



EVALUATION PROTOCOL

**The London Sexual Violence  
programme to improve attitudes  
towards harmful behaviours in  
adolescent dating and relationship  
contexts: a two-armed cluster  
randomised controlled trial**

**University of Manchester**

Principal investigator: Neil Humphrey

**The London Sexual Violence programme to improve attitudes towards harmful behaviours in adolescent dating and relationship contexts: a two-armed cluster randomised controlled trial**



**Evaluator (institution): University of Manchester**

**Principal investigator(s): Neil Humphrey**

<b>Project title</b>	The London Sexual Violence programme to improve attitudes towards harmful behaviours in adolescent dating and relationship contexts: a two-armed cluster randomised controlled trial.
<b>Developer (Institution)</b>	Brook
<b>Evaluator (Institution)</b>	University of Manchester
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<b>Trial design</b>	Two-armed cluster randomised controlled trial with random allocation at the school level
<b>Trial type</b>	Efficacy with integrated implementation and process evaluation
<b>Evaluation setting</b>	Mainstream secondary schools across Greater London
<b>Target group</b>	Pupils in Year 9 (aged 13-14 at baseline)
<b>Number of participants</b>	64 schools, 12,800 pupils
<b>Primary outcome and data source</b>	Attitudes towards harmful behaviours in adolescent dating and relationship contexts (MADVA survey; Kirkman et al., 2025)
<b>Secondary outcome and data source</b>	Knowledge of healthy relationships (bespoke measure) Informal and professional help-seeking intentions (adapted from Hedge et al., 2018) Pro-social behaviour (SDQ subscale; Goodman, 1997)

## Protocol version history

Version	Date	Reason for revision
<b>1.3[latest]</b>	24/02/2026	Incorporating all required changes
<b>1.2</b>	06/02/26	Post GeCo (YEF) feedback
<b>1.1</b>	10/11/25	YEF feedback
<b>1.0 [original]</b>	24/10/25	

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## Study rationale and background

Dating and relationship violence (DRV) describes a broad range of harmful psychological, physical and sexually abusive behaviours that take place in the context of a romantic relationship (Melendez-Torres et al., 2024). It can occur face-to-face or online and encompasses emotional and verbal abuse (e.g., coercion, name calling), physical violence (e.g., hitting, slapping) and harmful sexual behaviours (Young et al., 2021). These sexual behaviours are classified across a continuum, spanning developmentally inappropriate, problematic, abusive and/or violent acts (Hackett, 2010; NSPCC, 2019) This encompasses sexual harassment (e.g., sexist name calling, receiving or sending unsolicited nude images), sexual assault (e.g., groping) and sexual abuse (e.g., rape). DRV is a public health issue associated with range of negative short- and long-term health outcomes, including mental health problems, suicidal ideation, substance misuse, future DRV victimisation and perpetration, and compromised academic engagement and performance (Exner-Cortens et al., 2013; Piolanti et al., 2023; Taquette & Monteiro, 2019).

Nearly half of 13-to-17-year olds in England and Wales who have been in a relationship have experienced violent or controlling behaviours from their partner, including being pressured or forced into sexual activity; being physically assaulted; having explicit images of them shared without their consent; and/or being made to feel afraid to disagree or break up with their partner (Youth Endowment Fund, 2024). Within this population, there is evidence that certain groups are affected more than others:

- Girls are disproportionately affected by DRV (Hébert et al., 2017), and those in the UK report the highest rates of sexual violence victimisation compared to other European countries (Tomaszewska & Schuster, 2021). However, there is evidence of complex gendered patterns of perpetration and victimisation (Théorêt et al., 2021; Tomaszewska & Schuster, 2021). For example, a survey of 11-16-year-olds in Wales reported higher incidences of physical victimisation and emotional perpetration among boys compared to girls. However, girls reported higher rates of emotional victimisation than boys (Young et al., 2021).
- Literature on DRV disparities for sexual and gender minority youth is somewhat limited in scope and depth, but prevalence appears to be greater than is seen for cisgender and heterosexual adolescents (Miller et al., 2018; Sulla et al., 2025).
- Young people from minoritized ethnic groups may experience DRV differently and disproportionately, particularly where this intersects with systemic inequities and culturally specific norms around gender, sexuality, and family dynamics (De La Rue et al., 2014).
- There is mixed evidence on differences by socio-economic disadvantage although it may be that DRV is socially stratified (Young et al., 2021).

- Young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) are at increased risk of experiencing or perpetrating DRV due to challenges with social communication, understanding consent, and navigating complex interpersonal situations (McNeish & Scott, 2023).

Nonetheless, it is difficult to capture the true prevalence due to varied definitions that capture a broad range of behaviours (McNeish & Scott, 2023). Furthermore, underreporting is thought to be common due to shame, stigma, and/or a gap in knowledge of what constitutes DRV in the context of adolescents' relationships (Wincentak et al., 2017; Women's Aid, 2021). For example, only 23% of girls aged 11-21 demonstrated a comprehensive understanding of an abusive relationship (Girlguiding, 2018) and there are varied perceptions of prevalence between boys and girls, with boys less likely to identify sexual harassment as a problem (Ofsted, 2021). Indeed, 11–16-year-old secondary school students felt that sexual harassment was normalised in England, embedded in social culture and considered commonplace (Ofsted, 2021). These findings underscore the need for comprehensive, engaging and efficacious education regarding DRV during the secondary school years.

Growing public and political concern triggered a major reform of the sex and relationships curriculum in 2019, the first in twenty years (HM Government, 2019). An emphasis on healthy, nurturing relationships of all kinds as part of these reforms resulted in the framing of the new curriculum as Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) to accentuate this renewed relational focus. RSE became mandatory in secondary schools in September 2020, following recommendations in the Children and Social Work Act 2017 (HM Government, 2019). Statutory RSE guidance for schools was recently revised with a greater focus on misogyny and violence against girls and women, greater LGBTQ+ inclusion, to address young people's increasing exposure to harmful content online (e.g., misogynistic attitudes and unhealthy views about relationships), and describe best practice approaches for teachers (HM Government, 2025). The guidance, which all secondary schools are required to deliver starting in September 2026, includes curriculum content organised across the following broad areas: families, respectful relationships, online safety and awareness, being safe, and intimate and sexual relationships (including sexual health) (Department for Education, 2025a). From early 2026, schools will be able to apply for training grants to help prepare their staff to deliver this curriculum.

However, despite RSE being mandated since 2020, a policy-to-practice gap is evident. While most teenagers report receiving lessons on dating and relationships in the last 12 months, only around half report lessons on sexual consent, and only about 4 in 10 say that lessons covered topics such as harassment or building healthy, respectful romantic relationships. Even fewer say they have received practical advice on how to recognise or address unhealthy relationships (Youth Endowment Fund, 2024). This may be explained by teachers lacking

confidence and training to deliver RSE well (Cumper et al., 2023; Melendez-Torres et al., 2024; Taylor-Gee & Boyson, 2022). Some topics, such as sexual violence and pornography, are complex and challenging to teach and may go undelivered as a result (Ponsford et al., 2025). Furthermore, the recent revisions to the statutory RSE guidance noted above have already been critiqued regarding apparent contradictions in the treatment of digital image sharing, the approach taken to gender, and the conditional framing of children's rights and participation (Setty & Hunt, 2025). In sum, given the evidence of variable delivery and concerns relating to statutory guidance provided for schools, implementation of proprietary universal RSE interventions delivered by external specialists may be necessary.

The premise of the proposed trial is that such interventions can produce meaningful changes in adolescents' knowledge of and attitudes towards harmful DRV behaviours, which is the first step towards longer-term prevention of perpetration and victimisation. There is robust meta-analytic evidence to support this proposition. School-based DRV interventions can meaningfully improve DRV knowledge and attitudes among adolescents in both the short- and long-term (De La Rue et al., 2014; Melendez-Torres et al., 2024), with sleeper effects emerging for DRV perpetration and victimisation (Farmer et al., 2023; Melendez-Torres et al., 2024). Importantly, simple interventions such as the one being trialled here (see below) are easier to implement than complex interventions and are more effective in improving DRV knowledge and attitudes (Gaffney et al., 2022; Melendez-Torres et al., 2024). This has important practical implications for schools with competing priorities and resource constraints. Indeed, school-based interventions have been found to be most effective when primarily focusing on the unacceptability of violence, and increasing student capabilities to identify and disrupt violent behaviours (Bonell et al., 2023; Melendez-Torres et al., 2024).

The proposed trial cohort are pupils in Year 9 (i.e., aged 13-14), who we focus on specifically because the transition to mid-adolescence is a critical period for shaping attitudes toward relationships, gender, consent, and violence (Exner-Cortens et al., 2013). Moreover, the preventive framing of the intervention (LSVP, outlined below) means it will likely be more potent if delivered earlier, given for example the age-related increases in unwanted touching and other problematic behaviours reported by girls (Girlguiding, 2021).

## **The case for primary prevention**

The proposed trial differs from much prior work funded by YEF in that LSVP is a universal, as opposed to targeted or indicated programme (i.e., primary prevention rather than secondary or tertiary). We therefore briefly outline the general case for primary prevention in schools, in addition to the specific considerations for this study. Key to this is the so-called 'prevention paradox' (Rose, 2001): most adverse outcomes come from a large population at low or moderate risk, rather than from the small number of high-risk individuals. Universal, preventive interventions such as LSVP will only ever bring a relatively small benefit at the

individual level in the general, low risk population. However, because the number of people at low/moderate risk is massive, a small reduction in their risk, when multiplied across the entire population, results in many more cases being prevented overall than focusing exclusively on the very small high-risk group (Greenberg & Abenavoli, 2017).

There is good evidence to indicate that universal interventions delivered through schools can be an effective tool for primary prevention (e.g., Cipriano et al., 2023; Johnstone et al., 2018; Korpershoek et al., 2016; Onrust et al., 2016) including those that focus on DRV (Farmer et al., 2023). Importantly in the context of this trial, this evidence base also demonstrates that the effects of intervention exposure can be seen long after the intervention has been delivered (Taylor et al., 2017). For example, young adults who were exposed in childhood to the Good Behaviour Game (a classroom-based behaviour management intervention where teams of pupils earn rewards for collectively demonstrating desirable behaviours and avoiding specified disruptive behaviours during defined periods) showed significantly reduced rates of substance abuse, antisocial personality disorder, and delinquency (Kellam et al., 2011).

In our proposed trial, we focus on whether LSVP improves attitudes to harmful behaviours in adolescent dating and relationship contexts. The Theory of Planned Behaviour offers theoretical support regarding how this could ultimately lead to reductions in perpetration and/or victimisation of DRV (Tolman et al., 1996), but there is also empirical evidence. For example, Leen et al.'s (2013) international review concluded that peer influences and adolescent attitudes towards violence are the two most significant factors underpinning DRV. Furthermore, studies by O' Keefe (1997) and Price et al (1999) found that attitudes predict behaviour in the DRV context. Finally, Pittman and Kerpelman's (2013) cross lag panel study found evidence that disapproving attitudes towards DRV aggression negatively predict later reports of DRV aggression (i.e., higher disapproval -> reduced aggression).

Aligning with the above theory and evidence, our evaluation design uses attitudes towards harmful behaviours in adolescent dating and relationship contexts as its primary outcome, with a proposed longer-term follow-up relating to DRV perpetration and/or victimisation via data linkage in the Police National Computer (PNC). DRV perpetration and victimisation in the shorter-term (i.e., within the lifespan of the main trial) was considered as an outcome but ultimately rejected due to likely floor effects (which would necessitate a massive sample well beyond the capacity of the evaluation and delivery teams) and safeguarding concerns (i.e., required protocols to follow for young people who report having been the victim or perpetrator of (for example) sexual assault in an outcome survey).

The proposed trial uses a cluster randomised controlled trial (RCT) design, with secondary schools as the unit of randomisation. A cluster design is the norm in RCTs of universal interventions such as LSVP as it is the easiest way to guard against contamination effects. An integrated mixed methods implementation and process evaluation (IPE) is included to enable

us to go well beyond the basic question of whether LSVP works, to find out how it works, for whom, and under what circumstance and conditions (Humphrey et al., 2016).

## **Intervention**

### **Brief name**

London Sexual Violence Project (LSVP)

### **Why?**

The primary aim of LSVP is to change young people's attitudes towards harmful behaviours in adolescent dating and relationship contexts. The rationale for this focus is the empirical evidence indicating that the prevalence of DRV increases during adolescence, making early intervention essential. The essential elements of LSVP are theoretically underpinned by the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB). These essential elements, which include four in-person, specialist-delivered classroom sessions, are specifically designed to influence the three main constructs of the TPB: attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioural control. By improving young people's attitudes, establishing positive peer and social expectations (subjective norms), and strengthening their self-efficacy in rejecting harmful behaviour (perceived behavioural control) in the short-term (i.e., from the conclusion of the intervention to a year post intervention exposure), the intervention aims to increase the young person's intention to prevent and reject DRV in the longer term (i.e., in later adolescence/young adulthood). The LSVP Theory of Change (ToC; see Appendix 1) provides a visual depiction of these proposed mechanisms of change.

### **What? (materials and procedures)**

LSVP comprises four x 50–60-minute young person education sessions which are delivered using PowerPoint and prewritten facilitator session plans, reflecting the findings of Melendez-Torres et al.'s (2024) review that efficacious school-based DRV interventions are curriculum-based and aim to provide students with the knowledge, attitudes, and skills to prevent victimisation and perpetration.

In support of a short, four-session intervention format, Melendez-Torres et al. (2024) found no evidence that more complex interventions lead to greater and more sustained change. Instead, their review noted that the ease with which interventions could be delivered and modified was important. Melendez-Torres et al. (2024) concluded that simpler interventions that are delivered well can be effective, especially in resource-poor settings. In addition, they found that the implementation of interventions was affected by factors such as the time and resources to deliver the interventions. This is an important consideration given the constraints that exist for schools in delivering the national curriculum. In sum, there are

benefits to evaluating the efficacy of a short, simple intervention that is easy to implement and receive.

LSVP uses a spiral approach with a logical progression, with key ideas revisited in increasing complexity, as well as clear themes that are built on across the 4 sessions. For example, help-seeking is a consistent theme across all 4 sessions. The sessions focus on 1) healthy/unhealthy relationships and equality, 2) youth produced sexual imagery, 3) harmful sexual behaviours, and 4) understanding and responding to sexual violence and harassment. See Appendix 2 for further details. Sessions also all include general sexual health signposting and ad hoc safeguarding support as required. The four sessions originate from a longer, six-session programme originally developed by Brook in 2022 when they were commissioned by the NHS England to deliver a London Sexual Violence (LSV) programme across 7 London boroughs. These original six sessions were developed through an evidence-informed process that combined research evidence, consultations with young people and teachers (e.g., surveys), practitioner expertise and youth participation. For the current version, the sessions have been refined down to four through discussions with Brook's Participation Advisory Groups and evaluation feedback generated through the original LSV programme.

Brook also consulted with external partners such as the Women and Girls Network and the Middle Eastern Women and Society Organisation to ensure cultural competence and inclusivity. This has informed the tone and delivery of sensitive topics, particularly for young people from faith-based and ethnically diverse communities. LSVP explicitly addresses the gendered nature of DRV. Sessions acknowledge that while anyone can experience abuse, women, girls, and minority genders are disproportionately affected. The programme explores power dynamics, coercion, and societal norms, and includes content on online misogyny, harmful relationship expectations, and barriers to reporting (particularly for boys and young men, who may delay disclosure due to stigma).

Slight modifications have been made to the sessions as part of the co-design stage and refinement of the ToC, partly based on evidence as to the elements of similar interventions that have been found to lead to greater and more sustained change.

In addition to the student-facing sessions, participating schools receive 2 hours of workforce training, which focuses on managing disclosures of sexual harassment and encouraging schools to develop a whole school approach. As a result, it is primarily aimed towards those in the school who are responsible for behaviour, PSHE Leads and safeguarding personnel. The training is interactive and so aimed at groups of no more than 20 to allow for discussion and active engagement. The training aims to equip staff with the skills to identify, intervene, and support students experiencing or perpetrating sexually violent behaviours by confidently teaching consent and related topics, addressing incidents of sexual harassment, and responding effectively to disclosures of sexual assault. This helps schools create a culture of safety and respect by encouraging them to embed a whole school approach to preventing

sexual harassment and sexual violence. Schools become safer spaces where sexually violent behaviour is actively discouraged, and survivors receive the support they need. The training sessions are delivered using PowerPoint and a facilitators guide.

## **Who provides?**

Brook is a national charity founded in 1964 by Helen Brook. They support people with their sexual health and wellbeing through frontline services, education/training, and advocacy. Brook offer a range of services to support their mission of helping people to live healthier lives. They fight for everyone's right to safe, confidential, accessible healthcare, no matter who they are. Brook strive to challenge stigma, amplify voices and provide lifelong support that meets the diverse needs of different communities. Brook's offer combines clinical services, relationships and sex education, outreach in community settings, wellbeing programmes and counselling. Their life-course approach to sexual health and wellbeing means that people can benefit from their holistic services at any stage of their life.

LSVP is delivered by Education and Wellbeing Specialists from Brook who are trained in safeguarding, sexual health, delivery to young people and professionals, and trauma-informed delivery practices. They are all able to deliver complex education topics with groups of young people in a way that is trauma-informed but also improves knowledge and understanding of the topic. A member of school staff is required to be present at each session for safeguarding and behaviour management as part of the delivery agreement with each school.

When Brook work with a school, they complete a Service Level Agreement which includes a section on safeguarding. Brook delivery staff are trained to Level 3 safeguarding at a minimum and regularly attend safeguarding supervisions. A group agreement at the beginning of every session sets up a safe space where young people can contribute as much or as little as they feel comfortable. Brook staff also encourage young people to leave the session or communicate with staff if they feel uncomfortable or overwhelmed by the topic. They are aware of the increased likelihood of disclosures when delivering LSVP and manage disclosures sensitively and appropriately, signposting the young person and sharing information with the school as required.

## **How?**

LSVP is delivered in person to whole classes of up to 30 pupils.

## **Where?**

Secondary schools are the setting for both the classroom sessions and workforce training. This requires the cooperation of school administration in terms of infrastructure and

organisation with rooms for the relevant number of participants and the ability to project a presentation.

In the proposed trial, mainstream secondary schools (both independent and non-independent) delivering education to pupils aged 11-16 (i.e., Key Stages 3 and 4) in the Greater London area will be recruited. Only those who are completely naïve to the intervention will be considered (i.e., schools that have already been the site for delivery of LSVP are excluded, given that their staff will already have received the workforce training element, which could be a source of contamination). Non-mainstream schools (e.g., special schools) are not in scope given the need to significantly adapt both LSVP and the evaluation to make them suitable for the needs of young people in such settings. We acknowledge this as an unavoidable limitation of the trial; future work can explore the adaptation of LSVP for non-mainstream settings if our trial provides evidence of its efficacy.

### **When and how much?**

LSVP is delivered in each participating school over an approximately 6-month period (e.g. spring and summer terms of a given academic year) to enable all classes in the target year group to participate in the four taught sessions. Said sessions are integrated into the school's relationships and sex education (RSE) provision and therefore timetabled as part of personal, social and health and economic education (PSHE). In the proposed trial, the delivery periods are the spring (i.e., January to April) and summer (i.e., May to July) terms of the 26/27 (Wave 1) and 27/28 (Wave 2) academic years.

### **The counterfactual (control condition) and programme differentiation**

Schools allocated to the control arm of the trial will continue their business-as-usual, i.e. delivery of standard, RSE content in line with government guidance, usually taught by school staff. Given research indicating that standard RSE provision is patchy and variable (Youth Endowment Fund, 2024), we will gather data on usual practice as part of the trial's implementation and process evaluation (IPE) strand.

Government guidance does not specify a minimum amount of time that has to be spent on RSE. LSVP represents a significant departure from the norm in the following ways:

- RSE content is usually delivered by a member of school staff. LSVP sessions are delivered by experienced, specialist educators who are confident in managing sensitive discussions and disclosures. Unlike generalist teachers, Brook's facilitators are trained in trauma-informed practice and have extensive experience working with young people affected by or at risk of sexual violence. This ensures that sessions are not only informative but also emotionally safe and responsive.

- Whereas many school-based RSE lessons focus on legal definitions and punitive messaging, LSVP sessions are holistic, exploring the motivations, pressures, and real-life contexts that shape young people's behaviour. For example, in the Youth-Produced Sexual Imagery (YPSI) session, students are encouraged to consider why someone might send or request an image, how power and consent operate in digital spaces, and how to respond safely and respectfully. This contrasts with widely available resources (e.g., Oak Academy consent, exploitation and harassment lesson that are provided for free and used by many schools), which often rely on didactic, law-focused content that lacks nuance and fails to engage with young people's lived experiences.
- LSVP is shaped by ongoing consultation with young people, ensuring that content is engaging and reflective of diverse experiences. It also incorporates cultural competence, with adaptations made to ensure accessibility for young people from different faith and ethnic backgrounds.
- The statutory RSE guidance does not dictate specific curriculum coverage for each year group, instead noting that schools should develop pupils' knowledge of required content pertaining to families, respectful relationships, online safety and awareness, being safe, and intimate and sexual relationships (including sexual health) by the end of Key Stage 4 (Department for Education, 2025a).

## Impact evaluation

### Research questions or study objectives

#### Primary research question

1. What is the difference in attitudes towards harmful behaviours in adolescent dating and relationship contexts (measured by the MADVA) of young people aged 13-14 who participate in LSVP in comparison to those of young people who receive the standard statutory relationships and sex education curriculum?

Hypothesis 1 (confirmatory): We will observe improvement in **attitudes towards harmful behaviours in adolescent dating and relationship contexts** from pre (T0) to post (T1) intervention for schools implementing LSVP (intervention arm) compared to those delivering the standard statutory relationships and sex education curriculum (control arm).

#### Secondary research questions

2. What is the difference in knowledge of healthy relationships (2a), informal (2b) and professional (2c) help-seeking intentions, and pro-social behaviour (2d) of young people aged 13-14 who participate in LSVP in comparison to those of young people who receive the standard statutory RSE curriculum?

Hypothesis 2 (exploratory): We will observe improvement in knowledge of healthy relationships (2a), informal (2b) and professional (2c) help-seeking intentions, and pro-social behaviour (2d) from pre (T0) to post (T1) intervention for schools implementing LSVP (intervention arm) compared to those delivering the standard statutory RSE curriculum (control arm).

3. Is any intervention effect on the primary outcome noted in RQ1/H1 moderated by socio-demographic characteristics?
  - a. Sex, gender identity and modality
  - b. Sexuality
  - c. Ethnicity
  - d. Special educational needs
  - e. Free school meal eligibility

Hypothesis 3 (exploratory): Intervention effects on attitudes towards harmful behaviours in adolescent dating and relationship contexts will vary by sex, gender identity and modality (H3a), sexuality (H3b), ethnicity (H3c), special educational needs (H3d), and free school meal eligibility (H3e).

4. Is LSVP delivered as intended, and what factors appear to influence this?

No hypothesis presented as the first part of this research question will be answered descriptively to support the internal validity of the trial, with the second part being addressed in an explanatory manner in the IPE.

5. In the event of any non-compliance, is any intervention effect on the primary outcome noted in RQ1/H1 moderated by implementation variability?

Hypothesis 4 (exploratory): Intervention effects on attitudes towards harmful behaviours in adolescent dating and relationship contexts will be larger in the context of compliance (i.e., complete delivery).

6. What are the experiences and perceptions of LSVP Education and Wellbeing Specialists, school staff, and young people in either delivering or engaging with the intervention?

No hypothesis presented as this research question pertains to the qualitative strand of the IPE.

7. By young adulthood (specifically, age 18-25), does LSVP lead to reductions in perpetration and/or victimisation for relevant criminal offences (e.g. domestic abuse, sexual offences)?<sup>1</sup>

Hypothesis 5 (exploratory): Lower levels of perpetration (5a) and/or victimisation (5b) for relevant criminal offences (e.g. domestic abuse, sexual offences) recorded in the Police National Computer (PNC) will be observed for young adults who attended schools implementing LSVP (intervention arm) compared to those who attended schools delivering the standard statutory RSE curriculum (control arm). (by age 25, given evidence that intimate partner violence peaks during the 18-25 period; Johnson et al., 2015)

As noted, RQs 4 and 6 are primarily addressed in the IPE. They are elaborated in the corresponding section of the protocol below.

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<sup>1</sup> Not to be assessed in the current trial; data linkage will allow longer-term follow-up and analysis when the trial cohort are young adults (by age 25, given evidence that intimate partner violence peaks during the 18-25 period; Johnson et al., 2015).

## Design

**Table 1: Trial design**

<b>Trial design, including number of arms</b>		Two-armed parallel cluster randomised controlled efficacy trial with random allocation at the school level <b>and stopping rules between</b> trial waves pertaining to <b>recruitment and compliance</b>
<b>Unit of randomisation</b>		Cluster (school)
<b>Stratification variables</b> (if applicable)		School size (above vs below national average) School type (mixed vs single sex) (both of the above derived from <a href="#">Get Information About Schools</a> )
<b>Primary outcome</b>	variable	Attitudes towards harmful behaviours in adolescent dating and relationship contexts
	measure (instrument, scale, source)	Modern Adolescent Dating Violence Attitudes (MADVA) survey (Kirkman et al, 2025), self-reported, scored 48-240, with higher scores indicative of attitudes that are more accepting of harmful behaviours
<b>Secondary outcome(s)</b>	variable(s)	Knowledge of healthy relationships Informal and professional help-seeking intentions Pro-social behaviour
	measure(s) (instrument, scale, source)	Knowledge – self-reported, bespoke measure to be developed, scoring will be 0-100%, with higher scores indicating greater knowledge of healthy relationships Informal and professional help-seeking – self-reported (to be adapted from Hedge et al, 2018; higher scores will be indicative of stronger likelihood of seeking help from a given source (informal, professional).

		Pro-social behaviour: SDQ subscale; Goodman, 1997), self-reported, scored 0-10, with higher scores representing greater pro-social behaviour
Baseline for primary outcome	variable	As above
	measure (instrument, scale, source)	As above
Baseline for secondary outcome	variable	As above
	measure (instrument, scale, source)	As above

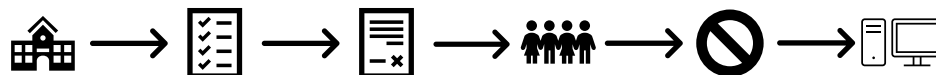
Per standard practice in YEF evaluations, the grantee/delivery organisation (Brook) will lead recruitment, which will take place in two waves. School recruitment into Wave 1 will take place in the first half of 2026, and Wave 2 will take place in the first half of 2027, with approximately half of the total sample required to be recruited in each. In analogous trials (i.e., secondary school, cluster RCT, focused on non-academic interventions, England):

- Bonnell et al. (2018; Learning Together/Inclusive trial) initial approach to 490 schools to obtain randomised sample of 40 (8% success rate)
- Lordan and Maguire (2019; Healthy Minds trial) initial approach to 174 schools to obtain randomised sample of 34 (20% success rate)
- Gold et al. (2025; BITUP trial) initial approach to 1014 schools to obtain randomised sample of 108 (11% success rate)
- Deighton et al. (2025; AWARE trial) initial approach to 1175 schools to obtain randomised sample of 239 (20% success rate)

Thus, the delivery team are likely to need to approach between 300 and 600 schools to obtain a randomised sample of 64. This is feasible given that the trial recruitment area is Greater London (>900 non-independent and independent mainstream secondary schools – see [here](#)); the recent revisions to the RSE statutory guidance will mean the issues addressed in LSVP will be high on schools’ agendas; and we are able to offer incentives (aggregated school feedback reports: see [here](#) for exemplar; and, financial remuneration for all schools of £1000 each, with half payable after T0/randomisation and half upon completion of the follow-up (T1) wave of outcome data collection). Furthermore, there will likely also be significant benefit of working with Local Authority (LA) teams to identify suitable/willing schools (as opposed to the more traditional ‘cold call/blanket’ approach to recruitment). The evaluation team did so in their

most recent RCT and our initial approach (via LAs) to 105 schools yielded a sample of 62 schools for randomisation (59% success rate) (Humphrey et al., 2025).

The onboarding and trial readiness process is as follows:



- (1) Brook recruit schools and hand over to UoM for onboarding.
- (2) Schools complete online memorandum of agreement covering key participation requirements.
- (3) UoM and a given school enter into a data sharing agreement for provision of required background data (e.g., UPN; date of birth; first name; surname; sex; ethnicity; special educational needs; free school meal eligibility) for the trial cohort (i.e., those who will be in Year 9 in autumn 26 for Wave 1, or autumn 27 for Wave 2).
- (4) Schools securely provide the required pupil lists.
- (5) Schools distribute parent/carer opt-out sheets for trial cohort (with opted-out pupils being excised from the project dataset). To note is that these will include information about the content of LSVP.
- (6) After the opt-out period ends, pupils complete outcome surveys (via password lists provided by UoM that will enable linkage back to socio-demographic information noted in (3) above).

## Randomisation

Following the completion of the recruitment, on-boarding and baseline data collection processes (e.g., eligibility checks such as school type; confirmation of data sharing agreements; provision of pupil background data; minimum % baseline survey completion threshold exceeded), eligible schools will be randomly allocated to either intervention or control conditions. The random allocation sequence will be undertaken by an independent statistician and will include stratification based on school size (above or below national average) and type (mixed vs single sex). Given the two waves of recruitment, randomisation will be undertaken in two batches: December 2026 (Wave 1) and December 2027 (Wave 2).

The nature of the trial design means that blinding is not feasible; this is the norm in school-based trials of universal interventions (Hayes et al., 2024).

## Participants

Based on the sample size calculations provided below, we expect our initial trial cohort to be  $\approx 12,800$  CYP. Young people will be eligible to participate in the trial if they attend a participating school, are in Year 9 (aged 13-14) in the 2026/27 (Wave 1) or 2027/28 (Wave 2)

academic years (i.e., at T0 in a given wave they are in the pupil list provided by the school) and have not been opted out of the study by their parents/carers or left the school in the time between provision of the pupil list and the T0 surveys.

To note is that as LSVP is a universal intervention, delivered to all young people regardless of need, no screening/assessment is used to determine eligibility (as would be typically used in a trial of a targeted or indicated intervention).

At this stage it is not possible to be certain of the socio-demographic composition (e.g., ethnicity, special educational needs, free school meal eligibility) of the trial sample. However, based on experience in previous, analogous trials (e.g., Deighton et al., 2025), we can expect recruitment to skew towards larger schools in urban areas, meaning that a higher proportion of young people from minoritised ethnic groups and who are eligible for free school meals than is seen nationally is likely. This is especially likely given that the trial will recruit schools in the Greater London area.

As noted elsewhere, recruitment will take place in two annual waves. We expect to recruit approximately 32 of the required 64 schools in the period leading up to the start of academic year 26/27 (Wave 1), with baseline (T0) and randomisation taking place in autumn term 26/27, delivery among intervention schools in spring and summer terms 26/27, and 12-month post-baseline follow-up in autumn term 27/28. The remaining 32 schools will be recruited in the period leading up to the start of academic year 27/28 (Wave 2), with baseline (T0) and randomisation taking place in autumn term 27/28, delivery among intervention schools in spring and summer terms 27/28, and 12-month post-baseline follow-up in autumn term 28/29. Accordingly, all delivery activity will have been completed well before the YEF-required deadline of March 2029.

Stopping rules (i.e., progression to Wave 2) have been discussed and agreed with YEF and Brook based on recruitment and compliance in Wave 1, as follows:

Recruitment:

- Green (proceed):  $\geq 30$  schools recruited in Wave 1;
- Amber (proceed with mitigation): 24-29 schools recruited in Wave 1, triggering contingency site for school recruitment in Greater Manchester (in addition to existing site in Greater London) in Wave 2;
- Red (stop):  $< 24$  schools recruited in Wave 1, triggering early termination of trial due to very low likelihood of being able to meet minimum overall recruitment target.

Compliance:

Full compliance is defined as completion of school workforce training and all four LSVP sessions delivered to all Year 9 classes in a given school.

- Green (proceed): 80-100% compliance, but consider dropping CACE/LATE analysis (or at least caveat around findings) due to redundancy;
- Amber (proceed with mitigation): 50-79% compliance, invoke strategies to improve compliance in Wave 2 based on Brook and UoM insights from Wave 1), CACE/LATE analysis 'sweet spot' (in terms of balance of power to detect complier effect, etc);
- Red (stop): <50% compliance, triggering early termination of trial as it would no longer be a true test of LSVP, and power in CACE/LATE analysis is likely to be significantly compromised.

Intervention delivery and outcome data collection will take place in participating schools. The school and pupil journey/flow through the trial is outlined below:

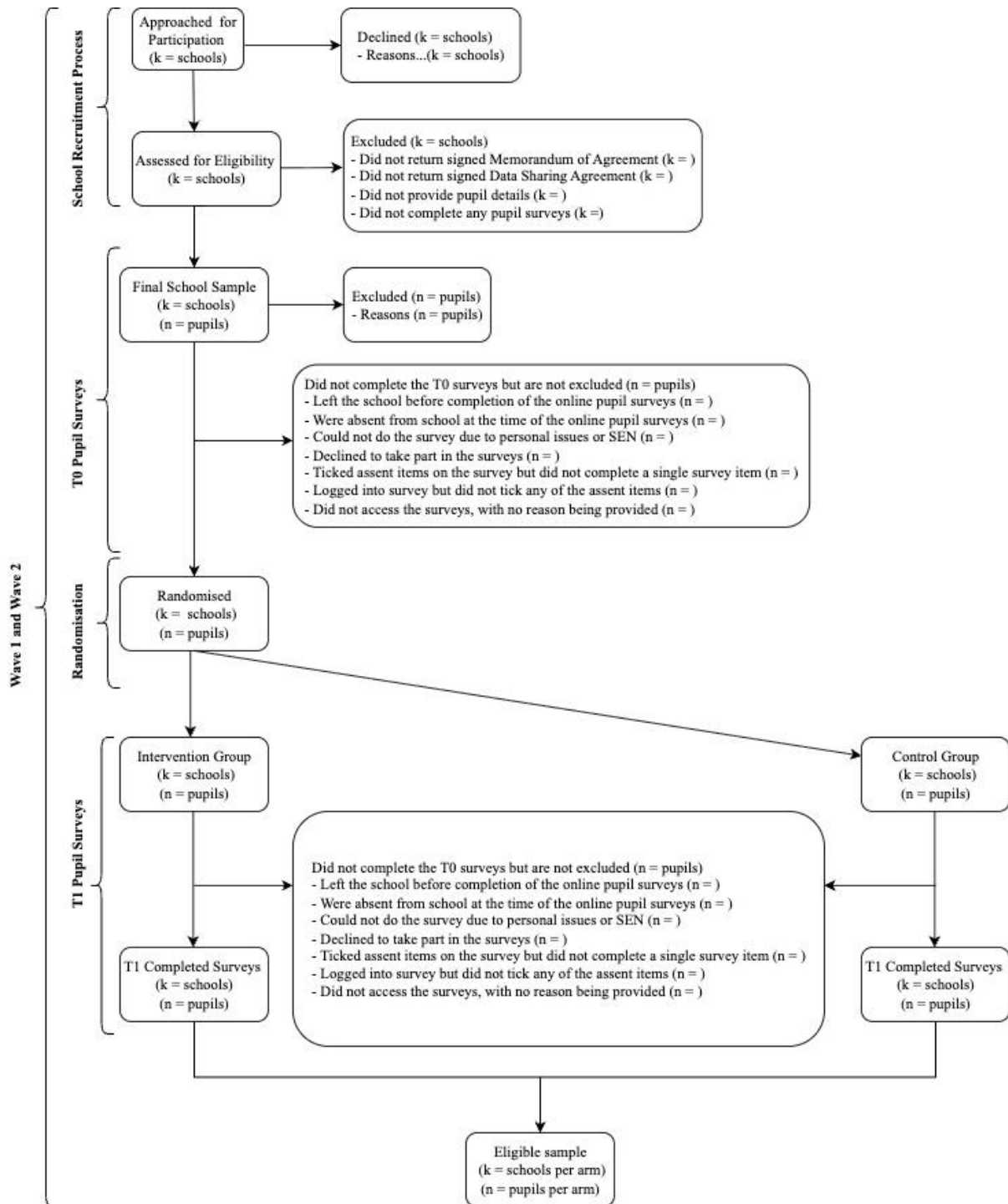


Figure 1. Anticipated school and pupil journey/flow through the trial.

## Sample size calculations

The trial will be powered for a minimum detectable effect size (MDES) of  $d = 0.19$ , balancing considerations of YEF's preferred MDES of 0.2; what size of intervention effect might be considered important or meaningful for the primary outcome in a public health context (Carey et al., 2023; Greenberg & Abenavoli, 2017); meta-analytic evidence for analogous

interventions (i.e., universal, school-based, focusing on adolescent dating and relationship violence and related issues: Lee and Wong (2022) report an average intervention ES on attitudes of 0.19); and pragmatic factors (i.e., the number of schools that could feasibly be recruited given funding and time constraints).

The average size of a secondary school in England is  $\approx 1000$  pupils (Department for Education, 2025b), meaning that a typical Year 9 cohort will be  $\approx 200$  pupils (likely split across eight classes of 25 pupils for PSHE/RSE delivery). Based on prior trials, we conservatively estimate  $\approx 5\%$  to be opted out or leave their school prior to completion of T0/randomisation, with a further  $\approx 20\%$  lost-to-follow-up (Bonell et al., 2018; Deighton et al., 2025), leaving 150 for analysis. Participating schools will vary in size, so we assume a Poisson distribution for cluster size and therefore adjust for a coefficient of variation of 0.08.

Although the available evidence is somewhat sparse as trials of universal, school-based DRV interventions do not always account for clustering (Farmer et al., 2023), the school-level intra-cluster correlation coefficient (ICC) for relevant attitudinal outcomes appears to be typically very small. For example, in Peskin et al.'s (2019) randomised trial of the Me and You adolescent dating violence prevent programme, all ICCs were 0.02 or less. In their meta-analysis, Farmer et al. (2023) used 0.05 as a conservative estimate, and so we adopt this here.

Small ICCs in this context are theoretically consistent. Attitudinal outcomes related to complex social behaviours (e.g., harmful behaviours in dating and relationship contexts), are highly individualized. While the delivery of interventions like LSVP are standardized at the school level, the variance in individual response is likely driven by external factors such as personal history of relationship exposure, family background, cultural norms, and individual psychological factors (Wang, 2016).

Finally, we conservatively estimate a baseline-to-follow-up correlation of 0.3 (from autumn of Y9 to autumn of Y10, the correlation in our #BeeWell cohort dataset for a measure of relationships with school staff is 0.43; in the Education for Wellbeing trial, pre-post correlations ranged from 0.31 to 0.59; Deighton et al., 2025).

The power level set (0.9) is deliberately more conservative than the YEF standard of 0.8 to reduce the likelihood of Type II errors given the social/public policy significance of DRV and the plan for longer-term follow-up (i.e., we need to be more certain of detecting a true effect on attitudes given that we hypothesize this will later translate into behavioural change in young adulthood).

Alpha level is set to the standard 0.05. As secondary outcomes are exploratory, no correction for multiplicity (i.e., Alpha adjustment) is warranted.

Given all of the above assumptions, we will need to recruit a minimum of **60 schools ( $\approx 12,000$  Year 9 pupils)**, which we have increased to 64 schools ( $\approx 12,800$  Year 9 pupils) to factor in

possible school-level attrition (i.e. 2 schools of 32 dropping out in each of Waves 1 and 2). Per YEF evidence security ratings, the MDES at the *design phase* (i.e., N randomised rather than followed up) is **0.18**.

Sample size calculations were run in Stata version 19 using the code:

- `power twomeans 0 0.19, sd(0.954) m1(150) m2(150) rho(0.05) cvcl(0.08) power(0.9)`

... where the standard deviation has been adjusted for the pre-post correlation of 0.3 for an ANCOVA analysis, estimated using the code:

- `sampsi 0 0.19, sd(1) pre(1) post(1) r01(0.3)`

**Table 2: Sample size calculations**

		PARAMETER
Minimum Detectable Effect Size (MDES)		0.19
Pre-test/ post-test correlations	level 1 (participant)	0.3
	level 2 (cluster)	N/A
Intracluster correlations (ICCs)	level 1 (participant)	N/A
	level 2 (cluster)	0.05
Alpha		0.05
Power		0.9
One-sided or two-sided?		Two-sided
Average cluster size (if clustered)		200
Number of clusters	Intervention	32 schools (of which 30 expected for analysis)

		PARAMETER
	Control	32 schools (of which 30 expected for analysis)
	Total	64 schools (of which 60 expected for analysis)
Number of participants	Intervention	6,000 (of which 4,500 expected for analysis)
	Control	6,400 (of which 4,500 expected for analysis)
	Total	12,800 (of which 9,000 expected for analysis)

### Outcome measures

All measures outlined below are to be collected at baseline (T0, pre-randomisation) and 12-month post-baseline follow-up (T1), except for the longer-term follow-up of perpetration and/or victimisation for relevant criminal offences (e.g. domestic abuse, sexual offences) recorded in the PNC (RQ7/H5a/b). The anticipated total item number is no more than 80 items, which will take participants approximately 15 minutes to complete (based on the median completion time of 23 minutes for the c.120 item #BeeWell survey, whose cohort also includes pupils aged 13-14).

All measures except those derived from the PNC will be administered online via RedCap or Qualtrics. The outcome data collection process will be managed by schools following guidance and instructions provided by the evaluator, with the offer of direct support by the evaluator team available to schools. Our model for supporting survey completion in schools is graduated. In most cases, the extensive support materials and instructions provided are sufficient for schools to follow and manage the data collection process with remote/indirect support from the evaluation team. We will keep regular communication with schools throughout the survey windows to spot support needs and monitor compliance with the data collection procedures. For those that struggle and/or for those where we need to 'mop up' (i.e., to maximise completion rates within a given school), we can offer in-person support as necessary. This support, a sufficiently wide survey window (8-10 weeks), an outcome survey battery that minimises data burden, provision of clear, actionable information for each school (e.g., % completion rate updates, 'not started' lists), and the school feedback reports and financial incentives combine to reduce the risk of high individual level attrition.

Schools in prior trials have favoured whole class administration and so we will use this here, with item blocks presented in a randomised order to even out any fatigue effects and to minimise response contamination and social desirability bias.

A range of support materials will be provided to participating schools, including:

- Survey preparation checklist (e.g. timetabling completion time, ensuring availability of IT equipment, sending out parent/carer information sheets);
- Introductory media (e.g. PowerPoint and/or short video to be developed by research team with Common Room North) to be administered c.48 hours prior to survey administration;
- Glossary of terms for teachers to provide standardised definitions as required;
- Frequently asked questions and other support materials (e.g., how to support pupils with SEND to complete surveys without compromising the confidentiality of their responses);
- Distress protocol.

The above processes have been used successfully in multiple analogous trials (e.g., Education for Wellbeing, Passport; Deighton et al., 2025; Humphrey et al., 2025) and other large scale projects (e.g., #BeeWell; #BeeWell Research Team, 2022) involving the evaluation team.

## **Primary outcome**

Improved attitudes towards harmful behaviours in adolescent dating and relationship contexts is a key proximal outcome of LSVP (see Appendix 1: ToC) and was therefore selected as the primary outcome. It will be assessed using the Modern Adolescent Dating Violence Attitudes Scale (MADVA; Kirkman et al, 2025).

As a new measure, MADVA reflects the contemporary adolescent context well (e.g., it examines attitudes to online as well as offline behaviours). It was developed in England, with significant input from young people, and validated with a sample of 10–25-year-olds. There are 48 items in total, scored on a five-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree) spanning attitudes towards (1) sexual abuse offline, (2) sexual abuse online, (3) psychological abuse offline, (4) psychological abuse online, (5) physical abuse offline, and (6) controlling behaviour offline. All items reflect maladaptive attitudes towards harmful behaviours (e.g., “It's okay for a guy to force his girlfriend do sexual things on camera if they are in a relationship”). Accordingly, a reduction in MADVA score represents an improvement in attitudes. The authors’ confirmatory factor analysis undertaken as part of their psychometric validation indicates that a 6-factor solution provides optimal fit, but a single factor solution yields acceptable fit and so is suited for use as the single primary outcome in the context of our trial.

Items will need to be edited slightly as the examples all portray heterosexual relationships with boys as the perpetrator and girls as the victim (e.g., "There is nothing wrong with a guy pretending to like a girl online so that he can convince her to send him nude pictures"). We will edit to wording that is neutral (e.g., "There is nothing wrong with pretending to like someone online to convince them to send nude pictures"). Edits will be discussed and agreed by the research team, Brook staff, and young people as appropriate, in line with our PPIE/REDI approach. To note is that the proposed changes are surface-level and merely about ensuring the language is inclusive and neutral. The structure, content and response format of the original MADVA measure will remain intact.

However, the evaluation team will take a 'belt and braces' approach, assessing the relevant psychometric characteristics of the adapted measure to ensure that they are in line with those of the original version. We are obviously constrained by the available data within the trial, but this will still permit a confirmatory factor analysis to assess the adequacy of the proposed single factor structure (assessed using standard fit indices such as Tucker Lewis Index and Root Mean Square of Approximation), and calculation of McDonald's omega to assess internal reliability/unidimensionality. Collectively, these assessments will give an indication of the internal consistency of the adapted MADVA (i.e., the extent to which the constituent items are homogeneous, thus measuring the same construct) (Terwee et al., 2007). Additional analyses can examine construct validity (i.e., the extent to which scores on a measure relate to other measures in expected ways), by for example testing expected correlations between measures (e.g., do MADVA scores correlate with knowledge of healthy relationships measure in the way we would expect?) or expected differences in scores between known groups (e.g., do MADVA scores differ between girls and boys in the way we would expect?) (Terwee et al., 2007). These analyses will be specified in more detail in the Statistical Analysis Plan for the trial.

Other measures were reviewed and rejected for being too narrow in scope. For example the Acceptance of Dating Violence Scale (Foshee et al., 1998) only focuses on physical violence, and the relevant subscale of Adolescent Attitudes Towards Dating Relationships measure (Price et al., 1999) only focuses on coercion.

## **Secondary outcomes**

Improved *knowledge of healthy relationships* (spanning issues such as gender roles, equality/respect, and consent) is one of the anticipated short-term outcomes of exposure to LSVP (see Appendix 1: ToC). It will be assessed via a brief, self-reported measure to be developed in collaboration with Brook and young people (as part of our PPIE/REDI engagement) during the set-up phase of the trial.

Existing knowledge measures used in prior studies are not suitable, being oriented too closely to the intervention being trialled (e.g., specific content not mirrored in LSVP) and/or the

context of the trial in question (e.g., state laws relating to DRV) (see for example Taylor, 2011). The new measure will be designed to provide a robust assessment of the intended learning outcomes of LSVP, and will be scored 0-100%, with higher scores indicating greater knowledge of healthy relationships. To note is that bespoke measurement of knowledge in this context is the norm (Farmer et al., 2023).

Increased *informal and professional help-seeking intentions* is one of the anticipated short-term outcomes of exposure to LSVP (see Appendix 1: ToC). It will be assessed via an adapted version of the self-report measure used by Hedge et al. (2018). In brief, this measure asks young people to consider the likelihood that they would seek help from different sources in the event of them experiencing DRV. Items are spread across two subscales: informal (nine items, e.g., friend, parent; Cronbach's alpha of .88) and professional (twelve items, e.g., teacher, Rabbi/Imam/Minister/priest; Cronbach's alpha of .96) sources of help. Each is scored on a four-point Likert-type scale from not at all likely to very likely (thus, informal help-seeking subscale = 0-36; professional help-seeking subscale = 0-48; in both cases, higher score is indicative of being more likely to seek help). We will adapt the measure to the UK context, by for example substituting cultural references (e.g., "guidance counsellor"). As with MADVA above, we do not expect that these minor edits will impact the psychometric properties of the measure but will include assessment of this so that we can be certain.

Alternative measures were reviewed and rejected, typically for being unsuitable for use with a universal sample (e.g. help-seeking measure developed by Ashley and Foshee (2005) focuses on confirmed perpetrators or victims of DRV).

Improved *pro-social behaviour* is one of the anticipated short-term outcomes of exposure to LSVP (see Appendix 1: ToC). It will be assessed via the pro-social behaviour subscale of the self-report version of the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (Goodman, 1997). This five-item measure asks young people about pro-social behaviours (e.g., "I am helpful if someone is hurt, upset or feeling ill"), which they endorse on a three-point scale (not true, somewhat true, certainly true). It is scored 0-10, with higher scores indicative of greater pro-social behaviour. The pro-social subscale's internal consistency is on the threshold of acceptability (e.g., both Cronbach's alpha and McDonald's omega = 0.69; Black et al., 2021).

The SDQ pro-social behaviour subscale is being used because it is one of YEF's approved measures.

Wording of all proposed measures will be quality-assured in terms of appropriateness for and relevance to with young people in the trial cohort through consultation with young peer reviewers via our PPIE/REDI work.

## Compliance

As LSVP is a simple, brief intervention delivered by trained external facilitators (Brook Education and Wellbeing Specialists), we expect implementation variability to be minimised when compared to, e.g., whole-school multi-component interventions delivered over the course of one or more years by teachers (Durlak et al., 2011). Nonetheless, complete compliance is by no means guaranteed; for example, in our recent trial of another brief universal, externally delivered intervention (Youth Aware of Mental Health, YAM, as part of the Education for Wellbeing project), delivery did not happen in around 1 in 5 schools due to difficulties co-ordinating delivery, and school staff concerns about safeguarding and behaviour management (Deighton et al., 2025). However, we do not anticipate similar problems with LSVP. First, Education for Wellbeing comprised two multi-arm trials, and so schools signing up were in with a chance of being allocated to several interventions, of which YAM was possibly the least desirable (whereas in the current trial, all will know they will receive LSV if randomised to the intervention arm). Second, the subject matter of YAM included content on topics such as suicide, which raised concerns among some schools (whereas LSVP maps directly on to the revised statutory RSE curriculum). Third, the YAM model stipulated that school staff could not be present when the external facilitator was delivering, which compounded those concerns.

Nonetheless, we will monitor compliance so that any moderating effects can be considered. In the LSVP trial, compliance is defined as complete delivery of (a) the 2-hour school workforce training *and* (b) all four sessions with pupils across all classes in the Year 9 cohort. Brook staff working with a given school will be asked to complete a log so that this can be ascertained at the school-level. Said log will be designed to enable a distinction to be drawn between partial delivery (e.g., completion of school workforce training and sessions with pupils in three of five Year 9 classes) and complete delivery failure (i.e., none of the intervention components delivered at a given school) to enable a more nuanced description of implementation to support internal validity in the trial (supported by qualitative accounts – see IPE section).

We plan to undertake complier average causal effect (CACE) estimation as necessary to ascertain the Local Average Treatment Effect (LATE) in the event of any noncompliance (i.e., is there evidence of a treatment effect in the context of compliance?). This will be fully specified in the SAP.

## **Analysis**

Pupil outcomes will be analysed per allocation of their schools, irrespective of their level of participation (i.e., intent-to-treat). Data from this cluster RCT form a two-level hierarchical structure, with young people nested within schools. To account for this clustering, primary and secondary outcomes will be analysed using two-level random effects models (Ime4; Bates et al., 2015).

The primary outcome, as measured by the MADVA scale at T1, will be regressed on the treatment assignment, baseline MADVA, and variables used in the stratification procedure. Secondary outcomes will be analysed similarly, with models appropriate to their distribution. The treatment effect for the primary outcome will be estimated as the adjusted mean difference in T1 MADVA scores which will be presented with 95% confidence intervals. Standardised effect sizes will be presented as Hedges'  $g$ , with a pooled variance appropriate for this cluster design, per Hedges' (2007) recommendations.

### **Missing data**

All efforts will be made to obtain outcome data on all participants. This will include a relatively wide survey window (c. 8-10 full school weeks) at each timepoint to enable multiple opportunities for young people to complete outcome surveys. Completion rates across all schools will be monitored and presented to the TSC/DMEC as part of ongoing monitoring.

Missing data will be summarised for all variables, and patterns of missingness explored.

Analyses of the primary outcome will be conducted on the observed data under the assumption that data are missing at random (MAR). Deviations from this assumption may be considered as sensitivity analyses. Details of these analyses will be outlined in the statistical analysis plan.

### **Sub-group analyses**

Exploratory subgroup analyses by gender, sexuality, ethnicity, special educational needs and free school meal eligibility are planned for the primary outcome (attitudes). The rationale for these analyses is threefold. First, there is evidence that some population subgroups are more likely to be at-risk than others in relation to DRV (e.g., sexual and gender minority youth report more frequent victimisation than their cisgender, heterosexual peers; Miller et al., 2018). Second, there is meta-analytic evidence of effect heterogeneity for some population subgroups, leading to recommendations that subgroup moderator analyses should be routinely undertaken as part of equity monitoring efforts (Melendez-Torres et al., 2023).

Third, YEF evaluation guidelines require some subgroup analyses to be undertaken as standard (e.g., ethnicity).

The primary outcome model specified above will be extended to include cross-level interactions (e.g., treatment\*gender). Separate models will be fitted for each subgroup analysis, and dummy-coded as necessary (i.e., for those with more than two categories).

A primary concern here from a REDI perspective is the balance to be struck between respecting distinct social identity markers and what is feasible from a statistical perspective. For example, while it is important to understand how the intervention may differentially impact young people who identify as non-binary or from smaller ethnicity groups, very small sample sizes will limit the extent to which meaningful statistical comparisons are possible. Indeed, all subgroup interaction effects are likely to be very underpowered, so even with collapsed categories, analyses will be exploratory and findings very limited.

We will ensure that any aggregation of groups (e.g., conflation of sexual and gender minority groups into a single LGBTQ+ group) are transparent and theoretically justified. Where small sample sizes in some subgroups prevent robust statistical analysis, findings will be contextualised using qualitative data from the IPE to allow a deeper understanding of how LSVP is experienced by different groups, especially those who may be underrepresented or more vulnerable to DRV.

Subgroup analyses will be underpinned by administrative data provided by schools (e.g., sex, ethnicity, special educational needs, free school meal eligibility) or directly from young people as part of the outcome survey protocol (e.g., gender identity and modality; sexuality). All demographic data collection will adhere to YEF policy (e.g., 19 minor ethnic group categories; Youth Endowment Fund, 2023) and relevant best practice guidance for structuring questions about gender and sexuality (Young & Bond, 2023).

### **Longitudinal follow-ups**

RQ7/H5 can be addressed by examining perpetration (5a) and/or victimisation (5b) for relevant criminal offences (e.g., domestic abuse, sexual offences) recorded in the PNC for young adults (by age 25) who attended schools implementing LSVP (intervention arm) compared to those who attended schools delivering the standard statutory relationships and sex education curriculum (control arm). As noted earlier, this longer-term follow-up is not part of the main trial and will need to be undertaken via data linkage to the PNC (this will be built into the trial information governance processes, e.g., via inclusion of data to facilitate future linkage in data sharing agreements with schools, and explicit reference to the intention to undertake such linkage in parent/carer information sheets and other relevant documents). Given that the data will be zero-inflated (i.e., most young adults will *not* be recorded as a

perpetrator or victim of relevant criminal offences), specialist statistical models (e.g., zero-inflated negative binomial regression/Hurdle models) will need to be used.

## Implementation and process evaluation

### Research questions

As previously noted, the IPE addresses the following overarching research questions:

RQ4: Is LSVP delivered as intended, and what factors appear to influence this?

RQ6: What are the experiences and perceptions of LSVP Education and Wellbeing Specialists, school staff, and young people in either delivering or engaging with the intervention?

Below, we elaborate these RQs:

- RQ4a: To what extent are the essential elements (i.e., activities in the Theory of Change) of LSVP delivered as intended across participating schools?
- RQ4b: What programme (e.g., staff expertise, training, planning, tailoring/adapting) and contextual factors (e.g., school culture, school staff engagement, timetabling, infrastructure) influence the delivery and reception of LSVP across different school settings?
- RQ4c: What does usual RSE practice look like, and to what extent is LSVP distinct from this in terms of practice-based (what is taught) and instructional (how it is taught) elements?
- RQ6a: Are the proposed mechanisms (e.g., session content perceived by pupils as relevant, relatable and realistic) and short-term outcomes (e.g., increased knowledge of healthy relationships among pupils) delineated in the LSVP ToC reflected in the perspectives of young people and staff in participating schools?
- RQ6b: To what extent is LSVP perceived as socially valid (e.g., acceptable, inclusive and culturally responsive) by young people and school staff in participating schools, and how do experiences vary across different groups (e.g., gender, ethnicity)?

### Research methods

Our comprehensive, mixed-methods IPE will be conducted in parallel with the efficacy trial, drawing on good practice guidance (e.g., Humphrey et al., 2016; Skivington et al., 2021). We will generate/gather data to answer the above RQs via:

- Usual practice surveys completed by all participating schools at baseline/T0 and T1 spanning instructional (*how* RSE is taught) and practice (*what* RSE is taught) elements.
- Brief surveys of relevant RSE coverage in T1 pupil surveys;
- Implementation logs and any other routine quality assurance data generated by LSVP Education and Wellbeing Specialists, in addition to bespoke data items as required to

build a comprehensive assessment of delivery in each school (e.g., reach, dosage) and cost calculations (see below);

- Brook's existing evaluation survey that young people complete at the end of each session;
- Case studies of 8 schools sampled to vary on key contextual and compositional characteristics (e.g., size, characteristics of pupil population, usual RSE practice), in which we will conduct:
  - Focus groups with pupils (up to 6 groups, approx. 48 young people per school);
  - Interviews with the LSV Education and Wellbeing Specialist(s) working with the school;
  - Interviews with teachers and senior leaders (e.g., school PHSE leads) (N ≈ 6 per school);
  - Observations of LSV being delivered (1 of each of the 4 sessions in each school while avoiding one whole group being observed on multiple occasions);
  - Observation of the 2-hour staff training session;
  - Document analysis of relevant school policies (e.g., usual RSE provision).

Within case study schools, we will sample senior leaders by liaising with the school to identify appropriate colleagues who have had leadership input into the process (e.g., school PHSE leads, safeguarding leads). We will send recruitment information to all the school staff who have supported the sessions (likely around 6 per school). We will be flexible to their needs and preferences, and so this could involve a mix of 1:1 and group interviews. While observing the sessions we can alert these teachers to possibility of a follow-up interview; interviewing teachers whose classes we have observed could bring some useful insights.

We will sample young people both through general expressions of interest and purposive sampling of groups of (marginalised) young people who will feel more comfortable talking about the issues in a group of those with the same identity (e.g., LGBTQ+ young people, through existing school-based Rainbow Groups). We will develop a video to speak directly to young people, expressing our wish to hear from a wide range of them, especially those who often find their voices are not heard. We can also work with the school to encourage students from marginalised groups to express an interest. We will form single-gender and mixed groups as appropriate, responding to young people's preferences by facilitating choice in available options. Finally, a more participatory experience in the focus groups will be enabled using zine-making, which will facilitate us in capturing more fluid conversations and in gathering zines as sources of data and dissemination material (Fox, 2024). We know from our own experience that students from marginalised groups often prefer more creative methods to share their views and so this will also help us to reach students from these groups and gather rich data that can also be used in the dissemination process. Participatory and creative techniques (these could include storytelling, drawing, discussion-based activities) will be used in qualitative data collection to match cognitive, emotional, and social development levels.

We will offer a 1:1 interview option to those who may find it difficult or undesirable to take part or reflect on these issues specifically in a group context. We will acknowledge young people's participation using vouchers as a gesture of thanks.

## **Analysis**

Thematic analysis and Thematic Framework Analysis (Babbage & Terry, 2025) will be used to collate and interrogate the qualitative IPE data. We will combine case study interview transcripts and field notes in NVivo, and use an inductive-deductive hybrid thematic analysis, guided by the Consolidated Framework for Implementation Research (CFIR; Damschroder et al., 2022), to address the IPE-related objectives noted earlier. We will use a convergence coding matrix to synthesise the different data sources (Tonkin-Crine et al., 2016). This synthesis will be interpretative rather than aggregative (as the case study and trial data cannot be formally combined). We will tabulate the data from each part of the evaluation according to the MRC framework (Skivington et al., 2021). We will organise data corresponding to each school and with consideration for intersectionality, to enable us to check for differences and similarities. In sum, the analysis will enable us to preserve the complexity within cases (i.e., case study schools), attend to convergence and divergence across data sources within each school, make comparisons between schools, and look across the entire dataset with intersectionality in mind (e.g., are there differences in perceptions of acceptability of LSVP by race/ethnicity, LGBTQ+ identity, SEND?). This will allow us to respond to the main research questions of the IPE by examining how LSVP is implemented, experienced and perceived by students and staff, and by exploring their views on who it works for, how it works and whether it is functioning as intended.

The quantitative data generated/gathered in the IPE can be used to extend our understanding of the impact (or lack thereof) of LSVP. Below are some examples:

- Usual practice survey T0 data can potentially be used to assess whether the impact of LSVP on the primary outcome of attitudes is moderated by the level of programme differentiation (i.e., extensions of ITT analysis to include treatment allocation\*differentiation level interaction; is there evidence of larger effects in schools where the level of programme differentiation is high?);
- In the event of noncompliance, implementation log data can be used in CACE/LATE analyses that will be fully specified in the SAP (contingent on the level of noncompliance observed);
- Depending on what and how data are gathered, quantitative data from the Brook evaluation survey completed by pupils in all sessions can be analysed to assess

whether there is a correlation between perceptions of LSVP’s acceptability and improvements in our specified outcomes.

**Table 3: IPE methods overview**

Data collection methods	Participants/ data sources (type, number)	Data analysis methods	Research questions addressed	Implementation/ logic model relevance
Usual practice survey	Completed by all intervention and control schools at T0 and T1.	Descriptive statistics and potential moderator analysis noted above.	4c	To explain any potential improvements in control group schools, and any variation among intervention schools.
Implementation logs	Session logs completed by Brook staff and any related quality assurance data (number TBC as depends on how recorded).	Descriptive statistics to support internal validity of main trial. These data can also be used in compliance/LATE analyses described elsewhere	4a	Adherence is theorised to lead to better outcomes.
Brook LSVP evaluation survey	Completed by all YP during the final session.	Content analysis, descriptive statistics and Thematic Framework Analysis.	6a, 6b	To understand mechanisms and outcomes within all intervention schools.
Focus groups	A diverse group of YP, N = 6 groups in each of the case study schools. 48 YP per school.	Thematic Analysis	6a, 6b	To understand activities, mechanisms, outcomes and contextual factors.
Interviews	In each case study school: all	Thematic Analysis	4b, 6a, 6b	To understand activities,

	Brook staff; school senior leaders; class teachers (6 per school).			mechanisms, outcomes and contextual factors.
Observations	In each case study school: at least 1 of each of the 4 sessions. To observe the 2-hour training session in each school.	Thematic Analysis	4a, 4b, 6b	To understand activities, mechanisms and contextual factors.
Documents	RSE policy documents in case study schools.	Thematic Analysis.	4c	To understand contextual factors affecting delivery in intervention schools.
Pupil outcome surveys at T1 (specifically, items probing RSE content exposure during delivery period)	Completed by all young people at T1	Descriptive statistics to support internal validity of main trial.	4c	To understand activities, mechanisms and contextual factors.

## Cost data reporting and collecting

As noted earlier, the IPE will incorporate collection of data on the cost of LSVP. A bottom-up estimation approach will be undertaken. Costs will be estimated from the perspective of Brook as the delivery organisation. However, it is important to also recognise costs borne by schools as the setting for delivery of LSVP, and so we will also estimate these to provide a more comprehensive assessment.

Our cost estimates will capture the resources used to deliver LSVP but will not be relative to usual practice (i.e., we will not estimate marginal costs). Estimates will be generated for set-up (i.e., one-off) and recurring (i.e., those which are incurred every time the intervention is delivered) costs, and we will note where there is any uncertainty. Per YEF [guidance](#), we will not include evaluation or programme development and adaptation costs.

Brook is the main organisation involved in the delivery of LSVP, employing Education and Wellbeing Specialists to provide both the school workforce training and young person sessions. Much of the cost calculations will therefore centre around them and will be probed via the implementation logs noted earlier. Since the compliance analysis requires it, we intend to sample said logs from *all* of Brook's Education and Wellbeing Specialists. However, there will be additional, organisational costs borne by Brook relating to training of these staff and the administration of the programme more generally. Furthermore, we will also need to consider costs associated with the integration of LSVP in participating schools (e.g., engagement with workforce training, infrastructure to support delivery, session materials, and opportunity costs), which we will surface through the school staff interviews noted earlier.

In the absence of a clear framework for micro-costing complex interventions, and to avoid abstract or standardised assumptions about costs and benefits, we will focus our questions on the contextual and subjective nature of value in educational settings, and how this may differ between and within schools. For example, in a recent study exploring how school staff conceptualise the cost and value of a universal school-based social and emotional learning intervention, our analysis revealed that these constructs were multidimensional, subjective, and contextualised by student needs. Different stakeholders (e.g., teachers, senior leaders) assessed an intervention's effectiveness using different evaluative lenses as they placed value in different outcomes (e.g., behaviour change, classroom climate). This resulted in different conclusions about an intervention's perceived effectiveness and cost-effectiveness (O'Brien et al., in preparation).

Exploring how cost and value are contextually grounded can inform micro-costing of LSVP and generate insights into real-world judgments and decision making, informing context-sensitive economic evaluations of similar interventions. Findings will be relevant not only to

researchers and policymakers but also to school- and LA-level decision-makers tasked with prioritising limited resources.

## **Reporting of costs**

Drawing on the above, we will produce two sets of figures:

- Average costs for a typical single cohort (in this case, an average Year 9 cohort in an average secondary school) receiving LSVP once during the trial;
- Average costs per participant receiving LSVP once during the trial.

For the latter, we will provide the total set-up, recurring, and combined costs per participant. YEF's mandatory reporting tables will be used to describe items included in the cost and a detailed breakdown of cost estimates by item.

## **Diversity, equity and inclusion**

In developing this study, UoM and Brook have worked in collaboration with Dr Shola Apena Rogers, YEF's Race Equity Advisor, to consider issues related to race, diversity, equity and inclusion. This will remain an ongoing, collaborative dialogue throughout the project.

We will ensure accessibility and inclusivity throughout the evaluation by embedding a bespoke REDI (Race, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion) strand throughout every phase of the project, adapting principles from the Child Trends framework (Andrews et al., 2019). Our approach is intersectional, recognising that young people's needs are shaped by a complex interplay of various social identities and abilities.

This perspective will guide our data collection and interpretation, ensuring the evaluation is accessible to all participants, and enabling an analysis of how the intervention impacts individuals across diverse and intersecting identities. It should be noted, here, that the intervention has already been examined with REDI principles in mind and written into the co-produced ToC.

This section should be read in conjunction with our Equality Impact Assessment (see Appendix 3).

### **Accessible Materials and Activities**

Multiple steps will be taken to ensure the evaluation is accessible, welcoming and inclusive. Participant-facing research materials (e.g., participant information sheets and consent forms) will be developed using plain, inclusive language designed for a low reading age and include visual aids, icons and images to support understanding and accommodate different needs (such as learning differences and neurodiversity). Alternative versions of information and consent forms will be developed, where needed (e.g., translations into additional languages or audio-read, large-print and video options).

We will work to create environments during data-collection sessions and (group) interviews that are non-judgemental, identity-affirming and sensitive to power dynamics. We will read materials aloud where appropriate to support accessibility and comprehension. Interviews and focus groups will include accessible participatory and creative methods to cater for all ability levels.

All activities, materials and tools will be designed (by members of the research team and Brook, with guidance from the YEF Race Equity Advisor) to ensure age and cultural appropriateness in a school setting, using plain, inclusive, culturally sensitive language and visual supports (e.g., diverse representations across race, gender and ability).

Tools will be adapted as needed and where possible to support different needs (e.g., outcome surveys will be augmented as necessary to improve accessibility for all young people, especially those with SEND – such as visual anchors for response options and hover-over tooltips that provide an expanded explanation for any ambiguous or unfamiliar words). Consultations with school SEND teams will ensure all activities (programme and research) and their delivery are appropriate. Additional time for outcome survey completion will be arranged as required, and there will be the option for pupils to complete in more than one sitting should they need to do so (as the survey responses are saved regularly, e.g., at each click through to the next set of items).

### **Inclusive Language and Measures**

Inclusive language will be embedded throughout all materials and activities. This means avoiding gendered language, not making assumptions about cultural background, family structure, sexual orientation or gender identity, and reflecting young people's lived realities. Any measures and scales that include non-inclusive language or gendered assumptions will be adapted. For example, items from the MADVA scale will be revised to reflect diverse relationship contexts and avoid assumptions about the gender of perpetrator and victim (e.g., "There is nothing wrong with a guy pretending to like a girl online so that he can convince her to send him nude pictures" will be reworded using gender-neutral and inclusive language: "There is nothing wrong with pretending to like someone online to convince them to send nude pictures"). Standardised scales used in the research will also be reviewed and revised to ensure they do not assume binary gender roles or heterosexual relationships.

In administering measures via RedCap, we will randomise blocks of questions to ensure young people don't feel pressured or observed by others sitting nearby, particularly for culturally sensitive topics. This process will be clearly explained to young people in the standardised survey instructions.

### **Cultural Sensitivity, Inclusion and Representation**

The evaluation will be guided by principles of cultural sensitivity and inclusion, with a focus on understanding and addressing the needs of minoritised and underserved groups:

- Incorporating reflexivity through regular debriefs to reflect on how researchers' positionalities and biases may affect design and interpretation and sharing knowledge about stigma, especially around race and gender inequity/assumptions;
- Exploring, through participatory and creative methods (e.g., zine making) in the IPE focus groups and interviews with young people, how the intervention engages with pupils' diverse cultural identities, and how gender norms and relational dynamics may impact participation;

- Providing opportunities for self-identification (during the IPE) in categories such as gender, alongside Census-standard categories, to better reflect how young people define themselves;
- Providing safe spaces in all interactions with young people for disclosure of sensitive information and experiences (e.g., discrimination, racism or exclusion), with researchers trained to manage these appropriately and sensitively;
- Ensuring facilitators' capacity (via Brook internal training) to discuss and manage religious, cultural, and gender-related sensitivities with confidence and care;
- Recognising that school staff can act as gatekeepers and may only select pupils they believe will represent the school positively. The evaluation team will engage directly with pastoral leads or designated mental health staff to reach a broader and more diverse range of young people.

Delivery of all activities, materials, surveys and (group) interviews will be responsive to different religious, cultural, and socio-economic contexts, to avoid cultural insensitivity or misunderstandings and tailored where necessary to respect pupils' religious, cultural or social contexts, including flexibility around holidays, dress codes, language needs and scheduling. Materials will incorporate culturally relevant examples, images, and scenarios in the research tools.

Brook are highly experienced programme managers and facilitators, offering comprehensive training and support for staff at all levels ensuring confidence in engaging with cultural and religious norms relevant to different communities (including providing scripts for facilitators to engage sensitively with cultural and religious differences within the group). In addition, their internal training programme aims to equip education, clinic and counselling staff with the knowledge and skills they need to support and meet the needs of a range of neurodivergent and/or neurodiverse people, and with additional understanding, knowledge, skills and confidence to integrate key elements of trauma informed approaches into their practice. User research (with teachers and young people) about teaching sexual harassment in RSHE has informed the education and training provided at Brook, and new content is developed with the 16-19 PAG.

The evaluation team will engage in ongoing dialogue with Brook and the YEF Race Equity Associate to ensure that the approach, processes, materials and dissemination plans are respectful, accurate, and relevant to the cultural contexts of the participants. The IPE will have the flexibility to adapt and respond to cultural indicators. This will involve tailoring the focus groups and interviews to account for the unique circumstances and challenges faced by these groups and identify any anomalies, inconsistencies, or gaps in the delivery of LSVP.

## Intersectional Analysis and Inclusive Dissemination

We will address this intersectionality and inclusive dissemination by:

- Employing an intersectional lens when analysing the data gathered for the IPE to identify themes across different demographic groups. Qualitative analysis will include analytic memos on how race, gender, class, and sexuality intersect within narratives. In addition, intersectional thinking meaningfully inform both design and interpretation i.e., how systems of power (gender, race, class, sexuality, etc.) interact to shape outcomes and experiences;
- Ensuring that dissemination will be accessible to reach diverse audiences, including policymakers, practitioners, and young people through various channels and forms. We will actively seek opportunities to present the methods and findings of the research at conferences, publish research articles, and collaborate with relevant stakeholders to ensure that the knowledge generated from the evaluation has a meaningful impact on research methods, policy and practice.

## Young people's input and participation

The evaluation will be informed by the lived experiences of young people, particularly those affected by the issues being explored during Brook's sessions. This will include direct and indirect influences:

**Indirectly**, the evaluation has been co-designed in sessions involving UoM research team and Brook delivery team providing a background of experience and knowledge, with Brook drawing on their experiences of delivering the intervention, the feedback they have received from young people and school/community responses and UoM drawing on their experiences of research with diverse groups of young people. The design is also grounded in the research literature (much of this represents the lived experiences of young people, schools or communities) drawing on what is known about how diversity shapes pupil's experiences of school-based interventions and evaluations on sensitive topics.

**Directly**, through interviews and focus groups, young people's voices will be placed at the heart of our inquiry, supported by the establishment of a Research Advisory Group (RAG) alongside Brook's Young Person Engagement Group (YPEG) already in place (see Table 4 below for delineation of membership and roles). Their insights and perspectives will shape the analysis, ensuring that the findings are relevant, responsive, and respectful of their lived experiences. By engaging participants as active co-producers of knowledge, the study will deepen understanding of the issues young people face and enhance the validity and impact of the data.

a. The **Research Advisory Group (RAG)** will be set up to help steer the research. This will include members of the evaluation and delivery teams alongside 6-8 young people from diverse backgrounds (including those with lived experience relevant to gender, ethnicity, religion, social class, etc.) of whom, two will be invited as equity co-researchers to provide ongoing feedback on materials and processes.

b. Brook’s existing **Young Person Engagement Group (YPEG)** will be consulted at key stages of the project as we build the measures and other research tools.

**Table 4: Young people’s input and participation.**

Advisory group	Members	Role
NEW: Research Advisory Group (RAG)	6-8 young people from diverse backgrounds (including 2 who will act as equity co-researchers), members of the evaluation team, Brook delivery staff	Steer the research design and delivery, provide ongoing feedback on research materials and processes, support inclusive, ethical practice, shape analysis and implementation.
EXISTING: Brook’s Young Person Engagement Group (YPEG)	Young people engaged through Brook’s participation structures	Provide insight from lived experience to inform programme design and delivery

## Ensuring a diverse sample of young people

Our sampling strategy will prioritise diversity and inclusion by:

- Recruiting schools in Greater London, in which we anticipate a highly diverse sample in terms of ethnicity and eligibility for free school meals (FSM). In mainstream secondary schools, we expect approximately 15% of participants to have special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). Furthermore, as our sampling strategy includes both independent and non-independent schools, and both single- and mixed-sex schools, we will be able to capture a broad and representative range of pupil backgrounds and school contexts.
- Collecting baseline demographic data (e.g., ethnicity, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, SEND, socio-economic status) to guide subgroup analyses.
- Using purposive sampling in the IPE to include schools and pupils representing a broad range of backgrounds and contexts. This means that participants are selected intentionally to represent diverse backgrounds, literacy/education levels, and

engagement in LSVP. This approach ensures that a variety of perspectives and experiences are included in the evaluation.

- Monitoring recruitment to ensure inclusion of voices from minoritised, marginalised, and underserved groups. This will be mapped against demographics in a fidelity checklist. In addition, we will:
- Appoint an EDI lead within the evaluation team to oversee monitoring of demographic representation and inclusion throughout recruitment and data collection.
- Conduct regular (quarterly) inclusion reviews documenting progress, challenges, and adjustments to ensure equitable participation.
- Maintain an inclusion and decision log capturing how sampling, recruitment, and analytical decisions reflect EDI principles, enhancing transparency and auditability.

### **Monitoring equality within the study**

The following action plan will monitor the routine collection of protected characteristic data from participants by the evaluation team, and data gathered by the implementation team:

- Throughout the project the research team will hold regular reflective/debrief sessions to address positionality and implicit bias, as well as targeted training on working with young people from marginalised backgrounds. The PI and Co-Is will support researchers throughout the evaluation to engage in self-reflection, critically examining their own biases, assumptions, positions of privilege and sensitivity to cultural contexts and power dynamics, with additional training where required;
- The Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) will serve as a living document and basis for ongoing equity-focused discussions. It will be updated and refined regularly to reflect new developments/insights and learning gained during the course of the project;
- A formal review of the EIA will be conducted quarterly in consultation with both evaluation and implementation teams, with input from young people engaged through Brook's Young Person Engagement Group (YPEG) and the Research Advisory Group (RAG). This collaborative review will help identify emerging equity issues and opportunities for improvement;
- The research team's combined knowledge of equity-related research and contextual challenges will inform adaptations to the project as necessary. We will keep up to date with new developments and research concerning diversity and inclusion within similar research settings to ensure current best practices are incorporated throughout the project lifecycle;

- Ongoing engagement with community members, through Brook's YPEG and the RAG, will provide feedback and guidance from young people with lived and living experience;
- As the fieldwork progresses, researchers will maintain vigilance to identify and respond to any unmet needs or barriers to access experienced by prospective or current participants.

## **The evaluation team: training and experience**

The UoM team has received mandatory training on 'Diversity and Inclusion in the workplace' and 'Unconscious Bias' to deepen understanding of the broader issues of equality and diversity, enhancing understanding of the unique needs and experiences of diverse populations, creating a supportive and inclusive research environment that values diversity, encouraging continuous learning, and promoting culturally sensitive research practices. JD has completed an additional course on Supporting Neurodiverse Students (UoM, Nov 2022) and will receive specialist Trauma-informed Practice training (Echo, scheduled Nov 2025). CF has completed mandatory training on EDI Essentials and Supporting Disabled students and is a member of the EDI committee in the School of Education at Bristol. Through her research on LGBTQ+ inclusion within education, CF has attended and contributed to multiple events and conferences on LGBTQ+ identities.

Our combined expertise makes us ideally placed to ensure a fully inclusive evaluation from initial design to dissemination. The interdisciplinary nature of the research team encourages a wide dialogue among researchers from various academic disciplines (psychology, criminology, sociology, public health) and with extensive practice experience. The diversity within the team will broaden perspectives, foster innovative approaches, and promote a more comprehensive understanding of inclusivity.

The evaluation team has significant experience working with marginalised communities, including young people from racially minoritised groups; LGBTQ+ young people; pupils with SEND; and those from low-income and underserved backgrounds.

Our prior work includes designing and evaluating interventions for diverse and excluded groups and developing inclusive research methodologies to ensure their experiences are accurately represented. For example, JD has undertaken research to understand the impact of interventions on young people (New Chapters; PROMISE; Mi-Men) with a focus on aspects of diversity, stigma and discriminatory treatment and has a track record in co-design, participatory methods and creative methodologies (such as art, photography, drama) to engage diverse and excluded young people. Similarly, NH has undertaken research to explore the impact of interventions for young people who identify as LGBTQ+ (Free2B) and for young

people with varying levels of risk exposure and levels of (dis) engagement with school (Football Beyond Borders). OD has led research to understand adolescent girls' perspectives on contemporary issues affecting their mental health, including sexism and discrimination (INSIGHT), to better represent 'seldom heard' child and youth voices in national school guidance (NICE guidelines for social, emotional and mental wellbeing in primary and secondary education) and to explore the wellbeing experiences of young LGBTQ+ people (#BeeProud), and routinely involves minoritised young people as both participants and as research partners. CF was PI on evaluation of Mentors in Violence Prevention programme, and Co-I on the New Chapters project. She was also Co-I on the From Boys to Men project, leading on the evaluation of 'Relationships without Fear'. More broadly, she brings notable expertise in multiple topics that are directly relevant to our proposed study, including school bullying, teenage relationship abuse, and LGBTQ+ inclusion in education/RSE.

This expertise will ensure that the team is well-equipped to engage effectively with diverse populations, understand their unique circumstances, and mitigate potential barriers to participation. Our prior experience will contribute to the successful implementation of the evaluation in an inclusive and equitable manner.

### **Ethics and registration**

All University of Manchester-led research projects are reviewed and approved by the University's Research Ethics Committee (UREC). Consistent with prior trials, we will make two submissions outlining in detail our plans, ethical considerations and mitigations for project components: the first for the main trial outcomes/impact-focused element (where opt-out consent will be used), and the second for the implementation and process evaluation element (where opt-in consent will be needed for certain activities, e.g. focus groups with pupils). UREC review panels, which comprise approximately 12-15 trained committee members primarily made up of academics but also including a lay member, assess ethical approval applications (sometimes but not always including a review meeting with the research team to discuss key considerations) and then request any required revisions before approval is granted. Ethical approval will be sought and granted prior to participant recruitment. Should we identify the need for iterative change across the course of the project, we have a UREC procedure by which we can submit planned amendments for feedback and approval.

We will prospectively register the trial with ISRCTN once this protocol is approved by YEF.

## Data protection

Per YEF guidelines (available [here](#)), the University of Manchester are the controller of personal data throughout the study, and will undertake the evaluation in line with our institutional privacy notice for research participants when storing and processing personal data. Said privacy notice is available [here](#) but we outline the relevant information below. All evaluation team members have undertaken relevant institutional Information Security and Data Protection training. For this evaluation, we have:

- Clear legal gateways for personal data to be shared with us:
  - Specifically, the Education Reform Act (1988 Part II - Chapter II The higher education corporations - Section 123A: “(1) A higher education corporation in England has power — (f) to carry out research and to publish the results of the research or any other material arising out of or connected with it in such manner as the corporation think fit.”) and the Children Act (2004 Section 10: Co-operation to improve well-being).
- Clear legal bases for us to process said data:
  - For research, the “Processing is necessary for the performance of a task carried out in the public interest or in the exercise of official authority vested in the controller” (Article 6 of the UK GDPR);
  - For sensitive information (e.g., ethnicity), we use the additional basis that, “the processing is necessary for archiving purposes in the public interest, scientific or historical research purposes or statistical purposes... which shall be proportionate to the aim pursued, respect the essence of the right to data protection and provide for suitable and specific measures to safeguard the fundamental rights and the interests of the data subject” (Article 9 of the U K GDPR).
- Robust, secure means through which personal data can be transferred, specifically ZendTo, in which files are encrypted as part of the drop-off process, with the access password being provided to the data recipient by phone;
- Secure storage of data in an encrypted Veracrypt container/folder (AES-256 algorithm), in a protected folder on the University's Research Data Storage system, known as Isilon. Access to the data will require 2FA to log into the university's network. The folder with the Veracrypt file will only be accessible by named users, and the container itself will be protected with a long password (30+ characters, changed annually);
- Pseudonymisation as standard, with access to critical personally identifiable information (e.g., name, UPN, DOB) only by the trial manager and stored separately from survey data;

- Use of secure survey software (RedCap or Qualtrics) which stores all data both in transmission and at rest in an encrypted, secure, EEA-based server in line with GDPR;
- Project data will be deleted securely five years post project (i.e., in March 2034). YEF guidance on data protection will be followed, including provision of privacy notices (see link above) and information sheets (to be developed in the lead-in phase of the trial). The information sheets will make clear to participants and their parents/carers:
  - The data collection processes for the trial, including what personal data is being shared by their school;
  - The intention to archive project data with YEF and also to link to other data in the future (e.g., PNC);
  - Their data protection rights;
  - Data storage/security processes that will be undertaken to keep their data safe.
- All project data will be stored in accordance with GDPR/Data Protection Act 2018; only named members of the evaluation team will have access to it and a minimisation process will be followed (e.g., project team members will only be able to access data relating to their specific role);
- UoM will undertake a Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA) ahead of the development of data sharing agreements with participating schools. Said DPIA will be approved/signed off by our Information Governance lead;
- Given that the evaluation team spans more than one institution (i.e., UoM and UoB), we will make appropriate arrangements for data access (e.g. DSA between UoM and UoB *or* making CB an honorary member of staff at UoM to facilitate direct access to UoM systems, circumventing the need for inter-institutional data sharing), in which minimisation will be applied (i.e., access only provided to data needed to fulfil a given role/work package, as opposed to 'blanket' access).

## Stakeholders and interests

Below we outline the roles and responsibilities of the delivery and evaluation teams. We declare no conflicting interests.

### Delivery team

#### Product Development Manager

Responsible for overseeing the delivery of educational resources and ensuring they remain relevant and effective. This includes making any necessary updates or adjustments to resources as required for the RCT.

#### Education Development Manager

Acts as the project manager, serving as the main point of contact with the funder and the research team. They provide strategic and operational oversight of the project, including management of the delivery team to ensure all project objectives are met efficiently and to a high standard.

#### Project Coordinator (to be recruited)

Will play a key role in maintaining strong partnerships and relationships with local agencies and stakeholders. They will oversee the supervision and appraisal of the specialists coordinate project activities with schools and manage team calendars. The role also involves ensuring that data and qualitative information are accurately collected and reported to the evaluation team.

#### Education Wellbeing Specialist

Responsible for delivering all project activities and achieving agreed key performance indicators (KPIs). They will deliver the intervention in trial allocated schools as well as ensure service users are connected to appropriate ongoing support through signposting and safeguarding referrals where necessary.

## Brook Executive team

### Assistant Director of Education and Wellbeing

Provides strategic leadership and oversight across all education and wellbeing programmes. Acting as the Senior Project Lead for this project, they are responsible for ensuring that projects are delivered effectively, align with organisational priorities, and meet funder expectations. This includes maintaining high standards of quality, impact, and compliance

## Evaluation team

Professor Neil Humphrey (PI) will lead the project, managing the research team, acting as the primary point of contact with YEF and Brook, and ultimately ensuring that the work is delivered to time and budget. Neil has led or collaborated on many large-scale RCTs of universal school-based interventions, including [Promoting Alternative Thinking Strategies](#), [Passport: Skills for Life](#), [Education for Wellbeing](#) and [Inclusive/Learning Together](#). He was lead author of the EEF's IPE [guidance for evaluators](#), and brings considerable experience of supporting delivery teams to understand and implement robust independent evaluation (e.g., [Football Beyond Borders](#)).

Professor Claire Fox (Co-I) will co-lead the IPE, and act as the primary relationships and sex education (RSE) subject matter expert. She was PI on evaluation of Mentors in Violence Prevention programme, and Co-I on a YEF-funded project ([New Chapters](#)), co-leading the co-design workshops and IPE with Dr Jo Deakin. Claire was also Co-I on the [From Boys to Men](#) project, leading on the evaluation of 'Relationships without Fear'. More broadly, she brings notable expertise in multiple topics that are directly relevant to our proposed study, including school bullying, teenage relationship abuse, and LGBTQ+ inclusion in education/RSE.

Dr. Jo Deakin (Co-I) will co-lead the IPE, with specific responsibility for the race, equity, diversity and inclusion (REDI) components in each project phase, building on her leadership on the race equity element on another YEF-funded-evaluation ([New Chapters](#)). Jo's research includes studies of interventions in justice contexts, youth violence (offending and victimisation), school exclusion and trajectories into crime. She brings considerable experience and expertise in engaging diverse, vulnerable, and excluded young people using participatory arts-based research, and working with partners and stakeholders to co-design research.

Dr. Ola Demkowicz (Co-I) will co-lead the IPE, with responsibility for ethics and safeguarding considerations. Ola led IPE on two of our prior school-based RCTs ([Achievement for All](#) and [Passport: Skills for Life](#)). She was PI on NIHR-funded [work with adolescent girls](#) on system change tackling gendered issues, including developing a theory of change (ToC) on school-

based peer-to-peer harmful sexual behaviour approaches, and is currently overseeing work examining young women's experiences of sexting. Ola brings considerable methodological expertise in mixed methods, youth engagement, and managing/navigating complex ethical issues (indeed, she co-led ethics for our School for the past three years and is now establishing a new University-wide Research Ethics Committee as an Ethics Chair).

Dr. Joao Santos will act as Trial Manager, leading on study planning, setup and the development of essential documents (e.g., trial protocol, data management plan, statistical analysis plan, ethical approval application, YEF report/s and other project outputs), monitoring trial timelines/milestones and budget, overseeing data generation, cleaning, analysis and archiving, and ensuring adherence to protocols and regulatory requirements (e.g., GDPR compliance), as he did in two prior large scale school-based RCTs (Education for Wellbeing; Passport: Skills for Life). Joao has significant experience and expertise in the application of advanced statistical modelling and open science practices in educational research contexts.

Dr. Lesley-Anne Carter (Co-I) will act as the quantitative methodology specialist, leading and advising on all statistical analysis and reporting, and related underpinning work (e.g. trial design, power and sample size calculations, instrumentation). She has supported the design and analysis of multiple RCTs, including evaluations of interventions targeting wellbeing in young people (BAY, New Chapters, Lumi Nova, CHuSE). Lesley has considerable expertise in multilevel modelling and applications of it to trial data.

Annie O'Brien will act as Research Associate. She will support Dr. Santos in trial management duties and will lead on IPE qualitative data generation and analysis, liaising with participating schools, managing junior staff (e.g., casual research assistants), and working with Brook on the detailed costing of the LSV intervention. Annie has worked in a similar capacity on our Passport: Skills for Life trial. More broadly, she brings experience and expertise in implementation moderator analysis (e.g., complier average causal effect estimation) and key considerations in evaluating the cost-effectiveness of universal, school-based interventions.

## Risks

Key project risks, their likelihood and impact, and mitigation strategies are outlined below:

Risk	Likelihood and impact	Mitigation
Failure to recruit enough schools	Likelihood low, impact high	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Large recruitment zone (Greater London, &gt;900 secondary schools)</li> <li>• Two waves of recruitment</li> <li>• Recent revisions to RSE guidance increase the likelihood of schools' interest in participation</li> <li>• Potential to extend to Greater Manchester and use evaluation team's school networks/contacts as necessary</li> <li>• Intervention is simple/brief, which will facilitate buy-in from schools</li> </ul>
Failure to retain enough schools (i.e., school-level attrition)	Likelihood low, impact high	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Financial incentives for all schools</li> <li>• Provision of bespoke aggregated feedback reports for schools following each wave of data collection</li> <li>• Minimisation of data burden (outcome survey designed to take c.10-15 minutes in total on average)</li> <li>• Power and sample size calculations purposively conservative in their assumptions (including c.6% school-level attrition)</li> </ul>
Failure to retain enough pupils (i.e., pupil-level attrition)	Likelihood medium,	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Minimisation of data burden for participating schools</li> <li>• Wide survey window (c. 8-10 weeks) to maximise opportunities for pupils</li> </ul>

	impact medium	<p>to participate at each data collection point</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Regular updates for schools on completion rates and 'not started' lists towards the end of the survey window to enable mopping up</li> <li>• Minimisation of data burden (outcome survey designed to take c.10-15 minutes in total on average)</li> <li>• Survey will be designed to be as accessible as possible (see REDI section)</li> <li>• Parent/carer information sheets will be translated into most commonly spoken languages other than English</li> </ul>
Data breach	Likelihood low, impact medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Secure, encrypted data transfer and storage; critical personal information (e.g., pupil names, DOBs, UPNs) stored separately from other data</li> <li>• Routine monitoring via TSC/DMEC</li> </ul>
Challenges in recruiting sufficiently diverse sample of young people in case study schools	Likelihood medium, impact high	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide clear information to schools regarding importance of pupil sample diversity</li> <li>• Monitor diversity of pupil sample over time and adjust recruitment strategy as necessary</li> <li>• Ensure all planned research activities are accessible and meaningful to a wide range of abilities and backgrounds, including non-traditional methods (e.g., zine-making) and adaptation as necessary</li> <li>• Parent/carer information sheets will be translated into most commonly spoken languages other than English</li> </ul>

Staff turnover/illness/attrition in evaluation team	Likelihood low, impact medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Evaluation team is set up so that reliance on any one individual is minimised</li> <li>• Redeploy within team as necessary</li> <li>• In the event of longstanding absence or staff turnover, we will replace from our wider network</li> </ul>
Non-compliance level exceeds acceptable threshold	Likelihood low, impact high	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Intervention is simple/brief</li> <li>• Delivery by external staff will facilitate compliance</li> <li>• Delivery period sufficiently wide (c. 6 months) to enable complete delivery across schools and classes within them</li> </ul>
<b>Staff turnover/illness/attrition in delivery team</b>	Likelihood low, impact medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Proactive recruitment strategies prior to delivery waves</li> <li>• Utilise delivery staff from other local teams based in London</li> <li>• Utilise bank staff based in London for delivery</li> </ul>
<b>Complaints from parents about intervention content</b>	Likelihood low, impact low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Schools are responsible for informing parents about the programme and its alignment with the content of the update RSE guidance</li> <li>• Brook to provide school support regarding parental engagement as required</li> </ul>
<b>Pupil distress/safeguarding disclosures</b>	Likelihood low, impact low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Details of safeguarding procedures are detailed in the Service Level Agreements in place with each school</li> <li>• The delivery team will work to the schools safeguarding procedure to ensure young people are safeguarded in the session</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Brook will follow up with schools to ensure appropriate support is in place for the young person following a disclosure</li><li>• Professional training delivered to school staff addresses approaches in school to support staff and young people when disclosures occur.</li></ul>
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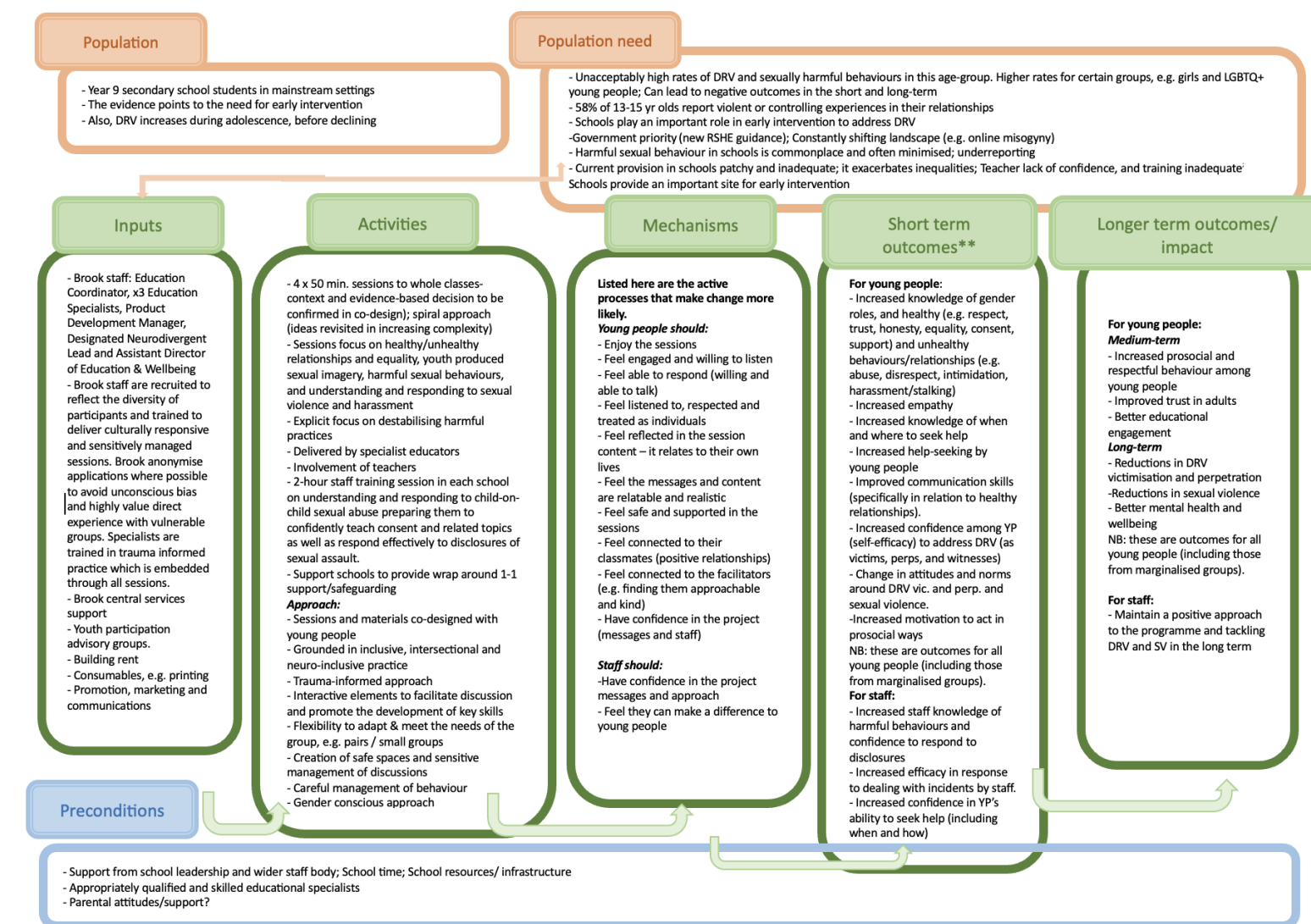
## Timeline

A detailed joint Gantt chart provided to YEF outlines project activities in detail. Below we present a consolidated timeline of key milestones:

Dates	Activity	Staff responsible/ leading
Jan 26 to April 26	Set-up and mobilisation	UoM, Brook
Feb 26 to Jul 26	Recruitment and onboarding of Wave 1 schools	Brook (recruitment), UoM (onboarding)
Feb 26 to May 26	Ethical approval for impact evaluation	UoM
Jun 26 to Sep 26	Ethical approval for IPE	UoM
Apr 26 to Jul 26	Instrumentation (quant and qual data generation instruments)	UoM
Apr 26 to Aug 26	Trial registration and statistical analysis plan	UoM
Sep 26 to Dec 26	T0/baseline outcome and usual practice surveys in Wave 1 schools	UoM
<b>Dec 26</b>	Randomisation of Wave 1 schools	UoM (via independent statistician)
Jan 27 to July 27	Delivery of LSVP in Wave 1 intervention schools	Brook
Jan 27 to Mar 27	Recruitment of Wave 1 case study LSVP schools	UoM

Jan 27 to July 27	IPE case study data generation (including costing work) in Wave 1 schools	UoM
Jan 27 to July 27	Recruitment and onboarding of Wave 2 schools	Brook (recruitment), UoM (onboarding)
Sep 27 to Dec 27	T1/outcome and usual practice surveys in Wave 1 schools	UoM
Sep 27 to Dec 27	T0/baseline outcome and usual practice surveys in Wave 2 schools	UoM
Dec 27	Randomisation of Wave 2 schools	UoM (via independent statistician)
Jan 28 to July 28	Delivery of LSVP in Wave 2 intervention schools	Brook
Jan 28 to Mar 28	Recruitment of Wave 2 case study LSVP schools	UoM
Jan 28 to July 28	IPE case study data generation (including costing work) in Wave 2 schools	UoM
Sep 28 to Dec 28	T1/outcome and usual practice surveys in Wave 2 schools	UoM
Sep 28 to Mar 29	Writing up of final report for YEF	UoM
<b>Jan 29 to Mar 29</b>	Draft and final reports for YEF	UoM
<b>Feb 29</b>	Data archiving	UoM

## Appendix 1: Theory of Change (v.5.1, 06/11/25)



\* Gender roles are social and behavioural norms that define what is expected of men and women in society. There is a wealth of evidence to suggest that the way that women and girls are positioned in society is a causal factor in GBV.

\*\* The theory of planned behaviour offers theoretical support regarding how improving attitudes to sexual violence could ultimately lead to reductions in DRV perpetration and victimisation (see [Tolman et al., 1996](#)), but there is also empirical evidence:

- a. Leen et al.'s ([2013](#)) international review concluded that peer influences and adolescent attitudes towards violence are the two most significant factors underpinning DRV (and also that the relationship is likely bi-directional);
- b. O Keefe's ([1999](#)) study found that attitudes predict behaviour in the DRV context;
- c. Price et al.'s ([1999](#)) study found that DRV attitudes were related to DRV behaviour;
- d. Pittman and Kerpelman's ([2013](#)) cross lag panel study found some evidence that attitudes towards DRV aggression negatively predicts later reports of DRV aggression (i.e., higher disapproval -> reduced aggression).

### **Short-, medium-, and long-term outcomes**

We see short-term outcomes as those that should happen during and immediately post the intervention. Having said this, some of the short-term outcomes will depend on initial changes on other short-term outcomes (e.g., knowledge -> attitudes; knowledge -> empathy; knowledge of help-seeking -> help-seeking behaviour). Medium-term outcomes will be informed by the short-term outcomes and ones we would expect to see at one-year follow-up. Long-term outcomes are those we would expect to see beyond the period of the project. Attitudes towards DRV and sexual violence would be expected to change in the short-term and be maintained at follow-up.

## Appendix 2 – LSVP in more detail

LSVP includes 4 sessions that aim to provide students with the knowledge, attitudes, and skills to prevent victimisation and perpetration. The focus is on destabilising harmful practices, identified as ‘foundational’ by Melendez-Torres et al., (2024), and changing ‘norms’ around acceptable behaviour. There is a balance of teaching about healthy (e.g. respect, trust, honesty, equality, consent, support) and unhealthy behaviours/relationships (e.g. abuse, disrespect, intimidation, harassment/stalking). The intervention uses a spiral approach with a logical progression from one session to the next and clear themes that are built on across the 4 sessions. For example, help-seeking is a clear theme across all 4 sessions. The sessions focus on 1) healthy/unhealthy relationships and equality, 2) youth produced sexual imagery, 3) harmful sexual behaviours, and 4) understanding and responding to sexual violence and harassment.

Activities include guided-practice activities, discussion activities, and reflection/thinking activities (Melendez-Torres et al., 2024). Although there is not an explicit emphasis on skill development (e.g., through role-play activities), many of the activities encourage young people to think through what they would do in different scenarios. For example, using scenarios and discussion, the young people can develop the language to be able to resist the pressures around having sex. There is also emphasis on empathy-building, through asking the young people to consider how individuals may feel in different scenarios. Ultimately, LSVP aims to increase young people’s confidence (e.g., self-efficacy) to seek help, address DRV, and act in more pro-social ways.

It is important to note that fewer interventions included in the Melendez-Torres et al., (2024) review focused on bystanders as a change pathway. While LSVP does ‘speak’ to bystanders in some of the activities in some of the sessions (particularly session 4), and bystanders, too will benefit from increased knowledge, and improved attitudes, LSVP is not a ‘bystander intervention’.

Furthermore, LSVP is delivered by expert facilitators who are carefully recruited to reflect the diversity of participants. Brook anonymises applications where possible to avoid unconscious bias and highly value direct experience with vulnerable groups. Brook staff are recruited and trained to deliver culturally responsive and sensitively managed sessions. Specialists are trained in trauma informed practice which is embedded through all sessions. The facilitators aim to create safe spaces by the establishment of a group-agreement at the outset and sensitive management of discussions. They are equipped to handle disclosures and to challenge gendered assumptions, encouraging students to consider how gender and power intersect in relationships.

LSVP has been designed with consideration of REDI and can be adapted to meet the needs of each group. LSVP can also be adapted to meet the different learning styles and needs of each group, for example, working in pairs and/or small groups. Each session has a clear lesson plan, a toolbox of activities, and, importantly, notes for facilitators to enable them to adapt to meet the needs of each group. Facilitators are also trained to adapt their teaching. For example, for a younger group, while the materials may stay the same, they may facilitate the groups differently. As part of the service-level agreement, Brook staff consult with the SEND coordinator in each school so that they are alert to any additional learning needs.

Care is taken to ensure that all young people can see themselves within the content, e.g. representation of LGBTQ+ relationships, race/ethnicity, and different family structures, and a gender conscious approach is taken which means that perpetrators are not always presented as male and victims as female. In addition, facilitators understand how relationships can present differently, e.g. within different cultural and religious groups, and how some young people (e.g. those who are neurodivergent) may see and approach interpersonal relationships differently. For example, the young people are encouraged to reflect on their own values and how these are influenced by different factors within their environment. There is attention to the potential for tensions and conflict within the discussions (e.g., LGBTQ+ identities and religious teachings). As a result, teaching scripts have been produced to enable facilitators to respond sensitively to difficult questions and potential conflict within discussions.

While LSVP aims to recognise different types of relationships and avoid positioning boys and men always in the role of perpetrator, it explicitly addresses the gendered nature of dating and relationship violence. Sessions acknowledge that while anyone can experience abuse, women, girls, and minority genders are disproportionately affected. The programme explores power dynamics, coercion, and societal norms, and includes content on online misogyny, harmful relationship expectations, and barriers to reporting- particularly for boys and young men, who may delay disclosure due to stigma.

Based on the Lundy model of participation, regular meetings take place with Brook's Participation Engagement Groups (YPEGs) which include young people from diverse backgrounds to inform new initiatives and refresh content. For example, activities and scenarios have been informed by discussions with young people to be appropriate, current, and relevant to young people's lives, and this includes behaviour that happens online. These groups review lesson plans and provide feedback on content relevance and impact as well as what topics should be included. For example, when asked which session could be removed, if necessary, young people suggested the 'consent' session, citing its frequent coverage in schools and our ability to weave the messages through the other sessions.

To inform LSVP, Brook has also consulted with external partners such as the Women and Girls Network and the Middle Eastern Women and Society Organisation (MEWSO) to ensure cultural competence and inclusivity. This has informed the tone and delivery of sensitive topics, particularly for young people from faith-based and ethnically diverse communities.

## Sample session

<b>Topic</b>	<b>Relationships &amp; Equality</b>
<b>Age and key stage</b>	<b>KS4 YR10</b>
<b>Time range</b>	<b>50 minutes</b>
<b>Aim</b>	<b>To encourage young people to explore differences in values surrounding relationships while understanding the importance of equality and respect.</b>
<b>Outcomes</b> <i>(By the end of the lesson pupils will be able to...)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify the qualities of a healthy relationships and their positive benefits</li> <li>• Explore how relationships can be legally recognised in marriage &amp; civil partnerships</li> <li>• Describe factors which impact values around sex and relationships</li> <li>• Explain that no one should be discriminated against based on their protected characteristics</li> <li>• Describe how to access services for advice and support</li> </ul>
<b>Links to government statutory guidance &amp; PSHE Association guidance</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>The characteristics and legal status of other types of long-term relationships</b></li> <li>• <b>The legal rights and responsibilities regarding equality (particularly with reference to the protected characteristics as defined in the Equality Act 2010) and that everyone is unique and equal</b></li> <li>• <b>The characteristics of positive and healthy friendships (in all contexts, including online) including: trust, respect, honesty, kindness, generosity, boundaries, privacy, consent and the management of conflict, reconciliation and ending relationships. This includes different (non-sexual) types of relationship</b></li> <li>• R1. The characteristics and benefits of strong, positive relationships, including mutual support, trust, respect and equality</li> <li>• R4. The importance of stable, committed relationships, including the rights and protections provided within legally recognised marriages and civil partnerships and the legal status of other long-term relationship</li> <li>• R9. To recognise, clarify and if necessary challenge their own values and understand how their values influence their decisions, goals and behaviours</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• R10. To understand a variety of faith and cultural practices and beliefs concerning relationships and sexual activity; to respect the role these might play in relationship values</li> <li>• R5. The legal rights, responsibilities and protections provided by the Equality Act 2010</li> <li>• R6. About diversity in romantic and sexual attraction and developing sexuality, including sources of support and reassurance and how to access them</li> <li>• R7. Strategies to access reliable, accurate and appropriate advice and support with relationships, and to assist others to access it when needed</li> </ul>
<b>Introduction and context</b>	This lesson builds on knowledge about healthy relationships and equality and explores the importance of celebrating diversity and understanding our values.

Resources required		Quantity
PowerPoint (if using)		
Plain paper		Enough for whole class
Whiteboard or flip chart paper and pens		1
Relationship timeline event cards		1
Relationship timeline facilitator debrief sheet		1
Activities and method (including key questions and messages relating to the activity)		
Activity	Description & key messages	Timing
1.	<p><b>Introduction</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create a safe space for learning including establishing ground rules and confidentiality. Introduce the topic and lesson outcomes.</li> <li>• Please communicate the session aims with the group</li> <li>• We are going to be speaking about values within this lesson. We need to be respectful of others.</li> </ul>	<b>5 minutes</b>

<p><b>2.</b></p>	<p><b>Values Tree</b></p> <p><b>Method</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Facilitator hands out pieces of paper, one for each member of the class.</li> <li>• Facilitator explains that we are going to think about our beliefs and values relating to relationships and how these are formed.</li> <li>• Ask the group to draw a very basic tree on their paper. This is not an art competition so just basic lines are fine! On the trunk facilitator asks individuals to write their name or 'me', on the branches write your beliefs/ opinions/ values about sex and relationships, on the roots of the tree write influences/ factors that help us form these values. If easier, the group can think of general societal beliefs or influences, rather than personal ones.</li> <li>• Facilitator gives the group a few minutes to add some ideas.</li> <li>• Facilitator reassures the group that these are private trees so they don't need to be shared, but if people feel comfortable please ask for suggestions. Facilitator should write these up on a whiteboard or flip chart paper.</li> <li>• Facilitator may have to challenge any unhealthy or unlawful beliefs about sex and relationships. This should be done in a constructive way, remembering safeguarding policies and procedures if needed.</li> <li>• Facilitator discusses the importance of inclusivity and being respectful to others, including to those who are part of the LGBT+ community and in LGBT+ relationships.</li> <li>• Please fully debrief with key questions and key messages.</li> </ul> <p><b>Examples/ ideas for the values tree</b></p> <p><u>Roots (facilitator can explore if some of these sources are more reliable than others)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Peers</li> <li>• Religion/ faith</li> <li>• Family</li> <li>• Country/culture you come from</li> <li>• School</li> <li>• Laws</li> <li>• TV/ films</li> <li>• Pornography</li> <li>• Books</li> <li>• Social media</li> <li>• Celebrities</li> <li>• Partner</li> </ul> <p><u>Branches (possible examples)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• You don't have to have sex if you don't want to</li> <li>• You shouldn't have sex before you are married (dependant on someone's faith/values)</li> <li>• Consent is very important</li> <li>• People should be equal in relationships</li> <li>• Trust and communication are important in relationships/ friendships</li> <li>• Friends and partners support each other</li> <li>• No one should feel controlled, threatened or bullied in a relationship</li> <li>• We should be respectful of other people's relationship values</li> <li>• Relationships and sexual attraction are unique and diverse</li> </ul>	<p><b>20 minutes</b></p>
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	<p><b>Key Questions</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Where do people get their values around sex/ relationships?</li> <li>2. Are some sources for values and beliefs more reliable than others? What are the problems with forming values from unreliable sources?</li> <li>3. Are some value systems more valid than others?</li> <li>4. Can you change your values? What can influence these changes?</li> <li>5. If something is right or wrong for you, does that mean it will be for everyone?</li> <li>6. What are protected characteristics?</li> <li>7. Should people use their own values to justify discrimination?</li> </ol> <p><b>Key Messages</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We are all unique and so will have our own values based on our experiences, faith, culture and a host of other factors. These will influence what feels right for us in terms of sex and relationships. These values and beliefs can change over time, perhaps with exposure to new people, places or ideas.</li> <li>• Some of the sources of information for values and beliefs may be more reliable than others. For example, basing all our opinions of relationships on what we see in the media or pornography may be unhealthy as they are not always realistic representations. It is important to develop skills to critically assess messages we are receiving in order to make informed choices about our lives. This may involve checking the original source of the information online. Is it from a reputable website? We may also need to think about biases we have personally, but also in our wider groups and the impact this has.</li> <li>• We can understand and explore difference while still respecting others.</li> <li>• Our values can impact our behaviour and how we treat others. This does not mean we are allowed to discriminate others based on what we feel is right for us from our values.</li> <li>• We have a right to our religious or cultural beliefs as long as they do not hurt us or others.</li> <li>• The Equalities Act (2010) gives legal protection for people and families with protected characteristics (age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, Sex) to not be discriminated against.</li> <li>• The law protects LGBT+ people from any form of hate crime, harassment, victimisation or discrimination, this is directly towards LGBT+ people, people who have an association with an LGBT+ person e.g. someone who has gay parents or people who are perceived to be LGBT+ regardless of their sexual orientation.</li> <li>• Your sexuality is unique to you. Sexual orientation can be fluid for some people and their preferences and choices can change. Every-one expresses their sexuality slightly differently and has a right to do so without fear of discrimination</li> <li>• If you have experienced homophobic, biphobic or transphobic bullying please speak to an adult you trust – you are not alone and it is not your fault.</li> </ul>	
3.	<p><b>Why Marriage?</b></p> <p><b>Method</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Facilitator explains that part of our values may involve our feelings about getting married</li> </ul>	5 minutes

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Facilitator asks the group why some people choose to get married? Take suggestions</li> <li>• Facilitator then asks why some couples may choose not to get married? Take some suggestions</li> <li>• Facilitator debriefs using key questions and key messages</li> </ul> <p><b>Key Questions</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Why do you think some people choose to marry or commit to a civil partnership? What does this bring to a relationship? Why might people choose not to marry? Does this depend on family, location and religion?</li> <li>• Are you less committed if you don't choose to marry or commit to a civil partnership?</li> <li>• Can you be happy and single? Do you have to be in a relationship? Does society and the media push people into being in a relationship?</li> </ul> <p><b>Key Messages</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Some couples choose to legally recognise their partnership through marriage or a civil partnership. A civil partnership offers the same legal rights as a marriage but there are no religious connotations or exchange of vows.</li> <li>• Same sex couples have the right to marry or commit to a civil partnership in the UK. All couples have the same legal recognition within these unions regardless of sexual orientation.</li> <li>• Citizens Advice states that in England all couples may marry if they are both 16 years or over and free to marry, that is, if they are single, widowed or divorced, or if they were in a civil partnership which has been dissolved. If you are 16 or 17 you cannot marry without parental consent. Both parents with parental responsibility must give parental consent. In some circumstances, other people may give parental consent.</li> <li>• Although there is no legal definition of living together, it generally means to live together as a couple without being married, sometimes also referred to as cohabitation. Generally you have fewer legal rights than if you were married or in a civil partnership. Some couples will choose to not get married based on their values, this is a valid choice.</li> <li>• Marriage for many is an important factor in their choices about long term relationships and becoming parents. People develop their own values for what is right for them, but should not judge or discriminate against others.</li> <li>• Marriage should always be entered into freely and without pressure. Forced marriage is illegal in the UK and this includes taking someone abroad to force, (pressure or abuse), them to marry, or marrying someone who does not have the capacity to consent to the marriage.</li> <li>• This is very different to an arranged marriage, which is legal, and planned and agreed by the families or guardians of the couple, and importantly consent is freely given by both individuals.</li> </ul>	
4.	<p><b>Relationship Timeline</b></p> <p><b>Method</b></p>	15 minutes

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Facilitator explains that we are going to think more about relationships now and the timeline of a healthy relationship</li> <li>• Using the front of the classroom or appropriate space, explain that the beginning of the relationship is one end and that the other end is potentially the end of the relationship or further on in time.</li> <li>• Facilitator asks for some volunteers who wouldn't mind coming to the front of the class and give each one a 'relationship event' card. Facilitator explains that each person can now decide if they want the event included in this healthy relationship timeline and where it would happen, near the beginning or further on. <i>(Facilitator may choose to include more or less event cards depending on time)</i></li> <li>• Give all the volunteers a few minutes to decide where to place themselves along the line. <i>(this can get a little rowdy with some groups, so explain the person holding the event is deciding where to place themselves, no one else)</i></li> <li>• Facilitator then asks someone from the 'audience' if they would like to move any of the events or remove/include any events missed out. Facilitator can repeat this process a few times if time allows</li> <li>• Facilitator then runs through the order of events from the start, clarifying any which need further input using the facilitator debrief sheet e.g. would every couple get married in their relationship timeline? What might this be based on?</li> <li>• Facilitator then thanks the volunteers and asks them to sit down.</li> <li>• Facilitator debriefs explaining that what each of our relationship timelines look like will be unique. This is based on our values and what we feel is important to us, in collaboration with our partner. However, everyone deserves to be in a healthy relationship regardless of values, experience or background. Remember some people may choose never to be in a romantic relationship. This is a valid option too.</li> <li>• Use key questions and key messages to fully debrief.</li> </ul> <p><b>Key Questions</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Was that easy? Hard? Did we all agree?</li> <li>• What are the most important qualities that people might look for in a relationship? Do these change over time?</li> <li>• What positive qualities and behaviours should people expect to exhibit and receive in a relationship?</li> <li>• Where can people go for support around relationships and sexual health?</li> <li>• Can you be happy and single? Do you have to be in a relationship? Does society and the media push people into being in a relationship?</li> </ul> <p><b>Key Messages</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• See activity plan for more specifics points for each event card</li> <li>• There are many similarities in healthy relationships no matter who they are with (friendships, family, romantic or sexual). Having positive relationships in our lives can be hugely beneficial to our emotional health and wellbeing, providing support and care.</li> <li>• Trust, equality and communication are key for healthy relationships.</li> <li>• Being appreciated and valued are positive aspects of relationships and help us to weather the storm when things get tough. What people appreciate will be different, so talk to your partner/friend and see what they would like you to do to show you care.</li> <li>• There are some overarching qualities and behaviours that everyone deserves and should have from a partner regardless of gender, age, sexual orientation, ability or race. For example, being respected, feeling safe and being equals. Consent is also</li> </ul>	
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	<p>key in healthy relationships. You should never feel pressured or manipulated into something, including sexual activity. Equally you should not do this to others.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If you feel unsafe, threatened, bullied or controlled by a partner then it is not your fault, but a sign of an abusive relationship. No one should use 'values' as a way to excuse these unhealthy behaviours. If you are experiencing abuse in a relationship please talk to someone you trust. You are not alone.</li> <li>• People have the right to factual and confidential advice and support around their relationships and sexual health. Please refer to local services, within school and locally.</li> <li>• If you don't feel safe or respected in a relationship/ friendship or at home please speak to a trusted adult like a teacher.</li> <li>• There are lots of support groups for young people who are exploring their gender and/or sexual identity, please ask your facilitator for more advice.</li> </ul>	
5.	<p><b>Summary</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Facilitators answer any questions carefully.</li> <li>• Provide a short summary of today's learning.</li> <li>• Ensure young people can identify someone they can talk to if this lesson raises any concerns.</li> <li>• Signpost to reputable organisations and your school's mentor or counsellor.</li> </ul>	5 minutes

### Relevant differentiation to support or challenge pupils

#### Consolidation

- For SEND young people, the messages about values and belief might be best taught via social story, presenting 'character' profiles of people with differing beliefs.
- SEND young people may find it hard to identify what they consider to be a key value, and a sheet with terms such as 'faith', 'what my parents believe', 'being treated with respect', 'getting married' might help them to explore what their relationship values are.
- A key message to include for SEND young people is the exploration of the idea of an 'equal' relationship. For example, if one partner relies on the other for care, how might they both feel, and how can they communicate to make sure they both feel their needs are met in the relationship? Does equal mean that both people do the exact same things, or does it mean that both people feel equally supported?
- This lesson may be something that can be extended for SEND young people in one-to-one or small group interventions so that they can consolidate the individual concepts at a slower pace.

#### Extension

- Young people who are able to engage well with the concepts in this lesson could complete an 'agony aunt' style activity offering advice to someone who either feels that their values and their partners are different, or who feel that they want to get married/have a civil partnership but their partner doesn't. How can a couple communicate around that issue?
- Are all values equally important? Young people could evaluate their own values and which is the most important to them in a relationship?

### Things to consider

- Be aware of the family circumstances of young people where they or family members may have experienced abusive relationships, adapt your teaching and provide any additional support required
- This lesson should sit in a wider programme including healthy relationships sessions, and builds on from the year 9 'Different Types of Relationships' session. It may be useful to check in with content covered in the RE curriculum to support a whole school approach.

### Further resources to support and extend learning

#### Information on relationships

<https://www.brook.org.uk/topics/relationships/>

#### Enduring love research on relationships;

<https://www.brook.org.uk/your-life/kindness>

#### Information about legal differences between marriage/cohabitation/age

<https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/family/living-together-marriage-and-civil-partnership/living-together-and-marriage-legal-differences/>

<https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/family/living-together-marriage-and-civil-partnership/getting-married/>

#### Equality Act simplified

<https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/advice-and-guidance/sexual-orientation-discrimination>

#### Support for LGBT+ young people

<https://www.brook.org.uk/your-life/homophobic-biphobic-and-transphobic-bullying>

<https://www.stonewall.org.uk/resources/best-practice-toolkits-resources>

<https://www.theproudtrust.org/for-young-people/>

#### Getting help in an abusive relationship

<https://www.brook.org.uk/your-life/abuse-getting-help>

Contact the Forced Marriage Unit (FMU) if they are concerned about someone relating to forced marriage  
fmu@fco.gov.uk 020 7008 0151

Contact Childline [www.childline.org.uk](http://www.childline.org.uk) 0800 1111

#### PSHE Association alternative lesson plans 'Family Life' (KS4):

<https://www.pshe-association.org.uk/system/files/Family%20Life%20-%20Guidance%2C%20lessons%20%26%20resources%20%28KS4%29.pdf>

### **Videos**

Home Office hate crime

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xjcaH66giLI>

Northern Ireland's first same sex wedding clip:

<https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/love-sex/northern-ireland-sex-wedding-first-gay-lgbt-a9329901.html>

## Appendix 3 – Equality Impact Assessment

The template form includes a comprehensive list of themes to consider in our approach to race equity diversity and inclusion across YEF projects. However, not all sections of this form will be equally relevant to all projects. Please agree which sections are focus areas for your project team to complete with the relevant project lead.

Section 1 - Overview			
<b>Name of grantee</b>	Brook	<b>Name of evaluator</b>	University of Manchester
<b>Name of project</b>	London Sexual Violence Project		
<b>YEF PM</b>	Anna Grace	<b>YEF EM</b>	Eimear North
Section 1b – YEF review			
<b>Reviewed by Race Equity Associate</b>	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>		
<b>Do you recommend that we approve this EQIA?</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Yes – with conditions <input type="checkbox"/> No		
<b>Narrative supporting the recommendation</b>	<p>Overall, this EQIA is strong and feels genuinely intentional rather than procedural - race and culture are built into the design rather than added on at the end. It recognises that experiences of relationships, harm and consent are shaped by racial and cultural context. It demonstrates understanding that dating and relationship violence, consent and help seeking do not sit outside of race, culture, power and stigma, and that racially minoritised young people are often left out or misrepresented in mainstream prevention and research. The EQIA shows a clear commitment to culturally responsive practice, intersectionality and youth voice, particularly through participatory design, inclusive materials, reflexive research practice, and disaggregated and intersectional data analysis.</p> <p>At the same time, it is honest about the limits of doing this work in mainstream school settings and through a large randomised trial. Schools are not neutral spaces, especially for Black, Brown and Muslim young people, and that affects who feels safe to speak, what gets shared and what ends up in the data. Even with strong intentions and good processes, some racialised experiences, especially those shaped by fear of stigma, discipline or being misunderstood, may still be harder to surface.</p> <p>With this in mind, I think there is scope to explicitly consider the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. School environments remain racialised spaces which affect safety, trust and disclosure - some racially minoritised young people may hold back on reporting because of stigma, fear of being judged or fear of surveillance.</li> </ol>		

	2. The EQIA states, "All materials use culturally relevant examples and inclusive images", however, what counts as culturally relevant content is not yet clearly defined. Which cultures? Who decides what is relevant? How are stereotypes avoided? Without addressing these points, there is a risk of centring white interpretations of other cultures.
<b>Section 2 – Evaluation details</b>	
<b>Type of evaluation</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Feasibility <input type="checkbox"/> Pilot (pre-post) <input type="checkbox"/> Pilot Efficacy (internal) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Efficacy <input type="checkbox"/> Effectiveness
<b>Research question</b>	
<b>Research design</b>	Two-armed cluster randomised controlled trial with random allocation at the school level
<b>Research location</b>	Greater London
<b>Research period</b>	September 2026 – December 2028
<b>Number of participants</b>	60 schools, 12,000 pupils
<b>Characteristics of participants</b>	Year 9
<b>Key aims and benefits of the research</b>	The key aim of this research is to evaluate the effectiveness of LSVP, a universal, specialist-delivered intervention designed to improve young people’s attitudes towards harmful behaviours in dating and relationship contexts. This is an urgent priority given the gaps in current Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) provision. Although RSE has been mandatory in secondary schools since 2020, evidence shows that many young people are still not receiving adequate education on topics like consent, harassment, and healthy relationships. With new statutory RSE guidance coming into effect in 2026, this research provides timely insight into whether externally delivered programmes can support schools to meet their obligations and better equip students to manage their own relationships safely and respectfully in offline and online spaces, as well as seek appropriate help when it is needed.

<p>Previous equality related research or consultation relevant to this research</p>	
<p><b>Section 3 - Identify who from the protected characteristic groupings or other relevant disadvantaged communities will or may be affected and how</b></p>	
<p>Age</p>	<p> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Positive impact  <input type="checkbox"/> Negative impact  <input type="checkbox"/> No impact  <input type="checkbox"/> Impact not known </p> <p>Narrative:</p> <p>LSVP is designed to benefit young people aged 13–14 (Year 9 at T1), a developmental stage identified as a key window for the primary prevention of dating and relationship violence (DRV). Research shows that nearly half of 13–17-year-olds in England and Wales who have been in a relationship report experiencing some form of DRV, including coercive control, physical assault, and pressure to engage in sexual activity (Youth Endowment Fund, 2024). Early adolescence is a critical period for shaping attitudes toward relationships, gender, consent, and violence (Exner-Cortens et al., 2013), making timely intervention essential.</p> <p>Despite the statutory introduction of Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) in 2020, there remains a gap in the delivery of key DRV-related topics such as sexual consent, harassment, and healthy romantic relationships (Cumper et al., 2023; Youth Endowment Fund, 2024). Teacher confidence and limited training are persistent barriers to effective implementation (Taylor-Gee &amp; Boyson, 2022), particularly around sensitive topics like sexual violence and pornography (Ponsford et al., 2025).</p> <p>By targeting Year 9 pupils through a developmentally appropriate and externally delivered programme, this study addresses these gaps and aims to promote critical reflection on relationship norms and help-seeking and improve knowledge and attitudes related to DRV. School-based DRV prevention interventions have been found to improve knowledge and attitudes in the short and long term, with evidence of sleeper effects on behaviour (Farmer et al., 2023; Melendez-Torres et al., 2024).</p> <p>The primary participants are aged 13–14, but this research could have wider benefits including a more respectful peer culture within the wider school community, improved school engagement, and early disruption of harmful norms.</p> <p>Mitigation:</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Intervention sessions are specifically designed for students in Years 9–10, using developmentally appropriate language and scenarios that resonate with adolescent experiences and maturity levels.</li> <li>• All research materials (information sheets, consent forms, surveys) are written in plain, inclusive language with a low reading age and supported by visuals and icons to support comprehension, including for students with SEND or lower literacy.</li> <li>• Participatory and creative techniques (e.g., storytelling, drawing, discussion-based activities) will be used in qualitative data collection to match cognitive, emotional, and social development levels.</li> <li>• Research sessions will be conducted in safe, non-judgemental spaces designed to reduce power imbalances and affirm identity. Trained facilitators will provide appropriate scaffolding and follow safeguarding protocols as needed.</li> <li>• Content has been informed by insights from Brook’s Young Person Engagement Group (YPEG), delivery experience, and UoM prior research on adolescent DRV prevention, ensuring the materials reflect young people’s lived realities.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Disability</b></p>	<p> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Positive impact  <input type="checkbox"/> Negative impact  <input type="checkbox"/> No impact  <input type="checkbox"/> Impact not known </p> <p>Narrative:</p> <p>Young people with disabilities, including those with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) and neurodiversities, are at increased risk of experiencing or perpetrating dating and relationship violence (DRV) (McNeish &amp; Scott, 2023). Emerging evidence suggests that adolescents with SEND may be more vulnerable to coercion, manipulation, and harmful sexual behaviours due to challenges with social communication, understanding consent, and navigating complex interpersonal situations (McNeish &amp; Scott, 2023). Despite this elevated risk, they are often underserved by existing prevention and intervention programmes, including those delivered in school settings.</p> <p>This study aims to have a positive impact on disabled students within mainstream education by embedding accessibility and inclusion throughout the intervention and evaluation design. The intervention itself does not assume normative developmental or communication styles, and the evaluation methods are flexible and adapted to support a wide range of needs. The participatory nature of the process evaluation also offers young people with SEND the</p>

opportunity to express their views and reflect on their experiences in ways that are meaningful and developmentally appropriate.

However, the study is limited to mainstream school settings and therefore **does not currently reach** pupils in specialist provision or alternative education settings (APs), where the prevalence and presentation of DRV may differ significantly. We acknowledge this as an important limitation in terms of equity and representativeness.

Mitigation:

Within mainstream schools, steps will be taken to ensure full inclusion of pupils with SEND and include the SEND team in planning and delivery:

- All participant-facing materials (information sheets, consent forms, surveys) will be developed to meet low reading age standards and adapted into multiple formats, including large print, audio-read, and visual formats (e.g., icons, diagrams).
- Students will be supported to complete outcome surveys and qualitative activities with additional time, assisted reading, 1:1 facilitation, or in multiple sittings, based on individual need.
- Participatory and creative methods (e.g., zine-making, facilitated discussion) will be used in the qualitative evaluation to accommodate diverse communication and learning profiles.
- Evaluation activities will be planned in consultation with each school's SEND team to ensure needs are identified and responded to in a way that is contextually appropriate and supports equitable participation while still retaining fidelity to the data-collection design.
- Subgroup analysis will be conducted by SEND status to explore potential differences in outcomes and experiences, ensuring that disabled students' responses are not lost in aggregate data.
- The evaluation is underpinned by an intersectional REDI approach that explicitly recognises the interplay between disability, other identities, and systemic disadvantage. Researchers will receive training on inclusive practice, power dynamics, and how disability (along with other characteristics and experiences) may shape young people's understanding and navigation of relationships.
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However, we acknowledge that:

Pupils in non-mainstream settings are not included in the trial, and their experiences with DRV or with similar interventions may differ significantly. The exclusion of non-mainstream settings limits

	<p>generalisability to young people with more complex disabilities or high levels of need. However, insights from this trial can inform future adaptations of LSVP or other DRV prevention programmes to better meet the needs of students outside the mainstream.</p>
<p><b>Sexual orientation</b></p>	<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Positive impact  <input type="checkbox"/> Negative impact  <input type="checkbox"/> No impact  <input type="checkbox"/> Impact not known</p> <p>Narrative:  Evidence indicates that LGBTQ+ young people are disproportionately affected by dating and relationship violence (DRV) (Miller et al., 2018; Sulla et al., 2025) and experience unique barriers to accessing support (OFSTED, 2021). Despite these risks, many school-based interventions and evaluations continue to be framed within heteronormative assumptions, limiting their relevance and accessibility for LGBTQ+ youth (Formby and Donovan, 2020). This study aims to counter that exclusion by embedding inclusive practice throughout both the intervention and the evaluation design.</p> <p>The LSVP content explicitly avoids heteronormative and gendered assumptions, presenting diverse relationship dynamics that resonate across a spectrum of sexual identities. The evaluation tools and processes similarly reflect this inclusivity. LGBTQ+ young people will have structured opportunities to reflect on their experiences in a safe, identity-affirming environment, which in itself can be a positive and empowering experience (Fox et al, 2024).</p> <p>However, it is also recognised that school settings can still pose challenges for LGBTQ+ inclusion, particularly where young people have not disclosed this identity or where broader school cultures are not fully understanding/affirming. As such, while a positive impact is anticipated, careful attention will be given throughout the study to ensuring psychological safety and meaningful inclusion for all participants, regardless of disclosure status.</p> <p>Mitigation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- All intervention and evaluation materials will use non-gendered and non-assumptive language regarding relationship dynamics and identities (e.g., gender-neutral pronouns, neutral relationship scenarios).</li> <li>- Standardised scales used in the research (e.g., MADVA) have been reviewed and will be revised to ensure they do not assume binary gender roles or heterosexual relationships.</li> <li>- Young people will be offered the option to self-describe their sexual orientation and identity beyond standard categories in the IPE, to reflect lived experience.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- All staff involved in delivery and evaluation have been trained in REDI principles, unconscious bias, and managing disclosures of identity and discrimination. Brook’s internal training also supports confident, sensitive engagement with LGBTQ+ participants.</li> <li>- Data collection sessions (e.g., focus groups, interviews) will be carefully designed to ensure confidentiality, respect for identity (whether disclosed or not), and sensitivity to disclosures.</li> <li>- Creative and flexible approaches in the intervention (eg the range discussion activities) and the research (eg zine making) will allow participants to reflect on their experiences without needing to directly disclose identity unless they choose to.</li> <li>- The evaluation will consider how sexual orientation interacts with other identities (e.g., race, disability, socio-economic background) and will seek to identify any differential impacts or experiences.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Ethnicity</b></p>	<p> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Positive impact  <input type="checkbox"/> Negative impact  <input type="checkbox"/> No impact  <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Impact not known </p> <p>Narrative:</p> <p>Evidence suggests that young people from racially minoritised backgrounds may experience dating and relationship violence (DRV) differently and disproportionately, particularly where this intersects with systemic inequities and culturally specific norms around gender, sexuality, and family dynamics (De La Rue et al, 2014). Yet mainstream DRV interventions and evaluations have only produced limited evidence of their lived experiences (Young et al., 2021)</p> <p>This evaluation seeks to address this exclusion by embedding racial equity and cultural context into every stage of both intervention and evaluation design, using the REDI framework. The LSVP content and research tools are tailored to work with, and be appropriate for, a range of racial and cultural identities, and to support meaningful engagement from participants who may otherwise feel marginalised by more generic or monocultural approaches.</p> <p>This includes careful attention to language, representation, cultural norms around relationships and consent, and the potential impact of racialised power dynamics. Our participatory and qualitative components, and young people’s perspectives will shape the understanding of how LSVP is experienced and lead to greater trust, relevance, and impact among racially and culturally diverse participants.</p> <p>However, we acknowledge that racial and cultural identity is deeply personal and intersectional. As such, it is possible that some experiences of DRV may not be fully captured through standard</p>

evaluation tools or within mainstream school settings. The IPE will aim to surface these limitations.

**ADDITIONAL NOTE:**

School environments remain racialised spaces which affect safety, trust and disclosure - some racially minoritised young people may hold back on reporting because of stigma, fear of being judged or fear of surveillance.

In recognition of these dynamics, the research will seek to minimise institutional surveillance and judgement by emphasising confidentiality, using young person-centred and non-disciplinary language, and creating opportunities for confidential participation that do not require disclosure in front of other students or school staff (eg separate desks so that students completing research tools are not overlooked, individual interviews). However, we acknowledge that, despite our best efforts, conducting research within schools may reproduce some of the very power structures it seeks to examine. Our findings will acknowledge this possible limitation.

**Mitigation:**

- All materials use culturally relevant examples and inclusive images. While “culturally relevant content” is dynamic and not fixed or universally defined, the programme content has been designed and shaped in partnership with racially minoritised young people and communities<sup>2</sup>. In the same

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<sup>2</sup> Brook, including within LSVP, approaches cultural relevance as an ongoing commitment rather than a fixed definition. The organisation aims to ensure young people see their lived realities reflected in scenarios, language and imagery across race, faith, family structures, gender, sexuality and relationship norms, both online and offline.

Cultural relevance is shaped collaboratively with young people through Participation Advisory Groups, 65% of whose members are racially minoritised. These groups review lesson plans, imagery and examples, challenging content that feels tokenistic or inaccurate. For LSVP, this is strengthened through consultation with specialist organisations such as the Women and Girls Network and the Middle Eastern Women and Society Organisation, whose expertise supports sensitive, non-stereotyped approaches to women’s reproductive and sexual health. Schools, including SEND teams, also inform local adaptations while safeguarding core messages.

Brook actively avoids stereotypes through its session design principles. Materials are reviewed to remove gendered assumptions and heteronormativity, and imagery is drawn from an Easy Read library that includes diverse, positive representations of people with protected characteristics. Scenario reviews ensure harmful behaviours are not attributed to cultural or religious causes.

way, the research tools will be co-designed, drawing on Brook's expertise and informed by ongoing input from the Young People's Engagement Group (YPEG) and the Research Advisory Group (RAG). By embedding reflexive review processes through the RAG and YPEG, we will ensure that cultural relevance is continuously reviewed, responsive, and grounded in lived experience, rather than assumed or treated as static.

- Materials are co-developed between the programme and research teams, with YEF Race Equity Advisor, and with young people's voices embedded throughout via Brook's Young Person Engagement Group (YPEG) and the Research Advisory Group (RAG), and the evaluation's qualitative component
- Researchers actively address positionality and power in training and debrief sessions.
- Participatory methods will explore how the intervention interacts with young people's cultural and racial identities
- Where needed, translated or audio-read materials will be made available, and additional time/support will be provided to ensure full participation.
- Particular attention will be paid to ensuring all young people feel their identity is respected and that their perspectives are valid and valued, especially when discussing sensitive or stigmatising issues like DRV, shame, or disclosure.
- Young people will not be overlooked (by other students or staff) when completing questionnaires
- 1-1 Interviews will be offered to those who may find it difficult to take part in group discussion, and all discussions will be confidential within the parameters of UoM ethics approvals)
- Data will be analysed using an intersectional lens, including ethnicity, gender, SEND, socio-economic background, and other key identities, to explore how DRV experiences and programme impacts vary across groups.

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Cultural relevance is continuously reviewed through reflexive processes, including ongoing feedback from young people, to prevent a drift towards white-centred perspectives. Overall, LSVP's approach is co-created, grounded in lived experience and designed to reduce the risk of reinforcing stereotypes or centring dominant cultural norms.

<p><b>Sex</b></p>	<p> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Positive impact  <input type="checkbox"/> Negative impact  <input type="checkbox"/> No impact  <input type="checkbox"/> Impact not known </p> <p> <b>Narrative:</b>  Dating and relationship violence (DRV) is frequently gendered in both its expression and societal response. Although girls are disproportionately affected by DRV (Hébert et al., 2017) patterns of perpetration and victimisation are complex (Tomaszewska &amp; Schuster, 2021) with boys and young men more likely to perpetrate physical violence or underreport victimisation due to stigma, norms of masculinity, or lack of recognition (Young et al., 2021). These patterns are shaped by entrenched gender norms that affect how young people experience, interpret, and respond to DRV. </p> <p> The LSVP intervention seeks to critically engage with gendered expectations without reinforcing simplistic narratives of ‘boys as perpetrators’ and ‘girls as victims’. Rather, it provides a space for all participants, regardless of sex or gender identity, to reflect on and challenge the societal norms, peer influences, and online pressures that shape their views and behaviours in relationships. This is likely to have a positive impact across all genders by promoting more respectful, equitable relationships and supporting both prevention and disclosure. </p> <p> The evaluation will take care to avoid reinforcing gender stereotypes through either its design or delivery. Differential outcomes and engagement patterns will be closely monitored and disaggregated by sex, with a view to informing future improvements in gender-responsive DRV prevention. </p> <p> At the same time, we recognise that gendered power dynamics remain a central feature of many DRV experiences, and must be explored with nuance. For instance, the way that consent is taught, discussed, or understood may land differently for boys and girls, and this will be explored through the IPE. </p> <p> <b>Mitigation:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Intervention content explicitly challenges harmful gender stereotypes and provides young people with language, tools, and peer dialogue to reflect on how gender expectations influence behaviours and beliefs.</li> <li>- Both intervention and evaluation tools avoid reinforcing binaries or gendered assumptions (e.g., avoiding survey items that assume a girl victim/boy perpetrator dynamic). Scenarios are presented in diverse and inclusive ways.</li> <li>- Brook facilitators and researchers receive training to support discussions of gender and power sensitively, and to create</li> </ul> </p>
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	<p>safe spaces for participants of all genders to share and reflect.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Evaluation data will be analysed by sex (and other intersecting characteristics) to understand differential impacts and explore whether some groups are more or less likely to benefit or engage. Findings will inform future adaptations to increase equity.</li> <li>- The intervention is designed for relevance and resonance with young people of all sexes and gender identities, including non-binary. This includes the use of inclusive language and representation throughout.</li> <li>- During qualitative data collection and participatory methods (IPE), young people will be able to describe their gender identities in their own words, beyond binary or Census categories</li> </ul>
<p><b>Religion or belief</b></p>	<p> <input type="checkbox"/> Positive impact  <input type="checkbox"/> Negative impact  <input type="checkbox"/> No impact  <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Impact not known </p> <p>Narrative:</p> <p>The LSVP programme is designed to support all young people in developing healthy, respectful relationships. This includes being inclusive and respectful of different religious beliefs, practices, and values, which may shape how young people understand topics such as consent, sexuality, relationships, and gender roles. While the content addresses sensitive issues like sexual consent, coercion, and image-sharing—topics that may be considered taboo or controversial in some religious communities—it is framed in a way that encourages reflection, empathy, and open discussion, without imposing particular moral viewpoints.</p> <p>Little is currently known about the impact of religious and spiritual beliefs on young people’s experiences of DRV, however a wider body of research has explored how religion and religious actors influence norms and behaviours impact VAWG (Le Roux &amp; Pertek, 2023). With young people in UK schools, religion or belief may act as a protective factor in some contexts or present barriers to engagement if topics are perceived to clash with cultural or religious norms. For example, young people from conservative or faith-based communities may face additional stigma when discussing topics such as dating or sexual boundaries, particularly in group settings or where their confidentiality feels at risk.</p> <p>The LSVP programme makes deliberate efforts to avoid judgemental framing and recognises the importance of creating space for diverse moral views while still addressing harmful behaviours such as coercion, control, or abuse. Therefore, it is anticipated that the impact of the programme and evaluation will be positive for most</p>

	<p>young people, including those with religious beliefs, particularly as their views are acknowledged and respected within the intervention.</p> <p>However, it is acknowledged that a small number of students or families may feel that certain content is not appropriate due to personal or religious values. These concerns will be addressed at the school level, and in accordance with Department for Education guidance on Relationships and Sex Education, schools are expected to consult with parents and provide clear information on curriculum content, including where the right to withdraw applies.</p> <p>Mitigation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Researchers and facilitators are trained to manage cultural and religious sensitivities.</li> <li>- Language and content are inclusive and respectful, avoiding judgemental framing.</li> <li>- Flexibility around cultural practices (e.g. holidays, dress) is built into data collection.</li> <li>- Cultural diversity is represented in scenarios and imagery.</li> <li>- Schools will communicate clearly with families about the nature and aims of the intervention. In line with RSE guidance, parents may request withdrawal from certain sessions if appropriate (e.g., sex education, but not relationships or health education). The evaluation respects participants' right to decline participation in surveys or interviews without consequence.</li> <li>- Participatory components of the implementation and IPE will provide space for young people to explore how their beliefs shape their understanding of the content, and how they perceive the programme in light of their religious or spiritual identities.</li> <li>- Evaluation team members are encouraged to reflect on positionality and power, particularly when exploring sensitive topics with young people from faith-based backgrounds, and will receive guidance and debriefing support accordingly.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Gender reassignment</b></p>	<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Positive impact  <input type="checkbox"/> Negative impact  <input type="checkbox"/> No impact  <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Impact not known</p> <p>Narrative:  The LSVP programme and its evaluation are intentionally designed to be inclusive of young people who are transgender, non-binary, or gender-diverse, and seek to create safe spaces for exploring relationship dynamics, boundaries, and respect without reinforcing binary gender norms. The programme content and delivery actively challenge rigid gender roles and heteronormative assumptions and</p>

provide opportunities for all students to reflect on healthy behaviours in a way that affirms diverse identities.

While the intervention and evaluation teams are committed to gender inclusion, the school environment may influence individual experiences. Not all schools participating in the trial may provide affirming spaces for trans or gender-questioning students due to varying levels of staff training, school culture, or local community attitudes. This external context could affect how safe or empowered some participants feel to fully engage in the intervention or research activities.

Research shows that transgender and gender-diverse youth experience higher rates of DRV (Miller et al., 2018; Sulla et al., 2025), with school-based interventions having limited relevance and accessibility for all LGBTQ+ youth (Formby and Donovan, 2020). Ensuring that trans and non-binary students can access inclusive and empowering interventions such as LSVP is therefore critical.

Although the programme and evaluation design support inclusion, the overall impact may vary depending on school-level support structures, staff confidence, and peer attitudes. Ongoing consultation with young people will be important to assess the lived experience of gender-diverse participants across different contexts.

The programme and evaluation are inclusive of young people who are transitioning but we recognise that some school contexts may be less supportive which could influence the experience of these young people on the programme. The programme and the research attempt to reduce this risk by:

Mitigation:

- Affirming and non-binary language: All research tools (e.g., MADVA) will be revised to avoid binary gender assumptions and include self-identified gender categories, rather than assigning sex/gender based on school records.
- During the Implementation and Process Evaluation (IPE), participants are given opportunities to self-identify in open-ended ways. Safeguarding and data protection protocols are in place to ensure that disclosures related to gender identity are handled safely, respectfully, and confidentially.
- Intervention content has been reviewed to avoid gender stereotypes and to incorporate inclusive imagery and scenarios, with consultation from Brook's Participation Action Group and LGBTQ+ inclusion experts.
- Researchers will establish affirming, safe, and youth-centred spaces for survey and interview participation. This includes ensuring access to private settings, offering gender-neutral

	<p>pronoun options, and responding to participants' needs with sensitivity.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- All evaluation team members receive training on gender identity, inclusion, and unconscious bias, with particular attention paid to positionality and the evolving risks facing trans young people in the UK context. Reflexive practices are embedded in the team's ongoing work.</li> <li>- Ongoing feedback from gender-diverse youth via Brook's Participation Action Group will inform adaptations and improvements to ensure that the project continues to meet the needs of trans and non-binary students.</li> <li>- Data will be analysed by gender identity (including trans and non-binary categories) to assess any differential experiences or outcomes across participant groups. Where small numbers prevent subgroup analysis, this will be acknowledged transparently in reporting.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Marriage and civil partnership</b></p>	<p> <input type="checkbox"/> Positive impact  <input type="checkbox"/> Negative impact  <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No impact  <input type="checkbox"/> Impact not known </p> <p>Narrative: Not applicable</p> <p>Mitigation:</p>
<p><b>Pregnancy and maternity</b></p>	<p> <input type="checkbox"/> Positive impact  <input type="checkbox"/> Negative impact  <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No impact  <input type="checkbox"/> Impact not known </p> <p>Narrative: Not applicable</p> <p>Mitigation:</p>
<p><b>Social class</b></p>	<p> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Positive impact  <input type="checkbox"/> Negative impact  <input type="checkbox"/> No impact  <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Impact not known </p> <p>Narrative:</p> <p>There is mixed evidence on correlations between DRV and socio-economic disadvantage. It may be that DRV is socially stratified (Young et al., 2021). Our research is sensitive to social class influencing young people's experiences and outcomes. We use free-school-meals eligibility (FSM) as an indicator of socioeconomic status. Participation in this evaluation gives this (often un-heard) group of young people a voice on topics that could disproportionately affect them. There will be overlap with other vulnerable groups such as looked-after children, for whom</p>

	<p>socioeconomic disadvantage often compounds existing difficulties. This evaluation aims to positively impact these inequalities by ensuring that intervention and evaluation processes are accessible, relevant, and responsive to the needs of young people from diverse social class backgrounds.</p> <p>Mitigation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- As recruitment will be based in Greater London, we anticipate a highly diverse sample in terms of eligibility for free school meals (FSM)</li> <li>- Programme content and research tools are designed to avoid assumptions about participants’ economic circumstances. Scenarios and examples are developed and reviewed to reflect diverse socioeconomic realities and avoid reinforcing stereotypes.</li> <li>- The IPE uses creative and participatory approaches that help capture the nuanced of lived experiences of young people facing socioeconomic disadvantage.</li> <li>- Subgroup analysis by FSM to ensure their experiences are reflected in the analysis</li> <li>- Researchers and facilitators engage in ongoing reflexive practice, acknowledging their own positionality and potential biases related to social class.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Other</b></p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Positive impact  <input type="checkbox"/> Negative impact  <input type="checkbox"/> No impact  <input type="checkbox"/> Impact not known</p> <p>Narrative:</p> <p>Mitigation:</p>
<p><b>Section 4 – Summary and references</b></p>	
<p><b>Summary of the main equality issues</b></p>	<p>Alongside considering individual characteristics like disability, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, social class, religion or belief, and gender reassignment, this evaluation also recognises how these factors can overlap. Understanding how different identities and experiences intersect, and how that shapes young people’s opportunities and outcomes, will be central to the project’s focus on equity.</p> <p>Although intersectionality can make things more complex, the evaluation is expected to have a generally positive impact on marginalised groups. Many of these groups are over-represented in the population eligible for the programme, often because of systemic inequalities and structural barriers. Taking part in the</p>

	<p>programme gives them an important chance to share their views and benefit from content that’s inclusive and culturally sensitive.</p> <p>However, there is still a risk of negative impacts, particularly where barriers to access or engagement remain eg due to school context, language, disability, or cultural sensitivities. We set out an extensive and very clear range of strategies to reduce these risks and support fair participation and outcomes.</p> <p>The evaluation will include detailed subgroup and intersectional analyses to explore how indicators of different identities (ethnicity, disability, gender identity, and social class) affect participation, engagement, and outcomes. This will help build a clearer picture of who benefits most and where extra support might be needed.</p> <p>The project will work closely with schools and services that support high numbers of vulnerable young people, including those with special educational needs, care experience, or from racially minoritised communities. Reaching and involving young people who are most at risk of harm or inequality will be a key priority.</p> <p>Early projections suggest that the participant group will include strong representation from key populations: many will be from racially minoritised backgrounds, have special educational needs or disabilities, and come from lower socioeconomic backgrounds. The evaluation’s inclusive design and participatory methods are intended to ensure these voices directly shape the programme and its research, helping to advance equity throughout.</p>
<p><b>How will the equality impact of the study be monitored and evaluated?</b></p>	<p>The following action plan will monitor the routine collection of protected characteristic data from participants by the evaluation team, and data gathered by the implementation team:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) will serve as a living document and basis for ongoing equity-focused discussions. It will be updated and refined regularly to reflect new developments/insights and learning gained during the course of the project.</li> <li>• A formal review of the EIA (led by Neil Humphries/Jo Deakin) will be conducted quarterly in consultation with both evaluation and implementation teams, with input from young people engaged through Brook’s Young Person Engagement Group (YPEG) and the Research Advisory Group (RAG). This collaborative review will help identify emerging equity issues and opportunities for improvement.</li> <li>• The research team’s combined knowledge of equity-related research and contextual challenges will inform adaptations to the project as necessary. We will keep up to date with new developments and research concerning diversity and inclusion within similar research settings to ensure current</li> </ul>

	<p>best practices are incorporated throughout the project lifecycle.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ongoing engagement with community members, through Brook’s YPAG and the project’s youth engagement group, will provide feedback and guidance from young people with lived and living experience.</li> <li>• As the fieldwork progresses, researchers will maintain vigilance to identify and respond to any unmet needs or barriers to access experienced by prospective or current participants. Any concerns will be recorded as they arise and shared with the wider research team to be addressed. This may include addressing communication challenges due to language, disability, or cultural considerations and revising procedures or protocols to remove participation barriers.</li> <li>• Recruitment and retention will be actively monitored across key demographic and protected characteristic groups to detect disparities. Where discrepancies arise between eligible and consenting participants, the IPE will explore underlying reasons. This ensures both qualitative and quantitative analyses will be conducted to investigate how factors such as ethnicity, disability, gender identity, social class, and other relevant characteristics influence participant outcomes and engagement.</li> </ul> <p>By embedding these processes, the study aims to ensure that equity remains a dynamic and responsive element with processes in place to ensure the research team can respond and react.</p>
<b>References</b>	

### Section 5 - Action plan

Actions should be SMART and progress on the action plan should be monitored as part of routine quarterly monitoring. Equality actions may arise during the research process, these should also be recorded and actioned.

Action	Completion date	Owner	Monitoring	Impact	Status
<b>Formation of Research advisory group (RAG):</b> Establish a group including members	<b>Prior to start of project:</b> <b>December 2025</b>	<b>Neil Humphrey/ Jo Deakin</b>	<b>Report to wider research team meeting</b>	Ensure equity concerns are actively monitored and addressed, giving young	<b>planned</b>

of the evaluation and delivery teams alongside 6-8 young people from diverse backgrounds (including those with lived experience relevant to gender, ethnicity, religion, social class, etc.). Two young people will be invited as equity co-researchers to provide ongoing feedback on materials and processes.				people a direct voice in shaping the study. Provides clear process/ forum for equity issues	
<b>Regular engagement with RAG:</b> quarterly check in (zoom/Teams call) with additional meetings as required to respond to specific issues raised by researchers	<b>Ongoing throughout project</b>	<b>Evaluation team</b>	<b>Quarterly meeting, notes from meeting brought back to wider team meetings</b>	<b>Continual feedback and improvement, co-production of research and knowledge, enhance cultural/contextual sensitivity of the project and evaluation.</b>	<b>planned</b>
<b>Review &amp; update EIA.</b> Conduct quarterly review of the EIA to incorporate new findings, challenges, and improvements related to equity.	<b>Quarterly</b>	<b>NH/JD</b>	<b>Report to wider team meeting</b>	<b>Keeps an ongoing focus on equity considerations, with responsive and adaptive management of equity risks.</b>	<b>planned</b>
<b>Ensure inclusive research design and materials</b>	<b>At point of research material development</b>	<b>Evaluation team/ intervention team/ Brook's Young Person Engagement Group (YPEG) and the Research Advisory Group (RAG).</b>	<b>Materials reviewed by JD/NH and wider team</b>	<b>Reduces barriers to participation, supports respectful engagement of diverse participants, and improves data quality.</b>	<b>planned</b>

Tracking/monitoring of participation by equity characteristics	Recruitment phase	Evaluation team	Monthly reporting to wider team meeting	Enable early identification of issues with engagement	planned
Use targeted qualitative follow-up to explore disparities (in response to above)	Recruitment phase	Evaluation team	Monthly reporting to wider team meeting	Enables response to/understanding of barriers to engagement	planned
Assess and implement reasonable adjustments in communication, data collection, and intervention delivery (e.g., translated materials, easy-read formats, flexible scheduling) based on participant needs	Ongoing, as required	Evaluation team	Monthly reporting to wider team meeting	Allows for equitable access and participation, ensuring inclusivity for disabled participants and those with cultural or language needs.	planned
Embed reflexive practice in data collection and analysis, with regular team reflective sessions (and training where required) to identify and mitigate bias.	Ongoing throughout project	Evaluation team	Monthly reporting to wider team meeting	Supports validity of findings and culturally sensitive interpretation of data.	planned

**Please share your completed form with the evaluation manager for your project.**

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