

# Grassroots Efficacy Trial: Evaluation of an anti-conflict intervention by cluster randomised controlled trial

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<b>Registration date</b> 26/10/2023	<b>Overall study status</b> Ongoing	<input type="checkbox"/> Statistical analysis plan <input type="checkbox"/> Results
<b>Last Edited</b> 26/10/2023	<b>Condition category</b> Other	<input type="checkbox"/> Individual participant data <input type="checkbox"/> Record updated in last year

## Plain English summary of protocol

### Background and study aims

Pupil attendance in schools is a matter of great concern in England and Wales. While the reasons for school absence are complex, bullying, lack of safety at school, and school conflict are among them. The Grassroots programme aims to improve school attendance by reducing conflict and bullying behaviours in schools.

### Who can participate?

Young people in school years 7-9 attending mainstream state-funded secondary schools in the recruitment areas.

### What does the study involve?

Pupils in the treatment group will complete a survey in which they identify pupils they have chosen to spend time with. The best-connected pupils in each school will be invited to join a Change Makers group and attend 10 fortnightly intervention sessions with a facilitator to develop anti-conflict interventions tailored to their school. This will include handing out wristbands for engaging in friendly or anti-conflict behaviour, displaying posters with anti-conflict messages, sharing anti-conflict messages online, modelling pro-social behaviours and talking with peers about how to reduce conflict.

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

It is hoped that being part of a Change Makers group will be enjoyable and may improve pupils' experiences of school. Being part of a Change Makers group will mean missing a small number of lessons (10).

### Where is the study run from?

The Grassroots programme is being run by a team from Behavioural Insights Limited (UK). Regional facilitators will lead Change Makers sessions in schools.

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

January 2023 to January 2027

Who is funding the study?

1. Youth Endowment Fund (UK)
2. Education Endowment Foundation (UK)

Who is the main contact?

1. Dr Becky Taylor (UCL) is the main contact for the evaluation ([becky.taylor@ucl.ac.uk](mailto:becky.taylor@ucl.ac.uk))
2. Dr Kathryn Atherton (Behavioural Insights Ltd) is the main contact for the Grassroots programme

## Contact information

### Type(s)

Public, Principal investigator

### Contact name

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Scientific

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## Additional identifiers

### Clinical Trials Information System (CTIS)

Nil known

### Protocol serial number

TBC

## Study information

### Scientific Title

Grassroots Efficacy Trial: Evaluation of an anti-conflict intervention by cluster randomised controlled trial

### Acronym

Grassroots

### Study objectives

The Grassroots intervention reduces conflict and bullying behaviours among pupils and so reduces pupil absence from school.

### Ethics approval required

Ethics approval required

### Ethics approval(s)

approved 24/03/2023, IOE Research Ethics Committee (UCL) (20 Bedford Way, London, WC1H 0AL, United Kingdom; +44 (0)20 7679 2000 (switchboard); [ioe.researchethics@ucl.ac.uk](mailto:ioe.researchethics@ucl.ac.uk)), ref: REC1773

### Study design

Interventional cluster randomized trial, non-blinded, with randomisation stratified by recruitment region

### Primary study design

Interventional

### Study type(s)

Efficacy

### Health condition(s) or problem(s) studied

Improving school attendance through reduction of conflict and bullying behaviours in 11-14-year-old adolescents in secondary schools in England and Wales

### Interventions

The Grassroots programme (adapted from ROOTS, Paluck et al., 2016) will be implemented in schools and randomised on a 1:1 basis. The randomisation procedure placed half of participating schools in each region (North West, Midlands, London, West England and South Wales) in the intervention arm and half in the control. A seed in R was used to generate random numbers for each school (listed alphabetically) and schools with the lowest random numbers in each of the five regions were allocated to the intervention arm.

Pupils in the treatment group will complete a survey in which they identify pupils they have chosen to spend time with. The best-connected pupils in each school will be invited to join a Change Makers group and attend 10 fortnightly intervention sessions with a facilitator to develop anti-conflict interventions tailored to their school. This will include handing out wristbands for engaging in friendly or anti-conflict behaviour, displaying posters with anti-

conflict messages, sharing anti-conflict messages online, modelling pro-social behaviours and talking with peers about how to reduce conflict.

The control group is business as usual.

## **Intervention Type**

Behavioural

## **Primary outcome(s)**

School attendance is measured as the percentage of school sessions attended in a term from the National Pupil Database (England) and SAIL databank (Wales) at baseline (Autumn term 2023), post-intervention (Summer term 2023), and 1 year (Autumn term 2025)

## **Key secondary outcome(s)**

1. Bullying victimisation, cyberbullying victimisation, bullying perpetration and cyberbullying perpetration are measured using the four subscales of the Bullying and Cyberbullying Scale (for adolescents) at baseline and post-intervention
2. Aggressive behaviour is measured using the Peer Conflict Survey at baseline and post-intervention
3. Emotional symptoms, conduct problems, hyperactivity, peer relationship problems and prosocial behaviour are measured using the five subscales of the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire at baseline and post-intervention
4. Peer-to-peer incidents are measured by counting teachers' disciplinary reports over a term at baseline (Autumn term 2023) and post-intervention (Summer term 2024)
5. Peer-to-peer conflict is measured using the descriptive and prescriptive norms survey at baseline and post-intervention
6. Feeling safe in school is measured using two survey questions at baseline and post-intervention

## **Completion date**

31/01/2027

## **Eligibility**

### **Key inclusion criteria**

1. Young people aged 11-14 years
2. Educated in participating mainstream state-funded secondary school within traveling distance of the designated recruitment regions (Greater London, South Wales, West Midlands, North-West England)

### **Participant type(s)**

Learner/student

### **Healthy volunteers allowed**

No

### **Age group**

Child

### **Lower age limit**

11 years

**Upper age limit**

14 years

**Sex**

All

**Key exclusion criteria**

1. Pupils attending schools outside the recruitment area
2. Pupils in year 6 or below
3. Pupils in year 10 or above

**Date of first enrolment**

01/06/2023

**Date of final enrolment**

06/10/2023

**Locations**

**Countries of recruitment**

United Kingdom

England

Wales

**Study participating centre**

**UCL**

20 Bedford Way

London

United Kingdom

WC1H 0AL

**Sponsor information**

**Organisation**

Youth Endowment Fund

**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

**Funder Name**

Education Endowment Foundation

**Alternative Name(s)**

EducEndowFoundn, The Education Endowment Foundation (EEF), Education Endowment Foundation | London, EEF

**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 the current study will be archived in the Youth Endowment Fund's data archive, available in the Office for National Statistics Secure Data Service (<https://youthendowmentfund.org.uk/evaluation-data-archive/>).

The type of data stored: Participant evaluation reference number; trial group; pretest and post-test dates; delivery start and end dates; SDQ type, subscale and total scores at pre and post-test; cluster membership; school URN and LAESTAB; school postcode; practitioner type; number of sessions completed and offered; sex, FSM eligibility, ethnicity; SEND, SEED group membership, year group, region; Outcomes: baseline and post-intervention attendance, 1-year attendance, bullying and cyberbullying survey baseline and post-intervention scores, peer conflict survey

baseline and post-intervention score, baseline and post-intervention disciplinary count, baseline and post-intervention norms scores, baseline and post-intervention feeling safe in school and non-attendance due to safety score.

The process for requesting access (if non-publicly available): Data will be available to accredited researchers from the Office for National Statistics Secure Research Service by application to Youth Endowment Fund (<https://youthendowmentfund.org.uk/evaluation-data-archive/faqs-the-youth-endowment-fund-data-archive/>).

Dates of availability: Data for the short-term follow-up will be archived in January 2025. Data for the long-term follow-up will be archived in August 2026.

Whether consent from participants was required and obtained: Data was collected under Article 6 Public Task and Article 9 Statistical Purposes of GDPR. Consent was therefore not obtained.

The YEF data archive privacy notice was shared with participants and can be found here:

<https://youthendowmentfund.org.uk/evaluation-data-archive/faqs-the-youth-endowment-fund-data-archive/>

Comments on data anonymization: Data will be anonymised according to YEF instructions for preparing data for archiving: <https://youthendowmentfund.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/YEF-Data-Guidance-Submitting-data-Dec-2022.pdf>

Any ethical or legal restrictions: See details of YEF data archive above.

## IPD sharing plan summary

Stored in non-publicly available repository

## Study outputs

Output type	Details	Date created	Date added	Peer reviewed?	Patient-facing?
<a href="#">Study website</a>	Study website	11/11/2025	11/11/2025	No	Yes