ISRCTN96905637 https://doi.org/10.1186/ISRCTN96905637

Is a music-based mentoring programme delivered with young people aged 11 - 17 years involved in or deemed to be at risk of involvement in violent or non-violent offending, focused on managing behaviour and developing positive relationships and a pro-social identity, an effective approach to reducing young people's future engagement in delinquent behaviour compared to business-as-usual services?

Submission date 24/09/2024	**Recruitment status** No longer recruiting	[X] Prospectively registered [_] Protocol [_] Statistical analysis plan [_] Results [_] Individual participant data [X] Record updated in last year
Registration date 26/09/2024	**Overall study status** Ongoing	
Last Edited 16/03/2026	**Condition category** Other	

Plain English summary of protocol

Background and study aims

The SHIFT mentoring programme is a voluntary 1:1 music mentoring intervention. It aims to support young people to develop more positive relationships, improve their behaviour, and enhance their wellbeing, with the ultimate aim of reducing delinquent behaviour. Conducting an efficacy study of SHIFT will add to the limited robust evidence base for what works to reduce offending among young people in the UK.

The present, YEF funded work is being commissioned in the context of local research which shows:

1. Concern in Sussex over what the Violence Reduction Partnership considers to be a high proportion of serious violent crime committed by young people (Sussex Violence Reduction Partnership, 2022).
2. Worse or increasing levels of some indicators that may increase young people's risk of involvement in violence in Sussex compared with the national rate (Sussex Violence Reduction Partnership, 2022).
3. High numbers of young people associated with violence in Sussex and participating in VRP projects have been excluded or are absent from school, have special educational needs, have low educational attainment, have poor mental health and relationships, or are experiencing

criminal exploitation (Sussex Violence Reduction Partnership, 2022).
4. Over-representation of minoritised ethnic groups the criminal justice system (Ministry of Justice, 2021).

The SHIFT music mentoring model as an approach to prevent or reduce delinquent behaviour for young people is based on evidence which shows:
1. The impact of mentoring approaches: The YEF toolkit highlights that mentoring programmes can positively impact outcomes which are often associated with later involvement in violence, such as substance misuse, behavioural difficulties, educational outcomes, social connections, and emotional health (Gaffney, Jolliffe, and White, 2022).
2. The potential benefit of structured arts-based interventions:
2.1 'Non-traditional approaches' that involve creative, dynamic and multisensory music-based strategies can lead to improvements in engagement and mental health for adolescents in diverse contexts (Rowdin et al., 2022).
2.2 A systematic review commissioned by YEF found that arts-based interventions may lead to positive emotions, the development of a sense of self, development of positive personal relationships for young people at risk of, or already involved in, violence and/or crime (Mansfield et al, 2024). However, there is a need for more rigorous quantitative evaluation evidence to support this (Mansfield et al, 2024; Daykin et al, 2011).
2.3 Music-based interventions similar to SHIFT may improve mental wellbeing (Noise Solution, 2023) and encourage engagement with statutory services (for example, increasing the likelihood of young people attending YOT appointments) (Caulfield et al., 2020).
2.4 Interventions focusing on pro-social leisure or recreation should be structured or have a skills-based focus to be potentially beneficial in preventing offending (HM Inspectorate of Probation, 2023).
3 The importance of personalised approaches:
3.1 Targeted programmes which consider the individual characteristics and needs of young people are more likely to reduce attrition and reoffending rates (Christensen, Hagler, and Stams et al., 2020).
3.2 Voluntary participation tailored to individual interests, taking a trauma-informed approach encourages better engagement by young people with services than statutory interventions for this cohort (Big Lottery Fund, 2018).

The SHIFT approach responds to this evidence-base by offering a personalised, 18-week music mentoring intervention. Previous qualitative evaluation of SHIFT indicates that the approach may have a positive impact on young people's mood, confidence, emotional regulation, behaviour, relationships, motivation and attitude (National Children's Bureau, 2023). The YEF-funded RCT of SHIFT aims to build on this promising evidence, utilising a more robust evaluation approach to understand the impact of the model.

Who can participate?
The programme will work with young people aged 11-17 who live or attend school in West Sussex, East Sussex or Brighton and Hove who have offended or are at risk of offending due to risk factors such as violent behaviour, educational exclusion and associations with peers involved in offending.

What does the study involve?
The Efficacy Trial is a two-arm, parallel randomised controlled trial (RCT). All young people referred into the project, who meet the eligibility criteria and who consent to be part of the evaluation complete a baseline questionnaire before being allocated at random to a treatment or control group on a 1:1 basis.

Young people in the treatment group are paired with a mentor. The mentor delivers 18 weekly 90 minute face-to-face music mentoring sessions. At exit from the programme (within 6 months) young people complete a Time 2 (T2) questionnaire.

Young people who are allocated to the control group will receive light-touch signposting and safeguarding support, provided by a member of the AudioActive team based in each of the three local authorities. Young people in the control group will be offered a maximum of three one-to-one one-hour check-in meetings with a local authority-based control group practitioner. Those in the control group attend a meeting after six months during which they complete a T2 questionnaire.

What are the possible benefits and risks of participating?
The possible benefits of participating in the study include improved wellbeing and reduced involvement in delinquent behaviour.

Risks of participating in the study include:
1. Young people could be triggered or upset by topics in questionnaires. Mitigations against this include (a) SHIFT practitioners receive training in how to support young people who may be affected in this way and direct them to further safeguarding or other appropriate support services and (b) SHIFT practitioners are experienced youth support workers who have extensive experience of conducting work with vulnerable young people, and they receive additional training from the experienced research team before tools are rolled out.
2. Young people in the control group might not receive the support needed which could lead to adverse consequences. The mitigation is they will be safeguarded and signposted to "business as usual" services.

Where is the study run from?
SHIFT is being delivered by Audio Active, located in Brighton and Hove. The evaluation team is Cordis Bright, based in London (UK).

When is the study starting and how long is it expected to run for?
November 2023 to November 2026

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

Who is the main contact?
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Study information

Scientific Title
AudioActive’s SHIFT mentoring project. A randomised controlled trial efficacy study with internal pilot

Acronym
YEF SHIFT

Study objectives
Is a music-based mentoring programme delivered with young people aged 11 - 17 years involved in or deemed to be at risk of involvement in violent or non-violent offending, focused on managing behaviour and developing positive relationships and a pro-social identity, an effective

approach to reducing young people's future engagement in delinquent behaviour compared to business-as-usual services?

Ethics approval required
Ethics approval required

Ethics approval(s)
Approved 04/09/2024, Royal Holloway University of London Research Ethics Committee (Egham Hill, Egham, TW20 0EX, United Kingdom; +44 (0)1784434455; ethics@rhul.ac.uk), ref: 4234

Primary study design
Interventional

Study design
Interventional two-arm parallel randomized controlled trial

Study type(s)
Efficacy

Health condition(s) or problem(s) studied
Reduction in the likelihood of involvement in delinquent behaviour for young people at risk of, or already involved with, violence and crime.

Interventions
This efficacy study will be a two-arm, parallel-group-assignment randomised control trial (RCT). Randomisation will be done at the individual level. Randomisation is conducted using an online computer programme Sealed Envelope (https://www.sealedenvelope.com/simple-randomiser/v1/).

All young people who are referred to the programme, meet the eligibility criteria, consent to be part of the evaluation and complete a baseline questionnaire will be allocated at random to the treatment or control group on a 1:1 basis within an initial meeting with an AudioActive programme coordinator/manager.

Those in the treatment group will receive SHIFT music mentoring programme (18 weekly one-to-one music mentoring sessions with a SHIFT mentor). Discussion topics to be covered across the 18 sessions are: behavioural and emotional regulation; mental health and wellbeing; relationships with family; relationships with peers; keeping safe; involvement in offending; engagement in education; feelings about the future and career opportunities; pro-social identity.

Those in the control group will receive light-touch signposting and safeguarding support, provided by a member of the AudioActive team based in each of the three local authorities. Young people in the control group will be offered a maximum of three one-to-one one-hour check-in meetings with a local authority-based control group practitioner. These meetings will take place over the same six-month period as the SHIFT programme.

Intervention Type
Behavioural

Primary outcome(s)

Self-reported delinquent behaviour measured by the Self Reported Delinquency Scale volume score at baseline and six months post randomisation.

Key secondary outcome(s)
1. Self-reported delinquent behaviour measured by the Self Reported Delinquency Scale variety score at baseline and six months post randomisation.
2. Quality of relationship between young person and mentor (treatment group) or young person and case worker (control group) measured by the Social Support and Rejection Scale at six months post randomisation.
3. Wellbeing measured by the Short Warwick Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale at baseline and six months post randomisation.
4. Pro-social values and behaviours measured by the pro-social sub-scale in the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire at baseline and six months post randomisation.
5. Behavioural difficulties measured by the externalising score in the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire at baseline and six months post randomisation.
6. Conduct problems measured by the conduct problems sub-scale in the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire at baseline and six months post randomisation.
7. Emotional problems measured by the emotional problems sub-scale at baseline and six months post randomisation.
8. Peer problems measured by the peer problems sub-scale at baseline and six months post randomisation
9. Hyperactivity/inattention measured by the hyperactivity/inattention sub-scale.

Completion date
27/11/2026

Eligibility

Key inclusion criteria
1. Young people aged 11 - 17 years.
2. Young people who have either been:
2.1 Convicted of a criminal offence.
2.2 Arrested, but have not received a criminal conviction.
2.3 Considered at high/medium risk of offending due to demonstrating one or more of the following factors:
2.3.1. Carrying weapons such as knives.
2.3.2. Known association with high-risk peers, known to be involved in criminal activity.
2.3.3 Known to have siblings already involved in criminal activity.
2.3.4. Displaying overt coercive or violent behaviour.
2.3.5. Excluded or at risk of exclusion from mainstream education i.e. persistent absences and suspension due to displaying behaviours including offending, bullying, aggression, violence.
2.3.6. Signs of possible criminal exploitation e.g., burner phones, unexplained change in finances, missing episodes.
2.3.7. Drug use or possession.
3. Young people who are living or attending school in East Sussex, West Sussex, or Brighton and Hove.

Participant type(s)
Learner/student, Other

Healthy volunteers allowed
No

Age group
Child

Lower age limit
11 Years

Upper age limit
17 Years

Sex
All

Total final enrolment
0

Key exclusion criteria
1. Young people will not be eligible if they are currently serving a custodial sentence.
2. Young people will not be eligible if they have previously served multiple custodial sentences.
2. Young people will not be eligible if they are accessing any other similar arts-based programmes or programmes using ‘music-as-a-hook’.

Date of first enrolment
01/10/2024

Date of final enrolment
26/06/2026

Locations

Countries of recruitment
United Kingdom

England

Study participating centre
Schools and Pupil Referral Units, Social Services, Youth Services, Youth Offending Services and Third Sector Organisations in Brighton and Hove
AudioActive, Lewes Road, Brighton and Hove
Brighton and Hove
England
BN2 4GL

Study participating centre

Schools and Pupil Referral Units, Social Services, Youth Services, Youth Offending Services and Third Sector Organisations in East Sussex
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Study participating centre
Schools and Pupil Referral Units, Social Services, Youth Services, Youth Offending Services and Third Sector Organisations in West Sussex
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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

The datasets generated during and/or analysed during the current study will be archived after the study in the YEF data archive and will be available to researchers on request.

Two datasets will be transferred to the YEF archive. The first dataset will contain identifying data and a unique project specific reference number for each participant. This will be transferred to the Department for Education, who will pseudonymise the data (replacing all identifying information with a unique project specific number) before transferring to the Office of National Statistics (ONS) for storage in the YEF archive. The second dataset will contain all the evaluation data and the project specific reference numbers. This will be anonymised and is submitted directly to the ONS where it's stored in the YEF archive.

The archiving process is likely to take place around July 2027. The YEF have not set a specific time limit on how long they will store data for, but will carry out a review every five years to see whether there is a continued benefit to storing the data and its potential use in future research. The YEF will only allow information in the archive to be accessed and used for research in accordance with the ONS's 'Five Safes' framework and via the ONS-SRS. The 'Five Safes' framework makes sure that:

1. Only researchers with the skills and expertise to analysis the data are able to access it.
2. Only approved projects that are being conducted for the benefit of society and have been approved by ethics committees can go ahead.
3. Technology will make sure that the data is kept safe, by tracking and monitoring researchers' activity will be tracked and monitored.
4. All the data will be checked to make sure no one can be identified from the data.
5. Only data that uses references (and does not contain identifying information) can be analysed.

Participants and their parents/carers have the right to ask the research team during the evaluation, and the YEF after data has been transferred for archiving:

• for access to the personal information held about them;
• to correct any personal information held about them which is incorrect, incomplete or inaccurate.
In certain circumstances, they also have the right to:
•ask for their personal information to be erased where there is no good reason for continuing to hold it
• object to their personal information being used for public task purposes;
• ask for the use of their personal information to be restricted or suspended

All young people and their parents/carers will be giving a privacy notice and information sheets about the use of their personal data, the archiving process, and their data protection rights before consenting to be involved in the study. They have the right to withdraw from the study (and not have their information sent to the YEF archive) at any time before July 2027. Once information goes into the YEF archive after July 2027 it can no longer be deleted because that would affect the quality of the archived data for use in future research. They will however have the right to apply to the YEF who will review applications for deletion on an individual basis.

IPD sharing plan summary

Available on request