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# Evaluation of the Inspiring Futures intervention

**Submission date**
14/04/2025

**Recruitment status**
No longer recruiting

**Registration date**
22/08/2025

**Overall study status**
Completed

**Last Edited**
22/08/2025

**Condition category**
Mental and Behavioural Disorders

[ ] Prospectively registered
[X] Protocol
[ ] Statistical analysis plan
[ ] Results
[ ] Individual participant data
[ ] Record updated in last year

## Plain English summary of protocol

Background and study aims
Young people from disadvantaged communities often face challenges that put them at risk of poor behaviour and educational outcomes. This study aims to test if the "Inspiring Futures" programme, delivered by Rugby Football League coaches, helps improve behaviour among school children aged 12-14 who are at risk of developing problems. The programme combines mentoring with sports activities to build skills in self-control, teamwork and decision-making.

Who can participate?
Students in Years 8 and 9 (aged 12-14) who may benefit from additional support. Schools select students based on behaviour records, attendance patterns, pastoral needs, and interest in physical education.

What does the study involve?
The study will work with 114 schools across Northern England. Schools will be randomly assigned to either run the Inspiring Futures programme or continue with their normal activities. Students in the programme schools will attend twelve weekly two-hour sessions led by Rugby League coaches. All participating students will complete questionnaires at the beginning of the study and five months later. The study will also collect information about school attendance, exclusions and wellbeing.

What are the possible benefits and risks of participating?
Students receiving the programme may benefit from improved behaviour, better emotional regulation, enhanced social relationships, and increased school engagement. There are minimal risks to participation. Students may feel initial discomfort when discussing personal feelings or experiences, but the programme is designed to create a supportive environment.

Where is the study run from?
The study is run from schools in several northern English local authorities including Leigh, Wigan, Warrington, St Helens, Huddersfield, Wakefield, Hull, Barrow, Swinton, Salford, and Leeds.

When is the study starting and how long is it expected to run for?
November 2023 to April 2026. Recruitment began in April 2024. The intervention will be delivered between January 2025 and July 2025 across two waves. Data collection will finish by December 2025, with final results available by April 2026.

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

Who is the main contact?
Dr Facundo Herrera, Principal Investigator, Ipsos UK, facundo.herrera@ipsos.com

# Contact information

### Type(s)
Public, Scientific, Principal investigator

### Contact name
Dr Facundo Herrera

### ORCID ID
https://orcid.org/0000-0002-2869-1419

### Contact details
222 Avenue Extension Road
Clarendon Park
Leicester
United Kingdom
LE2 3EL
+44 (0)7947443259
facundo.herrera@ipsos.com

# Additional identifiers

# Study information

### Scientific Title
A cluster randomised controlled trial evaluating the effectiveness of the Rugby Football League's Inspiring Futures mentoring programme on behavioural difficulties in school children in Years 8 and 9

### Study objectives
Participation in a rugby-as-a-hook mentoring programme that focuses on regulating and managing emotions will lead to reduced behavioural difficulties among at-risk youth compared to business-as-usual.

### Ethics approval required
Ethics approval required

### Ethics approval(s)
Approved 01/11/2023, Ipsos Ethics Board (3 Thomas More Street, London, E1W 1YW, United Kingdom; +44 (0)2030595000; ukpaethicsforms@ipsos.com), ref: 23-061247-01

### Primary study design
Interventional

## Study design
Two-armed cluster-randomized controlled trial

## Study type(s)
Efficacy

## Health condition(s) or problem(s) studied
This encompasses externalising behaviours (conduct problems and hyperactivity) which form the primary outcome measure, as well as internalising behaviours (emotional problems and peer problems) which are measured as secondary outcomes. The intervention aims to address these behavioural difficulties through a sports-based mentoring programme that focuses on regulating and managing emotions.

## Interventions
This is a two-armed cluster randomised controlled trial with random allocation at the school level. The unit of randomisation is the school. Randomisation is stratified by Foundation. The trial will be conducted in schools across multiple local authorities in northern England, including Leigh, Wigan, Warrington, St Helens, Huddersfield, Wakefield, Hull FC, Barrow, Swinton, Salford, and Leeds.

The intervention is a 12-week mentoring programme called "Inspiring Futures" delivered by coaches from the local Rugby League Foundation. Each weekly session focuses on small, manageable goals across three broad topics: personal well-being, collaboration, and leadership. Students receive weekly 2-hour mentoring sessions for 12 weeks in total, delivered face-to-face within the school setting.

## Intervention Type
Behavioural

## Primary outcome(s)
Behavioural difficulties measured using the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ) combined conduct and hyperactivity scales (0-20), collected via student survey at baseline and at the 5-month follow-up

## Key secondary outcome(s)
The following secondary outcome measures are assessed at two timepoints: (1) baseline - before randomisation, and (2) follow-up - five months after randomisation:
1. Internalising behaviour measured using the SDQ combined emotional problems and peer problems scales (0-20)
2. Pro-social behaviour measured using the SDQ Pro-social behaviour scale (0-10)
3. Children's well-being measured using the Short Warwick Edinburgh Mental Well-being Scale
4. Educational attainment measured using the KS2 Reading, Writing and Maths
5. Number of temporary exclusions measured using the Annual number from administrative data
6. Number of authorised absences measured using the Annual number from administrative data
7. Number of unauthorised absences measured using the Annual number from administrative data
8. Physical activity measured using the Self-reported question on days engaged in physical activity (0-7)

## Completion date
01/04/2026

# Eligibility

### Key inclusion criteria
Participants will be selected based on a scoring system that evaluates four risk factors: behaviour log, pupil attendance, pastoral input, and attitude to PE/interest in sport.

### Participant type(s)
Learner/student

### Healthy volunteers allowed
No

### Age group
Child

### Lower age limit
12 Years

### Upper age limit
14 Years

### Sex
All

### Key exclusion criteria
1. Students not in Years 8 and 9 as of September 2024
2. Students who do not meet the selection criteria based on the scoring system (which evaluates behaviour log, attendance, pastoral input, and interest in sport)
3. Students whose parents/guardians do not provide consent
4. Students who do not provide assent to participate

### Date of first enrolment
01/10/2024

### Date of final enrolment
14/04/2025

# Locations

### Countries of recruitment
United Kingdom

England

### Study participating centre
**Rugby League Foundation**
20 Fitzroy Square

London
United Kingdom
W1T 5HP

# Sponsor information

**Organisation**
Ipsos (United Kingdom)

**ROR**
https://ror.org/05f71tw16

# Funder(s)

**Funder type**
Research organisation

**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 a publicly available repository (Youth Endowment Fund Data Archive)

**IPD sharing plan summary**
Stored in publicly available repository

**Study outputs**

| Output type | Details | Date created | Date added | Peer reviewed? | Patient-facing? |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Protocol file | version 10 | 25/03/2025 | 29/04/2025 | No | No |