

EVALUATION PROTOCOL

Future Men's Boys Development Programme. A randomised controlled trial efficacy study

Cordis Bright

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Evaluation protocol

Evaluating institution: Cordis Bright

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Project title	Future Men’s Boys Development Programme. A randomised controlled trial efficacy study
Developer (Institution)	Future Men
Evaluator (Institution)	Cordis Bright
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Protocol author(s)	Dr Stephen Boxford, Professor Darrick Joliffe, Keiran Manners, Camilla Antrobus, Emma Andersen, Rachel Dale, Bonnie Butler
Trial design	Two-armed parallel randomised controlled trial with random allocation at the young person level
Trial type	Efficacy study
Evaluation setting	Six secondary schools in South London
Target group	Boys aged 11 to 16 who are at risk of disengagement from school, exclusion or poor outcomes due to known adversity factors.

Number of participants	480 boys from six secondary schools
Primary outcome and data source	School engagement, measured by the School Connectedness Questionnaire (Marsh and Randolph, 2020).
Secondary outcome and data source	<p>Relationships with peers, measured by the Strengths and Difficulties peer-relationship problems subscale (Goodman, 2005)</p> <p>Emotional symptoms, based on the Strengths and Difficulties emotional symptoms subscale (Goodman, 2005)</p> <p>Behavioural difficulties measured by the Strengths and Difficulties externalising behaviours score (Goodman, 2005)</p> <p>Relationships with teachers, measured by the School Connectedness Teacher Bonding and Attachment subscale (Marsh and Randolph, 2020).</p> <p>Relationship between project co-ordinator and young person, measured by the Social Support and Rejection Scale (Roffman et al., 2000).</p>

1 Protocol version history

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3 Introduction

This is the trial protocol for an efficacy study, two-arm parallel randomised control trial (RCT) evaluation and implementation and process evaluation (IPE) of Future Men’s Boys Development Programme (BDP).

The BDP is a targeted, manualised, social and emotional learning programme delivered across 12 one-to-one, 50-60-minute-long sessions. It aims to develop the social and emotional capacity and skills of boys in Years 7-11 who are at risk of exclusion and disengagement from schools, to improve school engagement and reduce the likelihood of exclusion.

The efficacy study will take place across six schools in South London between September 2023 and July 2025, i.e., across two academic years.

4 Background

4.1 Overview

This section sets out the theoretical and scientific background, policy and practice context and rationale for the study. It provides the:

- Context.
- Rationale for the Boys Development Programme.
- Rationale for an RCT evaluation of the Boys Development Programme.

4.2 Context

The BDP was developed in response to the following context:

- a) Evidence that low school engagement, exclusion from school, and a commitment to a deviant peer group can lead to increased risk of involvement in youth violence and crime.
- b) Evidence that exclusion and disengagement from secondary school disproportionately affects young people from ethnic minority backgrounds, including those from black Caribbean and dual heritage Caribbean backgrounds, and those from low-income households.
- c) Evidence that targeted, social-emotional approaches can improve young peoples' educational outcomes.

The rest of this section discusses each theme in more detail.

4.2.1 Poor educational outcomes and the risk of youth violence

Evidence shows a strong association between disengagement, suspension or exclusion from school and the likelihood of youth violence and offending (All-Party Parliamentary Group on Knife Crime (APPG), 2019; Hemphill et al., 2006, Rosenbaum, 2020). ONS (2022) data shows that young people aged 23-24 with custodial sentences are more likely to have histories of fixed-term or permanent exclusions than those without criminal conviction (73% compared to 9%). Similarly, 53% of young people with custodial sentences had been persistently absent from school, i.e., missing a fifth or more of sessions in a single school year, compared with 11% of those without criminal conviction (ONS, 2022).

Evidence on attribution is weaker, but some studies posit that this association is causal (Valdebenito et al., 2019; Rosenbaum 2020; Hemphill et al. 2006). Rosenbaum (2020) found that school suspension predicted an increased likelihood of involvement with the criminal justice system, and Hemphill et al. (2006) argued that school suspensions significantly increased antisocial behaviour 12 months later after holding established risk and protective factors constant. Other studies highlight potential explanatory causal mechanisms, such as the lack of access to support and negative peer influences following exclusion from school (Just for Kids, 2020; House of Commons Education Committee, 2018).

More recently, the link between school disengagement and exclusion has been recognised nationally. The UK government-commissioned Timpson Review of School Exclusions (2019) argued that it is right to recognise exclusion and poor educational outcomes as an indicator of a higher risk of involvement in violence and crime. The review recommended that support for young people at risk of disengagement and exclusion from school should be “fully considered” in the efforts to prevent and tackle serious youth violence. This includes

a focus on the design, development and evaluation of a range of both individual- and school-wide interventions aimed at preventing low school disengagement and exclusion (Valdebenito et al., 2019). It is hypothesised that targeting and preventing exclusions and disengagement from school will therefore indirectly reduce the likelihood of youth violence and offending (Gaffney et al., 2021).

4.2.2 Disproportionality in exclusion and disengagement from school

There is evidence that young people from ethnic minority backgrounds and low-income households are disproportionately at risk of disengagement and exclusion from school (Graham et al., 2019; Timpson, 2019; Department for Education, 2023). Department for Education (2023) statistics show that in 2020/21 the suspension rate for pupils from a mixed white and black Caribbean background in state-funded schools in England was 9%, double the national average (4%), and the suspension rate for black Caribbean pupils was 7%¹ (DfE, 2023). Similarly, permanent exclusion rates were also above the national average of 0.05%, at 0.12% for pupils from a mixed white and black Caribbean background and 0.08% for black Caribbean pupils (DfE, 2023). Gaffney et al. (2021) show that this persistent disadvantage remains after controlling for other known risk and protective factors.

Studies emphasise that the causes of this disproportionality are complex and rooted in both historical and contemporary structural racism and institutionalised discrimination (Wallace and Joseph-Salisbury, 2022; Demie 2019). For example, Wallace and Joseph-Salisbury (2022) explored both the historical and contemporary factors that shape the persistent educational disadvantages faced by black Caribbean pupils in secondary schools in England. They concluded that institutional racism, lack of diversity in the school workforce, and lack of effective training persist, resulting in black Caribbean boys being disproportionately targeted by disciplinary intervention. The authors highlighted the urgent need to transform the structure and culture of English schools to address this imbalance.

4.2.3 Evidence that social-emotional approaches improve educational outcomes

There is evidence that targeted, social-emotional approaches to support reduce the risk of disengagement and exclusion from school through mitigating risk factors and strengthening protective factors. In England and Wales, school exclusion programmes generally seek to identify children with “problem behaviour” and to intervene to prevent exclusion (Gaffney

¹ Rates are calculated using the number of pupils in January each year and the number of suspensions in the whole academic year, i.e., a suspension rate of 8.50% is equivalent to 850 per 10,000 pupils.

et al. 2021). The rest of this section provides an overview of the risk factors, protective factors, and evidence base for social-emotional approaches to support.

Risk factors

Studies highlight that individual level risk factors for school disengagement, suspension and exclusion include the following social-emotional factors (Bowman-Perrott et al., 2013; Hawkins et al., 2000; Timpson, 2019):

- Poor communication skills.
- Difficulty managing emotions.
- Conflict with peers and/or teachers.
- Association with deviant peer-groups.

For example, using data from the Special Education Elementary Longitudinal Study, Bowman-Perrott et al. (2013) found that young people with emotional and behavioural disorders were most likely to be excluded multiple times. Similarly, using data from a UK population-based birth-cohort study, Paget et al. (2018) found that social communication difficulties and behavioural difficulties were significantly associated with exclusion for both eight- and sixteen-year-olds.

Evidence suggests that traditional notions of masculinity may compound the above social-emotional risk factors. Studies highlight that the ways in which boys are socialised and the pressures to conform to “acceptable expressions” of masculinity mean that many boys are discouraged from emotional expression, empathy, self-compassion, seeking support and pro-social behaviour (Logoz et al., 2023; Harland et al., 2005; Harland, 2008; Kilmartin, 1994; Hong, 2000). For example, Logoz et al. (2023) found a strong association between men with high levels of self-reported traditional masculine ideologies and impaired emotional competence, with men with lower self-reports of verbal emotional expression more likely to express anger and aggressive behaviour. The study concluded the importance of addressing gender ideologies when working on emotional competence and reducing aggression in men (Logoz et al., 2023). As such, traditional conceptions of masculinity and gender roles may exacerbate the known social-emotional risk factors for school disengagement and exclusions.

Protective factors

Conversely, evidence shows that protective factors against the risk of school disengagement, suspensions and exclusions include (Graham et al. 2019, Bowman-Perrott et al., 2013; Hawkins et al., 2000; Timpson, 2019):

- Raising aspirations.
- Improving relationships with peers and adults.
- Improving conflict resolution and communication skills.
- Developing a positive attitude to learning.
- Improving self-awareness and self-regulation.
- Developing problem solving and decision-making skills.
- Self-esteem, empathy and cooperation.

Evidence suggests that individual-level social-emotional approaches which target the above risk and protective factors improve behaviour, communication and emotional management and therefore reduce the likelihood of disengagement and exclusion from school. In a meta-evaluation of school-based interventions, Valdebenito et al. (2019) found that the most effective interventions were those which:

- 1) Aimed to increase self-control and reduce violence.
- 2) Included one-to-one support (i.e., mentoring/monitoring).
- 3) Included counselling and a focus on mental health.
- 4) Included support to enhance academic skills.

In addition, the authors found that interventions which targeted change at the student level were associated with greater effectiveness than interventions which targeted change at the school level. Given this, we can expect that targeted, individual-level interventions may reduce disengagement and exclusion from school, which in turn may reduce the risk of youth violence and offending.

4.3 Rationale for the Boys Development Programme

The Boys Development Programme (BDP) was developed as a response to the above context. The programme takes an evidence-based approach to provide social-emotional support which aims to improve educational outcomes. The sessions delivered as part of the BDP seek to strengthen protective factors and mitigate known risk factors for school disengagement and exclusion through developing improved communication, conflict

resolution and emotional management skills. Table 1 shows the risk and protective factors each session aims to address, which are discussed in more detail below. Further information on the BDP is provided in section 5.

Table 1: Risk factors and protective factors addressed by each BDP session topic²

Risk factor	Protective factor(s)	BDP session topics
Difficulty managing emotions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased emotional knowledge and regulation. • Developing an emotional language to identify feelings other than anger. • Understanding and identifying physical responses associated with feelings. • Practising self-regulating techniques. 	Emotions Conflict resolution
Poor communication skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing enhanced communication skills. • Understanding the importance of communication. • Practicing communicating feelings and thoughts. 	Emotions Communication Conflict resolution Boys Development Goals and Aspirations
Conflict with peers and adults	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding personal responses in conflict situations. • Developing non-violent strategies for communicating through conflict. • Understanding adult and own roles and responsibilities. 	Emotions Communication Conflict resolution Boys Development

² Source: Boys Development and Conflict Resolution Manual Part 1

Risk factor	Protective factor(s)	BDP session topics
Association with deviant peer groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improving social problem-solving skills. • Identifying the costs and benefits of association with anti-social peers. • Clarifying personal values and ethics. • Practicing strategies for non-engagement with antisocial peers or behaviour. 	Boys Development Communication

4.4 Rationale for an RCT evaluation of the Boys Development Programme

The rationale for an RCT evaluation of the Boys Development Programme is strong. Despite the context outlined above, there is limited evidence in the UK on what works to support racially minoritized boys to remain engaged with school and to reduce the likelihood of exclusions (Gaffney et al., 2021). Existing evidence on interventions to reduce exclusions often shows small and short-term effects (Graham et al., 2019). For example, Valdebenito et al. (2019) found that school-based intervention programmes significantly reduced exclusion during the first 6 months after implementation, however this impact was not sustained at 12 months. In addition, there are limited experimental evaluations which examine the effect of social emotional interventions on school engagement and exclusions in a UK context, and it is therefore challenging to assess whether the impact of these interventions is causal (Valdebenito et al., 2019). Research on innovative, effective and low-cost strategies to reduce school exclusions in the UK is needed (Gaffney et al., 2021). This randomised control trial aims to build on the limited evidence base by looking at the extent to which targeted, social-emotional programmes for boys at risk of disengagement and exclusion improve school engagement.

5 About the Boys Development Programme

5.1 Overview

This section describes the Boys Development Programme (BDP) in full. It covers:

- The BDP theory of change.
- Who does the BDP aim to work with?
- How does the BDP work with them?
- What does the BDP aim to achieve?

5.2 Theory of change

In line with the Early Intervention Foundation's 10 steps for evaluation success, Table 2 below presents the BDP's Theory of Change. This has been developed based on:

- Documentation and information provided by Future Men.³
- Co-design workshops and project management meetings between Cordis Bright, Future Men and YEF.
- A rapid review of evidence.

³ For more information about Future Men, please see: <https://futuremen.org/> Last accessed 20 July 2023.

Table 2: BDP Theory of change

Why?		Who? Participants	How? Intervention	What? Outcomes		
Context	Evidence			Short term	Medium term	Long term
<p>The BDP was developed in response to:</p> <p>a) Evidence that low school engagement, exclusion from school, and a commitment to a deviant peer group can lead to increased risk of involvement in youth violence and crime.</p>	<p>Risk factors associated with low school engagement, exclusion from school are⁴:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Poor communication skills⁵ Difficulty managing emotions⁶ Rejection by non-deviant peer group⁷ Conflict with peers & teachers⁸ <p>Protective factors which improve engagement with school are:</p>	<p>Boys in Years 7-11 (aged 11 to 16) in areas of high need/deprivation who are identified as being at high risk of disengagement from school which may lead to exclusion.</p> <p>A young person would not be accepted onto the 1:1 programme if:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Their behaviour and circumstances 	<p>A minimum dosage of 12, one hour, weekly 1:1 sessions that take place over a 12 week period. Sessions are tailored to boys' needs, but topics can include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Masculinity/boys' Development Emotions Communication (including social media) Conflict (including peer interactions and pressure) Goals and aspirations 	<p>The boys:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have strategies for managing feelings and behaviours Have strategies for dealing with conflict situations Have improved recognition of their own emotions and how they 	<p>The boys:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stronger engagement with school Remain in school Reach their potential at school Get along better with their peers Get along better with 	<p>The boys:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved educational engagement Reduced exclusions Experience a reduction in opportunities for engagement in anti-social behaviour/ crime Thrive and progress through school & beyond

⁴ Paget A, Parker C, Heron J, Logan S, Henley W, Emond A, Ford T (2018). Which children and young people are excluded from school? Findings from a large British birth cohort study, the Avon Longitudinal Study of Parents and Children (ALSPAC), Child Care Health and Development, 44 (2): 285-296.

⁵ HM Government (2019). Timpson Review of School Exclusion. Available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/807862/Timpson_review.pdf [Accessed 31/01/23]

⁶ [Permanent exclusions and suspensions in England: 2019 to 2020 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/807862/Timpson_review.pdf) [Accessed 31/01/23]

⁷ Hawkins, D. J. et al., (2000). "Predictors of Youth Violence", Juvenile Justice Bulletin April 2000, USA. Department of Justice

⁸ [Permanent exclusions and suspensions in England: 2019 to 2020 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/807862/Timpson_review.pdf) [Accessed 31/01/23]

Why?		Who? Participants	How? Intervention	What? Outcomes		
Context	Evidence			Short term	Medium term	Long term
<p>b) Evidence that exclusion and disengagement from secondary school disproportionately affects young people from ethnic minority backgrounds, including those from black Caribbean and dual heritage Caribbean backgrounds, and those from low-income households.</p> <p>c) Evidence that targeted, social-emotional approaches can improve young peoples' educational outcomes.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Raising aspirations • Improving relationships with peers and adults,⁹ • Improving conflict resolution and communication skills¹⁰ • Developing a positive attitude to learning • Improving self-awareness and self-regulation • Developing problem solving and decision making skills • Self-esteem, empathy and cooperation 	<p>indicate that clinical support would be more appropriate.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is evidence that the school intends to exclude the pupil and is using the programme to demonstrate that support was offered. • They have a more advanced learning or communication need which would make a speaking and listening intervention hard to access. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Home and school expectations <p>The sessions focus on developing protective factors which strengthen young people's personal characteristics and mitigate against any potential negative peer group influence.</p> <p>These sessions aim to give boys a positive relationship with a trusted adult with whom they can identify and model positive behaviour. This is the key mechanism of change.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • interact with thoughts and behaviours • Have improved understanding of communication strategies • Have an improved understanding of male development • Have an improved understanding of how communication impacts relationship. 	<p>their teachers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have improved emotional regulation • Have reduced misbehaviour and aggression • Have higher aspirations for the future 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have improved future opportunities and life chances.

⁹ Graham, B., White, C., Edwards, A., Potter, S., and Street, C. (2019). *School exclusion: a literature review on the continued disproportionate exclusion of certain children*. Available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/800028/Timpson_review_of_school_exclusion_literature_review.pdf [Accessed 31/01/23]

¹⁰ Graham, B., White, C., Edwards, A., Potter, S., and Street, C. (2019). *School exclusion: a literature review on the continued disproportionate exclusion of certain children*. Available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/800028/Timpson_review_of_school_exclusion_literature_review.pdf [Accessed 31/01/23]

5.3 Who does the BDP aim to work with?

The BDP's target cohort is boys in Years 7-11 (aged 11-16) in areas of high need/deprivation, who are identified as being at high risk of disengagement and exclusion from school. Within this, the project team expects most boys to be from racially minoritized backgrounds, and many to be from low-income households.

Inclusion criteria are:

- a) Boys at risk of exclusion (due to poor behaviour records and/or significant behaviour incidents). This is assessed by incidents of poor behaviour in individual behaviour logs, for example, incidents in the classroom, around the school and/or situations involving teachers and/or other pupils.
- b) Boys at risk of disengagement (achieving below potential and/or poor attendance). This is assessed by school attendance which is recorded accurately each day for pupils.
- c) Boys at risk of poor outcomes due to known adversity outside school (child-poverty, previous or ongoing child-protection concerns). This is assessed by socio-economic information collected by schools such as being eligible for Free School Meals, care status, or having English as an additional language.

Exclusion criteria are:

- a) Boys' behaviour and circumstances indicate that clinical support would be more appropriate. (For example, where there is evidence of significant trauma for which no prior support has been received.)
- b) There is evidence that the school intends to exclude the boy and is using the programme to demonstrate that support was offered.
- c) The boy has a more advanced learning or communication need which would make a speaking and listening intervention hard to access. However, young people with SEND or an EHCP are not automatically excluded from the programme.

Boys do not need to meet all the inclusion criteria above to be accepted into the BDP. As part of the referral process, the BDP receives anonymised referrals from schools based on the referral guidance that schools use to guide their initial referrals. These are outlined in Table 3 below. Following receipt of anonymised referrals BDP managers/co-ordinators meet with the school staff to discuss each referral on a case-by-case basis to ensure they are appropriate using the inclusion and exclusion criteria outlined here. In practice, Future Men stakeholders reported that this guidance does not result in boys

with lower than expected levels of need to be referred to the BDP. Once referrals are agreed to be appropriate informed consent will be collected from parents/carers before non-anonymised referrals are made to the BDP. This process helps to ensure that all referrals into the BDP are in line with the inclusion and exclusion criteria outlined here.

Table 3: BDP eligibility guidance for schools

Eligibility	Eligibility guidance for schools
Not eligible: Needs are above eligibility thresholds	Language or learning needs that require specialist intervention.
	Behaviour stemming from trauma or neurodiversity that requires therapeutic intervention.
	Pattern of violent behaviour where risk to staff cannot be moderated.
	Exclusion process has already started or is likely to start soon.
Eligible: Needs meet eligibility thresholds	Low attendance, approaching minimum level.
	Low educational attainment resulting from behavioural, communication, or relationship challenges in or out of school.
	Behavioural challenges or patterns of behaviour that place student at risk of exclusion without intervention.
	Any other factor that places the young person at potential risk of exclusion that could be prevented by this intervention.
	Low level behaviour that affects engagement with school.
Not eligible: Needs are below eligibility thresholds	Limited, infrequent behaviour issues that fall within school's disciplinary framework.
	Low attainment that is not linked to wider concerns.

Eligibility	Eligibility guidance for schools
	Isolated incidents or comments expressing misogynistic views.

5.4 How does the BDP work with boys?

Table 4 describes the BDP intervention in line with the Template for Intervention Description and Replication (TiDieR) framework (Hoffman et al. 2014).

Table 4: About the BDP

TiDieR item	Description
Brief name	Future Men's Boys Development Programme
Why?	<p>The BDP was developed in response to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Evidence that low school engagement, exclusion from school, and a commitment to a deviant peer group can lead to anti-social behaviour, weapon-carrying, and crime. b) Evidence that targeted, social-emotional approaches can improve young peoples' educational outcomes. c) Evidence that exclusion and disengagement from secondary school disproportionately affects black Caribbean and dual heritage Caribbean boys.
Who delivers?	<p>Support is delivered by three full time BDP project co-ordinators. The co-ordinators are overseen by a BDP project manager. Each project co-ordinator has experience of working with boys and young men and receives in-house training on approaches to delivering the BDP and the BDP toolkit. They also receive mandatory safeguarding training on induction. There is also an evaluation research assistant who supports evaluation data collection (both primary and secondary data) including baseline, time 2, and time 3. This role also supports collecting informed consent and the randomisation process. Each project co-ordinator works in two secondary schools. They will support 10 boys per term per school, i.e. 80 boys over the course of the trial.</p>

TiDieR item	Description
<p>What is delivered?</p>	<p>The BDP is a targeted, manualised, social and emotional learning programme delivered across 12 one-to-one, 50-60 minute sessions. It aims to develop the social and emotional capacity and skills of boys in Years 7-11 who are at risk of exclusion and disengagement from schools to improve their educational engagement outcomes, including improving school engagement and reducing the likelihood of exclusion.</p> <p>The sessions focus on developing protective factors and addressing risk factors to strengthen young people’s personal characteristics and mitigate against potential negative peer group influence. Sessions are tailored to boys’ needs but typically cover the following topics (See Table 1 for more information):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction meeting • Masculinity • Emotions • Conflict • Effective Communication • Goals and Aspirations <p>Each session broadly takes the following format:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Check in. 2. Target review (i.e., revisiting goals set in the previous session). 3. Self-assessment exercise on wellbeing, behaviour, schoolwork (effort), conflict/communication, and coping. 4. Optional warm up game. 5. Main activity. This element is tailored and utilises a flexible range of core learning material. 6. Open questions using question cards and prompts. 7. Fun checkout activity that builds rapport and ends every session on a positive note. For example, rock paper scissors or preferred activity. 8. Target setting for the next session.

TiDieR item	Description
	<p>Further information on the one-to-one session structure is provided in Appendix 2.</p> <p>The sessions aim to give young people access to a positive relationship with a trusted adult with whom they can identify and who can model positive behaviour. This relationship is the key mechanism of change which is intended to lead to improved school engagement.</p>
<p>When and how much?</p>	<p>The programme consists of 12 weekly one-to-one sessions (covering a full school term) which are around 50-60 minutes in length.</p> <p>Further sessions may be provided if the BDP project co-ordinator and school agree they are needed for higher-risk young people (up to a maximum total of 36 sessions).</p> <p>Support will be delivered across four school terms, i.e., from September 2023 to January 2025.</p>
<p>How?</p>	<p>Support is delivered face-to-face on an individual basis.</p>
<p>Where?</p>	<p>Support is delivered in secondary schools during lesson time. This will take place across six secondary schools in Wandsworth, Southwark and Lambeth.</p>
<p>Tailoring?</p>	<p>Sessions are tailored to individual needs based on assessment and discussion during the introduction meeting. However, most boys will receive sessions on the topics outlined above.</p>
<p>How well?</p>	<p>Fidelity to the BDP throughout the evaluation will be assessed against the programme's theory of change and documented approach. This assessment will take place through the use of monitoring data and as part of the implementation and process evaluation (IPE).</p>

5.5 What does the BDP aim to achieve?

In line with the Theory of Change presented in Table 2, this section sets out the BDP's:

- Short term outcomes.
- Medium term outcomes.
- Long term outcomes.

5.5.1 Short-term outcomes

The intended short-term outcomes of the BDP are that boys have:

- Strategies for managing feelings and behaviours.
- Strategies for dealing with conflict situations.
- Improved recognition of their own emotions and how they interact with thoughts and behaviours.
- Improved understanding of communication strategies.
- Improved understanding of male development.
- Improved understanding of how communication impacts relationships.

5.5.2 Medium-term outcomes

The intended medium-term outcomes of the BDP are that boys:

- Have stronger engagement/bonds to school.
- Remain in school.
- Reach their potential at school.
- Get along better with their peers.
- Get along better with their teachers.
- Have improved emotional regulation.
- Have reduced misbehaviour and aggression.
- Have higher aspirations for the future.

5.5.3 Long-term outcomes

The intended long-term outcomes of the BDP are:

- Improved educational engagement.
- Reduced exclusions.
- Reduced opportunities for engagement in anti-social behaviour/ crime.
- Boys thrive and progress through school and beyond.
- Improved future opportunities and life changes.

6 Impact evaluation

6.1 Overview

This section presents an overview of information about the impact evaluation. It covers:

- Research questions.
- Trial design.
- Participant journey through the trial.
- Approaches to quantitative analysis.

6.2 Research questions

The key research question for the efficacy study evaluation is:

‘Do targeted, social-emotional learning programmes for boys at risk of disengagement and exclusion improve school engagement in comparison to business as usual?’

The key primary outcome measure for the evaluation will be school engagement measured by the School Connectedness Questionnaire (Marsh and Randolph, 2020) as per the YEF outcomes framework (see: <https://youthendowmentfund.org.uk/outcomes/>).

Additional research questions are:

1. **Delivery:** Can the BDP work under ideal circumstances?
2. **Impact:** a) What is the impact of the BDP? b) Do different sub-groups of young people have different outcomes, e.g. those from minoritized/marginalised groups?

3. **Unintended consequences:** Does the BDP have any unintentional consequences? If so, what are these? Do different groups of young people experience these differently?
4. **Iatrogenic effects:** Are there any serious negative effects attributed to the BDP on any outcomes?
5. **Mechanisms:** Which factors contribute most to the observed outcomes?

We are committed to delivering the evaluation in line with race equity, diversity, equality and inclusion. As part of this, we will explicitly assess differences in access, experiences and outcomes for young people from racially minoritized and marginalised backgrounds. This will be addressed in analyses under research questions 2, 3 and 4 above. We will also address differences in experiences across groups through our IPE approach. This is key for this study as evidence shows that exclusion and disengagement from secondary school disproportionately affects pupils with a black Caribbean background and those with a mixed white and black Caribbean background (Graham et al., 2019; Timpson, 2019; Department for Education, 2023). Further information on how the evaluation will be delivered to promote race equity, diversity, equality and inclusion is provided in section 6.5 (quantitative analysis approaches), section 7 (IPE approach), and section 9 (diversity, equity and inclusion).

6.3 Trial design

Table 5 presents an overview of the efficacy study trial design. Further information on the rationale for each of the following elements of the trial design is provided in the rest of this section:

- Randomisation approach.
- Sample sizes.
- Outcomes measures.

Table 5: Trial design overview

Trial design, including number of arms		Two-arm parallel efficacy randomised controlled trial with random allocation at the young person level
Unit of randomisation		Individual young person
Stratification variables (if applicable)		Secondary school
Number of participants		480, i.e., 240 in the treatment group and 240 in the control group.
Primary outcome	variable	Self-report measure of school engagement
	measure (instrument, scale, source)	School Connectedness Questionnaire (Marsh and Randolph, 2020).
Secondary outcome(s)	variable(s)	Emotional symptoms; Relationships with peers; Behaviour difficulties; Relationships with teachers; Relationship between project co-ordinator and young person.
	measure(s) (instrument, scale, source)	Relationships with peers, measured by the Strengths and Difficulties peer-relationship problems subscale (Goodman, 2005) Emotional symptoms, measured by the Strengths and Difficulties emotional symptoms subscale (Goodman, 2005) Behavioural difficulties, measured by the Strengths and Difficulties externalising behaviours score (Goodman, 2005)

		<p>Relationships with teachers, measured by the School Connectedness Teacher Bonding and Attachment subscale (Marsh and Randolph, 2020).</p> <p>Relationship between project co-ordinator and young person, measured by the Social Support and Rejection Scale (Roffman et al., 2000).</p>
Baseline for primary outcome	variable	Self-report measure of school engagement
	measure (instrument, scale, source)	School Connectedness Questionnaire (Marsh and Randolph, 2020).
Baseline for secondary outcome	variable	Relationships with peers; Emotional symptoms; Behavioural difficulties; Relationships with teachers ¹¹ .
	measure (instrument, scale, source)	<p>Relationships with peers, measured by the Strengths and Difficulties peer-relationship problems subscale (Goodman, 2005)</p> <p>Emotional symptoms, based on the Strengths and Difficulties emotional symptoms subscale (Goodman, 2005)</p> <p>Behavioural difficulties, measured by the Strengths and Difficulties externalising behaviours score (Goodman, 2005)</p> <p>Relationships with teachers, measured by the School Connectedness Teacher Bonding and Attachment subscale (Marsh and Randolph, 2020).</p>

¹¹ Please note at baseline, we will not be using the Social Support and Rejection Scale as the young person will not have worked with the project co-ordinator prior to the BDP.

6.3.1 Randomisation approach

This efficacy study will be a two-arm, parallel randomised control trial (RCT). Randomisation will be done at the individual level with stratification at the school level. All young people who are referred to the programme, meet the eligibility criteria, consent to be part of the evaluation and complete a baseline questionnaire will be allocated at random to the treatment or control group on a 1:1 basis, as per Hutchison and Styles (2010).¹²

Randomisation will be done using 24 blocks of 20 pupils (i.e. one block of 20 per school per term), followed by block sizes of four. This design was agreed for the following reasons:

1. The small sample size of schools (six schools) involved means that randomisation at the school level would not control for school level variation. Randomising at an individual level with equal allocation within schools will control for school-level effects. In addition, while the delivery will be in six schools, the facilitators will be the same across these schools and the BDP is a documented intervention.
2. Implementation-wise, it was the most elegant design, i.e., it means all schools will receive some input from the BDP which means they get something in return for being involved in the evaluation. This means there is a greater likelihood of schools being supportive of the evaluation and the evaluation being informed by higher quality data.
3. Schools will refer into the programme in batches of 20 boys per term. Using block sizes of 20 therefore ensures that 10 young people are allocated to the treatment group across each of the four terms, i.e., so that Future Men can deliver the BDP at capacity. Subsequent block sizes of four can then be used to account for any attrition that has been experienced throughout the trial. The programme would only seek to fill spaces on the BDP made vacant due to attrition if there are 8 or more one-to-one sessions that can still be delivered that term. We therefore anticipate that the number of boys to be randomised with smaller block sizes will be low.

Further information on randomisation practicalities and processes can be found in section 6.4.5 below.

¹² See: <https://www.nfer.ac.uk/media/2114/rct01.pdf>. Last accessed 22 June 2023

6.3.2 Sample sizes

Our approach to estimating the sample size for this efficacy study using Power Calculations is conservative and has been influenced by the following:

- **YEF guidance.** YEF guidance suggests that efficacy study RCTs should have a Minimum Detectable Effect Size (MDES) of 0.20. According to Lipsey & Wilson (2001), $\frac{1}{2} d = r$, which in turn is equivalent to the difference in proportions. Therefore, it is our understanding that an MDES of 0.20 is about equivalent to 10% difference in proportions.
- **The evidence base.** Valdebenito et al. (2019) in their systematic review and meta-analysis exploring the impact of school-based interventions on reducing school exclusions conducted a meta-analysis of 37 studies. Using a random effects model they showed that school-based interventions significantly reduced school exclusions during the first 6 months after implementation (SMD=0.30, 95% CI (.2, .41), $p < 0.001$). Using the approach outlined by Lipsey & Wilson (2001) this can be considered equivalent to a 15% difference in proportions. This also suggests that school-based interventions similar to the BDP are likely to have a positive impact, i.e., reducing the likelihood of young people being excluded from school.
- **BDP delivery constraints.** The BDP will be able to deliver the intervention to a maximum of 240 boys over the duration of the study. With a control group allocated as close as is feasible to a one-to-one ratio, this means a total sample size of 480 boys is achievable under existing plans. This is a constraint in terms of determining the sample of the efficacy study.
- **School engagement measured by the School Connectedness Questionnaire.** Cordis Bright, YEF and Future Men agreed the primary outcome for the study should be school engagement. Based on a rapid evidence assessment, which considered scales including those in the YEF outcomes framework, school engagement will be measured by Marsh and Randolph's (2020) School Connectedness Questionnaire. This is a scale presented and endorsed by YEF's outcomes framework.

However, there is limited evidence about the extent to which the Marsh and Randolph (2020) School Connectedness Questionnaire may capture change in school connectedness among boys. The School Connectedness Questionnaire contains 10 items which are summed into three subscales of: 3 items (Teacher Bonding and Attachment), 4 items (Peer Bonding and Attachment) and 3 items (School Engagement).

In their validation study, Marsh and Randolph (2020) reported mean average scores, standard deviations and skew in two samples – one was a sample of young people in general education, and one was a sample for young people experiencing emotional and behavioural disorders. The results are summarised in Table 6 and Table 7 . Please note total scale scores were not reported in Marsh and Randolph’s (2020) paper.

The tables below show that Marsh and Randolph (2020) reported that the subscales had a level of negative skew. We will assess this skew and take appropriate ameliorative action (e.g. log transformation) so that parametric statistics can be used. We will outline more about this in our Statistical Analysis Plan.

Table 6: School Connectedness Questionnaire subscale means, standard deviations and skew in the General Education sample (n=132)

Subscale	Items	Mean	SD	Skew
<i>Teacher Bonding & Attachment</i>	3	2.64	.43	-0.86
<i>Peer Bonding & Attachment</i>	4	2.73	.32	-2.23
<i>School Engagement</i>	3	2.61	.38	-0.83

Table 7: School Connectedness Questionnaire subscale means, standards deviations and skew in reported in the Emotional and Behavioural Disorder sample (n=38)

Subscale	Items	Mean	SD	Skew
<i>Teacher Bonding & Attachment</i>	3	2.68	.45	-1.73
<i>Peer Bonding & Attachment</i>	4	2.54	.45	-1.06
<i>School Engagement</i>	3	2.53	.52	-0.94

Because no total score for school connectedness was presented and there was no validation of the total score in the Marsh and Randolph (2020) paper, we use the means of the subscales to conduct the power analysis and estimate the sample size needed. We present two calculations below:

- **Power calculation 1:** If we use the mean score of 2.73 (peer bonding and attachment, general sample), which was the highest reported mean, select a

standard deviation of 1.0¹³, and an MDES of .20 (or a 10% relative increase or decrease in score) the sample size required to detect a statistically significant result if it exists (Power=.80, two-tailed), is 422, or 211 in both groups.

- **Power calculation 2:** If we use the mean score of 2.53 (school engagement, emotional and behavioural disorder group), which was the lowest reported mean, select a standard deviation of 1.0, and an MDES of .20 (or a 10% relative increase or decrease in score), the sample size required to detect a statistically significant result if it exists (Power=.80, two-tailed), is 490, or 245 in both groups.

Given that the standard deviation is likely to be lower than 1.0, we are confident that a sample size of 422 will be sufficient to detect a statistically significant result if it exists.

The study will involve around 480 boys across six secondary schools, i.e., 240 in each of the treatment and control groups. This is in line with Future Men's capacity to deliver the BDP to 60 boys per term, i.e. 240 boys across four academic terms. Based on Power Calculation 1 this means even with attrition or non-completion of questionnaires for 58 boys (12%, which is slightly above YEF's desired target of no more than 10% attrition) the sample should be able to detect statistically significant differences. Table 8 presents power calculation 1.

These sample size calculations were completed using SPSS 25.0

Please note in Table 8 we have suggested pre-test/post-test correlation of 0. This is because we have no reason to believe that the variance of the school connectedness measure would be different between the treatment and control group. However, inclusion of a pre-test as a covariate in impact analyses helps to explain (error) variance in the post-test and improves the likelihood of uncovering programme impacts by reducing the standard error of the impact estimate.

It is difficult to estimate what the pre-test/post-test correlation will be as this depends on unknown sample characteristics and the characteristics of the measure under investigation. For example, we don't know what the pre-test post-test correlation is likely to be for the school connectedness measure with young people, many of whom might come from minoritized backgrounds, in England. The greater the estimated pre-test/post-test correlation the lower the MDES and the smaller the sample needed to detect a statistically significant result if it exists.

¹³ We have selected a standard deviation of 1.0 to be conservative. This is because the standard deviation has a bigger impact on the sample size needed than the mean. Underestimating the standard deviation runs the risk of setting and targeting a sample size that is at risk of a type II error.

It is possible that there might be a pre-test/post-test correlation between the school connectedness measure at Time 1 and at Time 2, for example, but we do not have a way of reliably estimating this. Having the pre-test/post-test correlation set at 0 means that we have more of a buffer in sample size to detect a significant impact if it exists. This also means that we increase the likelihood of being able to detect a statistically significant result if the BDP does not recruit the numbers anticipated, or if questionnaires are spoiled etc.

Table 8: Sample size calculations

		PARAMETER
Minimum Detectable Effect Size (MDES)		0.20
Pre-test/ post-test correlations	level 1 (participant)	0.0
	level 2 (cluster)	N/A
Alpha		0.05
Power		0.80
One-sided or two-sided?		Two-sided
Number of participants	Intervention	211
	Control	211
	Total	422

6.3.3 Outcome measures

Table 9 maps the outcomes from the BDP's theory of change against the validated measures which will be used to capture them. Both the outcomes and measures have been discussed, prioritised and agreed through discussions between Cordis Bright, Future Men and YEF. All measures were reviewed to ensure they are in line with Early Intervention Foundation evidence standards, i.e., that they are not amended, that they are standardised and validated, and capture the projects outcomes. In addition, measures were prioritised which were brief, use clear and age-appropriate language, and have been validated for use with young people of the same age and/or from marginalised backgrounds.

In addition, we will work with schools to collect school administrative data relating to attendance, behaviour and engagement throughout the efficacy study. We have started to explore this with schools and recognise that there will be differences between how schools collect and record this type of data and that the policies they use that will influence this data. As such, any analysis based on this data will be exploratory in nature.

Further information on how this will be collected and analysed is provided in section 6.4.4 and 6.5 respectively.

Table 9: Outcome measures

Outcome from the theory of change	Measure	Subscale(s)	Number of items	Collection point(s)
Primary outcome				
Stronger engagement with school	School Connectedness Questionnaire	Full measure	10	Baseline, 12 weeks post randomisation, 24 weeks post randomisation
Secondary outcomes				
Get along better with their peers	Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire	Peer-relationship problems sub-scale	5	Baseline, 12 weeks post randomisation, 24 weeks post randomisation
Emotional symptoms	Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire	Emotional symptoms subscale	5	Baseline, 12 weeks post randomisation, 24 weeks post randomisation

Outcome from the theory of change	Measure	Subscale(s)	Number of items	Collection point(s)
Behavioural difficulties	Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire	Externalising behaviours score (i.e. the sum of hyperactivity and conduct subscales).	10	Baseline, 12 weeks post randomisation, 24 weeks post randomisation
Get along better with their teachers	School Connectedness Questionnaire	Teacher Bonding and Attachment	3	Baseline, 12 weeks post randomisation, 24 weeks post randomisation
Positive relationship between project co-ordinator and young person	Social Support and Rejection Scale	Full measure	22	12 weeks post randomisation, 24 weeks post randomisation

Outcomes data collection points

Outcomes will be measured at the individual level primarily through the administration of self-report validated measures. Self-report data will be collected with assistance from BDP practitioners (e.g., the BDP project co-ordinators and evaluation research assistant) in school settings who will be independent to those delivering support to the boys. Measures will be obtained at:

- **Baseline**, i.e., once informed consent has been achieved from parents/carers and young people and before randomisation is conducted.
- **12 weeks later**, for both the treatment and control group, i.e. on exit from the BDP for those in the treatment group.
- **24 weeks later**, i.e., at follow-up for both groups to see if any observed impacts at 12-weeks have been sustained 12-weeks post intervention.

In the trial, primary and secondary outcome measures will be collected at the 12-week, post randomisation point, and 24 weeks post-randomisation (i.e., 12 weeks after boys stop receiving the intervention) to see if they are sustained. Further detail and information on outcomes measures and data collection can be found in section 6.4.4 below.

Primary outcome measure

The key primary outcome for the evaluation will be school engagement. This will be measured by the self-report School Connectedness Questionnaire (SCQ) (Marsh and Randolph, 2020), and collected at baseline (T1), 12 weeks post randomisation (T2) and 24 weeks post randomisation (T3). The primary outcome timepoint is T2, i.e., 12 weeks post randomisation or at the end of support from the BDP, with analysis conducted at T3 to see if the impact is sustained. The SCQ is a measure of school connectedness from YEF's Outcomes Framework¹⁴ and was agreed in collaboration with YEF and Future Men. It is a short measure comprised of 10 items which contains three constructs. These are:

- Teacher bonding and attachment (3 items).
- Peer bonding and attachment (4 items).
- School engagement (3 items).

¹⁴ See: <https://youthendowmentfund.org.uk/outcomes/> . Last accessed 13 July 2023.

The SCQ uses a 3-point Likert scale, which includes 1 (not true), 2 (somewhat true), and 3 (true). It was developed on both general education and special education students, using a diverse student population in terms of race and ethnicity, socioeconomic status, and age (6-18 years).

Secondary outcome measures

The secondary outcomes measures are that boys:

- Get along better with their peers (SDQ sub-scale).
- Get along better with their teachers (SCQ sub-scale).
- Reduced behavioural difficulties (SDQ sub-scale).
- Reduction in emotional symptoms (SDQ subscale)
- Have positive relationships with their project co-ordinator (control group) / significant adult (treatment group) (SSRS).

See Table 9 for more information about these and how they will be measured. The first four secondary measures above will be collected at baseline (T1); 12 weeks post randomisation (T2) and 24 weeks post randomisation (T3). The secondary outcome time is T2, i.e., 12 weeks post randomisation or at the end of support from the BDP. Analysis will be conducted at T3 to see if the impact is sustained.

We will measure the extent of positive relationships between boys and project co-ordinators (treatment group) and significant adults (control group) using the Social Support and Rejection Scale (SSRS, Roffman et al., 2000)¹⁵. This will be collected at 12 weeks post randomisation (T2) and 24 weeks post randomisation (T3) for both the treatment and the control group. The secondary measure timepoint will be T2, with analysis conducted at T3 to see if the impact is sustained. The SSRS is a measure of the quality of relationship between young people and a trusted adult (control group) or project co-ordinator (intervention group). This measure was selected in addition to YEF's core measure (SDQ) because a positive relationship with a trusted adult who models behaviour and values is the key mechanism of change of the BDP. The SSRS was selected in agreement between Cordis Bright, Future Men and YEF.

¹⁵ See: <https://nationalmentoringresourcecenter.org/resource/measurement-guidance-toolkit/#mentoring-relationship-quality-and-characteristics--social-support-and-rejection-scale>. Last accessed 13 July 2023.

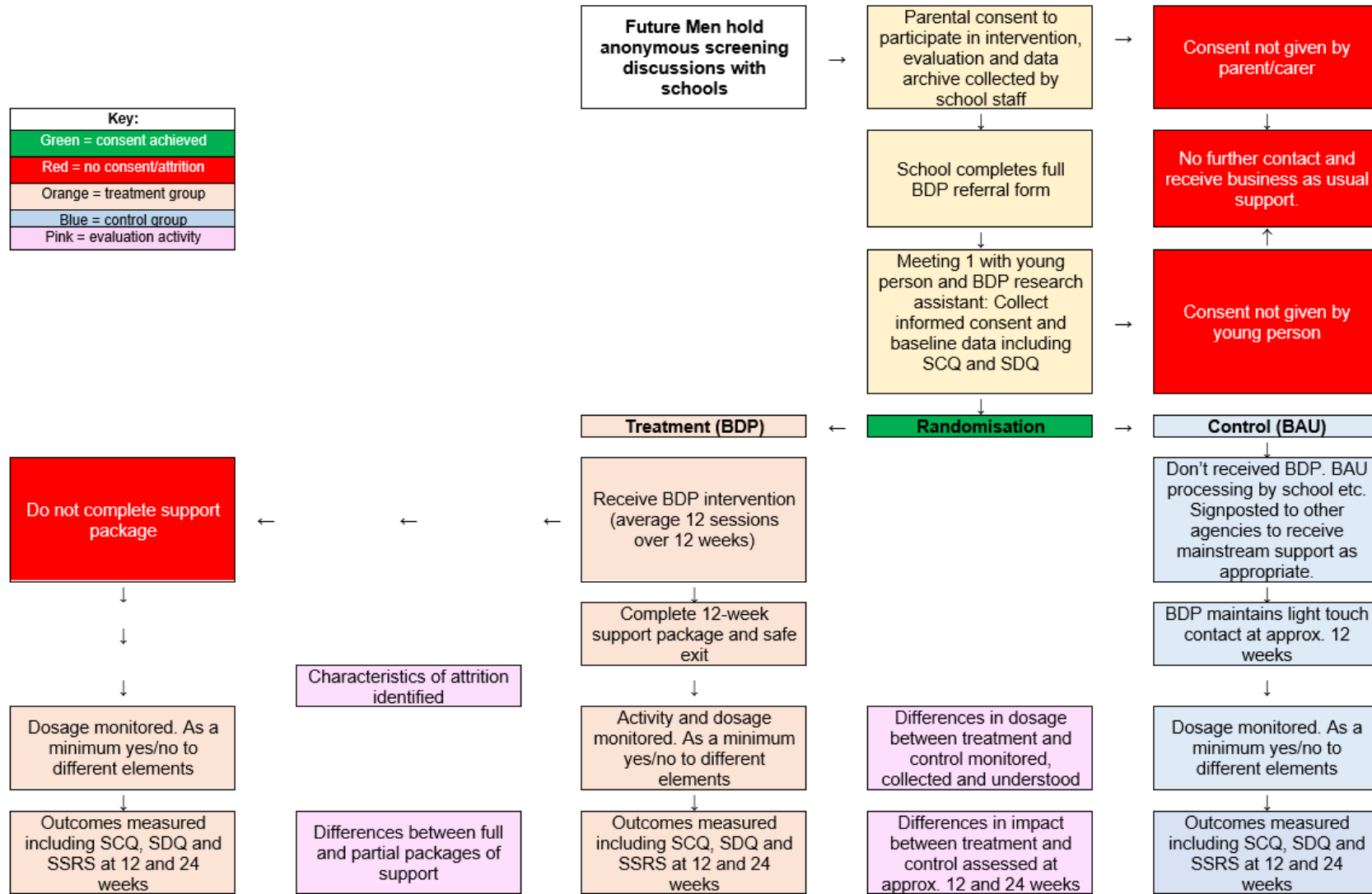
6.4 Participant journey

Figure 1 presents the participant flow diagram for the efficacy study. This shows the following key steps:

- Referrals, identification and screening.
- Collecting informed consent.
- Data collection at baseline and two follow-up points.
- Conducting randomisation.
- Treatment and support phases.
- Conducting analysis.

The rest of this section describes how each of these processes will be implemented and conducted in full.

Figure 1: Efficacy RCT pathway (BDP=Boys Development Programme, BAU=Business as usual)



6.4.1 Participant referrals, eligibility and screening

Eligible boys will be identified by school leads, including heads, deputies, SENCos, pastoral leads, and/or heads of year in the six schools. They will be identified in line with the inclusion and exclusion criteria and eligibility thresholds set out in section 5.3. Before referrals are made, all referral partners will undergo discussions with trained and experienced Future Men practitioners who will share the referral form and explain the eligibility criteria and thresholds in advance.

Each school will be encouraged to make referrals on a term-by-term basis. Future Men colleagues will hold an anonymous eligibility and screening conversation with school professionals to assess the suitability of each young person for support and participation in the evaluation against the eligibility and exclusion criteria.

Once the eligibility for each boy has been confirmed, school partners will then seek parental consent to participate in the programme and evaluation (see section 6.4.3 below). Once this has been achieved, school partners will complete a referral form for each boy, which has been designed and developed by Future Men with support from Cordis Bright. This will capture data on eligibility thresholds; demographic information; and socio-economic data. Further detail on the data types collected at this stage is outlined in section 6.4.4.

6.4.2 Recruitment rates

Over the course of the efficacy study the BDP will aim to recruit approximately 60 boys to a treatment group and 60 boys to a control group per term, i.e. recruitment rates will be 20 boys per school per term (10 in the treatment (BDP) group and 10 in the control group), as shown in Table 10 below.

Table 10: Participant recruitment flows (numbers include 1:1 allocation across treatment and control groups)

	Term 1	Term 2	Term 3	Term 4	Total
School 1	20	20	20	20	80
School 2	20	20	20	20	80
School 3	20	20	20	20	80
School 4	20	20	20	20	80

	Term 1	Term 2	Term 3	Term 4	Total
School 5	20	20	20	20	80
School 6	20	20	20	20	80
Total	120	120	120	120	480

6.4.3 Collecting informed consent

The role of the BDP research assistant

Future Men will recruit two research assistants to support the efficacy study. The evaluation research assistant will be responsible for conducting the evaluation processes with boys and will not be delivering the BDP intervention with boys – this is the responsibility of the BDP project co-ordinators. The research assistant will conduct three meetings with each boy in the trial:

- **Meeting 1:** Explaining the programme and evaluation, achieving informed consent from young people, administering self-report surveys, conducting the randomisation process and informing young people of the outcome. They will also discuss the randomisation outcome with the lead contact in each school to ensure those in the control group receive support that they would have received without the Boys Development programme, i.e., business as usual.
- **Meeting 2:** Administering the self-report surveys 12 weeks after randomisation (or at the end of support for any boys who receive more than 12 sessions) for both boys in the treatment and control group.
- **Meeting 3:** Administering the self-report surveys 24 weeks after randomisation for both boys in the treatment and control group.

They will also be responsible for liaising with school leads around collecting parent/carer consent, and collating school administrative data (i.e., data collected by schools about attendance, exclusion and behaviour) from schools for boys in the treatment and control groups.

Initially the research assistants will be supported in the above tasks by the three BDP project co-ordinators. They will work together to onboard boys to the programme and evaluation in the schools that they will *not* be delivering in. This will support the capacity of the research assistants and set up of the trial, while also maintaining the integrity of the data collection processes and ensuring that bias is minimised.

Both the boy and their parents/carers will be asked to consent to the boy's participation in the study. These processes have been designed to adhere to good practice guidelines, including YEF and the Government Social Research Unit's guidance, to ensure they are accessible, inclusive and culturally sensitive.¹⁶ All information sheets and consent materials to be used throughout the evaluation are provided in Appendix 1.

Parents/carers

Once a boy has been anonymously discussed in a screening conversation held between school partners and BDP members of staff, parents/carers will be contacted by trusted members of school staff to provide informed consent. All parents/carers will be provided with information sheets which detail the programme and evaluation in full, as well as a privacy notice for the evaluation. This will be done via email, via post/hard-copy or in person depending on the school's preference and in line with their ways of working and policies. Parents/carers will then submit informed consent via an online or paper form, which is securely collected and stored by Future Men. For parents/carers and schools who prefer to submit a paper copy, consent forms can also be printed and submitted to a member of BDP staff, who will then scan and upload this to Future Men servers.

All evidence of informed consent will then be shared securely with Cordis Bright via secure transfer in line with the Data Protection Act and GDPR. Cordis Bright and Future Men will work with school leaders to support teachers to explain the evaluation and implications to parents/carers who have concerns.

Young people

Once parent/carer consent has been achieved, young people will then meet with the BDP evaluation research assistant during school time. The evaluation research assistant will explain the intervention and the evaluation to the young person, share and discuss the evaluation information sheet and gain written evidence of consent. Participants will be informed that taking part in the evaluation is optional, i.e., that if they choose to not take part then they will continue to be able to access all usual services, but that the BDP will not be available to them. Young people will also be told that they have the right to withdraw from the evaluation at any point with no adverse consequences, i.e., they would still be able to receive the BDP if they withdraw from the evaluation at a later date.

¹⁶ The evaluation includes a disbursement ceiling in case the following is needed: Document and tool translation into community languages; simultaneous translation; supporting the delivery of evaluation summaries into community languages; supporting tool use for young people with SEND.

Cordis Bright will provide guidance and training to the BDP evaluation research assistant, project co-ordinators and project manager to ensure the messages in the information sheets are clearly communicated to young people and their parents/carers. We will monitor this process by capturing feedback from the BDP evaluation research assistant and project coordinators to ensure that materials are being used appropriately and that we are capturing informed consent.

We will also work with them around explaining to young people how consent will be stored and transferred to us in line with the requirements of the Data Protection Act and GDPR. Participants will be informed that they may ask for any of the information collected about them to be destroyed at any time up until two weeks after they have completed the third questionnaire, i.e., after around 14 weeks after they have finished involvement in BDP, when analysis may already have begun. Participants may withdraw and ask for any of the information collected from them to be excluded from YEF data archiving at any time up until the end of the evaluation period in around June 2026 (when data will be transferred for archiving), even if their data has been used as part of the evaluation.

Evidence of written consent from young people will be collected via a photo of the consent form. This will then be scanned to Future Men servers and sent securely to Cordis Bright in line with the requirements of the Data Protection Act and GDPR.

6.4.4 Data collection

Table 11 presents an overview of the different data types that are collected at each stage of the efficacy study. These are:

- Eligibility data.
- Demographic and socio-economic data.
- Self-report validated outcomes measures.
- Administrative data on behaviour, exclusions and absences from schools (exploratory data).
- Activity and dosage data.
- Evaluation monitoring data.

Each data type is then discussed in full throughout the remainder of this section.

Table 11: Data collection overview

Data type	Data collection source	Data collection point				
		Referral	Baseline	Treatment/ Signposting phase	12 week follow up	24 week follow up
Eligibility	School partners.	✓				
Informed consent	Parents/carers and young people.	✓				
Demographic and socioeconomic data	School partners.	✓				
Self-report outcomes measures	Young people with support from BDP evaluation research assistant		✓		✓	✓
Administrative data from schools, i.e., on	School partners		✓		✓	✓

Data type	Data collection source	Data collection point				
		Referral	Baseline	Treatment/ Signposting phase	12 week follow up	24 week follow up
behaviour, exclusion and absences.						
Activity and dosage data (treatment group)	BDP project co-ordinators.			✓		
Activity and dosage data (control group)	BDP project co-ordinators and school partners via the Implementation and Process Evaluation consultation.			✓		
Evaluation monitoring data	BDP Evaluation research assistant and Project Co-ordinators.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Eligibility, demographic and socio-economic data

As discussed in section 6.4.1, data on eligibility criteria, demographic and socio-economic information will be provided by school partners through the BDP referral form. This referral form has been designed and developed in collaboration between Future Men, Cordis Bright and YEF for the purposes of the efficacy study. It includes the following:

- Referral information, including referral reason, date and source.
- Demographic data on sex, age, ethnicity, SEND status and need.
- Socio-economic data on free school meal eligibility, care status and English as an additional language.
- Confirmation that the boy meets the inclusion criteria and thresholds outlined in section 5.3.
- Additional information about the young person, including accessibility requirements and clinical support.

All data categories will be collected using harmonised data categories, i.e., in line with ONS and government guidance. We will also use the referral form to collect data required for the YEF archive, including Unique Pupil Numbers.

All eligibility, demographic and socio-economic data will be stored and collected securely on Future Men servers. This will then be shared via secure transfer with Cordis Bright and stored securely and in line with the Data Protection Act and GDPR on Cordis Bright servers.

Baseline outcomes collection

After consent is received, baseline data collection of the SDQ and SCQ will take place for all young people with support from either the BDP evaluation research assistant or a BDP project co-ordinator who will not be delivering support in the school. This is to minimise bias and to maintain independence of the measurement collection from the BDP delivery team. In addition, the evaluation research assistant, BDP project co-ordinators and managers will receive training and guidance from Cordis Bright, including scripts, on how to administer the questionnaires. They will support young people by reading questions or explaining a question if needed and explain that their responses would be kept anonymous and only shared with the evaluation team. Questionnaires will take around 30 minutes to complete and will be done during school time.

All self-report questionnaires will be completed virtually and submitted to the evaluation team via secure survey software SmartSurvey.¹⁷ Data will be stored securely on SmartSurvey and Cordis Bright servers in line with Data Protection and GDPR. Our approach ensures separation between data collection and the BDP project co-ordinators, i.e., those involved in delivering support will not have access to the outcomes measures data once it has been collected. Paper copies of the questionnaires will also be available to complete as a contingency plan for technical issues, or if young people request this. These will be scanned by the BDP evaluation research assistant, who will then share these with Cordis Bright via secure transfer.

If completing these tools is perceived to be upsetting or to trigger welfare issues a safeguarding intervention will take place, whereby the BDP evaluation research assistant and school staff will follow their internal safeguarding policies, refer the young person to school designated safeguarding leads, and refer to other support as required.

Activity and dosage data collection

Activity and dosage data will be collected by the BDP project co-ordinator who is responsible for delivering support to the young person. For those in the treatment group, this will involve collecting the following categories:

- Name of the BDP project co-ordinator.
- For each session: date, session type, and session topic.
- Total number of sessions completed for each young person.
- Case closure date.
- Case closure reason.

Those in the control group will be provided with business as usual that will vary by school. We will work with schools to understand the type of provision on offer. However, it may not be possible to quantify exactly what each young person in the control group has received as business as usual in the study. This is due to the different approaches to reporting and recording this information in individual schools. We will gain an understanding of business as usual in each school through consultation as part of the implementation and process evaluation.

¹⁷ See www.smartsurvey.co.uk/GDPR

Follow-up collection

All young people will also complete the SDQ, School Connectedness Questionnaire and SSRS at around 12 weeks and 24 weeks post randomisation with support from the BDP research assistant. This will take around 30-40 minutes to complete and will be done during school time. If completing these tools is perceived to trigger any issues, then a safeguarding referral will take place to the school designated safeguarding lead.

Administrative data

We will work with school partners to collect school administrative data throughout the course of the efficacy study. This will be an exploratory approach so any analysis based on the data will be exploratory in nature. It will involve collecting at baseline, T2 and T3 measures for:

- **Attendance data.** We propose that this is an average of the year prior to referral for baseline, the term following support for T2 (i.e., timing in line with T2 outcomes questionnaire collection), and the subsequent term for T3 (i.e., timing in line with T3 outcomes questionnaire collection).
- **Exclusions data.** Similarly, we suggest that this is an average of the year prior to referral for baseline and in line with T2, and T3 outcomes measure questionnaire collection timings.

We will work with schools to understand how this data is collected and the ways in which it may be possible to share this with us. This will involve an assessment of the quality, accuracy and comparability of this data both within and across schools. We will also ask for copies of school behavioural and exclusion policies to inform our understanding of any differences in how this data may be collected.

Evaluation monitoring data

Throughout the evaluation, the BDP evaluation research assistant and project co-ordinators will be responsible for monitoring and recording progress throughout the trial. This will include for each young person tracking the following data types:

- Referral date, reason and source.
- Informed consent.
- Outcome measure completion rates (i.e., baseline, 12 weeks and 24 weeks).
- Randomisation outcomes.

- Trial completion.
- Trial withdrawals and attrition.

This data will be collected and stored on Future Men secure servers and shared with Cordis Bright on a fortnightly basis. We will then use it to audit the integrity of randomisation processes, data collection and to assess recruitment, retention and exit through the trial. We will also use it to monitor any differences in participation across groups, for example young people from marginalised or minoritized backgrounds.

6.4.5 Randomisation processes

As described in section 6.3.1, young people will be randomised on a 1:1 basis to either the intervention or control group using stratified block randomisation to ensure balance at the school level.

Sequence generation

The randomisation sequence will be generated digitally, by online software Sealed Envelope.¹⁸ This will be generated at the start of the study for all 480 boys using 24 blocks of 20 (i.e., four blocks per school, one per school per term), followed by block sizes of four (these will be used in the event of any attrition in schools). The randomisation sequence will be stored securely on Cordis Bright servers and will not be accessible by Future Men colleagues.

Randomising and auditing

Once informed consent and baseline measures have been collected, the BDP evaluation research assistant will conduct randomisation. They will input the young person's unique identifier, school name, and confirmation that informed consent and baseline measures have been collected into the software, which will then return the randomisation outcome. The young person will then be informed of the randomisation outcome, which will also be noted and stored in the evaluation monitoring dataset. Cordis Bright will deliver training and guidance to the BDP evaluation research assistant and project co-ordinators on how to inform young people of the result, to avoid feelings of 'winning' or 'losing'.

As trial administrators, the evaluation team will have access to a data audit log of all randomisations which have been conducted. Throughout the study Cordis Bright will

¹⁸ See <https://www.sealedenvelope.com/>.

regularly audit this log against the evaluation monitoring data to ensure the integrity of the randomisation process is intact.

Allocation concealment

Allocation concealment will be ensured using the digital randomisation software Sealed Envelope, i.e., randomisation outcomes will be computer generated. Within this software, the BDP evaluation research assistant/project co-ordinators are the randomisers (i.e., they are able to generate randomisation outcomes), and the evaluation team are the trial administrators (i.e. they are able to access the randomisation sequence and audit the randomisations which have occurred). This separation of roles through the software enables allocation concealment, as the BDP evaluation research assistant does not have access to the sequence.

Blinding

Due to the nature of the trial, it will not be possible for participants or BDP practitioners to be blind to the allocation arm. Due to the nature of the trial and the data we will be collecting in terms of activity, dosage and outcomes the analysis will also not be subject to blinding.

6.4.6 Treatment phase

Those in the treatment group will receive the BDP (around 12 one-to-one support sessions from a BDP practitioner focussed on developing social-emotional skills and competencies, in line with section 5 above).

Those in the control group will be signposted to key school staff by the BDP evaluation research assistant / project co-ordinator. Key school leads could include school safeguarding leads, SENCos and/or pastoral leads. Boys in the control group will receive appropriate support / provision that the school would provide under business as usual, i.e., that they would have likely received anyway without the BDP being present.

As part of the evaluation, boys in the control group will attend meetings at 12 weeks and 24 weeks with the BDP evaluation research assistant during which they will complete the follow-up (12 week and 24 week) questionnaires. If any safeguarding needs are identified during these meetings, BDP practitioners will refer on to designated school safeguarding leads, who will refer on to relevant support and/or authorities as required.

6.4.7 Compliance measures

Compliance for the purposes of the efficacy study will be met when boys have been randomised and allocated into the treatment or control group. Any further compliance

analysis relating to fidelity to the programme (e.g., quantity of dose) will be exploratory in nature. This is because:

- **We will take an “intention to treat” approach to analysis.** This is in line with YEF statistical analysis guidance¹⁹ and means that all those allocated to treatment and control conditions in the randomisation will be included. The study in its current form may not likely be statistically powered to demonstrate impact in relation to compliance measures.
- **Evidence has yet to be collected about what optimum dosage (measured by quantity) is for the programme to have an impact on boys.** We plan to conduct exploratory analysis concerning compliance as part of the evaluation.

Our approach to exploratory analysis will be set out in the Statistical Analysis Plan for the study.

6.5 Quantitative analysis

This section outlines our high-level approach to:

- Primary outcome analysis.
- Secondary outcomes analysis.
- Subgroup analysis.

6.5.1 Primary outcomes analysis

Our analyses will be conducted in line with the YEF Analysis Guidance. First, all analyses will be conducted on an intention to treat basis, which means the data of all those who commence the BDP will be included regardless of the ‘dose’ received.

The primary analysis will be an analysis of covariance (ANCOVA), controlling for BDP versus business as usual on the measure of school connectedness (Marsh & Randolph, 2020). The outputs from this analysis will be used to calculate the effect estimate (Hedges’ G) for the impact of BDP on school connectedness.

As mentioned, it is our opinion that this is not a cluster RCT. This is because, while the BDP is being delivered in six different schools (so could be considered clustered), the actual delivery of the intervention is being facilitated by the same individuals using a protocolised

¹⁹ See: <https://res.cloudinary.com/yef/images/v1623145483/cdn/6.-YEF-Analysis-Guidance/6.-YEF-Analysis-Guidance.pdf> . Last accessed 13 July 2023.

approach across these schools. If, however as the evaluation proceeds, it is determined that this could be considered a clustered trial we will employ hierarchical linear modelling (HLM) in which BDP and business as usual young people are nested in schools.

After the completion of this analysis, we will conduct a robustness check particularly related to the demographic characteristics of the BDP compared to business as usual group. That is, if these are unbalanced a model controlling for this will be employed.

If sufficiently powered, examining the impact of perceived support (as measured by the social support and rejection scale), or the impact of other secondary outcomes (e.g., Get along better with peers (SDQ sub-scale)), on the school engagement outcome could provide an interesting explanation for possible differences in the two groups in school connectedness.

6.5.2 Secondary outcomes analysis

There are five secondary outcome measures of interest in this RCT. These are:

- Get along better with their peers (SDQ subscale).
- Get along better with their teachers (School connectedness sub-scale).
- Emotional symptoms (SDQ subscale)
- Behavioural difficulties (SDQ externalising behaviours score).
- Have positive relationships with their project co-ordinator (treatment group) / significant adult (control group) (SSRS).

We propose mirroring the analytic approach used for the primary outcome (e.g., ANCOVA) to predict the post-measure (e.g., SDQ final scores and SSRS final scored) based on whether the individual was in the BDP or business as usual group. We would calculate Hedges' G and the corresponding confidence intervals for these analyses.

6.5.3 Exploratory analysis

As discussed earlier in the protocol we propose conducting exploratory data analysis on the following questions:

- Model compliance. This will utilise monitoring data collected by the BDP. We will explore evidence concerning what level of dosage is associated with what level of outcome. For example, does attending 8 BDP sessions out of 12 deliver a similar impact as attending all sessions?

- School administrative data. We will explore how useful this administrative data is for use in RCTs like this. That is, if we can secure robust, reliable, valid, accurate and consistent data from these school sources.
- Race equity, equality, diversity and inclusion. If there are sufficient participants from ethnic minority and White British backgrounds, we would propose to conduct an ANCOVA to evaluate whether BDP worked equally well with individuals of both ethnicities.

6.5.4 Data quality monitoring and support

We will train and provide an evaluation handbook that includes guidance to support the BDP evaluation research assistant and project co-ordinators with data collection. This includes an evaluation email inbox so that all BDP practitioners can easily contact the evaluation team with questions which can be responded to quickly.

We will conduct a data quality audit for data that has been collected for the first 20 young people in the evaluation. We will monitor how tools have been completed and amend administration techniques based on feedback from practitioners and boys to ensure that the data collected is high-quality and complete. We will then conduct quarterly data quality audits throughout the course of the evaluation. These will assess data completeness, reliability and validity including Cronbach's Alpha and correlation analysis to confirm if the scales are performing as we would theoretically expect them to.

7 Implementation and process evaluation

7.1 Overview

This section presents information about the implementation and process evaluation (IPE). We intend to deliver a mixed-methods IPE which will be conducted between January and July 2025.

The rest of this section covers:

- Research questions.
- Research methods.
- Approach to analysis.

7.2 Research questions

The implementation and process evaluation has been designed in line with YEF guidance on feasibility studies and IPEs, and Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) guidance on IPEs.

The primary objectives of the IPE are to:

- Understand the association between aspects of the BDP's implementation and successful outcomes.
- Gather data to support guidelines for successful implementation of the BDP.

As such, key research questions are as follows:

1. **Dimensions of implementation:** How effectively has the BDP been implemented in schools?
 - a. *Fidelity:* To what extent has support been delivered in line with the BDP's theory of change and protocols?
 - b. *Dosage:* How much of the BDP has been delivered? How much of the BDP needs to be delivered to have an impact?
 - c. *Quality:* How well has the BDP been delivered?
 - d. *Reach:* How well has the BDP reached its intended cohort?
 - e. *Responsiveness:* To what extent have young people engaged with the intervention?
 - f. *Intervention differentiation:* To what extent is the BDP sufficiently different from existing practices within schools?
 - g. *Adaptation:* Are any changes needed to accommodate context and need?
2. **Factors affecting implementation:** Which factors have acted as enablers or barriers to implementation of the BDP?
 - a. *Community level factors:* Which factors have impacted implementation at the school and wider community level? For example, level of need, readiness for change, and/or policy practice and funding context?
 - b. *Organisation level factors:* Which factors have impacted implementation at the organisational level? For example, capacity, skills and training, co-ordination and resources?
 - c. *Unexpected factors:* Which other factors have had an impact?
3. **Experiences of support:** What are young people's experiences of support?
 - a. Which aspects of the BDP have supported positive outcomes?
 - b. How have experiences of support differed across sub-groups, e.g., those from racially minoritized/marginalised backgrounds, low income households or with

SEND?

4. **Guidelines for future implementation:** What are the implications for future replication, scale and spread?

7.3 Research methods

This study will use a mixed methods approach to evaluate the process and implementation of the BDP. The qualitative evidence captured from the IPE will be triangulated with quantitative evidence from the RCT to support evidenced recommendations concerning the ways in which the BDP could improve in the future, and also potential for future development and roll-out of both the initiative and evaluation. Table 12 presents an overview of the methods used throughout the IPE. The rest of this section outlines these methods in more detail.

Table 12: IPE methods overview

Research methods	Data collection methods	Participants/ data sources (type, number)	Data analysis methods	Research questions addressed	Implementation/ logic model relevance
Data analysis	Activity and dosage data collected by BDP project co-ordinators	All young people who have received the BDP (n=240) and those in the control group (n=240)	Descriptive statistics and bivariate analysis	RQ1	Dimensions of implementation
Semi-structured interviews	Interviews with young people	30 young people, i.e., 5 per school. This will involve a range of ages, compliance, year groups and ethnicities.	Thematic analysis	RQ1 to RQ4	Dimensions of implementation; factors affecting implementation; experiences of support; and guidelines for future implementation
Semi-structured interviews	Interviews with BDP stakeholders	6 to 8 key BDP stakeholders including project co-ordinators, project	Thematic analysis	RQ1 to RQ4	Dimensions of implementation; factors affecting implementation;

Research methods	Data collection methods	Participants/ data sources (type, number)	Data analysis methods	Research questions addressed	Implementation/ logic model relevance
		managers and strategic staff.			experiences of support; and guidelines for future implementation
Semi-structured interviews	Interviews with wider stakeholders	18 interviews i.e., 3 stakeholders per school, likely to involve school pastoral leads, SENCOs and deputies.	Thematic analysis	RQ1 to RQ4	Dimensions of implementation; factors affecting implementation; experiences of support; and guidelines for future implementation

Interviews with young people

We will conduct in-depth, semi-structured interviews with 30 young people receiving support from the BDP (i.e., those from the treatment group) towards the end of the evaluation, aiming for 5 young people from each of the 6 schools. These interviews will be used to help understand experiences of the BDP, including its fidelity to the ToC and BDP manual. We will ensure that we capture the voices of boys from a range of different ethnic backgrounds, in recognition that (a) black boys are disproportionately at risk of exclusion from school, and (b) that minority groups can face different barriers and systematic issues.

We will work with BDP project co-ordinators to ensure that our interview sample represents a range of schools, ages, school years, ethnicities, and compliance. We will gain informed consent from both parents/carers and young people to take part in the interviews. All interviews will take around 30 minutes and will be conducted either via telephone or video call or face to face. We will work with both BDP project co-ordinators and school staff to arrange the most practical method of conducting these. The BDP practitioner will not be present within the classroom with the young person while the interview takes place, although the young person will be able to choose to have them present if they would prefer, and they will be on hand should issues arise throughout the conversation.

If any safeguarding issues arise in these interviews the interviewer will discuss them with the BDP project co-ordinator and key school contact. They will follow the School, Future Men and Cordis Bright safeguarding policies as appropriate.

Interviews with BDP and wider stakeholders

We will also conduct in-depth, semi-structured interviews with 6-8 BDP managers and staff, and with 18 key stakeholders including school representatives and strategic stakeholders. These will be conducted virtually, either by video call or telephone, and will take around 45 minutes to one hour. We will design and agree topic guides for the semi-structured conversation which we will agree in collaboration with colleagues from Future Men and YEF. These conversations will explore views and perspectives of how successfully the BDP has been implemented, including dimensions of implementation, factors affecting implementation, experiences of support and guidelines for further implementation. These will inform our understanding of implementation and support future replication, scale and spread of both the evaluation and intervention.

Activity data analysis

Data collected through the above methods will be triangulated against activity and dosage data collected as part of the impact evaluation. Analysis of this data (including number of

sessions, types of topics covered) will be used to assess the dimensions of implementation, including fidelity, dosage, and reach.

7.4 Analysis

The qualitative evidence captured through the IPE study will be recorded in a matrix, which maps responses against the research questions in section 7.2. We will deploy a mixture of a priori codes and open coding to categorise and identify recurring themes. This is an iterative process, using initial data collected to establish themes, and using these themes to continue to code further data. This allows for constant comparison of the themes and ensures that any theories or judgements are closely linked to the data they developed from. This mirrors a thematic qualitative analysis approach.

The quantitative evidence will be analysed in SPSS using descriptive statistics and bivariate analysis, i.e., frequencies, percentages and cross-tabulations.

Evaluation reports are strongest when a range of evidence is used to answer each evaluation question. To ensure that data is not presented in 'silos', we will take a rigorous approach to triangulating both qualitative and quantitative data. We will map both quantitative and qualitative data against the research questions to assess how effectively the BDP has been implemented and the extent to which experiences of support have differed across groups. Taken together, this information will inform decisions around future scale, replication and spread, and whether progression to an Effectiveness Study will be practical and useful.

8 Cost data reporting and collecting

We intend to capture, collect, and report on cost information relevant to the BDP in line with YEF guidance. This section outlines our approach to:

- Capturing cost data.
- Reporting cost data.

8.1.1 Capturing cost data

We intend to work with Future Men colleagues and school staff to report on the pre-requisite, set up and recurring costs of the BDP. In line with YEF guidance, we anticipate the primary sources of information to inform these calculations to be:

- Future Men's delivery budget.
- Time estimates provided by Future Men staff.

- National wage rate averages for school staff.
- Time estimates provided by school points of contact.

This is in line with YEF’s guidance, i.e., this approach will:

- **Estimate the costs of delivery only.** Future Men colleagues will deliver each component of the BDP (i.e., staff, materials and equipment) in line with the estimated costs presented in the budget. Pro-rated national wage rate averages for school staff will enable us to estimate associated costs for delivery settings.
- **Derive estimates using the ‘bottom-up’ principle.** We will use the BDP budget and national wage estimates to derive estimates for each element of BDP delivery, i.e., such that total estimates for delivery of the BDP to an average cohort are the sum of its parts. This is in line with a bottom-up principle of cost derivation.
- **Estimate costs from the perspective of the organisations delivering the intervention.** This includes both Future Men as the delivery organisation, and school partners as the delivery setting of the intervention.
- **Not compare how costs change compared to business as usual.** For example, we will include pro-rata wage estimates of the costs associated with school staff time, which would be excluded if we compared this to a business-as-usual scenario.

Table 13 presents the sources we expect will inform each cost estimate (i.e., cost per unit and unit), as well as the likely elements of the delivery these will apply to. We will continue to work with Future Men colleagues to deliver and refine these over the course of the efficacy study.

Table 13: Cost estimation overview

Category	Sources to inform cost estimates		Element of delivery ²⁰
	Cost per unit	Unit	
Staff and labour costs	Labour cost information will be drawn from Future Men budgets, e.g. pro-rated from salary costs (wages plus employer NIC contributions) for evaluation research assistance, project co-ordinators, project managers and/or strategic staff.	We will work with Future Men colleagues to provide time estimates for each element of delivery. This will likely be provided by the evaluation research assistants, three BDP project co-ordinators who deliver support, and the BDP project manager.	Estimates for BDP staff costs are likely to include the following elements: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reviewing and screening referrals. • Preparation for the one-to-one sessions. • Delivering the one-to-one sessions. • Administration tasks. • Training.
	School staff labour cost assumptions will be drawn	We will work with school partners and Future Men colleagues to provide time	Estimates for school staff costs are likely to include the following elements:

²⁰ Please note that we will work with Future Men colleagues to continue to refine and add to the elements of delivery which will require cost estimates throughout the efficacy study.

Category	Sources to inform cost estimates		Element of delivery ²⁰
	Cost per unit	Unit	
	from pro-rated national wage rate averages.	estimates for each element of delivery.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Making referrals. • Contacting parents/carers for consent. • Co-ordinating delivery on site. • Other administration and preparation tasks.
Programme procurement costs	There are not currently costs associated with programme procurement of the BDP. We will work with Future Men to generate estimates of what this may entail throughout the efficacy study in line with YEF guidance.		
Buildings and facilities	Costs of buildings and facilities are likely to be zero as the intervention is delivered in schools.		
Materials and equipment	Material costs will be drawn from Future Men budgets and discussed with Future Men staff, including finance/business managers.	Material unit estimates will be provided by Future Men staff.	<p>Estimates for materials and equipment costs are likely to include the following elements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Printing costs for worksheets and resources used in BDP sessions.

Category	Sources to inform cost estimates		Element of delivery ²⁰
	Cost per unit	Unit	
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Equipment used for administration and preparation tasks. • Equipment (i.e., tablets) used to deliver activities.
Incentives	Incentive costs will be drawn from Future Men budgets and discussed with Future Men staff, including finance/business managers.	Incentive unit estimates will be provided by Future Men staff, likely the three BDP project co-ordinators who deliver support.	Incentive costs are likely to be zero. However, we will work with Future Men colleagues to ascertain whether there are any elements of delivery which may fall under this category.

8.1.2 Reporting results

We will take the following approaches to reporting cost information in line with YEF guidance:

- All costs relating to both evaluation and programme development and adaptation will be excluded from cost estimates.
- All costs will be adjusted to constant prices using GDP deflators, using 2023 (the year in which delivery begins) as the base year. This will account for any data around cost being collected at different points across the efficacy study period. We will not discount cost estimates based on time preferences.
- Any costs relating to durable inputs will be pro-rated in line with the proportion of project participants who have benefitted. However, we do not anticipate that there will be durable inputs with benefits to those outside the project.
- All cost estimates will be generated assuming full compliance (i.e., that all participants attend 12 BDP sessions).
- Each estimate will be disaggregated into prerequisite, set-up, and recurring costs.

Total costs will be presented for one round of delivery for an average cohort of boys in one school as delivered throughout the efficacy study. This is defined as the average cost of delivery of the BDP to 10 boys across 12 weeks in one secondary school. Total costs and average cost per participant will then be presented for set-up, recurring and total costs using the mandatory tables in YEF guidance, i.e. all assumptions and estimates will be set out in full.

9 Diversity, equity and inclusion

We are committed to delivering the evaluation in line with race equity, diversity, equality and inclusion. This is key for this study as evidence shows that exclusion and disengagement from secondary school disproportionately affects pupils with a black Caribbean background and those with a mixed white and black Caribbean background (Graham et al., 2019; Timpson, 2019; Department for Education, 2023). The BDP recognises this and seeks to address this imbalance. We will therefore work to ensure that our approach to diversity, equity and inclusion is rooted in and informed by a) our experience, and b) the existing evidence around what works in conducting research with young people, parents/carers, and communities from minoritized and marginalised groups.

All of Cordis Bright's evaluation work is delivered in line with our EDI strategy (available [here](#)) and EDI project toolkit (available [here](#)). This sets out our commitment, principles and approaches to ensure that our work is accessible to all. We commit to:

- (1) Providing equal opportunities in all aspects of employment and ensuring that we do not discriminate in recruitment or employment on the basis of a protected characteristic or any other characteristics or identities.
- (2) Opposing discrimination in all its forms, be it at a structural or institutional level or an inter-personal level. This includes direct discrimination, indirect discrimination, discrimination by association, discrimination by perception, victimisation, harassment, and bullying.
- (3) Seeking to build our understanding of the barriers created by discrimination and inequality and ensure fair, equal and inclusive treatment for our staff, clients and the people whom our work aims to support.

In line with these commitments, to ensure diversity, equity, and inclusion in this efficacy study we will:

- Provide clear accessible information so that participants from all communities can participate, including through individual meetings between BDP evaluation research assistants, project co-ordinators, school staff and the young people and their families.
- Use informed consent processes and materials that adhere to good practice guidelines, including YEF's and the Government Social Research Unit's, to ensure they are accessible, inclusive, and culturally sensitive.
- Wherever possible and where they exist, ensure that validated outcomes measures which are selected for use in the efficacy study have been developed and validated with young people from racially marginalised backgrounds to ensure that they are valid for use with the BDP's target cohort.
- Pilot outcomes measures with young people to ensure that administration techniques are accessible and inclusive. We will provide training and guidance to the BDP evaluation research assistant, project co-ordinators and project manager as required to enable them to support questionnaire completion from young people from different groups.
- Provide support to enable young people with SEND, English as an additional language or literacy support needs to participate in the evaluation as required. This may include document and research tool translation into community languages; simultaneous translation; or supporting tool use for young people with SEND.

- Monitor key demographic and socioeconomic information of all participants in the treatment and control groups. This will enable us to analyse any differences in referrals, recruitment, retention, and safe exit across different groups, and to assess whether they are representative of similar cohorts in the youth justice system and wider society.
- Ensure that young people from a range of minoritized and marginalised backgrounds are sampled as part of our approach to qualitative interviews through the IPE, and that they are explicitly asked about their views and experiences of the intervention in terms of race equity.
- Deploy staff who have completed cultural competency training as well as undertaken projects on equality and inclusion including over-representation of children from minoritized ethnic groups in the youth justice system.
- Conduct exploratory subgroup analysis of differences in outcomes achieved by different demographic and socioeconomic groups, including by race/ethnicity.

All members of our evaluation team are experienced at working with minoritized and marginalised communities. As part of our commitment to continuous improvement we will discuss and reflect with Future Men and YEF colleagues on the most effective ways to conduct research and evaluation in as equitable, inclusive, and accessible a way as possible.

10 Ethics and registration

Ethical approval was granted for the study by Royal Holloway University Research Ethics Committee under reference: REC/3756. This involved the submission of a detailed application which was subject to review and scrutiny from YEF and Future Men colleagues. The trial will be publicly registered on the ISRCTN registry once delivery commences in September 2023.

11 Data protection

Cordis Bright are the controller of personal data throughout the evaluation, as specified in YEF data guidance (available [here](#)). Cordis Bright will deliver the evaluation in line with our full Data Protection and Information Governance Framework when storing and handling personal data for the evaluation. Cordis Bright are also registered under the Data Protection Act, have Cyber Essentials Plus accreditation and are registered under the NHS Data Security and Protection Toolkit.

For this evaluation, we have:

- A clear legal reason for sharing data with us, e.g., public interest/public task.

- A robust process to transfer data, i.e., Future Men will transfer data by secure methods such as secure email (CJMS) or using Switch Egress. Cordis Bright will send anonymous, pseudonymised, non-identifiable individual level data to Professor Darrick Joliffe via secure transfer such as Switch Egress or CJMS.
- Secure storage of data, i.e., data is saved on Cordis Bright's secure cloud-based Microsoft 365 servers using a unique identifier number. Personal or sensitive data has additional encryption with access only to designated/authorised member of our team. Anonymous, pseudonymised, non-identifiable individual level data will be stored securely on Royal Holloway servers in line with Data Protection Act and GDPR.
- Secure survey software, i.e., outcomes measures will be collected via SmartSurvey. This stores all data both in transmission and at rest in an encrypted, secure, UK based server in line with GDPR.²¹
- Anonymisation and pseudo-anonymisation where possible including separating personal data from questionnaire data and separate storage.
- Project data will be deleted securely six years post project, i.e., in June 2032. We will also follow the YEF guidance on data protection, which includes producing privacy notices and information sheets (attached). More information is available in the link above.

In addition, we have set up processes to fully inform participants of data protection considerations regarding data collection, the YEF archive, and their data collection rights. After participants have agreed to participate, they will be allotted an identification number. Participants will be informed that all information about them will be stored securely. Data obtained from participants through questionnaires and interviews will be kept separate from identifying information.

All identifying information will be stored securely and in accordance with GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018, for the purpose of correspondence with participants and only members of the research team will have access to it (other than for archiving).

Published reports will not identify the research participant at any time. All data will be encrypted and stored securely in password protected files on password protected computers using Office 365 SharePoint and Microsoft Teams storage and only members of the research team will have access to it.

²¹ For more information see <https://www.smartsurvey.co.uk/gdpr>.

Cordis Bright and Future Men are in the process of conducting and finalising a Data Protection Impact Assessment and a Data Sharing Agreement.

12 Stakeholders and interests

This section outlines the roles and responsibilities of the delivery team and the evaluation team. There are no conflicting interests of which we are aware that may be perceived to influence the design, conduct, analysis or reporting of the trial.

Future Men's delivery team

- **David Hopkinson, Project Manager.** David is Future Men's project manager, and oversees the data collection and delivery of the project in schools. David has a broad range of experience across the charity and youth work sector. He has experience managing complex multiagency projects. He has experience in mentoring projects with boys and young men, relationship and sex education, and harmful sexual behaviours. He has previously contributed to the #menforchange toolkit with the University of Liverpool, and holds a BA from the University of Leicester and an MA from Institute of Education/UCL.
- **Ann Cayenne, Future Men Operations Director (Head of Boys' Development Team).** Ann provides oversight of operational aspects of Future Men. Ann is a leading voice in working with boys and young men and one of the founders of the boys development programme. Ann has over 13 years extensive, direct experience of working with boys in both primary and secondary schools across London. A culturally competent advocate for the needs of marginalised boys, providing support to staff, parents/carers, promoting early intervention models to reduce the risk of permanent school exclusions.
- **Project co-ordinators x 3.** The BDP is delivered by three full time project co-ordinators. Future Men have an outstanding staff team of project coordinators who organise and deliver the one-to-one programme in schools. Future Men's coordinators form a multidisciplinary team from a range of professional backgrounds including Youth Justice, Youth Work, and Education. All Project co-ordinators have up to date safeguarding training and DBS checks in addition to their specific Future Men training.
- **Research assistants x 2.** The research assistants carry out one-to-one baseline, 12-weeks, and 24-week surveys as well as supporting with data collection from the partner schools. This is a new position within the Future Men team to facilitate delivery of the RCT. Research assistants come from education and youth work backgrounds.

- **Chris Stein, Director of Marketing Fundraising and Advocacy at Future Men.** Chris has been working around young people's well-being and men's mental health for more than 20 years. Chris has written reports for the Department of Health, Public Health England and NHS England on the language men use to talk about their mental health, contributing to best practice. He has worked with the Youth Offending Service in Hackney and managed a multi-directorate public health programme supporting young people in Hackney. Chris graduated with a BSc from UCL in Anthropology.

Cordis Bright's evaluation team

- **Dr Stephen Boxford, Principal Investigator and Project Director:** Steve is a Director and the Head of Research at Cordis Bright. He has over 20 years' experience of delivering and publishing high quality research and evaluation in the area of criminal justice for Central Government Departments, What Works Centres, Police and Crime Commissioners and Fire and Rescue Services, Local Authorities, Health Agencies and Voluntary and Community Sector Organisations. He has a BA from the University of Oxford and an M.Phil. and PhD from the University of Cambridge.
- **Professor Darrick Jolliffe, Co-Principal Investigator:** Darrick is a highly regarded Professor of Criminology at Royal Holloway, University of London. He is a highly cited scholar and has extensive experience of evaluation design and implementation including RCTs. His experience includes leading evaluations of culturally aware interventions delivered by Ipswich and Suffolk Council for Racial Equality and the Zahid Mubarak Trust as well as smaller projects in immigration detention centres.
- **Camilla Antrobus, Co-Principal Investigator:** Camilla has a broad and wide-ranging knowledge and experience of schools gained from her current role as a learning and development consultant and previous roles as a management consultant; a primary and secondary school local authority adviser; secondary deputy headteacher; and classroom teacher. Her experience includes working with schools to identify and support children at risk – including those with special educational needs and disabilities – to improve attendance and educational outcomes and to reduce exclusions.
- **Keiran Matters, Co-Principal Investigator:** Keiran is a registered senior social worker practising primarily within prison and informal education settings. His experience includes developing and delivering radical social work informed interventions for over 12 years, as well as being the lead diversity and inclusion consultant to HES (Hertfordshire Essex and Suffolk) prisons, where his practice includes developing

strategies towards addressing disproportionality in young people entering custody from marginalised communities.

- **Emma Andersen, Co-Principal Investigator and Project Manager:** Emma is a skilled and experienced project manager with strong evaluation and analytical expertise. She has experience delivering complex, large-scale process and impact evaluations in the area of criminal justice which utilise both quantitative and qualitative methods. She has particular experience in working on projects supporting children and young people at risk of violence and exclusion. Emma has an MA from the University of Cambridge and an MSc with Distinction from the London School of Economics.
- **Rachel Dale, Consultant:** Rachel has a strong research background, with experience utilising a range of both quantitative and qualitative methods. Rachel has academic experience of designing and implementing RCTs, and a track record of projects which aim to support young people from marginalised and minoritized backgrounds. Rachel has a first-class BSc in Psychology from University of Leeds.
- **Bonnie Butler, Researcher:** Bonnie is an experienced researcher with skills in both qualitative and quantitative research. Bonnie has experience working in a Social, Emotional, and Mental Health (SEMH) school supporting 9-16 year old boys with their learning and emotional development, and is trained in trauma-informed approaches. Bonnie has a first-class BSc in Psychology from Swansea University.
- **Karim Bukleb, Researcher:** Karim is a skilled and experienced mixed-methods researcher. He is skilled at engaging and conducting research with young people who are commonly referred to as “vulnerable” and/or “hard-to-reach”. He has a track-record of delivering high quality quantitative and qualitative analysis. Karim has a first-class BSc from University of East Anglia and an MSc from the School of Oriental and African Studies.

13 Risks

Table 14 summarises some key risks to delivery of the efficacy study evaluation and proposes strategies to mitigate these. We will develop this risk register and use it to support project management to ensure smooth delivery of the evaluation.

Table 14: Summary of key risks and mitigation approaches

Risk	Likelihood (Low/medium/high) Impact: (Low/Medium/High)	Mitigation
Lack of clarity around Theory of Change and project pathways	Likelihood low. Impact high.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working closely with project team and YEF/EEF to co-design the Theory of Change. • Mapping participant pathways. • Understanding entrance and exit criteria. • Ensuring a screening and assessment approach that is fit-for-purpose.
Challenges with randomisation approach, e.g., lack of buy-in, individual-level randomisation with-in schools leading to contamination	Likelihood medium. Impact high.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working with Future Men and partners to explain the benefits of RCTs. • Discussing embedding randomisation in project approach. • Understanding business as usual for control group. • Exploring alternative designs should randomisation not be feasible.
Recruitment and attrition	Likelihood medium. Impact high.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Embedding recruitment and data collection into everyday practice. • Reviewing data capture progress regularly. • Allocating resource to follow-up participants who may have moved-on.

Risk	Likelihood (Low/medium/high) Impact: (Low/Medium/High)	Mitigation
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exploration and application of keep-in-touch techniques used in longitudinal studies.
The project changing its delivery approach during the evaluation	Likelihood low. Impact high.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working closely with project to understand changes. • Flexibility in research design where possible. • Ensuring all stakeholders are aware of the impact changes have on evaluation.
Data collected not addressing the questions	Likelihood low. Impact high.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Co-design approach; piloting of tools. • Early analysis to assure fit-for-purpose.
Project and evaluation not being delivered in line with YEF and Cordis Bright's commitment to race equity, equality, diversity and inclusion.	Likelihood low. Impact high	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will work with YEF and Future Men to ensure the project and evaluation are delivered in line with the commitments outlined in our strategies, plans and EDI project toolkit. • We will analyse data and evaluation findings through the lens of race equity, equality, diversity, and inclusion. • Where we think practice can improve, we will raise, discuss and support the implementation of actions with YEF and Future Men.

Risk	Likelihood (Low/medium/high) Impact: (Low/Medium/High)	Mitigation
Safeguarding/ public safety/data breach	Likelihood low. Impact medium.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take actions as agreed with YEF/project protocols. • Ensure that there is learning across the team about what happened and what steps could be taken to avoid in future. • If required: introduce additional training; re-visit methodology; re-allocate team members. • Agree an appropriate communications strategy.

14 Timeline

Table 15 outlines the key activities, timings and roles and responsibilities for the efficacy study.

Table 15: Project activities and timeline

Dates	Activity	Staff responsible/ leading
Evaluation set-up phase (April 2023 to August 2023)		
April 2023	Efficacy RCT commences after Stage Two application finalised	Cordis Bright YEF
June 2023	Ethics application submitted to Royal Holloway University Research Ethics Committee	Cordis Bright YEF

Dates	Activity	Staff responsible/ leading
	<p>Information sheets and privacy notices finalised</p> <p>Recruitment meetings with prospective schools</p> <p>Primary outcome measure agreed</p>	Future Men
July 2023	<p>Efficacy study trial protocol drafted</p> <p>Schools recruited and in place before the end of summer term</p>	<p>Cordis Bright</p> <p>Future Men</p>
August 2023	<p>Efficacy study trial protocol finalised in light of feedback</p> <p>Ethical approval confirmed from Royal Holloway University</p> <p>Evaluation handbook developed for BDP practitioners administering tools</p> <p>Training on tool administration delivered to BDP practitioners by Cordis Bright</p>	<p>Cordis Bright</p> <p>YEF</p> <p>Future Men</p>
Efficacy study trial delivery in the field (September 2023 to January 2025)		
September 2023 to July 2025	Efficacy study is delivered in the field, i.e. referrals,	<p>Future Men</p> <p>Cordis Bright</p>

Dates	Activity	Staff responsible/ leading
	<p>randomisation, data collection and support delivery.</p> <p>Data quality audits are completed for first 20 young people</p> <p>Monthly data quality audits conducted throughout efficacy study</p>	
January 2025	<p>Baseline outcomes data collection and randomisation is complete</p> <p>Start of interviews with Future Men staff and stakeholders</p> <p>Start of interviews with young people receiving BDP support</p>	<p>Future Men</p> <p>Cordis Bright</p>
May 2025	<p>Completion of interviews with Future Men staff and stakeholders</p> <p>Completion of interviews with young people receiving BDP support</p>	<p>Cordis Bright</p>
July 2025	<p>Completion of all data collection</p>	<p>Future Men</p> <p>Cordis Bright</p>
Analysis and reporting (September 2025 to January 2026)		
July-October 2025	<p>Analysis</p>	<p>Cordis Bright</p>

Dates	Activity	Staff responsible/ leading
November 2025	Submission of draft final evaluation report	Cordis Bright
February 2026	Submission of final, peer reviewed evaluation report	Cordis Bright YEF
March 2026	Evaluator supports with YEF publication process	Cordis Bright YEF
June 2026	Evaluator submits data for YEF archive	Cordis Bright YEF

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16 Appendix 1: Information sheets, consent materials and IGDP documentation

Document name	Document link
Evaluation information sheet and consent form for parents/carers	 Evaluation info and consent - Parents ca
Evaluation information sheet and consent form for young people	 Evaluation info and consent - Young per
Interview information sheet and consent form for parents/carers	 Interview info and consent - Parents ca

Document name	Document link
Interview information sheet and consent form for young people	 Interview info and consent - Young per
Privacy notice	 BDP evaluation - Privacy notice v2.pdf

17 Appendix 2: BDP session structure

Table 16 presents the one-to-one session structure for the BDP. This is intended to be treated as a guide, and Future Men guidance states that project co-ordinators should use a range of activities which suit young people's needs and learning styles.

Table 16: BDP one-to-one session structure

Activity	Description	Differentiation
1 Check-in	Asking how they are today: Happy = Hand-held-high, Okay/Mixed = Hand centre, Unhappy/Down = Hand low	Participants do not have to explain their response at any length unless they want to, however, it can be good to invite them: “Any particular reason?”
2 Target review	Remind YP of target set last week. Ask them to rate themselves out of 5 for having achieved set target. (session 2 onwards)	It can help participants to process their achievements and/or hold themselves to account if you ask for one or two “examples” Either when it went well or when it didn’t go well
3 Self- Assessment	Ask YP to think about the week last week and rate themselves on 3-5 key areas. Note areas on template	Areas: Wellbeing, Behaviour, Schoolwork Conflict/Communication, Progress towards personal goals
4 Optional Warm-up activity	E.g. Lazer/story ball/High fives	This can help YP (and practitioner) reset and come into the present moment. Particularly useful for YP who find verbal interactions and reflection difficult.
5 Main activity	Flexible range of core learning material listed in the rows below. This is the part of the session where the core topics (i.e. masculinity, emotions, boundaries and goals and aspirations are covered).	Selected/adapted to suit clients needs and learning style.

Activity	Description	Differentiation
6 Open questions	Use questions cards to expand discussion/reflection: Free spirit publishing: Teen talk/Guy talk/Choices School of life: 100 questions (families) Future Men: Question Grid	YP picks 3 cards (face down) at random. Afterwards YP can choose one of the questions they answered to ask practitioner. Although the content of these questions is somewhat 'random' YP responses can reveal deeper thoughts about key areas for reflection.
7 check out activity	Fun and relaxed check out activity to build rapport, such as rock paper scissors or other running game	This is an important stage as it restores a positive, trusting bond between YP and practitioner even where the session contained criticism and serious guidance. It is good preparation for target-setting as YP may feel more hopeful and open minded after becoming playful.
8 Target Setting	YP decides on target; "something you would like to change or keep working on over the next week". Previous targets can be repeated but only if they remain relevant. Target should be noted down to be revisited the following week.	If YP struggles to think of an appropriate target some prompts are: "think of what we have spoken about today" or "think of what you were saying at the beginning of the session". If YP still struggles it is okay to offer an idea for a target but always ensure they agree and are happy to attempt it.



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