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Piloting and testing the impact of a digital healthy eating intervention on young adults in Jamaica and the UK

Submission date
27/02/2026

Recruitment status
No longer recruiting

Registration date
27/02/2026

Overall study status
Completed

Last Edited
27/02/2026

Condition category
Nutritional, Metabolic, Endocrine

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

Plain English summary of protocol

Background and study aims
The dietary behaviours of young adults are influenced by exposure to digital food communications. This study will examine whether a digital health intervention using a WhatsApp group-based programme bolstered by weekly supermarket vouchers can improve diet quality among young adults aged 18-25 years. The study will test the feasibility of the intervention in a multi-country setting, specifically Jamaica and the United Kingdom.

Who can participate?
Young adults aged 18 to 25 years old; have been living in Jamaica or the United Kingdom for the past 5 years; watch/engage with food-related content on social media at least five times weekly; are able to read and respond in written English and complete online surveys; own a smartphone and are existing WhatsApp users or are willing to install and use WhatsApp, with data/Wi-Fi access, for the duration of the study; and can provide a mobile number with a local country code for WhatsApp registration (UK +44 or Jamaica +1-876/+1-658).

What does the study involve?
This research study focuses on young people's eating habits and healthy eating messages. It will test the feasibility of a health intervention — that is, a planned set of activities designed to support young adults in making healthier food choices. In this study, the intervention involves sharing healthy eating information and resources with participants through different approaches (for example, group chats on WhatsApp, supermarket vouchers, or emailed materials). The study will take place in a multi-country setting, specifically Jamaica and the United Kingdom. Participants will be asked to complete questionnaires at baseline, immediately post-intervention, and 4 weeks after completion of the intervention.

What are the possible benefits and risks of participating?
This study offers a chance for young people in Jamaica and the UK to participate in an intervention aimed at promoting healthier dietary habits. You may directly benefit from:
1. Access to practical resources on healthy eating, including recipes, videos, and guidance tailored to their age group.

2. Social support through group interactions (for those in the intervention arms), which may encourage motivation and sustained behaviour change.
3. Supermarket vouchers (for those in the voucher arms), which can help offset food costs and support healthier food purchasing.
4. Increased awareness and self-efficacy regarding healthy eating, which may influence their dietary choices during and after participation.
While no guaranteed health outcomes are promised, participants are likely to gain knowledge, strategies, and, in some cases, financial support that could positively influence their food decisions. Your contribution is valuable and will help ensure that the study reflects the perspectives of young people. We hope that the research results will support health leaders and researchers in developing policies and creating interventions targeted at young people.
For participants allocated to WhatsApp intervention groups, full anonymity during group participation cannot be guaranteed. The study will use the WhatsApp Community announcement function, which limits interaction between participants and reduces the visibility of contact details. Participants will not see other members' full phone numbers unless they already have each other saved as contacts. This means there is a risk to privacy. Depending on personal WhatsApp settings and contact lists, other group members may be able to see your profile name, profile image, or phone number if you are already included in their contact lists. We encourage participants not to share identifiable information in the WhatsApp group.
There is also a risk of encountering inaccurate or inappropriate comments from other participants within the WhatsApp group. To reduce this risk, the groups will be moderated by the research team, and misleading information will be corrected or removed where necessary.

Where is the study run from?
The study is run by the Nuffield Department of Population Health of the University of Oxford. The study is fully digital and will be run using WhatsApp, email and Trail Deck for the completion of online questionnaires.

When is the study starting and how long is it expected to run for?
February 2026 to August 2026

Who is funding the study?
1. Vital Strategies (USA)
2. Bloomberg Philanthropies (USA)

Who is the main contact?
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Contact information

Type(s)
Public, Principal investigator, Scientific

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Additional identifiers

Study information

Scientific Title
The Virtual Intervention for Boosting Healthy Eating Behaviours among Young Adults (V.I.B.E.) Pilot and Feasibility Trial

Acronym
(V.I.B.E.) Pilot and Feasibility Trial

Study objectives
The research objectives are to:
1. Determine the feasibility of a multi-country randomised controlled trial of a targeted digital communication healthy eating programme for young adults aged 18–25 years in Jamaica and the UK.
2. Provide estimates of the treatment effect of a digital communication healthy eating intervention to inform power calculations for a full trial.

Ethics approval required
Ethics approval required

Ethics approval(s)
1. Approved 23/01/2026, Mona Campus Research Ethics Committee (MCREC) (Mona Campus Research Ethics Committee Faculty of Medical Sciences University of the West Indies, Mona, Kingston, 0000, Jamaica; +1 (0)876 970 4892; mona-mcrec@uwi.edu), ref: CREC-MN.055,2025 /2026

2. Approved 24/02/2026, Medical Sciences Interdivisional Research Ethics Committee (MS IDREC) (Research Governance, Ethics & Assurance, Research Services, University of Oxford, Boundary Brook House, Churchill Drive, Headington, Oxford, OX3 7GB, United Kingdom; +44 (0)1865 (6) 16577; ethics@medsci.ox.ac.uk), ref: MS IDREC 2381890

Primary study design
Interventional

Allocation
Randomized controlled trial

Masking
Blinded (masking used)

Control
Active

Assignment
Parallel

Purpose
Prevention

Study type(s)

Health condition(s) or problem(s) studied
Improvement of diet quality and dietary behaviours in young adults

Interventions
Randomisation will be done automatically by Trial Deck, a clinical trial management platform. Participants will use the Trial Deck platform to register for the study and complete questionnaires.

The intervention groups are as follows:

1. Group chat only:
Participants will be part of a moderated WhatsApp group using the WhatsApp Community announcement function for the duration of the 4-week intervention period. Participants will receive up to three announcements per day, including links to food-related social media videos, practical recipes and advice on manageable dietary changes. Engagement with the group is voluntary, and there are no minimum time or participation requirements.

2. Supermarket voucher + group chat:
Participants will receive the same WhatsApp group intervention described above and, in addition, will receive a weekly supermarket voucher during the 4-week intervention period. Vouchers will be delivered electronically. The vouchers are intended to reduce financial barriers to purchasing healthier foods and form part of the intervention.

3. Control group - Information only:
Participants allocated to the control group will receive static healthy eating materials, provided via email at the start of the study. Control participants will not receive access to WhatsApp groups, videos or social support content.

Intervention Type
Behavioural

Primary outcome(s)
1. Feasibility of research procedures measured using recruitment data, retention data and acceptability of data collection procedures at T0: prior to start of trial; T1: baseline (week 0); T2: post-Intervention (week 4); T3 : follow up (week 8)

2. Feasibility and acceptability of intervention components measured using assessments of engagement with intervention content, comprehension, usability, satisfaction, perceived support, acceptability, equity considerations, healthy eating self-efficacy and open-ended questions at T1: baseline (week 0); T2: post-Intervention (week 4); T3 : follow up (week 8)

Key secondary outcome(s)
1. Overall diet quality measured using the Mini-Eating Assessment Tool (Mini-EAT) diet quality score at T1: baseline (week 0); T2: post-Intervention (week 4); T3 : follow up (week 8)

Completion date
30/08/2026

Eligibility

Key inclusion criteria
1. Aged 18–25 years at enrolment.
2. Residents in Jamaica or the UK for the past 5 years, with no plans to relocate during the study period.
3. Currently watches and engages with food-related content on social media at least five times per week (prior to enrolment).
4. Able to read and respond in written English and complete online surveys.
5. Owns a smartphone and is an existing WhatsApp user or willing to install and use WhatsApp, with data/Wi-Fi access, for the duration of the study.
6. Provides a mobile number with a local country code for WhatsApp registration (UK +44 or Jamaica +1-876/+1-658). VoIP/app-based numbers are not eligible.

Healthy volunteers allowed
No

Age group
Adult

Lower age limit
18 Years

Upper age limit
25 Years

Sex
All

Total final enrolment
0

Key exclusion criteria
1. Self-reported current diagnosis or treatment for an eating disorder
2. Currently enrolled in a structured/healthy eating/weight management programme or another nutrition-related study
3. Unable to provide informed consent or complete study procedures in English
4. Currently pregnant or breastfeeding
5. Following a medically prescribed diet for a serious condition that would conflict with general healthy-eating advice

Date of first enrolment
27/02/2026

Date of final enrolment
01/05/2026

Locations

Countries of recruitment
United Kingdom

England

Jamaica

Study participating centre
Nuffield Department of Population Health, University of Oxford
University of Oxford Richard Doll Building
Old Road Campus
Headington
Oxford
Oxford
England
OX3 7LF

Study participating centre
Caribbean Institute of Health Research, University of the West Indies
University of the West Indies, Mona Campus
Kingston
Jamaica

Sponsor information

Organisation
University of Oxford

ROR
https://ror.org/052gg0110

Funder(s)

Funder type

Funder Name
Vital Strategies

Alternative Name(s)
Vital Strategies, Inc., Vital Strategies Inc

Funding Body Type
Government organisation

Funding Body Subtype
For-profit companies (industry)

Location
United States of America

Funder Name
Bloomberg Philanthropies

Alternative Name(s)
Bloomberg IP Holdings LLC, BP

Funding Body Type
Private sector organisation

Funding Body Subtype
Trusts, charities, foundations (both public and private)

Location
United States of America

Results and Publications

Individual participant data (IPD) sharing plan

IPD sharing plan summary
Not expected to be made available