

A study evaluating the Ben Kinsella Trust's Choices and Consequences programme, a school-based knife crime prevention programme for Year 6 pupils

Submission date 26/08/2026	Recruitment status Recruiting	☒ Prospectively registered ☐ Protocol
Registration date 26/08/2026	Overall study status Ongoing	☐ Statistical analysis plan ☐ Results
Last Edited 26/08/2026	Condition category Other	☐ Individual participant data ☒ Record updated in last year

Plain English summary of protocol

Background and study aims

Knife crime and serious youth violence remain important concerns in England. There is growing interest in preventing violence early, before children become involved in knife carrying or other harmful behaviour. However, there is currently limited strong evidence about whether school-based knife crime education programmes are effective.

Choices and Consequences is an educational workshop about knife crime and safety delivered by the Ben Kinsella Trust. It aims to help children understand the consequences of knife crime, reflect on peer influence and decision-making, and build confidence to make safer choices.

This study aims to find out whether Choices and Consequences works under ideal conditions. In particular, it will test whether Year 6 pupils who receive Choices and Consequences show reduced willingness or intentions to carry a knife compared with pupils who continue with their usual school provision. The study will also look at whether the workshop affects related outcomes including empathy, prosocial behaviour, peer relationships and mental wellbeing. Alongside this, the researchers will explore how the programme is delivered in practice, how pupils and schools experience it, and whether there are any unintended or negative effects.

Who can participate?

Year 6 pupils aged approximately 10–11 years attending participating mainstream primary schools in or near the areas served by BKT's exhibition centres in Islington, Barking and Dagenham, and Nottingham.

Choices and Consequences is a universal programme, meaning it is intended for all pupils in participating classes rather than only children identified as being at risk of knife crime or violence. Pupils will not take part if their parent or carer chooses to opt them out, and pupils themselves can choose not to participate.

What does the study involve?

This is a two-arm cluster randomised controlled trial. In plain English, this means whole Year 6 classes, rather than individual pupils, will be allocated at random to one of two groups:

1. The Choices and Consequences group.
2. The control group, who will continue with business as usual, meaning their normal school curriculum, pastoral provision and safeguarding arrangements.

Choices and Consequences is a one-off, two-hour workshop delivered at one of BKT's purpose-built exhibition spaces. The workshop combines facilitated discussion, visual displays, short films, interactive activities and immersive theatre. Pupils explore the personal, social and legal consequences of knife crime alongside topics such as peer influence, responsibility, decision-making, first aid and staying safe.

Pupils in both groups will complete questionnaires before classes are randomly allocated, approximately 1–2 weeks after the workshop, and around one school term later. Pupils who receive Choices and Consequences will also complete a short questionnaire immediately after the workshop.

The main outcome is pupils' willingness or intentions to carry a knife. Other outcomes include prosocial behaviour, peer relationships, empathy and mental wellbeing.

The study also includes an implementation and process evaluation. This means the researchers will look at how Choices and Consequences is delivered, what helps or gets in the way of successful delivery, how pupils and schools experience the programme, and whether different groups of pupils experience it differently.

What are the possible benefits and risks of participating?

Possible benefits are that pupils who take part in Choices and Consequences may develop a better understanding of the consequences of knife crime, reflect on peer influence and decision-making, and feel more confident about making safe choices. The study will also help build evidence about whether educational approaches of this kind can help prevent knife carrying and serious youth violence.

The workshop and questionnaires include potentially sensitive topics relating to knife crime, violence, safety and wellbeing, which some pupils may find upsetting. To reduce this risk, the workshop is delivered by trained staff, and schools are asked to share relevant information in advance so that appropriate support can be put in place. Pupils can take a break or stop participating if they wish, and schools' usual safeguarding and pastoral arrangements remain in place. Any safeguarding concerns will be managed using agreed safeguarding procedures.

Where is the study run from?

The study is being run with primary schools in and around Islington, Barking and Dagenham, and Nottingham.

The Choices and Consequences programme is delivered by the Ben Kinsella Trust at its exhibition centres in Islington, Barking and Dagenham, and Nottingham. The independent evaluation is being carried out by Cordis Bright.

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

September 2026 to July 2028.

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

Who is the main contact?
Matt Irani, Principal Investigator and Project Director, Cordis Bright, mattirani@cordisbright.co.uk
Madeleine Morrison, Co-Principal Investigator and Project Manager, Cordis Bright, madeleinemorrison@cordisbright.co.uk

Contact information

Type(s)

Public, Scientific, Principal investigator

Contact name

Ms Madeleine Morrison

Contact details

Cordis Bright, 23–24 Smithfield Street
London
United Kingdom
EC1A 9LF
+44 20 7330 9170
madeleinemorrison@cordisbright.co.uk

Type(s)

Public, Scientific, Principal investigator

Contact name

Mr Matt Irani

Contact details

Cordis Bright, 23–24 Smithfield Street
London
United Kingdom
EC1A 9LF
+44 20 7330 9170
mattirani@cordisbright.co.uk

Type(s)

Public, Scientific, Principal investigator

Contact name

Dr Stephen Boxford

Contact details

Cordis Bright, 23–24 Smithfield Street
London
United Kingdom
EC1A 9LF

+44 20 7330 9170
stephenboxford@cordisbright.co.uk

Additional identifiers

Study information

Scientific Title

An efficacy cluster randomised controlled trial of the Ben Kinsella Trust's Choices and Consequences programme, a universal knife crime prevention intervention for Year 6 pupils, compared with business as usual, assessing impacts on willingness or intentions to carry a knife

Study objectives

To assess whether a two-hour universal knife crime education workshop, delivered under efficacy conditions designed to maximise implementation fidelity, delivery consistency and participant safety, leads to a reduction in Year 6 pupils' willingness or intentions to carry a knife at 1–2 weeks post-workshop, compared with business-as-usual provision.

Ethics approval required

Ethics approval required

Ethics approval(s)

Approved 21/07/2026, University of Portsmouth Research Ethics Committee (Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, University of Portsmouth, Rm LB3.14 Milldam Building, Burnaby Road, Portsmouth, PO1 3AS, United Kingdom; no telephone number provided; simon.kolstoe@port.ac.uk), ref: 26/ETHICS/022

Primary study design

Interventional

Allocation

Randomized controlled trial

Masking

Open (masking not used)

Control

Active

Assignment

Cluster

Purpose

Prevention

Study type(s)

Health condition(s) or problem(s) studied

Prevention of knife carrying and serious youth violence among Year 6 pupils.

Interventions

Choices and Consequences is a structured, immersive knife crime prevention intervention developed and delivered by the Ben Kinsella Trust. It is a universal intervention rather than one targeted at pupils identified as being at risk. For this trial, it will be delivered to Year 6 pupils aged approximately 10–11 years.

The intervention consists of a one-off, two-hour workshop delivered during the school day at one of the Ben Kinsella Trust's purpose-built exhibition spaces in Islington, Barking and Dagenham, or Nottingham. Pupils attend as intact classes, in groups of up to approximately 30 pupils. Delivery is led by trained facilitators and professional actors and follows a standardised sequence, with facilitators able to adapt pacing and interaction in response to pupils' needs while maintaining fidelity to the intervention's core components.

The workshop combines facilitated discussion, visual displays, short films, interactive activities and immersive theatre. Pupils are exposed to victim and family narratives and perspectives of people involved in and/or affected by serious violence. They explore the personal, social and legal consequences of knife crime, first aid, peer influence, responsibility and decision-making, and take part in structured reflection designed to support safer choices. The intervention is intended to provide reflective learning rather than fear-based deterrence.

Schools receive information before the visit outlining the workshop themes, sensitive content and recommended preparation activities. They are also asked to share relevant safeguarding, SEND and contextual information needed to support safe participation. Facilitators and actors receive structured training in intervention delivery, safeguarding, child protection, equality, diversity and inclusion, trauma-informed practice and the safe delivery of sensitive content. Delivery quality is supported through observation, feedback and refresher training.

The study uses a two-arm, parallel cluster randomised controlled trial design. The unit of randomisation is the Year 6 class. Participating schools must contribute at least two eligible Year 6 classes. Following completion of baseline data collection and confirmation of final class lists, eligible classes within each school will be randomly allocated as close to a 1:1 ratio as possible to either the intervention or business-as-usual control condition. Randomisation will be conducted using Sealed Envelope, a secure web-based randomisation platform. Allocation is concealed until baseline data collection is complete.

Classes allocated to the intervention group will attend the Choices and Consequences workshop. Immediately after the workshop, pupils will complete a short post-workshop questionnaire.

Classes allocated to the control group will not receive Choices and Consequences during the trial period. They will continue with business as usual, defined as their normal curriculum, pastoral provision and safeguarding arrangements, without exposure to Choices and Consequences content, materials or activities.

Intervention Type

Behavioural

Primary outcome(s)

1. Willingness or intentions to carry a knife measured using pupil self-report 11-item version of the Willingness to Carry a Knife Scale (Hobson, Yesberg and Bradford, 2022) at baseline (T1), 1–2 weeks post-workshop (T3), 1 school term post-workshop (T4)

Key secondary outcome(s)

1. Prosocial orientation measured using Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ) Prosocial behaviour subscale at baseline (T1), 1–2 weeks post-workshop (T3), 1 school term post-workshop (T4)
2. Peer relationships and peer problems measured using SDQ – Peer problems subscale at baseline (T1), 1–2 weeks post-workshop (T3), 1 school term post-workshop (T4)
3. Empathic concern and prosocial motivation measured using Empathy Questionnaire for Children and Adolescents (EmQue-CA) total score at baseline (T1), 1–2 weeks post-workshop (T3), 1 school term post-workshop (T4)
4. Mental wellbeing measured using Stirling Children's Wellbeing Scale (SCWBS) at baseline (T1), 1–2 weeks post-workshop (T3), 1 school term post-workshop (T4)

Completion date

31/07/2028

Eligibility**Key inclusion criteria**

1. Pupils enrolled in Year 6 in a participating mainstream primary school
2. School is located within, or in close proximity to, a Choices and Consequences delivery region (Islington, Barking and Dagenham, or Nottingham)
3. School is able to contribute at least two eligible Year 6 classes and participate in class-level randomisation
4. Pupils are enrolled in a participating Year 6 class at the time of delivery and data collection

Healthy volunteers allowed

Yes

Age group

Child

Lower age limit

10 Years

Upper age limit

11 Years

Sex

All

Total final enrolment

0

Key exclusion criteria

1. Pupils not enrolled in a participating Year 6 class
2. Pupils in cohorts that have previously received the Choices and Consequences intervention, including in an earlier school year

- 3. Pupils whose parent/carer opts them out of participation
- 4. Secondary schools are not eligible to participate in the trial

Date of first enrolment

01/09/2026

Date of final enrolment

30/04/2028

Locations

Countries of recruitment

United Kingdom

England

Study participating centre

The Ben Kinsella Trust

The Ben Kinsella Trust

124 City Road

London

England

EC1V 2NX

Sponsor information

Organisation

Youth Endowment Fund

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 archived after the study in the YEF data archive (<https://youthendowmentfund.org.uk/evaluation-data-archive/>) and will be available to researchers on request.

IPD sharing plan summary

Available on request, Stored in non-publicly available repository