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Re-Frame: A diversion programme for adolescents in police custody who possess illicit substances

Submission date 29/03/2023	**Recruitment status** No longer recruiting	[ ] Prospectively registered [ ] Protocol
Registration date 13/04/2023	**Overall study status** Completed	[ ] Statistical analysis plan [ ] Results
Last Edited 07/02/2024	**Condition category** Other	[ ] Individual participant data [ ] Record updated in last year

Plain English summary of protocol

Background and study aims

For young people, having a criminal record is associated with a variety of negative life outcomes including poor physical and mental health, unemployment, and substance use. The Re-Frame study is a study of a diversion scheme implemented in four regions of England; Kent, Cornwall, Sefton, and Wigan. The study builds on a previous study where we tested the feasibility of recruiting, intervening and following up with the target population. The previous study was designed as an internal pilot study and this means we can combine the data collected in this study with the data collected in the pilot study to make a larger sample.

Who can participate?

Young people aged between 10 and 17 years old who are found by the police to be in possession of Class B or C illegal substance (cannabis or amphetamines for example)

What does the study involve?

Participants can be referred to a young person's substance misuse service for assessment and intervention rather than being arrested and charged, avoiding a criminal record. Once referred, those considered eligible have their intervention chosen at random, either a two-step psycho-education and brief intervention or simple education only. After 6 months, we assess how effective the intervention was in terms of offending behaviour, substance use, and other health and
psychological factors.

What are the possible benefits and risks of participating?

Those who participate in the intervention have the potential to reduce their substance use and any associated risk-taking behaviours. This in turn is likely to lead to a reduction in involvement in criminal activity and a reduction in involvement with the police which is known to lead to improvements in young people’s wellbeing. The interventions are based on similar approaches in other areas and there is no evidence of any risks associated with engaging with the intervention.

Where is the study run from?
University of Kent (UK)

When is the study starting and how long is it expected to run for?
October 2021 to March 2025

Who is funding the study?
Youth Endowment Fund - Another Chance Scheme (UK)

Who is the main contact?
Prof Simon Coulton, s.coulton@kent.ac.uk

Contact information

Type(s)
Principal investigator

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Additional identifiers

Study information

Scientific Title
Re-Frame: Randomised controlled trial of a diversion programme for adolescents in police custody who possess illicit substances

Acronym
Re-Frame

Study objectives
The Re-Frame intervention is no more effective in reducing recidivism than care as usual for young people diverted from police custody found to possess class B or C substances.

Ethics approval required
Old ethics approval format

Ethics approval(s)
Approved 10/12/2021, University of Kent Social Science Research Ethics Committee (Social Research Ethics Committee, Division of Law, Society and Social Justice, University of Kent, Canterbury, Kent, CT2 7NZ, UK; +44 (0)1227 823406; lssjethics@kent.ac.uk), ref: SRC0498

Primary study design
Interventional

Study design
Multi-centre parallel prospective individually randomized controlled trial

Study type(s)
Treatment

Health condition(s) or problem(s) studied
Reduction of offending among young people who use class B or C illicit substances

Interventions
Intervention Group
Two sessions of the Brief Intervention will be given by skilled youth workers. In session one, they will use a Drug Grid to reflect on how their actions have affected their lives, their family and the wider community. The child will have the opportunity to recall their arrest experience and explain how this impacted them. The practitioner will assist the young person in critically reflecting on this event and offer support in relation to trauma or consequences felt as a result.

The Drug Grid is a drug education exercise that enables the child to demonstrate their current understanding of substances (including medication, legal highs, and image and performance-enhancing drugs). As they go through the exercise they will learn about these substances (e.g. depressant or hallucinogen), being led by their own experience and building on their knowledge base. The worker can dispel myths and provide information on the effects of each substance, including the risks of poly use and overdose.

Brief intervention session two is the Drug Triangle. We Are With You Young People's substance misuse services will aim to complete this session within two weeks of the original referral. Ideally session one will take place in week one and session two in week two, depending on the child's availability and preferences.

Using the Drug Triangle, the child will focus on the substance, mindset and setting that led them to the session. This holistic harm reduction approach ties in with contextual safeguarding, framing the child's situation within a wider context. They will spend time thinking about how this has affected them, their family, school (if applicable), and community. The child will also be encouraged to reflect on the impact on those people and communities that produce drugs. At the end of the session the participant will be advised about their rights in relation to stop and search procedures should they require it in the future as well as assertion techniques and advice relating to the procedure itself.

At the end of the two sessions, the young person will have greater clarity about the risks they have taken, the links between substance use, risk-taking behaviour and violent offending, and the potential of criminal proceedings. The short-term aims are that the child will have a greater understanding of their personal needs, an increase in confidence to reduce substance use, and a positive shift from precontemplation to action and maintenance in the cycle of change.

Control Group
The child will receive one session of Advice, Information, and Signposting. The child will be offered information about the With You substance service in their local area and encouraged to access the service for support if required. Advice, Information, and Signposting is a tier 1, universal level of support. It is unstructured and is based on a conversation only.

Intervention Type
Behavioural

Primary outcome(s)
All offences, including arrests, cautions and charges, in the 6-months post-randomisation measured using data obtained directly from the Police National Computer

Key secondary outcome(s)
1. Self-reported delinquency measured using the Self-Report Delinquency Scale (SRDS) at baseline and month 6
2. Quantity, frequency and type of substance use measured using the Time Line Follow Back Method (TLFB) at 6 months
3. Mental health and wellbeing will be measured using the Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Well-being Scale (WEMWBS) at baseline and month 6
4. Health-related quality of life measured using the Child Health Utility Questionnaire (CHU-9D) at baseline and month 6
5. Emotional regulation and behaviour measured using the self-completed Strength and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ) at baseline and month 6
6. Motivation to change measured using the readiness to change ruler (RR) at baseline and month 6
7. Self-efficacy measured using the short Situational Confidence Questionnaire (SCQ-8) at baseline and month 6
8. Positive and Negative Expectancy measured using a four-item Success Expectancy (SUE) measure at baseline and month 6
9. Family environment measured using the Brief Family Relationship Scale (BFRS) at baseline

10. Anxiety measured using the General Anxiety Disorder Questionnaire (GAD-7) at baseline
11. Depression measured using the Personal Health Questionnaire for Adolescents (PHQ-A) at baseline
12 Adverse child experiences measured using the Adverse Child Experience Questionnaire (ACEQ) at baseline

Completion date
30/03/2025

Eligibility

Key inclusion criteria
1. Aged 10-17 years inclusive
2. Considered appropriate for diversion by police
3. In possession of class B or C illicit substances

Participant type(s)
Other

Healthy volunteers allowed
No

Age group
Child

Lower age limit
10 Years

Upper age limit
17 Years

Sex
All

Key exclusion criteria
1. Arrested for a sexual or violent offence
2. History of four or more offences
3. Substance use severity that requires specialist clinical intervention such as detoxi[cation or medication-assisted maintenance
4. Inability to understand oral English sufficiently to engage in the intervention or the follow-up

Date of first enrolment
01/03/2023

Date of final enrolment
31/08/2024

Locations

Countries of recruitment

United Kingdom

England

Study participating centre
We Are With You - Kent
Unit H
Jubilee way
Faversham
United Kingdom
ME13 8GD

Study participating centre
We Are With You - Sefton
Landmark House
43-45 Merton Road
Bootle
United Kingdom
L20 7AP

Study participating centre
We Are With You - Cornwall
Western House
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Truro
United Kingdom
PR1 1HQ

Study participating centre
We Are With You - Wigan
Coops Business Centre
11 Dorning Street
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WN1 1HR

Sponsor information

Organisation
University of Kent

ROR
https://ror.org/00xkeyj56

Funder(s)

Funder type
Research organisation

Funder Name
Youth Endowment Fund

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 publically available repository. Data sharing agreement to be made available after final analysis and publication have been undertaken.

IPD sharing plan summary
Stored in publicly available repository

Study outputs

Output type	Details	Date created	Date added	Peer reviewed?	Patient-facing?
Study website	Study website	11/11/2025	11/11/2025	No	Yes