not participate in other youth support programmes at the same time as the this intervention.

Date of first enrolment
01/05/2023

Date of final enrolment
29/02/2024

Locations

Countries of recruitment
United Kingdom

England

Study participating centre
Bridge Park Community Leisure Centre
Harrow Rd
London
England
NW10 0RG

Sponsor information

Organisation
Youth Endowment Fund

Funder(s)

Funder type
Charity

Funder Name
Youth Endowment Fund

Results and Publications

Individual participant data (IPD) sharing plan
No later than three years after the pilot, we will deliver the following for sharing purposes:
1. A dataset to the Department for Education containing only the personally identifying data (i.e. name, address etc.) for the CYP in the treatment and control groups, with a list of random reference numbers.
2. The evaluation data set and random references numbers to ONS (https://www.ons.gov.uk/) (no directly identifying data will be included). We have no further information on ONS's publication plans.

IPD sharing plan summary
Stored in non-publicly available repository

Study outputs

Output type	Details	Date created	Date added	Peer reviewed?	Patient-facing?
Protocol file			13/03/2026	No	No
Study website		11/11/2025	11/11/2025	No	Yes