ISRCTN19464308 https://doi.org/10.1186/ISRCTN19464308

An efficacy evaluation of a restorative mentoring programme for young people who have offended or are at risk of offending

Submission date
02/05/2024

Recruitment status
No longer recruiting

Registration date
07/05/2024

Overall study status
Ongoing

Last Edited
08/09/2026

Condition category
Other

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

Plain English summary of protocol

Background and study aims
Coram is a charity that aims to help young people. Coram's Centre for Impact is working with UpskillU to research the impact of the EXODUS mentoring programme on young people aged 11 to 17 who have offended, or are at risk of offending.

As part of the research, young people taking part will be randomised. This means about 50% of young people will randomly get EXODUS, and 50% will randomly get the normal support offered by their local youth offending service or local council.

At the end of the research, Coram will compare the outcomes for the young people that got EXODUS to the young people that got usual support. Coram will look to see if EXODUS can help to reduce young people's levels of offending.

EXODUS is a mentoring programme for 11 to 17 year olds who have offended or are at risk of offending. EXODUS aims to reduce the likelihood of young people offending. Mentors who understand the criminal justice system take young people through a structured mentoring programme. An organisation called UpskillU run EXODUS. You can find out more about UpskillU here: https://upskillu.co.uk

Who can participate?
Young people aged 11 to 17 years who are supported by Northamptonshire Police and Youth Justice Service, Haringey Council and Youth Justice Service or who are in Oakhill Secure Training Centre can be referred. Young people from these 3 sites need to meet the eligibility criteria which includes:
1. Known to have offended - where a young person has been arrested (and led to conviction) or identified by police for offending and/or antisocial behaviour or affected by serious violence, criminal or sexual exploitation (as perpetrators and/or victims)
2. The young person is considered to demonstrate high/medium risk factors associated with offending, exploitation, and/or victimisation. This is based on vulnerability assessments undertaken by referral partners.

3. The young person is currently in / leaving custody where CYP are in custody and will complete their custodial sentence within a given timeframe to allow them to engage in EXODUS.

What does the study involve?
Young people who are referred to the programme will meet with a peer researcher for an introduction meeting. The peer researcher will explain the trial and check if the young person is happy to take part. The young person will need to complete a consent form.

After that, the peer researcher will support the young person to answer some questions using an online questionnaire. The questionnaire asks the young person about any offending they have been involved with in the past year and how they have been feeling and behaving over the last six months.

The young person is then randomised into the intervention group (EXODUS) or the control (business as usual support) group.

The peer researcher will contact the young person again at six and 12 months later. At six and 12 months, the researcher will ask the young person to complete the online questionnaires again.

What are the possible benefits and risks of participating?
At the end of the research, Coram will compare the outcomes for the young people that got EXODUS to the young people that got business as usual support. Coram will look to see if EXODUS can help achieve positive outcomes for young people, including reducing offending.

At the moment, we do not know if EXODUS works so this research is important. Being involved in the study means a young person is supporting finding out what the best ways are to reduce levels of offending for young people in the UK.

The questionnaires ask young people about any offending they have been involved with in the past year and how they have been behaving and feeling over the past six months. This may may feel sensitive for the young person. The young person does not need to answer any questions if they find them upsetting. The young person may feel disappointed if they are not offered EXODUS. Being offered EXODUS is completely down to chance and in no way due to anything the young person has said or done. Whether the young person is or is not offered EXODUS, the researcher and the youth offending worker (or similar) will talk about the other support available to the young person. At this stage, we do not know that EXODUS helps young people more than the regular support services available.

Where is the study run from?
Coram (UK)

When is the study starting and how long is it expected to run for?
March 2024 to August 2027

If progression criteria are successfully met, then the study will progress to a full efficacy trial and run until 2028 (with randomisation running until 2026).

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

Who is the main contact?
Hannah Lawrence, hannah.lawrence@coram.org.uk

Contact information

Type(s)
Public, Principal investigator

Contact name
Ms Hannah Lawrence

ORCID ID
https://orcid.org/0009-0009-4113-8712

Contact details
Coram campus, 41 Brunswick Square
London
United Kingdom
WC1N 1AZ
+44 207 520 0365
hannah.lawrence@coram.org.uk

Type(s)
Scientific

Contact name
Mr Narendra Bhalla

Contact details
Coram campus, 41 Brunswick Square
London
United Kingdom
WC1N 1AZ
+44 207 5200316
Narendra.Bhalla@coram.org.uk

Type(s)
Scientific

Contact name
Ms Mia Johnson Hall

Contact details
Coram Research, Impact and Evaluation
Coram Campus
41 Brunswick Square
London
United Kingdom
WC1N 1AZ
+44 (0)7805 813071
Mia.Johnson@coram.org.uk

Additional identifiers

Protocol serial number
GR4-EVAL-102303

Study information

Scientific Title
An efficacy evaluation of a restorative mentoring programme for young people aged 11 to 17 years who have or are at risk of offending

Study objectives
The primary research question for the efficacy trial is:

What is the difference in self-reported offending rates of CYP demonstrating risk factors or affected by offending or exploitation, between those who receive a targeted restorative mentoring programme and those who receive business-as-usual support in youth offending, custody and community safety services?

The primary outcome will be volume of offending at 12 month follow-up (i.e. the number of offending behaviours). Offending will be measured primarily using the Self-Report Delinquency Scale (SRDS), which assesses the frequency and severity of 19 offending behaviours in the last 12 months.

The outcome measure will be completed at the point of randomisation (baseline) and at 6 and 12 months.

The primary research question for the internal pilot is:
Is a full efficacy trial of the EXODUS intervention feasible?

If set progression criteria are met then the the internal pilot will progress to a full efficacy trial in 2025.

Ethics approval required
Ethics approval required

Ethics approval(s)
Approved 05/03/2024, Coram Research Ethics Committee (Coram Campus, 41 Brunswick Square, London, WC1N 1AZ, United Kingdom; +44 207 520 0300; research@coram.org.uk), ref: C-REC-2023/24-03

If the study meets the progression criteria for a full efficacy trial then a further ethical application will be submitted in January 2025.

Primary study design
Interventional

Study design
Multi-centre interventional randomized controlled trial

Study type(s)
Efficacy

Health condition(s) or problem(s) studied
Reducing of offending behaviour for young people aged 11 to 17 years old

Interventions
Randomisation will take place at the individual level. Randomisation will be stratified by the three referral partners to ensure equal group allocation among participants from each referral agency. Young people will be randomised into the control or intervention group (details below) on a 50:50 basis and will be randomised on a rolling basis. Allocation concealment will be maintained, as those involved in enrolling participants (researchers and referral partners) will not know in advance of randomisation how participants will be allocated.

Randomisation will be completed by a Coram researcher using an easily operable Excel tool hosted securely on Coram internal server and only accessible to the study team. The tool allows evaluators to see randomisation outcomes at the press of a button at the front end, while preventing them being able to anticipate the order of forthcoming randomisations hidden in the backend.

The intervention:
EXODUS is a 12-month therapeutic restorative mentoring intervention. A young person aged 11 to 17 is taken through a structured programme by paid mentors trained in restorative practice. EXODUS works with young people who are identified by statutory referral partners as having offended, considered to demonstrate high or medium risk factors associate with offending, exploitation and/or victimisation and currently in or leaving custody against a set criteria. EXODUS aims to reduce the likelihood of young people being affected by violence, offending and/or exploitation. For young people leaving custody, it aims to support their reintegration into society. EXODUS is delivered by UpskillU a restorative organisation and an established national restorative justice training provider.

During EXODUS, young people receive 12 weeks of intensive one to one mentoring with trained mentors. Sessions are in person and virtual and built around a prescriptive therapeutic programme. This is followed by a 26-week transitional phase focusing on longer-term goals and personal development. At the end of this transitional phase, the young person is introduced to their Circle of Support and Accountability (COSA) consisting of a group of adult volunteers recruited from the communities where young people reside to serve as an extended support network. As part of the ending phase young people receive 12 weeks of fortnightly COSA sessions and check in calls from their mentor on the weeks they do not have COSA sessions. The mentoring intensity is reduced to help prepare young people for the end of the programme. At the end of which young people have an exit interview and assessment.

The control:
There are 3 statutory referral partners to the trial. These are 1. Northamptonshire Police and Youth Justice System, 2. Haringey Council and Youth Justice System and 3. Oakhill Secure Training Unit. Young people that are randomised into the control group will receive business-as-usual support from the referral partner. Business as usual support across the 3 sites is varied (especially as support is tailored to the young person) but may have some commonalities. Business as usual support will be explored in the implementation and process evaluation. At this stage business as usual has been grouped as:
• relational: family, social, peer

• health: physical activities and universal emotional support
• targeted therapeutic support e.g. counselling or CAMHS
• education, training and employment support
• youth justice work e.g. one to one sessions with a youth offending worker on victim awareness

Intervention Type
Behavioural

Primary outcome(s)
Volume of offending is measured using the Self-Report Delinquency Scale (SRDS), which assesses the frequency and severity of 19 offending behaviours in the last 12 months, administered at baseline, 6 and 12 months.

Key secondary outcome(s)
1. Recorded incidence of offending measured using local police data, including arrests, cautions, reprimands, warnings, and convictions collected about participants on both arms of the trial every 6 months
2. Recorded incidence of violent offending measured using local police data, including arrests, cautions, reprimands, warnings, and convictions associated with violent offending collected about participants on both arms of the trial every 6 months
3. Criminal victimisation and exploitation measured using a sub-scale of the Juvenile Victimization Questionnaire (JVQ) (Module A: Conventional Crime) collected from young people (self-reported) at baseline (randomisation point), and then 6 and 12 months post randomisation
4. Emotional and behavioural problems measured using the self-reported Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ) collected from young people at baseline (randomisation point), and then 6 and 12 months post randomisation
5. Trusted adult relationship measured using the Social Support and Rejection Scale (SSRS) collected from young people (self-report) at 6 and 12 months post randomisation

Completion date
06/08/2027

Eligibility

Key inclusion criteria
Participants will be 11 to 17 year-olds (at time of referral) who are at least one of the following:
1. Known to have offended where CYP have been arrested (and led to conviction) or identified by police for offending and/or antisocial behaviour or affected by serious violence, criminal or sexual exploitation (as perpetrators and/or victims)
2. Considered to demonstrate high/medium risk factors associated with offending, exploitation, and/or victimisation. This is based on vulnerability assessments undertaken by referral partners which considers whether CYP are:
2.1. Known to the Youth Offending Service (YOS)
2.2. Have a pending or in place National Referral Mechanism (NRM) as at risk of exploitation or trafficking
2.3. Have had a recent recorded missing episode (in last six months)
2.4. Known by the police/YOS to be affiliated with groups, often referred to as gangs, involved in crime, violence and trafficking
2.5. Known by the police/YOS to have siblings already involved in and affected by serious youth violence

2.6. Known to local authority children’s services (e.g. known to early help, are a Child in Need, on a Child Protection Plan, are Looked After, or have care experience)
2.7. Demonstrate school exclusion risk factors i.e. persistent absences and suspension, displaying anti-social behaviour
3. Currently in / leaving custody where CYP are in custody and will complete their custodial sentence within a given timeframe to allow them to engage in EXODUS

Participant type(s)
Service user

Healthy volunteers allowed
No

Age group
Child

Lower age limit
11 Years

Upper age limit
17 Years

Sex
All

Total final enrolment
774

Key exclusion criteria
1. Aged under 11 or over 18 years at the time of the referral
2. At very high risk of harm or very high safety and wellbeing concern needing emergency support
3. With an acute mental health need requiring specialist intervention
4. Is judged to lack the mental capacity to decide about participating in this trial

Date of first enrolment
01/04/2024

Date of final enrolment
17/08/2026

Locations

Countries of recruitment
United Kingdom

England

Study participating centre

Northamptonshire Police and Youth Justice Services
53 Billing Road
Northampton
England
NN1 5DB

Study participating centre
Haringey Council and Youth Justice Service
38 Station Road
London
England
N22 7TB

Study participating centre
Oakhill Secure Training Centre
Chalgrove Field
Oakhill
Milton Keynes
England
MK5 6AJ

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

Results and Publications

Individual participant data (IPD) sharing plan
At the end of the research study participant data (name, gender and date of birth) will be archived by the Youth Endowment Fund (the funder), who will become the data controller.

The Youth Endowment Fund wants to know whether taking part in the research study prevents children and young people from being involved in crime and violence as they grow older.

To do this, the Youth Endowment Fund will keep information about the young people who have taken part in an archive so that more research can be done in the future. Once it is transferred it will be permanently deleted from Coram's data storage systems.

To archive participant data the Department for Education will match this data to the participant's Pupil Matching Reference number and then pseudonymised it - meaning the participant's name and personal information are removed. From this point on, it will no longer be possible to identify the participant from the information.

The pseudonymised data will be linked to other data collected during the research study as well as data held by the Department for Education and Ministry of Justice and held in the Youth Endowment Fund's secure archive with the Office for National Statistics and held indefinitely under the basis of Public Task under UK General Data Protection Regulation Article 6.1(e). This will make it possible to carry out research into the long-term impact that the projects funded by the Youth Endowment Fund have on reducing children and young people's involvement in crime. The Youth Endowment Fund will only allow information to be used for research in accordance with the Five Safes Framework (https://ukdataservice.ac.uk/help/secure-lab/whatis-the-five-safes-framework).

Please see the Youth Endowment Fund's data archive privacy notice here for further details: https://youthendowmentfund.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/YEF-Data-Guidance-Participants.pd

IPD sharing plan summary
Stored in non-publicly available repository

Study outputs

Output type	Details	Date created	Date added	Peer reviewed?	Patient-facing?
Participant information sheet	information for young people version 1	08/03/2024	03/05/2024	No	Yes
Participant information sheet	overview for professionals		03/05/2024	No	Yes
Protocol file	version 1.4	10/07/2024	06/08/2024	No	No