

ECHO (Evidence for Children's Outcomes): An evaluation of the Chance UK mentoring programme

Submission date 29/08/2014	Recruitment status No longer recruiting	☐ Prospectively registered ☒ Protocol
Registration date 09/09/2014	Overall study status Completed	☐ Statistical analysis plan ☒ Results
Last Edited 15/10/2021	Condition category Mental and Behavioural Disorders	☐ Individual participant data

Plain English summary of protocol

Background and study aims:

This project will assess the performance of a mentoring programme provided by Chance UK, currently available in Enfield, Hackney, Islington, Lambeth and Waltham Forest. Chance UK was a programme that looked at the effects of mentoring on children that had emotional and behavioural problems. This was very successful with 98% of the children taking part showing significant improvements. However, it did not include a control group which makes drawing firm conclusions about the impact of the programme difficult. Here, we want to build on the early results from the Chance UK's mentoring programme using experimental methods to estimate how successful it is as improving children's emotional and behavioural problems. This is an exploratory study and further research may be needed to get some definite answers.

Who can participate?

The sample will be drawn from approximately 65 primary schools across London. Participants will be children aged 5-11 years with behavioural difficulties who are referred by school staff to Chance UK's mentoring programme.

What does the study involve?

Children referred to Chance UK's service and deemed eligible are randomly allocated into one of two groups. Those in group 1 are given one year of weekly one-to-one mentoring by trained volunteers. The sessions are developed to meet the individual needs of every child taking part. Those children in group 2 are directed towards other services as provided in their London borough. Changes in each child's behaviour is measured through questionnaires and follow-up sessions at 9 months and 16 months after the referral date.

What are the possible benefits and risks of participating?

The potential benefit to participating families is the reduction of the child's emotional and behavioural problems. There are no known risks.

Where is the study run from?

The Social Research Unit at Dartington, UK.

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

The trial start date was taken as the date when referrals were first collected from Chance UK in order to screen for eligibility for the study, 29th July 2014. The final report is due to be produced by the end of March 2017.

Who is funding the study?

The Big Lottery Fund (UK) is providing the funding as part of their Realising Ambition project.

Who is the main contact?

Dr. Nick Axford (naxford@dartington.org.uk)

Contact information

Type(s)

Scientific

Contact name

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Contact details

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Additional identifiers

Protocol serial number

N/A

Study information

Scientific Title

The effectiveness of Chance UK's early intervention mentoring programme in improving behavioural and emotional outcomes in primary school children with behavioural difficulties: an exploratory randomised controlled trial

Acronym

ECHO

Study objectives

1. It is hypothesised that, relative to the control group, children in the intervention group (i.e. receiving Chance UK's mentoring programme) will show improved behaviour and emotional wellbeing from the main caregiver's perspective.
2. It is further hypothesised that, relative to the control group, children in the intervention group will show improved self-esteem and self efficacy.

3. In addition, it is hypothesised that there will be a positive relationship between fidelity of delivery and outcomes.

Ethics approval required

Old ethics approval format

Ethics approval(s)

Warren House Group Research Ethics committee, 02/07/2014. ref. WHG2014-001

Study design

A two-arm, exploratory, randomised controlled, parallel group, superiority trial

Primary study design

Interventional

Study type(s)

Treatment

Health condition(s) or problem(s) studied

Emotional and behavioural problems

Interventions

Chance UK's mentoring programme is for children aged 5 to 11 years old reported as displaying emotional and behavioural difficulties. It aims to prevent future antisocial and criminal behaviour by reducing the associated risk factors (such as early problem behaviour, lack of a positive role model, and limited opportunities) and by promoting children's strengths (such as decision-making, coping skills, social skills and sporting, creative or academic abilities). Chance UK use a solution-focused approach to improve young children's behaviour throughout one year of one-to-one mentoring by trained, supervised volunteers. The mentors meet with the children weekly, for around 2 to 4 hours. They develop an individual programme of activities in line with their child's interests and needs; this could include visits to the park, sports centre, library or exhibitions. All tasks are intended to be interactive and have a purpose; the aim of sessions is to help children to work towards specified personal goals, to recognise and build strengths, and to consider and try out more effective responses to difficulties, while broadening their horizons. All of this is with the aim of helping the children to progress towards the preferred future that they have identified. Chance UK only serve children with an identified level of need, volunteer mentors are highly trained to deliver a tailored programme of structured activities, a thorough matching process is designed to create successful matches, the sessions take place weekly for one year, and parents are offered support as part of the programme. The control group will be signposted to other services available in the London borough in which the child attends school.

Intervention Type

Other

Phase

Not Applicable

Primary outcome(s)

The study will primarily measure changes in children's behaviour and emotional functioning from the main parent/carer's perspective. These measures will be administered/collected at baseline, mid-way through the mentoring year or equivalent, and post-test at the end of the mentoring

year or equivalent.

1. Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire parent report (SDQ; Goodman, 1997)
2. Eyberg Child Behaviour Inventory (ECBI; Eyberg, 1978)

Key secondary outcome(s)

Secondary assessments will measure the same outcomes but from the perspective of school staff. In addition, measures for children aged 8-11 years will capture changes in self-esteem and self-efficacy, which are the key mediators through which the programme core components are theorised to impact on behaviour and emotional wellbeing. Parental/carer depression will be assessed and analysed as a covariate to determine whether this influences the way that parents /carers report on their child's behavioural difficulties on the primary outcome measure, which could potentially confound the results. These measures will be administered/collected at baseline, mid-way through the mentoring year or equivalent, and post-test at the end of the mentoring year or equivalent. Supplementary data will also be collected on family demographics (at baseline only). A service use questionnaire will establish other services that the child or family receives during the course of the study (administered at mid-point and post-test only).

1. Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire teacher report (SDQ; Goodman, 1997)
2. The Self-Perception Profile for Children (SPPC; Harter, 1982; 2012)
3. Children's Hope Scale (Snyder et al., 1997)
4. Beck Depression Inventory II - short form (BDI; Beck & Beck, 1972)
5. Family Demographics Questionnaire (FDQ; Little et al., 2012)
6. Family Service Use Questionnaire (Little et al., 2012)

Completion date

31/10/2017

Eligibility

Key inclusion criteria

1. The child is aged between 5 and 10 years old at point of referral
2. The child lives or attends school in any of the London boroughs of Enfield, Hackney, Islington, Lambeth or Waltham Forest
3. The child scores 16 or above on the Total Difficulties scale of the teacher-reported SDQ
4. The child scores 14 or above on the Total Difficulties scale of the parent-reported SDQ
5. Both parent and child are willing to take part in the programme and the study
6. There is no diagnosis of autism or any developmental delay that would prevent the child from engaging in the programme and the study, as identified through school records and parent report
7. The child is not severely emotionally distressed as a result of a recent life event, such as a bereavement
8. There is no known history of the family making malicious allegations against professionals, as identified through information submitted on the referral form
9. There is no known risk of violence towards Chance UK staff or the research team by the child or parent, as identified through information submitted on the referral form

Participant type(s)

Patient

Healthy volunteers allowed

No

Age group

Child

Lower age limit

5 years

Upper age limit

10 years

Sex

All

Total final enrolment

246

Key exclusion criteria

For the purposes of the study, siblings are not eligible to participate as this would mean that one or more families would be over-represented in the data. To be precise, one child of a group of siblings may participate but fellow siblings will not be eligible. Chance UK will inform referrers that they have capacity to work with one child per family. However, if siblings are referred, Chance UK will check the eligibility of both/all; if only one is eligible (i.e. on teacher SDQ) that child will proceed, and if both/all are eligible the oldest child will proceed. If the parent SDQ threshold is not reached for the older child, it will be conducted for the younger child(ren).

Date of first enrolment

29/07/2014

Date of final enrolment

31/03/2017

Locations**Countries of recruitment**

United Kingdom

England

Study participating centre

The Social Research Unit

Dartington

United Kingdom

TQ9 6AB

Sponsor information

Organisation

The Big Lottery Fund (UK)

ROR

<https://ror.org/034wa7719>

Funder(s)

Funder type

Charity

Funder Name

Big Lottery Fund (UK) (as part of the Realising Ambition programme, managed by Catch22)

Alternative Name(s)

BIG

Funding Body Type

Private sector organisation

Funding Body Subtype

Other non-profit organizations

Location

United Kingdom

Results and Publications

Individual participant data (IPD) sharing plan

IPD sharing plan summary

Not provided at time of registration

Study outputs

Output type	Details	Date created	Date added	Peer reviewed?	Patient-facing?
Results article		01/01/2021	15/10/2021	Yes	No
Protocol article	protocol	12/03/2018	17/12/2020	Yes	No
Participant information sheet	Participant information sheet	11/11/2025	11/11/2025	No	Yes
Study website	Study website	11/11/2025	11/11/2025	No	Yes