



EVALUATION PROTOCOL

**The Skill Mill programme to reduce the risk of violence and offending: a two-armed randomised controlled trial with an internal pilot**

ICF Consulting Services Ltd and  
Manchester Metropolitan University

Principal investigator: Dr Lucy Loveless

# The Skill Mill programme to reduce the risk of violence and offending: a two-armed randomised controlled trial with an internal pilot

## Evaluation protocol

Evaluating institution: ICF Consulting Services Ltd and Manchester Metropolitan University

Principal investigator(s): Dr Lucy Loveless



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<b>Project title</b>	The Skill Mill programme to reduce the risk of violence and offending: a two-armed randomised controlled trial with an internal pilot
<b>Developer (Institution)</b>	The Skill Mill
<b>Evaluator (Institution)</b>	ICF Consulting Services Ltd and Manchester Metropolitan University
<b>Principal investigator(s)</b>	Dr Lucy Loveless
<b>Protocol author(s)</b>	Dr Lucy Loveless, Robert Wishart, Dr Aisha Amad, Professor Chris Fox, Dr Gavin Bailey, Dr Matt Barnard
<b>Trial design</b>	Two-armed randomised controlled trial with random allocation at the individual level
<b>Trial type</b>	Efficacy trial with an internal pilot and an implementation and process evaluation

<b>Evaluation setting</b>	Community
<b>Target group</b>	16-18 year olds who are known by police or the youth justice system to have committed a violent or non-violent offence
<b>Number of participants</b>	704
<b>Primary outcome and data source</b>	Number of offences (as recorded in the Police National Computer in the period 12 months post-randomisation)
<b>Secondary outcome and data source</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Behavioural difficulties (as measured by the self-report SDQ)</li> <li>- Total difficulties (as measured by the self-report SDQ)</li> <li>- Self-efficacy (as measured by the self-report New General Self-Efficacy Scale)</li> <li>- Employment aspirations (as measured by a questionnaire that is part of the New Philanthropy Capital JET framework)</li> <li>- Not in employment status (based on the data accessed via HMRC)</li> <li>- Number of offences (as recorded in the Police National Computer in the period 7-12 months post-randomisation)</li> </ul>

## Protocol version history

Version	Date	Reason for revision
<b>1.2 [latest]</b>		
<b>1.1</b>		
<b>1.0 [original]</b>		<i>[leave blank for the original version]</i>

*Any changes to the design or methods need to be discussed with the YEF Evaluation Manager and the developer team prior to any change(s) being finalised. Describe in the table above any agreed changes made to the evaluation design. Please ensure that these changes are also reflected in the SAP (CONSORT 3b, 6b).*

## Table of contents

Protocol version history .....	3
Table of contents .....	4
Study rationale and background.....	6
Table 1: Effectiveness of summer employment programmes .....	9
Intervention .....	12
Table 2: Summary table of financial incentives being offered .....	23
Impact evaluation .....	24
Table 3: Trial design .....	26
Figure 3: Participant flow diagram with expected numbers .....	35
Outcome measures.....	38
Implementation and process evaluation.....	46
Figure 4: Key functions of process evaluation and relations among them .....	46
Cost data reporting and collecting.....	51
Summary of evaluation data collection processes, sources and timing .....	52
Table 8: Summary of evaluation data collection .....	54
Internal Pilot .....	57
Table 10: Progression criteria .....	59
Diversity, equity and inclusion.....	61
Ethics and registration .....	62
Data protection.....	64
Stakeholders and interests .....	65
Risks .....	67
Timeline.....	72
References .....	76



## **Study rationale and background**

### **The need for support to help prevent young people becoming involved in violence and crime**

Involvement in violence and crime can have a major impact on young people (YP) as both victims and perpetrators, and indeed the dichotomy between the two has been challenged given the high prevalence of adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) shared by both groups (Children and Young People's Centre for Justice, 2023). According to the World Health Organisation (WHO), involvement in violence and crime can lead to 'mental health problems and increased health-risk behaviours... [and] results in greatly increased health, welfare and criminal justice costs' (WHO, 2015). In recent years, there has been a mixed picture in terms of trends relating to crime, but the overall picture is that rates remain worryingly high. According to the YEF's latest review of the data (YEF, 2023), although there were reductions in levels of crime during the pandemic, since the end of lockdown restrictions violent crime has returned to and in fact exceeded levels previously recorded. This has included homicides increasing by 2%, violence with injury increasing by 4%, and violence without injury increasing by 11%. The data also indicates that there was a disproportionate rise in potential child victims in 2021 (an increase of 9% compared to 2020).

### **The factors influencing young people becoming involved in violence and crime**

The WHO takes a risk-based approach to understanding why YP become involved in violence and crime, using an ecological framework to identify the factors at individual, family and community levels (WHO, 2015). At an individual level, risk factors range from those associated with an individual's characteristics (such as sex, cognitive functioning, and psychological and behavioural disorders), behavioural patterns (illicit drug use, harmful use of alcohol, involvement in crime and delinquency), and individual experiences (including child maltreatment, parental drug use and unemployment). Some of these individual factors overlap with those categorized as part of the family and close relationship level, which include poor parental supervision, on the one hand, and harsh and inconsistent discipline by parents on the other. Other factors at this level include parental divorce, and depression, familial unemployment and a history of antisocial behaviour, and among wider social relationships, peer delinquency and gang membership. At the highest ecological level, social and community risk factors include access to alcohol, drugs and firearms and other weapons, and poverty and inequality.

While a risk-based approach to understanding the causes of violence provides a useful framework for assessing broad policy-based decisions about violence prevention, using it to design and evaluate interventions that aim to work at an individual level can be challenging. This is because identifying factors associated with violence does not distinguish between the causes of violence and its effects, nor does it identify the underlying mechanisms involved. In

addition, the risk factor model does not clearly distinguish between aspects of an individual's life or context that can potentially be influenced (such as their drug or alcohol use or who they choose to be their peer group) and those that cannot (such as their sex or other genetic factors).

A range of models have been used to gain a more in-depth understanding of the causes underlying youth offending and violence (see for example Gomes and Audley, 2023). These can broadly be grouped into three types: historical and socio-cultural models; models related to biology and neurology; environmental and social cognition models. From a historical and socio-cultural perspective, the nature and role of policing and the actual and perceived role of the criminal justice system (CJS) is seen as having major influence on the prevalence of violence of time and between communities (Pinker, 2011). It is argued that as the CJS became more established and trusted, individuals including young people no longer felt the need to personally implement 'justice' or carry out acts of retribution and there is a reduction in the cultural acceptability of violence more generally. Within this context, those young people who do not feel they have a stake in society will be more likely to resort to violence and offending as a way of advancing their economic and social interests, which helps explain the association between offending and YP being not in education, employment or training (NEET) (ONS, 2022) and provides another reason why the fact that almost 13% of young people are NEET (ONS, 2025) is a cause for concern.

From a biological and neuroscience perspective, cumulative adverse childhood experiences such as abuse, neglect and disrupted and disorganised attachment patterns can undermine the neurological processes governing impulse control and threat perception, which increases the prevalence of adolescent aggression and negatively influences the ability of individuals to consider the long-term consequences of their actions (Baglivio et al, 2020). Finally, from a social cognition perspective, distorted and pathological thinking patterns increase the likelihood of violence and offending (King, 2012) as do anti-social goal values and goal expectancies, helping to perpetuate violence and offending within communities through the transmission of cultural norms (Tomaszewski, 2018).

### **Factors influencing the disproportionate prevalence of BAME young people involved in violence and crime and experiencing negative social outcomes**

It has long been recognised that youth violence and crime disproportionately affect minority ethnic communities, with young people from those backgrounds being more likely to be both victims and perpetrators and more likely to be arrested and convicted for a crime. For example, the YEF's Children, Violence and Vulnerability (CVV) report (YEF, 2022) indicates that while children from black backgrounds make up 4% of 10–17-year-olds, they represent 29% of children in custody (which is an increase of 12 percentage points from 2011/12). In part, this overrepresentation reflects prejudice within the criminal justice system which can lead to a disproportionate focus on minority ethnic communities and individuals, causing statistics

relating to crime to be biased (Lammy, 2017). These negative experiences can then undermine the trust of individuals from minority ethnic communities in the CJS, potentially leading them to be more likely to engage in violence as a defensive or retributive act and increasing the chance of recidivism, creating a negative feedback loop (Parr-Morley and Kir, 2024). However, there are also a range of structural factors that are seen as having had long-term and far-reaching effects. YP from ethnic minorities, for example, are more likely to live in economically deprived areas (Ministry of Housing, 2020), where the prevalence of adverse childhood events is higher, increasing the likelihood of developmental disorders (Walsh et al., 2019), and they are more likely to experience and be victims of crime (The Health Foundation, 2024).

Alongside being more likely to be involved in violence and crime, young people from minority ethnic communities are likely to have fewer education and employment opportunities and poorer outcomes in these domains with all ethnicities having a higher rate of unemployment than white people (3% vs 6%), with people from the combined Bangladeshi and Pakistani (9%), Asian 'other' (7%) and black (7%) ethnic groups having the highest unemployment rates (GOV.UK, 2023). However, the picture in terms of NEET status is more complicated. Although YP from black, African or Caribbean backgrounds are more likely to be NEET than their white counterparts (15.2% vs 13.2%), YP from all other ethnic backgrounds are no more likely, or in fact are less likely, to be NEET than white YP (Youth Futures Foundation, 2025).

### **The effectiveness of employment-focused programmes in supporting vulnerable young people**

Employment-focused programmes are relatively intensive interventions that have the potential to help prevent young people becoming involved in violence and crime as well as potentially having a range of other benefits. The most common form of employment-focused programmes for young people are summer employment programmes, which provide paid work placements typically during YPs long summer school holidays. They are presumed to work via diverting or distracting YP from offending or antisocial behaviour as well as having more long-term effects through skill acquisition, positive relationships with peers and staff, making YP more likely to see the importance of education and training in achieving their life goals and raising their aspirations, according to a recent YEF review (Muir et al, 2025). However, despite their potential benefits, the evidence regarding the effectiveness of summer employment programmes is limited. The YEF review indicates that based on the current research there is evidence of a small positive impact on two of the eight offending-related outcomes included in the review, no impact in four and evidence of a negative impact (i.e. harmful) for two outcomes (see **table 1** below). The evidence rating for all existing studies that met the review inclusion criteria was low, all being rated as one or two out of five (where five is the highest evidence rating and one the lowest).

**Table 1: Effectiveness of summer employment programmes**

OUTCOME	IMPACT RATING	EVIDENCE SECURITY RATING
Number of violence-related offences	Low positive impact	2
Likelihood of an offence (any kind)	Low positive impact	2
Likelihood of violence-related offence	No impact	2
Number of offences (any kind)	No impact	2
Number of drug-related offences	No impact	2
Number of property-related offences	No impact	1
Likelihood of a drug-related offence	Harmful impact	1
Likelihood of a property-related offence	Harmful impact	2

Source: Muir et al, 2025

**The effectiveness of adult vocational training and employment interventions on offending outcomes**

According to a recent rapid evidence assessment (Fox et al., 2021), the evidence regarding the effectiveness of adult employment-focused interventions on reducing re-offending is also mixed. The assessment included 46 studies in total originating from both the US and UK and involved a meta-analysis of a subset of 33 that had the highest evidence rating. It found that the programmes on average were associated with a statistically significant 9 percentage point reduction in reoffending, with the UK-based interventions being associated with a slightly smaller 6 percentage point reduction in offending (also statistically significant). Interventions included in the analysis covered both those based solely in custodial environments, those solely in the community and interventions that took place across both contexts. Those that took place solely in custodial environments were not associated with any impact on

reoffending, while both those that took place solely in the community and interventions that took place across both contexts, were associated with a positive impact on re-offending, with the mixed setting model being marginally more effective than the community-only model (RR 0.83 [0.74, 0.94] vs RR 0.91 [0.87, 0.94]). Within the review were seven interventions that involved an element of job placement or transitional work (making them closest in nature to The Skill Mill, the subject of the current evaluation), and these interventions were on average associated with a statistically significant positive impact on reoffending albeit the confidence interval around the estimate was substantial (RR 0.8 [0.74, 0.99]). The review notes that for the majority of studies there was no targeting in terms of individuals convicted of particular offence categories, although the interventions excluded sex offenders or offenders classed as high risk of violent reoffending. However, one intervention, Cook et. al. (2015), targeted offenders with gang associations; although the direction of outcome was positive (i.e. it was in the direction of a reduction of reoffending), the result was not statistically significant due to the wide confidence interval around the outcome, RR 0.83 [0.52, 1.32].

### **The reasons for undertaking the current evaluation**

Despite the limited evidence for the impact of summer employment programmes and the mixed evidence regarding the effectiveness of employment programmes aimed at adult offenders and violence prevention, there are a number of reasons for undertaking the current study. Firstly, the low evidence security rating of those studies means that the actual effects of the programmes could be more substantial than current studies indicate. Secondly, all the studies included in the review were conducted on programmes implemented in the USA and the UK context may be different in significant ways. In addition, the intervention that is the subject of the current evaluation, The Skill Mill, is different in important ways to those reviewed as part for the YEF toolkit. Unlike those programmes, The Skill Mill is a much more substantial programme, comprising six months of paid employment (opposed to around six weeks) plus three months of post-employment support and targets YP with a history of offending rather than YP who are at risk of offending. In addition, The Skill Mill builds on two specific frameworks or perspectives that summer jobs programmes generally do not.

The first is the 'desistence' perspective, which values and seeks to learn from individual success stories and personal trajectories 'recognising the individual as the agent of change', aiming to understand the mix of personal perspectives, contexts and social networks that help an individual cease offending (Maruna and Mann, 2019). The second perspective is Child First Justice. The Child First approach is underpinned by four 'tenet's:

- seeing children as children, including recognising their age-appropriate needs, capacities, rights and potential and ensuring interventions reflect these;
- seeking to support children to develop pro-social identity that builds on their strengths and capacities:

- encouraging children's 'active participation' through taking a collaborative approach; and
- aiming to remove children from the criminal justice system as much as possible using pre-emptive prevention, diversion and the use of minimal intervention.

The Skill Mill has not previously been subject to evaluation that was able to make a causally robust assessment of its impact, but previous process and outcomes evaluations have concluded that it is a promising programme (Baines et al, 2025; Long et al, 2018). The most recent evaluation by Baines et al, found that over 90 percent of participants on the programme had not re-offended by six months following completion, had gained a nationally recognised qualification and completed the six-month programme (91.5%, 91.3% and 100% respectively). The evaluation concluded that the programme was at a scale and intensity are of the level needed to make substantial changes in YP's lives, that the real-world but forgiving nature of the work and skills and commitment of the supervisors were central to its success, and the small cohorts and the fact that YP receive payment for the work supported the effectiveness of the model. The delivery organisation has also addressed the primary weakness of the programme identified in the evaluation, which was the lack of capacity to provide follow-up support, and which is now included through dedicated pathways advisors.

The current evaluation therefore aims to evaluate The Skill Mill through a two-armed randomised controlled trial (RCT), with randomisation at the level of the individual young person and with the control group receiving business-as-usual from youth offending services and children's social care services. The study incorporates an implementation and process evaluation, which involves collecting quantitative and qualitative data from YP in both intervention and control groups and from mentors and management staff. In addition, the study will include a cost analysis. The rationale behind the approach is that RCTs are an effective way of assessing the net impact of an intervention and a two-armed, individually randomised approach was selected as the most feasible and efficient way of generating a sufficient sample size given the capacity of The Skill Mill. The evaluation team believes this study will make an important contribution to the evidence on What Works in employment-based programmes that centre on work placements focused on manual labour within the UK context.

## **Intervention**

### **What is the intervention?**

The Skill Mill (TSM) was established in Newcastle in 2013 as an innovative response to local youth offending challenges, combining work opportunities with skills development for young people at high risk of reoffending. The name 'The Skill Mill' was chosen for its resonance with both the water-based work and the concept of a traditional mill as a place of employment. The intervention consists of a six-month paid employment, with young people (YP) working in cohorts of four (a 'crew') with a supervisor who works with the cohort over the full six-month period. Following the employment phase, YP receive three months of post-intervention support, which is aimed at helping them transition from TSM in a new employment opportunity or a training or educational opportunity. Reflecting the primary employment opportunities and likely destinations of the YP, the programme focuses on manual labour roles.

While employed by TSM, YP are paid at the minimum wage for the time they work, up to five full time days per week (with the aim that they work the five days full time equating to 35 hours per week). Supervisors track how many hours the YP work and then the YP are paid on a Friday morning by bank transfer for the time worked over the previous five days (i.e. including the Friday of the previous week and Monday to Thursday of the current week). Attendance is currently tracked manually by supervisors, though plans are in place to implement a digital system to streamline payment and reduce administrative burden.

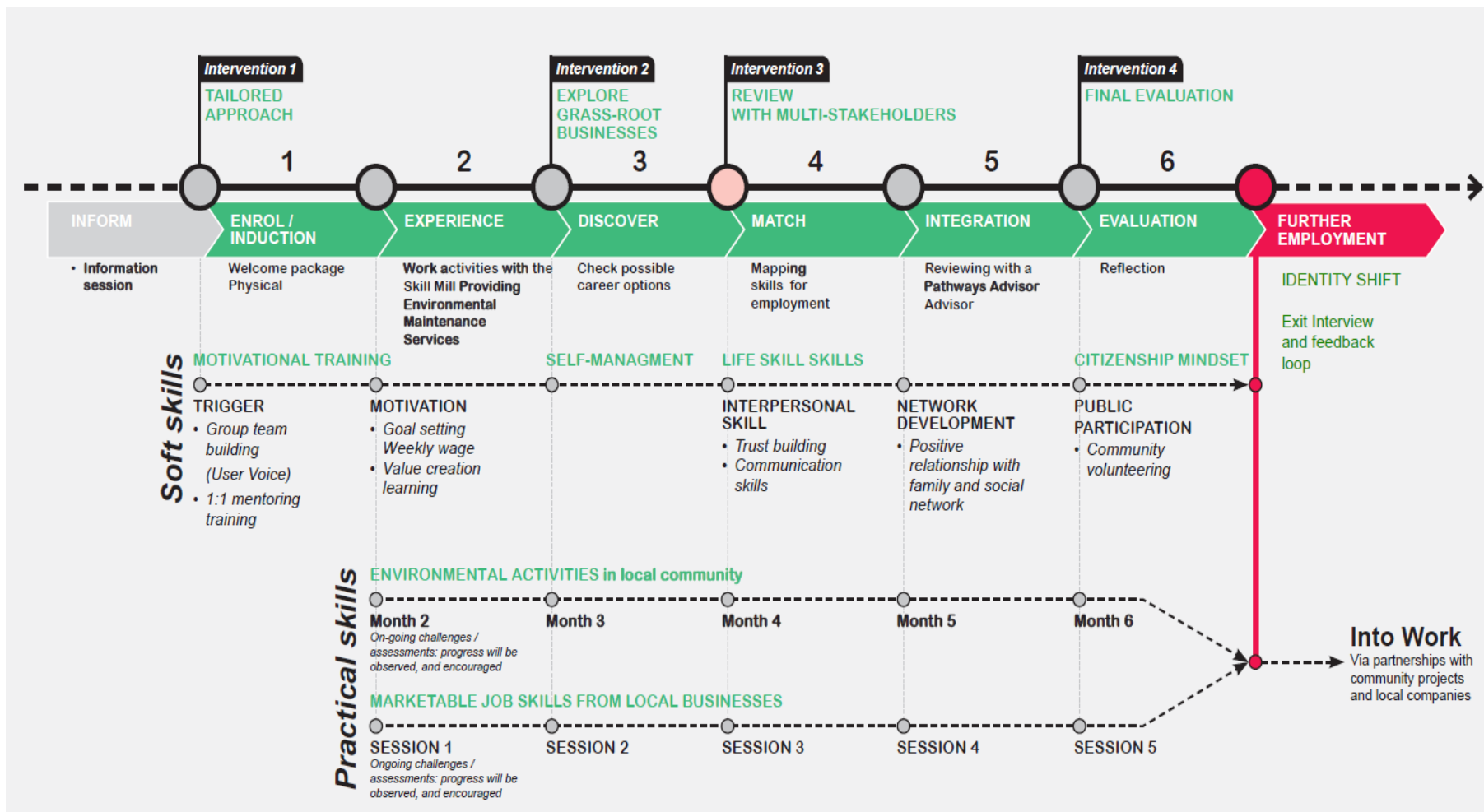
To facilitate payment, TSM supports YP to set up a bank account before they start the intervention if they do not already have one, drawing on relationships TSM has with banks that are willing to support the programme and accept the YP as customers. In line with legislation, young people are entitled to holiday and statutory sick pay.

TSM model aims to integrate employability and practical skills training through providing short courses (up to a day in length) in the use of equipment such as basic tools and machinery and on-the-job training by the supervisor. External trainers also provide certification for equipment requiring formal accreditation, such as strimmers and lawnmowers. In addition, participants are supported to achieve qualifications such as the CSCS (Construction Skills Certification Scheme) card for construction site work and NVQ Level 2 in Construction, and receive certificates upon completion, including City & Guilds Level 1 in Land Based Operations, which are intended to improve their employment prospects post-programme. Alongside practical training, TSM provides wrap-around support in collaboration with youth offending services, including therapeutic input e.g. when participants experience bereavement or trauma.

Post-employment support lasts three months and consists of: one-on-one work with the YP to support career development and job progression; practical support such as the co-creation action plans, support with CV writing and interview coaching; and acting as an advocate for young people where relevant. The delivery will be shaped by the previous evaluation and overseen through TSM operation management team, with data collected and analysed using PLINTH. QA will be implemented via the TSM governance board.

**Figure 1** below sets out the structure of TSM programme. It indicates that there are six stages to the employment phase of the intervention, starting with enrolment and moving through successive stages that support the YP in becoming work-ready. There are four key 'intervention' elements, where there is a specific process undertaken, starting with tailoring the introduction to the particular cohort of YP (intervention 1), followed by working with YP to explore their post-programme employment opportunities with grass-root businesses (intervention 2), then viewing the skills of YP with a range of stakeholders to assess their suitability for different roles (intervention 3) and ending with a final evaluation of young people, including their self-reflection on their progress (intervention 4). The figure also illustrates that the programme is focused on developing soft skills (including motivation, self-management, life skills and a 'citizen mindset'), along with practical skills (through environmental activities and the development of job skills). The end point of the programme is further employment, via TSM partnerships with community projects and local companies, and this reflects an identity shift for the YP.

Figure 1: TSM programme overview



### **Who is the intervention for?**

TSMI has historically been aimed at young people at the higher end of the offending spectrum, such as those with persistent or serious offending histories, often on the cusp of, or recently released from, youth custody or are subject to a community order as a direct alternative to custody and under the supervision of the Youth Offending Service (YOS). They therefore equate to the tertiary level of need based on YEF's eligibility criteria. There is evidence to indicate that these individuals benefit most from intensive support and employment. TSM recruits young people who are motivated to change, often felt to be at a turning point in their offending trajectory, who it believes will benefit from the structure, routine, and sense of belonging provided by the programme.

Historically, TSM's participant base reflects the gender distribution of the youth justice system, with around 8–10% female participants; all-female teams and mixed-gender groups have been successful, with female participants showing particularly positive outcomes and zero reoffending. The programme has a higher proportion of Black and Minority Ethnic participants than the national average, with group composition varying by location. Potential conflicts, including gang affiliations or personal histories, are managed proactively in collaboration with youth offending staff, and the programme prioritises safety and positive peer influence within teams. YP can be removed from the programme if after recruitment they are deemed too high a risk to take part, for example because of ongoing mental health issues, drug and alcohol dependency or conduct which places others and themselves at risk of serious harm.

### **Who delivers the intervention?**

Supervisors are typically seconded from youth offending services and selection is based on an individual's ability to build rapport with young people and manage challenging behaviour, rather than matching on gender or ethnicity. TSM believes that the most effective supervisors are those who are empathetic, tolerant, and fair, and skilled in negotiation. Some supervisors already have the practical skills needed to work with the team and train them, but in some cases, supervisors need to receive training in these skills before starting with TSM. In the past, there have been difficulties in recruiting suitable supervisors from outside of youth offending services, which has led to challenges in group management and outcomes. This has reinforced the preference for internal secondments from youth offending services.

The post-programme pathway advisors are recruited for the role and required to have experience supporting young people who are not in education, employment or training and who have been involved in the Youth Justice Service. In addition, they are required to have strong interpersonal skills, the ability to design effective action

plans, knowledge of local labour markets and training providers, proficiency in IT and case management, independence in managing caseloads, and a commitment to equality and partnership working.

### **Where is the intervention delivered?**

The intervention is delivered to locations where the work is undertaken by TSM cohort. These vary depending on the type of work opportunities available in the local area. They include places where environmental management is required (such as allotment clearance), construction-related tasks or technology recycling. Typically, TSM supervisor will identify a location where they will meet the YP each morning and then will drive them to the work location.

### **What is business as usual?**

The support and interventions YOS deliver include individual and group interventions, such as anger management, victim awareness programmes, decision-making skills, and support for substance misuse. In addition, YOS work with education and training providers, with the aim of engaging YP in meaningful activity and developing their skills, and can provide family support, such as signposting to services such as mental health, addiction or domestic abuse services and those offering parenting support. In addition, YOS will provide practical assistance such as helping YP to find suitable housing, access to health and mental health services. The range and nature of support from YOS will vary depending on the location of the service. No YOS service before the advent of The Skill Mill is understood to provide paid employment programmes.

Alongside inputs from YOS, YP may be receiving support from other local statutory and third sector organisations, including:

- **Children's Social Care Services** – if they are on a child protection plan they will regularly meet with a social worker and they and their carers may be receiving a range of support services, including parenting programmes or support for parents/carers with mental health, addiction or domestic abuse issues; children designated a child in need may also receive support, as may their parents/carers though it is likely to be at a lower level. Support offered varies across different local authorities (NHS, 2023a).
- **Child and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS)** – children who have been identified as having a mental health condition may have been referred to the local CAMHS service, where they can receive support from a psychiatrist, who may prescribe medication, and from psychotherapists. The support available and waiting lists vary across different integrated care

boards, who are responsible for commissioning local NHS services (NHS, 2023b).

- **Third sector organisations, such as Young Minds.**

### **What inputs and resources are needed for this intervention?**

The key inputs required to deliver TSM are:

- skilled people including:
  - supervisors experienced in managing young people with complex needs and with the practical skills needed to deliver commissioned contracted work to a good standard while leading and developing the team, who provide support during the employment period of the intervention;
  - pathway advisors experienced in managing young people with complex needs who assist young people in finding employment or other training opportunities after the end of the employment element of the intervention;
  - administrative, financial and logistical support staff and systems, e.g. to enable payment;
  - external trainers for specific tools and machinery;
- partnerships with statutory services, local authorities (e.g., YOS) to identify participants and help provide wraparound support;
- relationships with local organisations and commercial partners able to offer work contracts;
- access to work sites, materials, equipment and insurance for environmental management, construction, and recycling projects across different regions, including personal protection equipment and uniforms.

### **What are the intervention activities?**

The intervention activities consist of:

1. support to participants in navigating employment processes at the start and throughout the employment element of the programme (e.g., setting up bank accounts, understanding pay and attendance requirements);
2. training in the skills and behaviours required in the workplace including:
  - a. workplace skills development;
  - b. personal development (through teamwork and problem solving);

- c. building portfolios (AQA);
  - d. health and safety skills (including first aid);
3. direct engagement in practical work for the six months of the employment element of the programme (e.g., environmental management, construction, recycling);
  4. supervision, training and mentoring of participants by dedicated staff during the employment element of the programme, including working towards NVQ 2 in Construction;
  5. three-month post-programme transition support.

#### **What is the intervention expected to achieve?**

The most immediate outcomes expected of the programme are a reduction in behavioural difficulties, a reduction in criminal behaviour and reduced violent conduct. In addition, the programme aims to ensure that following the programme, YP are engaged in education, employment or training (EET). These two immediate outcomes are likely to be mutually reinforced, in that reduced behavioural difficulties and criminal behaviour will enhance YP's ability to obtain and stay in EET, while engagement in EET is likely to enhance the skills and motivation YP have gained from the intervention (Rodwell et al, 2018). The ultimate impact of the intervention, and its primary outcome, is a reduction in reoffending by YP.

#### **Are there any potential negative or backfire effects?**

As the YP form a 'crew' with others who have an offending background, this could reinforce criminal behaviour rather than ameliorate it. In addition, if YP are not able to obtain work at the end of the programme, they may feel more disillusioned than when they started, undermining any positive changes they experienced.

#### **What are the mechanisms of change?**

TSM is an intensive intervention that comprises a number of elements that separately and together initiate a causal chain that is believed to lead to the immediate outcomes of reduced behavioural difficulties, criminal behaviour and violent conduct, and the ultimate impact of reduced reoffending.

The programme activities are believed to influence YP in four ways.

- **Reduced exposure to risky individuals and environments:** the intensive, full-time nature of the intervention means that YP are occupied for a large proportion of their day during the working week, which reduces their exposure to anti-social peer groups and peer influence and also limits the

opportunity to engage in anti-social or criminal behaviour (Wright and Cullen, 2004).

- **Changed identity:** the meaningful nature of the work, becoming part of a team, the training and mentoring from supervisors, the language used to refer to young people (as colleagues rather than service users) and the financial remuneration combine to influence the identity of YP, which can take the form of: changing the YPs goal values (what they perceive to be important goals, including their employment aspirations) and their goal expectancies (the likelihood of achieving particular goals, including meaningful employment) (Morgenroth et al, 2015); YPs perception of their 'actual self' (their assessment of who they are at a point in time), their 'ideal self' (the kind of person they would like to be) and their 'ought self' (their perception of the kind of person they should be) (Higgins, 1989); and, their social identity (the characteristics associated with being part of a group) and concomitant social norms (their perception of what is typical or expected by members of a group) (Gross and Vostroknutove, 2022).
- **Increased self-efficacy:** self-efficacy is a self-construct that represents a person's belief about their ability to undertake various tasks. In the case of TSM, it specifically reflects employment-related tasks the ability to gain post-intervention employment, and their ability to be successful in the job. Self-efficacy is seen as being influenced by an individual's cognitive assessment of their own performance, observation and comparison of their own performance to others, physiological feedback comprising the emotional and physical sensations while undertaking a behaviour; and verbal and non-verbal feedback from others (Bandura, 1977; Redmond, 2010).
- **Skill development:** the intervention develops practical work-related skills related to the use of tools and equipment and 'soft' workplace skills, such as turning up on time and working with a team, as well as more general social skills, such as the ability to negotiate and manage personal issues, for example managing social interactions in order to avoid contact with peers who may be involved in offending or anti-social behaviour; it also improves the YP confidence and self-belief and self-esteem.

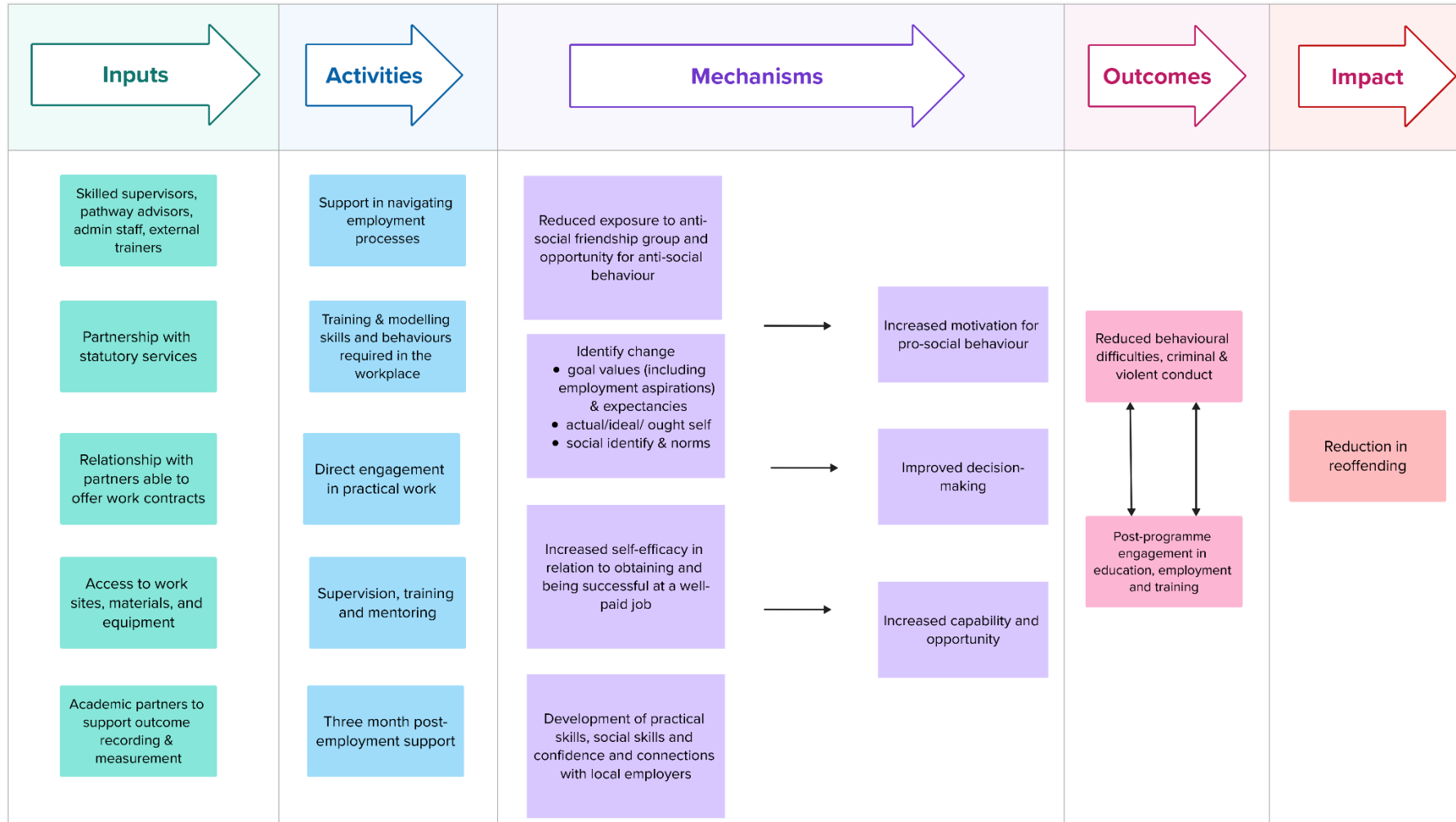
Based on the integrated model of behaviour (Barnard, 2023), these changes influence immediate behavioural outcomes through three distinct pathways.

- **Increased motivation:** the changes to identity and the increased belief that paid employment is valuable and obtainable, changes a YP's core, underlying motivation, orienting it towards pro-social behaviour and away from anti-social behaviour such as offending and violence;

- **Improved decision-making:** through providing remuneration in the short term and increasing the belief that paid work is available in the longer term, the intervention increases the salience of the costs of anti-social behaviour such as offending and violence and the benefits of obtaining and retaining employment, and these influence the choices YP make, such as how to respond to invitations from peers associated with offending; the responsibility and teamwork required of YP's also helps improve their decision-making skills and ability to prioritise long-term goals over short-term benefits.
- **Changes the YP's capabilities and their opportunities:** the intervention simultaneously increases YP's skills and capabilities to undertake work and their abilities to avoid becoming involved in offending and violence, as well as increasing the opportunities they have to take alternative paths through the connections with local employers.

A diagram summarising the theory of change for TSM is set out in **figure 2** below.

**Figure 2: The Skill Mill theory of change**



## Incentives

The participants involved in the trial are vulnerable YP who are more likely than average to have complex and unstable lives. This means that it will be challenging to achieve a high response rate for the data collection, particularly for the six-month follow-up data collection. Drawing on lessons from behavioural science, we believe that incentives and keeping in touch processes can be important tools in achieving a high response rate. We have designed an approach based on the following principles.

- **Provide a significant initial financial thanks:** behavioural science indicates that initial feedback sets expectations and can be an important influence on encouraging repeated behaviour. This is particularly relevant for the YP in the target group as goal setting, long term planning and delayed gratification are all issues that contribute to their risk of offending and are common challenges for the individuals who will be recruited for this trial.
- **Maintain regular contact:** regular keeping in touch processes through email and texts to the participants to check their contact details have not changed and a monthly roll call (i.e. ensuring the location of the participant is known) with TSM and YOTs to provide early warning if there is likely to be an issue in obtaining follow-up data.
- **Providing a significant financial thanks for follow up data collection:** a significant incentive can be a strong motivator and also play a symbolic role, recognising the value and effort YP need to make to complete the surveys and the importance of the YP in the control group despite not taking part in the intervention.

Based on these principles, the YP will be offered the following incentives:

- £20 for completion of baseline measures (intervention group and control group);
- £80 for completion of the six-month follow-up measures (control group only).

We are proposing to only provide incentives to complete the six-month follow-up measures to those YP allocated to the control group because unlike in other trials, those in the intervention group will be receiving a substantial financial reward for taking part. Therefore, it does not seem inequitable to only offer the incentive to the control group and furthermore this limits the total cost of the trial. However, all YP will be given the incentive to complete the baseline measures, as this happens before randomisation. In addition, YP from both control and intervention groups, who take part in qualitative interviews will receive an additional £30 incentive.

The amount of the incentive for the follow-up for the control group (£80) reflects the fact that the intervention is very substantial and involves paid work and therefore there is a

greater danger of resentful demoralisation than in other trials. In addition, the participant population has a high level of need and are being recruited via YOTs, rather than institutions such as alternative provision schools, so the evaluation team believes that it may be particularly difficult to obtain data from the control group at follow up as they may no longer be involved with the YOT or any other institution that could support recontacting them.

The exact form of the incentive is to be confirmed. There is currently no voucher platform that enables YP to use their vouchers online simply and easily. Therefore, the evaluation team will investigate the possibility of using a form of 'payment card' that offers maximum ease and flexibility in using the incentive. If this is not possible, then physical vouchers will be given to the YP, as the evaluation team has found this more acceptable and effective than virtual vouchers. A summary of the incentives offered in the evaluation is set out in **table 2** below.

**Table 2: Summary table of financial incentives being offered**

	BASELINE	FOLLOW UP	QUALITATIVE INTERVIEW
Intervention group	£20	N/A	£30
Control group	£20	£80	£30

### **Social Outcomes Partnership**

TSM will be delivered within a Social Outcomes Partnership (SOP), supported by Bridges Outcomes Partnerships (BOP), in which the participating YOTs will contribute to the funding of the service if positive outcomes are achieved by the young people being supported by TSM. BOP is a not-for-profit social enterprise that has worked with Government, community groups and specialist VCSE partners to design and deliver over 70 services that support people to improve their lives.

BOP and TSM have been involved in the planning of the evaluation to ensure that the social outcomes partnership and the evaluation work alongside each other. For example, data gathered during the referral stage will be shared with the evaluation team and included in the evaluation questionnaire for YP to confirm rather than asking them to re-enter it. In addition, the project will be overseen by a strategic board that comprises senior staff from the YEF, BOP, TSM, the local authorities and the evaluation team. This structure will help ensure that any emerging issues are quickly addressed and do not undermine either the evaluation or the SOP.

## Impact evaluation

### Research questions or study objectives

The research questions are as set out below.

**The primary research question** addressed by the efficacy trial will be: Is a 6-month paid employment placement with specialist supervision followed by 3-month post-employment support with a pathway advisor delivered with young people aged 16-18 who have already offended an effective approach to reducing young people's rates of reoffending, 12 months after randomisation, compared to business-as-usual?

**The secondary research questions addressed by the efficacy trial will be:** Is a 6-month paid employment placement with specialist supervision followed by 3-month post-employment support with a pathway advisor delivered with young people aged 16-18 who have already offended an effective approach to:

- a. Reducing young people's behavioural difficulties compared to business-as-usual?
- b. Reducing young people's total difficulties compared to business-as-usual?
- c. Increasing young people's self-efficacy compared to business-as-usual?
- d. Increasing young people's positive aspirations to work?
- e. Reducing the proportion of young people not in employment compared to business-as-usual?
- f. Reducing young people's rates of reoffending, between 7 months and 12 months post randomisation, compared to business-as-usual?

### Design

The evaluation will be a two-arm, multisite, randomised controlled trial. Randomisation will occur at the level of the individual young person, stratified by the local authority, with allocation to the intervention and business-as-usual control using a 1:1 allocation ratio. This allocation ratio is the most efficient for statistical power, minimising the costs of delivering the evaluation.

The trial is defined as an efficacy trial as it is delivered directly by the developers rather than on a large scale by professionals not involved in the development of the approach. A two-armed design was chosen as it is an effective way to answer the research questions; a multi-armed trial would require a large sample and is not required to answer the research questions.

The primary outcome will be proven re-offending within 12 months of randomisation, measured by any violent or non-violent offence as recorded within the Police National Computer (PNC) data. The secondary outcomes will be behavioural difficulties measured by the SDQ externalising behaviours score, total difficulties measure by the SDQ total difficulties score, self-efficacy measured through the New General Self-Efficacy Scale, employment aspirations as measured by the employment aspirations questionnaire, employment measured through data from HMRC, and proven re-offending between 7 and 12 months post-randomisation, measured by any violent or non-violent offence as recorded within the Police National Computer (PNC) data.

A summary of the trial design is set out in **table 3** below.

**Table 3: Trial design**

<b>Trial design, including number of arms</b>		Two-armed randomised controlled trial with randomisation at the individual level
<b>Unit of randomisation</b>		Individual
<b>Stratification variables</b> (if applicable)		Local Authority
<b>Primary outcome</b>	variable	Re-offending
	measure (instrument, scale, source)	Any proven violent or non-violent offence within 12 months of randomisation, Police National Computer (PNC)
<b>Secondary outcome(s)</b>	variable(s)	Behavioural difficulties Total difficulties Self-efficacy Employment aspirations Employment status Proven reoffending between 7 months and 12 months post randomisation

	measure(s) (instrument, scale, source)	<p>SDQ externalising score, participant survey (Behavioural difficulties)</p> <p>SDQ total score, participant survey (Total difficulties)</p> <p>New General Self Efficacy Scale, participant survey (Self-efficacy)</p> <p>Employment aspirations questionnaire, participant survey (Employment aspirations)</p> <p>HMRC data (Employment status)</p> <p>Any violent or non-violent offence within between 7 and 12 months post-randomisation, Police National Computer (PNC) (Proven reoffending between 7 months and 12 months post randomisation)</p>
Baseline for primary outcome	variables	<p>Age of first offence</p> <p>Number of previous offences</p>
	measure (instrument, scale, source)	<p>Age of first offence: 0-19, PNC</p> <p>Number of previous offences, PNC</p>
Baseline for secondary outcome	variable	<p>Behavioural difficulties</p> <p>Total difficulties</p> <p>Self-efficacy</p> <p>Employment aspirations</p> <p>Employment status (no baseline)</p> <p>Proven reoffending between 7 months and 12 months post randomisation</p>

	measure (instrument, scale, source)	<p>SDQ externalising score, participant survey (Behavioural difficulties)</p> <p>SDQ total score, participant survey (Total difficulties)</p> <p>New General Self Efficacy Scale, participant survey (Self-efficacy)</p> <p>Employment aspirations questionnaire, participant survey (Employment aspirations)</p> <p>Any violent or non-violent offence within between 7 and 12 months post-randomisation, Police National Computer (PNC) (Proven reoffending between 7 months and 12 months post randomisation)</p>
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### Trial implementation

The trial will be implemented in five successive phases, consisting of: 1) recruitment, consent and baseline data collection; 2) randomisation; 3) employment phase and follow-up data collection; 4) post-employment support; and 5) admin data collection. Each of these phases is discussed below and will be followed by each local authority for each cohort of YP.

#### Recruitment, consent and baseline data collection

The first phase of the trial will involve **screening** YP for suitability by YOS case managers based on meeting the eligibility criteria set out in the Participants section below and who are believed to have the motivation and stability to participate in TSM and are not involved in any other trials running concurrently. The YP identified through this process will be invited to a **high level information session**, delivered by the case manager and TSM, which will outline the programme in high level terms and explain that it is being run in the context of a evaluation and this means that if selected to take part in the evaluation there will be a 'fair lottery' to decide who receives the intervention and who is part of the control group. For YP who decide that in principle they wish to take part, the case manager will then complete an **application/referral form**, which will be assessed by TSM<sup>1</sup>. TSM will **select** eight YP to take part in the evaluation, with any other YP (if suitable) being put on a **reserve list** to receive the intervention if a YP allocated to the intervention

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<sup>1</sup> As a slight adaption for the trial, YP will no longer be required to take part in an interview following a successful application. This was necessary to ensure that YP did not have to complete too many activities before randomisation took place.

drops out. If a YP drops out of the intervention, two YP on the reserve list will be invited to take part in the evaluation and randomised, meaning one YP joins the intervention and the other goes into the control group. All YP who are assigned to the intervention group will participate for the full six months employment element (and three months post-employment support).

The case manager will then meet the eight selected young people and provide further information about the evaluation, including the need to collect data, and be reminded of the fair lottery element. The YP will then be asked to **consent** to participate in the trial, covering data collection, data sharing and permission to contact them through parents, carers, YOS or other organisations if they cannot be contacted directly. Consent will also be obtained for submitting their data to the ONS data archive. The case manager will support the YP who do consent to complete an **online questionnaire** that can be accessed using a mobile phone, tablet or computer and which will collect the required baseline data. This process ensures that collecting baseline data will not introduce selection bias, as it is collected prior to randomisation. The evaluation team will undertake a quality check of the baseline data and ask the case manager to support the YP to update any items that are missing or need correcting (such as missing contact details or email addresses in an incorrect format). If a YP declines to complete the baseline data, they will not be eligible to take part in the evaluation and TSM will invite another YP to take part instead.

### Randomisation

Once the consent and baseline data collection has been completed, the trial statistician will **randomise** the eight participants on a 50:50 basis to the intervention and control arms, i.e. four will be allocated to the intervention group (undertaking TSM programme) and four will be allocated to the control group. The randomisation will be conducted using Stata, a statistical software package. The case worker will then meet with each young person to tell them the **result of the randomisation**.

The YP allocated to the **control group** will be told about the business-as-usual support available and will be given a £20 spending card/ voucher (exact form to be confirm) as thanks for taking part. They will also be reminded that the evaluation team would like them to complete a similar questionnaire in six months 'time and that they will receive £80 as thanks for doing so. YP will be told at this point that the case worker or evaluation team may contact at some points over the next few months to make sure their contact details are up-to-date.

The YP allocated to the **intervention group** will be given a £20 spending card/ voucher (exact form to be confirmed) as thanks for taking part and be told more about TSM and the next steps including induction and initial training. They will also be told that they will

be asked to complete a similar questionnaire in six months 'time, just before the end of the employment phase of the programme.

If it emerges within the first month, that an intervention group participant cannot take part in the intervention, we will randomise additional YP who are on a waiting list. This randomisation would consist of two randomly sampled YP from the wait list, who would be randomly allocated to intervention and control using the same randomisation process as outlined above. The intervention group participant(s) that have dropped out will still be included in the analysis as the trial is conducted on an intention-to-treat basis. The inclusion of a reserve list ensures the intervention can follow its typical delivery with four participants, as ordinarily, if someone dropped out, a new YP would join the group.

#### Employment phase and follow up data collection

During the employment phase of the programme, the data on **attendance and disengagement** that is collected by TSM will be shared with the evaluation team to monitor fidelity and so it can be used in the analysis if needed. In addition, the TSM supervisor will conduct a **monthly 'roll call'**, which involves reviewing which YP are still taking in part in the programme and identifying any onward destinations (such as employment or training) and sharing the details with the evaluation team. They will also check whether the YP in the control group are still involved in YOT and if not again identify any onward destinations. Any YP in either intervention or control group who the TSM or the YOT are no longer in touch with will be **'red flagged'** as at high risk of not completing follow up data collection and the evaluation team will aim to make contact with them and ensure all their contact details are up-to-date.

Towards the end of the employment period (ideally within two weeks of it finishing), the TSM pathway advisor will support the YP in the intervention group to complete the follow up questionnaire, which again will be accessed using a mobile phone, tablet or computer, and provide. At the same time, the YOT case worker, guardian or professional will support the YP in the control group to complete the follow up questionnaire and provide the YP with the financial incentive. The evaluation team will check the data and ask TSM supervisor or YOT case worker to check with YP if there is any missing data or data problems. As part of the roll call process, YP who leave YOT case management before the end of the six months will have been identified and their contact details checked at that point. The evaluation team will contact them via email and text at the six-month point with a link to the survey and an offer of support if they would like help completing it. They will also be reminded that they will receive an £80 incentive to complete the survey.

#### Post-employment support

The YP in the intervention group will receive the second element of the programme, the three-month transition support. Data on attendance and engagement with this element will be collected by the pathway advisors to be used as part of the analysis if necessary.

### Admin data access

ICF will apply for the PNC data via the Office for National Statistics Secure Research Service. The application will be submitted well in advance of the final data being ready to minimise the risk of delays. Bridges Outcomes Partnerships will facilitate access to HMRC for data on employment status (see the outcomes section below for more details of PNC and HMRC data access).

### **Participants**

Participants must meet all the eligibility criteria set out below to be considered for inclusion in the trial:

- aged 16-18 years old inclusive at the date of referral and date of engagement with the programme;
- must have left school (completed year 11);
- offending history with one or multiple convictions for any type of offence;
- will have received a Youth Justice Board approved Youth Justice Assessment such as Asset Plus or equivalent;
- will be open and active cases or recently closed cases;
- must be willing and able to use public transport to get to the meeting point every day;
- must be willing to work outdoors in all weathers as well as indoors;
- must be willing to work towards gaining the CSCS Construction Industry Green Card.

Exclusion criteria for the trial are:

- physical impairments that would prevent them from undertaking physical work of the kind that TSM is contracted to undertake;
- substantial mental health issues that would prevent them from engaging in sustained employment or working within a team environment with other YP;
- gang affiliations or personal history of violence such that YOS and TSM judge their inclusion to put at substantial risk the safety of other YP and/or supervisors and pathway advisors;
- are involved in any other trials of interventions running concurrently.

Offence type will not be considered a reason to exclude a young person from participation provided that offenders with convictions for serious offences are assessed for risks to other young people, TSM staff, and members of the public with whom they will come into contact and the assessment indicates that the risk is not high. The risk assessment will be undertaken by the YJS manager and TSM and focus on risks associated with gang affiliation and likelihood of causing harm to other young people due to risk of violent or sexual harassment or abusive behaviour.

During the selection process, the YOT and TSM will draw on the ASSET PLUS Risk Assessment and Risk of Serious Harm scores to evaluate appropriateness for the programme and may prioritise YP with a score of 4 or more on Adverse Childhood Experiences Questionnaire and general criminogenic need where employment would represent a significant desistance factor. Priority will also be given to young people where there is a medium/high risk of re-offending and where there has been previous experience of custody (on remand or as a sentence).

In terms of ethnicity, TSM anticipates that the participants in the trial will reflect the distribution of ethnicities in the local offending population for each local authority involved in the evaluation. The proportion of YP by ethnicity in each of the local authorities that had agreed to be part of the evaluation at the point this protocol was drafted is set out in **table 4** below, which indicates that the percentage of YP from non-white backgrounds ranges from 65% in Birmingham to 3% in Sunderland. This indicates that the ethnic mix of participants in the trial is likely to vary substantially depending on the geographic location of the local authority.

**Table 4: Proportion of young people aged 10-17 with at least one offence or caution by area and ethnicity and the national average for the year ending March 2024 for local authorities that have agreed to be part of the evaluation**

LOCAL AUTHORITY	%						TOTAL NUMBER OF YP
	WHITE	ASIAN	BLACK	MIXED	OTHER	MISSING	
<i>National average</i>	73	5	10	7	1	4	55,843
Barking and Dagenham	52	6	26	10	3	2	1,937
Barnsley	96	0	1	1	0	1	1,440
Birmingham	38	20	21	12	2	6	6,723
Bradford	66	26	2	5	0	1	3,823
Brighton and Hove	74	3	5	10	2	7	843
Cambridgeshire	85	2	4	5	1	4	2,549
Cheshire East, Cheshire West, Halton and Warrington	94	0	1	3	0	1	3,419
Devon	92	1	1	2	0	4	2,525
Durham	96	0	0	1	0	2	2,845
Greenwich	50	3	27	18	2	1	1,781
Hackney	20	3	55	18	2	2	1,689

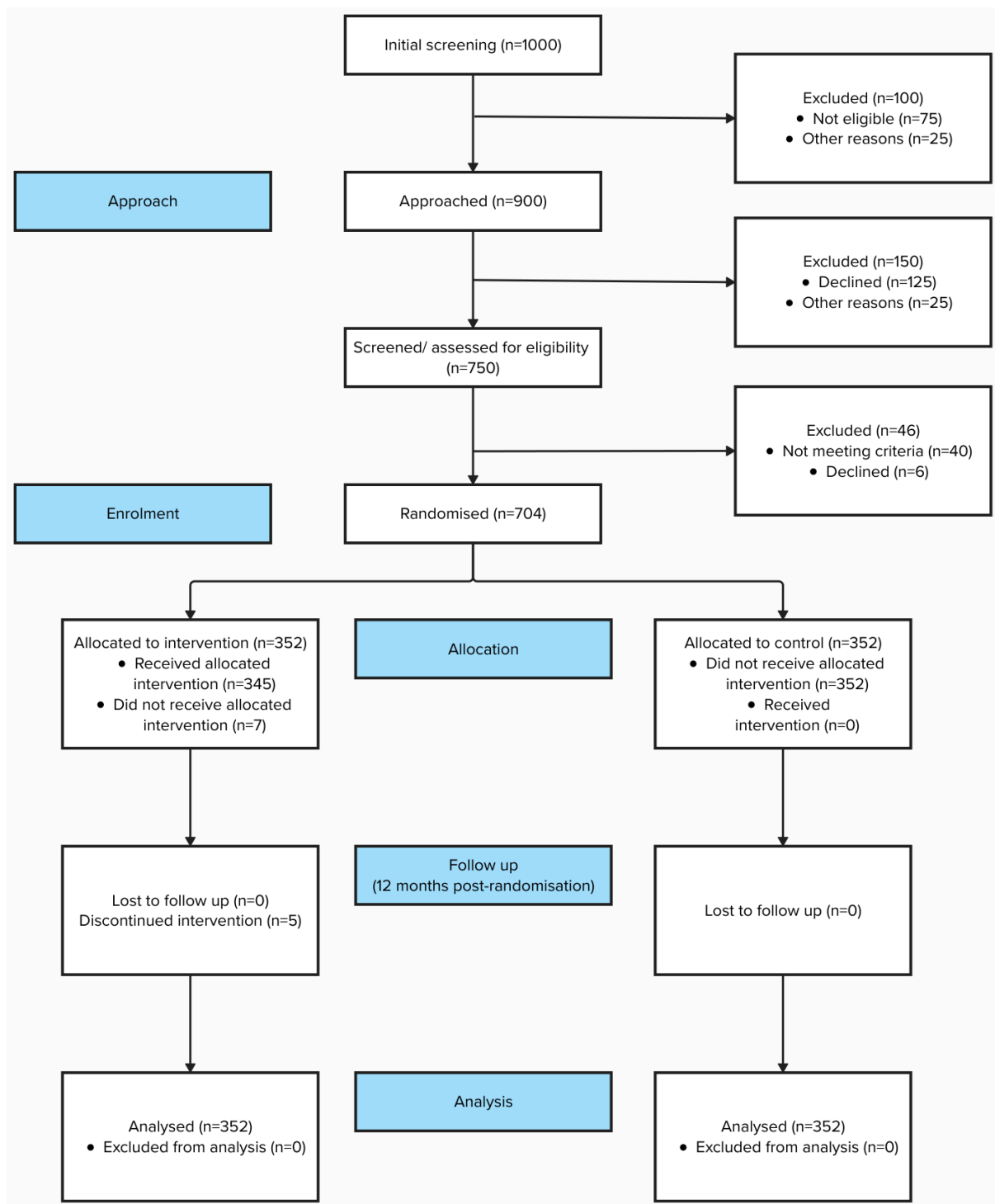
LOCAL AUTHORITY	%						TOTAL NUMBER OF YP
	WHITE	ASIAN	BLACK	MIXED	OTHER	MISSING	
Islington	40	4	35	18	3	1	1,268
Leeds	70	4	6	8	2	10	4,279
Norfolk	87	1	3	3	0	6	4,683
Reading	63	5	14	17	0	1	843
Sheffield	68	9	6	13	2	1	2,676
Slough	46	19	15	14	2	4	947
Sunderland	97	1	0	1	0	0	1,700
Surrey	81	4	3	6	1	5	2,338
Warwickshire	84	2	2	6	0	6	2,184
West Mercia	91	2	3	3	0	2	5,351

Source: Youth Justice Board (available at <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/youth-justice-statistics-2023-to-2024/youth-justice-statistics-2023-to-2024>)

In terms of gender, and reflecting the offending population, it is anticipated that 8-10% of participants will be female with the rest being male.

A participant flow diagram with expected numbers approached, enrolled, allocated, followed up and analysed, is included in **figure 3** below.

**Figure 3: Participant flow diagram with expected numbers**



### Sample size calculations

The sample size calculations were conducted based on achieving a minimum detectable effect size of 0.20 or below. The reoffending rate for young people aged 10-17 was 32.5% in 2023-24 (Youth Justice Statistics, 2025). An MDES of 0.20 would therefore be

synonymous with a reduction in the reoffending rate of 8.4 percentage points.<sup>2</sup> While this represents a substantial reduction, the target group is well-defined, the programme is intensive and seeks to directly change capabilities (skills, qualifications, employability) and therefore we feel that an MDES of this size can be justified.

Our sample size calculations were conducted in PowerUp! (Dong and Maynard, 2013) for a blocked individual-random assignment design where eight YP are randomised within each of the 22 Local Authorities (LA) for four cohorts of YP. This indicates a total sample size of 704 YP within 88 blocks. The assumptions used in the power calculations were:

- A type-one (false-positive) error rate of 0.05.
- A type-two (false-negative) error rate of 0.20 (synonymous with power of 0.80).
- Two-tailed statistical significance testing.
- Variance in the outcome can be explained by model covariates, increasing statistical power. We anticipate that there will be little variation in whether a YP is recorded on the PNC as offending at baseline as prior offending is part of the eligibility criteria. We therefore propose using age of first offence and number of previous offences. Age of first offence is strongly associated with recidivism. For example, recent analysis by the Ministry of Justice (2025) indicates the most prolific youth offenders committed their first offence between the ages of 14 and 16.
- Eight YP are randomised with a 1:1 allocation in each of the 22 Local Authorities (LA) for four cohorts of YP. This indicates a total sample size of 704 YP within 88 blocks. There is therefore no clustering, and therefore no intra-cluster correlation to consider in the calculations.
- As the primary outcome is sourced from administrative data, we do not anticipate any attrition per se. However, we have accounted for a potential reduction in the YP sample of 10%. This ensures the design will be powered if, for example, LAs do not reach the target number of beneficiaries, if there was missing covariate data, or in the unlikely case that YP withdraw permission to access their data.

Based on these assumptions, the trial will be powered to a MDES of 0.199. Sample size calculations as summarised in **table 5** below.

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<sup>2</sup> This was estimated by converting the MDES into a log odds ratio using the formula  $\log \text{oddsratio} = \frac{\text{Effectsize} \times \pi}{\sqrt{3}}$ . We then take the exponential to obtain the odds ratio, and calculate the percentage impact by using the assumed value of the outcome in the control group (chance of the event occurring/not occurring).

**Table 5: Sample size calculations**

		PARAMETER
Minimum Detectable Effect Size (MDES)		0.199
Pre-test/ post-test correlations	level 1 (participant)	0.45
	level 2 (cluster)	0.00
Intracluster correlations (ICCs)	level 1 (participant)	n/a
	level 2 (cluster)	n/a
Alpha		0.05
Power		0.80
One-sided or two-sided?		Two-sided
Number of participants	Intervention	352
	Control	352
	Total	704

## Recruitment schedule

The recruitment schedule in **table 6** below is based on the assumption that 22 YOTs will be part of the trial and that TSM can work with two cohorts of YP per YOS per year. The number of YP recruited reflects the sum of those in both intervention and control groups.

**Table 6: Trial recruitment schedule**

	COHORT	NUMBER OF YP PER YOS	TOTAL NUMBER OF YP PER COHORT
Feb 2026	1	8	176
Aug 2026	2	8	176
Feb 2027	3	8	176
Aug 2027	4	8	176
Total YP			704

## **Outcome measures**

### **Primary outcome**

The primary outcome will be **re-offending within 12-months of randomisation**. Specifically, any proven offence (i.e., a caution or conviction for a violent or non-violent offence) committed within 12-months of randomisation. This will be derived using the date of randomisation, the offence date and offence code, obtained from the PNC accessed via the Office for National Statistics. We opt for a 12-month follow-up because this is the most common follow-up period for interventions targeted at recidivism. This follow-up period is also feasible because the data is administrative and therefore does not require an additional data-collection point with YP.

Offending will be a binary indicator (yes=1/no=0) and violent offences will include violence against the person, sexual offences and robbery. Non-violent offences include theft, criminal damage and arson, burglary, drugs, possession of weapons, public order

offences, miscellaneous crimes against society, fraud, summary motoring and summary non-motoring offences, and undefined offences. Offences that are the result of breaching civil orders will be excluded.

It is important to note that offences recorded in the PNC are only one measure of offending. In addition, YP from minority ethnic backgrounds may be overrepresented or may have an offence included in the PNC as the result of profiling. Thus, it is important to acknowledge that the measure is an imperfect metric.

Offences were chosen as it allows for better comparability between studies as it is a commonly used measure and as the evaluation takes the form of an RCT it should provide an unbiased estimate of the impact of the intervention in the context of comparing the intervention to BAU. However, the absolute level of offences cannot be simply interpreted as the effect of the programme, partly for the measurement issues discussed above and partly because it is measured from the point of randomisation which will be a short time before the programme starts. In addition, this is not the outcome that is being used as part of the SOP as that has been decided in consultation between BOP, TSM and the YOTs for the purposes of defining the funding model and linking with YOTs strategic goals rather than for the purposes of evaluation.

### **Secondary outcomes**

The secondary outcomes are captured both through self-report measures for psychological characteristics and administrative data for offending and employment status. The self-report data will be captured 6 months post randomisation. This time point was chosen as this should be sufficient time for psychological effects to become apparent (American Psychological Association, 2017). It is also the end point of the employment element of the intervention and the evaluation team judged that collecting substantial amounts of self-report data after this point will be very difficult and likely to result in low response rates.

The first of the secondary outcomes is **behavioural difficulties**, 6-months after randomisation. Behavioural difficulties will be captured using the externalising behaviour subscale of the SDQ (self-report version, Goodman, 1997). The SDQ measures emotional and behavioural difficulties and has been widely used in clinical and research settings. It has good psychometric properties and is comprised of five sub-scales, which are: emotional symptoms; conduct problems; hyperactivity/inattention; peer problems; and, prosocial behaviour. Each subscale has an individual score and the externalising behaviours score (which ranges from 0 to 20, with a higher score indicating more negative externalising behaviours) is the sum of the conduct and hyperactivity scales.

The second secondary outcome will be **total difficulties**, 6-months after randomisation. This will be captured using the SDQ and is the total of the SDQ subscales that indicate the presence of emotional and psychological problems (the emotional, conduct, hyperactivity

scale and peer problems scales). The total difficulties score is generated by summing the scores from the scales and ranges from 0 to 40 (with a higher score indicating more difficulties).

The third of the secondary outcomes is **self-efficacy**, which is both an important outcome of the programme in its own right and believed to play a crucial mediating role between the programme and its primary outcome and impacts. Self-efficacy is self-construct that represents a person's belief about their ability to undertake various tasks, and in the case of The Skill Mill, specifically employment-related tasks include the ability to gain post-intervention employment, and the ability to be successful in the job. Self-efficacy will be measured using the New General Self-Efficacy Scale, a five-question measure which uses an five point agree-disagree Likert Scale for each question. The total score being a simple average of the scores of each individual question and therefore ranges from one to five. The measure has been shown to have higher construct validity than other similar measures and high reliability (Chen, Gully and Eden, 2001). In addition, this scale is being used in the YEF-funded evaluation of a summer jobs programme (Beninger et al, n.d.) and therefore aids comparison across the two studies.

The fourth secondary outcome will be **employment aspirations**, which is a mediator between the programme and the outcome and related to goal values and goal expectancies. It will be measured using a questionnaire that is part of the New Philanthropy Capital Journey to Employment (JET) Framework (Coppes and Plimmer, 2013). The aspirations for work is a short measure comprising 14 questions in two grids, the first of which is answered using a four-point Likert Scale focused on importance (from Very Important to Not at All Important) and is related to aspects of the type of employment YP might aspire to (such as having a high income and reflect goal values) and the second a percentage scale representing likelihood (with 100% reflecting something that has 'already happened') and is related to the perceived probability of different outcomes (such as finding a job in their field and reflect goal expectancies). The questions are based on those included in the young adults module of Understanding Society Wave 2 (a large-scale UK household longitudinal study funded by the Economic and Social Research Council) (Understanding Society, n.d.).

The fifth of the secondary outcomes is **employment status** 9-months after randomisation. The preferred approach to measuring NEET status would be to access it through the Longitudinal Education Outcomes (LEO) dataset. However, there is a two to three-year time lag between the collection of EET data and it being available through LEO (Department for Education, 2024), which means it will not be available for the whole sample during the lifespan of this evaluation. Therefore, the research team intend to use data received directly from HMRC on employment status, access to which will be facilitated by the Bridges Outcomes Partnership (BOP). HMRC would be provided with the National insurance numbers (NINOs) and unique project reference number of each

participant (both control and intervention groups). Our proposal is then to follow the precedent set by the DfE Care Leavers projects in Bristol, Lewisham, Sheffield; and the refugee programme in the Northeast and Plymouth which received the same information for the same purpose. On a quarterly basis, BOP would receive and share with the evaluation team:

- taxable pay YTD;
- taxable pay in Period;
- tax year;
- employer;
- RTI start date;
- RTI leaving date;
- hours Band.

Bridges Outcomes Partnership will download the HMRC data set directly into a UK located Azure blob storage account which will be secured by RBAC and 2FA. Automated ETLs will be built in Azure Synapse (UK located, secured by RBAC and 2FA) to process the HMRC data and create invoices to be submitted to relevant Local Authority commissioners and a CMS report data set (Unique Project Reference and 'Yes/No' confirmation of outcome achieved that will be ingested into the CMS via mass upload).

Relevant data (Unique Project Reference Numbers, RTI Start Dates, RTI End Dates, and Hours Band) is shared via secure method to a dedicated MS Teams site. Access to the MS Teams site will be limited to the core project team at ICF and Bridges Outcomes Partnership. This will include all types of employment contracts, split into the following hours bands:

- A: up to 15.99 hours
- B: 16-23.99 hours
- C: 24-29.99 hours
- D: 30 hours or more
- E: Other - no fixed contracted hours or irregular hours.

In addition, data on education, training and employment offers will be collected as part of the survey administered to intervention and control groups six months post-evaluation (with careful attention given to the wording the question for the intervention group, to ensure that YP do not consider TSM activities in their response to avoid the risk of measurement bias). This variable will be forward looking for the participants in the intervention group and will be analysed as part of the exploratory analysis. Employment status based on HMRC data will be coded as a binary measure (where 0 = not employed and 1 = employed).

The final secondary outcome is **re-offending**, in the period 7 months to 12 months after randomisation. This will be derived in the same way as the primary outcome and is being evaluated as it will provide insight into the degree to which any reduction in offending is due to diversion (which would only be apparent while YP are taking part in the employment element of the programme) versus changes in characteristics such as identity and self-efficacy (for which one would see an effect beyond the end of the employment phase of the intervention, i.e. after the first six months).

### **Baseline measures**

The purpose of including the baseline measures in the analysis models is to explain some of the variance in the outcome, increasing statistical power and thereby reducing the sample size requirements. It is therefore important that we select the most appropriate baseline measures that can explain the corresponding outcome.

The primary outcome is re-offending (any violent or non-violent offence within 12 months of randomization). Using a baseline measure of prior offending is unlikely to have much variance in the population of interest as the eligibility criteria ensure that YP taking part in the evaluation will have at least one existing offence. Consequently, we consider alternative baseline measures for the primary outcome. We propose using two baseline measures for the primary outcome:

- **Age of first offence** (in months); this can be derived in the PNC using the month and year of birth and the date of the first recorded offence.
- **Number of previously recorded proven offences**; this can be accessed via the PNC.

Behavioural difficulties and total difficulties are the first of the secondary outcomes. We are collecting both using the SDQ, which will be administered at baseline. Therefore we will use the same outcome measure at baseline and endline for these outcomes.

The New General Self-Efficacy measure and the employment aspirations scale will also be used at baseline and at follow up.

The fourth secondary outcome is employment status 9-months post-randomisation. As with the primary outcome, we anticipate little variation at baseline as it is likely that the vast majority of target population will all be unemployed when they are recruited to take part in the evaluation. Therefore, we are not proposing to use a baseline measure for this outcome.

The final secondary outcome is re-offending in the period 7-12 months post randomisation. We will use the same baseline measures for this analysis as the primary outcome analysis (age of first offence and number of previous offences).

## **Compliance**

A key consideration for the evaluation is how to measure the effectiveness of TSM when an individual participates as intended (as opposed to the offer of TSM participation, which is what the primary, intention-to-treat, analysis will measure). To generate evidence against this research question, we will therefore conduct compliance analysis to estimate the complier average causal effect (CACE).

We assume one-sided non-compliance, as YP randomised to the control arm will not be offered paid employment by TSM. Therefore, the compliance measure will only need to be collected for the intervention arm. We will measure compliance based on YP's attendance at their work placement, through data collected by TSM for payroll purposes. Non-attendance for a valid reason (e.g. bank holidays, annual leave, sick leave) will not be considered non-compliant as this would be normal practice in the workplace. As each cohort of YP will have a 6-month paid placement, this would equate to approximately 130 days (Monday - Friday) including paid leave.

In some cases, YP may leave TSM early and will be considered non-compliant for all days following their last working day. However, if the YP leaves TSM for a paid work opportunity, this should not be considered non-compliant as it is a marker of success for the programme under its usual practice. Therefore, YP in these instances will be considered compliant in each subsequent period after their last working day.

Consequently, the compliance measure will have a range of 0-130, where 130 would indicate complete compliance with TSM, and 0 indicates complete non-compliance.

## **Analysis**

This section provides an overview of the planned analyses. Following YEF's statistical analysis guidance (YEF, 2021), the full statistical analysis plan (SAP) will be published within three-months of randomisation.

The primary analysis will consist of a logistic regression, where re-offending 12-months post-randomisation is the dependent variable and the independent variables are random allocation, age of first offence and number of previous offences and fixed effects for the sites (LAs). Sensitivity analysis will be conducted to assess the volatility of impact estimates to modelling decisions. Specifically, we will re-estimate the primary analysis model in two ways:

- A "simplified" model where the only dependent variables are random allocation and fixed effects for sites.
- A "saturated" model, including a vector of a wider range of baseline characteristics. This could include demographics such as age, gender, ethnicity and disability/long-term health conditions, and baseline measures used for the

secondary outcome (e.g. SDQ externalising behaviour score, Attainment 8, self-confidence/self-efficacy, employment aspirations).

We anticipate missing data for the primary analysis will be unlikely as the primary outcome will be sourced from administrative data and the independent variables will either be sourced from administrative data or collected at baseline as a condition of inclusion in randomisation. Missing data analysis will be conducted if more than 5% of the intention-to-treat sample. Firstly, we will estimate a “drop-out” logistic regression where the dependent variable would be binary indicator of whether the case is missing outcome data, regressed against all available time-invariant and baseline characteristics (e.g. age at randomisation, gender, ethnicity, disability/long-term health condition, age of first offence etc.). If suitable covariates and auxiliary variables are available, we will conduct multiple imputation through chained equations (MICE) to impute missing values as a sensitivity analysis. Following YEF’s analysis guidance the primary analysis will not include imputed data but it would be included in an additional set of analyses.

Compliance analysis will be conducted following a two-stage least squares (2SLS) instrumental variable (IV) regression following the approach of Angrist and Imbens (1995). This means that the random allocation will be the instrument for compliance. Endogeneity tests will be conducted to ensure that there is not a weak instrument problem. Additionally, the compliance measure will be reported descriptively and may also be included in the implementation and process evaluation (IPE).

Secondary outcome analyses will follow the same structure, with the relevant secondary outcomes as the dependent variables, and their corresponding baseline measures, random allocation and fixed effects for site. The continuous outcomes (behavioural difficulties, self-confidence/self-efficacy) will be analysed using OLS regression whilst the binary outcomes (employment status and re-offending between 7-12-months post-randomisation) will be analysed using a logistic regression.

### **Exploratory analysis**

Exploratory analysis will be conducted assessing the impact on the number of offences, 12-months after randomisation (as opposed to a binary indicator of any offence committed within 12-months, which is used for the primary analysis). This analysis will use a Poisson specification but will otherwise follow the same model structure as the primary analysis, substituting the dependent variable for the count of offences. Exploratory analysis will be conducted to assess the extent of treatment effect heterogeneity. This will be estimated for the primary outcome only. The logistic regression will follow the specification of the primary analysis, with an interaction between random allocation and the site fixed effect. This will enrich our understanding of the programme’s effectiveness in different contexts. Additional exploratory analysis may be specified in the statistical analysis plan and will include analysis based on the date

of the start of the intervention rather than from randomisation if there is a substantial difference between the two and employment, education and training plans and arrangements at 6 months post-randomisation.

### **Sub-group analyses**

Sub-group analysis will be conducted for the primary outcome only. Specifically, we will explore sub-group analyses for two subgroups; ethnicity and disability/long-term health conditions (as a very high proportion of young offenders have been found to have long term health conditions, including mental health conditions (University of Glasgow, 2024)).

Sub-group analysis by ethnicity should ideally distinguish between different minority ethnic subgroups, as a simple white/non-white dichotomy mask underlying trends for different minority ethnic groups. However, this comes at a trade-off with statistical power and the feasibility of modelling. It is highly likely that some or all of the subgroup analyses will be underpowered, meaning that there is a greater risk of a false-negative (type-two error) finding.

At this stage we propose separate sub-group analysis by the following ethnic subgroups: White, Asian, Black, Mixed, Other. However, we will outline in the SAP a decision rule to determine whether these subgroups can be analysed independently, or if some subgroups may need to be combined. For example, sample sizes are likely to be smallest for the Mixed and Other subgroups, so it may prove necessary to combine these two groups, but the remaining subgroups could be analysed independently.

The subgroup analysis will be conducted using a subsample analysis and an interaction model. In the interaction model, the reference group will be White YP.

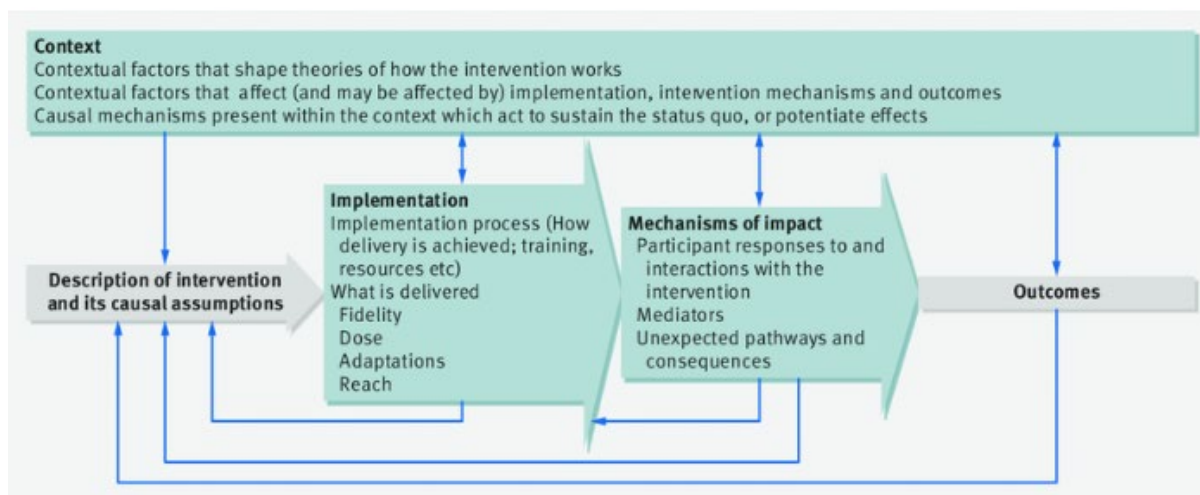
### **Longitudinal follow-ups**

There is no planned longitudinal follow-up as part of this evaluation, but the evaluation data will be archived allowing for longer term follow up in the future.

## Implementation and process evaluation

Our approach to the implementation and process evaluation is informed by MRC guidance for undertaking process evaluations of complex interventions and case study research (Moore et al, 2015; Crowe et al, 2011). The guidance is useful in providing a clear structure that reflects key elements of intervention implementation and the factors that influence outcomes (as illustrated in **figure 4** below).

**Figure 4: Key functions of process evaluation and relations among them**



Source: Moore et al, 2015

### IPE Research questions

#### Context

1. What are the range of experiences of the YP involved in The Skill Mill (including those relating to culture and the experience of prejudice or hostility based on ethnicity) and how have these influenced their risk of becoming involved in violence as a victim or perpetrator or offending?
2. What services do the YP involved in The Skill Mill receive before their involvement in TSM and how have these influenced the development and implementation of the intervention?
3. How does the environment of YP involved in The Skill Mill influence their ability to take part and benefit from the intervention and mentors' ability to support YP, including the nature of the local employment market?

## Implementation

4. What is the range of experiences of supervisors and pathway advisors of the training they received and what factors are perceived to influence its effectiveness?
5. To what extent is The Skill Mill being delivered in the way it is intended?
6. What are the range and nature of work undertaken by The Skill Mill crews?
7. What factors influence the implementation of The Skill Mill?
8. What are the barriers and facilitators to effective implementation of The Skill Mill?
9. What is the range of experiences of YP of The Skill Mill?
10. How does the intervention delivery change or adapt over time, both the employment element and the post-employment support element?
11. What factors influence their experience and the acceptability of the intervention?
12. What are the experiences of other stakeholders, including YOT and organisations contracting The Skill Mill teams to undertake work, of the programme?
13. What is the influence on implementation of the programme being delivered in the context of a social outcomes partnership in comparison to “traditional pay-for-inputs” contracting methods – where the provider receives a block payment for their forecast inputs, regardless of performance?
14. What services comprise business as usual for YP in the absence of TSM and what are the range of services received by YP in the control group during the intervention period and how do these vary in different geographic areas?

## Mechanisms of impact

15. What are the range of causal pathways that influence outcomes from The Skill Mill and do they reflect those specified in the theory of change?
16. What factors (such as family relationships and the local social and economic context) influence the causal pathways for The Skill Mill and what are the range of ways they affect the outcomes experienced by YP?
17. In what ways do the employment component and the three-month post-employment support separately and together influence the outcomes experienced by YP?
18. What factors influence the nature and quality of the relationship between YP and supervisors and pathway advisors?

19. What is the influence on the mechanisms of impact of the programme being delivered in the context of a social outcomes' partnership?

#### Outcomes

20. Are there any unanticipated positive outcomes for YP or supervisors or pathway advisors from involvement in The Skill Mill and do these vary in terms of different types of YP?

21. Are there any unanticipated negative or backfire outcomes for YP or supervisors or pathway advisors from involvement in The Skill Mill or the evaluation (for the control group) and do these vary in terms of different types of YP?

22. What are is range and nature of education, training and employment destinations of YP after the end of the programme?

#### **Research methods**

The implementation and process evaluation will draw on both quantitative and qualitative methods.

#### **Programme administrative and assessment data**

We anticipate that TSM will record information relating to the trial and key characteristics of the YP and their circumstances and share this with the evaluation team. This will include: recruitment data, date of the start of programme; age, ethnicity, sex/gender, and education, employment and training status. Data will also be collected on the attendance of YP. The programme administrative and assessment data will be used to assess fidelity to the trial and the quality of the intervention alongside providing contextual information about the characteristics of the YP.

#### **YP survey**

All YP in both intervention and control groups will be invited to complete a survey at the end of the employment element of the programme (i.e. six-months post randomisation). The survey will be used to address questions relating to the implementation of the intervention, the mechanisms through which it achieves its outcomes, and identification of confounds. The survey themes will include: experiences of the intervention (among the intervention group only); other services received (including BAU for the control group); and, YP goals and their attitudes to violence and offending.

#### **In-depth interviews**

In-depth interviews will be undertaken with groups that can provide insight into the implementation of the intervention (including the training and experience of supervisors),

the mechanisms influencing its outcomes and the context within which it is operating including: referrers/YOTs; staff at TSM; strategic staff at BOP; clients for whom YP are providing services; and, YP in interview and control groups. The YP in both intervention and control groups will be invited to be interviewed just after the follow-up data quantitative collection and we anticipate several rounds of data collection so that emerging issues (particularly in terms of implementation of the RCT) can be identified and addressed during the evaluation. We will also aim to interview a selection of YP in the second year who completed the programme in the first year to gain insight into the longer-term impact of the programme.

The YP survey will include a statement saying that the evaluation team is interested in interviewing a sample of YP to find out more about their experiences and asking them to tick a box if they are not interested in this part of the study. An opt-out will be used at this point as opt-ins can effectively exclude potential participants who would be happy to take part but would not actively volunteer, undermining the diversity of the sample and potentially having the effect of excluding some groups.

A selection of YP who do not opt out will be made aiming to achieve diversity in terms of changes to their attitudes to the acceptability of violence, as recorded in the survey, as well as diversity in terms of sex, age, ethnicity and geographical location. These YP will be contacted by email and/ or text and invited to take part (an opt in), and interviews arranged with those who agree. The qualitative interviews with YP will explore the context of their lives (their living arrangements, involvement in EET, experiences of CJS services and offending), experiences of mentoring (for the mentoring group only), and their experiences of other services. Anticipated number of qualitative interviews by cohort is set out in **table 7** below.

**Table 7: The anticipated number of qualitative interviews by cohort**

	COHORT 1	COHORT 2	COHORT 3	COHORT 4
Referrers	1	2	2	2
TSM supervisors and pathway advisors	4	4	4	6
BOP Staff	1	1	1	2

	COHORT 1	COHORT 2	COHORT 3	COHORT 4
TSM crew clients	1	1	2	2
Intervention YP	4	5	6	7
Control YP	2	2	2	2

N=66

### Analysis

The administrative data and YP survey will be analysed with descriptive and inferential statistics to understand the characteristics of the YP population, fidelity to the programme model and its quality and to provide insights into the mechanisms associated with the intervention, such as differences between the intervention and control group in terms of attitudes to violence and offending and goals as well as the experience of YP in the intervention group of the programme.

With participants' permission, the qualitative interviews be audio recorded and the recordings transcribed using Trint, a secure online service that translates and transcribes recordings of interviews. The data will then be managed using the Framework approach (Richie et al, 2013). Within this approach, the data gathered from the interviews will be summarised into a framework developed in Microsoft Excel, subdivided into main themes and sub-themes where columns represent themes, and each row is an individual case. This means the data is arranged in a systematic way that is grounded in the accounts of the participants while closely tied to the research objectives and allows comparative analysis to take place both between and within cases. The social-demographic characteristics (including gender and ethnicity) of YP will be included in the matrix, so that any typology can take those characteristics into account. In addition, any direct comments on the influence of their background (such as their ethnicity or gender) on their experience will be captured within the relevant cells in the matrix.

The final stage of analysis involves working through the framework in detail, drawing out the range of experiences and views, identifying similarities and differences, developing and testing hypotheses, and interrogating the data to seek to explain emergent patterns and findings. The aim of the analysis is to develop categories and explanations that are comprehensive in the sense of capturing the full range of views and experiences. Following the Framework tradition, a balance between induction and deduction will be

used during the analytical process. Early on the focus will be inductive in the sense of aiming to understand participants from their point of view and only later as the process moves up the 'analytical ladder' with existing concepts and the theory of change brought in to deductively organise and contextualise the findings (Barnard, 2012).

The findings will reflect three broad types of analysis (Ritchie et al, 2013) as described below.

- Thematic analysis – this provides the foundation of the findings through detailing the different types of processes and approaches used.
- The identification of typologies – though typologies do not always exist, where they do, they can be powerful tools for understanding the nature of the phenomena by combining multiple elements identified through the thematic analysis at a case level.
- Explanatory analysis – explanatory analysis aims to understand the connections between different parts of the process and how they contribute to the outcomes and impact and is developed through in-depth intra- and inter-case exploration.

Quantitative and qualitative data gathered as part of the IPE data will be combined and triangulated to test the intervention's logic model and interrogate the causal mechanisms underlying it. This will be supported using an integrated model of behaviour and the categorisation of the causes of violence undertaken using that model (Barnard, 2023). In exploring the factors influencing the effectiveness of TSM and the reasons the trials fails to find an impact (if that is the ultimate outcome), the IPE analysis will aim to distinguish between theory failure, programme failure, implementation failure, and methodological failure, while keeping in mind the contextual and environmental factors that can influence all types of failure (EEF, 2019; Coldwell & Moore, 2023).

### **Cost data reporting and collecting**

The following data will be collected using a bottom-up approach to produce a cost analysis, following the YEF guidance on cost reporting (YEF, n.d.).

- **Personnel time** – time to deliver the intervention and provide supervision will be recorded as part of the implementation checklist completed during delivery.
- **Programme costs** – costs such as payment of young people, transport, and provision of equipment, will be recorded as part of the implementation checklist completed during delivery; additional venue costs (where relevant) will be recorded.
- **Training costs** – TSM will be requested to record time and resources required to train staff, including cost of external trainers, training material and facilities.

- **Other programme inputs** – TSM will be asked to record any other costs arising as a result of intervention delivery.

These costs will be collected for each phase of the programme (the employment element and the post-employment support), so that the relative contribution to the overall programme costs can be assessed.

## **Summary of evaluation data collection processes, sources and timing**

### **Data collection processes**

Data collected directly from YP

Quantitative measure and survey data will be collected using an online portal that can be accessed through desktop & laptop computers, tablets and phones. The surveys will be self-complete but YP will be supported by YOT case managers and TSM supervisors and in addition evaluation team members will provide further support, particularly for YP in the control group at the six-month follow up data collection point and if the YP in the control group are no longer part of the YOT case management.

Qualitative interviews will be undertaken by evaluation team staff and take place face-to-face with YP in safe spaces. Interviews with staff and stakeholders will take place face-to-face or online, depending on schedules. If face-to-face, they will take place at the offices of the relevant organisation.

Accessing PNC data through the Office of National Statistics (ONS)

The trial statistician, who is an ONS accredited researcher (a requirement for accessing data) will apply to access the PNC data via the ONS Secure Research Service. It takes approximately 12 months between data being added to the NPC database for it be available via the ONS Secure Research Service, and permission to access to the data can take several months to be approved, so the request will be made well in advance to ensure it is available in time. The date request will be made after the last cohort has joined the programme and the request will cover all cohorts that are part of the programme.

Accessing employment data

BOP will complete the HMRC data request template and return this directly to the HMRC data sharing team. On receipt of the request, HMRC will make a preliminary review to ensure all sections relevant to the request and issue a data sharing reference. On acknowledgement of the request, HMRC will commence an initial high-level scoping with HMRC stakeholders to understand HMRC's views on necessity and proportionality of the proposed data and whether there is legislation that allows HMRC to share this data for the proposed purpose.

Once initial scoping is complete and all stakeholders have provided approval in principle to progress the request, TSM will be engaged with HMRC to work with BOP further to refine the request, agree the specific data requirements and the most suitable method of transfer. In previous BOP programmes, this has been via a secure link to download the data from HMRC's portal (SDES). BOP will then supply HMRC with National Insurance Numbers and a unique project reference number for each participant and receive the following data from HMRC on a regular basis: Taxable pay YTD; Taxable pay in Period; Tax year; Employer; RTI start date; RTI leaving date; hours Band.

### **Summary of data sources and time points**

**Table 8** below summarises all the data collection being undertaken for the evaluation, including specifying the research element, research question, measure/data collected, the participants and the data collection time points.

**Table 8: Summary of evaluation data collection**

Evaluation element	Research question/ objective	Measure/ data collected	Participants	Data collection time points				
				Baseline	Treatment phase	6-month follow-up	9-month follow-up	12-month follow-up
RCT process	Approach & eligibility	Recruitment log	Treatment & control	x				
	Consent	Informed consent/ assent	Treatment & control	x				
	Contact details	Contact details individual & significant others	Treatment & control	x				
	Demographics	Demographics	Treatment & control	x				
	Randomisation	Randomisation outcome	Treatment & control	x				
Impact	Offending at 12 months	PNC data	Treatment & control					x
	Behavioural difficulties	SDQ	Treatment & control	x		x		
	Total difficulties	SDQ	Treatment & control	x		x		

Evaluation element	Research question/ objective	Measure/ data collected	Participants	Data collection time points				
				Baseline	Treatment phase	6-month follow-up	9-month follow-up	12-month follow-up
	Self-efficacy	New General Self-Efficacy Scale	Treatment & control	x		x		
	Employment aspirations	NPC JET survey		x		x		
	Employment status	HMRC	Treatment & control				x	x
	Offending between 7-12 months post randomisation	PNC						x
Fidelity/ confounds	Intervention fidelity	YP attendance	Treatment only		x	x	x	
	Other interventions received	Survey	Treatment & control			x		
	Other interventions received	Qualitative interviews	Treatment & control				x	x
IPE	Feasibility, acceptability,	Survey	Treatment & control			x		

Evaluation element	Research question/ objective	Measure/ data collected	Participants	Data collection time points				
				Baseline	Treatment phase	6-month follow-up	9-month follow-up	12-month follow-up
	mechanisms and experience							
	Feasibility, acceptability, mechanisms and experience	Qualitative interviews	Treatment & control, supervisors, stakeholders				x	x
Costs	Costs of delivering the programme	Costs data proforma	The Skill Mill management				x	

## Internal Pilot

An internal pilot will take place during the first six months of the trial. An internal pilot forms part of the trial and the outcome data generated will contribute to the final analysis. This is in contrast to an 'external pilot', which is undertaken as test of the processes and procedures of an efficacy study, but any outcome data collected are not included in the analysis of the full trial or form part of the main data set (Avery et al, 2017). The pilot period will start when the first YP are randomised and start the intervention or are assigned to the control group. The overarching aim of the pilot is to assess whether a full trial of TSM programme is feasible. The specific research questions the pilot is aiming to answer are:

1. **Intervention acceptability and feasibility:** Is the intervention acceptable to referrers and YP such that sufficient YP are referred to TSM and YP participate fully with it?
2. **Intervention delivery:** Is TSM able to deliver the intervention as intended to sufficient numbers of YP?
3. **Trial acceptability and feasibility:** Are the trial procedures and processes acceptable to YP such that they agree to participate, share relevant data, agree to data on them being accessed from other data sources (including the PNC) and comply with randomisation allocations?

To inform the pilot, we will:

- review the administrative and baseline data and six-month follow up data collection;
- monitor the participant characteristics to check they are in line with those in the local area in terms of ethnicity and gender;
- invite feedback from all supervisors and YOSs via email;
- interviews with referrers, TSM supervisors, BOP staff, TSM crew clients, and YP from intervention and control groups (see anticipated numbers in **table 9**) below

**Table 9: the anticipated number of qualitative interviews to be undertaken as part of the pilot**

	COHORT 1
Referrers	1
TSM supervisors	4
BOP Staff	1
TSM crew clients	1
Intervention YP	4
Control YP	2

N=13

As with the quantitative data collection, the qualitative data collected for the pilot will be included as part full IPE dataset if the progression criteria are met and the full efficacy trial is undertaken.

### **Progression criteria**

Based on the data gathered and reviewed as part of the pilot, the following progression criteria set out in **table 10** below will be applied to determine whether the main trial should go ahead.

**Table 10: Progression criteria**

Category	Area	Question	Progression criteria	Red/Amber/Green
A: Project implementation	Recruitment	Do sufficient YOTs sign up as partners in the trial	Proportion of targeted 22 YOTs who have signed up as partners	≥75%
				74%-50%
				<50%
A: Project implementation	Fidelity	Do YP attend sufficient workdays	Average YP attendance	≥65%
				64%-50%
				<50%
A: Project implementation	Eligibility	Do YP referred meet the eligibility criteria?	Percentage of referred YP who meet eligibility criteria.	≥75%
				74%-50%
				<50%
A: Project implementation	Supervisor training	Do supervisors receive the necessary training to deliver the intervention?	Percentage of supervisors who have received necessary training before starting to deliver the intervention.	≥75%
				74%-50%
				<50%
A: Project implementation	Engagement	Do sufficient YP remain engaged in the programme?	Percentage of YP who start the programme who remain on it after four months	≥65%
				64%-50%
				<50%
	Recruitment			≥75%
				74%-50%

Category	Area	Question	Progression criteria	Red/Amber/Green
A: Project implementation	Recruitment	Do sufficient YOTs sign up as partners in the trial	Proportion of targeted 22 YOTs who have signed up as partners	≥75%
				74%-50%
				<50%
A: Project implementation	Fidelity	Do YP attend sufficient workdays	Average YP attendance	≥65%
				64%-50%
				<50%
B: Evaluation Measurement Recruitment		Have sufficient YP been recruited?	Percentage of first cohort recruitment target achieved.	<50%
C: Measurement and findings	Feasibility of randomisation	Is randomisation feasible?	Percentage of YP allocated to each condition	45%-55%
				35%-44% or 56%-65%
				<35% or >65%
C: Measurement and findings	Data quality	Have sufficient data permissions been given?	Percentage of YP who agree for their PNC data to be collected at 12 months	≥95%
				94%-85%
				<85%
C: Measurement and findings	Data quality	Has sufficient follow up data been collected?	Percentage of YP who completed the SDQ at 6 months	≥75%
				74%-50%
				<50%

## Diversity, equity and inclusion

Throughout its growth, ICF's commitment to fighting inequality and promoting diversity has not wavered and is part of the core culture of the organisation and as such we share YEF's commitment to incorporating a racial and ethnic perspective in study design and implementation and ensure we bring a deep and nuanced approach to the research. In doing so, our thinking is informed by both the landmark Child Trends guide to embedding a racial and ethnic equality perspective in research (Andrews et al, 2019), and the For Equity Health Inequalities Assessment Toolkit HIAT (<https://forequity.uk/hiat/>), which was produced by a team at Lancaster University and funded by the NIHR School for Public Health Research. The HIAT sets out step-by-step process for incorporating a race equity perspective which encourage researchers to 1) reflect on how to embed an equity lens into the research process, 2) involve people with lived experience and 3) dive deeper into the issues raised.

In terms of concrete plans for implementing a race equity lens, we plan to undertake the range of activities set out below, but expect these to be developed, expanded and deepened as the study progresses.

- **Establish a YP advisory group:** we will establish an advisory group of YP to provide input into all stages of the evaluation, including design, implementation, reporting and interpretation. Ideally, this will comprise YP who have previously been part of the intervention as they will have the most relevant experience, and we will work closely with TSM to establish such a group for the purposes of the evaluation.
- **Support YP to participant in the evaluation and complete data collection:** the evaluation team will draw on recruitment materials developed for research with YP with a similar background and vulnerabilities and that has been shown to be accessible, clear and supports genuine informed consent. Survey questions have been tested with similar groups of YP and include a 'read aloud' option to address any literacy issues.
- **Quantitative analysis:** we will collect ethnicity and other EDI data and analyse the impact on different ethnic groups separately against a consistent reference group (e.g. White YP), avoiding a dichotomous analysis of White YP against YP from minoritised ethnic groups, which would be over-simplistic and hide nuances in the data.
- **IPE/ qualitative research:** We believe that the qualitative element of the evaluation is particularly well-placed to 'dig deeper' into the data to identify the 'root causes' of violence and how the intervention helps address these. Our approach will be informed by the theory change, which will support effective probing during interviews to fully explore the underlying issues and causes of behaviour and experiences (Lewis et al, 2013). This approach is built on the use of purposive

sampling to capture the range and diversity of experiences and the Framework approach to analysis, which ensures that all voices and experiences within the data set are treated equally and play their full part in analysis.

- **Adopting a sensitive and trauma-aware approach to engagement and interviewing:** the evaluation team will draw on its extensive experience of conducting research with vulnerable young people and adults to avoid re-traumatisation and upsetting YP. This includes being open and transparent about the process (including explaining the limits to confidentiality), allowing time to build rapport, creating a safe, non-judgemental space through non-leading questioning, avoiding inappropriate responses to YP's experiences, being patient and allowing pauses and breaks where needed, and avoiding the research interview from seeming to be a therapy session (which can leave participants feeling shamed if they have over-shared on topics that were not directly relevant to the research).
- **Reflecting on researcher background potential biases:** as a research team we will actively discuss and reflect on our backgrounds and biases, including considering whether it is appropriate to align the ethnic backgrounds of interviewer and participant. As a research team we see ourselves working within a critical realist tradition (Bhaskar, 1975), so strive to undertake objective, unbiased research but recognise that the degree to which this is possible is always limited and therefore it is important to recognise and acknowledge those limits.

In addition, TSM has a range of processes and procedures in place in order to ensure that YP from minoritised backgrounds are treated fairly and are supported to overcome any explicit or structural disadvantages in accessing employment. Processes and procedures are designed to be clear, consistent, fair and compliant with Equal Opportunities legislation and with UK Youth's Equal Opportunities Policy, which it monitors and reviews regularly. Inclusive practices are central to TSM's recruitment process and participant wellbeing is promoted by being considerate of the vulnerabilities of the participants during recruitment, providing young people with welcoming information documentation written in Plain English and in a range of different media formats. During registration, all young people also complete an employment starter form which details any additional information and necessary adjustments which is later shared with their future employers. TSM undertakes a due diligence process to ensure that they have the necessary knowledge and expertise to recruit and support a diverse cohort of young people fairly and effectively.

## **Ethics and registration**

The trial will be reviewed using ICF's research ethics committee. The key ethical issues for the trial include the following.

- **Ensuring voluntary participation on the basis of informed consent** – YP will be asked to provide consent at the start of the trial and at each subsequent data collection point (both quantitative and qualitative) be asked to reconfirm their consent. Following NSPCC ethics committee guidance, we consider YP aged 16-18 able to provide consent without needing to seek the consent of a parent or carer. However, we will discuss with CYJ teams the importance of being aware of the particular vulnerability of YP within the target cohort and offering or facilitating additional support during the consent process (such as including a parent or carer within the discussion).
- **Avoidance of harm** - in partnership with TSMI the deliver organisation, we will develop a safeguarding protocol for the trial that will cover the response to adverse events or safeguarding concerns that arise during mentoring or data collection; the safeguarding protocol will be informed by the NSPCC evaluation department disclosure (Cotmore & Barnard, 2015) and a summary of the protocol will be explained to participants as part of the consent process and included explicitly in the participant information sheets.
- **Ensuring data is kept confidential** – we will follow strict data security processes, including only sharing data where necessary; using encrypted files to share data; storing data in secure, password protected folders; avoiding reporting findings in a way that allows identification of any issues.

Our initial assessment is that the trial is low risk, on the basis that the level of risk of taking part in the intervention and trial is comparable to the risk of standard care. As such we do not propose employing formal stopping criteria, though potential risks and issues will be monitored on an ongoing basis. The trial will be registered with the ISRCTN registry.

## Data protection

A Data Protection Impact Assessment will be undertaken for this study. The following assessment is based on our current understanding but will be updated based on the impact assessment. In addition, a data sharing agreement will be put in place between the evaluation team and TSM.

ICF will be the data controller for the evaluation data and will be joint data controllers for the data that is required for the SOC and evaluation. The lawful basis we will rely on for all data purposes is the legitimate interest of the data controller (as defined by the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) Article 6). The aim of the RCT is to gather evidence on the effectiveness of TSM on outcomes for YP and this is expected to have substantial social benefits for YP, organisations such as youth offending services and children's social care services, and society more broadly, which justifies the legitimate interest of the data controller. In order to assess eligibility, describe the characteristics of the YP involved in the trial and to undertake analysis of outcomes on subgroups, the following special category data and data on protected characteristics will be recorded: ethnic origin; sexual orientation; SEND status; data on health; sex/gender; and age. Voluntary informed consent will be obtained and participants will be able to withdraw consent for their data to be used up to the point of analysis. A data privacy notice will be made available to participants during the recruitment and consent processes, which will inform participants of their rights and provide further information on the study (detail of the information being collected, how ICF will store, process and protect personal data, and who the data subject should contact if they have any concerns). Data will be stored securely on ICF servers within a UK-based server and only be accessible to the study team.

At the end of the study, the evaluation team will submit data to the YEF archive. The process involves preparing and submitting two datasets.

- One dataset will only contain participants' identifying data and a unique project specific reference number for each YP. This will be submitted to the DfE and pseudonymised (e.g., personal identifying data is removed and replaced with DfE's pupil matching reference numbers (PMRs)). The PMRs and the project specific reference numbers will then be submitted to the ONS for storage in the YEF archive.
- The second dataset will contain all the evaluation data and the project specific reference numbers. This will be submitted directly to the ONS for storage in the YEF archive.

The evaluation team will destroy its copy of the data sets two years after completion of the final evaluation report.

## **Stakeholders and interests**

### **The Skill Mill**

The following are the lead contacts within The Skill Mill who will be responsible for overseeing the intervention and working to deliver the trial in collaboration with the evaluation team.

- David Parks OBE, Managing Director: overseeing the strategic implementation of the programme.
- Andy Peaden, COO overseeing the operational implementation of the programme
- Charlotte Clarke, overseeing financial and data functions
- Andrew Park, Skill Mill Board Member
- Linzie Pentleton, Skill Mill Board Member
- Dr Katri-Liis Lepik, Skill Mill Board Member
- Sadiq Mussani, Skill Mill Board Member

### **Bridges Outcomes Partnerships**

The following are the lead contacts within Bridges Outcomes Partnership who lead the social outcomes partnership that is co-funding the intervention.

- Iciar Ania, executive director: overseeing the social outcomes partnership with The Skill Mill.

### **Evaluation team**

The following are the members of the evaluation team with primary responsibility for implementing the trial.

- Dr Lucy Loveless, managing consultant, ICF: principal investigator for the trial with overall responsibility for its design and delivery.
- Dr Aisha Ahmad, managing consultant, ICF: project manager for the trial, responsible for the day-to-day project management and coordination of the evaluation and lead for the implementation and process evaluation.
- Professor Chris Fox, professor of Evaluation and Policy Analysis, Manchester Metropolitan University: providing strategic input into all aspects of the evaluation and leading the implementation and process evaluation.
- Laura Campbell, senior consultant: project coordinator.

- Robert Wishart, ICF associate: trial statistician, responsible for sample size calculations and lead for impact analysis.
- Dr Gavin Bailey, lecturer and researcher in the Policy Evaluation and Research Unit at Manchester Metropolitan University: supporting the implementation and process evaluation.
- Khin Lin, senior consultant, ICF: providing support across all elements of the evaluation
- Dr Matt Barnard, consulting director, ICF: providing senior support and quality assurance for the study.
- Dr Sergio Salis, consulting director, ICF: providing quality assurance for the statistical analysis plan and the quantitative analysis.

## Risks

Risk	Mitigation
<p><b>Inability to get buy in from sufficient YOTS</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Extensive and detailed discussions with individual YOTs about their involvement</li> <li>• Group meetings with YOTs to keep them updated with developments</li> <li>• TSM &amp; Bridges signing agreements before the start of the trial</li> </ul>
<p><b>Inability to identify sufficient participants will mean the trial is underpowered.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adequate recruitment key element of pilot phase and part of continuing criteria</li> <li>• Recruitment regularly and frequently monitored and early action taken if lower than required</li> <li>• Adjustment to study timelines</li> <li>• Strong pre-existing partnerships and relationships with YOS teams Support by evaluators for TSM in explaining trial and requirement to YOS teams</li> </ul>
<p><b>Inability to recruit sufficient participants will mean the trial is underpowered.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensuring sufficient time for YOS case worker to introduce and explain the intervention and benefits to YP</li> <li>• Recruitment material designed to be clear, accessible and attractive Behaviourally informed incentives to support engagement</li> </ul>
<p><b>Intervention causes harm through negative peer effects and disappointment of not getting follow on work</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The evaluation team will work with TSM to develop a serious adverse events protocol that covers reporting and actions</li> <li>• The evaluation team will work with TSM to identify crisis and longer-term referral pathways and sources of advice, such as with local Child and</li> </ul>

	<p>Adolescent Mental Health Services and Young Minds</p>
<p><b>Intervention causes harm to vulnerable YP due to lack of sensitive management and oversight</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• TSM implementing a 'child first' approach, prioritizing their wellbeing at all points and taking into account their social and cultural backgrounds TSM supervisors and evaluation team have training in cultural awareness and trauma-informed practice enabling them to respond sensitively to YP's lived experience</li> <li>• TSM undertakes additional tailored preparation for inclusion of young women including assessing risk by male participants, ensuring appropriate workwear and equipment is available and modelling inclusive language and behaviour</li> <li>• Evaluation team makes sure research materials are accessible and inclusive, including using YP advisory group to check on language and presentation</li> </ul>
<p><b>Attrition from the trial (ie failure to collect follow-up secondary outcome data) which will undermine its validity</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Multiple contact details requested from participants</li> <li>• Regular check ins with supervisors and participants</li> <li>• Contact details reviewed &amp; updated if needed at each data collection point</li> <li>• Close monitoring of participation numbers and data collection</li> <li>• Assigning additional resource to making contact and supporting completion of measures if lack of initial response Behaviourally-informed incentive strategy</li> </ul>

<p><b>Social outcomes partnership undermines trial integrity by focusing the delivery partnership on achieving the outcomes that have been included in the social outcomes contract by the young people</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• BOP involved in design and planning of trial.</li> <li>• BOP agrees finalised trial design and agrees there should be no unplanned deviations from it.</li> <li>• BOP, ICF and TSM have designed the outcomes in the trial to be in line with the outcomes included in the outcomes contract.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Attrition from the intervention may lead the trial to find no evidence of impact as too few YP have received a sufficient dose.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• TSM supervisors will maintain face to face interactions with the participants on a weekly basis including through: being clear at the start of the research, and throughout, about the value of the research to TSM and the importance of their contribution to this maintaining contact and keeping up to date contact details, with the TSM staff actively maintaining contact with the participants, for example contacting them at key points in the year such as in the month of their birthday</li> </ul> <p>Staff will work with involved professionals to increase engagement rates and reduce drop-out rates.</p>
<p><b>Unable to access or link YP data in trial with PNC data meaning the primary outcome cannot be evaluated</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Evaluation team will apply for access early (9-12 months in advance of when the data is needed)</li> <li>• Required details for data linkage collected as part of baseline data collection, including name of school attended at age 16, and checked as part of data quality review before YP joins trial</li> <li>• Sensitivity analysis undertaken to assess risk of under-reporting due to data lags</li> </ul>
<p><b>Poor data quality manifesting as incomplete or inaccurate quantitative data or qualitative data lacking richness and depth</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support and training provided to staff undertaking data collection</li> </ul> <p>Clear recruitment and data collection tools that facilitate accurate completion by YP</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Monitoring of data collection quality and swift implementation of additional quality controls if necessary</li> </ul>
<p><b>Lack of distinction between intervention and control</b> undermining <b>ability of evaluation to identify impact.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Quantitative monitoring of services received by control group</li> <li>Qualitative exploration of services received by control group</li> </ul>
<p><b>Data breach leading to harmful disclosure of participants personal data</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Clear data sharing and storage protocols shared with TSM and evaluation team Monitoring of data sharing and storage and rapid reporting and response if risk or breach</li> <li>Review and introduce new procedures &amp; training if needed</li> </ul>
<p><b>Reduction of evaluation staff capacity due to sickness or other causes undermining implementation of evaluation</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ongoing monitoring of resources and staffing against need</li> <li>If reduction in staff capacity, draw on additional staff at ICF or its wide network of associates and consultants</li> </ul>
<p><b>Reduction of delivery staff capacity due to sickness or other causes undermining implementation of evaluation</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ongoing monitoring of resources and staffing against need. A comprehensive mobilisation/implementation plan is developed internally within TSM, based on previous mobilisation considerations including specific contract requirements, to enable the management of capacity and prioritisation.</li> <li>TSM to bring in additional capacity. TSM will undertake a wide-ranging structured recruitment and publicity campaign including job websites, social media, local papers and universities.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promote attractive pay, conditions of work and staff benefits. Promote internally and externally and across current partner organisations.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Deterioration in the relationship between the evaluation and project teams leading to a lack of cooperation undermining the proper functioning of the trial.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Regular meetings between evaluation and project team to discuss progress and maintain good communication</li> <li>• Early identification of sources of friction and proactive response from both teams to resolve issues</li> <li>• Keeping YEF appraised of progress of trial and status of partnership and seeking support when needed</li> </ul>

## Timeline

Dates	Activity	Team responsible/ leading
<b>Project and Evaluation Set Up and Mobilisation stage - Pilot</b>		
Jan 2026 – Feb 2026	Protocol finalisation, development of consent and information sheets, ethical approval application and decision	Evaluation team
Jan 2026 – Feb 2026	Project team agree ISAs and referral mechanism with partners/stakeholders, recruitment, vetting and DBS checks of staff for project delivery, staff training	TSM
Jan 2026 – Feb 2026	Development of online portal	Evaluation team
Jan 2026 – June 2026	Development of IPE tools and online portal	Evaluation team
<b>Project and Evaluation Launch and Delivery - Pilot</b>		
Feb 2026 – May 2026	Receipt of referrals (Cohort 1)	TSM
Feb 2026 – May 2026	Baseline data collection and randomization (Cohort 1)	TSM & Evaluation team
March 2026 – Feb 2027	Delivery of intervention (Cohort 1)	TSM
Sep 2026 – Nov 2026	Submission of end of phase reports	TSM
Sept 2026	Submission of document reporting against progression criteria and YEF decision on whether to progress to efficacy study	Evaluation team

Sept 2026	Follow-up data collection (Cohort 1)	TSM & Evaluation team
Sept 2026 – Nov 2026	Qualitative data collection for pilot study	Evaluation team
<b>Project and Evaluation Set Up and Mobilisation stage - efficacy</b>		
July 2026 – Aug 2026	Statistical analysis plan drafted	Evaluation team
<b>Project and Evaluation Delivery - efficacy</b>		
Aug 2026 – Oct 2026	Receipt of referrals (Cohort 2)	TSM
Aug 2026 – Oct 2026	Baseline data collection and randomization (Cohort 2)	TSM & Evaluation team
Sept 2026 – May 2027	Delivery of intervention (Cohort 2)	TSM
Feb 2027	Follow-up data collection (Cohort 2)	TSM & Evaluation team
Feb 2027 – May 2027	Qualitative data collection (Cohort 2)	Evaluation team
Feb 2026 – May 2027	Receipt of referrals (Cohort 3)	TSM
Feb 2026 – May 2027	Baseline data collection and randomization (Cohort 3)	TSM & Evaluation team

Mar 2027 – Feb 2028	Delivery of intervention (Cohort 3)	TSM
Nov 2027	Follow-up data collection (Cohort 3)	TSM & Evaluation team
Aug 2027 – Nov 2027	Qualitative data collection (Cohort 3)	Evaluation team
Aug 2027	Receipt of referrals (Cohort 4)	TSM
Aug 2027	Baseline data collection and randomization (Cohort 4)	TSM & Evaluation team
Sept 2027 – May 2028	Delivery of intervention (Cohort 4)	TSM
Feb 2028	Follow-up data collection (Cohort 4)	TSM & Evaluation team
Feb 2028	Qualitative data collection (Cohort 4)	Evaluation team
June 2028 – July 2028	Project delivery report	TSM
<b>Sept 2028 – Nov 2028</b>	Offending data access application	Evaluation team
<b>June 2029 – Sept 2029</b>	Data analysis	Evaluation team
Sept 2029 – Jan 2030	Final evaluation report	Evaluation team

Jan 2030 – Feb 2030	Peer review, final report sign off and data archived	Evaluation team.
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