EVALUATION REPORT

The Reach Programme

Feasibility study report

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March 2023

Sheffield Hallam University

YOUTH ENDOWMENT FUND

Home Office

About the Youth Endowment Fund

The Youth Endowment Fund (YEF) is a charity with a mission that matters. We exist to prevent children and young people becoming involved in violence. We do this by finding out what works and building a movement to put this knowledge into practice.

Children and young people at risk of becoming involved in violence deserve services that give them the best chance of a positive future. To make sure that happens, we'll fund promising projects and then use the very best evaluation to find out what works. Just as we benefit from robust trials in medicine, young people deserve support grounded in the evidence. We'll build that knowledge through our various grant rounds and funding activity.

Just as important is understanding children and young people's lives. Through our Youth Advisory Board and national network of peer researchers, we'll ensure they influence our work and we understand and are addressing their needs. But none of this will make a difference if all we do is produce reports that stay on a shelf.

Together, we need to look at the evidence, agree what works and then build a movement to make sure that young people get the very best support possible. Our strategy sets out how we'll do this. At its heart, it says that we will fund good work, find what works and work for change. You can read it here.

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Contents

About the Youth Endowment Fund 2

About the Evaluator 4

Glossary 5

Executive Summary 6

The project 6

Introduction 9

Research questions 16

Ethical review 18

Data protection 18

Project team/stakeholders 20

Methods 22

Participant selection 22

Theory of Change/Logic Model development 23

Data collection 24

Analysis 30

Timeline 31

Findings 32

Participants 32

Findings 34

Conclusion 104

Development of the Logic Model and Theory of Change 110

Evaluator judgement of intervention feasibility and progression to a pilot trial 111

Success/target criteria 111

Recommendations for moving forward to a pilot trial 116

Future publications 119

References 120

List of Tables and Figures 121

Appendix 1: Theory of Change, Logic Model and Blueprint 122

Appendix 2: Information sheets, consent forms and privacy notices 132

Appendix 3: Employment criteria and training for YWs 146

Appendix 4: Reach Programme referral form 149

About the Evaluator

Anna Stevens, Research Fellow (Co-PI/PM) a.stevens@shu.ac.uk. Anna is co-principal investigator and project manager for the evaluation. She is the key contact for the evaluation team and has led on the overall conduct of the study. Anna has over 10 years' experience of educational trials for the Education Endowment Fund (EEF) and is part of the YEF cross-team working group at Sheffield Hallam University. She has extensive experience of educational research projects and is particularly skilled in the management of randomised control trials, quantitative data collection, amalgamation and statistical analysis.

Dr Charlotte Coleman, Deputy Head of Psychology, Sociology and Politics (Co-PI) and **Kate Whitfield, Associate Professor and Chartered Psychologist (Project Advisor)**. Charlotte is co-principal investigator for the project and led the Theory of Change workshops throughout the study. Dr Charlotte Coleman and Kate Whitfield have extensive experience in the evaluation of crime reduction and mentoring programmes. They are experienced in working with young people, vulnerable groups and schools.

Bernadette Stiell, Senior Research Fellow (IPE lead). Bernadette led on the design and conduct of the qualitative fieldwork. She has extensive IPE and qualitative methods expertise and is experienced in project and programme evaluation for DfE, EEF and YEF, including the current Roots of Empathy trial.

Ben Partridge, Lecturer (Qualitative lead). Ben conducted the later stage qualitative fieldwork with the young people and youth workers and is co-author of the report. Ben has experience of qualitative data collection and analysis through his work focusing on death and bereavement experiences in educational settings. In his previous posts, Ben has over nine years' experience of working in education settings with young people.

Sean Demack, Principal Research Fellow (Statistical advisor). Sean is statistical advisor to the project and has provided guidance and advice on trial design leading to the pilot trial. Sean has led the design and analysis of numerous large-scale/national RCT-centred evaluations. He also has published on the methodology of educational RCT designs and is working with Durham University to provide accurate, up-to-date statistical guidance for designers of educational trials in England.

Amanda Wilcox, **Researcher (Fieldworker)**. Mandy conducted the early-stage fieldwork with the young people. She has previously conducted research – including interviews and focus groups and designing interview/focus group schedules – and different forms of analysis, such as thematic analysis. This has included interviews with vulnerable people who have committed crimes.

Glossary

Suspensions The terminology around exclusions has recently been updated to use the term 'suspension' to define a fixed-term exclusion. Please note that schools sometimes referred to 'fixed-term exclusions' or 'exclusions' to mean suspensions; therefore, this term has been kept in the direct quotes from participants but has been updated in the main text and in the Theory of Change and Logic Model.

ACES Adverse Childhood Experiences

DL Delivery lead

DV Domestic violence

EAL English as an additional language

LLR Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland

LM Logic Model

SEN Special educational needs

SHU Sheffield Hallam University

SL School lead

ToC Theory of Change

VRU Violence Reduction Unit

YEF Youth Endowment Fund

YP Young person/people

YW Youth worker

Executive Summary

The project

The Reach Programme is a targeted intervention aimed at 11–16-year-olds who are at risk of suspension or persistently absent from school and at risk of future involvement in anti-social behaviour and crime. The programme provides an opportunity to explore the 'teachable moment' component in a school context. 'Teachable moments' interventions, often called 'Navigator' programmes, make use of points in people's lives where they may be more inclined to seek help and support as a result of hitting a low point or a significant event. Developed and led by the Violence Reduction Network for Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland (in collaboration with Leicester City Council and Leicestershire County Council), Reach uses trained youth workers (YW) to deliver one-to-one sessions to young people (YP) over a period of six months. The intervention consists of core components that are tailored to the needs of the YP, including a more intensive relationship-building phase during the first few weeks of the programme. Other core components include understanding behaviours; providing social skills training; building confidence, wellbeing and resilience; and encouraging positive relationships. YWs also provide recreational activities for YP. Sessions are delivered face to face; in school, street-based environments; and at home, and while they are usually one-to-one, some sessions invite peers or family members to engage. In this project, 73 YP across six schools received the programme.

YEF and the Home Office funded the delivery of the Reach Programme, with YEF also funding a feasibility study, which aimed to investigate whether the key components and outputs of the Logic Model and implementation plan were practical and achievable. It further aimed to inform the progression to a pilot trial and explore whether the programme was effectively implemented. To address these aims, the feasibility study used predominately qualitative methods, including interviews with four school leads (SLs), six delivery leads, four YWs and twelve YP. Evaluators also conducted observations of sessions, a survey with seven YWs and monitoring data analysis. The feasibility study was delivered from December 2021 to September 2022.

Key conclusions
Within certain local areas of Leicestershire and Leicester with the highest rates of suspensions and serious violence, there was an identified need for the Reach Programme. A gap in support was also identified for YP who are suspended from school. Further understanding is needed with regard to the issues that lead up to a YP's suspension. Schools and families were on board with the implementation of the programme, with schools noting the gap that Reach filled.
The Reach team successfully recruited and retained a team of eight YWs, who brought a range of experience and competence. The matching process with YP was generally perceived to be successful, the number of referrals from schools was largely as anticipated, and schools found the referral process straightforward and valued the support from the Reach team. School senior leaders were also invested in the programme. Implementation was facilitated when the YW was well integrated into the school and when there was one or two dedicated YWs per school.
The delivery model, particularly the order and length of sessions, was intended to be flexible. This flexibility was key to the success of the delivery of the programme. In general, YWs were able to meet fairly frequently with YP, and YP were perceived to engage very well in the programme. The programme was perceived to work best when delivered at 'teachable moments', and the evaluators observed generally high-quality delivery. YP perceived their YWs as non-judgemental and receptive listeners and spoke very positively about the mentoring.
SLs identified that Reach has benefits beyond usual practice in that it could work with YP while they were in the community and outside of term time, and YWs were viewed as someone the YP could relate to outside of the school and home context. YWs found the resources to support delivery very valuable, while the diverse range of activities used appeared to support engagement.
Barriers to delivery included school staff time, the availability of adequate space to conduct sessions in school, the temporary nature of YW contracts, the time taken to build effective relationships between YWs and schools in some cases, a lack of community provision in the county (not city), and in some instances a lack of family understanding of Reach during recruitment.

Interpretation

Within certain areas of Leicestershire and Leicester with the highest rates of suspensions and serious violence, there was an identified need for Reach. The evaluation also identified little support for YP once they are suspended from school and limited understanding of what leads to suspension. In addition, recent years have seen a rise in school absences (exacerbated by COVID-19), meaning that young people received less exposure to protective factors that come from being in school. Schools and families were on board with the implementation of the programme, with schools noting the gap that Reach filled.

There were initial challenges in recruiting YWs, but the Reach team successfully recruited and retained a team of eight YWs who brought a range of experience and competence. There was diversity among the team in terms of ethnicity but less so in terms of gender, with 75% of the team being female. However, matching the YW and YP in terms of gender and ethnicity was perceived to be less important than anticipated. The matching process was generally viewed as successful, and allowing YP to input into this worked well. Where relationship building between YW and YP was successful, it was facilitated by finding common ground and experiences; YW empathy; creating feelings of safety, security, and trust; and being a non-judgemental ally and friend.

The number of referrals from schools was largely as anticipated. Schools also viewed the referral process as straightforward. They used their own discretion, alongside the referral criteria, to select young people. When comparing the characteristics of the YP recruited to Reach to the data on suspensions in those schools, the gender and age profiles were broadly similar. A slightly higher proportion of White British YP were recruited compared with the proportion of White British YP suspended. Caution in interpretation is needed here due to low numbers and the lack of comparison to school population data. Further research will be conducted on this in the pilot trial. Schools generally found the ongoing support from the Reach team very useful and felt there had been sufficient training and support. Senior leaders in schools were invested in the programme and often involved the wider team of pastoral and safeguarding staff, all of which facilitated implementation. Ensuring the YW was integrated into the school and having a smaller number of YWs in each school also facilitated implementation. YWs themselves were offered a variety of formal and informal training, with weekly group supervisions and peer support cited as particularly beneficial.

The delivery model and the order and length of sessions were intended to be flexible to suit the needs of YP, and this flexibility was key to the success of the programme. In general, YWs met fairly frequently with YP (although this was not the case for all YP). The programme was perceived to work best when delivered at 'teachable moments', and the evaluators observed generally high-quality delivery. YP perceived their YWs as non-judgemental and receptive listeners and spoke very positively about the mentoring. YP appeared to respond well to discussions and were able to lead sessions and direct the flow of the conversations. School and delivery leads perceived YP engagement in sessions to be very good; the mood of YP sometimes impacted engagement, but this provided further teachable moments. Engagement may have been supported by the activities. YP reported a range of interwoven and varied activities. SLs identified that Reach has benefits beyond usual practice, in that it could work with YP while they were in the community and outside of term time, and YWs were viewed as someone the YP could relate to outside of the school and home context. Support was also perceived to be more timely than other interventions.

Barriers to delivery included school staff time, the availability of adequate space to conduct sessions in school, the temporary nature of YW contracts, the time taken to build effective relationships between YWs and schools in some cases, a lack of community provision in the county (not city), and a lack of family understanding of Reach during recruitment in some instances.

Following the successful completion of the feasibility study, the YEF is funding a pilot trial, which began in Autumn 2022. The main focus of the pilot trial is the acceptability of individual level randomisation within schools, alongside an implementation and process evaluation that expands on the findings from the feasibility study.

Introduction

Background

The Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland (LLR) Strategic Needs Assessment revealed a local need for a new intervention that proactively identifies at-risk young people (YP) at critical upstream moments to prevent future involvement in violence. While Leicester and Leicestershire have lower rates of pupil exclusions and suspensions as a whole compared with the UK,[1] analysis by Leicester City Council showed that exclusions and suspensions are concentrated in the areas with higher rates of serious violence and deprivation. Based on local data, we know that a significant proportion of at-risk YP have been suspended and/or truanted and attend schools in areas with high crime rates and deprivation.[2]

The development of The Reach Programme has been led by the Violence Reduction Network (VRN) for LLR in collaboration with the Leicester City Council and Leicestershire County Council, who are the delivery partners for this project. Its design was informed by the VRN's Strategic Needs Assessment, which revealed that 15–19 year-olds, followed by 10–14 year-olds, commit the highest rates of serious violence locally. Furthermore, it shows that YP involved in serious violence are most likely to reside in the east and west of Leicester, and Charnwood in the county. Local data show that the schools with the highest rates of suspensions and permanent exclusions are also based in the same 'hotspot' areas. Currently, there is no local provision that provides intensive, responsive and contextually tailored support to at-risk YP in an upstream environment.

The Reach Programme

WHY

The Reach Programme is aimed at YP aged 11–16 in secondary schools (years 7–11). It is a six-month, evidence-informed intervention that provides an opportunity to explore the 'teachable moment' component in a school context. 'Teachable moments' interventions, often called 'Navigators' programmes, make use of points in people's lives where they may be more inclined to seek help and support as a result of hitting a low point or a significant event in their lives. Navigators-style programmes provide three key activities: 'reach-in' at the teachable moment, mentoring and signposting, all of which are largely reflected in the Reach Programme. It incorporates intensive and flexible mentoring, offers opportunities for prosocial activity, and addresses individual, relationship and community risk factors through structured learning components such as social skills training.

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[1] https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/

[2] https://www.violencereductionnetwork.co.uk/_files/ugd/6e2bca_0fe8a2784aa94e6f84fb459f31da9ea6.pdf

While the programme has not yet been evaluated, the intervention's core components have been identified as showing promise in preventing involvement in crime and violence (YEF Toolkit, 2021; YEF What Works Review, 2020). Mentoring is effective in reducing both crime and the behaviours associated with crime and violence. Research suggests that, on average, mentoring reduces crime by 26%. There is also strong evidence that mentoring can reduce behavioural difficulties and substance use and improve self-regulation – three important predictors of violence. However, impact varies widely depending on the approach taken. Additionally, evidence indicates that combining mentoring with recreational activity is an enabling factor that can increase a YP's participation. There is also a growing evidence base demonstrating positive outcomes for teachable moments interventions, subsequently reducing involvement in violence. On average, social skills training programmes have reduced the number of children involved in crime by 32%. Furthermore, research on social skills training suggests that its impact on preventing violence is likely to be high. Targeted programmes working with children who were already demonstrating a need for more intensive support have achieved greater impacts than universal programmes focused on primary prevention (YEF Toolkit, 2021; YEF What Works Review, 2020).

WHEN and HOW MUCH

Reach is a six-month intervention, where the YW meets with the YP two to three times a week for the first eight weeks, and then one to two sessions each week for the next ten weeks. Most sessions are an hour long, but this varies and may be longer for recreational activities. Following completion of the core components, the frequency of sessions between the YP and YW reduces to once a week or fortnight. If a YP sustains positive behaviour for an additional four to six weeks, the YW discusses closing the case with their Team Manager initially and then with the YP and their parents/carer. If in agreement, and if sustainability plans are in place that ensure that the YP and their family have formal and informal support networks in place if issues do occur in the future, the case is closed.

WHAT

The intervention consists of core components that are tailored to the needs and learning styles of the YP. The following figure provides an overview of the core components and the structure of the programme as a whole:

LEVEL OF INTENSITY	HIGH																							
CORE COMPONENTS	WEEKS																							
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24
1: Intesive, flexible and responsive mentoring support																								
2: Relationship Building																								
3: Understanding Behaviours																								
4: Social Skills Training																								
5: Confidence, Wellbeing and Resilience																								
6: Positive Relationships																								
7: Aspirations																								
8: Recreational Activities																								

Materials: The session materials for the core components all included aims and objectives, a method outlining how to deliver the session, links to resources that the YWs could draw upon and a 'next steps' section for the YP to work on.

Procedures: Young people were identified for inclusion if they were aged between 11 and 16, were at risk of suspension (i.e. they have carried out behaviour in their school that would normally qualify for a suspension), had three indicators of vulnerability (e.g. looked after, domestic violence [DV] or substance misuse in the home; please see full referral form at Appendix 4) and where there were concerns about future involvement in anti-social behaviour and crime as either a victim or perpetrator. It should also be noted here that after delivering the intervention during the feasibility phase, it was decided to include persistent absenteeism in the eligibility criteria for the upcoming pilot evaluation.

Once a YP was identified, school staff made a referral to the programme using an online form. The referral was triaged by the delivery team to assess eligibility. Eligible YP and their parents/carers were contacted within 24 hours to arrange an assessment as soon as practicable. The assessment explored the strengths, needs, risks and interests of the YP. This information was used to match the YP to the most suitable YW to act as a mentor throughout the duration of the intervention. The YW then worked through activities related to the core components with the YP, as set out below:

• **Relationship building:** The YW engaged in activities with the YP that they enjoy doing, such as cooking, gaming or going to the gym. During this phase of the intervention, the YW was expected to meet with the YP at least twice a week. The sessions were designed to be

unstructured and fun with the aim of developing a positive and trusting relationship between the YP and YW.

• **Understanding behaviour:** Once a trusting relationship had developed, the sessions shifted from an unstructured format to a focus on problem behaviours and emotional management. This phase began with setting several goals and short-term milestones linked to the behaviours of concern that were identified by the referrer and those revealed in the assessment and relationship-building phase. The YP and YW then agreed an intervention plan that set out the goals, milestones and planned activities. Using motivational interviewing techniques, the YW asked the YP open questions to draw out their experiences of and perspectives on the drivers/causes of their behaviour. The YW provided emotional and practical support during these sessions as required.

• **Social skills training:** YWs delivered six sessions focused on social skills training. These sessions involved recapping the situations and experiences that led to negative displays of behaviour (as identified in the core activity 'Understanding behaviour'). To begin with, sessions focused on the feelings that the YP felt in those situations, identifying the intensity of these feelings and understanding the difference between feelings and behaviours. Attention would then turn to discussing the feelings and perspectives of others, such as family members, peers and teachers, including reading and interpreting social cues. These sessions included role play and perspective-taking. The remaining sessions focused on tools to help manage feelings including relaxation and breathing exercises and communication skills.

• **Confidence, wellbeing and resilience:** Within these interactive sessions, the YW encouraged the YP to reflect on their confidence and wellbeing. They talked about activities or situations that made them feel anxious and fearful. The YP was given the opportunity to identify the activities that they were good at, while talking about the aspects that they wanted to improve on. The YW explained a range of helpful strategies for overcoming fears and facing challenges confidently. Towards the end of this phase, they would also work on how to build resilience.

• **Positive family, peer and community relationships:** The YW discussed positive relationships with the YP. Together, they explored positive and negative relationships in each domain:

- Within the family – at home and extended family
- Positive and negative peers – what makes a positive/negative peer? How to resist negative peer influences

- Community – who is in their local community?
- Formal/informal relationships

The YW would also speak to the YP's family and spend time with their friends to gain a contextual understanding of their family and peer relationships. If the YW perceived that the parents/carers would benefit from additional support – e.g. with housing, employment or communication skills – they would be referred to relevant services.

• **Identifying and achieving aspirations:** The YW worked with the YP to identify what they wanted to achieve for themselves in the future, including discussions of different roles and sectors. Key activities included listing what they would like to achieve in the next three, six and 12 months and beyond, the steps to achieve those aspirations and 'who' would help them achieve their aspirations.

• **Recreational activity:** During the relationship-building phase, the YW identified purposeful recreational activities that interested the YP. These sessions took place alongside the more structured sessions outlined above. Appropriate family members and positive peers were also encouraged to participate in these activities. The YW facilitated access to these opportunities and would attend/participate if necessary to encourage participation. At the beginning of the project, recreational activities might include fun activities such as bowling, but the YW would also aim to identify more sustainable activities that the YP could continue beyond the project, such as football, youth groups, music clubs or cooking/baking.

WHO PROVIDED

The development of the Reach Programme has been led by the VRN for LLR in collaboration with the Leicester City Council and Leicestershire County Council, who are the delivery partners for this project. They have been involved in co-designing this intervention, utilising their data and expertise to ensure the intervention is targeted in the right places and at the right YP. They have led the intervention through the recruitment, onboarding and training of:

- Eight FTE experienced YWs who provided intensive one-to-one support to at-risk YP. The VRN provided formal training for the YWs, alongside drugs awareness training run by Turning Point. YWs were also encouraged to undertake training in areas pertinent to their role, such as safeguarding, adverse childhood experiences, training county lines, and awareness raising on YP-relevant topics such as social media use and drill music. For a full list of training and pre-employment criteria, please see Appendix 3.
- 1.5 FTE team managers who were responsible for the line management of the YWs.

- One FTE project coordinator who led on mobilising the intervention and overseeing delivery across city and county.
- 1.5 FTE project officers who provided administrative support to the delivery team and gathered data/information for the evaluation.

HOW

The programme components were delivered face to face by YW specifically recruited and trained for this programme. Sessions were mostly one-to-one between the YW and the YP, but the YP's family and peers were also encouraged to take part and engage with some sessions where this was appropriate and seen as beneficial to the YP.

WHERE

The YW arranged sessions at times and in places that worked for the YP. Adopting a contextual safeguarding approach, the YW spent time with the YP in the spaces that they occupy including their school, street-based environments and at home. This enabled the YW to develop a comprehensive understanding of the YP's lived reality and to collect further information about their strengths and needs.

TAILORING

Although it was expected that YPs would complete all core components of the programme, in cases where some activities were assessed as not needed or where a YP demonstrated a need for extended time on some components, the schedule was amended flexibly to fit with the YP's needs. Thus, there was tailoring of the order and extent to which the core components were delivered to the individual.

Logic Model development

The first version of the Logic Model (LM) was created in advance of submitting the application to the Home Office/YEF for funding for the Reach Programme. Led by the VRN, the delivery partners Leicester City Council and Leicestershire County Council were involved in the creation of the initial LM, which drew on the principles of using a 'teachable moment' to engage with YP at risk of suspension. A teachable moment is a period where situational factors converge in such a way that they prompt reflection and behaviour change (Lawson and Flocke, 2009).

As can be seen from the LM and Blueprint in Appendix 1, the activities delivered on the Reach Programme were designed to maximise the potential of the teachable moment, with responses to referrals within 24 hours. Further, engagement with the YP's family took place

at a very early stage to capitalise on the moment for greater engagement potential. Mentoring also began very early in the Reach Programme, with YWs (mentors) being assigned within three working days. The focus in the early programme sessions was on building a relationship with the YWs at times and in places that worked for the YP. Given that signposting activity (for example, housing and employment support) is not as appropriate for YP as it is for adults, the focus in the sessions was on providing support to YP to change their behaviour and improve their relationships with others.

Research questions

The research questions for the feasibility study are set out below. These are also presented in Table 13, which summarises the findings for each research question, and Table 2 (see 'Data collection'), which indicates the participant data used to answer each research question and their relevance to the Theory of Change (ToC) and LM and to findings.

Overarching research questions:

- **Community level factors:** *What is the level of need and readiness for change in the context where the intervention will take place?*
- **Organisational factors:** *What are the key issues facing the schools/communities around suspensions/disadvantage/crime?*
- **Organisational capacity:** *What is the readiness and capacity for change in the settings in which the intervention will take place? Is the culture, coordination, communication and leadership sufficient to enable implementation? How do schools/delivery leads (DLs) perceive the sustainability of the intervention looking ahead?*
- **Recruitment of YWs:** *Has the programme been able to recruit suitable YWs with relevant experience? Is there diversity among the YW team?*
- **Matching process and relationship-building phase:** *Have YP been allocated to a suitable YW? Is the relationship-building phase successful?*
- **Referrals process, eligibility criteria and reach of the programme:** *Is the level of referrals as anticipated? Are the eligibility criteria successful in accessing the intended population? What are the criteria that would make a YP potentially ineligible for the programme? Reach: What is the rate of participation by intended recipients?*
- **Implementation support system:** *What strategies and practices are used to support high-quality implementation? What training and ongoing support or technical assistance is available?*
- **Fidelity/adherence:** *To what extent do implementers adhere to the intended delivery model?*
- **Dosage:** *How much of the intended intervention has been delivered?*
- **Quality:** *How well are the different components of the intervention being delivered?*
- **Responsiveness:** *To what extent do the participants engage with the intervention?*
- **Peer relationships:** *Has peer engagement work been undertaken as expected? Have YP received and engaged with appropriate activities to develop social awareness and skills?*
- **Intervention differentiation:** *To what extent are the intervention activities sufficiently different from existing practices?*

- **Resources:** *Feasibility and appropriateness of the resources required to deliver the intervention*
- **Barriers:** *Exploring the barriers to the implementation of the Reach Programme*
- **Moving forward to the pilot trial:** *Practicability and acceptability of implementing randomisation; exploring the possibility of an active control condition; baseline/outcome data collection and planned measures*

Ethical review

A full ethical review was undertaken for the feasibility study by the ethics review team at Sheffield Hallam University (SHU) prior to the start of data collection in December 2021. The ethics application was approved with reference number ER35983539. SHU has established research ethics procedures in place to ensure research is undertaken in accordance with commonly agreed standards of good practice and academic integrity. It aims to promote good practice throughout the assessment of ethical issues and compliance with legal requirements. SHU's ethics processes align with the guidelines of the British Educational Research Association and British Sociological Association and operate through the University Research Ethics Committee (SHU REC) and Faculty Research Ethics Committees (FREC). The project team ensured that they followed these procedures, including operating to standardised protocols concerning anonymity, confidentiality, informed consent, rights to withdraw and secure (electronic and physical) data storage. The research team is experienced and committed to working in an ethically appropriate and sensitive way, and its members are familiar with the ethical issues arising when working with diverse groups of participants. Copies of our ethics policy, principles and procedures are available at http://www.shu.ac.uk/research/ethics-integrity-and-practice. SIoE ensures that professional standards are always maintained and the wellbeing of research participants always protected. Participant information sheets, consent forms and privacy notices for all data collection are presented in Appendix 2.

Data protection

A privacy notice (Appendix 2) was sent to parents of the YP involved in the project to allow SHU to have access to the monitoring data collected by the delivery team. Two data-sharing agreements were set up, one with Leicester County Council and one with Leicestershire County Council, to specify that SHU and the councils are joint data controllers for the project. All names of YP were removed prior to the data being transferred to SHU.

For the qualitative fieldwork, participant information sheets containing a privacy notice were distributed to all participants prior to interviews being conducted. For the YP and parents/carers involved, this information was tailored to be as accessible as possible. Consent forms were completed by all participants prior to fieldwork taking place.

In terms of data storage, all recordings on digital devices were removed once the audio file had been stored securely on the password-protected shared drive. The audio files were sent for transcription via SHU's secure data transfer system 'Zendto', and once the transcripts had been returned, the copies of the audio files were removed.

For the write-up of the report, school names were not reported, and any references to schools used a number (e.g. School 1 to School 6). Participants were also anonymised or described using their first initial only for reporting purposes.

The processing of personal data for the purposes of the evaluation is defined under the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) as a specific task in the public interest. The legal basis for processing personal data is 'Public Task' (Article 6 (1) (a & e)). In addition to its research ethics policies and procedures described above, SHU has established data protection policies and procedures (https://www.shu.ac.uk/about-this-website/privacy-policy/information-governance-policy) aligned with legal requirements and research societies' standards of good practice. Throughout the project, the project team ensured that they followed all required data protection procedures, including standardised protocols concerning anonymity, confidentiality, rights to withdraw, and (physical and electronic) data privacy, security, storage, transfer and processing.

Our research centre consults with the SHU Data Protection Officer and Information Governance lead on all matters regarding data security. All staff receive Data Protection training, and all projects are conducted in compliance with legislation including GDPR. The SHU Data Protection policy statement can be found at https://www.shu.ac.uk/about-this-website/privacy-policy/privacy-notices/privacy-notice-for-research.

Project team/stakeholders

Please see the 'About the Evaluator' section for details of the evaluation team. As also noted above, the intervention also received funding from the Home Office. Table 1: Full delivery team sets out details of the project delivery team and their affiliations.

Table 1: Full delivery team

Violence Reduction Network		Leicester City Council		Leicestershire County Council	
Stevie-Jade Hardy – Head of Data, Evidence & Evaluation	Involved in development	Nicola Odom – Partnership and Service Development Manager	Involved in development	Carly Turner – Youth and Justice Service Manager	Involved in development
		Ivor Sutton – Team Manager in Early Help & Prevention	Involved in development	Rachel Lobel – Team & Partnership Manager in Youth and Justice	Involved in development
		Ayesha Desai – Reach Team Manager	Involved in development and delivery	Emily Jackson – Reach Team Manager	Involved in development and delivery
		Simon Chetwyn – Project Coordinator	Involved in development and delivery	Corinne Melbourne – YW	Involved in development and delivery
		Charlotte Smith – YW	Involved in development and delivery	James Stephens – YW	Involved in development and delivery
		Zarah Lee – YW	Involved in development and delivery		
		Karen Norton – YW	Involved in development and delivery		
		Charlotte Allitt – YW	Involved in development and delivery		
		Priyah Dosanjh – YW	Involved in development and delivery		
		Arwel Hughes – YW	Started in post 01/09/22		

The VRN, along with the delivery team, were involved in reviewing some of the research tools; for example, the evaluation team cross-checked with the deliverers the questions and information that was being gathered from schools to avoid over-burdening schools. The

delivery team also provided contact details for schools, YWs and members of their team to be interviewed. The delivery team acted as liaison to set up the evaluation team's interviews/focus groups with YP and their observations of delivery so that these could be conducted as smoothly as possible without over-burdening schools and YP. The delivery team was responsible for collecting the monitoring data and providing extracts that were shared with SHU for analysis purposes.

While the delivery team did support the organisational side of the face-to-face fieldwork, the evaluation team independently collected the data. This meant that to maintain independence, only a member of the evaluation team was present for the interviews with SLs, YWs, YP and for the observations. Participants were reassured that data collected would be confidential to the evaluation team and all reporting would be anonymised. All analysis of the research data collected was undertaken and reported on by the evaluation team at SHU.

Methods

Participant selection

A total of six schools were recruited to the feasibility study; four schools were based in Leicester City, and two schools were based in Leicestershire County. These schools were identified for the Reach Programme due to their higher number of suspensions and their locality in terms of being in areas with higher rates of serious violence and deprivation. Schools were asked to make referrals to the Reach Programme using a referral form that specified a set of risk factors and also asked for information on previous suspensions and reasons why YP were deemed currently to be at risk of suspension. To be eligible for the programme, the YP needed to meet at least three of the risk factors listed and considered to be at risk of suspension. SLs made decisions about who would be suitable for the programme in conjunction with the wider team in their school. Once the referrals had been made, consent was sought from the parents/carers for the YP to participate in the Reach Programme.

Over the course of the feasibility study year, it was expected that around 100 YP would be recruited to the programme, with the rationale being that each of the eight YWs should be able to take a caseload of around 12 YP. However, due to challenges for YW recruitment at the beginning of the project (see section below), the programme's capacity to take referrals was lower than expected during the initial stage of the study. Therefore, at the time of reporting, 73 YP have been recruited to the study. It should also be noted here that YW recruitment challenges only affected capacity at the beginning of project; the delivery team now has a full team of qualified and experienced YWs as planned.

The data collected were predominantly qualitative and obtained via remote interviews, with some face-to-face collection also taking place in school and community settings. Alongside these methods, a YW survey was conducted, and monitoring data were provided by the deliverer.

Theory of Change/Logic Model development

The ToC, LM and a Blueprint of activities (Appendix 1) had already been developed by the VRN staff and the delivery team as part of the funding application to YEF. These documents were developed prior to delivery commencing and thus reflected the expected processes to be carried out on the Reach Programme.

The development of the LM started by utilising the VRN's Strategic Needs Assessment, which incorporates a wide range of data on crime, education and social care to evidence the local need. Based upon the nature and scale of the local need, the existing evidence base was reviewed predominantly using the YEF's toolkit and supplemented with policy documents and research reports (e.g. the UK Government's Serious Violence Strategy and the Timpson Review of School Exclusion) to identify interventions and approaches that show promise or have evidence supporting their impact for addressing the local problem.

Through discussions as part of the programme co-design process, it became clear that some elements of the process were still being discussed or negotiated and would need to be reconsidered in relation to the ToC. To ensure the ToC remained up to date and representative of the programme throughout the feasibility stage and would accurately inform the pilot stage, three workshops took place to revise and refine the ToC:

Workshop one: October 2021. The first workshop included three members of the evaluation team and the Head of Data, Evidence & Evaluation from the VRN. At this point in time, recruitment of the full delivery team was still in progress, so it was deemed appropriate to have a smaller workshop with the VRN lead during this initial phase.

This workshop largely focused on the following points: Introducing the ToC and outlining expectations; why the intervention approach is needed; who the approach is for; what is achieved by the approach; what the key activities are and how they link to outcomes; and what the barriers, enablers and unintended consequences are. These were mapped against the original ToC and LM. A further key component of this process was to reach an agreement on the primary outcome measure and any secondary outcome measures that will be taken through to the pilot trial (this is discussed under 'Moving forward to the pilot trial' in the findings section).

Workshop two: May 2022. A number of stakeholders took part in the second workshop, including representatives from the delivery management team, the VRN and the evaluation team.

This workshop focused on refining the ToC post-delivery. Discussion identified the following areas to be revised in the ToC: (1) Representation of parents' role and likely parental

outcomes around understanding of their role, increased family communication skills and engagement with programme/other support; (2) aspirational outcomes needed to be reflected in the short- and medium-term outcomes; (3) recognition of who Reach is aimed at, which is not the very high-risk YP who are referred to youth offending teams and other agencies, or those who do not meet the criteria; and (4) updated inclusion criteria to add low attendance as a criterion.

Workshop three: **July 2022**. The VRN lead and members of the evaluation team took part in the third workshop, where final touches were made to refine the ToC. At this point, early findings from the SL interviews were available, and a member of the evaluation team fed back these findings to further inform these refinements. For example, the inclusion criteria were amended to reflect that non-attenders could also be considered for inclusion, and the evidence was included to show that non-attenders were at risk of later criminality and therefore could derive the same benefits/outcomes from the Reach Programme as those at risk of suspension. The terminology around exclusions was also updated so that these were referred to as 'suspensions', which better reflects current discourse in this area.

Data collection

Given that the project involved a small sample, being a total of six schools, it was deemed most appropriate to undertake predominantly qualitative data collection. Qualitative work also allowed for a more in-depth exploration of the implementation issues at this early stage of development prior to collection of quantitative measures during the pilot stage. Data collection instruments were developed by the evaluation team, while the delivery team provided comments on the draft instruments and further information for the evaluation team's SL interviews. This was to avoid over-burdening schools with questions where the required information had already been gathered. At the pilot stage, these instruments will be refined and reviewed based on findings from the feasibility study. The data collection instruments were developed jointly with input from all members of the evaluation team to provide validation.

The evaluation team collected all of the data aside from the monitoring data, which were collected directly by the delivery team. For each round of data collection, participants were assured of anonymity and their rights with regard to withdrawal and data protection. The delivery team provided information and contact details of the participating schools to the evaluation team and also facilitated the face-to-face interviews/group interviews with the YP in terms of making arrangements and liaising with the schools. All interviews with the YP and other stakeholders were conducted by a member of the evaluation team only.

Table 2: Methods overview below sets out the methods used, the number of participants involved in the data collection for each research question and the relevance of each research question to the LM/ToC.

It should be noted that some minor updates were made to the original plan, as follows:

- It was originally planned to interview two schools from the city and two from the county, but ultimately three schools from the city were interviewed and one from the county due to the later recruitment of schools in the county.
- The YP were interviewed mostly one-to-one and in small groups rather than larger groups as planned; after discussions with the delivery team, it was considered that this was the most appropriate method for the YP to feel comfortable.
- The second early-stage DL interview involved two participants since it was considered beneficial for both to contribute.
- In place of two separate one-to-one interviews, it was considered beneficial to interview the three DLs as a team.
- One YW was not in post during the fieldwork period; thus, there were seven responses to the YW survey.
- An additional email survey to all SLs (five out of six responded) was administered towards the end of the feasibility study to further inform 'business as usual'.

Table 2: Methods overview

Research question	Implementation/ToC/LM relevance	Participants/ data sources
Community level factors: What is the level of need and readiness for change in the context where the intervention will take place?	Assess improvements in school attendance, reduction in family conflicts and increases in the aspirations of YP to understand any reductions in community support resources needed and increases in what resource/benefit YP can bring to the community. 'Improved attendance at school – ToC'. 'Improved relationships with family and reduction in conflict in the home – ToC'. 'Increased aspirations – ToC'. 'YP aged 10–17 years old are at risk of or have received a fixed-term suspension and have three indicators of vulnerability – LM'.	Early stage DL interviews (three participants)
Organisational factors: What are the key issues facing the schools/communities around suspensions/disadvantage/crime?	Explore and understand the causes/drivers for problem behaviours (e.g. individual, familial, school, peer and contextual factors). 'Improved understanding of the causes/drivers for problem behaviours – ToC'. 'Six schools (four in the city and two in the county) with the highest rates of fixed-term suspensions agree to participate – LM'. '120 referrals received during feasibility period – LM'.	Early stage DL interviews (three participants) SL interviews (four participants)
Organisational capacity: What is the readiness and capacity for change in the settings in which the intervention will take place? Is the culture, coordination, communication and leadership sufficient to enable implementation? How do schools/DLs perceive the sustainability of the intervention looking ahead?	Assess the extent to which staff make appropriate referrals and provide additional support to YP when at school. 'Reduction in suspensions or problem behaviours – ToC'. 'Improved attendance at school – ToC'. '120 referrals received during feasibility period – LM'. 'Six schools (four in the city and two in the county) with the highest rates of fixed term suspensions agree to participate – LM'.	SL interviews (four participants) Later stage DL group interview (three participants)
Recruitment of YWs: Has the programme been able to recruit suitable YWs with relevant experience? Is there diversity among the YW team?	Assess whether programme is reaching target criteria in regard to experience/skills and diversity to support YW/YP relationship-building and skills development of YP. 'Development of positive and trusting relationship with YW – ToC'. 'Retain YWs throughout feasibility period – LM'.	Early stage DL interviews (three participants) YW survey Later stage DL group interview (three participants)

Matching process and relationship building phase: Have YP been allocated to a suitable YW? Is the relationship building phase successful?	Assess whether the allocation and matching process assesses need and mentor skill/experience to enable YW/YP relationship building. 'Development of positive and trusting relationship with YW – ToC/LM'. 'YWs and YP meet two to three times a week during the relationship-building stage – LM'.	YW survey YW interviews (four participants) Interviews with YP x 12 participants (combination of one-to-one/small group) Later stage DL group interview (three participants)
Referrals process, eligibility criteria and reach of the programme: Is the level of referrals as anticipated? Are the eligibility criteria successful in accessing the intended population? What are the criteria that would make a YP potentially ineligible for the programme? Reach: What is the rate of participation by intended recipients?	Refinement and standardisation of eligibility criteria to ensure appropriate inclusion of YP. '120 referrals received during feasibility period – LM'. '75% (n = 90) of YP referred are recruited onto programme – LM'.	SL interviews (four participants) Later stage DL group interview (three participants) Monitoring data Secondary data
Implementation support system: What strategies and practices are used to support high-quality implementation? What training and ongoing support or technical assistance is available?	'Hiring staff and training YWs to ensure that they're highly skilled and culturally competent – LM'. Assessment of relationship outcomes between YP and YWs. 'Development of positive and trusting relationship with YW'.	SL interviews (four participants) SL interviews (four participants) YW interviews (four participants)
Fidelity/adherence: To what extent do implementers adhere to the intended delivery model?	To gain an overview of fidelity to programme across the right YWs. 'Prompt response (within 24 hours) from YW after 'critical moment' to arrange assessment – LM'. 'Comprehensive and contextual assessment of YP to match YP to YW – LM'. 'YWs and YP to meet two to three times a week during the relationship-building stage – LM'. 'Extensive relationship-building phase (4–6 weeks) to include recreational activities – LM'. 'Facilitating access and encouraging participation in purposeful and sustainable activity – LM'.	YW survey YW interviews (four participants), Interviews with YP x 12 participants (combination of one-to-one/small group) Two observations of delivery Later stage DL group interview (three participants) Monitoring data

Dosage: How much of the intended intervention has been delivered?	Assess ongoing delivery and make estimates of future expected delivery. '75% (n = 67) YP are recruited onto the programme – LM'. '75% of YP complete the programme – LM'. 'YP complete 80% of core component sessions – LM'.	YW interviews (four participants) Interviews with YP x 12 participants (combination of one-to-one/small group) Later stage DL group interview (three participants) Monitoring data
Quality: How well are the different components of the intervention being delivered?	Assess experiences of delivery and participation of each element of intervention to refine processes to improve likely outcomes. 'YP complete 80% of core component sessions – LM'. '75% (n = 67) complete the programme – LM'.	YW interviews (four participants) Interviews with YP x 12 participants (combination of one-to-one/small group) Two observations of delivery Later stage DL group interview (three participants)
Responsiveness: To what extent do the participants engage with the intervention?	Assessment of engagement with intervention, mentor and peers. 'High rates of attendance and participation in sessions'. 'Increased and sustained engagement in prosocial recreational activities'. 'Increased network of positive peers and trusted adults'.	YW survey YW interviews (four participants) Interviews with YP x 12 participants (combination of one-to-one/small group) SL interviews (four participants) Later stage DL group interview (three participants)
Peer relationships: Has peer engagement work been undertaken as expected? Have YP received and engaged with appropriate activities to develop social awareness and skills?	'Increased network of positive peers and trusted adults – LM'. 'Improved social skills – LM'. 'Improved understanding of negative peer influences – LM'.	YW interviews (four participants) Interviews with YP x 12 participants (combination of one-to-one/small group) Later stage DL group interview (three participants)
Intervention differentiation: To what extent are the intervention activities sufficiently different from existing practices?	To inform 'business as usual' case and potential control condition.	SL interviews (four participants) Email survey to all SLs (five out of six SLs responded)*

Resources: Feasibility and appropriateness of the resources required to deliver the intervention	Clear and accessible intervention materials. Good understanding and use of learning outcomes for activities.	YW interviews (four participants) Interviews with YP x 12 participants (combination of one-to-one/small group) Two observations of delivery Later stage DL group interview (three participants)
Barriers: Exploring the barriers to the implementation of the Reach Programme	To determine what factors may be affecting the appropriate and consistent delivery of the core components identified in the ToC/LM.	YW survey YW interviews (four participants) Interviews with YP x 12 participants (combination of one-to-one/small group) SL interviews (four participants) Observations of delivery Later stage DL group interview (three participants)
Moving forward to the pilot trial: Practicability and acceptability of implementing randomisation; exploring the possibility of an active control condition; baseline/outcome data collection and planned measures	To inform pilot trial.	DL later stage group interview SL interviews (four participants) and completion of 'business as usual' information from five schools Meetings with delivery team throughout Email survey to all SLs (five out of six SLs responded)*

*A short email survey was administered to all SLs towards the end of the feasibility study to supplement the information regarding 'business as usual'. This is presented under 'Moving forward to the pilot trial'.

Analysis

All qualitative data were recorded and fully transcribed for analysis purposes. A descriptive summary of the findings is presented using quotes from participants to illustrate findings under each thematic area. Data were analysed using a codebook thematic analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2019). The codebook thematic analysis is akin to a framework approach and was used because it provides the opportunity to use the research questions as a deductive analytic framework, while also providing scope for some inductive analytic work around each research question write-up. The deductive approach ensures that the write-up will answer the study questions and meet the needs of the YEF evaluation while also allowing for the data from the YP, YWs, schools and stakeholders to speak for itself. Each interview was coded with the research question framework as a guide. Themes and an analytic narrative were inductively developed around each of the research questions. Three lead researchers worked on the coding of the data for validation purposes. Given the small sample size, Microsoft Excel was deemed to be a sufficient tool for undertaking this analysis. Research questions were set up as rows in an Excel spreadsheet. The transcripts were analysed so that text relevant to each research question, from each participant, was copied into the Excel spreadsheet, which allowed us to look across participant data for each research question.

The small-scale YW survey was collected via Qualtrics and analysed using the statistical package SPSS. Given the low number of survey participants (seven), the findings are purely descriptive and reported in numerical rather than percentage format. The monitoring data collected by the Reach team were provided in anonymised format to the SHU evaluation team. These data were used largely to inform the success/target criteria and were also triangulated with the qualitative data where appropriate (e.g. regarding fidelity, dosage and reach of the programme). Data on suspensions in the six schools in the study were also provided to SHU by the VRU to allow a comparison with the demographic profile of YP recruited to the programme in terms of age, gender and ethnicity to further inform the extent to which the programme was reaching its intended recipients.

Timeline

Table 3: Timeline (e = evaluation team, d = delivery team) below shows the activities that took place during project delivery. Throughout this time period, there were continuing discussions between the evaluation team and the delivery team regarding potential randomisation and the control condition (business as usual) leading to the pilot trial.

Table 3: Timeline (e = evaluation team, d = delivery team)

Date	Activity
October 21	Initial ToC workshop (e and d)
November 21	Set up meetings between delivery team and evaluation team (e and d)
December 21	Set up work with schools (d); recruitment of delivery team and YWs (d); ethics application (e); design of information sheets and consent forms for fieldwork (e); feasibility study plan (e and d)
January 22	Design of research tools for DL interviews (e); early-stage interviews with lead delivery team (e and d); design of YW survey (e); first referrals received from schools (d)
February 22	Set up data sharing agreements between SHU and the two councils (e and d); YW survey distributed to YWs currently in post (this was also sent later to YWs with a later start date) (e)
March 22	Design of SL interview schedule and YP interview schedule (e); set up work to plan SL interviews and interviews with YP (e and d)
April 22	Interviews with SLs (e); early-stage interviews with YP (e)
May 22	Mid-point ToC workshop (e and d); design of YW interview schedule and observation schedule (e)
June 22	Later stage interviews with YP (e); remote interviews with YWs (e)
July 22	Observations of delivery and face-to-face interviews with YWs (e); later stage DL interviews (e and d); final ToC workshop (e and d)
August 22	Analysis of all data collected (e); updated version of monitoring data provided for analysis (e and d); report writing (e)
September 22	Report writing and submission of final feasibility study report (e)

Findings

Participants

Purposive sampling was used to sample the schools interviewed, with the lead contact for Reach in schools as the interviewee. This method was deemed most appropriate given the smaller sample size and need for pragmatism. The average age of the YP interviewed was 13, which reflects the average age of the full total of YP recruited to the Reach Programme. Of the YP interviewed, 73% were male, compared with 60% of all the YP recruited to the Reach Programme; 50% of YP interviewees were White British, compared with 62% of the full sample, with the other YP interviewees being Asian, Black and mixed race. Table 4 below sets out the numbers of participants involved in the qualitative fieldwork, the YW survey and in the monitoring data.

Table 4: Study participants

Participants	Numbers and location
DL interviews	6 participants (1 early stage individual interview, 1 early stage group interview with 2
SL interviews	4 participants: 3 city and 1 county
YW interviews	4 participants: 3 city and 1 county
YP interviews/small groups	12 participants (8 individual interviews and 2 x groups of 2): 8 city and 4 county
Observations	2 YP and 2 YWs: 1 city and 1 county
YW survey	7 respondents: 5 city and 2 county
Monitoring data	109 referrals of YP with 73 recruited

In terms of the full sample of the 73 participants recruited to the Reach Programme, Tables 5–7 below show the demographics (gender/age/ethnicity) of these young people. These data are also presented further on in the report alongside levels of suspensions in the six schools to give an overview of the reach of the programme.

Table 5: Recruitment to the Reach Programme by gender

Gender	Recruited to Reach Programme (n=73)
Male	60%
Female	40%

Table 6: Recruitment to the Reach Programme by age

Age	Recruited to Reach Programme (n=73)
11	8%
12	21%
13	22%
14	26%
15	23%
16	0%

Table 7: Recruitment to the Reach Programme by ethnicity

Ethnicity	Recruited to Reach Programme (n=73)
White	62%
Asian	7%
Mixed	12%
Black	8%
Other	11%

Findings

A full presentation of the findings from the fieldwork is set out below under each research question addressed. Please see Table 13 for a summary of these findings and Table 2 for a summary of the participant data used to answer each research question alongside the relevance to the LM/ToC.

Community-level factors

- *What is the level of need and readiness for change in the context where the intervention will take place?*

As noted in the background section above, the LLR Strategic Needs Assessment revealed a local need for a new intervention that proactively identifies at-risk YP at critical upstream moments to prevent future involvement in violence. While Leicester and Leicestershire have lower rates of pupil exclusions and suspensions as a whole compared with the UK,[3] analysis by Leicester City Council shows that exclusions and suspensions are concentrated in the areas with higher rates of serious violence and deprivation. Based on local data, we know that a significant proportion of at-risk YP have been suspended and/or truanted and attend schools in areas with high crime rates and deprivation.[4]

At the outset, one of the DL interviewees set out the key aims and objectives of the Reach Programme in terms of focusing in on suspensions, drawing on the evidence base of the link between suspensions and future involvement in crime/poorer life outcomes:

'So for us, I would say the key aim, key objective of the programme is to reduce exclusions – that is the overarching aim, and the reason why we are focusing on that is because we know from the evidence base just how much of an indicator of vulnerability that is to the future involvement not only in anti-social behaviour and crime but generally poorer outcomes in life.' DL early interview

The DL went on to discuss the local context and the higher level of suspensions in certain areas (east Leicester, west Leicester and Charnwood) compared to local and regional data, with the top reason for suspensions in these areas identified as physical assault on another pupil. The DL further noted that in areas where there were higher rates of suspensions, there were also higher rates of serious violence.

[3] https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/

[4] https://www.violencereductionnetwork.co.uk/_files/ugd/6e2bca_0fe8a2784aa94e6f84fb459f31da9ea6.pdf

The DL went on to describe the existing gap in support for YP at risk by highlighting the current situation where the YP would receive a suspension for a few days, have a conversation and then gain no further support. They indicated that programmes such as Reach are needed to address what led to the disruptive behaviour to start with and to promote a 'whole family approach', where a YW can further explore what is happening at home and can set them up with other early help and links to other areas of support.

The target age range of YP was also discussed, with the peak age identified as 15–19, closely followed by 10–14. The DL highlighted that the optimum mechanism to reach these YP was through schools, describing this as a 'reachable space' where they could engage with the YP.

The DLs went on to say that although the programme was focusing in on suspensions, this was part of a wider context that the programme sought to influence, in terms of looking at constructive activities, relationships with peers and families, and relationships with professionals in schools. This links in with comments made by SLs about the ability of YWs to connect with the YP in the community and in the family environment, which is not always possible for schools to do.

Organisational factors

- *What are the key issues facing the schools/communities around suspensions/ disadvantage/crime?*

School context and community issues

SLs discussed the high levels of crime and deprivation in the communities where some of their YP are based; for example, they mentioned saturated areas in terms of housing and housing estates where families have high levels of unemployment. This reflects the focus of the Reach Programme on areas with higher rates of serious violence and deprivation and the link with higher levels of suspensions and truancy (see background section). All SLs mentioned regular contact/meetings with the local police/liaison officer to discuss particular incidents that may have occurred, for example:

'We're in a very deprived area, so we've got a lot of disadvantaged kids. We do a lot of work with the police and things like that.' SL County

Two of the SLs mentioned family issues, such as parents/carers being involved in incidents and family/neighbour disputes that affected the school, with one school citing an officer

coming into the school each week to go over incidents that YP or parents/carers have been involved in.

Impacts of COVID-19 pandemic

It was noted in the early-stage DL interviews that YP's academic and personal development appears to have been adversely impacted by the inconsistency in educational provision during the pandemic owing to periods of isolation and less structured learning experiences. DLs further described existing issues being exacerbated by the pandemic, with the protective factors that come from being in the school environment having been stripped away. They went on to note the missed opportunities to identify risk factors and put in place early support:

'I think locally not only were there existing issues in terms of having maybe high rates of exclusion, but I just think everything has been exacerbated by the pandemic and the scale of absences and all of those protective factors that came from being in the school environment, you know, stripping away that development you would have maybe expected in normal times; those opportunities to identify risk factors and put support in early, you know, has just been missed in the last two years.' DL early interview

DLs also highlighted how, post-COVID-19, schools are facing increased challenges from pupils at younger ages than previously, e.g. YP as young as 10 years old taking knives into primary schools.

Organisational capacity:

- *What is the readiness and capacity for change in the settings in which the intervention will take place?*
- *Is the culture, coordination, communication and leadership sufficient to enable implementation?*
- *How do schools/DLs perceive the sustainability of the intervention looking ahead?*

At the outset, DLs commented on the near universal support for the programme, noting that schools were very positive about the programme and were almost taken aback by the amount of intensive support that was potentially being offered.

DLs also commented that during the set-up phase, the feedback from YP's families was also positive and that they were largely supportive of the programme.

Once implementation was underway in schools, SLs in general spoke very positively about Reach and indicated that they were very thankful to have the opportunity to take up the additional support. For example, one SL mentioned how Reach had filled a gap because of the wider approach of the programme in terms of involving parents/guardians and also because of the tailoring to the individual YP:

'*We believe in a very strong partnership with parents and guardians and with the members of staff – almost that triangulated approach with the student almost in the centre or in the corner, making that work. And this is where the Reach Programme was almost like a prayer answered. They've got particular needs and particular support, and the individuals are trained to help, and they have almost that bank of ammunition of how do I tackle this and giving them those positive steps to move forward.'* SL City 2

Another SL mentioned their readiness to incorporate Reach as part of their support systems for pupils and described how they had integrated Reach through their existing pastoral teams:

'*We've launched it through the pastoral teams so that they are aware of the programme and can make their recommendations for students. But as a school, yes we're always ready to embrace any additional support that we can.'* SL City 3

The involvement of the school's pastoral team or safeguarding leads to facilitate the integration of Reach was also highlighted by other schools. SLs further indicated that senior leaders within the school were involved and very supportive of the programme, with one SL noting how the programme was mentioned in SLT meetings with parents/carers:

'An example is that when our safeguard lead who's a member of SLT has had meetings with pupils or parents or carers, that the programme has actually been mentioned in those meetings as a form of support. So, yes, they are fully on board.' SL City 1

All schools felt the programme would be sustainable in the way it runs at the moment, but one SL raised the issue of funding:

'I think the only question mark I would have would be in terms of funding… again, being transparent, this year we haven't had to actually pay anything towards the programme, and there have been contributions towards other bits that have supported things working the

way that they have. I think if we're in a position where we'd have to look to pay towards that, then we would have to look very long and hard into whether we can go ahead with the programme.' SL City 2

Although DLs had positive views on the programme's sustainability, there was an understanding that, over time, the programme may need to change to achieve it:

'We were accepting that we're going to evolve as we go. We need to get the processes that work both for the Reach and for the schools.' DL early interview

In terms of sustainability for the DLs themselves, some concern was expressed over renewal of contracts. While the team members were thinking ahead and looking forward to the development of the programme, the uncertainty of job security was affecting them and had also raised concerns about retention of the YW team:

'There is that little bit of worry over that retention of staff because of that uncertainty over the contract and whether it's going to get renewed, so that could be a concern for all of us. You know, it's sort of a juxtaposition, if that's the right word to use. On the one hand, you're thinking about the development; on the other hand, you're thinking, "Well, I've got to make sure I've got a job after Christmas".' DL late interview

Recruitment of YWs

- *Has the programme been able to recruit suitable YWs with relevant experience?*
- *Is there diversity among the YW team?*

Recruitment of YWs at the start of the programme proved challenging and took longer than expected due to the limited number of suitable candidates applying. DLs believed this problem was exacerbated by the fact that the roles were temporary contracts, noting that potential candidates were not going to leave permanent jobs for short-time contracts.

As the project progressed, five YWs were recruited in January and February 2022, with a sixth YW in place by March. A further YW was recruited in the summer, and the final YW started in September 2022. However, even though YWs were successfully recruited, DLs highlighted there was still some delay as the appointees were onboarded onto the project for reasons such as working out notice periods in existing jobs, references coming back and DBS checks.

The type of employment contracts was a concern for over half of the YWs, who indicated in the YW survey that the temporary nature of the contracts (four out of seven respondents) and duration of contracts (four out of seven respondents) caused uncertainty at the time of application.

Although recruitment of YWs proved challenging at the outset and affected the capacity for referrals at the start of the feasibility study, findings show that the YW team now in place brings a wide range of experience and competencies to the roles and work together as a close-knit, mutually supportive and committed team. This is further demonstrated by the YW survey, where just one of seven respondents indicated that they were uncertain about whether they met the range of skills required. The YW team have all been retained in post, as at the time of reporting. DLs commented on this retention and on the unique qualities that each individual YW brings to the team:

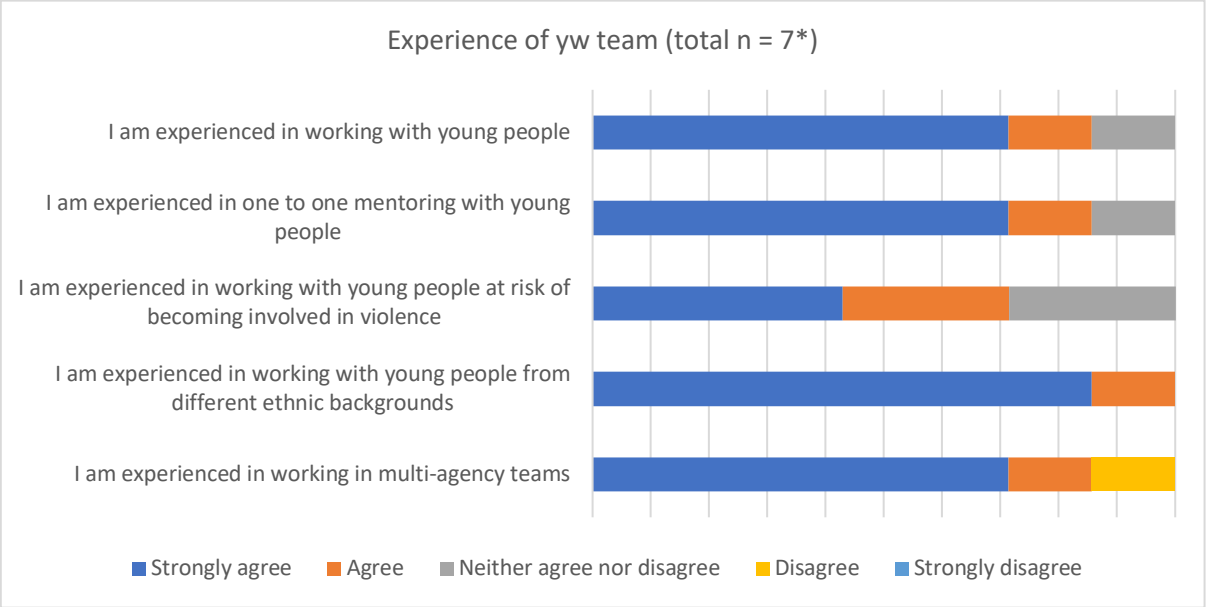
'*We've got quite a good range of broad skills, abilities and experience… and previous experience, so I think that's really helped in terms of the delivery because I think they've all brought their own unique qualities to that.'* DL late interview

This breadth of experience was further confirmed by the YW survey, where respondents indicated that their pooled experience included previous work for a prevention team in the council, work with looked-after children, previous experience as a YW and work with YP in colleges/special education needs (SEN) schools. Two respondents felt that their experience of working with YP with SEN was particularly beneficial to undertaking the Reach YW role. Another respondent cited the skills that they thought were important to the role in terms of being able to listen, being adaptive and responsive according to the needs of the YP and being non-judgemental:

'*The ability to listen, adapt and deliver the same thing in different methods according to the young person you may be working with. The ability to be a guiding non-judgemental hand, planting seed with the young people treating them with equality and respect*.' YW survey

Overall, YWs were confident of their experience in the relevant areas, with the majority agreeing or strongly agreeing with the statements in Figure 1 below. There was slightly less experience among the team regarding working with YP at risk of becoming involved in violence, compared with the other areas; however, the majority did agree that they were experienced in this area, and none of the respondents disagreed with this statement (Figure 1: YW survey – experience of YW team

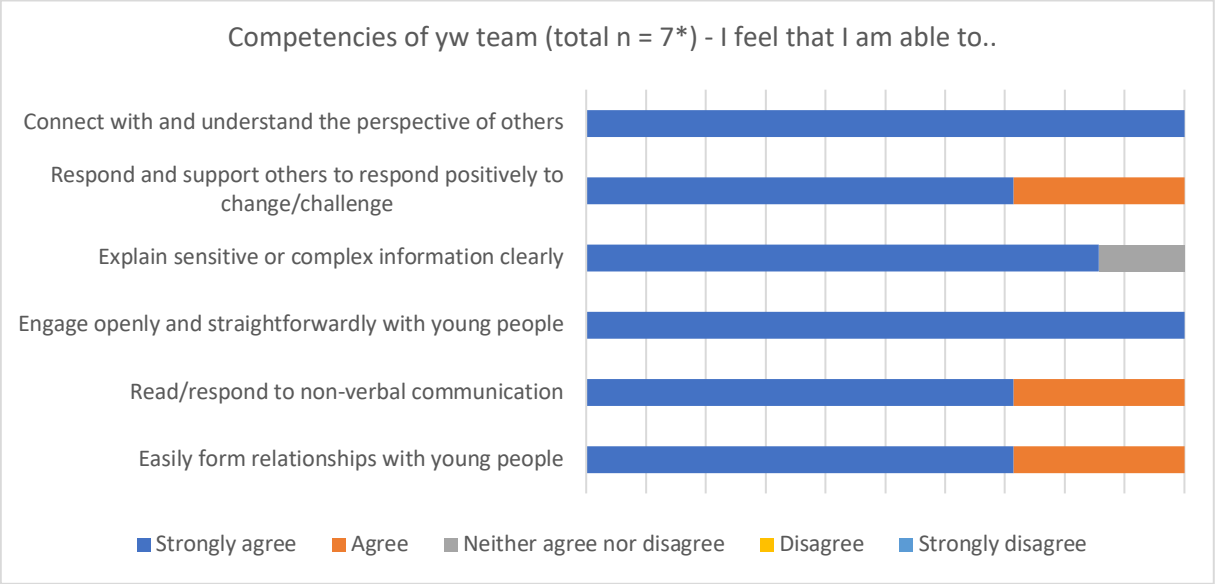
Figure 1: YW survey – experience of YW team



*Note that percentages are not reported here due to low numbers of respondents; however, the graphs represent the proportion of responses to each statement.

The YWs were also confident of their other competencies important to the role, with almost all respondents agreeing or strongly agreeing with the statements in Figure 2 below. In addition, six of the seven respondents indicated that they were confident or very confident in conducting their role (with one missing answer; Figure 2).

Figure 2: YW survey – competencies of YW team



*Note that percentages are not reported here due to low numbers of respondents; however, the graphs represent the proportion of responses to each statement.

The YW team were also asked about their motivations for applying to the role, which demonstrated the commitment and enthusiasm they bring. Reasons included:

- *'Having more time to work with young people on a one-to-one basis and having the chance for more face-to-face contact with young people'*
- *'Interest in reaching young people earlier in life at the prevention stage'*
- *'A strong belief in the Reach Programme and the capacity of the programme to see real impact on young people in helping them realise their own potential'*

(YW survey)

In terms of diversity, just over half the team indicated that they were of English/Welsh/Scottish/Northern Irish/British backgrounds, with other ethnicities reported being Indian, mixed race and any other White background. With regard to gender, as indicated by the delivery team, there were six females and two males in the YW team at the time of reporting. Nearly all survey respondents were aged 34 and under, with half of them aged 24 and under. The suitability of the team in terms of matching YWs with YP is discussed below in the section on the relationship-building phase.

Matching process and relationship-building phase

- *Have YP been allocated to a suitable YW?*
- *Is the relationship-building phase successful?*

Findings from the study indicated generally that the matching process proved less important than anticipated in terms of the gender and ethnicity of the YW. DLs noted that although the YW team was predominantly female, this had not impacted on the engagement rate:

'Actually, if you look at the engagement rate, regardless of male involvement, the retention rate's been relatively high; it's interesting that the females that are working with the male young people that we've got on the programme, that actually isn't affecting engagement or their ability to continue on the programme; they've not declined the intervention based on the youth worker's gender.' DL late interview

From the perspective of the YWs, the majority (five out of seven) indicated in the survey that they felt they had been matched appropriately with all of the YP they were working with. The other two YWs indicated that they felt this was the case for some of the YP they were working with. The YWs that were interviewed said they felt they were generally well matched to their YP. While there were some cases where YP were reallocated, on the whole, the process of matching YP to YWs was successful.

'I think for the most part, yes, my young people… I've been matched with well.' YW Interview 3

The DLs further commented on the engagement of the YP and indicated that the relationship- building phase had been largely successful thus far:

'They've all engaged really really well; they're all meeting that sort of, developing that relationship with the YW from the start, so everyone's hitting that component in terms getting that relationship.' DL later stage interview

The YW survey further revealed that YWs were, for the most part, positive in how the relationship-building phase had gone thus far:

- In terms of identifying suitable activities, respondents indicated that this was achieved for all (four out of seven) or most (three out of seven) of the YP they had worked with to date.
- YWs were also largely confident that they had been able to build a trusting relationship with their YP during the relationship-building phase: three out of seven

respondents said this was true for all their YP, and the other four respondents said it applied to most of their YP.

- YWs were also confident that they had a comprehensive understanding of the lived reality of their YP so far, with two respondents saying this was the case for all their YP, and five respondents citing most of their YP.

The YW interviews revealed more in-depth insights into the matching process and relationship-building phase as described under the themes below, which demonstrate the elements that led to the matching process and relationship-building phase being successful.

Flexible, young person-led approaches

During this matching and relationship-building phase, there were a number of issues and ideas that became important, the first of which was that having a flexible approach that was YP-led rather than YW-led was key. The YWs made one-page profiles as a way of communicating to YP who they were and allowed YP to express interest in working with them. The YPs were invited to match themselves based on the 'advertised' profile. This approach to the matching process gave YP a degree of control and autonomy:

'We made one-page profiles of ourselves… we thought, actually, why don't we do it a bit different? Why don't we talk about ourselves and then they choose us?' YW Interview 2

As well as promoting a YP-led approach to selecting a YW, there was also a flexible YP-led approach to the process of building a relationship. YWs used the relationship-building phase flexibly to meet the needs of individual YP. If, on occasion, it did not feel appropriate to move on to new modules, YWs could decide to spend longer on modules such as the relationship-building work, with YWs expressing the hope that such tailoring may ultimately lead to better long-term outcomes. In addition, the types of activities YWs could choose to complete with YP were also YP-led:

'It works pretty well, four to six weeks. The good thing about this programme is it's flexible. If you've got a young person that's going to take a little bit longer to build a relationship, you've got the time to do that. So, yeah, with him, it's been a little bit longer.' YW Interview 1

Although the findings suggest that most YP in the programme were well matched with their YW, mismatches could happen, even through a YP-led approach to YW selection. In these cases, the delivery team's response was to allow the YP to be reassigned to appropriate YWs. While it did not generally appear that features such as YW gender and ethnicity were

critically important for YP, in one case it was important for the YP to be re-matched with a female YW.

'I was working with a young girl, but then she chose to work with a female worker. That was fine, and I understand they want to choose who they want.' YW Interview 4

Common ground

One apparent feature of the relationship-building phase for YWs was the finding of common ground with the YP, something that was important in developing trust and rapport in the relationship between the YW and the YP. Common ground could be sought in recreational activities and interests, language and cultural background or experience.

In one case, where a YP had English as an additional language (EAL), having a common language was a way in which a relationship was built with a YP.

*'The young man I've got from ** – his English is actually quite good. I lived in ** for a little while, so I can speak a little [of the language], so at the start that was really good for relationship building.'* YW Interview 2

As well as having a language in common, the YW explored shared interests in the form of card games and encouraged the YP to teach them new games weekly. Being the one to teach a card game provided the YP with opportunities to lead, take control and initiate interactions, and the ongoing activity provided a focus for coming weeks.

For others, sports formed common ground. This led the way for recreational activities such as playing sports together and visiting sporting grounds, in addition to using their interest in a sport to introduce the YP to other related sporting activities. In some cases, YWs had an interest in sporting activities such as football and had links to clubs and venues that facilitated engaging in sporting activities:

*'I used to play football for **. So, I think a lot of the lads chose me because there was that football element in there. I've got quite a lot of them into boxing as well, because I do that in my own time.'* YW Interview 2

Again, flexibility and being led by the YP was important. Finding out what the YP liked could open the door, but this was the starting point from which a deeper relationship could be built:

'I've found out I've always got something in common with each case, that I can relate to. One young person really likes cars and motorbikes, so I will relate to that and go into that general interest… just being able to have those general interests in common, and I tend to try and build the relationship based on that and then just let it go from there.' YW Interview 4

Related experiences

As mentioned above, issues such as gender and ethnicity were generally not overly important for YP or YWs in building a relationship; however, in some cases, having some form of related experience was a facilitator for the relationship, not just with the YP but also with the YP's family. For one YW, having gone through the immigration process themselves provided a degree of understanding and empathy that may be important in working with and building a relationship with YP and their families:

'I think that's because a lot of the young people I work with – their families have either moved to the UK or they have dual heritage or their heritage is not originally British, White British. So, they see me as someone who gets it; someone who's also been through immigration understands how expensive and how stressful that is. So, it's actually been a really positive thing, I think, for me.' YW Interview 3

In the interviews, the YWs talked about how a number of the families they work with have dual heritage, are immigrants to the UK or have family elsewhere in the world. While such characteristics may not be essential for matching YWs to YP, the findings suggest the importance of the YW's ability to understand and empathise with YP and families because of parallels in their own lived experience. This may be something to consider going forward.

Safety, security, trust and non-judgement

For some YW and YP in this programme, the process of building a relationship was demonstrated with incremental steps over time. One measure of trust is described below. The YP asked the YW eventually to visit the family home, and the YW was able to meet the family and engage with the YP and the family together. Steps such as this could not always be achieved straight away because a degree of trust that had to be built first:

'The first young person I started working with is A up at [school]. Originally, he didn't want me coming to the house; he didn't really want any sort of contact. We were meeting once a week for maybe 45 minutes, and it was really quiet. And now, open, chatting away. So now I'm right like seven weeks, I'm coming over, we're going to do this. He's like, "Yeah it's fine.

We can make pizza, we can do this, we can play cards with the family." Finally feeling like I'm getting somewhere with that. That's huge.' YW Interview 3

Interviews with YWs indicated that there are several key features of good relationship building that include the feeling of safety and security, equality, respect, feeling listened to, feeling at ease and not feeling judged. According to one YW, it is important that these features are in place and demonstrated by the YW in order for a relationship to grow:

'For me, with the young people, they have to feel safe and secure around me. They've got to feel that I will listen. … it's making them feel at ease, making them feel equal, making them feel respected, making them feel listened to, and then straight away you can start to build a good relationship with them. And obviously you don't judge them.' YW Interview 1

While these features need to be demonstrated by YWs and instilled in YP, the notion of relationship building is not one-sided. Just as the YP needs to have trust in their YW, the YW also needs to have trust and faith in the YP. It hinges on a mutual exchange of trust: the YP trusting that the YW can and will deliver on what they have promised, and the YW trusting that the YP will engage in the programme and beyond:

'I need to have trust in them that they will engage with the programme and they will be able to build themselves up following it and be able to sustain themselves as the programme goes on and then eventually ends. And they've got to trust me that I'll be able to deliver on what I've promised to them in a way – that I'll be able to give them some of these tools that they can go away with.' YW Interview 4

From the perspectives of the YP interviewed, they had a similar set of priorities for relationship building with their YW to ensure a successful relationship. This broadly included the building of trust, open-mindedness, being non-judgmental, understanding and caring.

One YP talked about her YW as someone they could tell anything to, something that implies a feeling of deep trust on the part of the YP. She said she could disclose any issue or problem and be sure that the YW would respect the confidentiality of the relationship.

Open-mindedness was another important feature in the YP–YW relationship. Being open-minded may have led YWs to have greater understanding of the YP, which was also important. The YP interviewed expressed the desire to be understood, and when this was achieved, it strengthened the relationship building:

'It is quite important because I wouldn't want to be working with someone that doesn't get me and doesn't get what I like.' YP Interview 2 – City

Similarly, being non-judgemental was also an important feature of the relationship that may have led to YP being more open and honest. In the delivery observation activities, it was evident that no topic of conversation was off limits, and if the YP wanted to discuss anything, they felt like they could do this. For the YW to be open and receptive to the conversation is one thing, but the more important aspect is accepting the information given without judgement:

'She's just like an open person. She's open to anything. I can talk to her about anything. She's not judgmental at all, and she gives solutions to every problem.' YP Interview 4 – City

Importantly, with these relationship features in place, the YP in the study felt that they were able to talk to their YWs and could see the same features in themselves, as in the case of this YP:

'Yeah, she does laugh lot. She's really like open as well. Like, she's one of those people that you feel like you can talk to about anything. I don't know, I just love her loads. She's really open and like… when people are like that, it makes me feel like that I'll actually get along with them, because I'm the same.' YP Interview 9 – County

Lastly and crucially, YP reported how their YWs made them feel listened to and ultimately cared about, which is an important feature of the relationships.

'She tries to listen to me – she tries to make us feel like we're on the same level so that she can talk to me and I can talk to her as well.' YP Interview 4 – City

Maintenance of trust and relationship building

The notion of trust was key to the relationship-building phase, but successful relationships also required ongoing maintenance. Otherwise, the YW–YP relationship could 'regress', which could be detrimental to the programme. The need for maintenance provided some challenge during term time when time was more limited; however, during the school holidays, there was more flexibility for the YW and YP to spend time together:

'Some of them have – what's the word – regressed, that's the word I'm looking for. There's a little bit of regression, and I think that may have to do with the fact that I cannot see them as much, so there's a little bit of trust that needs to be rebuilt with that, but luckily over the summer we've got the time to do.' YW Interview 3

An ally/A friend

There is a distinct sense of allyship and friendship born from the relationship-building activities that took place in this programme. The YW extract below conveys the sense that the YP sees the YW as someone who they want to be proud of them, which is a good indicator of a positive adult relationship being built:

*'I've been working with * for a while. He just really struggled with attendance. I heard nothing for weeks and weeks and weeks, and then all of a sudden I'm getting text messages – I wanted to go to school, I tried to go to school today – or calling me and saying, "I'm going to school today." Just those little things that he wants to be accountable. He wants me to be proud of him. They want to be held accountable and they want me to feel proud of them. That's huge.'* YW Interview 3

For some YP who experienced a difficult life event, a YW formed a positive adult relationship that provided someone to turn to when the YP felt they could not approach family or friends. The YW, again, acted as an ally for the YP who otherwise felt they had no one else to talk to. In addition to this, some of the YP interviewed talked about their YW as a 'best friend', which again demonstrated the strength of the developing relationship. One of these YP indicated that this was the first time they had had such a strong positive relationship.

'The best thing about having a mentor is the fact that now I've got a new best mate that I can just call up at any time that I want, if I'm struggling, just talk for like 30 minutes – however long I want – and you know just get to talk to someone. I've never really had that before.' YP Interview 10 – County

Referrals process, eligibility criteria and reach of the programme

- *Is the level of referrals as anticipated?*
- *Are the eligibility criteria successful in accessing the intended population?*
- *What are the criteria that would make a YP potentially ineligible for the programme?*
- *Reach: What is the rate of participation by intended recipients?*

Level of referrals

The level of referrals that schools were ready and able to make was largely as anticipated. As noted in the SL interviews below, schools were able to identify many YP that they felt would be eligible and suitable for the Reach Programme, which further emphasises the positive view of the programme by schools and the potential for Reach to access a wider cohort. The number of referrals that schools were able to make, however, was significantly affected by the staffing capacity of the delivery team at the beginning of the project (please see 'Recruitment' section above).

Ineligibility

Of the 109 YP who had been referred to the programme to date, 11 cases were deemed not eligible. In these 11 cases, although the schools were able to identify indicators of vulnerability, there were no concerns about the YP's behaviour or that it would lead to suspension or future involvement in crime and violence.

Implementing the referral process; success in accessing the intended population

In terms of the referral process itself, SLs perceived this to be fairly straightforward and felt that they had been adequately briefed by the delivery team on the expectations; for example, one SL commented:

'*It's all the kinds of things that we would be expecting and all the information that they would need to collect for their analysis of background and that kind of stuff. Yes, it's a reasonable form.'* SL City 3

SLs discussed the effectiveness of the referral criteria in reaching the intended population. There was a general sense that although the criteria were useful, there were instances where SLs felt that other YP could potentially benefit but did not yet meet the criteria, so perhaps accessing the YP at an earlier stage in their lives could be beneficial:

'*To be honest, I think there's a lot of students that would benefit especially if we're looking at that earlier intervention to prevent escalation. But obviously funding is limited, places are limited, capacity is limited, so we could refer quite a few more students if there was the*

space to do so, but they may not meet three of the referral criteria. But they would absolutely benefit from the programme.' SL City 3

'I've done cheeky referrals where they haven't been excluded and probably aren't at risk of exclusion, but with some of the things that I've seen, it would have been ideal for these kids. And then when that gets knocked back, I understand why, because it's not part of the criteria, but it would be nice to get some of these kids involved as well.' SL County

There was also a sense that some YP who were on the programme could have potentially benefited more from the programme if it had been implemented sooner in their lives. One school noted for a particular case that the intervention would have been helpful at primary school. Another school also noted certain cases where there was a sense that getting in earlier could have been more effective, and the SL then made links to the question of what would happen once the YP has completed Reach:

'In certain cases, where it's at a higher… again, I'm all about analogies, but it's almost like if a ship was slightly off track, then we've been able to correct it and get it back on track, but in certain cases because the ship was sailing in completely the wrong direction, the mentors have been able to slightly correct it – and I am conscious that because they're so close to going the wrong way, after that is removed, will they defer back? Only time will tell, I guess.' SL City 2

In terms of basing a referral on whether a YP had already had a suspension, one SL noted that this was not always an appropriate criterion, especially for those who had had their first-time suspension, which may have been due to a low-level incident. It was evident that schools found it useful to use their own discretion on who was most suitable for the programme:

'*I think that the way I've referred has been very different to what was expected and the way it was sold. But the referrals have been accepted. It is going to be low-level disruption; it's going to be pupils with high numbers of negatives, pupils who have no aspirations, who are struggling to access the full curriculum in school. A handful of those pupils will have an exclusion, but it doesn't necessarily mean that it's been in the last six months. It could have been, for a current Year 10 pupil, at the end of Year 8 or start of Year 9. So yes, it's not necessarily been following an exclusion…'* SL City 1

Another SL noted that they were spreading referrals equally across year groups and focusing on 'high priority and high profile' individuals, while a third school agreed that they were

prioritising need and using their informed judgement to decide which YP would benefit most from Reach.

There was a broad view from the delivery team that the referral process had been successful and the programme was reaching the YP for whom it was intended, particularly in terms of accessing those who had been previously suspended or were at risk of suspension. The delivery team went on to suggest that it was hard to assess whether the referrals were happening at that teachable moment, which ties in with a view from some schools that some YP may benefit from earlier intervention:

'I suppose all the referrals that we're getting have had previous FT exclusions, or are at risk of, you know, if they continue with the behaviour they're displaying will be excluded in some way. We're definitely getting those, whether we're getting them at the reachable moment... well, we have had ones who are quite far down the line, you know, in terms of they've had loads of exclusions and obviously (before our involvement) then they've obviously referred to us – then their behaviour's become so challenging that they're having to look at AP and alternative options.' DL late interview

It was suggested that the county had more challenging cases that might warrant earlier input:

'It's trying to get that balance of early intervention but also not getting them too further along… the county has the more complex cases, a couple of them more further along, not all of them, a couple of them more so.' DL late interview

As noted in the SL interviews, schools were exercising a degree of flexibility and judgement in terms of the referrals they were making. The DLs' comments also recognised the need for flexibility while staying true to the core values of the programme:

'*It's a broader base that we have here, I mean, but I think… I guess the criteria's quite tight; I think we're going to have to show, I guess, a degree of flexibility whilst still being true to the values of the programme and the values of the feasibility.*' DL late interview

Reach of the intervention

The VRU provided a summary of data on suspensions according to gender, age and ethnicity from all six of the schools involved in the feasibility study. The number of permanent exclusions has been omitted here due to low numbers. These data are presented alongside

gender, age and ethnicity demographics for the 73 YP recruited to the Reach Programme so far. Please note that the school suspension data are from 2018/19, and caution should be taken when comparing this to the recruited cases in the feasibility study during 2021/2022. It should also be noted here that the suspension data are based on a subsample of pupils who have experienced an FT exclusion; therefore, the statistics are limited in showing how this subsample is distributed across schools and socio-demographics. There is a need for fuller details on school populations for a more comprehensive analysis.

The tables presented below show that in terms of gender and age, the demographics of those recruited to the Reach Programme were broadly similar to the pattern of suspensions for those six schools in the feasibility study during 2018/19. In terms of ethnicity, a higher proportion of White British YP were recruited to the programme compared to the proportion of those who received a suspension in 2018/19. A lower proportion of Asian YP were recruited to the programme compared to the proportion of those who received a suspension in 2018/19. The proportions of Black YP and other ethnicities were broadly similar.

Table 8: % suspensions of six feasibility schools by gender

Gender	Suspensions 2018/19	Recruited to Reach Programme (n=73)
Male	57.8%	60.3%
Female	42.2%	39.7%

Table 1: % suspensions vs recruited to Reach of six feasibility schools by age

Age	Suspensions 2018/19	Recruited to Reach Programme (n=73)
11	10.5%	8.2%
12	19.2%	20.5%
13	18.3%	21.9%
14	23.8%	26.0%
15	22.8%	23.3%
16	5.4%	0.0%

Table 2: % suspensions vs recruited to Reach of six feasibility schools by ethnicity

Ethnicity	Suspensions 2018/19	Recruited to Reach Programme (n=73)
White	51.7%	61.6%
Asian	20.6%	6.8%
Mixed	11.8%	12.3%
Black	11.2%	8.2%
Other	2.5%	11.0%
Unknown	2.2%	-

Number of risk factors for YP recruited to the Reach Programme

The table below shows the number of risk factors that YP had when they were recruited to Reach. The mean number of risk factors was 6.3. In general, a YP needed to have three or more risk factors to be eligible for Reach; however, on occasion, there was discretion used depending on what those risk factors were, e.g. already involved in anti-social behaviour or DV in the home).

Table 3: Number of risk factors for YP recruited to Reach

Number of risk factors	n	%
2	3	4.1
3	9	12.3
4	12	16.4
5	10	13.7
6	13	17.8
7	10	13.7
8	2	2.7
9	3	4.1
10 +	11	15.1
Total	**73**	**100**

Implementation support system

- *What strategies and practices are used to support high-quality implementation?*
- *What training and ongoing support or technical assistance is available?*

Initial contact/training with schools and ongoing support

At the outset, a member of the lead delivery team identified a lead staff member within each school and met with them individually to present an overview of what the Reach Programme could offer. The areas covered in this presentation were:

- Rationale for Reach
- The delivery model
- Theory of Change
- Core components
- Referral process and eligibility criteria
- Ongoing support

The process was then periodically reviewed with each school, and any issues arising were addressed. The delivery team made clear to schools that they would be available for meetings with parents/carers and YP. Schools cited the usefulness of the ongoing support from Reach as discussed in the section below.

Strategies and practices used to support high-quality implementation

In terms of facilitating implementation into the school and the strategies and practices used, it was evident that SLs were invested in the programme and that wider teams of staff were involved. SLs found it helpful to involve the year group leads and broader pastoral team with regard to making referrals, with SLs highlighting their contact with the delivery team throughout:

'Working directly with my heads of year that I line-manage to say, almost soft-touch, "Right, have you suggested anyone for this programme?"' SL City 2

'Tonight we've got our referral panel. All of the year teams, the pastoral leads will be at the referral panel, and that's when we do… I have my individual meeting with each year group, but then we'll all come together to represent the whole school, if you like, and there's additional people there – the SENCO and all that kind of thing. So, we're all contributing to that as well.' SL City 3

'I did all the referrals – obviously met the Reach delivery team when it was all coming out. Took the lead role on that. Fed it back into my staff here, my pupil support staff, and also my SLT, fellow SLT members here. Then, we got together as a team, worked through the referrals – who we wanted to refer. I then instigated all those referrals, liaised constantly with the Reach delivery lead, liaised constantly with the youth workers picking up our students, and always involved in that process.' SL County

The DLs noted that organisational issues, including room availability, were working well in one of the schools that joined later in the programme, suggesting that the school staffing model in this school was effective in terms of liaison and communications:

'At [school 4], it's working quite well, isn't it, on the whole, and I don't know if that's because they joined later and they had a bit more in place. Yes, we don't have as many barriers or challenges with [school 4] in terms of delivery so for the YWs to go in and deliver their sessions… it works reasonably well, actually, you know, there is room availability; the contact lead at [school 4], she knows when they're coming in, and the YWs liaise directly with her.' DL late interview

The DLs went on to note that perhaps a model of liaising with each head of year instead of being reliant on one member of staff could facilitate implementation:

'And then [school 1], we've had quite a few difficulties this term with sessions being cancelled because their heavily reliant on one member of staff being present… if they're going to the assistant head of year, each head of year knows you know just their cohort.' DL late interview

Relationship between YW and the school

It was clear that some of the schools had developed close working relationships with the YWs, particularly where a school was predominantly involved with one or two YWs. This meant that the YW was well known in the school and had been integrated like a member of staff:

'*She's like a member of our staff now, who comes into school, sees the kids in school. We know she does the stuff away from school, and it's just like an extra thing we do, it's just implemented into school life. It really has just embedded itself and dipped in seamlessly, if I'm honest.'* SL County

As discussed in the barriers section below, there was one SL who had some initial difficulties co-ordinating the practicalities of the programme. This SL was involved with a larger number of YWs within that school, which caused a few issues in terms of co-ordination and having various new faces within the school each time. These challenges suggest that this school may have benefited from working with predominantly one or two YWs.

Another school suggested that they might prefer having just one or two Reach mentors directly linked to the school to facilitate co-ordination:

'Could it be and should it be that we have, for example, one or two Reach mentors that are almost like the mentors directly linked to the school? Then we have one person – I guess in an amazing world it would be me, but just genuinely in terms of the workload it doesn't always quite work.' SL City 2

DLs also discussed this model and noted that in the county, each school in effect had a dedicated YW attached to it. This arrangement had the potential to facilitate organisational issues and possibly be replicated in the city area:

'It kind of felt that one YW took the majority of one school's referrals, and then when the other YW came into post, they then picked up the majority of the second school, so it was almost like one YW had [school 5], the other had [school 6], and it works quite well that they're in each individual school, so we did look at whether that could work in the city, didn't we, whether the YW has a designated school and whether that makes things easier for the school.' DL late interview

The DLs went on to make the caveat that this approach did take away the YW–YP matching process and was potentially more challenging to implement in the city:

'It [1 YW per school] takes away the matching; you've got timetables that are going to be different for every single individual, so there has been more challenges in the city, I would say, around co-ordinating that school approach.' DL late interview

In terms of caseload and ability to take referrals, one school did comment that potentially having more YWs would be beneficial:

'I think more YWs would be ideal. Again, I put through a couple of referrals that have been pinged back because there's not enough – they're at capacity already. So definitely more

people would be ideal. But that's nitpicking I suppose. I reckon there's tonnes of kids we could refer, there really is – tonnes of kids. So if they have the capacity to take even more, it would be ideal.' SL4 County

Training and ongoing support from Reach

SLs across the board spoke positively about engagement with the delivery team and ongoing support from them in terms of integrating Reach into their schools. In general, they felt that there had been enough training and ongoing support and found the process relatively straightforward:

'Yeah, definitely. It was explained very clearly. There was a lot of clarity with it. It was just simple and easy to do.' SL County

'So, because I've been involved with similar programmes to this for a very long time, obviously it was quite straightforward, and it was just – oh that's good, there's something else.' SL City 3

However, one school did indicate a potential need for further support from Reach in terms of liaising with parents/carers:

'So, when I make that referral, it's a conversation I'm having with parents, whereas I think it needs to be a meeting and a conversation between parents/carers and a person from the Reach Programme and also a person from school.' SL City 1

Another school reported that they had involved YWs in the reintegration meetings with parents/carers and had found this useful for the process of reintegrating the YP back into school following a suspension. The SL noted that the Reach worker had been very helpful in facilitating this process following the meetings:

'*Then we have a very clear reintegration meeting, so parents and guardians and the child and the staff would then sit down with the child and look at what behaviour led to that… we've then had the Reach worker coming in on that meeting and sitting in on listening to some of the targets, and then they're also able to support them with the family and do some one-to-one work. So that has been really useful.*' SL City 2

One school highlighted the regular engagement between the Reach team and the school team, particularly the two-way nature of the feedback and information sharing:

'We continued to have keep-in-touch meetings with myself and the Reach co-ordinator, where he shared any potential issues from their mentors this way in, and we shared any potential issues the other way out, and then we feed back – him to his team, me to my team, to ensure things work as smoothly as they can.' SL City 2

YW training

With regard to training available for the YWs, the DLs discussed formal and informal training that had taken place. The VRN provided some formal training for the YWs, alongside drugs awareness training run by Turning Point. YWs were also encouraged to undertake training in areas pertinent to their role, such as safeguarding, ACEs, county lines, as well as awareness raising on YP-related topics such as social media use and drill music.

In terms of more informal training and support, DLs highlighted the usefulness of the group supervision sessions, which brought staff from the city and county together and proved really beneficial to teamwork and YWs feeling supported by colleagues:

'We've been holding group supervisions together on a weekly basis, [and] that allows both city and county to come together and discuss cases, share good practice and talk about cases that they're struggling with or stuck on… the feedback from the YWs has been really positive, they find that really beneficial, it helps everyone gel as a team.' DL later stage

Interviews with the YWs themselves also confirmed the weekly group supervision. In addition to this, every YW also had access to one-to-one support from their line manager on a monthly basis, which included case supervision and personal supervision:

'*Every YW will have one-to-one supervision with their line manager on a monthly basis, and that will include case supervision but also personal supervision.*' DL late interview

It was evident that the YWs could easily access support from their line management if they needed it. The DLs noted that YWs could contact them immediately by phone with any issues arising with a particular YP, for example, or with any safeguarding issues. This support was available as needed with no need to wait until the next supervision session.

Returning to the weekly supervision session, YWs confirmed that this afforded them the opportunity to share ideas and good practice between the team from the county and the

city. This good practice could then be implemented in practice-based work with YP, and the sharing of good practice could become more iterative:

'The general support as well from the Leicester City team. We have supervision each week, so they generally offer a lot of advice. So, if there is something that I'm particularly struggling with, then they'll come up with a lot of ideas, which are very useful and I have used and they have helped me, and I'll do the same back as well. So I think having a good close-knit team helps. Yeah, that definitely helps engage me with the young people as well.' YW Interview 4

This process of weekly supervision was important to ensure that YWs first and foremost feel supported but that they also have a space in which they could seek advice that was objective.

'It's just that voice of reason. Yes, they've always got good advice to give, and it's just knowing you're supported, as well.' YW Interview 1

The youth work role is complex, and working with a diverse range of YP provided an array of challenges for the YWs. The Reach management team formed an important knowledge base that YWs could tap into, especially when they had not dealt with a specific issue before. The personal supervision provided opportunities to discuss individual YP cases and gain feedback or support with particular matters:

'What's good as well is they both have a lot of knowledge where I probably don't. I had a few young people that were excluded, but they weren't given a date to come back, and [DL lead] was good at recognising that and saying you can challenge that and say, "He just needs a risk assessment or he just needs this." She had a lot of legislation knowledge, and [DL lead] worked locally for [ages], so he had a lot of relationships already in schools. So that's worked really well with being able to take the problems to them.' YW Interview 2

As well as providing practical and pragmatic support and knowledge that is essential for the youth work role, the management team also provided a degree of emotional support and reassurance.

'I do have that amazing management. I keep singing the praises – I just really feel supported, to be honest with you. It's a really wonderful environment. I don't ever feel like I can't share something or if I'm having a bad day, I don't have to be like, "Yeah, everything is fine." It's a

really great environment to work with. I just get up in the morning, and I'm like, yeah if I've got an issue with a young person, if it's safeguarding or whatever, I know that I can just speak to [DL lead]… speak to [DL lead], and it's going to be alright. There's a wealth of knowledge around.' YW Interview 3

The challenges faced by YWs in their roles should not be underestimated. The personal supervision received by YWs in Reach provided a good degree of support and also confidence for YWs in dealing with challenging issues, whether these were emotional and wellbeing-related or pragmatic and professional. One YW commented that the role could be scary and hard work but that knowing there was a good support system in place made it enjoyable.

The group supervision had a slightly different focus to the personal supervision. Whereas the personal supervision had more attention to wellbeing and troubleshooting very specific issues that required specialist knowledge, the group supervision was more focused on the sharing of good practice and connecting and sharing information across the county and the city.

This sharing of good practice was viewed by YWs as important in raising each other up and helping to provide a better service for YP.

'We've all put different interventions in as a team, and it really helps at city and county – we meet every week, and we have a meeting and we go through and we share ideas. That really helps us all grow, helps us all get new things… I might have something that they don't have. That really helps build a team and helps us all do better.' YW Interview 1

Working across different regions added to the potential challenge for YWs. The group supervision provided the opportunity for connection between those who work in the county and those who work in the city. It was a forum where specific YWs could share their own local knowledge that would be useful in developing practice.

'I think it's really important that we have [the group supervision] because obviously half the team work in the county, so it keeps us all feeling like one team. Interestingly, I work in the city, but I live in the county, and two of the YWs work in the county but live in the city. So our knowledge of the local areas – I know much more about the areas where [YW] is working because I live in it. When she's saying I can't find any sessions, I can't find any youth groups open, I'm able to say, "Oh, actually, I know this place".' YW Interview 2

Additionally, each member of the YW team has a professional work history that informs their practice, and the group supervision was a key opportunity to share skills and knowledge beyond their experience of working with Reach. The youth work team between them held a vast array of experience that was helpful in developing key skills within the wider team.

*'If I just go off to the city, * was previously a teacher, and then we've got *, who worked in early prevention, so she had similar sort of experience. Then * has been working in youth work for four years. So we've all had a similar sort of way. Maybe me and * [are] more are education-based, so we probably have more knowledge on worksheets and how to get stuff on paper. But I think that's where we all brought something a little bit different. In early prevention, they do the safety plans and the intervention plans. I probably wouldn't have thought of doing that straight away. So, that's been really good. It's been really enriching to have so many different people with different things that work in their areas, so we can sort of mesh together.'* YW Interview 2

Fidelity/adherence:

- *To what extent do implementers adhere to the intended delivery model?*

The delivery model was intended to be flexible according to the needs of the YP. The need for this flexibility became even more evident throughout the course of delivery. A set of core components was mapped out with guidance on the number and frequency of sessions per core component (Appendix 1: Blueprint). In terms of the amount of time spent on each core component and the order in which the components were intended to be delivered, it became apparent during the course of the feasibility study that these factors needed to be adaptable. The number and frequency of sessions needed be tailored by the YW to the individual YP's needs; for example, if an issue arose in the YP's life, then more time would be spent on emotional and practical support. Equally, if the YW felt that the YP did not need the prescribed number of sessions on a particular component, then the number/time of sessions were reduced accordingly. For some YP, the 'positive relationships' component was not needed in as much depth as anticipated:

'The positive relationships component is four weeks, and for some young people there's not been four weeks' worth of work to do around positive relationships because it's not an identified need.' DL late interview

The order of delivery of the core components was also adapted to meet the needs of the YP. The findings indicate that while all the core components were delivered in each case, the delivery model worked best when the order of components was varied to fit the individual

YP. As the programme progressed, it became apparent to DLs that the optimum delivery approach was to allow flexibility rather than rigid adherence to the schedule for all YP:

'We're noticing a lot more that it doesn't work for every young person to follow it step by step, as we initially first thought, so we're maybe having to cover certain core components before others, just because that kind of works.' DL late interview

Furthermore, the length of sessions varied between individuals, so simply recording the number of sessions did not accurately reflect the time spent with the YP. One way of recording this in more detail moving forward to the pilot trial would be to record time spent per core component and time spent on other activities such as emotional support.

One of the core components covers 'positive social activities'. These activities were additional to the other sessions. The idea was to support the YP into a sustainable activity but without the YW's presence at these activities; instead, the YW would ask about them as part of the more structured sessions. The activities included boxing, basketball, football, cooking sessions, bowling, adventure golf, crochet and embroidery, graffiti art, a Girls Group (took place at a youth centre) and the SEND Group (took place at a youth centre). In total, 62 of the total number of YP recruited were successfully engaged in these activities at the time of reporting.

The DLs cited the adaptability of the programme in terms of tailoring meet-ups to the needs/wishes of the YP. For example, at first, some of the YP were keen to see the YW in school time; however, as that relationship developed, the YP was then happy to see the YW outside of school. This pattern concurs with the findings that the relationship-building phase was on the whole successful:

'*It definitely goes with what the young people want; I think we started utilising the school appointments a lot more because I think initially young people were reluctant to see their YWs outside of school in that – no that's my time, I'll see you in school time so I don't have to go to my lessons or whatever – but I think as they develop their relationships with the young people, some of them have said, "Well, yeah, okay I will see you outside of school***".'** DL late interview

Moving on to location of sessions, these were intended to take place in the school, home and community environments, with some flexibility on this according to what the YW deemed appropriate for the YP. DLs did note that in some cases, school-based sessions were

not always an option in terms of space, and sessions had had to be rearranged in the home or community:

In some cases, it was reported that home visits were not always possible due to the reluctance of either the YP or the parents/carers, although the DL in the county noted that this had not been the case for YPs in schools in this area:

'I know that in the city, there's been a few… like sometimes the parents might be a bit reluctant [for home visits]… I think because they're working... We've not had that feedback from the YWs in the county. I mean, they've been able to see the young people at home or in the community, or take them out from home.' DL late interview

DLs suggested that sessions were happening more often in community venues and places than in the YP's homes.

While the findings show that the delivery of the Reach Programme did adhere to the intended delivery model, the flexibility in the way the model was applied proved to be paramount for YWs.

YWs saw the Reach Programme not as a rigid prescription but as something that should work around the needs of the YP. This applied to how the YW responded to and managed the engagement of the YP.

'We're flexible. We can be flexible. I have been into a school, and one of the young people [has] not wanted to leave their lesson, so they've not wanted to come and see me, but to me that's a positive because that's the whole point – if you want to stay in the lesson, then that's great! That's what we're aiming for.' YW Interview 1

Returning to the order of core components and the extent to which they were delivered, findings from the YWs also reflected the value of flexibility. They indicated that the ordering could change and adapt to the needs of the YP and topics could be tailored appropriately to fit emerging teachable moments. YWs felt it was important to capitalise on any teachable moments – this being a fundamental principle of Reach's ethos.

'But what's really special about the programme is that it has been adaptable. Even though I'll say this young person is on week 8, we should be looking at empathy, if that young person comes in and they're in a bad place, we don't have to shove empathy down their

throat. We can talk about what's going on with them. I think what's really important is that we have got the worksheets to work on, but in every session plan, we put that if it's more appropriate to have this as a conversation, have it as a conversation. We don't have to make them write anything down because I think that's a big barrier for a lot of these young people at school – they're forced to read and write. I've got a few young people that have dyslexia as well, so a worksheet itself is a scary thing.' YW Interview 2

The teachable moment is at the core of the way in which YWs navigated the mentoring sessions. The programme was ultimately intended to be flexible enough to capitalise on these teachable moments, which are led by the YP. One YW talked about the role of a YW as 'working in the now' and responding to situations as they arise, fitting the core components around the events as they occur.

'How I work is, we've had the programme to follow, but I know what components I need to cover in my head. And it's moments, because when something is happening, you deal with it in the moment. So if they're having a bad… that could probably come under say social skills, but you're not on social skills. You'll grab that piece of work and do it in that moment because it fits. That's what good about the programme – it is flexible. It's all those reachable, teachable moments. Being a YW, it's very much working in the now, working in the moment – what is the young person going through at that moment in time? Right, this bit will come under social skills, so let's do a bit of social skills. Like they're having arguments with their friends and they all fell out, and that's when you can… even if you might be on the 'understanding behaviour' bit, but if you get the social skills bit coming in, then you do that at that moment there, if that makes sense.' (YW Interview 1)

The findings make it clear that the Reach Programme is not a one-size-fits-all approach. The programme could and should be delivered in a way that accounts for YP's individual needs and differences, as long as it retains the crucial YW relationship building and the core components of the programme are delivered. Therefore, when problems arise, YWs may respond appropriately and pivot the session plans to account for the issues and challenges the YP may be facing.

'To be honest, we've had to be flexible. It has differed by each young person. … I wouldn't cancel a young person to see another young person. But in that reachable, teachable moment, if you're in it, you have to take advantage of it. Sometimes that means doing a longer session or not covering what you planned to. If I'd planned to do careers, I wouldn't do that session then – I would just deal with the problem.' YW Interview 2

While capturing these teachable moments through flexible delivery is an aim of the programme, YWs also realised that it was not always possible to be with the YP at the time the teachable moment occurs and that there are limitations to the scope of the YW's role.

Adapting the core components

When delivering the core components, YWs made adaptations to their presentation and order. In this case, the changes and adaptations made to the order of the modules were not done in response to YP but were instead made across the board as a way of attempting to improve the engagement with YP:

'They have all definitely been there. For me, what I found is better – you know how we've got Goals and Aspirations towards the end? I've put that session in first. So when you meet with a young person, instead of going, "Let's talk about your negative behaviour," that seems quite punishing, and then they tend to treat us like we're a teacher. Whereas when you go in and say, "Tell me about you, what do you love? What do you want to do more of?" And then you do that aspiration sheet with them and you say, "What do you want to do in the future?" You go, "Okay, you want to be an engineer." You can get them excited about that, and then it's much easier to engage them.' YW Interview 2

Ultimately, the programme was seen by YWs as something that is flexible and gives scope to the YW to decide on the best presentation of the programme in response to the YP.

'I think leaving it up to the YW is really powerful in a way because each young person will come at a different time, with different things, and you couldn't put it in the right order for everyone.' YW Interview 2

While these decisions were sometimes made for the YP, they could also be negotiated with the YP if the YP were in a position where they were able to have a say in what they think their own priorities are and what they would ultimately like to work on:

'So, it's gently trying to have this conversation with them and just explaining that this is what you need to do in this situation. I brought the form in and showed the core components and said, "Okay, right"… because his behaviour wasn't really that bad, it was just kind of one incident. So I said to him, "Does this feel really patronising when we're talking about behaviour?" And he was like, "A little bit." I was like, "Alright, what do you want out of this?" So he was like, "I'm worried about my GCSEs." I was like, "Right, fine – resilience, social skills, we'll work on that then and we'll build from there".' YW Interview 3

Adaptations to presentation of activities

Some YP reported not enjoying the worksheet-based activities, and some YWs made adaptations to the way in which these and other activities were presented. YWs demonstrated creativity and innovation in the way that activities were presented, and ultimately this aimed to lead to better engagement from the YP:

'I think that's when it's really important that you adapt it so it's not just worksheets, so it is fun games, different ways to do it. One of the ones I've used as well is having pictures on the wall and they have to hit it with a tennis ball. When you get 50 points, you answer a question. They can do it that way. That's been really good. A lot of my young people, I just talk to them, and then I fill in the worksheet, and then at the end I give it to them and say would you agree with this? And when they see it written down, it's actually quite powerful. I'll write down little quotes that they've said to me throughout the session. One of them I did the other day – he would say in the moment, "I'm really angry, but afterwards I get embarrassed." And I'm like, "I'll write that on a post-it note," and then on the back I'll get them to write something about the comment, so it's almost like they evaluate their own work instead of just a worksheet someone has printed off Twinkl or Google.' YW Interview 2

Importantly, the YWs' creative approaches still fed from the principle of responding appropriately to YP and their needs. Often, traditional paper-based tasks were creatively interpreted and presented in more practical ways which may help with engaging YP:

'I made up a session that I've put in the Understanding Behaviours, which is "fight, flight and freeze". They watch a little video around what it is, around when we feel endangered or threatened, we get this release of hormone, and that hormone can make us react in this way. And they look at it, and they go, "Oh, that makes sense! When a teacher is blocking my way, that's why I'm feeling all these feelings." You can see them piecing it together. Then, the second part of the session, it's basically it comes back to cavemen, that we had a fight or flight. If there was a bear, we run away or attack, and they're like, this makes so much sense! So you can see it. Once you've done it once, you've got the worksheet, you've got the video, you've got that, and a young person. It doesn't have to be something that takes ages to prepare, as long as you've got that link and you can talk, then the session writes itself. They always come out with something that you can lead on from. So, it's not so much me – I don't really have to sit down and think, "Oh, I need to think about this" – they come up with a lot of the sessions themselves.' YW Interview 2

Adding new core components:

One YW suggested a new component that may be helpful for some YP. In working with YP, they identified the need for sexual health work to be included in the programme. While this may not be essential for all YP, for some individuals this may be a valuable component going forward:

'I was saying the other day that we could probably do a section, there probably could be a week in there about sexual health and keeping safe and stuff like that. Because there's a lot of oversight of sexualisation [with these]. I think maybe some of them – there's one or two where we've got about breathing and mindfulness – maybe swap one of them and do a bit of sexual health work with them.' YW Interview 1

Extending the mentorship for longer-term results*:*

While the Reach Programme was scheduled to take place over six months, one YW suggested that a longer dosage period could be of greater benefit to the YP. They also suggested that tying the programme around the school year may be a potential adaptation.

'It would be nice if it was more an academic school year – that you were with them the whole academic school year because then you can really get beginning to end, if that makes sense.' YW Interview 1

The length of the Reach intervention is further discussed in the success/target criteria above.

Positive comments by YP

The YP involved in the interviews were very positive about the programme, and there were few adaptations that they felt were needed. The only negative feedback was around the use of worksheets, which they were generally less receptive to.

'I don't think there's anything to improve on.' YP Interview 1 – City

Dosage

- *How much of the intended intervention has been delivered?*

As discussed in the fidelity section above, the length of sessions was found to be variable by the individual, given that YWs were responsive to the needs of the individual YP at the time. In terms of frequency of sessions at the relationship-building phase, the YW survey responses indicated that YWs were less certain that they had been able to meet with their YP twice a week as expected: one respondent agreed that this was the case for all of their YP, three agreed this was the case for most, two for some and one YW indicated that they did not feel this was the case for any of their YP. At the relationship-building phase, the YP interviewed did indicate that they had met frequently with their YW as expected:

Although sessions were not always as frequent as desired, they were often longer, so capturing details of dosage going forward to the pilot will be crucial in terms of gaining a deeper understanding of this. An overall picture of length of sessions was given by the DLs, who stated that the average length of sessions were around 60 minutes, with some sessions that were longer, especially during non-term time.

'The average length of a sessions was 60 minutes. When the sessions were held after school or in non-term time, the sessions tended to be longer, approximately between 90 minutes and two hours. Positive recreational activities can be over two hours, especially during non-term time.' DL late interview

This variability was also captured in the YW interviews, where sessions were described as typically being around an hour or more:

'The ones in school are about an hour, even though I have had a two-hour session. Out of school is usually about an hour [more].' YW Interview 1

Some in-school sessions were shorter, and some out-of-school sessions were longer to account for the journey times needed to complete sessions.

Sessions were very frequent at the start and then tapered off as the YP progressed through the programme.

'It used to be three times a week, the sessions. Now it's gone down to two, and then like in a few weeks' time, it's going to go down to once a week.' YP Interview 6 – City

The communication mode of the intervention varied, and while the majority of the mentoring was delivered face to face, some telephone contact also occurred. In the case below, the sessions were twice per week and included telephone contact:

High caseloads for the YWs accounted for some of the scheduling challenges. For one YW, it was not possible to see every YP in their case load in a single week due to the high caseload, and therefore YP were seen across a period of 10 days rather than weekly:

'What I've done is I've had one school visit and one activity a week. What I've tried to do is do my weeks almost Wednesday to Wednesday, so you've got 10 days to get everyone in. When you've got up to 13 people, you can't physically see them after school every day. So someone might have their session in a school on the Tuesday and then their activity on the following Monday, but it's all within what I class as a week.' YW Interview 2

Overall, YWs tended to have a flexible approach to dosage to meet the needs of the YP they worked with. If longer sessions were required to deliver activities specific to the YP's needs, then sessions could be longer but slightly less frequent:

'Both. Also, some sessions were longer. Because I've got one child – he's really into graffiti art – in fact, the new one I'm picking up is into that as well, so we went into town and we went and did graffiti on the legal walls in the Leicester city centre. So that was like a [four half-hour] session, so I only saw them once that week.' YW Interview 1

As well as flexibility in the length of the session, there was flexibility in how the session time was used. Driving time was often used as part of the debrief or the introduction to the session with the YP:

'The flexibility as well, with the activity. Sometimes you have to drive the young person 20 minutes to get to where you're going. Once you've driven your 20 minutes, you've got to the town, you've got to do what you're doing, and then get home. There's almost like half an hour to 40 minutes that you're spending with that young person in the car without doing the activity itself. So we've decided in that time, we use that as the sort of debrief. We'll say to them, "How's this week gone?" on the journey there. And then on the way back we'll be talking about next goals, what we want to do in the next session, and really incorporate just the journey time into your supporting time. That's worked well. But you have to be flexible with the times because if a young person just wants to have a game of pool, that's not going to take as long as going to the cinema.' YW Interview 2

Some of the challenges to administering the intervention as expected included the schools and their flexibility and the number of YP involved. YWs reported that some schools allocated short time periods for seeing YP, which constrained the delivery of the sessions:

'To start with, we always aim to see the young person two to three times a week. In that would be a school session. What I've found is some schools… School 1 for example will give you a half-hour slot, whereas School 2 always gives me an hour. So the students that are in the other school, they have less time. Sometimes, when they come in to see you, you have a quick game of Uno to break the ice, and then you get onto the topic of the work and then it's up. So, that can feel at times… I think different schools being more flexible with the times.' YW Interview 2

In addition, YW's increasing caseload numbers could prove challenging. In the extract below, one YW described the administrative activities and referrals required for each YP as obligations that were time consuming and put pressure on workloads:

'Just with the amount of people. I feel like eight is the nice number to work with. I'm quite happy about the fact that all the information we have to put on Capita isn't time-sensitive; it's not 24 hours. If that was the case, then we'd really have to scale back, just because there's volumes of information that if a person discloses something to you, it's an hour of updating and talking to [DoSS] or talking to safeguarding or Childline or whatever and going to the right people to do that.' YW Interview 3

Moreover, larger allocations of YP could make it challenging for YWs to see each YP and make all the required contacts. This could lead to some relationship breakdown. Eight YP was seen as a manageable number, but when caseloads went beyond this, it was difficult to schedule sessions with up to 12 YP every week.

'To be honest with you, I was very happy with seven or eight young people. I felt like that's doable. I can really wholeheartedly focus on seven to eight young people. I can make the phone calls, talk to parents, put everything on [Capita], feed back to the schools, text the young person. All of that felt really contained. And then we started getting 9, 10, 11, 12. And to be honest with you, there are times when I feel guilty about the fact that I haven't called that parent. There's a little bit of a relationship breakdown.' YW Interview 3

Quality

- *How well are the different components of the intervention being delivered?*

YWs and YP discussed their views on the programme as a whole and the specific components that make up the intervention. YWs talked about how the different components of the intervention are intertwined and not separate:

'Ah… I think it's not so much work better than others, I think they just all intertwined. They're not as separate as they look. That's the bit that you've got to be conscious of all the time – that's what I mean by you work in the moment and the what area. I think the confidence building should run all the way through it, because that's the main – their sense of self-esteem is one of the major parts of the problems of they can't do their social skills, why they can't do their behaviours, because of that sense of who they are, these children.' YW Interview 1

Crucially, the components work best at teachable moments. If it is possible to catch a YP at the right time, the components can have more of an impact. In addition, one YW talked about YP's awareness: at the time of the intervention, they may not always feel like it is making a huge difference, but the hope is that they can look back and realise how much of an impact it has made:

'Yeah, definitely catch them at the right time and then building on that. But I think it will be something that, long term, they'll look back and think, "Oh, if it wasn't for that programme, I could have ended up going down a very different path." That's what I hope anyway. That's what I hope some of them will look back on and think. Because whilst you're working with them, they probably don't realise that. They kind of don't really understand where their goal is. I've probably spoken to them about it, but because they're not at that point yet, they just don't really see it.' YW Interview 4

As indicated in the previous section, one of the main challenges to quality delivery is the number of cases YWs have. One YW talked about having more than eight cases. They felt that their time was stretched and that this may have impacted on their ability to deliver a high-quality service.

'I'm not going to lie – think all of us have felt the stress of getting it past that eight number. And not so much that we can't see them, because we can, but I just think the quality may be stretched once you're juggling those last few. For me, a few things that have happened. With the eight, you can more or less see them in a week, 10 days – you can see them all after

school one day. We've been able to do that with the ones coming in later in the programme, so they will start just with having a school session once a week, whereas at the start the relationship-building was much more meeting them at home, taking them bowling. It's hard to then find that time to do those creative sorts of things with them.' YW Interview 2

They also talked about the sessions feeling rushed as they were attempting to fit everyone in. The 'rush' the YW described could also get in the way of capitalising on important conversations and key teachable moments – things that are key to the ethos of the intervention and to the success of the Reach Programme for YP.

'And at the start, I was trying to see two people in one day, so 3 till 4 I'd have a young person, and then I'd go pick up another young person 4 till 5. It didn't get the quality because I was rushing to their house, rushing them to a youth centre, rushing them back, to pick up another… it just felt rushed. And when you're having that good conversation, you don't want to say, "Oh, that's your time up, actually." I think seeing them less but for longer worked.' YW Interview 2

The YP who were engaging with the intervention spoke very positively of their mentoring. One YP talked about the quality of the advice they received from their YW. They talked about their YW listening and giving advice, which is different to other adults in their life who may listen and not provide the same degree of guidance or support.

*'…because she helps a lot more than other people I have asked the same things what I say to *. If I said it to my auntie or something, they wouldn't give me anything [to do], they'd just listen and say, "Oh, that's tough." But if I say it to *, she'd help me and give me advice and things. So, different in a good way.'* YP Interview 3 - City

The positive experience of mentoring also went beyond the sessions themselves and extended into remote mentoring through text and telephone conversations.

'It feels good. Like, when I'm struggling, I text her straight away, cos I know that she'll listen.' YP Interview 9 - County

While some YP really enjoyed the sessions and talked positively about them, there were certain activities that some liked less, such as the worksheet-based activities. Despite this, the quality of the mentoring was enough to engage the YP in those activities.

'Yeah, I like going to the youth club, and I like it when she comes for the school visits. I don't really know. I like doing everything that she does with me. I don't really like doing… obviously when she gives me a sheet, I do it; I'm not the kind of person that will say no to all of that. I like doing it. She's a good YW.' YP Interview 4 - City

Generally, the YW characteristics that YP rated highly were those that play an important role in YP receiving a high-quality intervention. As discussed earlier, these YW characteristics included being non-judgmental, a good listener, open and approachable on any topic.

'It's fun, because I feel like I can talk to her about anything. And she's not one of them people that are all negative and they throw it back in your face. She listens and she gives you advice.' YP Interview 9 - County

Responding to the young person

Throughout the evaluation team's observation activities, high-quality delivery was observed. First, both the observed sessions embedded potentially difficult conversations within practical tasks, which the YP generally responded to well. One example was a discussion that ran alongside a cooking activity where the YW introduced a conversation about anger and linked it to a celebrity chef to explore strategies for anger management.

J talked about [YW] never seeing him angry as a result of a discussion about Gordon Ramsay's temperament/anger, which led to J talking about triggers that he had. He talked about no longer being triggered by football, but instead social media made him angry. [YW] continued the discussion, and J talked about strategies he used to combat this like blocking people on social media, which [YW] praised. (Observation 1)

At all times, any difficult discussions were carried out in a way that was non-judgemental and embedded within the session in a naturalistic way. YP responded well to the discussions and were able to lead the sessions, directing the flow of conversation, while the YW was simply responding to their discussion topics and introducing topics and ideas from the core components.

When warming the tortillas, the microwave didn't work, which allowed [YW] the opportunity to model a different way of warming the tortillas. J engaged with the demonstration, asking questions and responded well to the change in activities. J chatted about a film he likes, which involved drugs. [YW] picked up on this discussion of drugs and marijuana. Discussion was both non-judgemental and educational. [YW] invited him to ask questions today or in

the future and indicated who else he can talk to should he wish to – other centre staff or parents. This led to a discussion of smoking in the family. (Observation 1)

The observations demonstrated a good balance of YP-led activities, while the YWs also had a role in directing the activities. In the example below, the YW-led activity was sandwiched between activities the YP had chosen. Each activity was not rushed; the YW gave the YP time and space to think about their responses.

Main activity – [YW] and E moved to the table to complete a worksheet and discussion-based activity. [YW] introduced the activity to E explaining that they would complete this activity and then move back to the recreational area and play more games after. The instructions given to E by [YW] were clear and concise. He was asked to use the sheet to indicate things that made him angry either in school or out of school. [YW] used personal examples to illustrate the activity and then asked E to have a go. E chose not to talk about the activity but engaged with the activity by writing his responses, which he then shared with [YW]. [YW] chose some examples and asked E to elaborate, which E was happy to do. Some of the examples were explained and elaborated upon. [YW] talks about how these things could be dealt with, asking E to think of ways of dealing with these things if they come up or examples of how he has dealt with them in the past, highlighting the cause and effect and thinking through behavioural repercussions. [YW] provided praise when E is able to think of examples or suggestions. Time is given for E to think about his responses and contribute to the worksheet. [YW] does not rush his responses. [YW] continues to look for further explanation and break down his responses, relating them to school or home life and explores how this makes E feel. (Observation 2)

Positive relationships

Overall, the observed sessions were distinctly positive. YWs would provide encouragement, praise and non-judgemental approaches to difficult conversations. Any difficult discussions were phrased in a helpful way, and there was a clear sense that a positive relationship was developing between the YW and the YP, one that would enable frank and open discussions.

Overall, the relationship was very positive. Ideas like acceptance were embedded by [YW]. J spoke about a football mug that was missing from the kitchen, and [YW] talked about the football team he supports and the how other people support different teams, especially local team. She spoke to J about how sometimes it doesn't matter if someone supports a different team or has other differences, it doesn't stop people being friends. This then segued into a discussion of friendship. J spoke about his friend who had slapped him. [YW] engaged in discussion around what constitutes bullying, and J talked about this incident being playful

banter but also demonstrated an awareness of the right and wrongness of activities. Again, [YW]'s response was non-judgemental but supportive. (Observation 1)

Praise, encouragement and positive reframing

Throughout the observed sessions, there was a significant amount of praise and encouragement embedded within every activity, even the relationship-building activities that were not directly feeding into the core component being covered that week:

The session started with some play-based activities as relationship-building tools. These activities included table football, pool and air hockey. These were fun and engaging activities played by [YW] and E. E was highly motivated to engage in these activities, and [YW] provided praise and encouragement throughout. (Observation 2)

What was also notable was the positive reframing work that was being done in the sessions. One of the YP had a tendency to be self-disparaging and would make some negative comments about themselves. YWs were skilled in being able to reframe these comments and present back positive interpretations of these behaviours and utterances, which served to boost the YP's self-esteem.

[YW] continually positively reframed E's contributions. For example, if E talks about being bad at maths, [YW] says that he is very good at business studies though. E talks about being terrible at science, but [YW] highlights how the school must think he is good at science as he is in a top set.

[YW] provides more opportunity to engage with tasks that E does. Again, [YW] provides time for E to think and respond. When E is self-disparaging, [YW] continues to reframe these contributions. [YW] also provides reassurance to E when he is self-disparaging. When E talks of his friend as being inconsiderate, [YW] reassures E that he was likely trying to distract him from what had happened and probably means well. (Observation 2)

Responsiveness:

- *To what extent do the participants engage with the intervention?*

In general, SLs were positive about the impacts they had observed on the YP involved in Reach so far, suggesting that most were well engaged and were sharing their experiences with their peers:

'*All of the young people are fully on board with it. Obviously, we have some who were quite apprehensive at first, but after the first two or three sessions, they absolutely love it, to be honest.*' SL City 1

'In terms of happy, I think all but one. I think when they've got themselves involved in that programme, they've genuinely really appreciated and understood what it's all about and being able to see the way it works. Then the feedback they've then shared with other young individuals has been extremely positive.' SL City 2

The positive engagement overall by YP was also noted by DLs. They commented that some YP were perhaps hesitant at first, but once that relationship had developed, some real progress was made in engagement and enthusiasm:

'One of the cases who was adamant they didn't want any sessions at home… but with schools closing this week, this young person has agreed to see the YW over the summer and to be picked up and do the activities. He's been seen at school this whole term he's been on the programme, and they were talking about the summer, and he's said he would like to see the YW and he doesn't have the school to be seen in over the summer so…' DL late interview

The YW survey also reflected this view, with four of seven YWs agreeing that most of the YP they were working with were fully engaging in the programme so far, and the other three YWs agreeing this was the case for some of their YP. DLs also cited the low YP drop-out rate, particularly in the county.

'Engagement of young people has been really positive on the programme, hasn't it? In terms of the county, we've literally only had one drop-off.' DL late interview

However, the DLs did go on to note the more complex issues in the county and the challenge of keeping track of YP that were on the edge of the criminal justice system:

'There's a cohort of young people in the county that are really at that level of… heading towards the criminal justice system, but it has just made delivery more tricky, tracking them down, keeping them engaged; it's not easy.' DL later stage

Generally, YP demonstrated that they were responsive to the intervention sessions delivered. One indicator of responsiveness was good attendance at the sessions. This was a notable indicator as despite some YP not attending school, they were keen to attend mentoring sessions, with sickness being the only reason for absence.

'So, mine have turned up to all the sessions outside of school – so when I'm meant to be seeing them outside, all of the activities have been there. The only problem is if they've got sickness or absence from school, they're not going to be in the school session, which has happened a few times.' YW Interview 2

While the overall responsiveness was good, there was some natural variation in the ways that YP responded within the sessions. Some were more openly enthusiastic, while others needed more encouragement and reassurance.

Some YP benefited from repeated activities where sessions were familiar while others were more open to new experiences and activities and were more receptive to the 'newness' of the intervention.

'Some of them are really up for it. They'll look forward to it; I'll get a text from them, their mums and dads, and they'll just say they're really looking forward to it, they had a really good time. So yeah, there are some that just love it. But then others you have to really coax them out, and you have to really feed into what it is that they want – so if they want to do a certain activity, then you have to give them that activity, even if that's all they want to do, just repeat repeat repeat that activity, then maybe you just feed into that a little bit more, but then each time you'll talk about something a little bit different. I think overall the engagement has been pretty solid from them.' YW Interview 4

There were a number of things that could affect engagement on the whole, one of which was how the YP was feeling at the time of the intervention. External factors such as a dispute they may have had or whether they have had a better or worse day more generally could affect the way in which the YP engaged with the planned session. While this was the case, engagement was reported as generally very good, and the events that may have influenced a YP's mood or engagement may also provide teachable moments.

Some YP were particularly engaged by certain key activities. As discussed previously, many YWs developed sessions based on their YP's interests and allowed the YP to lead the session or series of sessions:

'I didn't like it as much at the start, but then I started to like it more because when I got to know that we could do cooking and that, I liked it a lot because I like cooking a lot.' YP Interview 1 – City

One indicator of the success of and responsiveness to the intervention was when YP were able to demonstrate their use of strategies independently from the YW. One YW described seeing a YP she worked with using the strategies she had taught him in school:

'If I start on the positives, one of the really positive things that I noticed – I was in the school visiting another student, and I was being shown the isolation room where they go sometimes. I was in there, and then one of my students was in there, so I was like, "What are you doing in here? What's happened?" And he'd basically been involved in a physical fight, but he'd removed himself and took himself to read a book in the isolation room. That was part of his plan – in the intervention plan we'd done together. If he gets upset, his favourite book is Horrid Henry – so, if I get upset, I'm going to go read Horrid Henry and calm down. To see him actually doing that, it almost gave me goosebumps because I could see it in motion. It was really great to talk to him about it.' YW Interview 2

Some YP also demonstrated engagement and responsiveness through teachable moments in school. One YW talked of a YP who had absconded from school and responded to the YW in a teachable moment that happened in an unplanned way.

'Last week, I had a young person that had absconded from detention. I had to chase him on an electric scooter as he was trying to leave the school. I said, "Come back, please," and he did, and he came back and we did detention together. But instead of just sitting in silence, he sat with me and did an anger management plan. If we maybe had more of a presence in say detention – that happened between 3 and 4 – if any of our young people are in detention, if we could do some group work with them, or do some self-reflection.' YW Interview 2

When engagement and responsiveness was poorer, YWs would negotiate with the YP about whether the programme was the right one for them. For YWs, engagement and responsiveness are key to Reach success, and it was important to ensure that this was clear to the YP:

'For some of them, like with R, I'm only seeing them for 35 minutes. I've had the direct conversation of, "Right, this is a voluntary programme, and if you want to be on Reach, then I need to be seeing you at least twice a week – once physically or having a phone call contact. Because that's part of the programme – if you want to put the effort in." I had a really quite blunt conversation, which I'd never really had to have before with someone.' YW Interview 3

The YP involved in the intervention had varying degrees of awareness of what the intervention was trying to achieve, but they all had a reason for wanting to take part.

Behaviour

Some YP recognised that they needed support with improving their behaviour. They felt this was a goal they wished to work on and that the programme would be able to support them.

'It's helped me manage my feelings. It's helped me with pupils in the school and teachers. And it's helped me with my behaviour in school and outside of school.' YP Interview 2 – City

'She was saying something about [YW], because obviously my behaviour is getting worse, and she thought [YW] would help me. So I agreed to what she said. And now I'm seeing [YW] and it's helping me.' YP Interview 10 – County

Adult relationships

Some YP also felt that by engaging with the programme, they might be able to form better adult relationships with teachers and family. Better familial relationships were key to engaging with the programme for some YP. Reflecting on the programme, they felt that it has helped improve relationships in the home.

'I would say it really helps you [with school life] and having perspective. And it really helps you get your behaviour in control and makes you feel not [overwhelmed] speaking to your parents – having someone else to speak to other than that family.' YP Interview 2 – City

'She's helped me deal with things at home and outside of school. She's helped me manage my feelings and helped me with my behaviour.' YP Interview 3 – City

Confidence, courage and being a better person

YP talked about wanting to develop more confidence, and this goal emerged in most of the YP interviews. Confidence was also a motivator for YP in responding to and engaging with the programme but was also an outcome of programme engagement.

'My confidence? I'm not really good with confidence because I don't really like doing new things. But I feel like it's got better.' YP Interview 10 – County

For some, this confidence was to achieve things that they desired, such as the confidence to work towards a specific job or to have more courage. One YP talked about their YW as someone who inspired them to do better:

'Helped me to manage my feelings. And helped me to think about what I want in the future. I told her I wanted to be a mechanic, and she said, "Oh, that's good – you could own your own garage" and all of that, and that's good.' YP Interview 4 – City

'It's like she's teaching me about courage and she kind of inspires me to do better.' YP Interview 8 – County

Poignantly, one YP described their hope for engaging with the intervention and talked of wanting to become a 'better me', which captured the desire to be a well-rounded individual.

Peer relationships

- *Has peer engagement work been undertaken as expected?*
- *Have YP received and engaged with appropriate activities to develop social awareness and skills?*

Developing peer relationships is an aim of the Reach Programme. To support this aim, YWs developed sessions that were designed to tap into different forms of peer relationships including relationships with other YP.

DLs reported that, on occasion, the YP's peers (who were not on the Reach Programme) had come along to sessions. The DLs further indicated that peer work had proved to be the most needed element of 'positive relationships':

'But where we've identified some peers, we've tried to reach those, reach them through doing joint sessions with some of their friends, so we've had young people come along to the sessions who aren't referred to Reach, so some of their peers who aren't on the programme come along to a session.' DL late interview

'For the county, for example, positive relationships the main issues is around peers, so their peer influences, how they sort of deal with that, the risks that their peers potentially may pose in terms of their future and behaviour, so we've kind of had to adapt that a little bit to sort of suit that because, like I said, the family side of it isn't a worry; it's more the peers.' DL late interview

YWs also discussed running joint sessions or inviting friends of the YP to sessions, which they used to develop relationships with other YP. This allowed the YP to share the mentoring experience with their peers:

'Sometimes, I can do joint sessions that go quite well, and I can mix in a few friends. So I could do two friends one week and then a couple of different friends. They're all kind of in the same friendship group.' YW Interview 4

Sometimes, the friends who were invited to sessions were external to the Reach Programme, whereas sometimes it was a joint session with another YP who was already part of the programme. This has been successful and demonstrates positive outcomes.

'Y, who is A's best friend. By the end of it, building that trust with schools, I was able to do a session with both of them together. Originally they were like, "Let's keep it separate," because of their behaviour and things. They were fine with it in the end. It was a joy. They're both great.' YW Interview 3

In terms of the outcomes of such sessions, the YW and YP could work on key goals such as developing trust with peers, and this was demonstrated outside of the mentoring relationship.

'Like, more… some of my mates, because I didn't really like trust them, but now I like trust them [a bit] more. Yeah.' YP Interview 7 - County

Joint sessions with siblings or other familial relations

While the majority of the peer relationship sessions were focusing on friendship relationships, some were also run with siblings or cousins. This provided the opportunity to

see the YP in different social settings and the responsiveness of YP in these scenarios has been good.

'For me, with a few of my young people, it's actually been engaging with their siblings. It's getting them to come along to a session. One of my young people that doesn't have any siblings, he brought his cousin to a youth session. That was really good because not only did it let me see them in a bit of a different light – because it's different one-to-one – but they were almost like excited to share it.' YW Interview 2

Peer mentor role

One YW talked about a peer relationship teachable moment where a YP they were working with took on a peer-mentoring role to a younger peer who was having a more difficult time. This moment demonstrated the importance of teachable moments in peer relationship building. Furthermore, with guidance from the YW, the YP was able to put into practice the skills they had learnt throughout the Reach Programme.

'I think he understands more about relationships. We had this really lovely moment – we couldn't find a classroom, so we were in the seclusion [bay], and there was this Year 7 who was running around the school who should have really been [in school], and I was like, "Come here" – to kind of help the teachers – because he could see us playing cards. "Come over here, come sit with us, it will be alright." He's sitting there. And I was like, "Are you okay with him joining our session," because it's one-to-one? "Yeah, it's fine." So he started talking to this Year 7, and he was showing him how to play the cards. We had talked a little bit. He's going into Year 9, and he was quite nervous about going into Year 9, and we kind of talked a little bit about the coping mechanisms and things. So with the Year 7, I said, "Oh, A, do you have any advice for him?" And he's like, "Oh, when going into Year 8, be aware of this, you have to work on your behaviour." I could have cried. I was just really impressed to see this young man supporting this person. It was just a really lovely teachable moment.' YW Interview 3

School relationships

The relationships that YP have with teaching staff in school can be fractious and more challenging. The relationship-building work that YWs did with YP could make a significant difference to the way that YP relate to teachers.

'She's been at my meetings, and she's talked to the teachers and everything. So she's helped a bit with that. And I think me having a YW helps like… I don't know… telling the teachers stuff.' YP Interview 8 – County

Having the opportunity to work in school provided the opportunity for YWs to invite teachers to sessions with YP and help to build positive relationships. These opportunities were about forming positive experiences between staff and YP to build a foundation on which both teachers and the YP could move forward and find different ways of working with each other:

'He needs to get on better with is the assistant head of year, so once a week we'll go and play Uno with him. It has really showed a different side to his character, and it's broken down that barrier. He sees my young person now as having a really good sense of humour because he's had that quality time with him that's not telling him off. I think they don't always get that time for positive reinforcement. They only see the naughty kids when they're naughty. They don't see them when they're doing well. I think that's a really important part of our job.' YW Interview 2

Parental relationships

Just as relationships can be fractious between teaching staff and YP, relationships between YP and members of their family can also be challenging. YWs provided a crucial role in being able to support the YP and parents to build more positive relationships. This could be about educating parents, providing an outside view of the situation or building understanding and the ability to communicate more effectively.

'I think it was a combination of the work she was doing with me and her mum and dad getting on board as well. They're happy to support her, and she's doing positive things. Also the fact – they heard me about the phone. She hasn't got a TV in her bedroom. And I know she's been naughty at school, but they've taken her phone off her all the time. I did say to them, "She's bored." And the dad ended up taking her out into the town more, and they've just started doing a bit more. We had a really good conversation about how can you understand what your mum and dad have sacrificed for the education here? And now you've been back there and you're seeing people that would love to be at school. She heard it.' YW Interview 1

YP also reported better familial relationships and less fractious relationships. For some YP, this was about building the confidence and ability to talk to their parents and communicate more effectively:

'I'd say it's better at home because me and my mum we always used to get in arguments all the time, but now, like the past month, we've been getting on very well. We haven't had an argument.' YP Interview 8 – County

'She's helped me… I don't know, she's just helped me open up a bit more. Like, there's something that I wanted to tell my mum and dad, and she just encouraged me to do it.' YP Interview 8 – County

One concern for YWs was around their relationship with YP coming to an end and the YP's ability to continue to build positive relationships. In easing out of the YW relationships, YP were encouraged to form positive relationship with other adults in the community, for example with coaches. The goal here was to move the positive attachment from the YW to other key adults who would be a stable part of the YP's life after the end of the Reach intervention:

'Really good. A lot of mine have been really good. I think the hard thing is, as you get towards the end, they start being like, "Oh, I'm not going to see you anymore, what's going to happen to me?" There is that sense of a little bit of grief – [it is] six months. I've tried to explain to a lot of my young people that their intervention plans live beyond me, so on the plan it's three people that you can basically go to, and I try to make sure they've got one person in school that they feel really connected to, they've got one person in their friends or family who they can go to for support, and they have one person in the community, whether that's a coach, whether it's someone that works at the local gym. They've got people that know them and can support them beyond us – so we're not just their go-to, and we don't solve everything for them, we direct them back to those three main people.' YW Interview 2

Intervention differentiation

- *To what extent are the intervention activities sufficiently different from existing practices?*

SLs conveyed that Reach had benefits above and beyond schools' usual practices. The most prominent factor mentioned by SLs was that Reach YWs were able to work with the YP in the community and that YP viewed their YW as someone they could relate to outside of the school and the home context. Another theme that arose was the work that YWs could do with YP during 'hot spot' time such as school holidays. The quotes below illustrate these themes:

'I think what works well is it's a form of support that isn't school... with the YWs, it's an external person who they can build a positive relationship with. There's also like a fun element to it as well. Obviously in the school, you're expected to be a certain way and do things in a certain way and speak to pupils in a certain way. With YWs it's very different. And if they want to spend time with that young person say bowling or at Nando's or… then for them it works… it allows for the "out of school, out of home" context where young people may feel a bit more free to open up, and works with young people in a community setting.' SL City 1

'The real value of the Reach Programme for us is the fact that they're working with the students in the community. That's always been our missing link. We can do a normal full amount of stuff in school, and we do build good relationships with the families, but we can't actually be out there in the community and follow through on that. So that for us is the real benefit of the Reach Programme. That's why it was absolutely wonderful to get the opportunity of Reach so that that's something that can work with the child outside of school, can work with them during the holidays – because they really are hot spots. If there's issues in the community, that comes back into school, but the Reach workers will actually attend those provisions with them and encourage them to participate, and as well supporting the family in the home. Yes. It's just another adult reinforcing the same message but coming from a different place. So, they see those people as quite different to… it's not school, it's not home, but this is an adult that's telling me the same message.' SL City 3

'And they've also engaged them in activities out of school… these students are getting loads and loads of one-to-one support with the pupil support team, but that goes in the holiday period, doesn't it? So if they're around all over the summer, they're still getting that contact with someone, that support.' SL County

This SL also went on to discuss how the YW had enabled links with the local boxing club, which would not have happened with in-school support:

'Also the fact that it was an outside person coming in that wasn't a part of the school, so to speak – kind of an outside interest and outside eyes, fresh set of eyes, to see what's going on. And the fact that we haven't got time to be able to take kids to here and different places. The Reach Programme have got a couple of kids in boxing, which we wouldn't be able to offer, so that's been fantastic for them – really good.' SL County

One SL mentioned the fact that Reach acted as a bridge between home and school, with another school highlighting that parents/carers tended to be on board with the programme, whereas this was not always the case for other programmes under, for example, social care:

'I would say that the students that we're referring, the parents are feeling quite desperate, and they are really looking for more help, so they're really pleased that we're offering this. We've got one student who was going off the rails badly and Mum could not cope at home at all. But the Reach worker has really made a difference, and it's that bridge between home and school, I think.' SL City 3

'I think the other thing that's been really good is that parents have agreed and got on board with this really quickly, whereas normally when you ask for a YW, they freak out at the idea of anything under the umbrella of a social care, children and family wellbeing service. Whereas this is a really quick route to getting a YW really quickly, and parents just say yes straight away. I think it's amazing. It's been absolutely brilliant.' SL County

As discussed above, schools were using their own judgement in referrals, with one school mentioning that they had not always used the focus on suspensions as a basis for referrals. However, one school did mention that the focus on suspensions was what had appealed to them in Reach, which differed from the focus of some of their other support:

'We had a lot of external agencies we were using, which we still do. And we just saw Reach as another jigsaw piece, if you like, to fit into the puzzle, that could help some of these kids. The unusual thing was that Reach was obviously looking at those kids who had been excluded or were at risk of exclusion or permanent exclusion, so that's what attracted us to it.' SL County

This school was also very enthusiastic about the speed of response to referrals, which they had not experienced with other agencies:

'Yes, definitely. Definitely. I would say the biggest thing for me is that obviously, as you imagine, we use a lot of agencies, external agencies, where we can send an email, and then I'm still sending an email weeks later or months later chasing it. Reach – I've sent referrals through, I could send a referral through now, and they would get back to me this afternoon. The comeback on it from them, the turnaround, is amazing. I've never experienced anything like it. So quick. Just makes our lives so much easier as well.' SL County

Resources:

- *Feasibility and appropriateness of the resources required to deliver the intervention*

As noted above, the resources used to deliver the intervention were always intended to be flexible and tailored to the YP. DLs talked about being proud of how the resources had come together and went on to note the intended flexibility of implementation of these resources. They commented that the YWs were finding the resources really useful as guides for their sessions, while applying flexibility during delivery depending on the needs of the YP at that point in time:

'They're finding it useful, aren't they, in terms of having a guide of session plans and a bank of resources that they can chose from, to tailor that programme to the young person, so each session is adaptable to the needs of the young people.' DL late interview

'What we find is some YWs when they have those sessions... they have the plan but quite often the session kind of it's completely different to that due to perhaps an incident or the young people's state of mind at that particular stage, so you know sometimes that session may need to be delayed or adapted further at that particular time.' DL late interview

During implementation, DLs noted the feedback from the YWs that some of the resources may need some tweaking, while some resources were needed more than others, and so this was being reviewed over the summer period.

The nature of the activities that could be conducted with YP depended on the location – whether in school or out of school. Out-of-school activities provided opportunities to explore aspirations and engage YP in a wider array of pursuits to help deliver the Reach Programme:

'It's good aspirations time – the summer holidays and stuff – this is where you can get them more into the activities, more into the out of school stuff, because they are out of school. The holidays are good when you want to do more the activities and the aspirations side of things, because then you've not got… obviously they're not in school. Because it is hard when they're in school, sometimes the after-school activities, because you've got to do them all after school.' YW Interview 1

Physical activities that were not based on worksheets were helpful as an engagement tool for exploring core component topics. One YW described using physical activities as a way

into discussing harder hitting questions. These conversations could then be a gateway for deeper discussion or to access worksheet-based activities.

'I think the activities – using youth centres, playing a game of pool, table tennis, they all respond to that really well, in my experience. Not saying everyone would, but the young people I've been working with. And the games element. With the ping-pong… I think one of the best sessions I've ever had with my young people is I put all the questions in the bottom and one of them is "who can I be nicer to?". That question, I call it the killer question, because whoever they say – if they say I could be nicer to my English teacher, and then you think, okay, let's do it. Let's stop playing the game, sit down, what are we going to do? It's that time, as soon as they say it, you think we can make that a reality for them. And having that sort of knowledge of what can I be better at, and then being able to put that plan in with them for the next week. They've probably never had that relationship with anyone. And if people ask them things, it just gets left. I have one in gratitude week, and we have to be thankful for someone. They'll make a card. And giving them that space to do that, you can just see them open up a little bit. You get to know them more by who they need to be nicer to.' YW Interview 2

The range of activities delivered outside of the school setting was diverse. YWs again looked to YP to direct these activities and YWs played on the YP's interests to engage them, which ensured they were suitable for the YP. Activities included martial arts, football, bowling and graffiti art.

'We're going to do so more graffiti art. We're going to try and find some football teams for a couple of my kids. We're going to do some bowling because some of them are finishing, so they get like a treat, don't they? I'm going to do a couple of fun stuff. The after-school – one of them wants to do MMA, so like now we've got more time to research all them kinds of things. We've been doing it… there's a couple of them I took to boxing.' YW Interview 1

YP reported a range of interwoven activities that ensured sessions were not repetitive, and this may have impacted positively on responsiveness and engagement:

'She might say… she'll get a worksheet and do stuff and write stuff on it and stuff like that. Or we might just say how my day's gone and all of that. Or we might play a game…Yeah, just to see how my day has gone and all of that.' YP Interview 4 – City

Based on the outcomes of worksheet-based activities, some YWs identified physical activities that would not only engage the YP but would also meet their needs. For example,

drawing on the anger management work, boxing was selected as a way of tackling this core issue for one YP:

'[Boxing] Good. It helps me take a lot of anger out – all out [whenever I feel] just really angry about something, it really helps with it.' YP Interview 2 – City

One of the main barriers to continuing activities was price. Some YP may have enjoyed and benefited from a certain activity, but due to its high costs, they were not be able to pay for this themselves, and the Reach Programme was also unable to fund it.

'There's a couple of them I took to boxing. The guy was really good, but then he wanted them to sign up and do a direct debit for £45 a month. It was just too much. So now I've got to go back to the storyboard and find them somewhere else, because they can't sustain that after I'm gone.' YW Interview 1

Barriers

- *Exploring the barriers to the implementation of the Reach Programme*

Organisational issues and space to carry out the sessions

Staff time emerged as an issue that affected implementation of the programme. One SL mentioned some difficulties with the practical organisation in managing the numbers of referrals:

'Yes. I think that the numbers we have at the moment – I would say I wouldn't want any more pupils at the moment. Just because it does take a lot of time to organise, and obviously to answer questions from staff and parents and carers and pupils.' SL City 1

This SL went on to discuss the difficulty they had experienced with timetabling and finding spaces for some of the sessions, also suggesting the need for more forward planning if possible:

'*The only thing really has been trying to put together a timetable. Obviously for myself – it's difficult to always be available, so what I was trying to do was put forward that it would be great if I could book in the next four or five weeks of sessions so I knew what's happening when, and I could ensure I'm around to collect pupils if needed. I totally understand that obviously that's quite difficult for YWs. You don't know what's going to happen on the day. That's been like the only difficult thing – being around, because even though we are blessed with a number of pastoral staff, unfortunately a lot of them are busy. So it's not like I can*

just say, "Can you be here at this time" for this person. It's hectic. It's trying to be in three or four different places at once. Obviously trying to ensure that it went smoothly. For example, I wasn't here on one of the days – I left it to another member of staff. One of the rooms had been used. So it just didn't go to plan. So yeah, it's difficult obviously because I want to be there to ensure that it runs smoothly. I also need to ensure that I'm not becoming like a yes man in terms of, "Yes, you can be here at this time and do this at this time." Even when we were trying to put a timetable in place and knowing when they're coming in over the four or five weeks – there's always constant changes, which makes it difficult.' SL City 1

This difficulty was also noted and understood by DLs:

'I think school's capacity as well... if a school's got, I don't know, seven, eight, nine referrals and all of those young people are at a similar stage, that's potentially nine appointments in a week that they're trying to manage.' DL late interview

Timing within the school year was also noted by DLs as a factor in terms of finding space for delivery:

'A few weeks ago, beginning of exam season, that was quite problematic I think for school leads to still arrange for our visits to take place. Rooms became even more of a premium, so suggestions of using outdoor space when it's available to complete sessions in and around the school.' DL late interview

One SL also noted the impact of timing of key events in the academic year:

'Especially right now, total transparency, we've had exams. They automatically take over areas.' SL City 2

Using outdoor space had worked in some instances, although this solution was less viable in the winter season. In their survey responses, YWs did give a more positive picture of suitable space allocation, with five of the six respondents to this question indicating that they had been able to find suitable places for meetings in the case of all or most of their YP.

Barriers are outweighed by programme benefits

One SL noted some barriers to the programme in school but indicated that these were outweighed by the benefits. The main barriers for this school were logistical issues, for example room bookings, and the SL went on to suggest having a single point of contact and a maximum of two YWs to liaise with (as noted in the implementation section above):

'I think there have been certain barriers, as there would with anything, when you are almost trying to do the leadership approach. However, I guess for me in this moment in time, I have to say the positives have outweighed any particular barriers. One of the things that we have been looking at internally is: can we make one single point of contact? Because without boring you with all the logistics, there have been times where certain things – allocation of rooms – one person's approach might be slightly different and then you have got five potential different [people]. Equally, you might get that variation from potential mentors as to how they do things. I discussed this with the Reach lead as well. Then that person could touch base with the one or two mentors as opposed to sometime three mentors and three bits of messages.' SL City 2

SLs admitted that although their individual time capacity was sometimes an issue, they viewed time spent as an investment to prevent further issues down the line that would require their involvement:

'It is an extra thing. I can't lie. … but in my mind, it's almost an investment because if it's going to help these young people in controlling and managing their behaviour, then in terms of later on in life, I'll have to deal with less issues in terms of actually I need to contact…' SL City 2

'*The thing is, we always want more time, don't we… and actually it warrants… the time that we need to take to make the referrals, the benefit from that – it offsets. Because if I'm sorting out a referral for a student, I'm maybe not needing to interact with that student to resolve the difficulties because we've now got external support to do that*.' SL City 3

One of the schools did note a potential barrier was communicating with the parents in some instances and getting forms signed at the assessment stage:

'*No barriers within school. The barriers have been that the parents have said, "Yes, yes, yes we really want this," but then getting them to sign the form or to respond when… they've signed the form, but the Reach team are then trying to communicate with them to conduct an assessment, and some of them have not been so readily available to respond. I don't think they're reluctant. I think it's just organisation and that kind of thing*.' SL City 3

Stigmatisation

Although the study initially set out to explore whether stigmatisation was a potential barrier, the opposite was the case across the board for YP, with the exception being reports by YWs that some parents/carers were concerned about being stigmatised (see below). SLs noted that stigmatisation was not an issue; on the contrary, peers of the YP involved in Reach also wanted to be on the programme, which was viewed as a positive:

'*What actually happens is that friends of those who are engaging in the programme have requested to be part of the programme. Yes, there's no stigma attached to it at all. I think the people who are engaging in the programme are quite open. Again, it's all positive. So pupils will be asking if they can be referred to it.*' SL City 1

'*No (stigmatisation), but I think the ethos of this school is we've always had so much positive intervention that actually it's just completely normal. Sometimes, it works the other way, that mainly there's a bit of jealousy around, "Well, why haven't I got that?"'* SL City 3

'Stigmatisation – I wouldn't say so. No definitely not. All our one-to-one stuff is done very discreetly, so it's not as if you go into a class and pull a kid out, and everyone knows they're going to speak to somebody.' SL County

Job stability

One of the barriers for YWs related to job stability. The temporary and short-term nature of contracts was a concern for YWs and put them in a precarious position. This in turn could lead to the loss of experienced youth work staff. This issue was more problematic for some staff than others, for example those with a family to support.

*'When I first joined it was only until March – and I joined in December. That was only three months. I come from * anyway, so I'd asked my old employer to keep my post open, so if the project didn't get past three months, I could go back. But because I worked in adult social care, they said sorry we can't keep your post open because we need to backfill. So I actually felt like, oh God, if this doesn't work, then I haven't got a job in three months. But I felt at the time – I think I hoped more that even if it wasn't extended there might be other possibilities in early prevention. I have a few friends that I worked with in my teaching days that I thought would be perfect for this, that did the sort of mentoring, and they felt they couldn't take the risk to leave a full-time post to come on and do a temporary post. I'm quite lucky – I don't have a mortgage… I don't have kids. For me, there wasn't as much pressure.'* YW Interview 2

While job precarity was a barrier for YWs, they did highlight their passion for Reach and for their role. This was a dichotomous position whereby staff enjoyed and valued their role, but this had to be balanced against the practicalities of needing a stable income:

'I've seen a job come up that I could go for, and it's do I go for it? I don't want to, in case the Reach carries on, because it feels like your baby, do you know what I mean? You don't want to walk away from it. I see the point of it. It is enjoyable and I enjoy the challenge of it. So yeah, a bit of job insecurity I suppose is what makes it a little bit hard.' YW Interview 1

School relationships

Another major barrier for YWs was the relationship they had with the school in the earlier stages of establishing the Reach Programme. While some schools had been accommodating from the start, the relationship took much longer to build in other schools. One YW found a particular school to be more restrictive.

'They've been quite accommodating, especially School 5. School 5, honestly, I could go in every day. School 5 are just so accommodating. I'll go in… probably a whole day or most of the day. Sometimes I can go in twice a week and see them on different days. Say if one of them is not here or one of them has gone home. School 6 but it's a bit more restricted timings and stuff. I think to be fair to them they've had mock exams and stuff going on. So some of it you can understand anyway.' YW Interview 1

One YW described some of the schools they worked with as not having understanding of the programme, which led to greater difficulties in forming a working relationship and also led to poorer communication.

'That was a bit of a barrier because finding the right person in the school who could get the room booked… For example, School 2, which was one of the schools we go to, I've got eight young people there. I don't think they really understood the programme, so at the start, I was having to book through reception who would then book through the assistant head of year, who would then get reception to book the room, and then they would sometimes forget to tell me where the room was. Or I would turn up, and then the young person wasn't in that day. That was just teething pains, I think. Now, I'm just booked out for a term.' YW Interview 2

While the experience was different in different schools, YWs talked of not feeling as welcome in the early days of the programme when working with some schools was more difficult. This situation has since changed as YWs developed better relationships with schools. While teaching staff could now see the benefit of the YW intervention, in the early

days of running Reach, YWs needed time to build relationships with schools and communicate some of the benefits of the programme to senior staff and teaching staff:

'At the start, I don't think they really understood maybe what we were doing, so that was where the teething problems come in. I don't think they knew what to expect from us. But obviously it was different in all the schools, but I do now feel much more welcome. I can walk through the school and people know us, whereas at the start, it was a little bit like – who's that? What's going on? And I think also as YWs, we probably didn't look like teachers, so the teachers were a little bit intrigued as to who we were… what we were doing. But a lot of them, the majority I would say, were very pleased that these young people have that extra support, and all of the teachers I've worked with have said how much they can already tell the young person is opening up more. I think they're now seeing the value of us, so they're treating us with that little bit more respect maybe than at the start.' YW Interview 2

Ultimately, the schools needed time to build trust with the YWs, which echoes some of the findings about the YP–YW relationship. Schools needed to see the benefit of the scheme and have time to trust that the scheme was not about the school failing but about providing a service for at-risk YP:

'Most of them are alright because you go in and you have your DBS and they're quite happy for you to be involved for the most part. But I think, honestly, for some of the schools we're a bit of a tick-box – oh, this is another plaque that we can put on the wall. It just was a bit awkward getting emails across, or kind of having a very like [presented] "Hi, how are you?" but actually nothing really to come of it. So that was tricky at the beginning, but slowly we built that relationship. It's a trust. I think they thought, "Oh no, we've done something wrong, so they've come in because we have failed as a school." And they realised, oh no, the Reach team are on your side. We want the best for your students just as you do. We're just coming at it from a completely different angle.' YW Interview 3

One of the primary barriers with schools was communication with the Reach team. Again, while some schools were more inclusive towards YWs, communication from other schools was more lacking. Schools did not always notify YWs when YP were absent or excluded.

'We've also had some incidents where the school hasn't told us that the young person has been excluded, so you go into the school – you've spent 20 minutes going to the school and then they're like, "No, they're not here." So, yes the relationship was a bit like – well you want us to support them because they are getting excluded, so… yes, some communication things.' YW Interview 3

Furthermore, some YWs were included in meetings that schools were having with families and YP, but this was inconsistent. This issue is another example of how schools could operate as a barrier or an enabler to better relationship-building with YWs. One YW described contrasting approaches in schools, one much more collaborative than the other:

'School 5 to me have been the most accommodating, the most welcoming. They really include you as part of the team. Once you're on board with the young person, they include you in a lot more… School 6 are friendly and that, don't get me wrong, but I do find School 5 is a bit more of a nurturing environment as well. They really are. With School 6, for example, one of my girls – she was on a managed move from one school, and they've told me – her mum rang me yesterday, they've sent her back to the other school, but I wasn't involved in any of the meetings. So, you do kind of think – I've not finished the project. We're not miracle workers, we're not going to change things over one week, but I don't know – that was really frustrating.' YW Interview 1

Access to provision

A further barrier to the Reach Programme running effectively was the access to community-based provision in the county. While the city team did not report any such access barriers, the county team reported a general lack of access to clubs and activities for YP. While there is no quick fix for this, it was something to bear in mind when planning sessions for YP in the county:

'It's a bit of a struggle in Loughborough because there's not a whole lot here. It has been a bit tough. It would be good if they had more youth clubs. They've only really just started one, but it's only one hour a week, it's on a Wednesday, and it's a little bit hit-and-miss as well whether many people even attend. There are different clubs, but they're more outside of Loughborough, so again it's another aspect of the families being able to support them, whether they can take them to it as a weekly thing because it might be that they have training three or four times a week, but I wouldn't be able to take them to it every single time. So then it kind of falls on the parents, but they might not be able to because of other commitments. But yeah, it has been a little bit tricky in that aspect. I've tried to start looking a bit further afield to other villages and things nearby. Loughborough is a bit of a tough place to find different things to do.' YW Interview 4

However, one YW in the county did say that this situation was improving and the network of potential providers was slowly expanding:

'Out of school is a little bit harder in the county because we've not got so many youth clubs, and we're building that network up now. So, this is why it would be really good if they carried it on next year because I just feel like this year we're setting it up, we're just getting our teeth into it, we're learning the pros and cons.' YW Interview 1

As well as the need for more clubs and activities in the county, access to a more consistent youth centre space was also proving to be difficult. The ideal scenario would be to have a space that the team could use more consistently:

'I think the city has got a bit more open to them, but they still need more. But with the county – when they made the youth cuts, they lost a lot. One youth centre is not just the youth centre anymore – it's the family wellbeing centre. As YWs, we have restricted access to it. We need that drop-in building. We need that building where there's YWs around all the time and you can come… a lot of the young people, especially since lockdown, they've not got back out there.' YW Interview 1

Families and their understanding of Reach

Lastly, the understanding that YP's families had about the Reach intervention was a potential barrier to recruitment of YP. While some families were accommodating and encouraged their YP to join the Reach Programme, this was not always the case. In some families there was some hesitation.

'There are different barriers as well – like working with the families. Some of the families can be really accommodating, and they really encourage you to attend and offer you a lot of support, whereas sometimes the families may not be so supportive, and they might be a little bit against you or a little bit hesitant at first.' YW Interview 4

From the perspective of some families, the notion of working with a YW came with potential negative connotations and could lead to stigmatisation. Some parents were not aware of the role of a Reach YW and the potential benefits for their child and instead relied on their more negative preconceptions of the role. In more extreme cases, families that did not fully understand the nature of Reach and the YW intervention felt that YWs were akin to social workers. One YW reported that a parent became upset thinking that the YW was there to remove the child from the home:

'As YWs, we work in early prevention; we're funded by a violence-reduction network. It's got a lot of negative connotations in its way. So if it was maybe framed as a more positive… I think YW as a whole doesn't always come with that positive that we're there to enrich lives. We usually get involved when something is going wrong. So, I think that may be a bit of a

difference. Obviously my title in theory is a youth advocate, but when you say that, no one knows what it means. Oh yeah, I'm a youth advocate. What does that mean? And I say we try and voice the young person's… we're here to make sure that they get what they need from school [and from] home. I think that sometimes has a better… than just saying, "I'm a YW." But our hoodies have got "YW" printed on the back, so kids coming out… they obviously think, "Oh, that's her YW." But yes, I think it can have a bit of a negative, especially for a lot of the families who don't have English as a first language, they wonder why we're there. One of the other YWs – the first time she turned up, Mum started crying because she thought she was removing her son from her care.' YW Interview 2

Again, some families did not seem to understand the difference between a social worker and a YW. The identification with the council may have been unsettling for some and possibly led to hesitation to take part in Reach or created an immediate obstacle to any potential relationship between YWs and families because of perceived negative connotations of council involvement:

'I think for some of the families, they see the council badge and they get really concerned, because they've worked with the social services before and they've had a really horrendous time with it. Sometimes, I'll just take the badge off and put it in my bag because it is a barrier.' YW Interview 3

Moving forward to the pilot trial:

- *Practicability and acceptability of implementing randomisation*
- *Exploring the possibility of an active control condition*
- *Baseline/outcome data collection and planned measures*

The practicability and acceptability of implementing individual-level randomisation was explored at the feasibility stage; the issues were discussed with the full delivery team as the study progressed. At the outset, it was not deemed possible to move towards school-level randomisation given the smaller number of schools than expected; therefore, individual-level randomisation was explored and communicated with the delivery team, including the YWs.

The early-stage DL interviews revealed that the set-up of the funded delivery and evaluation components brought further challenges around supporting teams to understand the need for processes related to randomised control trials:

'That's been quite useful to have the VRU involved to be that conduit, between the Youth Endowment Fund, the evaluators, like your perspective, the things coming through were

around randomised control trial and efficacy testing and fidelity. I think things that maybe some delivery partners aren't familiar with so being able to translate that in a way that will kind of make sense within their own working environment.' DL early interview

At the early stage, DLs began to rationalise the use of randomisation:

'*Even if it goes down that route, we're still getting more for some of our YP than we would have done. Nobody is getting less... obviously, it's an additional service… it's an additional intervention. Those YP will still get intervention but not this intervention. So they will just get what they would have normally got, which is obviously nowhere near as intense or as much as this. I think they're probably thinking, well actually they're not getting any additional, but actually they're getting what they would normally have got anyway.'* DL early interview

In further conversations with the delivery team managing the day-to-day implementation of Reach, some concerns were raised, for example over what would happen to those allocated to the control group, with a concern that a YP may go on to be excluded if they did not receive the Reach Programme. There was also apprehension about how schools would receive this process. Reassurance was given here in terms of the possibility of implementing an active control condition so that those allocated to the control group would receive some form of support. In terms of communicating this to schools, it was decided to present this as a comparison of Reach versus an alternative form of support.

With regard to a possible active control condition, different options were explored, including funding a group-based activity. However, after some consideration, it was decided that this would not be appropriate, given that this activity would need to run for the duration of the pilot trial and there might be low numbers of YP attending given the variability in timings of referrals. In addition, it was apparent that capacity to run this group work might be problematic.

The other option for an active control condition was drawing on existing support available in schools. This has the methodological advantage of being as close as possible to 'business as usual' and allows time to fully explore what YP would have received prior to Reach. While the SLs have generally been very enthusiastic about the Reach Programme and its implementation, it proved difficult to engage SLs in conversations around randomisation, given the priorities and demands of their day-to-day jobs and due to the language of RCTs being somewhat inaccessible. One SL that we spoke to specifically about this raised a concern that YP in their school would be excluded if they were not referred to the Reach Programme. At that point, the evaluation team undertook further exploration with all six schools in the study to identify what support other than Reach was available within their

school. This inquiry elicited a good response from five of the six schools, as presented below (Table 12).

Table 4: Support options within schools outside of the Reach Programme

Support options (outside of the Reach Programme)	Number of schools indicating yes (total of five)	Examples
Do you deliver group-based sessions to YP who need additional support?	4	• In-house groups and workshops with the PCSO • Tends to focus on friendship and communication skills or anxiety. Delivered an online programme called Flourish this year. Limited capacity. Only offered to around 10 students per year • Student support team working across all year groups to offer group sessions • Exam anxiety; Commando Joe (group work/teambuilding with an ex-forces mentor).
Do you deliver one-to-one sessions to YP who need additional support?	5	• Evolve team. This targets mental health and wellbeing. Pastoral support is also available 1:1. • Mentoring and counselling • Grounded; Anger Management; Young Carers. Limited capacity • Student support team working across all year groups to offer one-to-one sessions. Head of Year/Assistant Head of Year mentoring • Emotional health practitioners and a psychotherapist who sees students who are below the CAMHS threshold
Do you have alternative provision come in to deliver activity/support?	3	• External mentoring • Love4Life (girls); Youth Activator Programme; Mental Health Support Teams; Leicester City did deliver some sessions, but they were not well planned, and the leaders often let the students down last minute. Limited capacity, only around 15 students are able to access these. • Faith in Families – who work with vulnerable students. Police – a school liaison officer who offers assemblies, group sessions and 1:1 sessions. Alternative providers (AP) who offer group sessions in schools. Calm Clinics – counselling sessions. Leicester City FC in the community – offer group or 1:1 sessions. Boys Move – led by an independent sports company.
Do you have the option for short-term alternative provision placements? (e.g. two- or six-week programmes)	3	• Managed Moves are available to certain students who are struggling with behaviour. However, this is not used regularly due to placement options being available. Hosts are available; however, this again depends on other schools' availability. • Carisbrooke – offer 2-, 6- and 18-week programmes. • Students at risk of suspension sometimes visit the City Provision for behaviour for 24-week programmes one or two days per week, or six weeks full time.
Do you deliver after-school clubs to YP who need additional support?	2	• A variety of after-school clubs are available to all students who wish to take part in them. • Enrichment programme available after school. Compulsory workshops as a consequence are also held.
Do you make referrals to local	3	• MARF referrals are made when causes of concern occur with

authority-run targeted youth support?		behaviour. This can be targeted youth support, CFWS or other services such as key worker, etc. • We complete a MARF to access a YW. However, there is a long wait (unlike the Reach Programme), and parents are often a barrier to this. Parents can reject the support due to it coming under the social care umbrella. Once a child has reached the top of the waiting list for a YW and parents are called directly, rather than this being supported through school, parents often then reject the offer of support. • Youth Service, e.g. targeted youth support via referrals made by school.

Based on these five schools' responses, it is clear that there are various forms of support available outside of the Reach Programme, although this is variable by school. Some comments made require further discussion and exploration with schools, for example the capacity of that alternative support and gaining a timely referral to the alternative support.

While it proved difficult to engage schools in conversations around randomisation, the interviews shed some further light on potential issues with randomisation that would need to be worked through with schools:

'These pupils may not have done anything in particular to lead to an exclusion, but they have risks and needs that aren't met within the school. I would say that the pupils who've been referred to Reach are pupils who wouldn't meet criteria for other external support in terms of youth service, prevention etc. It's pupils who are on the cusp and Reach is being used as a preventative measure to being referred to other external agencies... I think a lot of it has come from me being understanding of the pupils and knowing our young people and knowing that they wouldn't necessarily meet the threshold for other external agencies, but they would for this one.' SL City 1

Another school mentioned they would have put pupils on managed exclusion if the YW had not been available:

'*Like I said, the two young people they would definitely have been moved on somewhere else, without a doubt, maybe looking at permanent exclusion for both of them. But they've turned it round themselves, and I think that's a lot to do with the work from the Reach project.*' SL County

Current position and plans to work with schools on randomisation

Over the summer, the YW team was briefed on the plan to move towards randomisation at the pilot stage with the hope that YWs could form that relationship with schools and work closely with them on this. YWs suggested that some accessible visual communications to sum up the referral process, which incorporates explanation of randomisation, could be presented to schools along with a set of 'FAQs'. The evaluators will continue to work closely with the delivery team and YEF on this during the autumn term and plan the optimum way of communicating this issue with schools ahead of new referrals being made in January 2023. There is a set of six new schools to work with in addition to the original six schools.

There was some discussion around the point at which to randomise the individuals. The delivery team indicated that the eligibility check was purely data-based and not overly arduous or burdensome on the YP or their families, so it was possible to implement randomisation post-eligibility check. Post-randomisation, the in-person assessment would then take place for those allocated to the intervention group. Prior to randomisation, consent would be sought from all those deemed eligible to be in the trial, and baseline data would be collected.

Planned quantitative measures to be collected during the pilot trial

The Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ) and the Self Report Delinquency Scale (SRDS) are planned to be the main outcome measures used during the pilot trial. The YP-completed SDQ measure is planned for the pilot trial, although this could be extended to include the teacher-completed SDQ measure to provide further validation. These measures were explored alongside the ToC to confirm their appropriateness, and it was decided that both these measures fitted well with the ToC in terms of reduction of criminal behaviour and with peer relationships, conduct, emotions and prosocial behaviour.

Of the other scales considered, it was determined that the Mentor Youth Alliance Scale (MYAS) may be useful to take forward to the pilot trial in terms of evidencing short-term outcomes on the YW–YP relationship. Establishing a good relationship with a YW is important in terms of the engagement and responsiveness of the YP to the Reach Programme, so it is an important area to explore. This scale was piloted with four of the YP interviewees; all the YP involved understood the questions well and did not find the time taken to complete it overly burdensome. This scale would be used with the intervention group only.

Another possibility in terms of secondary outcomes is to use the existing data collected by the delivery team. These are collected pre- and post-intervention and explore:

- Motivation at school
- Confidence
- Anger
- Relationships at home
- Peer relationships

These data collections could be extended to include the control group as well as the intervention group to allow a comparison of outcomes.

Conclusion

Table 13: Summary of feasibility study findings

Research question	Findings
Community level factors: What is the level of need and readiness for change in the context where the intervention will take place?	• The Reach Programme's overarching remit is to reduce suspensions within certain local areas within Leicester and Leicestershire. • These local areas have particularly high levels of suspensions compared to regional levels, with physical assault being a top reason for suspension; the areas that have the highest rates of suspensions also have the highest rates of serious violence. • Currently, there is little support for YP at risk who are suspended from school. At the same time, there is limited understanding on what leads up to a YP's suspension. Therefore, there is a need for more work to be done with a whole-family approach to understand and address what led to that suspension. • While the key aim is to reduce suspensions, the programme also has the potential for wider impact on YP's relationships with families, peers and schools.
Organisational factors: What are the key issues facing the schools/communities around suspensions/disadvantage/crime?	• Schools in the study were found to have regular contact/meetings with local police/liaison officers to discuss particular incidents. • Family disputes/neighbour disputes within the community sometimes spilled over into schools. • Recent years have seen a notable rise in school absences, exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. This has meant that during periods of school closures and home learning, YP have received less exposure to the protective factors that come from being in school.
Organisational capacity: What is the readiness and capacity for change in the settings in which the intervention will take place? Is the culture, coordination, communication and leadership sufficient to enable implementation? How do schools/DLs perceive the sustainability of the intervention looking ahead?	• Schools and families of YP were found to be very much on-board with the programme during the set-up phase. • Once implementation of Reach was underway, schools were generally very thankful for the opportunity for additional support, noting the gap that was filled by the Reach Programme. • Reach was usually implemented in schools with the involvement of the wider school pastoral/safeguarding team. • Sustainability of the programme was generally viewed very positively from an implementation point of view; some concerns were raised over sustained funding for the programme.
Recruitment of YWs: Has the programme been able to recruit suitable YWs with relevant experience? Is there diversity among the YW team?	• Recruitment of YWs proved to be challenging at the beginning of the programme due to the availability of suitable candidates and the temporary nature of contracts. • As the study progressed, the Reach team were able to recruit and fully retain a team of eight YWs who brought a wide range of experience and competence to the programme. • There was diversity among the team in terms of ethnicity but less so in terms of gender, with 75% of the team being female.
Matching process and relationship-building phase: Have YP been allocated to a suitable YW?	• The matching process was generally viewed as successful from the viewpoint of DLs, YWs and YP. • Matching the YW and YP in terms of gender and ethnicity was less important than anticipated, and the gender balance of the YW team in

Is the relationship-building phase successful?	favour of females did not prove to be problematic in terms of engagement of YP. • Allowing YP to have input into the matching process worked well. • On occasions where the match was less successful, the YP was reallocated a YW. • For relationship building between the YW and YP to be successful, there were a number of facilitating factors: finding common ground and related experiences; ability of the YW to empathise with the YP; creating feelings of safety, security and trust in the YP; being an ally/friend; and being non-judgemental. • Building trust was a mutual factor: the YW needed to have trust that the YP will engage with them. • YWs used the relationship-building phase flexibly to meet needs of YP; the YWs ran this phase for longer if needed.
Referrals process, eligibility criteria and reach of the programme: Is the level of referrals as anticipated? Are the eligibility criteria successful in accessing the intended population? What are the criteria that would make a YP potentially ineligible for the programme? Reach: What is the rate of participation by intended recipients?	• The level of referrals was largely as anticipated from schools; schools were ready to make further referrals once the delivery team had the capacity. • Of the 109 referrals to date, 11 YP were identified as ineligible; whereas they met the risk factors, there were no concerns about their behaviour in general at that point. • Schools generally viewed the referral process as straightforward and were happy with the information they had been given on the process. • There was a sense that a wider pool of YP could benefit who were not yet considered eligible; accessing YP at an earlier stage in their lives was viewed as potentially beneficial. • Schools often used their own discretion in deciding who to refer, alongside making use of the referral criteria. • When comparing the characteristics of the YP recruited to Reach to the data on suspensions in those schools, the gender and age profiles were broadly similar, further indicating that the intended YP population was being reached. There were some ethnic differences. A slightly higher proportion of White British YP were recruited, compared with the proportion of White British YP who had received a suspension. Caution in interpretation is needed here due to low numbers, the time discrepancy in the data collected (period of recruitment vs period of suspensions data) and the lack of comparison to school population data. Further research could be conducted on this going into the pilot trial. • The delivery team broadly viewed the referral criteria as successful in accessing the intended population thus far but also expressed the view that some YP may benefit from the intervention earlier on.
Implementation support system: What strategies and practices are used to support high-quality implementation? What training and ongoing support or technical assistance is available?	• Schools generally found the ongoing support from the Reach team very useful and felt there had been sufficient training and support. • Senior leaders in schools were evidently invested in the programme and often involved the wider team of pastoral and safeguarding staff, all of which facilitated implementation. • Organisational and practical communications with the schools were pertinent to facilitate implementation; it was useful to have a few points of contact within a school so that one individual in the school did not become overburdened. • One school indicated a potential need for further involvement from Reach in terms of liaising with parents/carers.

	• Ensuring that the YW was well integrated into the school was found to be a potential facilitator to implementation. This was aided by having a smaller number of YWs within each school; although this potentially impeded the YW/YP matching process, it might be more important to prioritise this way of working, given the matching process was found to be less critical than anticipated. • Further, when the YW was well integrated into the school, this facilitated organisational arrangements and enhanced the YW/school relationship. • YWs themselves were offered a variety of formal and informal training, with weekly group supervisions and peer support cited as particularly beneficial and conducive for forming a close-knit team and for sharing a wide pool of knowledge, including local knowledge. The group supervisions were also important in bringing together the work across the city and county. • YWs also cited the importance of the emotional support gained from the full team sessions and praised the amount of support that they received.
Fidelity/adherence: To what extent do implementers adhere to the intended delivery model?	• The delivery model was intended to be flexible according to the needs of the YP. The need for this flexibility became even more evident throughout the course of delivery and proved crucial to the success of the programme. • Findings indicated that while all core components were delivered, the delivery model worked best when the order and extent to which these were delivered varied according to the individual YP's needs. • Further detail on the extent to which each core component was delivered and on the length of sessions (which varied according to individuals) will be collected going forward to the pilot trial. • The Reach Programme was not a one-size-fits-all approach. The programme was delivered in a way that accounts for the individual differences in YP and their particular needs. When problems arose, YWs were able to respond to these and pivot the session plans to account for issues and challenges the YP was facing. • The programme was also adapted to the individual in terms of where the settings took place (i.e. school/community/home). • There may be scope for creating additional optional components (e.g. sexual health). • YWs cited the potential need for a longer completion period in some cases.
Dosage: How much of the intended intervention has been delivered?	• In general, YWs were able to meet fairly frequently with their YP, although this was not the case for all YP. • The need for flexibility according to the needs of the YP in terms of session length and type of activity was apparent. • Challenges to meeting with the YP as expected sometimes arose in terms of communications with the school about how long the YP was available for and in terms of the caseload of the YW.
Quality: How well are the different components of the intervention being delivered?	• Crucially, the components worked best at teachable moments; if it was possible to catch a YP at the right time, the components could have more of an impact. • One of the main challenges to quality of delivery was the caseload of the YW.

	• The YP who engaged with the intervention spoke very positively of their mentoring. • Generally, YP spoke of their YW as someone they could talk to about anything; they described their YWs as non-judgemental and receptive listeners. These are qualities that are important to YP in receiving a quality intervention. • Through the evaluator's observation activities, high-quality delivery was observed. • In the observed sessions, any difficult discussions were done in a way that was non-judgemental and embedded within the session in a naturalistic way. • YP responded well to the discussions; YP were able to lead the sessions and directed the flow of conversation, while the YW simply responded to the YP's discussion topics and introduced topics and ideas from the core components.
Responsiveness: To what extent do the participants engage with the intervention?	• SLs and DLs believed that most of the YP thus far were engaged very well with the Reach Programme, especially as they progressed and built the relationships with the YWs. • There was some natural variation in the way that YP respond within the sessions; some were more openly enthusiastic while others needed more encouragement and reassurance. • There were a number of things that affected engagement on the whole, one of which was how the YP was feeling at the time of the session. • While this was the case, engagement was reported as generally very good, and any factors that may have affected a YP's mood or engagement may also have provided teachable moments. • Some YP were particularly engaged by key activities. • Many YWs developed sessions according to their YP's interests and allowed the YP to lead the session or series of sessions with their interests. • For YWs, engagement and responsiveness were key to the success of Reach; ensuring that this was clear to the YP was important. • The YP involved in the intervention had varying degrees of awareness of what the intervention was trying to achieve, but they all had a reason for wanting to take part.
Peer relationships: Has peer engagement work been undertaken as expected? Have YP received and engaged with appropriate activities to develop social awareness and skills?	• Peer relationships proved to be the most needed element of the 'positive relationships' core component. • YWs sometimes ran joint sessions with YP's peers to aid in the development of peer relationships. Some peers were outside of the Reach Programme and some were part of the Reach Programme; on occasions, this joint work was carried out with siblings or cousins of the YP. • The relationship-building work that YWs did with YP could make a significant difference to the way that YP related to teachers in their school. • YWs provided a crucial role in supporting YP and parents to build more positive relationships. • In easing out of the YW relationships, YP were encouraged to form positive relationship with other adults in the community, for example with sport's coaches; the goal here was to move the positive attachment from the YW to other key adults who will be a stable part of

	the YP's life after the end of the Reach intervention.
Intervention differentiation: To what extent are the intervention activities sufficiently different from existing practices?	• The SL interviews revealed that Reach had benefits above and beyond their usual practices in that the service could work with the YP in the community and that YP viewed their YW as someone they could relate to outside of the school and outside of their home context. This was the most prominent factor mentioned by SLs. • Further, Reach YWs could work with YP during school holidays, which were potentially 'hot spots' for problem behaviours; during holiday time, other services may not be able to reach young people. • Reach enabled YP to make those links to other adults in the community (e.g. sports coach) that the school was unable to do. • SLs further indicated that Reach provided support in a timely way, which was not always possible with other interventions.
Resources: Feasibility and appropriateness of the resources required to deliver the intervention	• The YWs found the resources really valuable as a guide for their sessions, while applying flexibility during delivery depending on the needs of the YP at that point in time. • Out-of-school activities provided opportunities to explore YP's aspirations and engage them in a wider array of activities to help deliver the Reach Programme. • The range of activities delivered outside of the school setting was diverse; YWs looked to YP to direct these activities, and YWs played on the YPs' interests to engage them. • Non-worksheet based, physical activities were helpful in acting as a gateway for exploring core component topics. • YP reported a range of interwoven activities, which ensured that sessions were not repetitive; this may have impacted positively on responsiveness and engagement. • One of the main barriers to continuing activities was price; some of the YP may have enjoyed and benefited from an activity, but due to high costs they were not able to pay for this themselves, and the Reach Programme was also unable to fund this.
Barriers: Exploring the barriers to the implementation of the Reach Programme	• School staff time could be a barrier to implementation in terms of practical organisation; one way to mitigate this somewhat could be to use a revised model with fewer YWs per school, as noted above. • Timing of events in the school year could impact on availability of space, for example room availability during exam time. • Space to conduct the Reach sessions was an important issue to consider during the winter season, moving forward to the pilot trial, in terms of ensuring schools have indoor space available. • SLs noted these barriers but indicated that they were outweighed by the benefits of the programme, further reflecting schools' positive views of the programme. • Although the study initially set out to explore whether stigmatisation was a potential barrier, the opposite was found across the board, with the exception being that in some cases, YWs noted that parents/carers were concerned about stigmatisation. • One of the barriers for YWs related to job stability; the temporary and short-term nature of their contracts was a concern for YWs and left YW staff in a precarious position. • While job instability was a barrier for YWs, they did highlight their passion for Reach and their role.

	• Another major barrier for YWs was the relationship they had with the school in the earlier stages of establishing the Reach Programme; while some schools were accommodating, in other schools there were difficulties, which meant the relationship took longer to build. • Subsequently, YWs have built better relationships with schools over time. • While teaching staff could now see the benefit of the YW intervention, in the early days of running Reach, YWs needed time to build relationships with schools and communicate some of the benefits of the programme to senior leaders and teaching staff. • Ultimately, the schools needed time to build trust with the YWs, which echoes some of the findings about the development of YP–YW relationships. • One of the primary barriers with schools was communication. While some schools were more inclusive towards YWs, communication from other schools was more lacking. Schools did not always communicate when YP were absent or excluded or include YWs in meetings schools were having with families and YP. • A further barrier to the Reach Programme running effectively was a lack of community provision in the county. While the city team did not report any such access barriers, the county team reported a general lack of access to clubs and activities for YP. While there was no quick fix to this, it is something to bear in mind when planning sessions for YP in the county. • Lastly, the YP's family's level of understanding of the Reach intervention is a potential barrier to YP recruitment. While some families were accommodating and encouraged their YP to join the Reach Programme, this was not always the case, and some families showed hesitation.
Moving forward to the pilot trial: Practicability and acceptability of implementing randomisation; exploring the possibility of an active control condition; baseline/outcome data collection and planned measures	• The delivery team raised some concerns about randomisation, e.g. what would happen to those YP allocated to the control group, with a concern that a YP may go on to be excluded if they did not receive the Reach Programme. • Reassurance was given here in terms of the potential to implement an active control condition so that those allocated to the control group would receive some form of support. • Possible active control conditions were explored (e.g. group-based after-school sessions). However, it was decided that these would be difficult to implement, given that they might not be suitable for all YP and due to the rolling nature of referrals. • The 'business as usual' case was thus further explored by means of an email survey to schools that asked them to tabulate their existing forms of support outside of Reach (e.g. pastoral care, counselling, and internal/external group work). This demonstrated that schools did have other forms of support that could be used with those YP allocated to the control condition. • Further work was planned in the autumn term 2022, with all schools to explore this and prepare them for randomisation in January 2023. • The Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ) and the Self Report Delinquency Scale (SRDS) are planned to be the main outcome measures used during the pilot trial. These measures were explored

	alongside the ToC to confirm their appropriateness; it was decided that both measures fitted well with the ToC in terms of reduction of criminal behaviour and with peer relationships, conduct, emotions and prosocial behaviour. • Of the other scales considered, it was determined that the Mentor Youth Alliance Scale (MYAS)[5] would be useful to take forward to the pilot trial in terms of evidencing short-term outcomes on the YW–YP relationship. • Another possibility in terms of secondary outcomes is to use the existing data collected by the delivery team, which explore motivation at school, confidence, anger, relationships at home and peer relationships.

Table 13 above gives a detailed summary of the overall findings of the study. These findings are discussed below, first in relation to the LM and the ToC. An overall assessment of the feasibility of the intervention is then given, taking into consideration the success/ target criteria and the overall findings, followed by a full discussion of the progression of the intervention to a pilot trial.

Development of the Logic Model and Theory of Change

The current ToC and LM (Appendix 1) reflect the expected delivery and outcomes of the Reach Programme. The original key assumptions still hold: that YP who are at risk of suspension are more likely to be at later risk of involvement in crime and violence. However, revisions have been made to include YP who are not attending well at school (less than 90% attendance), as evidence suggests their outcomes are similar to those who are at risk of suspension. Moving forward to the pilot trial, the eligibility criteria will be defined as 'children and young people aged 11–16 who are at risk of suspension or who are persistently absent from school, and where there are concerns about future involvement in anti-social behaviour and crime as either a victim or perpetrator'. The ToC/LM reflects that these groups of YP will be offered a six-month social and personal intervention through the development of a trusted relationship with a YW, with the aim of achieving improved engagement at school, improved familial and peer relationships, and improved behavioural and aspirational outcomes.

The qualitative findings revealed the timely importance of the Reach Programme in the post-pandemic context of increased school absences. Schools identified that Reach plugged a real gap in provision for YP who needed additional support to engage with education, which, as the ToC outlines, allows them greater opportunity to achieve good educational outcomes and to reduce their risk of being victims or perpetrators of crime. The feasibility

[5] https://nationalmentoringresourcecenter.org/resource/measurement-guidance-toolkit/#mentoring-relationship-quality-and-characteristics--mentoryouth-alliance-scale-myas

study found that short-term ToC outcomes were largely being met, including good engagement from YP, parents and peers; the use and understanding of local opportunities; understanding of problem behaviour; and development of positive trusting relationships with YWs. The LM inputs have largely been achieved, with DLs, SLs and YWs agreeing that suitable staff were recruited and trained to both manage and deliver the programme and that the materials used were fit for purpose. Further, stakeholder and partner organisations (e.g. schools) viewed the programme positively and had a good understanding of the referral processes.

The qualitative findings also provided support for the conclusion that the activities (outputs) offered on the programme were as described in the LM, namely that they were timely, achievable and developed good relationships between YWs and the YP. Further, the findings showed that good relationships were achieved between YWs and schools, with further work proposed to strengthen the YW/school relationship moving forward to pilot, particularly during the early stages of school participation.

Evaluator judgement of intervention feasibility and progression to a pilot trial

Success/target criteria

Success/target criteria were developed following meetings and discussions between the delivery partners, SHU and YEF. Given that Reach is a new programme, we could not use prior evidence of the programme to inform these targets; however, they were given due consideration in terms of what was deemed to be reasonably achievable and in terms of assessing the number of YP that could receive the programme within a given timeframe, which would inform the design of a pilot trial going forward. A RAG system has been used to categorise targets: Green (Go), Amber (Pause and think) and Red (Stop). A summary of these is presented in Table 6: Summary of success/target criteria4 below, followed by further details for each criterion and target set.

Table 6: Summary of success/target criteria

Criteria	Target set	% Achieved	Status
Project implementation	Attendance of YP at planned sessions (Green = 80%, Amber = 50%, Red = below 50%)	95% (n sessions attended = 1,230 out of a total of n sessions offered = 1,289)	Green
Recruitment and retention	YP who are referred and are eligible are successfully recruited to the programme (Green = 75%, Amber = 50%, Red = below 50%)	81% (n = 73 YP recruited out of a total of n = 90 YP who were referred and eligible)	Green
	Of those that are successfully recruited to the programme, the percentage that will	88% (at the time of reporting n = 14 completions out of a	Green

	go on to complete the full programme (Green = 75%, Amber = 50%, Red = below 50%)	total of n = 16 that started at least six months prior; please see below for details)	
	Retaining YWs (Green = 75%, Amber = 50%, Red = below 50%)	100% (n = 8 YWs retained out of a total of n = 8 recruited)	Green
Measurement and findings	YWs rating of how far they agree as to whether the YP they are working with has made progress as expected (strongly agree to disagree). % agree/strongly agree: Green = 70%, Amber = 50%, Red = below 50%.	71% (n = 52 strongly agree/agree out of a total of 73)	Green

Project implementation

- ***Target:*** *Attendance of YP at planned sessions (Green = 80%, Amber = 50%, Red = below 50%).*

Overall attendance at the sessions was good; 95% of sessions were attended. Table 7: Attendance at sessionsbelow shows the total number of sessions offered to date and the number of unauthorised absences:

Table 7: Attendance at sessions

	Sessions attended	Unauthorised absence	Total sessions offered
Number	1230*	59	**1289**
% of total	95%	5%	

*Note that this total includes rearranged sessions further explained below under 'completion'.

Recruitment and retention

- ***Target:*** *YP who are referred and are eligible are successfully recruited to the programme (Green = 75%, Amber = 50%, Red = below 50%).*

Table 8: Recruitment to the programme shows that a total of 73 YP were recruited to the programme at the time of reporting. The total number of YP who were referred and eligible was 98; of those 98 referrals, eight cases were pending. Therefore, there was a total of 90 eligible referrals where we know the outcome, of which 73 (81%) were successfully recruited to the programme.

Table 8: Recruitment to the programme

Description	Total n	Further details
Number of referrals since the beginning of the programme	109	
Number of ineligible YP	11	
Number of YP who were eligible but declined/didn't start	11	Vast majority due to parents declining

the programme		support
Number of YP who disengaged/left the programme	6	The reasons for these included: YP moved away from the area; YP felt that they were doing well at school and no longer needed the support from the YW; YP felt that they were receiving sufficient support from other services (e.g. AP); YP decided that they no longer wanted to participate in the programme.
Number of YP currently pending	8	
Number of YP on the programme	73	

- ***Target:*** *Of those that are successfully recruited to the programme, the percentage that will go on to complete the full programme (Green = 75%, Amber = 50%, Red = below 50%).*

As explained in this report, recruitment of YWs at the start of the programme proved challenging, so there was less capacity for cases than anticipated in the early months of the programme. Therefore, fewer cases than expected have had the full time period (six months) to complete the programme. At the time of reporting, 14 cases have fully completed the programme and have been closed; in total, 16 cases started at least six months ago, thus the figure reported here is 14 cases out of 16 (88%). However, there are various complexities around completion that are described in the paragraph below, and further consideration will be given to the length of time to complete leading to the pilot trial.

The programme has six months of content, but this could be protracted for a range of reasons, including holidays (on the part of both the YWs and the YP over the summer) and illness (for both YWs and YP including numerous instances of COVID-19 that prevented face-to-face sessions from taking place). It can also take longer to complete for those with SEN (including those who are neurodiverse) and those for whom English is an additional language because a session plan for them may have to spread over multiple meetings, whereas for other YP it could usually be completed in one inning. Finally, the six-month timeframe has been extended due to sessions needing to be rearranged. For example, there were a couple of instances where a YW attended school to deliver a session, but the YP had been suspended and therefore was not in school for the session to take place. This might mean that the session needed to take place the week after. The YP engaged in the project were often facing challenging circumstances (e.g. DV within the home or physical and sexual assault), and there were times where YWs prioritised a session focused on providing emotional support rather than a session linked to the core component. This adaptation would also extend the length of the programme. Finally, one of the other factors that extended the length of the programme was the summer holidays; YWs wanted to make sure

that those YP who were coming to the end of the programme were successfully supported into the transition for the next school year. This need for flexibility and adaptability of the programme is further discussed in the findings section.

- ***Target:*** *Retaining YWs (Green = 75%, Amber = 50%, Red = below 50%).*

Although recruitment of YWs took longer than expected due to the temporary nature of contracts, the delivery team have a full team of eight YWs in post at the time of reporting. This full team of YWs has been retained in post. Table 9 below shows the start date of the YWs:

Table 9: Start month of YWs

Month of start date	Number of YWs
January	3
February	2
March	1
June	1
September	1

Measurement and findings

- **Target:** *The YP that I'm working with has made progress as expected: % Strongly agree/agree* (Green = 70%, Amber = 50%, Red = below 50%).

It should be noted first that pre- and post-intervention scores were collected by the delivery team via YP-friendly statements on the following areas:

- Feeling bad about myself (pre and post score 1 to 5)
- Anger (pre and post score 1 to 5)
- Relationships at home (pre and post score 1 to 5)
- Friends (pre and post score 1 to 5)
- Increased uptake of positive recreational activities (yes/no)

As noted above, we only have data for 14 of the YP in these areas, given that 14 cases have completed at the time of reporting. YWs were also asked to respond to an overall statement on their YP's progress, to give an idea of outcomes so far for the 73 YP recruited to the programme to date:

How far do you agree with the following statement: the YP that I'm working with has made progress as expected:

- *Strongly agree*
- *Agree*

- *Unsure*
- *Disagree*
- *Strongly disagree*

Regarding the YP recruited to the programme to date, 72% of YWs agreed that their YP was making progress as expected thus far (Table 18). Further qualitative data relating to observed outcomes on YP thus far are described in the findings section.

Table 10: Expected progress of YP

The YP that I'm working with has made progress as expected:	n	%
Strongly agree	18	24
Agree	34	47
Unsure	16	22
Disagree	4	5
Strongly disagree	1	1

Implementation of the Reach Programme

It is clear from the evidence that there is a need for the type of support that Reach offers in certain local areas and in schools with high levels of suspensions. Schools were ready and willing to refer many of their YP to Reach and indicated that Reach was filling a gap in provision. Furthermore, schools spoke very positively of Reach and were thankful for the opportunity of additional support. Schools also noted a range of positive outcomes so far for participating YP. Findings demonstrated that SLs, DLs and YWs were all confident that YP were engaging well in the programme, further evidenced by YP themselves, who in general spoke very positively of the programme and of their YWs.

Implementation of Reach was facilitated by the involvement of the wider school pastoral team and safeguarding team, with senior leaders in schools fully engaged with the programme. Further work could be done in terms of strengthening the organisational aspects of the programme and facilitating the YW/school relationship moving forward to pilot as discussed below. An optimum model for implementing the programme was suggested to be having one or two core YWs per school so that those YWs can build a strong relationship with that school and become a familiar face around the school. This model may have the potential to streamline some of the organisational and practical aspects of the sessions with YP.

With regard to implementing the relationship-building phase between the YW and YP at the outset of the programme, the matching process proved less important than anticipated in terms of gender and ethnicity. However, a number of facilitating factors in building that relationship were identified: finding common ground and related experiences; ability of the YW to empathise with the YP; creating feelings of safety, security and trust for the YP; being an ally/friend; and being non-judgemental.

Differentiation of Reach from existing practices

SLs indicated that Reach had benefits above and beyond schools' usual activities, with the most prominent factor being that Reach YWs were able to work with YP in the community and that YP viewed their YW as someone they could relate to outside of the school and home context. SLs also noted that YWs were able to access YP during school holidays, which could potentially be 'hot spots' for problem behaviours. SLs further noted the ability of Reach to link YP with other adults in the community, for example sports coaches, hopefully enabling those YP to maintain those positive links. The timeliness of Reach was also appreciated by SLs, who indicated that access to other support often had a time lag.

In summary, the evaluator believes that the Reach Programme is feasible in its intended context and should progress to a pilot trial, given that:

- The success/target criteria have been met.
- There was an identified need and readiness for the programme, demonstrated by the community and by schools.
- Implementation of the programme was largely successful, and schools spoke in very positive terms about the programme.
- Schools were ready and willing to identify and refer several YP to the programme.
- The programme was largely reaching its intended recipients, with the potential to expand the criteria for inclusion.
- YP were engaging well, as demonstrated by all stakeholders including YP themselves.
- The programme filled a gap for schools above and beyond their usual activities.

Recommendations for moving forward to a pilot trial

Continual need for flexibility and young person-led approach

At the outset, the programme was intended to be flexible and adaptable, taking into consideration the needs of the YP. The need for this flexibility became even more evident throughout the course of delivery and proved crucial to the success of the programme. While all core components were delivered, the delivery model worked best when the order and extent to which these were delivered varied according to the individual YP. The Reach Programme is not a one-size-fits-all approach. The programme should be delivered in a way that accounts for the individual differences in YP and their particular needs. When problems arise, YWs may respond by pivoting the session plans to account for issues and challenges the YP may be facing. There may be scope for creating additional optional components (for example around sexual health). For a variety of reasons discussed above, YP sometimes required a longer time period to complete core components. This should be taken into consideration when designing the pilot trial.

Relationships with schools

One of the barriers that was noted, particularly by YWs, was the organisational and practical elements of accessing YP in schools and building trusting relationships with schools. Areas that could be improved upon in schools included: communicating with YWs when YP were absent or excluded, or notifying YWs of other issues arising with YP, and ensuring that a suitable space was available and enough time was allowed for conducting the sessions. SLs noted that it was potentially easier for schools to work with one or two core YWs so that the YW became well integrated and a familiar face around the school. Although such an approach would detract somewhat from the matching process, the findings showed that this process may not be as important as anticipated given that the large majority of YP were happy with their YW (the successful elements to facilitating the YP/YW relationship are discussed in the section on the relationship-building phase). Thus, the potential benefits of working towards this 'key YW' model may outweigh the need for the matching process. Having a smaller team of Reach workers connected directly with each school may promote more effective communication. Equally, ensuring that schools make available a set of key staff contacts who fully understand the aims of Reach and are able to communicate timely information to YWs could further facilitate implementation.

Timing of the school year should be considered when planning communications and sessions, given the pressures schools face during exam periods for example. Moving forward to the pilot trial, further work could be done to consider how to optimise the relationship between the YWs and schools from the YW point of view and from the school point of view. Building that trusting relationship between the YWs and schools is key.

Reach of the programme

Overall, evidence showed that the programme was largely reaching its intended recipients, with schools using their own discretion, alongside the guidance given by Reach, when making referrals to the programme. As noted above, the eligibility criteria are being widened, moving towards the pilot trial, to include persistent absenteeism. The eligibility criteria are now defined as 'children and young people aged 11–16 who are at risk of suspension or who are persistently absent from school, and where there are concerns about future involvement in anti-social behaviour and crime as either a victim or perpetrator'.

Although the data should be treated with caution and further school population data are needed to provide a more robust analysis, there was potential evidence to suggest that a slightly larger proportion of White British YP were being recruited to the programme compared to the levels of suspensions among this group. The reasons for this could be further explored moving forward to pilot, with more robust data gathered to confirm this finding.

Relationships with parents/carers

There was some evidence, particularly from YWs, to suggest that the challenge of engaging parents/carers and building trust with them was a potential barrier to the programme, particularly for families where English is not their first language. The pilot trial could potentially undertake some qualitative work to explore these issues further.

Monitoring data collection

The extent to which the core components were delivered and the order in which they were delivered varied between individuals. This information could be captured in more depth in the monitoring data, along with more detailed information on the length of sessions, to potentially produce a 'time taken per core component' indicator. Records of the number of mentoring sessions where structured work has not taken place could also be collected. Further detail on frequency of sessions could be added to this.

Randomisation

As discussed above, moving forward to randomisation will form a crucial part of the pilot trial. A total of 12 schools (including the six original schools) are proposed to take part in the pilot trial, with randomisation of participants proposed to commence in January 2023. During the autumn term, work is planned to be carried out with schools leading up to implementing randomisation, ensuring that schools fully comprehend the processes involved. Further discussions and meetings will take place with schools to further explore the 'business as usual' condition (particularly in the new sample of schools recruited to the pilot trial) to ensure that YP allocated to the control group receive some form of support going forward to a trial. This will allow a full exploration of the implementation and acceptability of using randomised control trial methodology in this context. Evidence of promise will be examined by comparing outcome measures for the Reach Programme intervention and control groups while controlling for baseline measures. The primary measures would be the SDQ and SRDS, with potential to use existing outcome measures collected by the delivery team to determine if these would be suitable to take forward into an efficacy trial. A teacher-report SDQ measure could also be conducted to provide further validation of findings. Further detail on this will be specified in the pilot protocol going forward. It should also be noted here that any evidence of 'spill-over' will be collected at the pilot stage, given the peer work that is undertaken (peers of YP sometimes attend sessions). YP allocated to the control group will be asked if they have had any contact with YWs in the Reach Programme.

Limitations

The fieldwork was predominantly qualitative, given the small number of participants involved. This allowed for an in-depth exploration and understanding of the issues involved;

however, this brings with it a limited ability to draw general conclusions. Furthermore, purposive sampling was employed. Although it was the most appropriate sampling method for this study, it also brings the risk of bias. Given that the interviews were conducted with a nominated SL in four of the schools, data on the schools' views are limited to that individual lead, rather than encompassing the perspectives of wider staff and stakeholders in that school. A larger sample of schools going forward to pilot would permit a more mixed-methods approach, including potentially a survey of a wider group of stakeholders/staff perspectives and the collection of quantitative measures from YP at baseline and endpoint. In the feasibility study, the comparison of the profile of YP recruited in terms of gender/ethnicity/age with data on suspensions should be treated with caution given the time-lag of the data (the suspensions data were for 2018/19, compared with recruitment data collected in 2022) and also because of the low numbers involved. Further, this was based on a subsample of pupils who have experienced an FT exclusion; therefore, the statistics are limited in showing how this subsample is distributed across schools and socio-demographics. There is a need for fuller details on school populations for a more comprehensive analysis.

Future publications

The evaluators propose to produce academic papers from the findings of the feasibility study, details of which will be discussed in due course.

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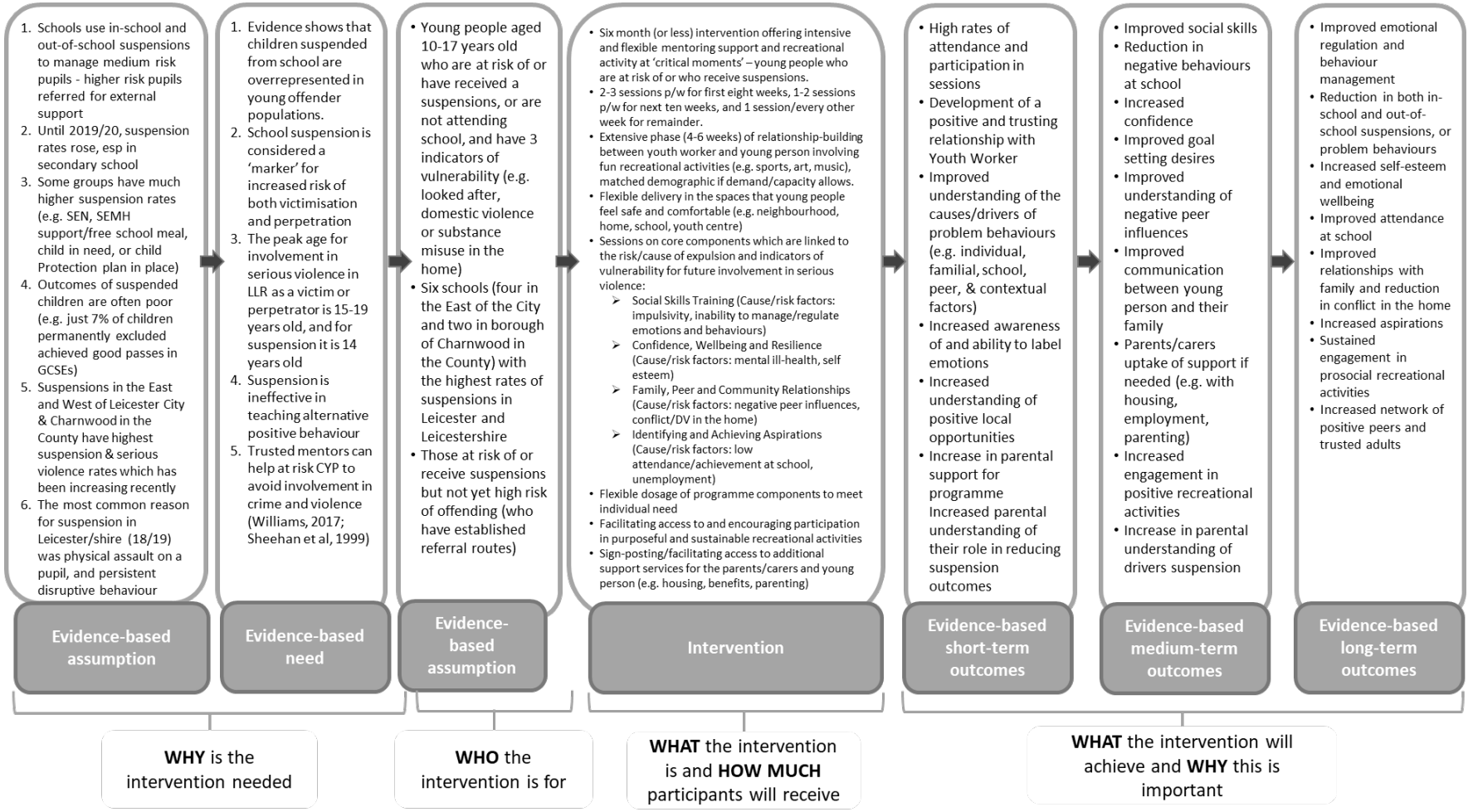
List of Tables and Figures

Table 1: Full delivery team 20
Table 2: Methods overview 26
Table 3: Timeline (e = evaluation team, d = delivery team) 31
Table 4: Study participants 32
Table 5: Recruitment to the Reach Programme by gender 32
Table 6: Recruitment to the Reach Programme by age 32
Table 7: Recruitment to the Reach Programme by ethnicity 33
Table 8: % suspensions of six feasibility schools by gender 52
Table 9: % suspensions vs recruited to Reach of six feasibility schools by age 52
Table 10: % suspensions vs recruited to Reach of six feasibility schools by ethnicity 52
Table 11: Number of risk factors for YP recruited to Reach 53
Table 12: Support options within schools outside of the Reach Programme 100
Table 13: Summary of feasibility study findings 104
Table 14: Summary of success/target criteria 111
Table 15: Attendance at sessions 112
Table 16: Recruitment to the programme 112
Table 17: Start month of YWs 114
Table 18: Expected progress of YP 115

Figure 1: YW survey – experience of YW team 40
Figure 2: YW survey – competencies of YW team 41

Appendix 1: Theory of Change, Logic Model and Blueprint

Theory of Change



Logic Model

INPUTS →	OUTPUTS		→ OUTCOMES		
What resources do we need?	**Activities** **What do we need to do in order for individuals to accomplish the short-term outcomes?**	**Participation** **What must be reached for the short-term outcomes to be**	**Short term (2 months)** **What preconditions must be met for the medium-term outcomes to be achieved?**	**Medium term (4 months)** **What preconditions must be met for the ultimate goal to be achieved?**	**Long term** **(Completion of intervention)** **What are the long-term outcomes?**
• Financial support from YEF to cover staffing, equipment, recreational activity and travel and subsistence • Hiring staff and training Youth Workers to ensure that they're highly skilled and culturally competent • School buy-in and in-kind resource to complete referrals • Training for key stakeholders in schools to ensure understanding of eligibility criteria and aims of intervention • Learning materials and project documents (e.g. referral forms, assessments) for the delivery of the intervention • Existing strategic and operational governance structure, organisational infrastructure and policies (e.g. safeguarding) to escalate barriers and problem-solve • Referral partners (e.g. sports clubs, housing) who are aware of the intervention and anticipate referrals	• Clear and concise online referral form for schools • Prompt response following referral for young person (YP) – if YP meets eligibility based upon referral information and data systems, Youth Worker (YW) attempts to contact young person and their parents/carers in 24 hours and arranges assessment as soon as practicable • Ongoing communication between YW and school to update on progress and encourage positive reinforcement from teachers in school • Comprehensive and contextual assessment of young person to identify strengths, needs, risks and interests – information used to match young people to YW • Parents/carers early engagement in and support for the intervention, includes participating in assessment and monthly reviews, and receiving support for parenting techniques if required • Extensive phase (4-6 weeks) of relationship-building between youth worker and young person involving fun, recreational activities (e.g. sports, art, music) • Flexible delivery in the spaces that young people feel safe and comfortable • Sessions on core components which are tailored to young person's needs, interests and leaning styles: 1. Social Skills Training 2. Confidence, Wellbeing and Resilience 3. Family, Peer and Community Relationships 4. Identifying and Achieving Aspirations • Facilitating access to and encouraging participation in purposeful and sustainable recreational activities • Monthly reviews of progress towards key milestones involves Youth Worker talking to young person, parents/carers, and school. If milestones haven't been met, young person and Youth Worker will continue to work on relevant core components (e.g. Social Skills Training) • Case closure process – when key milestones are met YW discusses plans with Team Manager, speaks to YP and parents/carers to assess views and gain agreement and ensures sustainability plans are in place (e.g. formal and informal mechanisms to access support if problems arise)	• Children and young people (11-16 years old) who are at risk of exclusion or who are persistently absent from school, and where there are concerns about future involvement in anti-social behaviour and crime as both a victim or perpetrator. • 12-14 schools (ten in the City and two/four in the County depending on YW numbers) with the highest rates of suspensions agree to participate • Teachers refer eligible young people • 290 referrals received during pilot period • 75% of young people referred are recruited to the programme • Youth Workers and young people meet two to three times a week during the relationship building stage • Young people complete 80% of core component sessions • 75% of young people complete the programme (*n*=67)	• High rates of attendance and participation in sessions • Development of a positive and trusting relationship with Youth Worker • Improved understanding of the causes/drivers of problem behaviours (e.g. individual, familial, school, peer, & contextual factors) • Increased awareness of and ability to label emotions • Increased understanding of positive local opportunities • Increase in parental support for programme Increased parental understanding of their role in reducing suspension outcomes	• Improved social skills • Reduction in negative behaviours at school • Increased confidence • Improved goal setting desires • Improved understanding of negative peer influences • Improved communication between young person and their family • Parents/carers uptake of support if needed (e.g. with housing, employment, parenting) • Increased engagement in positive recreational activities • Increase in parental understanding of drivers suspension	• Improved emotional regulation and behaviour management • Reduction in exclusions or problem behaviours • Increased self-esteem and emotional wellbeing • Improved attendance at school • Improved relationships with family and reduction in conflict in the home • Increased aspirations • Sustained engagement in prosocial recreational activities • Increased network of positive peers and trusted adults

Blueprint

Every young person on the programme receives the core components mapped out below but the order and the extent to which components are delivered is based upon the needs of the young person. Each Youth Worker will record the number of sessions delivered as part of each component to monitor dosage.

Core component	Content	Objective	Short term outcomes
1. Introduction and Assessment	***Eligibility criteria:*** *Children and young people who are at risk of exclusion or who are persistently absent from school, and where there are concerns about future involvement in anti-social behaviour and crime as both a victim or perpetrator.* Young person who fit this eligibility criteria are identified by school. The school contacts the parents to gain consent to submit referral to the team. Online referral submitted and triaged by Team Manager who has access to data management systems. Those who meet the eligibility criteria are forwarded to the Youth Worker who is the SPOC for that school. If the young person is deemed eligible based upon the additional information from data management systems, the Youth Worker will attempt to make contact within 24 hours with the young person's family to discuss the project, arrange a visit and conduct assessment. If the Youth Worker is unable to make contact, they will make three further attempts and send a letter to the family. If still unsuccessful, the Project Coordinator will speak to the school lead who made the referral to see if there is any other way to contact the family. For those where contact is made, the Youth Worker conducts a comprehensive and contextual safeguarding assessment to identify needs, strengths and interests, and assess existing support structures. The Youth Worker who conducts the assessment will be the one who provides ongoing support to the young person if they agree to participate on the programme. However, if there are specific requests (e.g. a female worker), this will be facilitated where possible.	To identify at-risk young people in an upstream environment at a critical moment To intervene at a time when a young person and their family might be more receptive to receiving support	High rates of attendance and participation in sessions
2. Relationship Building	The Youth Worker contacts the young person to arrange a meeting within the first week of the incident happening.	To encourage active engagement in the	Development of a positive and trusting relationship with Youth Worker

Number of sessions: 12 over 3 weeks	The Youth Worker will arrange sessions at times and in places that work for the young person. Adopting a contextual safeguarding approach, the Youth Worker will spend time with the young person in the spaces that they occupy including their school, street-based environments and at home. This will enable the Youth Worker to develop a comprehensive understanding of the young person's lived reality and collect further information about their strengths and needs. The Youth Worker will ask about previous personal/professional relationships – "describe a time when you had a positive relationship with someone – what made this a positive relationship?" The Youth Worker will engage in activities with the young person that he/she enjoys doing such as cooking, gaming or going to the gym. The young person will be asked to rate each session between 1-10 to assess progress. The Youth Worker will also get feedback from parents on what the young person is saying about the sessions when they return home to provide further validation. During this phase of the intervention, the Youth Worker is expected to meet with a young person at least twice a week. The sessions are designed to be unstructured and fun.	programme rather than passive involvement To develop trust and a positive practitioner-child relationship as this is associated with positive outcomes To provide a positive role model	
3. Mentoring: Understanding Behaviour **Number of sessions: 4 over two weeks**	In this phase, the sessions will shift from an unstructured format to focusing on problem behaviours and emotional management. This phase will begin with setting a number of goals which link to the behaviours of concern identified by the referrer and those revealed as part of the assessment and relationship building phase. The young person and the Youth Worker will agree an intervention plan which sets out the goals and planned activities. Through the use of motivational interviewing, the Youth	To develop an intervention plan in collaboration with the young person which sets out clear and realistic goals based upon their needs and strengths To identify and discuss the drivers/causes of the behaviours of concern	Improved understanding of the causes/drivers for problem behaviours (e.g. individual, familial, school, peer, and contextual factors)

	Worker will ask the young person open questions to draw out their experiences of and perspectives on the drivers/causes of their behaviour. The Youth Worker will provide emotional and practical support during these sessions as required.	To facilitate a safe space to discuss challenging issues and experiences and to provide emotional support To provide practical support to ensure that the young person and their family have access to and are aware of local services	
4. Positive social activities **Number of sessions: N/A**	The Youth Worker will also identify purposeful recreational activities that interest the young person. These sessions will take place alongside the problem behaviours and emotional management interventions. Where appropriate family member and positive peers will be encouraged to also participate in these activities. The Youth Worker will facilitate access to these opportunities and attend/participate if necessary to encourage participation. A budget has been allocated which equates to £50 per young person. While at the beginning, recreational activities might include fun activities such as bowling, the Youth Worker will aim to identify more sustainable activities which the young person can continue beyond the project, such as football, youth groups, music clubs, or cooking/baking.	To identify purposeful and sustainable recreational opportunities To maintain interest and engagement in the intervention To provide positive peer group experiences and opportunities to develop social skills To improve mental and physical health	Increased engagement in positive recreational activities Increased confidence Increased network of positive peers and trusted adults
5. Social skills training **Number of sessions: 12 over 3 weeks**	Youth Workers will deliver six sessions focusing on Social Skills Training. These sessions will involve recapping the situations and experiences which lead to negative displays of behaviour (as identified in the core activity 'Understanding Behaviour). To begin with sessions will focus on the feelings that young people feel, identifying the intensity of these feelings and understanding the difference between feelings and	To become more aware of and be able to label emotions To be able to understand others' points of view and assess others' emotions	Improved social skills, emotional regulation and behaviour management Reduction in negative behaviours at school

	behaviours. Attention will turn to discussing the feelings and perspectives of others such as family members, peers and teachers, including reading and interpreting social cues. These sessions will include role play and perspective taking. The remaining sessions will focus on tools to help manage feelings including relaxation and breathing exercises and communication skills.	To use new strategies for self-control and emotional management To use new interpersonal problem-solving strategies to develop and implement effective plans for interpersonal and school-related challenges	
6. Mentoring: Confidence, Wellbeing and Resilience **Number of sessions: 4 over 2 weeks**	Within these interactive sessions, the Youth Worker gets the young person to reflect on their confidence and wellbeing. They will talk about particular activities or situations which make them feel anxious and fearful. The Youth Worker will reassure the young person that these are normal feelings which all people feel. The young person will have the opportunity to identify the activities that they are good at, while talking about the aspects that they want to improve on. The Youth Worker will explain a range of helpful strategies for overcoming fears and facing challenges confidently. Towards the end of this phase, they will also work on how to build resilience.	To help young people understand the importance of mental wellbeing To help young people to manage and maintain their mental wellbeing To develop skills such as resilience and self-confidence To develop coping strategies	Increased confidence, self-esteem and emotional wellbeing
7. Mentoring: Positive Family, Peer and Community Relationships **Number of sessions: 8 sessions over 4**	The Youth Worker will discuss positive relationships with the young person. They will explore positive and negative relationships in each domain: • Within the family – at home and extended family • Positive and negative peers – what makes a positive/ negative peer? How to resist negative peer influences • Community – who is in their local community?	To identify the drivers/causes of conflict in the home environment and to develop strategies to reduce and avoid these tensions To help with a young person's commitment to the	Improved communication between young person and their family Parents/carers uptake of support if needed (e.g. with housing, employment, parenting)

weeks	• Formal/informal relationships The Youth Worker will also speak to the young person's family, and spend time with their friends to gain a contextual understanding of their family and peer relationships.	intervention To understand what negative peer influences are and why positive peer support is important To identify ways of resisting negative peer influence To identify positive community bonds and resources To identify existing and new support structures within and beyond the family	Improved relationships with family and reduction in conflict in the home Increased network of positive peers
8. Mentoring: Identifying and Achieving Aspirations **Number of sessions: 4 sessions over 2 weeks**	The Youth Worker will work with the young person to identify what they would like to achieve for themselves in the future, including discussing different roles and sectors. Key activities include listing what they would like to achieve in the next 3, 6 and 12 months and beyond, the steps to achieve that aspiration, and 'who' would help them achieve their aspirations.	To improve understanding of different jobs and career paths To identify a range of short-term goals and long-term aspirations To develop skills in setting goals and planning how to achieve them	Increased aspirations Improved attendance at school

9. Mentoring: Sustaining Positive Change **Number of sessions: 6 sessions over 6 weeks**	During this stage, contact between the Youth Worker will reduce and will comprise of face to face and telephone discussions. Throughout the intervention the Youth Worker will be assessing progress by revisiting the initial intervention plan and goals, and asking the young person to score how they feel things are progressing. They will also monitor the frequency and severity of the problem behaviours and identify positive behaviours. Where there is absence of a negative behaviour the Youth Worker will discuss with the young person what they feel contributed to this. This strength focused approach will support positive reinforcement from the Youth Worker to the young person. During this stage the Youth Worker will complete 'what if….' exercises to provide the young person with realistic scenarios that they may come across in the future. This provides a safe space for the young person to consider options available to them and the possible consequences of their actions. These sessions will also focus on earlier activities completed around relationships and talk to the young person about their support network who will be in a position to help with situations post intervention. When goals have been achieved, support structures are in place and there has been sustained period of positive behaviour, the Youth Worker will consider closing the case. They will discuss this and reach agreement with the young person and their family/the referrer, and with their Team	To provide positive reinforcement for and encourage positive and sustained behaviour change To provide motivation and support to continue the positive change To identify and put in place tangible mechanisms so that the young person has access to ongoing emotional and practical support (e.g. family members, peers, community groups, recreational activities, local services)	Reduction in exclusions or problem behaviours

	Manager during case supervision.		

Appendix 2: Information sheets, consent forms and privacy notices

Participant information sheet

THE REACH PROJECT

INFORMATION SHEET

Researchers at Sheffield Hallam University (SHU) have been asked by the Youth Endowment Fund (YEF) to conduct an independent evaluation of the **Reach Project** which will be delivered by the Violence Reduction Network (VRN) for Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland and two delivery partners: Leicester City Council and Leicestershire County Council.

THE REACH PROJECT

As you will be aware the Reach Project is a six month mentoring intervention designed to support young people at risk from becoming involved in violence. A team of 8 youth workers will provide intensive one to one support for young people referred to the programme across 6 schools in the Leicester and Leicestershire area over the course of the first year of the programme. The programme identifies at-risk young people at critical moments to prevent future involvement in violence.

THE EVALUATION

Alongside the delivery of the programme, an independent evaluation will take place to explore programme implementation and outcomes from the programme. The first part of the evaluation consists of a feasibility study (2021/22 school year). As a result of your key role in the Reach Project we would like to interview you as part of the feasibility study.

Researchers from SHU will be carrying out a set of remote/face to face interviews with delivery leads, youth workers and key contacts in schools involved in the programme to explore the implementation of the programme in its first year. Interviews will be conducted with a variety of stakeholders involved to gain a range of perspectives. Issues to be explored include: recruitment and retention of youth workers, any barriers/challenges to implementation, strategies and practices used to support implementation, training and resources used to support delivery, programme fidelity and how far the programme is reaching its intended participants. We will also be undertaking 2 focus groups with young people receiving the mentoring programme, and 2 observations of delivery.

With your permission, this interview will be recorded using an audio recorder (or recorded on video call if conducted in this way) and may be transcribed. This recording and transcription will only be shared with the people involved in the project from SHU. All digital data will be stored in secure, password-protected computers at Sheffield Hallam University.

DO I HAVE TO TAKE PART?

The interviews described above are key parts of the feasibility phase of the evaluation of the Reach Project funded by YEF. Participants can withdraw data without giving a reason by contacting the project lead at SHU (details below).

HOW WILL MY INTERVIEW DATA BE USED?

We will be using the interviews to help us to understand the implementation of the programme, and how it is perceived by delivery leads, youth workers, school leads and young people. The interviews will be analysed to form part of the final feasibility report to YEF and to inform the progression of the evaluation to a pilot study. The data gathered may also be used anonymously in research outputs such as peer reviewed publications.

WILL I BE IDENTIFIABLE?

As a result of the low numbers of delivery leads, youth workers and school contacts being interviewed anonymity of participants may not be preserved from members of the research team at SHU. Individuals may be identifiable even though names will not be used. Interview data will be stored, and shared between the SHU team without any individual identifiers. Reporting to YEF **will not** include any individual identifiers.

Any use of the data for wider academic research publications will anonymise both organisations and individuals.

PERSONAL DATA

We will only store personal information for the purposes of contacting you for the project. Sheffield Hallam University undertakes research as part of its function for the community under its legal status. Data protection allows us to use personal data for our work with appropriate safeguards in place under the legal basis of **public tasks that are in the public interest** (GDPR clause 6 (1) f). A full statement of your rights can be found at https://www.shu.ac.uk/about-this-website/privacy-policy/privacy-notices/privacy-notice-for-research.

All University work of this nature is reviewed to ensure that participants are treated appropriately and their rights respected. This work was approved by the University Ethics Committee. Further information can be found here: https://www.shu.ac.uk/research/ethics-integrity-and-practice.

If you have any general queries about the information provided please contact the Project Manager (details below).

For any concerns:

You should contact the Data Protection Officer if:	**You should contact the Head of Research Ethics:**
• you have a query about how your data is used by the University • you would like to report a data security breach (e.g. if you think your personal data has been lost or disclosed inappropriately) • you would like to complain about how the University has used your personal data DPO@shu.ac.uk	Dr Mayur Ranchordas ethicssupport@shu.ac.uk If you have concerns with how the work research was undertaken or how you were treated
Postal address: Sheffield Hallam University, Howard Street, Sheffield S1 1WB Telephone: 0114 225 5555	

If you have any further questions about the evaluation, please contact:

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Participant consent form

Sheffield Hallam University

Evaluation of The Reach Project - Participant consent form

You should have received an information sheet regarding this interview, if you have not already seen this please click here

If you are happy to take part in an interview as part of the evaluation of The Reach Project please complete the following consent form.

Please answer the following questions:

	Yes	No
I have read and understood the appropriate information sheet about this evaluation.	○	○
I have received enough information about the evaluation to allow me to decide whether or not to take part.	○	○
I understand that I am able to ask for further clarification from the interviewer before the start of any data collection and can decide not to continue at that point.	○	○
I understand that I am free to withdraw from this study after taking part in an interview and that this does not affect my role in the programme.	○	○
I understand that although my comments and quotations from this interview may be included in reports or related academic outputs, neither my name or my organisation's will be used, and that Sheffield Hallam University will make every attempt to ensure that any sensitive information or comments are fully anonymised (with other information changed if necessary).	○	○
I understand that anonymised data from this research may be retained by Sheffield Hallam University for up to 10 years after the study has finished. It may be available to other researchers (but only if it can be sufficiently anonymised to protect my identity).	○	○
I agree to provide information to the researcher under the conditions of confidentiality set out in the Information Sheet.	○	○
I consent to the audio recording and transcription of this interview.	○	○
I understand that choosing 'yes' to the above questions and signing this consent form will be taken as my written consent to taking part in interviews.	○	○

Please enter your full name in the box below:

If you would like a copy of this consent form or have any other questions regarding the research please contact a.stevens@shu.ac.uk

Parent/carer information sheet and consent form

Evaluation of the Reach Project:

Parent/carer Information Sheet and consent form

The Youth Endowment Fund (YEF) has funded the Violence Reduction Network (VRN) for Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland and two delivery partners: Leicester City Council and Leicestershire County Council to deliver a mentoring programme - **The Reach Project** - to young people across 6 schools in the area. You have received this form because your child is taking part in this programme. This information sheet provides information about the evaluation of this programme followed by an opt-out form to return if you do *not* wish your child to take part in a focus group or interview as part of the evaluation.

What is the Reach Project?
The Reach Project is a six month mentoring intervention designed to support young people. A team of 8 youth workers will provide intensive one to one support for young people referred to the programme across 6 schools in the Leicester and Leicestershire area over the course of the first year of the programme.

The Reach Project evaluation
Alongside the delivery of the programme, an independent evaluation will take place to look at how the programme is being run. Researchers from Sheffield Hallam University (SHU) will be carrying out interviews with project leads, youth workers and key people in schools involved in the programme which will help inform what is going well and what could be done better.

Your child's involvement in the evaluation – interviews or focus groups with young people
As part of the evaluation, your child will be asked to take part in a one-to-one informal interview or focus group carried out by an independent researcher from Sheffield Hallam University. These will take place during the day, at school, and last no longer than 20 minutes for a one to one interview, or up to 45 minutes for a small focus group. If you are happy for your child to take part, you do not need to do anything. If you are **not** willing for your child to take part, then please fill in the below and return to your child's youth worker. We will also be asking for your child's consent to take part separately. Your child will receive a certificate from the university as thanks for their participation.

Topics for the focus groups/interviews include:

- Is the young person happy to participate in the mentoring scheme
- How engaged are the young people with the programme
- Their relationship with their allocated youth worker
- Experiences of the programme
- Any outcomes or impacts so far
- Any changes or improvements to the programme from their point of view

The evaluation's ethical approach

This evaluation has been checked and approved by the University Research Ethics Committee (UREC) - (www.shu.ac.uk/research/quality/ethics-and-integrity). Below we outline the key things we will do to ensure fair and respectful practices:

- Only experienced research staff with Enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS] checks will visit schools or have contact with children.
- Parents (or guardians) can stop their child from taking part in a focus group/ interview [see final section for more details].
- Age-appropriate information sheets will be given to children prior to interviews/focus groups, with important information repeated verbally. Children will be given opportunity to ask questions. Before the interview or focus group, the researcher will make sure each child understands that…

    - Taking part is voluntary [up to them]. They can decide not be involved and withdraw from the focus group/interview without giving a reason. They should also know this will not make any difference with how they receive the mentoring intervention.

    - They will be asked to complete a brief consent form to confirm they agree to take part.

    - Their names will not be used in any reports so they will not be identified.

    - What they say will be treated confidentially [taking steps not the share the information outside of the research], unless they say anything viewed as a safeguarding concern or involves criminal activity - in which case the researcher would have to inform the school's safeguarding lead/teacher to decide on the most appropriate response.

    - If they come upset or worried, we would offer to stop the interview and make sure their teacher/youth worker is made aware to support them.

    - We would encourage them to discuss any issues they were worried about or unclear about with a parent (or guardian), teacher and/or the school safeguarding officer.

    - There are independent charities and helplines also available to be contacted if any the themes raised were a cause of concern.

Data protection: Confidentiality and right to withdraw

Personal data [such as names, age, ethnicity] will be kept securely on a password protected folder on the University computer system, accessible only to members of the evaluation team. The SHU evaluation team will comply with General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and in accordance with the university Data Protection Policy Statement. Please use the link for more information: https://www.shu.ac.uk/about-this-website/privacy-policy/privacy-notices/privacy-notice-for-research

- All interview and focus group data will be reported anonymously [your child's name will not be used].
- If you **do not** wish for your child to take part in an interview or focus group, please complete and return the accompanying Opt-Out consent form to your child's Youth Worker, or email a copy to Anna Stevens **a.stevens@shu.ac.uk**. If you are happy for them to take part you do not need to do anything.
- After their interview/focus group, if your child decides they wish to withdraw the information they have shared, they will need to contact the named researcher on the information sheet within 14 days of the interview/focus group.

You should contact the Data Protection Officer if:

- you have a query about how your data is used by the University
- you would like to report a data security breach (e.g. if you think your personal data has been lost or disclosed inappropriately)
- you would like to complain about how the University has used your personal data DPO@shu.ac.uk

You should contact the Head of Research Ethics if:

- you have concerns with how the research was undertaken or how you were treated ethicssupport@shu.ac.uk

Postal address: SIOE/SIRKE, Level 1 Arundel Building, Sheffield Hallam University, Howard Street, Sheffield S1 1WBT / 0114 225 6060

Outputs and what happens next: The evaluation report will be published on the YEF website, and the findings may also be disseminated at educational research conferences and in academic or professional journals. No individual pupils, staff or schools will be named in any reporting.

Please complete the form below and return this page to your child's Youth Worker or email to a.stevens@shu.ac.uk only if you are not happy for your child to be involved in a focus group or interview. If you are happy for them to take part, then you do not need to do anything.

I do not give my permission for my child to take part in a focus group:

Child's full name	
Signed	
Parent/carer	
Date	

If you would like more information on this research, then please contact Anna Stevens (evaluation manager) at Sheffield Hallam University: a.stevens@shu.ac.uk

Thank you for taking the time to read this information sheet.

Information sheet for young people

Evaluation of the Reach Project:

Information for Young People

Our project: We have put this information sheet together for you because you are currently receiving mentoring sessions and undertaking activities with your youth worker. Sheffield Hallam University is doing some research to understand how you feel about taking part in these sessions, if they are helping you and if you are enjoying them. We would like to talk to you about the sessions: on your own, or in a group with other young people who are also taking part, and following one of your mentoring sessions. We would also like to record these sessions with your permission, so we don't miss anything you say.

What is it for? Talking to you and others who are taking part in mentoring is a really important part of a wider research project which will tell us what's going well, and what could be done better. Once we've finished, we'll put all of the information together in a final report.

What will happen if I'm part of the group discussions or if I do an interview?
A researcher will ask you some questions about what you think about the mentoring, how it might be helping you or not. This will either be an interview of about 20 minutes with you - or as part of a discussion group with other young people of a similar age to you who are also receiving support from a youth worker. The group will be no more than 40 minutes.

Do I have to say yes to being part of this?
No, it's totally up to you – you do not have to take part in the research if you don't want to. No one will be upset if you say no.

You can also change your mind at any point, for any reason, and you don't have to answer any questions you don't want to. You being comfortable is most important.

If you decide you want to remove your contribution once the session is finished, we won't be able to remove your voice from the recording, but we can remove your words when we write it up.

You don't have to tell us your reason for not taking part if you don't want to. If you say no, it won't affect the sessions that you are taking part in with your youth worker.

Will anyone else know what I've said in the interview or discussion?

Only the research team will know what you have said. No personal details, like your name, will be shared in our final report.

The only time that we'd share what you say with others is if you say something that makes us worried that you or someone else might be in danger of harm. If this happens, we will have to tell someone who can help. We would talk with you about this first.

How we comply with the law

We will only use your information [not your name or personal details] if the law says it's ok [this is also called 'legitimate interests' and it fits with your rights]. Because this study is interesting and important to lots of people, the law says we can use your information to do this kind of work.

What happens after the session with the information I've shared?

We will study what you and other young people said, and write a report. In this report, we might include quotes from what you and other people have told us - but we will not use any names so no one will know what you have said.

Any research data will be kept safe and secure on a computer where no one can access them without permission.

If you feel upset by any of the questions we ask you, you should tell your teacher, parent or guardian, youth worker or the researchers. You can also contact us via the below:

Anna Stevens (project manager) – a.stevens@shu.ac.uk

If you are happy to take part in the group discussion or in an interview please sign the form below and return this to your youth worker or teacher.

Consent form

I have read and understood the information sheet and I've had the opportunity to ask questions. I understand that:

- It is totally my choice whether I take part or not. I don't have to take part, and I can stop taking part at any time, for any reason. No one will be upset if I do this.
- If I say no, it won't affect the support I receive from my youth worker.
- I don't have to answer any questions if I don't want to, or say anything I don't want to say.
- The discussion/interview with me and others will be recorded, but if I decide I do not feel ok with this afterwards, my words will be removed before the research write the report.
- The data is stored securely on a computer and follows the UK policies around keeping data safe (called General Data Protection Regulation, or GDPR). Personal information [like my name so you can contact me] will be held for a maximum of 2 years as the law says.

If you agree to take part, please:

Print your name clearly in BLOCK CAPITALS on the line below and sign:

Name: _____

Date: _____

Signed: _____

Privacy notice for participants

The Reach Programme

Privacy Notice

Introduction

This document outlines the responsibilities of Sheffield Hallam University (SHU) in handling personal data collected from participants (parents/carers/young people) as part of the Reach Programme evaluation. The evaluation is being funded by the Youth Endowment Foundation (YEF). Transparency is a key element of data protection legislation and this Privacy Notice is designed to inform you:

- how and why the University uses your personal data,
- what your rights are in relation to the use of your personal data, and,
- how to contact us so that you can exercise those rights.

Participant Rights

Data protection legislation gives you the following rights:

- The right to be **informed**
- The right of **access**
- The right to **rectification**
- The right to **erase**
- The right to **restrict** processing
- The right to **data portability**
- The right to **object**
- Rights in relation to **automated decision making and profiling**

For more information about these rights please further information on our website https://www.shu.ac.uk/about-this-website/privacy-policy/data-subject-rights and the Contact Us section at the end of this Privacy Notice.

Why are we processing your personal data?

It is necessary for the University to process your personal data in order to meet our public tasks (learning and teaching, research, knowledge transfer). This is in relation to the evaluation of the Reach Project to help strengthen the evidence base on mentoring programmes.

Retention

After the evaluation with YEF is complete, SHU will retain participants' data for research and knowledge-exchange purposes, including presentations at professional or academic conferences, or publications in professional or academic journals, for a period of ten years after the last publication arising from the evaluation. After this period, SHU will review the longer-term archival value of the data.

Respecting confidentiality

In the production of professional or academic publications or presentations, all data will be fully anonymised and no individual or school will be identified or identifiable. Should we wish to present or publish any information where a school may be identifiable we will seek the school's consent for this. Schools will be entirely free to refuse this and we would therefore ensure the school remained anonymous.

What is the legal basis for processing activities?

The processing of personal data through the Reach Project evaluation is defined under GDPR as a specific task in the public interest. The legal basis for processing your personal data is 'Public Task' (Article 6 (1) (e)). https://ico.org.uk/for-organisations/guide-to-the-general-data-protection-regulation-gdpr/lawful-basis-for-processing/public-task/

Which Personal Data will we collect and use?

In order to provide our services we need to collect and use some personal data. Below is a list of what this may include for the evaluation:

Type of personal data
Gender
Ethnicity

The data will be used to inform the demographic make up of focus groups to ensure representativeness. It will also be linked in with other data collected from the project inform the overall demographic make up of participants, take up of the programme, retention rates, the reach of the programme, how far the programme was delivered as intended and outcomes from the programme.

Who will we share personal data with?

The privacy of personal data is paramount and will not be disclosed unless there is a justified purpose for doing so. Data will be shared between the deliverers of the programme (VRN) (shared controllers) and SHU.

SHU NEVER sells personal data to third parties

Security

The University takes a robust approach to protecting the information it holds. This includes the installation and use of technical measures including firewalls and intrusion detection and prevention tools on the University network and segregation of different types of device; the use of tools on University computers to detect and remove malicious software and regular assessment of the technical security of University systems. University staff monitor systems and respond to suspicious activity. The University has Cyber Essentials certification.

Alongside these technical measures there are comprehensive and effective policies and processes in place to ensure that users and administrators of University information are aware of their obligations and responsibilities for the data they have access to. By default, people are only granted access to the information they require to perform their duties. Training is provided to new staff joining the University and existing staff have training and expert advice available if needed.

Contact Us

Please contact the Data Protection Officer if

- you would like to request copies of your personal data held by the University (**a subject access request**)
- you would like to exercise **your other rights** (e.g. to have inaccurate data rectified, to restrict or object to processing)
- you have a **query** about how your data is used by the University
- you would like to report a **data security breach** (e.g. if you think your personal data has been lost or disclosed inappropriately)
- you would like to **complain** about how the University has used your personal data

Data Protection Officer
Governance Services
City Campus
Howard Street
Sheffield
S1 1WB

DPO@shu.ac.uk
Telephone: 0114 225 5555

Anna Stevens (Project Manager and Co-PI)
Research Fellow
Sheffield Institute of Education Research and Knowledge Exchange (SIRKE)
Sheffield Hallam University S1 1WB
a.stevens@shu.ac.uk

Further Information and Support

Please see https://www.shu.ac.uk/about-this-website/privacy-policy#this-section

The Information Commissioner is the regulator for GDPR. The Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) has a website with information and guidance for members of the public:
https://ico.org.uk/for-the-public/

The Information Commissioner's Office operates a telephone helpline, live chat facility and email enquiry service. You can also report concerns online. For more information please see the Contact Us page of their website:
https://ico.org.uk/global/contact-us/

Appendix 3: Employment criteria and training for YWs

Youth Worker Training

Pre-Employment Criteria (Essential)
• Knowledge of youth justice and safeguarding legislation • Underpinning knowledge of theories of engagement of young people
• Awareness of the issues faced by young people (social, economic and inter-personal • Knowledge and understanding of how poverty and disadvantage impact on children's outcomes.
• Knowledge, awareness and commitment to implement safeguarding procedures in accordance to the Local Safeguarding Children Board
• Understanding of the production of effective interventions for young people • Knowledge and understanding of and the ability to deliver a range of interventions that have a positive impact on young people's lives. • Knowledge of various models of intervention such as solution focused intervention.
• Knowledge of child development and an awareness of differing needs of children and young people
• Excellent knowledge of the impact that educational exclusion has on young people.
• Knowledge of relevant education and learning policies.
• Knowledge and awareness of current issues affecting local and national policy development e.g. Serious Youth Violence, Child Criminal Exploitation.

Youth Worker Training cont..

Post-Employment Training for Youth Workers	City/County/Both
Corporate Induction training	Both
Safeguarding Children	Both
ADHD and Crime	Both
Understanding the principles of on-road Youth Work	Both
Assessment skills training	Both
Intervention Planning	Both
Understanding gangs and Street Violence in Urban Environments	Both
Substance Misuse Awareness (Turning Point)	Both
County Lines, Crack House, and Criminal Exploitation	Both
Signs of Safety	Both
Domestic Violence (level 1)	Both
ACE's introduction training	Both
Brook Traffic Light Tool Training	Both
Minus Violence	Both
Intro to the Lundy Model	Both
Foundation MAPPA	City
Working cross culturally	City
Social Media, Music and Youth Violence	Both
Gang Exit Strategies	Both

Appendix 4: Reach Programme referral form

Referral to The Reach Programme

Please complete if a young person is at risk of exclusion OR has received a fixed term exclusion. (This form MUST be completed and submitted on the same day that the fixed term exclusion is issued).

Name of Referrer	
Job Title	
School	
Telephone Number	
Email	

Young Person Details						
Name						
Date of Birth						
Year Group						
Attendance						
Attainment						
Gender						
Any identified SEND/SEMH/SLCN						
Positive Attribute/ Strengths and areas of interest						
Home Address						
Home Telephone						
Other Telephone						
Ethnicity	White		Asian or Asian British		Mixed	
	Black or Black British		Chinese		Other	

Family Details				
Who holds Parental Responsibility?	Mother	Father	Other (Please give details)	
Relationship	**Name**	**Address**	**DOB**	**Telephone Number**

Situation that has occurred to put the young person at risk of exclusion, or fixed term exclusion

Previous exclusions and periods of reduced timetable		
Reason for exclusion or reduced timetable	**Date Excluded**	**Number of days of exclusion**

Please Tick all that apply to the young person:		Tick
1	Showing signs of early abuse and / or neglect	
2	Impulsive (low self-control)	
3	Aggressive behaviour	
4	Low school attainment	
5	Substance use	
6	Previous head injury	
7	Unconcerned attitude towards offending	
8	Showing signs of anti-social behaviour	
9	Previous offending	
10	Low self-esteem	
11	Previous truancy and school exclusions	
12	Association with pro-criminal peers	
13	Child criminal exploitation (CCE)	
14	Gang membership	
15	Looked after child	
16	A family circumstance presenting challenge for the child, such as substance misuse, mental health, domestic violence, young carer	
17	Living in a deprived household	
18	Poor parental supervision	
19	Parental or sibling criminality	
20	Lives in a high crime area	

Details of Any Other Agencies Involved (For Example, Social Care, CAMHS, Youth Service, Police, etc…)	
Name of Contact	
Agency	
Telephone Number	
Details of Their Involvement	
Name of Contact	
Agency	
Telephone Number	
Details of Their Involvement	

Consent

Please confirm this referral has been discussed with the parent or carer of the young person you are referring: Y/N

Name of person you have discussed the referral with: _____

Relationship to the young person_____

Date_____

Referrers signature: _____ Date: _____

YOUTH ENDOWMENT FUND

Impetus

Home Office

youthendowmentfund.org.uk

hello@youthendowmentfund.org.uk

@YouthEndowFund

The Youth Endowment Fund Charitable Trust

Registered Charity Number: 1185413