

EVALUATION PROTOCOL

**Youth Restorative Justice Pilot
Randomised Controlled Trial**

Coram

Principal investigator: Dr Emily Blackshaw

Youth Restorative Justice Pilot Randomised Controlled Trial

Evaluating institution: Coram

Principal investigator(s): Emily Blackshaw

Project title	Youth Restorative Justice Pilot Randomised Controlled Trial
Developer (Institution)	RJ4ALL
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Evaluation setting	10 Youth Justice Services in England and Wales (Buckinghamshire, Cambridgeshire, Cardiff, Isle of Wight, Lambeth, Leeds, Northamptonshire, Wigan, Southwark, West Mercia)
Target group	Children and young people aged 10-17 in contact with Youth Justice Services
Number of participants	376 cases consented, 338 cases for analysis, 113 cases where restorative justice delivered

Protocol version history

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Table of contents

Protocol version history	2
Table of contents.....	3
Literature review and study rationale – restorative justice in the youth justice sector	5
History and definition of ‘restorative justice’	5
Types of restorative justice	7
Young people who are more likely to experience criminalisation	9
The impact of youth restorative justice	10
Barriers to delivering youth restorative justice	12
Evidence gap.....	13
Methods	23
Implementation and process evaluation.....	44
Observations	44
Interviews.....	46
Survey of referral and delivery staff	57
Case management and administrative data from delivery partners.....	58
Triangulating IPE findings	59
Outputs.....	63
Cost data reporting and collecting	63
Diversity, equity and inclusion	64
Ethics and registration.....	71
Data protection	71
Stakeholders and interests	72

Risks.....	74
Timeline	81
References.....	85
Appendix A – Rationale for expanding remit of trial to include indirect restorative justice activities	95
Appendix B – Mapping of research questions to methods	97
Appendix C – Draft case handling outcome measure.....	115
Appendix D – Checklist provided to practitioners within the Shared Practice Model	130
Stage	130
Delivery.....	130
Evaluation	130
Checklist	130

Literature review and study rationale – restorative justice in the youth justice sector

This section summarises the evidence most relevant to the proposed pilot study. It introduces restorative justice practices used within youth justice, outlines key debates within the field, and reviews evidence regarding outcomes for young people who have caused or experienced harm and those who have been harmed. The section also examines evidence relating to the differential criminalisation of particular groups of young people and factors that may influence engagement with, and benefit from, restorative approaches. Together, this evidence provides the rationale for the proposed study and informs its design and implementation.

History and definition of ‘restorative justice’

The contemporary practice of restorative justice was first constructed in the 1970s as an alternative approach to what was felt to be an “overly harsh” criminal justice system (Menkel-Meadow, 2007). Though in contemporary discourse it may appear to be a relatively new idea, restorative justice, and the many practices that come under its umbrella have existed for centuries, possibly longer. Braithwaite (2002) argues restorative justice was the “dominant model of criminal justice throughout most of human history for all the world’s peoples” but has been overridden in many nations by a more punitive model imposed by European colonial powers who conceived of crimes as offenses against the crown rather than the person or community. This has been recognised by other scholars, who have documented community practices in many cultures, modern and historical, that closely resemble restorative justice practices (Morris and Maxwell, 1993; Hammond, 2011; Hinton, 2015; Oyeniyi, 2017).

Yet, despite its prolific and historic nature, defining restorative justice is often acknowledged to be a challenge, since it is an abstract philosophy that informs many different practices (Doolin, 2007; Gavrielides, 2008; Zaman, 2024). It is sometimes viewed in opposition to the more punitive or retributive justice systems characteristic of modern European societies; though some criticise the idea that restorative justice is distinct and opposing to other forms of justice – Daly, 2002). In a more punitive system, victims can be sidelined; and greater focus is placed on “the criminal” who must be punished for their crime in a way that serves not only as an individual sentence but a warning from the state to others not to act the same (Foucault, 1977; Garland, 2001; Costelloe, Chiricos and Gertz, 2009; Carvalho, Chamberlen and Lewis, 2019; Tonry, 2022).

Restorative justice seeks to heal the harm done to the victim through practices aimed at increasing the empathy of the offender, getting them to recognise the harm they have caused, and restoring the wellbeing of the victim and wider community. Braithwaite defines restorative justice as “a process in which all the stakeholders affected by an injustice have the opportunity to discuss the consequences of the injustice and what might be done to put them right” (Braithwaite, 2010). Rather than treating criminal behaviour as a contravention of laws and an offence against the state, restorative justice treats it as a “violation of people and

interpersonal relationships” (Zehr and Mika, 1998). Echoing this social emphasis, Fattah (1998) writes that restorative justice considers “harmony” and “the preservation of social bonds” to be the best way to reduce crime, support the rehabilitation of the offender, and restore the damage done to the victim. Ultimately, despite their diverse presentations, all restorative justice practices tend to share “core principles and values”, including “the centrality of the victim in the process, voluntariness, restoration, respect, and empowerment” (Kimbrell, Wilson, and Olaghere, 2022).

In the UK, in its contemporary version restorative justice was first used in the 1980s (College of Policing, 2022) and its popularity has only increased since. Its place in the youth justice system was elevated by the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 and the Youth Justice and Evidence Act 1999, which established restorative justice as a key pillar of youth justice. The Ministry of Justice commissioned a large evaluation of restorative justice trials in the justice and youth justice systems taking place between 2001 and 2008 (Shapland et al., 2008). The final report – published in 2008 – claimed that the trials had produced evidence of the effectiveness of restorative justice at reducing reconviction in the two years following participation in a restorative justice programme (Shapland et al., 2008). In 2010, the Independent Commission on Youth Crime and Antisocial Behaviour (2010), which was set up to investigate approaches to address an increase in youth violence, called for restorative justice to be at the centre of managing all but the most serious crimes committed by young people.

Today restorative justice is widely used in England’s youth justice system, though its implementation and availability to harmed and harmer parties vary (All Party Parliamentary Group for Restorative Justice, 2021).¹ As outlined in the Victims’ Code (Ministry of Justice, 2025), victims of criminal offending in England and Wales have been legally entitled to receive information about restorative justice from the Youth Offending Team. But fulfilling this right depends on a number of factors including, what restorative justice services are locally available, how sincerely professionals offering harmed people restorative justice interventions (RJIs) believe in them, or their appropriateness for the situation, and how well professionals responsible for offering these interventions understand restorative justice and their role in the offer process (Littlechild and Sender, 2010; Stockdale, 2015; Marder, 2020).

¹ We were advised during meetings with RJ4ALL and restorative justice delivery teams during the co-design phase to use the terms “harmer” and “harmed” throughout the research, as these are used in restorative justice practice. “Harmer” refers to the young person who has committed the criminal offense – in other words, has caused harm. This term is preferred because it avoids labelling the young person with potentially stigmatising language related to criminality, while recognising the harmful consequence of their behaviour on other people. “Harmed” refers to the person against whom the offense was committed, in place of using the more stigmatising term “victim”.

Many young people who have caused harm are also often not being offered RJs (Robinson, and Banwell-Moore, 2023).

Types of restorative justice

Restorative justice can constitute many different practices. Some consider these as existing on a “spectrum” or “continuum” of restorativeness, with some being more restorative and some less so (McCold, 2000). Another way to look at them is to see them as ranging between direct and indirect (Nascimento, Andrade and de Castro Rodrigues, 2022; Frank Grimsey Jones et al., 2023). Some examples of commonly used direct and indirect restorative justice practices include:**Error! Reference source not found.**

- Face-to-face (meetings between the harmer and harmed), also called Victim-Offender Mediation (VOM)
- Peace circles
- Family Group Conferencing
- Community circles
- Shuttle conferences – where the participants do not meet but a mediator passes messages between them
- Letter writing
- Video or voice recording making
- Training courses for the young person who has caused harm – for example, managing emotion
- Peer/youth courts
- Community service programmes.

A programme of restorative justice may involve multiple forms of practice. For example, the harmer may write a letter to the harmed, attend a training course on managing difficult emotions, and take part in a community service programme.

According to Umbreit and Armour (2011), “restorative justice dialogue”, which could include face-to-face conferences, different kinds of talking circles, or family group conferencing, is the practice most used and considered to be the most evidence-based. They explain that this form of restorative justice always involves a dialogue between the harmer and the harmed that is related to a particular offence; a third-party mediator; and (generally) some advance preparation of all parties.

Restorative justice practices can be used at any point in the justice process, from preventative work in the community, to diversionary programmes, to post-conviction work. The College of Policing (2022) lists three levels of restorative justice that are used in policing and the justice system in England – these are detailed in Table 1.

Table 1. Three levels of restorative justice that are used in policing and the justice system in England².

Level	How RJ is used
Level 1	Informal RJ, which often occurs as it happens (for example, on the street), whereby police officers or PCSOs resolve low-level crime and anti-social behaviour. This can take the form of a community resolution, ³ which includes the facilitation of street negotiations to diffuse a situation immediately after a crime has occurred. The harming party can apologise and no further action taken.
Level 2	RJ can be used instead of, or as an addition to, the formal criminal justice process. It can be organised by police officers or staff for either a situation where a level one resolution could not take place, or for more serious offences.
Level 3	Will usually occur post-sentence but can also be used pre-sentence and can take place in prison. This may be for complex and sensitive cases where the harming parties are prolific and must be monitored. All levels require facilitators that are experienced in RJ.

There is an argument that restorative justice may not be appropriate for sexual abuse and domestic abuse cases (Stubbs, 2002; Curtis-Fawley and Daly, 2005; Hopkins and Koss, 2005). Some, such as Jülich (2006) and Cossins (2008), express concern that restorative justice can retraumatise those who have been harmed because it is not necessarily able to “defuse the power relationship between victim and offender”. They point out that it could, in fact, offer the harmer an opportunity to re-create the victim/abuser dynamic. However, some suggest that restorative justice can be used for any crime, including serious offences, such as domestic abuse and sexual abuse (Liebmann and Wootton, 2008; Centre for Innovative Justice, 2014; Armstrong, 2021). They believe, as long as the harmed and harmer both consent to take part and there is a mediating party involved who can safeguard the participants and ensure full consent, a restorative justice intervention can be used (Gavrielides, 2015; Why me?, n.d.).

The philosophy that underpins restorative justice has also been used outside of the justice system. Face-to-face conferences and forms of peace circles between harmed and harming parties, are often used in community disputes or in school settings, where they are sometimes referred to as “restorative practices” (Hobson et. al, 2022). In the USA, where a school-to-

² All information in this table taken directly from College of Policing (2022).

³ Meaning, the police officer or PCSO resolves the issue amongst the affected parties without involving the courts (out of court disposal).

prison pipeline⁴ has been identified (Tynan and Warren, 2025), there have been an increasing number of school-based restorative practice programmes. These are aimed at reducing harms caused in schools and creating a more positive school environment, as well as offering an alternative to a zero-tolerance approaches, student exclusion, and a recognition of racial and gender inequalities present in the everyday lives of students (Gonzalez, 2020).

Young people who are more likely to experience criminalisation

There is a wealth of evidence suggesting that young people in the youth justice system are likely to have experienced forms of marginalisation and social disadvantage. In particular, those in the youth justice system are more likely than the general population to have one or more disabilities or health conditions (Hughes et al., 2012; Hughes et al., 2020). They are more likely to have ADHD (Young et al., 2014; Young et al., 2018) or experience another form of neurodivergence or neurodisability (Baidawi and Piquero, 2020; Kirby, 2021; Day et al., 2024). Research has found that many have had traumatic brain injuries or foetal alcohol syndrome disorder (Hughes et al., 2016; Bickle et al., 2024). Many have special educational needs (SEND) (McDonald-Heffernan and Robin-D’Cruz, 2024; Thomas and Glazzard, 2025) or language and learning disabilities or differences (Hall, 2000; Talbot, 2010).

Young people who are care-experienced are over-represented with the youth justice system (Prison Reform Trust, 2016; Department for Education, 2018). There is also strong evidence suggesting young people who have been temporarily or permanently excluded from school are likely to commit crime (Gill, Quilter-Pinner and Swift, 2017; Sanders, Liebenberg and Munford, 2018; Cornish and Brennan, 2025).

Compared to their proportion in the general population, young people from racially and ethnically minoritised communities are overrepresented in the youth justice system, particularly Black children; Gypsy, Roma, and Traveller children; and children of mixed heritage (Youth Justice Board, 2021; Brodie et al., 2025; Youth Endowment Fund, 2025). In the year 2020/21, Black people made up only 4% of the general population of 10–17-year-olds in England and Wales, yet they represented 18% of 10–17-year-olds subject to stop and searches, 15% of those subject to arrests, and 29% of those in the youth custody population (Fraser, 2022). In the most recent data, from the year ending March 2024, Black CYP

⁴ The “school to prison pipeline” refers to a phenomenon whereby young people from predominantly racially or ethnically minoritised communities and low-income households are funnelled by punitive and exclusionary school policies into criminal activity and the justice system (Hemez, Brent and Mowen, 2019; Sevon, 2022). It has also been noted to affect young people with neurodisabilities (Kent et al., 2023). The school to prison pipeline has been widely documented in the USA but is increasingly recognised in the UK (Perera, 2020; HM Inspectorate of Probation, 2021; The Traveller Movement, 2022).

represented 19% of those subject to stop and searches, 8% of those subject to arrests, and 24% of those in the youth custody population (Youth Justice Board, 2025; see Table 2).

Table 2. Table showing rates of young Black people in England and Wales being subject to justice system actions in year ending March 2024 (Youth Justice Board, 2025).

Group	Percentage who are Black
10–17-year-olds in England and Wales population	6%
10–17-year-olds subject to stop and searches (where ethnicity was known)	19%
10–17-year-olds subject to arrests	8%
10–17-year-old children cautioned or sentenced	11%
10–17-year-olds children in custody on remand	27%
10–17-year-olds in youth custody population	24%

A report from The Traveller Movement (2016) found Gypsy, Traveller and Roma children aged 12-18 represented 12% of the population in Secure Training Centres (STCs) and 7% in Young Offender Institutions (YOIs) between, despite only being an estimated 0.1% of the general population.

Additionally, young people from racially and ethnically minoritised communities in England and Wales may have less access to restorative justice than their white peers (Sabbagh, 2017). This can be for many reasons, such as a likelihood to turn down support due to low trust in the justice system because of its history of systemic racism and low representation of racially and ethnically minorities groups in the youth justice system workforce.

Despite the relevance of the personal characteristics above to the criminalisation of young people, Kimbrell et al. (2022) note that many evaluations of restorative justice programmes fail to include considerations of characteristics related to different needs and demographics and do not contain information about these of their sample population. There has been little examination of the different needs that may impact a young person’s experience with restorative justice and consideration of how these needs may affect the outcomes measured in an evaluation.

The impact of youth restorative justice

The outcome often of greatest interest to policymakers is recidivism. However, research on the impact of restorative justice on recidivism has produced mixed results. Many studies have found positive results (such as McGarrell et al., 2000; Shapland et al., 2008; Bouffard, Cooper and Bergseth, 2017). Yet, there have been several meta-analyses of restorative justice evaluations, all of which have found – ultimately – little to no evidence of a positive impact on recidivism.

Wong et al. (2016); Wilson, Olaghere and Kimbrell (2017); and Kimbrell et al. (2022) initially found that there was a small-to-moderate and statistically significant reduction in reoffending behaviour compared to non-restorative youth justice responses. Skinner et al. (2025) found a relative reduction in “serious” reoffending that was estimated to be 34%. However, all three meta-analyses assessed that many of the studies were of low quality – for example, because they involved the risk of moderate or serious bias, methodological issues, or significant limitations regarding programme implementation issues which affected the quality of delivery, amongst other concerns – and therefore are not wholly conclusive. In fact, Wong et al. (2016); Wilson, Olaghere and Kimbrell (2017); and Kimbrell et al. (2022) found that, for the high-quality studies (randomised controlled trials and high-quality quasi experimental studies), restorative justice interventions had no significant effect on recidivism. It was only in lower quality studies that they found restorative justice had an overall positive effect. The observed disparity between findings from higher-quality and lower-quality studies raises concerns regarding the reliability of results derived from weaker evaluations.

Furthermore, Skinner et al. (2025) commented that most evaluations considered White males from anglocentric countries, meaning that there is very limited evidence of how restorative justice interventions impact recidivism (amongst other factors) for young people from ethnic and racial minorities. Considering how overrepresented these groups are in the youth justice system, this is a significant evidence gap.

Though reduced recidivism is often a key outcome for policymakers, there is strong evidence that restorative justice produces positive results for victim and non-delinquency outcomes. Those who have been harmed and those who have caused harm have often reported feeling greater satisfaction with the restorative justice process compared to those going through the traditional justice system (Strang et al., 2013; Wilson, Olaghere and Kimbrell, 2017; and Kimbrell et al., 2022). Restorative justice interventions also tend to increase the perception of the justice system's fairness amongst those who have harmed and been harmed (Van Camp and Wemmers, 2013; Wilson, Olaghere and Kimbrell, 2017); and Kimbrell et al., 2022). Those who caused harm showed a greater understanding of their impact on those they had harmed and demonstrated feelings of repentance for their behaviour (Poulson, 2003; Kim and Gerber, 2011).

Sherman et al. (2005) found that those who had been harmed felt less anger towards the offender who had harmed them and had less desire for revenge than those experiencing the traditional justice system. Gaffney et al. (2024) note this outcome “has important implications for breaking the cycle that underpins a significant proportion of violent crime”. Nascimento, Andrade and de Castro Rodrigues (2022) found in a systematic review that those who were harmed who participated in direct restorative justice (Victim Offender Mediations) “exhibited a decrease in their post-traumatic stress symptomatology”, meaning they felt less anxious and afraid following the intervention. However, just two of the five relevant studies used a control comparison, and such feelings were found to typically decrease over time following a

traumatic event. Nascimento, Andrade and de Castro Rodrigues (2022) also note that the result varied between adult and juvenile participants who had been harmed, with young people experiencing a greater decrease in anger than adults, though the difference was not statistically significant.

Barriers to delivering youth restorative justice

The literature consistently identifies significant challenges associated with the implementation of effective restorative justice. Hobson et al. (2022) expressed that restorative justice needs to be worked into the fabric of the youth justice system as a whole rather than being treated as an “optional extra tool in the youth justice toolkit”. Restorative justice’s effectiveness may be limited by the fact that it is delivered by people operating within institutional cultures that may not align with its underlying principles (Stockdale, 2015; Marder, 2020). For example, Marder (2020) explains that studies have found “deficiencies” in the ways police officers deliver restorative justice, such as their tendency to sideline participants (both harmers and those harmed) and their families in favour of finding quick solutions to criminal activity.

Furthermore, there are logistical and practical issues that can reduce restorative justice’s effectiveness. Funding pressures are noted to impact the availability of restorative justice services and quality of delivery (Marder, 2020; Banwell-Moore, 2022; Skinner et al., 2025). Littlechild and Sender (2010) found that extensive training was needed to ensure staff delivering restorative justice fully understood it. Additionally, within this training, the definition of restorative justice and who it is for must be agreed upon and made clear so that its practice not become overly influenced by individual interpretations of it or people making mistakes through lack of understanding or confidence in their understanding of it (Stockdale, 2015). Marder (2020) explains, “As restorative justice is embedded through training and policy, varied and culturally contingent interpretations by leaders, managers and early adopters will cascade throughout the force, influencing officers who also retain the discretion to interpret and use restorative justice according to situational or individual factors.” The lack of a standardised approach to implementing restorative justice was noted by Banwell-Moore (2022) as also being a barrier for Youth Offending Teams (YOTs).

As restorative justice is voluntary, its usage is dependent on those who have harmed and been harmed being willing to engage. It can, understandably, be anxiety-provoking for someone affected by criminal behaviour to consider participating in a restorative justice process, so support for the harmer and harmed when restorative justice is discussed as a potential intervention is recommended. It was noted by Robinson and Banwell-Moore (2023) that those who harmed would appreciate hearing from a fellow offender who has been through the restorative justice process about their experience of it. This may help assuage concerns those who have harmed have about what the process would look and feel like. There was evidence that those who have harmed are not being routinely and systematically offered restorative justice – despite it being their right – as well as not being centred in the restorative

justice process (Banwell-Moore, 2022). Studies noted the importance of those harmed and who have harmed being well-informed about restorative justice, so they can make a clear decision about participating, but have suggested that this does not always happen (Why me?, 2015; Banwell-Moore, 2022).

A major barrier for implementing restorative justice relates to making it accessible for young people from racially and ethnically minoritised backgrounds. There is evidence that young people from Black, Asian and other ethnic backgrounds may miss out on being offered restorative justice (Sabbagh, 2017) or, if offered it, not take up the offer due to institutional and systemic racism having caused them and their community to lack trust in the police and legal system (Robinson and Banwell-Moore, 2023). Robinson and Banwell-Moore (2023) found in qualitative interviews and focus groups with young people, young adults, and victims, that Black people they spoke to had negative perceptions of restorative justice, believing it would not work and would not meet their expectation, in addition to expressing a general mistrust of police. Some participants who identified as Black or brown said that they did not feel restorative justice was an appropriate intervention for hate crimes.

There has also been little consideration in evaluations about how restorative justice is experienced by young people with disabilities. Littlechild and Sender (2010) noted that staff they interviewed who practiced restorative justice in a residential facility said young people with communication difficulties, attachment disorders, autism, or significant degrees of learning disabilities struggled to understand and engage with restorative processes. Staff also expressed concern that there was no advice in their restorative practices training on how to adapt these practices for young people with disabilities and limited research to support its effectiveness with such groups.

There are further questions around how to effectively use restorative justice processes with gender-based crimes, such as domestic abuse. Robinson and Banwell-Moore (2023) note that some women had a lack of trust in the police and justice system to manage domestic abuse cases and properly support them through restorative processes. There are also the concerns around how power dynamics between abusers and their victims might be perpetuated by restorative approaches if they are not managed appropriately.

Evidence gap

There are substantial gaps in the evidence base for restorative justice interventions in the youth justice system. There is a significant need for more high-quality studies to determine the effectiveness of restorative justice on recidivism in young people, as many previous studies have been of low quality or at risk of research or publication bias. Research also needs to strongly consider and measure outcomes beyond recidivism, especially non-delinquency and victim outcomes. There is a significant gap in understanding demographic differences in young people participating in restorative justice interventions and how these may play into: their willingness to take part in restorative justice; their experience of the process; and their

outcomes. In particular, future research should focus on young people from racially and ethnically minoritised backgrounds, gender differences, and young people with disabilities. This is essential when considering how over-represented young people from racially and ethnically minoritised backgrounds and those with disabilities are in the youth justice system.

YEF Restorative Justice scoping study

To address this evidence gap, a scoping study for an evaluation of restorative justice activities for children and young people (CYP) aged 10 to 17 years in England and Wales was carried out last year (Alma Economics, 2024), exploring options for delivering an impact and accompanying process and implementation evaluation. This scoping study comprised a desk-based evidence review and qualitative fieldwork with Youth Justice Services (YJSs), the Youth Justice Board for England and Wales (YJB), external service providers, academic researchers, police forces and the Ministry of Justice (MoJ).

The scoping study concluded that a quasi-experimental design (QED), linking Youth Justice Service (YJS) and police data, represented the most appropriate research approach. Nevertheless, YEF has elected to fund a randomised pilot trial, which constitutes the current study. Despite the different evaluation design, insights generated during the scoping study have directly shaped the development of this protocol, as detailed in Table 3.

Table 3. Scoping study findings (Alma Economics, 2024) and implications for protocol

Scoping study finding	Implication for current trial protocol
Wide range in annual RJ cases found across participating services and in literature (estimated 48-82% of offenders agree to participate in RJ, but only 45% of these cases would attend a meeting), with unclear estimates of drop-out (one provider estimated 25%). In addition, the scoping study identified low engagement in evaluation activities (outcomes measures, interviews etc.) as a challenge.	Data request made of all YJS’s during co-design seeking data on direct, indirect, and other forms of RJ activities, and drop-out (case ends prior to face-to-face or indirect meeting being held) to support sample size estimations. Conservative (high) drop-out estimates used for sample size estimations. Protocol closely examines recruitment and drop-out rates to provide key information to ensure a fully powered full-scale RCT, should this be pursued.

	In the pilot trial co-design period we have worked closely with YJS's and young people with lived experience to seek to overcome low engagement with the evaluation. We present our approach in our risk register and methods below.
The literature and qualitative fieldwork showed that a reduction in reoffending is underpinned by remorse (understanding impact of actions), improved attitudes and perceptions towards offending, improved self-esteem, and increased trust in the justice system.	Recognised these mechanisms in Theory of Change (ToC; see Error! Reference source not found.) for exploration in Implementation and Process Evaluation (IPE).
The literature and qualitative fieldwork highlighted reoffending and reduced severity of reconvictions as primary outcomes, as well as the following secondary outcomes: confidence, self-esteem, wellbeing, stronger relationships with peers and family, community integration, reduced school exclusions.	Recognised these outcomes in ToC (see Error! Reference source not found.) and outcome measures (offending, emotional and behavioural problems, wellbeing, and case handling satisfaction).
Various challenges were identified in relation to data access, including varying data quality and case management systems between YJSs, the need for parent/carers consent, and complex and time-consuming data sharing agreements. This includes the challenge of variation in definitions and key terms.	We have worked closely with YJS's and RJ4ALL in co-design to develop a shared data language around key concepts and RJ definitions, which will support data sharing. We have assigned ample time and resource in our timeline and budget to developing and agreeing data sharing agreements between all parties. In line with ethical requirements and to mirror YJS practice, we will seek parent/carers consent for children under 16 years.

The scoping study suggested it would be challenging for an evaluation to isolate the effect of RJ from the range of support measures provided to a young person through YJS. The scoping study also recommended exploring the differing impacts of direct and indirect RJ.	We have expanded the remit of the trial to include both direct and indirect restorative justice interventions (see Appendix A for our rationale). We will examine outcomes by intervention delivery descriptively and through exploratory analysis within the intervention arm, complemented by evidence from the process evaluation to understand how and why experiences and outcomes may differ between direct and indirect restorative justice interventions. Our IPE contains a substantial plan to assess business as usual (BAU) across all YJS's to contextualise the observed impacts of RJ and to explore differing experiences of direct and indirect practices. Restorative Justice is clearly detailed in the Shared Practice Model and will support consistent delivery of restorative justice that is distinct from business-as-usual support.
The scoping study highlighted the challenges in measuring reoffending directly and suggested it is more feasible to measure through proven reoffending over a one-year follow-up period.	We will supplement self-report assessment of reoffending at one-year follow-up with police data at both a local and national data level.

Shared Practice Model of Restorative Justice

To address the issue of consistency of restorative justice practice, as part of this project YEF commissioned RJ4ALL to develop a Shared Practice Model. RJ4ALL with YJS and the YJB during co-design. The Shared Practice Model comprises a 10-step programme of restorative justice, with variations for direct and indirect delivery (see Appendix A for the rationale for expanding the remit of the study to include both direct and indirect delivery). The delivery of restorative justice will vary according to case factors and will likely fall between 6 weeks and 6 months.

RJ4ALL describe the seven core characteristics of the Shared Practice Model as:

- Focused. A clear definition of restorative justice that excludes support and interventions that do not involve dialogue (direct or indirect) between harming or harmed parties. This definition excludes preventative methods such as resilience workshops and victim awareness programmes.
- Manualised. The model intends to provide a clear outline of each stage of delivery, from initial assessments, consent, facilitation of the intervention, through to follow-up.
- Compliant. The model adheres to legislation that governs restorative justice delivery by youth justice service teams.
- Timely. Whilst every case is unique, as part of this evaluation, recruitment and delivery of RJ will have to be consistent across YJSs, delivered within 6 months.
- Monitored Data collection should be consistent across youth justice service teams to support the evaluation.
- Innovative. Consistency within the Shared Practice Model should support, rather than constrain, creativity.
- Malleable. The model allows for flexibility to respond to the needs and circumstances of individual localities and YOTs.

We have summarised the 10-step restorative justice programme below. For full details please see the Shared Practice Model.

1. Beyond Risk-Need-Responsivity

The Model encourages YJS teams to move beyond the Risk Need Responsivity model of rehabilitation (Andrews, 2008; Andrews & Bonta, 1994), moving away from deficit-based thinking, reframing harm, to one that considers victims and young offenders as active stakeholders in the process, not passive recipients of outcomes. The focus is shifted from the violation of state law to the violation of social liaison that bonds individuals, allowing for accountability and repair.

2. Understand and Manage Power

Practitioners must seek to understand and manage power between the harmed and harming parties, and between the parties and the facilitator. It should be acknowledged that all parties in conflict are equal in the identification of harm and in reaching an agreement for restitution. It is crucial that the practitioner learns to relinquish power themselves (Gavrielides, 2021).

3. Child First: Do No (Further) Harm & the restorative justice red lines

Risk identification and mitigation must be conducted carefully and continue throughout the delivery of restorative justice as a live process. A key principle within the Child First framework

is that practice or policy must not do any (further) harm to children and young people. The Victims Code and Article 12 of the Victims' Directive seeks to protect victims from secondary or repeat victimisation. This also involves identifying 'red lines' that must not be crossed or signal where restorative justice should either not be initiated or be ended. The 'red lines' are that restorative justice must be safe, impartial, confidential, fair, voluntary, and high-quality, and must be free from domination, discrimination, bias, and power abuse. Crucially restorative justice must never be practised if the harming party denies responsibility (different from guilt); no contact orders are in place (unless exceptions apply), or where trauma or mental health needs prevent genuine and meaningful participation in dialogue.

4. The restorative justice offer/referral and the right to be informed

Harmed parties have a right to information about restorative justice. If the harmed party is unwilling to participate, then the case is not appropriate for restorative justice. Youth justice teams must have a clear referral process with information for harmed parties to support them making an informed decision (a decision which is live and ongoing). Allocation of cases must be done on a case-by-case basis and depending on experience and any conflicts of interest. At least one caseworker involved in delivering restorative justice services in complex cases must be specially trained and highly experienced, and able to describe how previous/existing relationships can affect the restorative justice process and long-term implications. Practitioners will need to ensure that consent to the restorative justice voluntary and that parties understand they can withdraw at any point. Participants must be fully briefed and necessary safeguards and preparations made.

5. Preparatory stage

Relationships and empathy form the foundation of preparatory work. Preparation must allow time for adequate reflection and understanding. Preparation must include personal contact between the restorative justice practitioner and potential participants, development of a continuous risk assessment, a candid description of the restorative justice process to ensure realistic expectations, confirming informed consent from participants, and opportunity for participants to be self-reflective on the harm, continued relationships, perspectives, future opportunities and, their needs.

6. Risk Assessment

A thorough risk assessment must be carried out, with special attention for complex cases. This risk assessment must be live and flexible to reflect the dynamic nature of risk. There are risk assessment tools available that encompass general risks, including history of/continuous violence, mental, emotional and physical health related barriers, power imbalance, gender bias and homophobia, as well as relevant contextual needs including neurodivergence/SEND

and socio-cultural and racial differences. Written risk assessments are mandatory to establish and record any rationale for decision-making in case development.

7. The encounter (direct or indirect)

The encounter should be guided by the parties and not imposed by youth justice services, including whether the encounter is direct or indirect. The encounter should include a discussion of the facts, effect, and outcomes in relation to participants' actions, thoughts, feelings, and needs. The focus is not the harming party, but the harm. Facilitators should avoid expressing value judgements during the encounter, as it may make them appear as favouring a party over the other. The RJ dialogue must be sufficiently open and honest.

8. Reaching Restorative Justice Outcomes

All those with a stake in the harm are responsible for determining the outcome of the restorative justice process. Outcomes, where made, should be recorded and copies provided to participants. If the encounter results in an agreement, its fulfilment must be verified through a feedback mechanism or follow-up meeting. An apology should not be pursued nor imposed, though it may be offered.

9. Monitoring Restorative Justice Outcomes

Monitoring or observation periods must be agreed upon, even after other outcomes of processes have been completed. During this period, the practitioner will maintain contact with the participants and monitor completion of any outcomes. This follow-up will often coincide with post-encounter support to enable a holistic restorative justice ethos.

10. Follow-Up Holistic Support – the restorative justice ethos

A holistic provision of support should be provided to both parties both during and after any agreement is reached (and regardless of whether an agreement is reached) to repair the immediate harm. This can involve mental health specialists and therapists, social and health care workers, educators, and faith leaders. Youth justice services should create a directory of available and up-to-date resources for support.

We developed the following Theory of Change during co-design with RJ4ALL and YJS teams, see Figure 1. There is also an embedded Theory of Change (see Figure 2) in focusing specifically on the mechanisms and mediating outcomes that lead from restorative justice to reduced reoffending, given that restorative justice was not designed solely for this purpose. This Theory of Change will be refined as appropriate at the end of the trial period.

Figure 1. Theory of Change

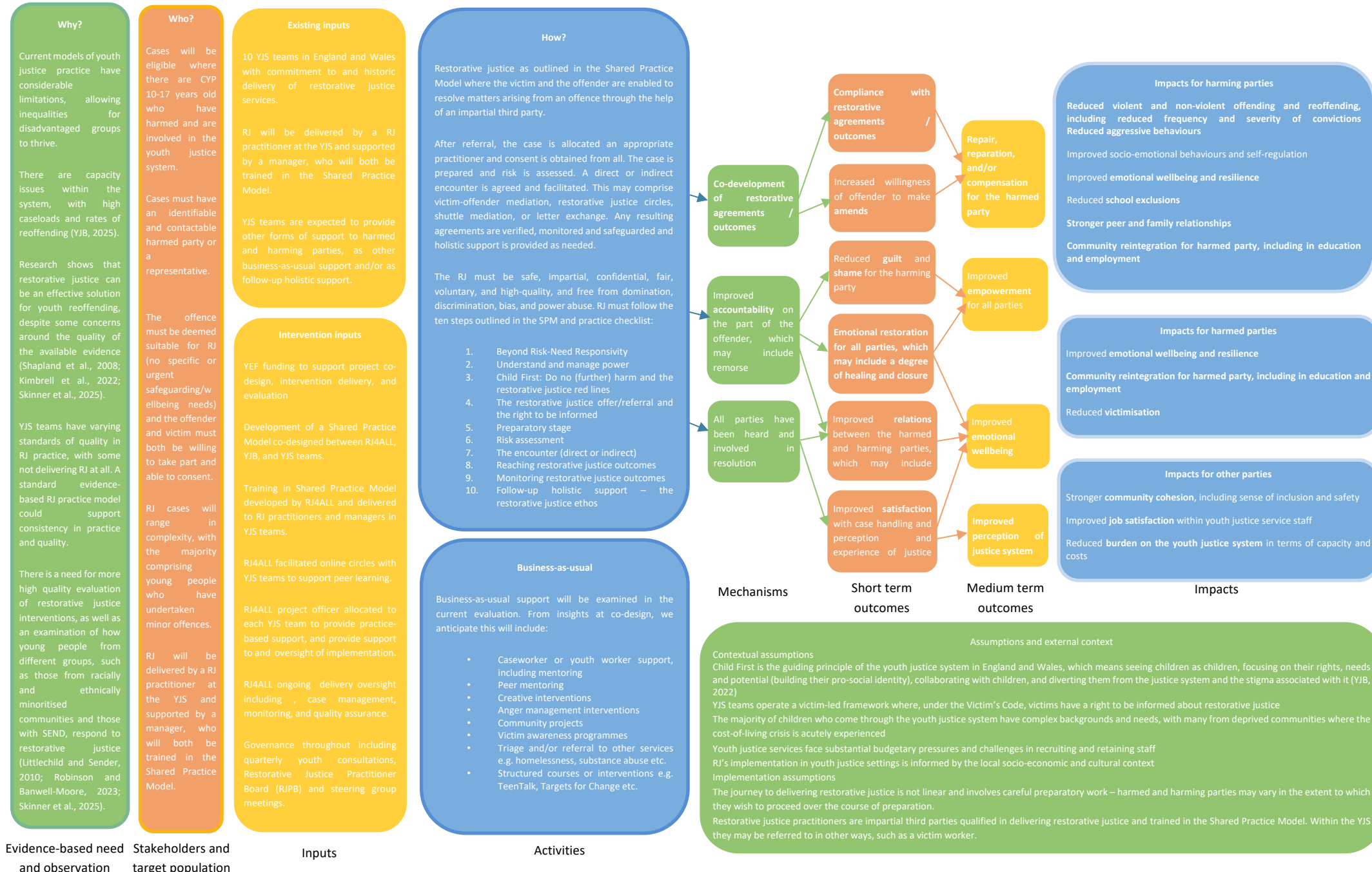


Figure 2. Embedded Theory of Change



YJS teams will be trained in to deliver restorative justice as per the Shared Practice Model by RJ4ALL through structured training, hands-on support, and quality assurance. Key activities include:

- Training development and accreditation (March–May 2026): Develop training aligned with the Shared Practice Model (SPM) and secure CPD status.
- Dedicated implementation support (from March 2026): Allocate a named RJ4All project officer to each YJS team.
- Onboarding and peer learning (April 2026): Facilitate online circles with all selected YJS teams to support onboarding and shared learning.
- Monitoring and quality assurance (May–June 2026): Agree monitoring protocols with YJS teams, including observation placements of RJ4All staff.
- CPD-certified onboarding training (July 2026): Deliver a CPD-certified online course for all YJS teams.
- Practice-based support (July–September 2026): Provide one-week placements of an RJ4All project officer within each YJS team.
- In-person CPD training (July–September 2026): Deliver three CPD-certified, face-to-face training sessions for all YJS teams.
- Continuous Delivery Oversight (October 2026 – July 2028): Support and monitor recruitment to treatment and control groups, as well as provide support to those cases included in the pilot through a case management system.
- Ongoing governance and engagement (from October 2026): Additionally provide ongoing oversight and review of the SPM through quarterly youth consultations, quarterly Restorative Justice Practitioner Board (RJPB) and steering group meetings.

This structured programme of accredited training, embedded practice support, and robust monitoring aims to ensure YJS teams are well-prepared to deliver the pilot with fidelity, while maintaining consistency across teams and high standards of practice. The centralised CMS is essential enabling this support, monitoring, and quality assurance; without it, consistent oversight of case management and intervention fidelity would not be possible.

Evaluation design

Building on this scoping study, we will conduct a two-arm randomised controlled trial, comparing restorative justice delivered according to the Shared Practice Model outlined above (in addition to business-as-usual support), with a control arm (business-as-usual support), with randomisation on a 1:1 basis. We are using the following definitions of each trial arm, as agreed with RJ4ALL and YJS teams in co-design:

1. Restorative justice trial arm. Direct restorative justice comprises a face-to-face and/or online encounter between harmed and harming parties, including Victim-Offender Mediation (VOM), Family Group Conferencing (FGC), and Restorative Justice Circles (RJC). Indirect restorative justice comprises indirect communication between harmed and harming parties, including letter exchange, video or audio file exchange or passing messages through the RJ practitioner. Restorative justice will be delivered in accordance with RJ4ALL's Shared Practice Model and in addition to business-as-usual support.
2. Control trial arm. No restorative justice, business-as-usual support, including community reparation projects, offending behaviour programmes, and mental health/wellbeing support. Distinguished from the restorative justice arm in that there is no dialogue between harmed and harming parties.

This evaluation will assess the feasibility of implementing the restorative justice Shared Practice Model (summarised below), identify evidence of promise in relation to key outcomes, and established the readiness to deliver and evaluate the intervention in a definitive randomised controlled trial (RCT).

Methods

This section sets out the methods of our impact evaluation, process and implementation evaluation (IPE), and cost evaluation. We detail: our participatory approach to design, conduct, and reporting; the research questions; the trial design; the delivery and research settings; trial eligibility criteria; the intervention description (including Theory of Change); trial outcomes; trial sample size; randomisation; procedures (including recruitment and data collection); the participant journey; and data analysis.

Participatory approach to design, conduct, and reporting

Design. This protocol was co-designed with stakeholders, including RJ4ALL, participating YJS teams, members of the YJB, the funder (YEF), the trial's Race Equity Associate, and young people with lived experience of youth justice services. Co-design took place between June 2025 and February 2026.

Co-design meetings were led by Coram and attended by members of Coram's evaluation team, RJ4ALL's project team, restorative justice practitioners in YJS teams, the funder, and the trial's Race Equity Associate. Five meetings took place remotely over Teams and lasted for two hours each. The meetings were designed to enable discussion of key issues related to

the intervention's Theory of Change and evaluation, including trial design, recruitment and data collection processes, and outcome measures.

Throughout co-design we also engaged individual YJS teams in ad hoc consultations where key decision points arose, such as around a potential three-arm trial design. Individual meetings were also held with the trial's Race Equity Associate to allow for in-depth discussion of issues related to race equity and review of the Equality Impact Assessment. We held separate meetings with young people with lived experience of the youth justice system, recruited through Coram's current programme of youth voice and advocacy. These young people are keen to advise on the trial as it progresses.

In parallel, RJ4ALL held focus groups and 1:1 interviews with members of the YJB and participating YJS teams, to allow them to build the intervention's Shared Practice Model. Members of Coram's evaluation team attended focus groups to support with designing a trial protocol that was embedded in the realities of intervention delivery.

Conduct. We will employ two peer researchers⁵ to support with carrying out evaluation activities in the pilot, including gaining consent, baseline and endline outcome data collection and IPE qualitative data collection (interviews). Young people with lived experience of youth justice services were supportive of using peer researchers in the pilot trial. However, one advisor raised a number of concerns which we will be mindful of, including safeguarding young people where the peer researcher may be known to them or their community, providing adequate training, and ensuring transparency of findings.

Coram is experienced with employing and supporting peer researchers to engage with research activities of this nature and are currently running an RCT using a similar peer researcher model for data collection. The peer researcher will hold a fixed-term employment contract with Coram and be expected to complete all mandated training (including GDPR and safeguarding). In addition to this training, the Coram will deliver project-specific training to upskill the peer researcher in the processes required for this study. The peer researchers will be supervised by Elizabeth Raws, who has led participatory strands of Coram research. The peer researchers will conduct interviews as part of the IPE with a Coram researcher. They will conduct consent conversations, data collection activities, and 6-month check-in calls independently, with supervision. For all research activities we will undertake contextual risk

⁵ A peer researcher is a researcher with relevant lived experience of the issue, service or population being studied, in this case experience of youth justice services, who is trained and supported to undertake research activities alongside Coram's core research team.

assessments to understand and mitigate risks and ensure safeguarding (for all parties) is adequate.

Throughout the trial, we will receive input and advise from two steering groups. One with lived experience of the youth justice system) and one comprising professionals with expertise in the youth justice system and/or restorative justice. Meetings will be held strategically so that groups can input at key points throughout the trial, such as triangulating findings. Young people with lived experience may be consulted individually, as opposed to in a group, according to their preferences.

Reporting. Peer researchers will support with data analysis through collaborative analysis sessions, such as coding interview transcripts. Peer researchers will also support with report writing, by reviewing draft findings to confirm they align with lived experience and do not misrepresent participants. They will also help to develop practical, realistic recommendations for policy and practice from our research findings, grounded in what works for young people and communities.

Research questions and objectives

This evaluation will assess the feasibility of implementing the restorative justice Shared Practice Model, identify evidence of promise, and established the readiness to deliver and evaluate the intervention in a definitive randomised controlled trial (RCT). We have grouped our research questions according to these objectives. The first three research questions address the feasibility of implementing the Shared Practice Model (SPM), which we will explore in the context of 10 YJS teams in the UK embedding the model within the context of a pilot RCT. This includes fidelity to the SPM, as well as barriers and facilitators of its implementation (RQ1.1), the extent to which structural factors affect how restorative justice is accessed and received for minoritised groups (RQ1.2), and the cost of delivering the SPM (RQ1.3).

The second series of research questions address the extent to which restorative justice, delivered according to the SPM, demonstrates evidence of promise, in terms of the outcomes achieved for harmed and harming parties. We will evaluate impact on police-recorded offending (RQ2.1) and self-reported offending (RQ2.2) for harming parties, self-reported emotional and behavioural problems and wellbeing (RQ2.3) and satisfaction with case handling (RQ2.4) for both children who have caused harm and individuals who have been harmed. We will specifically attempt to understand observed and perceived impacts of restorative justice for minoritised and underrepresented groups (RQ2.5). We will also seek to evidence our Theory of Change, examining assumptions and mechanisms that lead to the intervention achieving its theorised impacts.

The final series of research questions explore readiness for full-trial. We will examine the extent to which recruitment and retention procedures are effective in supporting a fully-powered trial, with a specific focus on minoritised and underrepresented groups (R.Q3.1). We will also assess the feasibility and acceptability of randomisation procedures (RQ3.2) and our selected outcome measures (RQ3.3).

Below we state each of these research questions. We provide a table mapping these questions to the methods in Appendix A.

RQ1. Feasibility of implementation

RQ1.1. To what extent is the restorative justice Shared Practice Model successfully implemented and what are the barriers and facilitators that influence this?

RQ1.2. How do structural factors⁶ affect children who have caused harm and those who have been harmed from different groups (particularly those from Black Asian and ethnic minority backgrounds, girls, and children with SEND, or children in care/or who are care experienced) in accessing and receiving the programme?

RQ1.3. What is the cost of delivering the restorative justice Shared Practice Model?

RQ2. Evidence of promise

RQ2.1. What is the difference in police-recorded offending rates of children in touch with Youth Justice Services at 12-month follow-up, between those in the restorative justice trial arm (receive restorative justice delivered according to the Shared Practice Model in addition to business-as-usual support) and those in the control arm (receive business-as-usual support)?

RQ2.2. What is the difference in self-reported offending rates of children in touch with Youth Justice Services at 12-month follow-up, between those in the restorative justice trial arm (receive restorative justice delivered according to the Shared Practice Model in addition to business-as-usual support) and those in the control arm (receive business-as-usual support)?

RQ2.3. What is the difference in self-reported emotional and behavioural problems and wellbeing of children and harmed parties in touch with Youth Justice Services at

⁶ For example, institutional racism, lack of diversity in the workforce, failures to acknowledge different experiences and treating CYP as a homogenous group, mistrust of support services or 'system', referral biases, and the lack of coordination between services and agencies.

12-month follow-up, between those in the restorative justice trial arm (receive restorative justice delivered according to the Shared Practice Model in addition to business-as-usual support) and those in the control arm (receive business-as-usual support)?

RQ2.4. What is the difference in satisfaction with case handling of children and harmed parties in touch with Youth Justice Services at 6-month follow-up, between those in the restorative justice trial arm (receive restorative justice delivered according to the Shared Practice Model in addition to business-as-usual support) and those in the control arm (receive business-as-usual support)?

RQ2.5. What are the experiences of restorative justice for different groups of children who have caused harm and those who have been harmed with the restorative justice process, including, but not limited to, those from racially and ethnically minoritised communities, girls, LGBTQ+ children, children with SEND, or children in care/or who are care experienced?

RQ2.6. What are the perceived outcomes and causal mechanisms for any perceived change in these outcomes?

RQ3. Readiness for full-trial

RQ3.1. Are the recruitment and retention procedures effective to support a fully powered trial? And are these procedures equitable for children who have caused harm and those who have been harmed from different groups (particularly those from Black Asian and ethnic minority backgrounds, girls, and children with SEND, or children in care/or who are care experienced)?

RQ3.2. Is randomisation feasible and acceptable?

RQ3.3. Are the proposed outcome measures and data collection processes appropriate, acceptable, and equitable for children who have caused harm and those who have been harmed from different groups (particularly those from Black Asian and ethnic minority backgrounds, girls and young women, and children with SEND, or children in care/or who are care experienced)?

Trial design

We will conduct a pilot randomised controlled trial (RCT) with two parallel arms, designed to assess feasibility of implementation, evidence of promise and readiness for a full-scale RCT. Randomisation will be case-level (cases comprising harming and harmed parties) on a 1:1 basis and stratified by YJS.

The trial compares a direct/indirect restorative justice arm with a control arm, using the following definitions as agreed with RJ4ALL and YJS teams in co-design:

- 1) Direct or indirect restorative justice trial arm. Direct restorative justice comprises a face-to-face and/or online encounter between harmed and harming parties, including Victim-Offender Mediation (VOM), Family Group Conferencing (FGC), and Restorative Justice Circles (RJC). Indirect restorative justice comprises indirect communication between harmed and harming parties, including letter exchange, video or audio file exchange or passing messages through the RJ practitioner.
- 2) Control trial arm. No restorative justice, business-as-usual support via YJS's, including community reparation projects, offending behaviour programmes, and mental health/wellbeing support. Distinguished from the restorative justice arm in that there is no dialogue between harmed and harming parties.

This two-arm pilot RCT will be supplemented by an implementation and process evaluation and a cost evaluation.

Settings

The trial involves 10 Youth Justice Services (YJS) in England and Wales. YJS were recruited by RJ4ALL based on their commitment to and delivery of restorative justice. Two services were replaced during and following co-design after withdrawing due to capacity concerns. The participating YJS are:

- Buckinghamshire
- Cambridgeshire
- Cardiff
- Isle of Wight
- Lambeth
- Leeds
- Northamptonshire
- Wigan
- Southwark
- West Mercia

Recruited participants (harmed and harming parties) allocated to the intervention arm will receive restorative justice in Youth Justice Service settings. Recruited participants will complete consent forms and outcome measures over the telephone/via videocall with a peer researcher or in person where possible. Interviews will be co-facilitated by a Coram researcher and the peer researcher in a private location chosen by the participant and can include a space at the Youth Justice Service, a community location, a research space, the individual's home, or over the telephone/via videocall.

Eligibility criteria

10 YJS teams were recruited by RJ4ALL through an expression of interest (EOI) exercise. An open recruitment call was circulated via RJ4All's and YJB's communication channels with the intention to reach all 154 teams in England and Wales. 49 YJSTs from across England and Wales expressed interest and 32 progressed to a full application. RJ4ALL selected the final 10 teams based on: 1) regular delivery of restorative justice; 2) being willing to take part in both delivery and the evaluation; and 3) having a strong record in handling restorative justice cases. Selection also took into account the demographic diversity and geographic spread of the overall sample.

Cases⁷ will be eligible for the trial where there is a child who has harmed aged 10-17 years (at the point of contact with the YJS) and an identifiable and contactable harmed party (or representative for the harmed party). There is no minimum age set for harmed parties and participation of any harmed parties under 10 years will be carefully assessed on a case-by-case basis. Cases will be excluded where practitioners view there to be an urgent and/or specific need (such as a safeguarding or wellbeing concern) that makes participation in the trial inappropriate. Cases will also be excluded where practitioners judge that either party lacks the capacity to consent to the trial. Cases will be excluded where practitioners assess that either party lacks in-principle willingness to explore restorative justice processes. Cases will also be excluded where children do not accept participation or involvement in the offence.

⁷ We use 'case' to refer to a dyad of a harmed and harming party. We anticipate one child who has harmed and one individual who has been harmed (or representative) in each case, although there may be exceptions where there are multiple harmed parties in one case.

We distinguish ‘in-principle willingness to explore restorative justice processes’ from ‘consent to take part in restorative justice’ to avoid a small and unrepresentative sample of ‘restorative justice-ready’ children. We also wish for the evaluation procedures to accommodate the significant role of the substantial preparatory work ahead of restorative encounters, where practitioners carefully build to consent to engage.

We distinguish ‘accepting participation or involvement in an offence’ from accountability and acceptance of harm, as accountability/acceptance of harm may develop through preparatory work or as an outcome of the encounter itself. Imposing this as an eligibility criterion again risks a small and skewed sample of cases. As per the SPM, practitioners will not allow a restorative justice encounter to go ahead where there is an outright denial of the harm they have caused. We avoid reference to ‘guilt’ in line with YJS Child First policy.

There are no inclusion/exclusion criteria placed on the type of case (e.g., community resolution, prevention etc.), the harm committed, or the received sentence (e.g., referral order, youth rehabilitation order etc.). Both parties (child who has harmed and person who has been harmed) must consent for the case to be randomised as part of the trial. Parent/carer consent is required for children under 16 years.

Table 4. Pilot trial inclusion and exclusion criteria

Inclusion criteria	Exclusion criteria
A case where a child has offended and is in touch with Youth Justice Service	An urgent and/or specific need (such as a safeguarding or wellbeing concern) that makes participation in the trial inappropriate
The child is aged 10-17 years at point of first current contact with Youth Justice Service	Either party lacks the capacity to consent to the trial
The case has an identifiable and contactable harmed party (or representative)	Either party lacks in-principle willingness to explore restorative justice processes

	Children do not accept participation or involvement in the offence
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Outcome measures

Primary outcome measure

Police-recorded offending. Our primary outcome measure is proven offending (i.e. a court conviction or an out-of-court disposal) as captured in the Police National Computer (PNC) managed by the Ministry of Justice (MoJ). Offending will be operationalised as whether an offence occurred in the 12-months following randomisation (binary yes/no). More detailed offence data (number of offences, time to first proven offence, type of disposal) will be included in additional exploratory analyses. This data will be requested at a single timepoint (March 2029) and will include offences observed over the 12-month follow-up period from the point of randomisation (with an additional 6-month waiting period for offences to be observed in the dataset as advised by MoJ) and offences observed in the 12-month prior to randomisation. Offences in the year prior to randomisation (baseline offending) will be used as a predictor in our analysis to increase the precision of our analysis.

Secondary outcome measures

Self-reported offending. In line with the ToC and YEF's evaluation specification, we will also measure offending with the Self-Report Delinquency Scale (SRDS), which assesses the frequency and severity of 19 offending behaviours in the last 12 months.

The measure asks the respondent whether they have taken part in one of the 19 offending behaviours to which they can answer 'yes' or 'no'. Those who answer 'yes' are asked how many times they did this and if they got in trouble. The SRDS produces two scores: the volume of delinquency score (the estimated minimum total number of offending behaviours reported) and the variety of delinquency score (the number of different offending behaviours reported). To calculate the volume score, the following values are assigned to each answer and totalled: Once = 1; Twice = 2; 3 times = 3; 4 times = 4; 5 times = 5; 6-10 times = 6; >10 times = 11. A participant can score a maximum of 209 on the volume score. To calculate the variety score: yes = 1 and no = 0. The number of items that the respondent answers 'yes' to will be calculated, producing a score ranging from 0 to 19. We will use the volume of delinquency score as our main outcome from this measure as it has greater sensitivity to change, but will also analyse and report on the variety of delinquency score as a secondary outcome.

Evidence supports the psychometric properties of the SRDS. Internal consistency of the measure has been reported as 0.87-0.92 and inter-item correlation has been reported as 0.19 (Fonagy et al., 2018; Humayun et al., 2017). The measure has been found to correlate with official police records of arrests (89.5%-95.2%; McAra & McVie, 2005). There is evidence that respondents answer accurately when asked if they have carried out these offending behaviours (Nock et al., 2006; 2007). Early qualitative evidence from Coram's YEF-funded evaluation of the EXODUS peer mentoring programme (Lawrence et al., 2024) suggests that young people feel more able to answer questions on the SRDS openly and honestly when completing with the support of a peer researcher as opposed to another individual without shared lived experience.

Emotional and behavioural problems. Emotional and behavioural problems will be assessed using two outcome measures depending on the participant's age at baseline. The self-reported Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ; Goodman, 2001) will be used for children who have harmed and harmed parties who are children (under 18 years) at baseline. The Warwick-Edinburgh Wellbeing scale (WEMWBS) will be used for harmed parties who are adults (18 years and over) at baseline. For consistency, participants will complete the same outcome measure at endline (12-month follow-up) as at baseline, regardless of whether they have turned 18 during this period.

The SDQ lists 25 items which form five subscales; emotional problems, conduct problems, hyperactivity, peer problems and pro-social behaviour. Respondents are provided with 25 statements, including 'I get very angry and often lose my temper' and 'I have one good friend or more' and are asked to indicate the extent to which these statements are true for them over the previous six months on a three-point scale ('not true', 'somewhat true', or 'certainly true'). Five of the items are positively worded and require reverse-scoring. A total difficulties score (range 0-40) is calculated by summing scores across the four 'negative' sub-scales. Externalising (across conduct and hyperactivity sub-scales; range 0-20) and internalising (across emotional and peer problems sub-scales; range 0-20) scores can also be calculated.

The SDQ has demonstrated good internal consistency in internal consistency (alpha coefficients = 0.79 to 0.80; Haywood et al., 2014; other sub-scales with fewer items demonstrate lower levels of internal consistency; Essau et al., 2012). There is also evidence of test-retest stability, with a test-retest reliability score of 0.79 and a 4-6-month stability score of 0.62 (Achenback et al., 2008). The measure has demonstrated good convergent validity with a significant correlation of .63 between the Total Difficulties score and the Spence Children's Anxiety Scale (SCAS; Essau et al., 2012). Recent research from the Netherlands has questioned the interpretability of the measure for 'low-educated' adolescents (Theunissen et al., 2024).

The WEMWBS is a 14-item scale measuring mental wellbeing for young people and adults aged 13 years and over. All items are positively worded and include statements such as 'I've had energy to spare' and 'I've been feeling optimistic about the future'. Respondents are asked to select the answer that best describes their experience of each statement over two weeks. Responses are on a 5-point scale ('none of the time', 'rarely', 'some of the time', 'often', and 'all of the time'). A total score is created by summing all items, with total scores ranging from 14 to 70 which higher scores indicating more positive mental wellbeing.

The psychometric properties of the WEMWBS have been well-documented for young person and adult populations. For adult populations, the WEMWBS has demonstrated good internal consistency (Cronbach's alpha of 0.89-0.91), test-retest reliability (0.83), and convergent validity with other mental health and wellbeing scales (Tennant *et al.*, 2007).

Satisfaction with case handling. A bespoke satisfaction survey has been developed to assess participants' experiences of case handling within the pilot RCT at 6-month follow-up. The instrument comprises two key sections:

- 1) General Satisfaction – capturing overall perceptions of case handling and service quality. This section will be completed by all participants in both trial arms.
- 2) Restorative Justice-Specific Satisfaction – focusing on participants' views of restorative processes, including fairness and voice. This section will only be completed by harmed and harming parties that take part in restorative justice.

The survey is intended to provide predominantly quantitative insights into participant satisfaction with case handling and their interaction with youth justice services. The survey is largely based on the Restorative Justice Youth Victim Satisfaction Survey (Ministry of Justice, 2016), with additions based on other relevant literature. A draft of the survey is available in Appendix A. During the set-up phase, further development and piloting will be undertaken with stakeholders (e.g., young people, practitioners etc.) to refine question wording, ensure cultural relevance, and enhance accessibility. The survey will be considerably shortened to meet the needs of children answering it.

Sample size

As this study is a pilot randomized controlled trial (RCT) as opposed to a definitive trial, our aims are to assess the feasibility of implementing the restorative justice Shared Practice Model, identify evidence of promise, and established the readiness to deliver and evaluate the intervention in a definitive randomised controlled trial (RCT). Pilot trials are not designed to detect statistically significant differences in outcomes. Consequently, the sample size does not need to be fully powered to test efficacy hypotheses.

The sample size for this pilot has been determined pragmatically, balancing resource constraints and the capacity of YJS teams, with the need to generate feasibility data. We anticipate that this sample size will enable us to estimate feasibility estimates around the proportion of eligible population who consent, adherence to trial arm allocation, and measurement retention at 12-month follow-up⁸. While formal power calculations are not required for pilot studies, the chosen sample will allow estimation of variability and inform the design of a subsequent definitive trial. We are confident that our projected sample size of 338 cases (offending data for 338 harming parties) are sufficient to obtain stable estimates of outcome variability for offending⁹. Whilst this may seem large for a pilot RCT, the sample size is appropriate for the objectives particularly as offending is a relatively infrequent outcome, so a larger sample helps to reduce uncertainty around these estimates. In addition, a key aim of the pilot is to understand how the restorative justice SPM is implemented across different local contexts. Delivering the pilot across 10 Youth Justice Services over a 12-month period will enable us to examine variation in referral pathways, intervention delivery, uptake, and participant engagement. This understanding is essential for assessing the feasibility and scalability of a future multi-site effectiveness trial and would not be achievable through a smaller or single-site pilot.

RJ4ALL requested information on caseloads from each of the participating YJS teams. To inform our calculations we also requested further details from participating YJS teams on their caseloads, including the proportion of cases with an identifiable and contactable victim and the delivery of direct and indirect restorative justice. Unfortunately, only 2 out of 10 teams returned this data prior to publication of the protocol.

We have used the following assumptions in our calculations:

- Annual caseloads for YJS teams comprise 0.92% of local population estimates¹⁰ (10-17 years) based on proportions from the two YJS that provided data (range 0.46-1.37%).
- Based on proportions from the two YJS that provided data 47% of cases had an identifiable harmed party (range 44-50%)

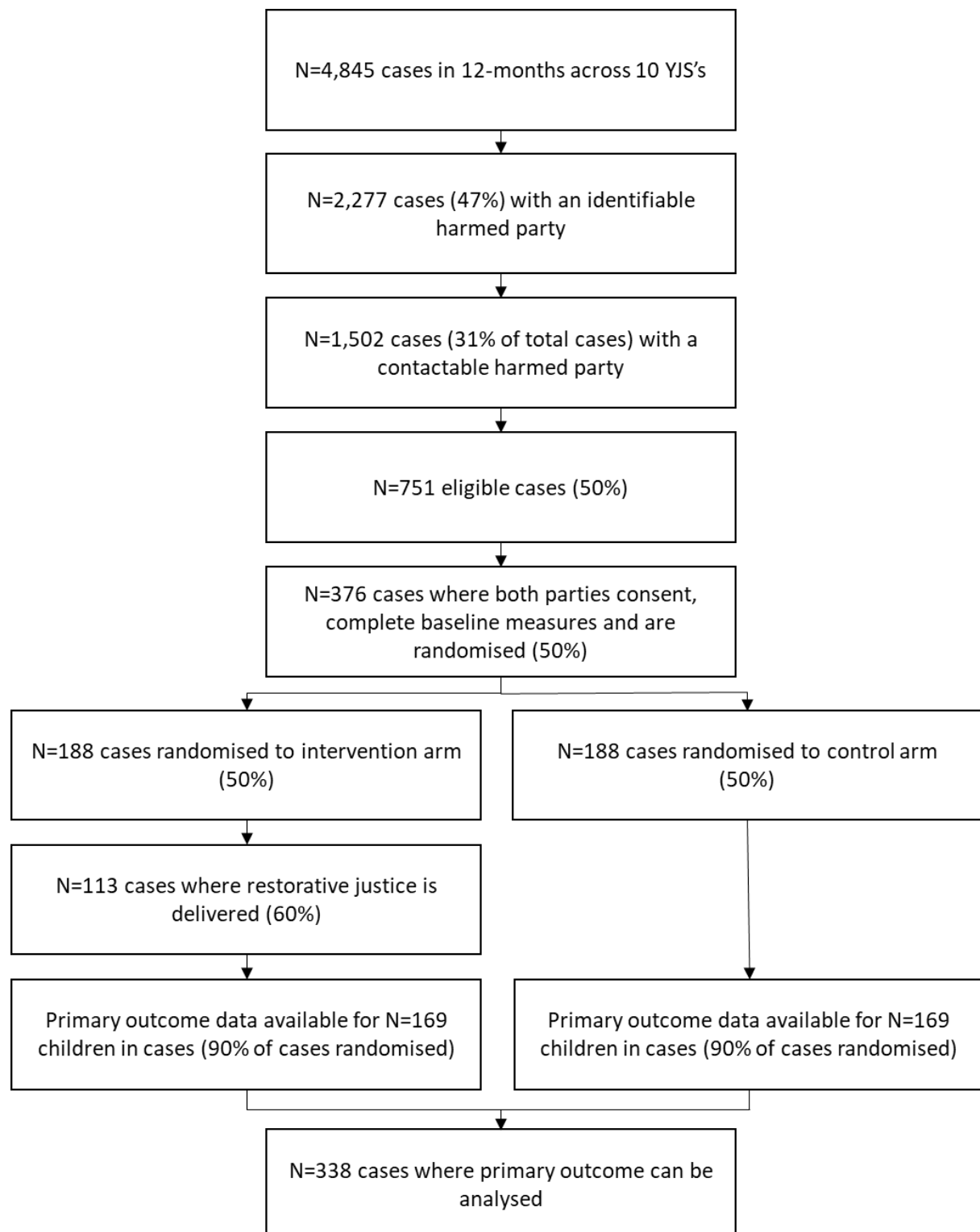
⁸ For example, we predict that 50% of eligible participants will consent to the trial. We would need at least 167 participants to estimate this parameter with a 95% CI with a maximum width of 15% (two-sided test; Ying et al., 2025).

⁹ Ying et al. (2025) estimate that 12-35 participants per trial arm is the minimum requirement to estimate outcome variability.

¹⁰ Taken from ONS Population Estimates for England and Wales: mid-2024 available at [Population estimates for England and Wales: mid-2024 - Office for National Statistics](#)

- Based on proportions from the two YJS that provided data 31% of cases had a contactable harmed party (range 31-32%)
- Of these 1,502 cases with an identifiable and contactable harmed party, we have made a conservative estimate that 50% of cases will be eligible. We have estimated that 50% of cases will not meet the eligibility criteria owing to: 1) an urgent and/or specific need (such as a safeguarding or wellbeing concern) that makes participation inappropriate, 2) either party lacking the capacity to consent; 3) either party lacking in-principle willingness to explore restorative justice processes; and 4) children not accepting their participation or involvement in the offence. We have made a conservative estimate based on YJS feedback during co-design that children and harmed parties are challenging to engage, and that eligibility is needed from two separate parties (harmed and harming parties).
- We have estimated that 50% of cases will not consent to the trial (and progress to randomisation and baseline outcome measures) owing to: 1) lack of engagement in arranging consent meeting (i.e. not answering phone, not attending meeting etc.); 2) change in willingness following further information about the trial from the peer researcher (e.g. not accepting of both possible trial arm allocations, not accepting of outcome measures etc.); 3) parent/guardian non-consent (or lack of engagement) for children under 16; and 4) emergent safeguarding/risk issues. We have made a conservative estimate of 50% based on YJS feedback during co-design that children may be resistant to the processes of an RCT and can be challenging to engage with (i.e. attend scheduled meetings, answer calls etc.) owing to emotional volatility, general life instability, and a distrust of professionals such as researchers. Again, we are also using conservative estimates as consent is required from both parties in the dyad.
- Sufficient data on restorative justice delivery is only available from one YJS. 19% of victims in cases received restorative justice (61% of victims in cases with an identifiable and contactable harmed party). 48% of harmed parties received direct restorative justice and 52% received indirect. We have therefore estimated that 60% of intervention arm participants will receive restorative justice. The scoping study reported that YJSs and external providers have annual restorative justice cases in the range of 16 to 84. We are therefore confident that our estimates are conservative and therefore achievable.
- We anticipate a low endline measurement attrition rate of 10% owing to the availability of administrative data through the PNC. We do anticipate some attrition, owing to retrospective withdrawal of consent from participants, lack of availability of PNC data, or data cleaning issues.

Figure 3. CONSORT diagram



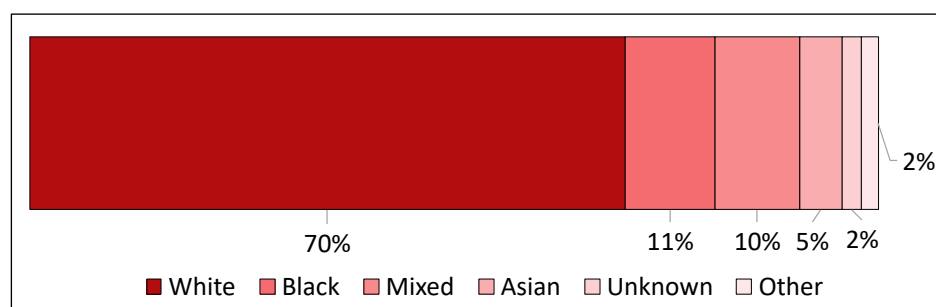
We predict that there will be 4,845 cases (where there is a child who has caused harm) in the 12-months of recruitment across the 10 YJS teams. 47% of these cases will have an identifiable harmed party, and in 31% of cases the harmed party will also be contactable. We anticipate that 50% of these cases with an identifiable and contactable harmed party (n=751) will be eligible for the trial and 50% of these will have both parties consent to take part. We estimate an analysable sample of 338 cases (offending data for 338 children who have harmed). We estimate there are 113 cases where restorative justice is delivered, comprising both direct and indirect practice.

At this stage, we do not feel able to build in robust predictions about the degree of crossover from control to intervention arm (control arm compliance). However, insight from YJS teams leads us to suspect that delivery of restorative justice to participants in the control arm will be minimal (either through opting out of the trial or continuing to take part but receiving restorative justice), as staff advised that without proactive engagement and motivation, children who have harmed will be unlikely to seek out opportunities to engage in dialogue with harmed parties.

In terms of the demographic profile of this sample, we know that male children, older children, children with SEND, care-experienced children, and Black children are overrepresented in the youth justice system. In 2024, 85% of children who were cautioned or sentenced were boys and 75% were aged 10-17+ (Youth Justice Board, 2025).

Data available from the Youth Justice Board regarding the ethnicity of children who have been cautioned and sentenced – as opposed to data about arrests or sentencing alone – is likely to more closely reflect the numbers of CYP in the youth justice system who may be eligible for restorative justice. The percentages of children and young people in England and Wales who were cautioned or sentenced in the year ending March 2024 by grouped ethnicity is shown in **Error! Reference source not found..**

Figure 4. The proportion of children and young people aged 10-17 in England and Wales who were cautioned or sentenced in the year ending March 2024 by grouped ethnicity (Youth Justice Board, 2025).



Given that disability and neurodivergence are often underdiagnosed, it is difficult to find data that would accurately reflect the percentages of CYP in the youth justice system with different disabilities. However, a recent report suggests that around 80% of CYP cautioned or sentenced in England and Wales have Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) (Thomas et al., 2025).

Children who are in care or who are care experienced are overrepresented in the youth justice system and those who are also racially or ethnically minoritised are even more likely to have youth justice involvement (Hunter, Francis and Fitzpatrick, 2023). Research by the Department for Education and Ministry of Justice (2022) looking at offending rates for pupils at Key Stage 4 found that, in 2014/15, 11% of children who were looked after had a recorded offence, compared to only 1% of all pupils¹¹. Hunter, Francis and Fitzpatrick (2023) found that care-experienced children made up only 2% of the overall dataset they were examining, yet accounted for 15% of children with youth justice involvement and 32% of those who were given a custodial sentence.

Randomisation

This trial uses 1:1 randomisation, meaning that each of the two trial arms will be of a similar size (as close to 1:1 as possible). Randomisation will take place at case level, where a case comprises the child who has harmed and the harmed party. All cases that are referred to the trial, meet the eligibility criteria, where both parties (child who has harmed and harmed party) consent to take part in the trial, and complete baseline outcome measures, will be randomly allocated to either the intervention or control (business-as-usual) trial arm.

Randomisation will be stratified by the 10 participating Youth Justice Services to ensure equal group allocation among participants from services. This is necessary in trials with small samples, as trial arms can easily become imbalanced.

Randomisation is completed by a Coram researcher using an easily operable Excel tool hosted securely on Coram's internal server and only accessible to the study team. The tool allows evaluators to see randomisation outcomes at the press of a button at the front end, while preventing them being able to anticipate the order of forthcoming randomisations hidden in the backend. In this way allocation concealment is maintained, as those involved in recruiting

¹¹ Key Stage 4 is for students aged 14 to 16 and is typically the stage when pupils complete GCSEs.

participants (peer researchers, Coram researcher, and YJS) will not know in advance of randomisation how participants will be allocated.

Trial participants (children who have harmed and harmed parties) are not blinded to which trial arm they are in, as they will be aware from the consent procedures that they are taking part in a trial comparing business-as-usual support with two forms of restorative justice (direct and indirect). RJ4ALL and YJS case workers and practitioners are not blinded, as they will know the cases to whom they are delivering the restorative justice. This lack of blinding is a necessity of the trial design. However, we have selected standardised self-reported outcomes and routinely collected police data to minimise bias. Those undertaking quantitative data analysis will be blinded to randomisation. We will prepare the main analytical dataset so that trial arm is indicated by numbers and there is no data about intervention participation. This, in addition to the *a priori* data analysis plan, will prevent bias being introduced during data analysis.

Procedures

This pilot RCT evaluates a complex, practitioner-delivered restorative justice process within youth justice. Because appropriateness and acceptability of restorative justice are case and context-dependent, we are using a phased-consent process for participants randomised to the intervention trial arm. All participants will be consented into the trial, which requires willingness in principle to explore restorative justice processes depending on allocation. However, participation in restorative justice itself will require further consent, obtained by practitioners after preparatory engagement work. If we were to require upfront commitment to restorative justice before any preparatory work, practitioners have advised that very few young people would be eligible. We would also risk producing a highly selective and unrepresentative sample.

Roles and responsibilities in recruitment

Practitioners (YJS restorative justice practitioners). Practitioners will: identify potentially eligible cases; conduct pre-consent motivational engagement, including providing information about restorative justice; check for in-principle willingness to explore restorative justice before referral into the trial; check whether the child accepts participation or involvement in the offence; support Coram researchers and the peer researcher in co-ordinating contact and meetings with children who have harmed and harmed parties. They do not obtain trial consent. Following randomisation, they will check for consent to take part in restorative justice following preparatory work as part of delivery.

Peer researchers. Peer researchers at Coram will receive case allocations from the central Coram research team; conduct consent and baseline meetings with children who have harmed and harmed parties, including parent/guardian consent as required; trigger randomisation conducted by Coram's central research team; and communicate the randomisation outcome to parties and the YJS.

Coram central research team: Researchers at Coram will allocate cases to peer researchers; randomise cases to trial arm when contacted by the peer researcher; and maintain the master screening and recruitment log, and randomisation records.

Recruitment pathway

Stage 1 – Case identification. Practitioners will identify potentially eligible cases using the criteria above. A key task at this early stage is establishing whether the harmed party is identifiable and contactable.

Stage 2 – Motivational engagement and acceptability checks. Practitioners will provide information about restorative justice to children who have harmed and harmed parties (this may also be done by victim liaison officers) and details of the pilot RCT using a script. A key task at this stage is for practitioners to assess in-principle willingness to explore restorative justice processes for both parties. Practitioners will also check whether children accept participation or involvement in the offence. Where this in-principle willingness or acceptance of participation is unclear, the practitioner will continue to engage with the parties until a clear position is reached. When this position is reached and eligibility criteria appear to be met, the case will be referred to the Coram central research team.

Stage 3 – Consent. Cases that practitioners identify as eligible will be referred to Coram, who will check the case against the criteria. Cases will be assigned to a peer researcher to conduct a consent meeting. The peer researcher will contact the harming and harmed parties individually to arrange a consent meeting. Practitioners will support with liaison where needed. Consent meetings will take place either over the phone, over video-call, or in-person depending on the preferences of the child and harmed party and the availability of the peer researcher. Coram researchers will work with practitioners to ensure appropriate supports are available at the meeting, including parent(s)/carer(s) and/or advocates where appropriate and needed. The peer researcher will take the individual (harmed or harming party) through

the information sheet and/or video¹² and seek consent to take part. These materials will be co-designed with RJ4ALL to accurately reflect the restorative justice intervention. Materials will reinforce an in-principle willingness to explore restorative justice processes dependent on allocation to the intervention arm, and an in-principle acceptance of control arm allocation. Written or recorded (witnessed verbal consent) consent will be taken. Consent will also be sought from parent(s)/carer(s) where a child (either harmed or harming parties) is under 16 years.

Stage 4 – Baseline data. The meeting with the first party will be broken into consent and baseline measures, as the second party will also need to consent in order for the case to progress through the trial. The peer researcher will take the consented participant through the baseline outcome measures, including demographic questions. Both the harming and harmed parties will receive a £20 voucher in recognition of their time. We anticipate that consent/baseline meetings will take 45 minutes to one hour.

Stage 5 – Randomisation. The peer researcher will share case details with the central Coram researcher who will randomise the case using an Excel tool allowing for concealed allocation. The peer researcher will inform the participants and the YJS immediately of the randomisation outcome and explain what this means in terms of service delivery. They will also inform participants that they will be in touch again in 6-months to check-in.

Delivery and endline data collection

Participants will receive either restorative justice in addition to business-as-usual support (intervention arm), or business-as-usual support (control arm). Please see the Shared Practice Model for further information on restorative justice delivery during this period. RJ4ALL will monitor the journey of each case through the restorative justice system using the case management system that they will embed and support in YJS teams.

At six-month follow-up from baseline meeting, the peer researchers will check-in via telephone or video call with participants (harmed and harming parties in both trial arms). This is an opportunity to check on well-being, check for ongoing consent, and confirm contact

¹² Young people with lived experience of youth justice services we consulted were supportive of an accompanying video to explain the pilot trial to potential participants and felt this should be offered alongside a written information sheet.

details are accurate¹³. The brief satisfaction with case handling survey will also be administered during this call.

At 12-month follow-up from the baseline meeting, the peer researchers will arrange a follow-up meeting with both parties individually. The YJS team may be asked to support in arranging this meeting where contact is challenging. At this meeting the peer researcher will re-check ongoing consent and take the participant through the follow-up outcome measures. Participants will receive a £20 voucher in recognition of their time. We anticipate that follow-up meetings will take approximately 45 minutes.

RJ4ALL have developed a checklist within the Shared Practice Model to articulate the phases of delivery against core requirements for the evaluation. A copy of this is provided in Appendix D.

Data analysis

All data cleaning and analysis will be undertaken in R statistical software. All code and analysis will be quality assured by a second member of staff and includes both the logic and the arithmetic of analysis. Full records of code will be shared with the YEF and published to enable replication.

We will report a baseline description of the trial participants using demographic data from YJS and RJ4ALL, monitoring data and baseline outcome measures. We will also report descriptive statistics (means and standard deviations for continuous variables, percentages and counts for categorical variables) for each characteristic and outcome.

We will report full baseline characteristics of the sample including baseline outcome scores, the characteristics of those lost to follow-up, and the characteristics of the analysable sample. We will also report participant flow throughout the trial, including completion rates of outcomes in a CONSORT diagram. We will use descriptive statistics (means, standard deviations, percentages etc.) to understand trial recruitment rates, restorative justice delivery rates (direct and indirect encounters), and outcome measure completion rates at baseline and 12-month follow-up. We will explore these rates by trial arm allocation and document these in a CONSORT diagram. We will use descriptive statistics to analyse demographic characteristics of the sample as they progress through the study, to better understand who is

¹³ Young people with lived experience of the youth justice system felt this is an important step in the research; as well as supporting engagement with the trial should be an opportunity to safeguard the young person and check-in on their wellbeing. A script for this encounter will be co-designed with these young people.

engaging in the trial. We will examine which member of the case (harmed or harming party) drops out/withdraws and their reasons for not proceeding. We will report on the extent and pattern of missing data and explore this using regression modelling if required. To support our feasibility findings, we will calculate the pre- post-test correlation of the primary outcome measure to inform a sample size calculation for a definitive trial.

The study uses a combination of self-reported offending data and administrative PNC data. PNC data will be subjected to validation checks, including completeness of identifiers, duplication, and date sequencing. Discrepancies between self-reported and police-recorded offending will be documented and explored descriptively to understand patterns of detection, disclosure, and system contact.

Outcomes will be analysed on an intention-to-treat basis meaning that all participants will be analysed according to the trial arm to which they were assigned, as opposed to whether the intervention was received. Our primary outcome (proven offending in 12-month follow-up; yes/no) will be analysed using a logistic regression model to estimate the average effect of treatment allocation on the probability of offending. The model will include a fixed effect for Youth Justice Service (the stratification variable) and for trial arm allocation. We will also adjust for baseline offending (whether offences were observed (yes/no) in the 12-months prior to randomisation), sex, age (depending on range of ages recruited) and ethnicity using fixed effects. Effect estimates will be presented as adjusted risk ratios. We will report standardised effect sizes to facilitate comparison across studies. In line with YEF analysis guidance, effect sizes will be calculated by transforming the estimated treatment effect to Hedges' *g* using the Cox transformation for binary outcomes. Standardisation will be undertaken using the unconditional pooled variance. For our continuous secondary outcomes, adjusted mean differences will be converted to Hedges' *g* using the unconditional pooled standard deviation.

For all observed statistics, we will report measures of uncertainty (bootstrapped confidence intervals) and we will report the intra-class cluster correlations (by YJS) for our outcome data.

For our secondary outcomes we anticipate using a similar approach specified for the primary outcome, but for continuous outcome data i.e. an ANCOVA regression model. For secondary outcomes measured for either harmed and harming parties, analyses will account for the non-independence of observations within dyads using cluster-robust standard errors.

The psychometric properties of the newly developed case satisfaction outcome measure will be assessed and reported to support its reliability and validity within the study population. Internal consistency will be evaluated using Cronbach's alpha for the total scale score, with item-total correlations examined to identify poorly performing items. Descriptive statistics,

response distributions, and checks for floor or ceiling effects will be reported to assess scale performance and sensitivity.

We will also explore the influence of trial arm allocation compliance using Complier Average Causal Effect Analysis (CACE; meaning whether individuals in the intervention arm receive restorative justice), by including intervention receipt in an instrumental variable analysis. For the purpose of the CACE analysis, intervention receipt will be determined by whether there was any form of facilitated dialogue between the harmed and harming party, either directly or indirectly. Cases that do not progress beyond preparatory work will not be considered as having received the intervention in the CACE analysis. This analysis is exploratory and dependent on a sufficient sample being achieved.

As this is a pilot study, as opposed to a definitive trial, we will not adjust for multiple tests.

If data allows, we will carry out exploratory analysis with sub-groups and include other variables of interest as predictors in regression analyses. However, we anticipate scope for this will be limited.

Implementation and process evaluation

An implementation and process evaluation (IPE) will supplement the quantitative methods outlined above (which focus on assessing evidence of promise using outcome measures). The IPE will use the following methods:

1. Observations of restorative justice activities;
2. Interviews with key stakeholders of the restorative process, including: referral and delivery staff; children who have caused harm; individuals who have been harmed or their representative; parents/carers of children who have caused harm; and RJ4ALL staff;
3. Survey of referral and delivery staff;
4. Case management and administrative data from delivery partners; and
5. Questions related to BAU support embedded in outcome measures.

Observations

We will carry out observations to address research questions 1.1 (To what extent is the restorative justice Shared Practice Model successfully implemented and what are the barriers and facilitators that influence this?) in terms of the extent to which observed delivery reflects the Shared Practice Model (SPM) and 2.6 (What are the perceived outcomes and causal mechanisms for any perceived change in these outcomes?) to further evidence the Theory of Change.

We will work in collaboration with Youth Justice Service (YJS) teams to identify four cases for observation. We will seek to include a broad range of case types, incorporating both direct and indirect restorative encounters. In light of the overrepresentation of certain groups within the youth justice system, purposive sampling will also be used to ensure that at least some of the observed cases involve children who have caused harm and who are Black and/or neurodivergent. As researchers will be observing sensitive encounters between harmed and harming parties, consent procedures will be equally sensitive. We will work with YJS teams to identify cases and facilitate consent conversations. Coram researchers will explain procedures to all parties verbally as well as sharing written information sheets and an accompanying video description. Consent must be obtained from all parties involved in the encounter in order for it to go ahead.

Observations are structured, designed to capture how the intervention operates in practice rather than to assess individual participants. The focus will be on processes, interactions, and contextual factors, rather than personal judgements or outcomes. Observations will be undertaken by two researchers (a Coram researcher and a peer researcher). The researchers will take care to minimise disruption, will not intervene in the process being observed, and will suspend or terminate the observation if safeguarding or distress concerns arise. To support consistency and rigour, the researcher will use a written observation template to record observations. This template is intended to guide attention to key domains while allowing space for reflexive and contextual notes. Key domains include:

- Context and setting, including date, time, duration, type of activity, location, layout, accessibility, attendance, and other contextual factors (delays, interruptions etc.);
- Structure and process, including how the session is facilitated, sequencing of the encounter, deviations from processes as detailed in the SPM;
- Practitioner facilitation, including communication style, management of turn-taking/participation, handling of power imbalances and issues of inclusion, responsiveness to participants;
- Participant engagement, including levels/forms of participation and interaction patterns;
- Mechanisms for change identified in Theory of Change, including the extent to which these are activated and supported, and contextual factors that may enable or undermine these mechanisms; and
- Fidelity to the Shared Practice Model, including core elements of the model, deviations from the model, areas of adaptation, and tensions/flexibility between fidelity and responsiveness.

Observation notes will be coded inductively and deductively and themes will be constructed. Analysis will be guided by our research questions. To address RQ1.1, our analysis will explore the extent to which fidelity to the Shared Practice Model is maintained in practice. To address RQ2.6, our analysis will examine the extent to which the Theory of Change is reflected in practice, variation in how mechanisms operate across different cases, and where adaptations to delivery appear to strengthen or weaken the causal pathways proposed in the Theory of Change. Data will be analysed in NVivo, guided by Braun and Clarke's six-stage process of reflexive thematic analysis. The peer researchers will be involved in reflexive discussions to support the analysis, to ensure it is grounded in lived experience.

Interviews

As shown in Table 6, interviews with stakeholders will be used to address a number of research questions, including: the extent to which the Shared Practice Model is successfully implemented the barriers and facilitators to this (RQ1.1); structural factors that affect children who have caused harm and those who have been harmed from different groups in accessing and receiving restorative justice (RQ1.2); experiences of restorative justice for different groups of children who have caused harm and those who have been harmed (RQ2.5); the perceived outcomes and causal mechanisms for any change (RQ2.6); and the effectiveness of recruitment and retention procedures and equity of these for different groups (RQ3.1); the feasibility and acceptability of randomisation (RQ3.2); and the appropriateness and acceptability of outcome measures and data collection processes and the equity of these for different groups (RQ3.3).

We will conduct 46 interviews in total, comprising:

- 20 children who have caused harm, including 10 children who are allocated to the intervention group and take part in restorative justice activities, 5 children who are allocated to the intervention group and do not take part in restorative justice activities, and 5 children who are allocated to the control group;
- 10 individuals who have been harmed, including 6 individuals who are allocated to the intervention group and take part in restorative justice activities, 2 individuals who are allocated to the intervention group and do not take part in restorative justice activities, and 2 individuals who are allocated to the control group;
- 4 parents/carers of children who have caused harm and who take part in restorative justice activities;
- 5 referral staff who have referred cases/children into the study;
- 5 YJS staff who have delivered restorative justice activities as part of the study; and
- 2 RJ4ALL staff who have supported the implementation of the Shared Practice Model in YJS teams.

We will recruit participants to interviews through our initial consent process. Consent agreements for the study will include a tick box to indicate whether individuals are happy to be contacted about interviews. For those who consent, we will use their demographic data to identify potential participants who fit with our sampling criteria. We will take a purposive sampling approach, aiming to roughly reflect the population of children in the youth justice system in our interviews; we have summarised this population in the earlier section on sample size. We detail a guide for our sampling approach in Table 5, although we may adjust these numbers as recruitment progresses. We will accept over-recruitment of children from minoritised communities, as they have previously been under-represented in research on this topic. We would like to recruit a diverse and representative sample of harmed parties; we will seek to reflect patterns of sampling for harming parties where possible. As there is conflicting evidence around how suitable restorative justice may be for cases involving hate crime, domestic abuse, or sexual abuse/assault (Hopkins and Koss, 2005; Cossins, 2008; Robinson and Banwell-Moore, 2023), we will also aim to interview at least two children with cases of these types (complex cases).

Whilst we are taking a purposive sampling approach and seeking to over-recruit from minoritised communities, there is not scope for a robust sub-group comparison.

Table 5. Purposive sampling framework¹⁴

Category	Ethnicity	Number of interviews with children who have harmed
Ethnicity	White	14
	Black	2
	Asian	1
	Mixed	2
	Other/unknown	1
SEND	With SEND	16
	Without identified SEND	4
Care-experience	Care-experienced	4

¹⁴ These numbers were informed by the data on CYP cautioned and sentenced, which is shown in Figure X – they are roughly proportionate to the composition of CYP from different ethnic backgrounds in the youth justice system.

	Not care-experienced	16
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A peer researcher will contact individuals who are selected to interview from our sampling over the phone. They will explain what the interview involves and share further details in an information sheet and accompanying video explanation. They will recontact the individual and ask them if they would like to participate. Where participants are children aged under 16 years, parent/carer consent will also be sought. We will ask YJS teams to support with recruitment and consent processes where needed.

Interviews will take place flexibly, with the time and location (in-person, telephone, videocall) according to participant preference. For in-person interviews, we will ask the participant where they would be most comfortable speaking to us and make arrangements for the interview to take place there e.g., their home, at the YJS, or in a community location. Interviews will be semi-structured and we anticipate they will be between 45 and 60 minutes. Interviews will be co-facilitated by a Coram researcher and a peer researcher. We will include the option to use creative methods, such as statement sorting activities, or enabling the participant to give written or drawn responses. As we are aware that CYP with disabilities including learning and communication differences are overrepresented in the youth justice system, we will have communication aids – like communication boards and communication apps – available for participants to use during the interview.

Interviews will follow a semi-structured discussion guide. We have detailed areas of focus that discussion guides will focus according to research question and participant group in Table 6.

Table 6. Areas of focus in interviews by participant group and research question

Research question	Interview participants	Areas of focus
RQ1.1 To what extent is the restorative justice Shared Practice Model successfully implemented and what are the barriers and facilitators that influence this?	10 referral and delivery staff	Experience of training, understanding of SPM, implementation of SPM including barriers and facilitators, reasons for deviations from SPM, variations by case type
	2 RJ4ALL staff	Experience of delivering training and supporting implementation of SPM including barriers and facilitators, observed deviations from SPM
RQ1.2 How do structural factors¹⁵ affect children who have caused harm and those who have been harmed from different groups (particularly those from Black Asian and ethnic minority backgrounds, girls, and children with SEND, or children in care/or who are care experienced) in accessing and receiving the programme?	10 children who have harmed and who are allocated to the intervention group and take part in restorative justice activities	Experiences of being informed about RJ, consenting to, and preparing for the encounter, responsiveness to lived experience throughout, perceived power imbalances, support received before, during, and after RJ
	6 individuals who have been harmed (or their representatives) and who are allocated to the intervention group and take part in restorative justice activities	
	4 parents/carers of children who have harmed and who are allocated to the intervention and who take part in restorative justice activities	

¹⁵ For example, institutional racism, lack of diversity in the workforce, failures to acknowledge different experiences and treating CYP as a homogenous group, mistrust of support services or 'system', referral biases, and the lack of coordination between services and agencies.

	5 children who have harmed and who are allocated to the intervention group and do not take part in restorative justice activities	Experiences of being informed about RJ, consenting to, and preparing for the encounter (if occurred), responsiveness to lived experience throughout, perceived power imbalances, decision not to take part
	2 individuals who have been harmed (or their representatives) and who are allocated to the intervention group and do not take part in restorative justice activities	
	10 referral and delivery staff	Experiences of service users being informed about RJ, consenting to, and preparing for the encounter (if occurred) responsiveness to lived experience throughout, perceived power imbalances, support received before, during, and after RJ
	2 RJ4ALL staff	
RQ2.5 What are the experiences of restorative justice for different groups of children who have caused harm and those who have been harmed with the restorative justice process, including, but not limited to, those from racially and ethnically minoritised communities, girls, LGBTQ+ CYP, children with SEND, or	10 children who have harmed and who are allocated to the intervention group and take part in restorative justice activities	Experiences of preparing for the encounter and of the encounter itself, experiences of direct and indirect activities, responsiveness to lived experience throughout, perceived power imbalances, support received before, during, and after RJ
	6 individuals who have been harmed (or their representatives) and who are allocated to the intervention group and take part in restorative justice activities	
	4 parents/carers of children who have harmed and who are allocated to the intervention and who take part in restorative justice activities	

children in care/or who are care experienced?	5 children who have harmed and who are allocated to the intervention group and do not take part in restorative justice activities	Depending on the point at which they dropped out and if they experienced any RJ or preparation: experiences of preparing for the encounter and of the encounter itself, experiences of direct and indirect activities, responsiveness to lived experience throughout, perceived power imbalances, support received before, during, and after RJ
	2 individuals who have been harmed (or their representatives) and who are allocated to the intervention group and do not take part in restorative justice activities	
RQ2.6 What are the perceived outcomes and causal mechanisms for any perceived change in these outcomes?	10 referral and delivery staff	Staff perceptions of outcomes, role of RJ, and pathways to change, role of business-as-usual support
	2 RJ4ALL staff	
	10 children who have harmed and who are allocated to the intervention group and take part in restorative justice activities ¹⁶	Perceived outcomes (intended/unintended, positive/negative/neutral), attribution of outcomes to restorative justice, how changes happened, differing perceptions between groups/cases types, contextual and structural factors, role of business-as-usual support
	6 individuals who have been harmed (or their representatives) and who are allocated to the	

¹⁶ Young people with lived experience of youth justice services were particularly keen for us to explore mechanisms of change and perceived impacts in interviews. One advisor noted that offending behaviours are complex (for example, young people may steal to keep themselves alive, or because they feel safer when incarcerated) and so the primary outcome of offending should not be summarised simplistically as an impact indicator.

	intervention group and take part in restorative justice activities	
	4 parents/carers of children who have harmed and who are allocated to the intervention and who take part in restorative justice activities	
	5 children who have harmed and who are allocated to the intervention group and do not take part in restorative justice activities	Depending on the point at which they dropped out and if they experienced any RJ or preparation: perceived outcomes (intended/unintended,
	2 individuals who have been harmed (or their representatives) and who are allocated to the intervention group and do not take part in restorative justice activities	positive/negative/neutral), attribution of outcomes to restorative justice or business-as-usual support, how changes happened, differing perceptions between groups/cases types, contextual and structural factors, role of business-as-usual support
	5 children who have harmed and who are allocated to the control group	Perceived outcomes (intended/unintended, positive/negative/neutral), attribution of outcomes to business-as-usual support, how changes happened, differing perceptions between groups/cases types, contextual and structural factors, role of business-as-usual support
	2 individuals who have been harmed (or their representatives) and who are allocated to the control group	
	10 referral and delivery staff	

RQ3.1 Are the recruitment and retention procedures effective to support a fully powered trial? And are these procedures equitable for children who have caused harm and those who have been harmed from different groups (particularly those from Black Asian and ethnic minority backgrounds, girls, and children with SEND, or children in care/or who are care experienced)?	2 RJ4ALL staff	Understanding and application of eligibility criteria and recruitment support, referral pathways and processes, practical barriers/facilitators, adaptations/support needed for full-trial, role of power and structural factors
	10 children who have harmed and who are allocated to the intervention group and take part in restorative justice activities	Experience of recruitment processes and consent, barriers/facilitators of participation, experience of being in the study, perception of engagement strategies, differential experiences by identity and circumstance
	6 individuals who have been harmed (or their representatives) and who are allocated to the intervention group and take part in restorative justice activities	
	4 parents/carers of children who have harmed and who are allocated to the intervention and who take part in restorative justice activities	
	5 children who have harmed and who are allocated to the intervention group and do not take part in restorative justice activities	Experience of recruitment processes and consent, barriers/facilitators of participation, experience of being in and dropping out/withdrawing from the study, decision to drop-out/withdraw, perception of engagement
	2 individuals who have been harmed (or their representatives) and who are allocated to the	

	intervention group and do not take part in restorative justice activities	strategies, differential experiences by identity and circumstance
	5 children who have harmed and who are allocated to the control group	Experience of recruitment processes and consent, barriers/facilitators of participation, experience of being in the study and allocated to the control group, perception of engagement strategies, differential experiences by identity and circumstance
	2 individuals who have been harmed (or their representatives) and who are allocated to the control group	
RQ3.2 Is randomisation feasible and acceptable?	10 referral and delivery staff	Understanding of randomisation, application of randomisation procedures, acceptability of randomisation procedures and trial arm allocation
	2 RJ4ALL staff	
	10 children who have harmed and who are allocated to the intervention group and take part in restorative justice activities	Understanding of randomisation, acceptability of randomisation procedures and trial arm allocation
	6 individuals who have been harmed (or their representatives) and who are allocated to the intervention group and take part in restorative justice activities	
	4 parents/carers of children who have harmed and who are allocated to the intervention and who take part in restorative justice activities	

	5 children who have harmed and who are allocated to the control group	Understanding of randomisation, acceptability of randomisation procedures and intervention trial arm allocation, contribution of RCT design to drop-out/withdrawal
	2 individuals who have been harmed (or their representatives) and who are allocated to the control group	
	5 children who have harmed and who are allocated to the intervention group and do not take part in restorative justice activities	
	2 individuals who have been harmed (or their representatives) and who are allocated to the intervention group and do not take part in restorative justice activities	
RQ3.3 Are the proposed outcome measures and data collection processes appropriate, acceptable, and equitable for children who have caused harm and those who have been harmed from different groups (particularly those from Black Asian and ethnic minority backgrounds, girls, and children with SEND, or children in care/or who are care experienced)?	10 referral and delivery staff	Experience of supporting outcome measure completion and facilitating data collection processes, professional perception of outcome measures and fit with organisational policies and practice
	2 RJ4ALL staff	
	10 children who have harmed and who are allocated to the intervention group and take part in restorative justice activities	Experience of completing outcome measures, acceptability of outcome measures and data collection processes, differential experiences by identity and circumstance
	6 individuals who have been harmed (or their representatives) and who are allocated to the	

	intervention group and take part in restorative justice activities	
	4 parents/carers of children who have harmed and who are allocated to the intervention and who take part in restorative justice activities	
	5 children who have harmed and who are allocated to the control group	
	2 individuals who have been harmed (or their representatives) and who are allocated to the control group	
	5 children who have harmed and who are allocated to the intervention group and do not take part in restorative justice activities	Experience of completing outcome measures, acceptability of outcome measures and data collection processes, role of outcome measures/data collection processes in decision to drop-out/withdraw, differential experiences by identity and circumstance
	2 individuals who have been harmed (or their representatives) and who are allocated to the intervention group and do not take part in restorative justice activities	

Interviews will involve discussion of sensitive experiences related to harm, justice involvement, and emotional distress. The researcher will retain overall responsibility for ethical conduct, safeguarding oversight, and adherence to the approved protocol. The lived-experience peer-researcher will support the interview process by contributing relational insight, helping to create a supportive and non-judgemental environment, and assisting in recognising signs of distress or disengagement. At the start of each interview, interviewers will establish clear ground rules, including checking participants' comfort with the presence of both staff and reiterating their right to withdraw or take breaks. Interviews will be conducted using a trauma-aware and strengths-based approach. Interviewers will use open, non-leading questions, avoid pressuring participants to disclose experiences they are uncomfortable discussing, regularly check in with participants about their wellbeing and consent to continue. If a participant shows signs of distress, interviewers may pause or slow the interview, offer a break, and/or change topic or stop the interview. If a participant discloses information that raises safeguarding concerns (for example, risk of harm to themselves or others), the researcher will follow Coram's established safeguarding procedures. Where interviews raise difficult issues, participants will be offered appropriate information about support services, which may include advocacy and emotional support resources. Co-facilitating interviews may evoke personal experiences for peer researchers. They will receive pre-interview briefing and preparation, opportunities for debriefing and reflexive discussion following interviews, and access to regular supervision from Elizabeth Raws (Coram researcher).

All interviews will be recorded with consent and transcribed verbatim. Interview transcripts, observation notes, and qualitative answers from the surveys will be coded inductively and deductively and themes will be constructed. They will be analysed in NVivo, guided by Braun and Clarke's six-stage process of reflexive thematic analysis. The approach will be flexible and iterative; as the researcher analyses, they will develop and refine the codeframe, which will then be reviewed by at least one other researcher in the team and further developed through discussion of potential improvements. We also hope to involve the peer researchers in analysis discussions, to ensure it is grounded in lived experience.

Survey of referral and delivery staff

The survey will be launched in September 2027, 11 months after delivery of the SPM has begun and will remain open for three months. A link to the survey (hosted on SmartSurvey) will be sent to referral and delivery staff. The survey will include an information sheet, link to data privacy notice, and tick box for consent. We will ask delivery teams to promote the survey amongst staff and encourage them to fill it in. We will send up to three email reminders

to complete the survey to encourage participation. Our target is for 40 members of staff (2 referral staff and 2 delivery staff in each YJS) to complete the survey.

The survey will include both open and closed questions and will take a maximum of 15 minutes to complete. In line with our research questions, the survey will cover: experience of training, understanding of SPM, implementation of SPM including barriers and facilitators, reasons for deviations from SPM, variations by case type, understanding and application of eligibility criteria and recruitment support, referral pathways and processes, practical barriers/facilitators, adaptations/support needed for full-trial, role of power and structural factors, barriers and facilitators encountered during referral and delivery; resource adequacy (time, training, staffing, materials etc.); organisational support and inter-agency collaboration; training adequacy and confidence in delivering restorative practices; and recommendations for scaling up and improving fidelity. Some questions will be formatted as multiple-choice checklists (e.g. barriers and facilitators) with options to add further detail to avoid the survey becoming overly burdensome.

Analysis will be conducted to summarise respondent characteristics, assess feasibility indicators, and explore experiences and perceptions of facilitating restorative justice against research questions. We will use descriptive statistics to analyse close-ended questions, by calculating frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations, and depicting responses graphically. For open-ended questions, responses will be coded inductively to identify recurring themes. We will develop a coding framework based on this and apply this to all responses.

Case management and administrative data from delivery partners

As the delivery partner supporting YJS teams to implement the SPM, RJ4All will set-up and oversee a data management system for case quality control. This will be a bespoke case management platform, whereby RJ4All will input key data for the cases over the 12-month delivery period. This platform will document case quality and consistency among YJS teams by storing data related to the harming party, harmed party, nature of the harm, intervention (direct or indirect) type, stage of the case, and any deviations from the SPM, and whether agreements are reached. Additional data fields may be agreed during the system set-up to improve consistency among YJS teams. The case management system will also include a SPM fidelity questionnaire, which will be developed in partnership with Coram during set-up and mobilisation, to enable an assessment of whether YJS teams are implementing the SPM in their casework. RJ4ALL will ask YJS teams to complete fidelity questionnaires for each case on a quarterly basis, with prompts to complete sooner for short-term cases.

Coram will access this data to address research question 1.1, 'To what extent is the restorative justice Shared Practice Model successfully implemented and what are the barriers and facilitators that influence this?'. Analysis will be conducted to summarise participant and case characteristics, adherence to the SPM model, and whether agreements are reached. Data will be summarised using descriptive statistics, calculating frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations. Where appropriate and necessary we will use inferential statistics to draw comparisons between groups.

Coram will also request information on business-as-usual support taken up across participants. We will use a pre-populated Excel spreadsheet and request YJS teams to return data securely through a protected folder on SharePoint.

YJS teams communicated in co-design that they wish to continue using their own restorative justice satisfaction surveys administered to harmed and harming parties, to support their learning and document their outcomes. We will seek to access and analyse results from these surveys to summarise participant experiences, although surveys vary across YJS teams.

BAU support

Within the series of outcome measures, we will include a question related to BAU support at baseline, 6-month check-in, and 12-month follow-up. The question at baseline is 'Have you received any support or services related to the incident/harm that brought you into this study?'. At 6-month check-in and 12-month follow-up, the question is, 'Since we last spoke, have you received any support or services related to the incident/harm that brought you into this study?'. If participants answer 'yes' they will be asked 'Which of the following support have you received? (Select all that apply)' and choose from the following list 'Victim support service; support from police; mental health support including counselling or therapy; mediation or restorative process (outside this study); support from a school, college or university; support from a community or voluntary organisation; support from friends or family; other (please specify). Finally we will ask 'Has there been any support you wanted but were unable to access?'.

Triangulating IPE findings

The IPE will involve both within-method and between-method triangulation. A researcher and the peer researchers will create a research question triangulation matrix to map findings from different data sources that relate to each research question. They will also consider how the findings from the different methods validate and challenge each other. We will triangulate data to interrogate the overall Theory of Change, with particular attention to the embedded causal assumptions linking restorative justice to reductions in reoffending. We have outlined how each mechanism and assumption in the Theory of Change will be assessed through

aspects of the IPE in Table 7. The peer researchers will be asked to consider how the results reflect their experiences of the issues the research aims to understand and where there may be differences, unexpected findings, or gaps left in the research. This approach will enable us to address our research questions in a robust and nuanced way, drawing out findings from all data sources and with insights from lived experience.

Table 7. Mechanisms and enabling assumptions of change and how these will be assessed

Key – Case management system data (1), fidelity questionnaire (2), observations (3), interviews (4), survey of referral and delivery staff (5)

Mechanisms	Assessment	Enabling assumptions	Assessment
Co-development of restorative agreement/outcomes	1	Parties are capable of articulating needs and preferences to inform the agreement/outcomes	3, 4
All parties have been heard and involved in resolution	4	Parties feel psychologically safe to speak	4
		Parties come to the encounter prepared to engage in dialogue	2, 4
		Equal and adequate opportunity to communicate	3, 4
Being held accountable in a supportive environment (reintegrative shaming) can help the young person to acknowledge their wrongdoing and develop a stronger sense of agency	2, 3	The restorative environment is supportive and perceived as fair	3, 4
		The encounter and agreement is facilitated as opposed to prescribed, to support the young person's sense of agency	2
		The encounter labels the behaviour as the problem, as opposed to the young person, meaning that the behaviour can be change and the young person is valued	2, 3
		The process does not reinforce 'offender' labelling and instead recognizes a young person's strengths	2, 3
Increased empathy and understanding of harm through facilitated dialogue	3, 4	Facilitator can manage emotions of the encounter sensitively and safely	2, 3
		Child is emotionally capable of engaging with the harmed party's experience	1, 2, 3, 4

Children reflect on why the harm happened and identify strategies to avoid similar situations that led to the harm	1, 3, 4	Child is emotionally and cognitively capable of engaging in this type of reflective thinking	1, 2, 3, 4
		Strategies take into account the realities of a young person's life and feel achievable to the young person	1, 2, 4
Restorative processes can include carers/supporters/advocates of the young person involved to help the young person feel connected rather than marginalised, which could support behaviour change	1	The child is able to bring carers/supporters/advocates into the encounter as needed	1, 3
		The facilitator is able to manage social and community dynamics sensitively	2, 5
Restorative encounters moves beyond individual responsibility and towards just relations between parties transforming fear and anger into solidarity	3, 4	Parties are able to achieve an emotion and interaction ritual that may include conversational and bodily rhythm, a balance of power and perspective, a turning point, and a shared focus of their emotions	3
If young people experience restorative as fair and transparent, they will develop trust in the justice system potentially increasing their compliance with restorative agreements	1, 4	The young person experiences restorative justice as fair and transparent	4
		The young person understands the restorative justice process and their rights	2, 4
Restorative justice may help to identify unmet needs as the young person reflects on why the harm happened. YJS teams may be able to address these through referral to appropriate services and support	1, 2	Services to address unmet needs exist and are accessible	1, 2

Outputs

We will produce the following outputs:

- A co-designed Theory of Change for the delivery of direct and indirect youth restorative justice. This will be updated at the end of the trial period as appropriate.
- A Shared Practice Model with co-design led by RJ4ALL, comprising a practical guide to deliver youth restorative justice. This guide will be a live document to incorporate learning as delivery progresses.
- A preliminary report which summarises findings in relation to the research questions from analysis of IPE and self-report data (ahead of police-recorded offending being accessed and analysed).
- A final report which will set out the findings in answer to our research questions. In addition to evidence of promise, this will include an assessment of the feasibility of implementing the Shared Practice Model and readiness for undertaking a full-scale efficacy study. If an efficacy study is considered feasible, we will include recommendations for the study design based on the findings from the pilot trial.
- We will create a participant-facing copy of the final report with peer researchers, which summarises key findings and implications.

Cost data reporting and collecting

As per YEF's Cost Reporting Guidance, we will take a bottom-up approach to estimating costs associated with urces and estimate these from the perspective of the delivery organisations (YJS teams and RJ4ALL). Costs relating to the evaluation will be excluded. We will separate costs into prerequisite, set-up and recurring costs.

In the first three months of delivery, we will consult with key delivery stakeholders to understand where costs will be incurred to refine our approach to capturing this data. We will then request cost data using the agreed method in April 2028 following the completion of YJS casework for the trial. We anticipate creating an online form to capture prerequisite, set-up, and ongoing costs broken down by the nature of the resource. We intend to use the following resource categories:

- Staff and labour costs of delivery staff, including police, caseworkers, restorative justice practitioners, and RJ4ALL project staff. We will request breakdowns of wages and direct non-wage costs (i.e. pension contribution and National Insurance). We will request full-time-equivalent role information and detail of hours/days worked if roles are not FTE.

- Programme procurement costs. We will work with RJ4ALL to understand costs for organisations to access the Shared Practice Model and training going forwards.
- Buildings and facilities. These costs will include rental fees for premises for RJ4ALL to deliver training and for YJS teams to deliver restorative justice.
- Materials and equipment. We will also collect data on travel, materials, and subsistence costs associated with delivery of RJ4ALL's training and restorative justice.
- Other costs. We will include this to capture any other costs that cannot be categorised as above.

Given this retrospective, bottom-up approach, uncertainty around cost estimates should be low. However, in line with the Green Book guidance, we will apply appropriate optimism biases and run sensitivity analyses to account for uncertainty around key assumptions. We will also be clear in our reporting that data is self-reported and therefore cannot be independently verified.

Diversity, equity and inclusion

We anticipate that the research could particularly impact people from the following groups: young people; disabled people (including those who are neurodivergent or who have one or more mental illnesses); people from minoritised ethnic communities; women, particularly where they are victims; and people from a lower social class. The main equity issues relate to barriers to participation, the capacity for young people/victims to meaningfully consent to take part in the trial, and sensitivities and nuances around discussing aspects of the restorative process at interview.

We will maintain a REDI log throughout the trial identifying issues in the trial relating to race, equity, diversity, and inclusion as well as assigned actions. We will review this log quarterly with our Race Equity Associate and adapt our processes to address emerging issues. Emily Blackshaw (PI) will be responsible for maintaining the REDI log, but all researchers on the core project team will be responsible for updating with issues arising issues. As part of this work, we will monitor emerging issues related to diversity, equity, and inclusion with the support of RJ4ALL and their case management system. We will systematically record reasons for non-take-up across all stages of the recruitment, delivery, and measurement process. We will work closely with RJ4ALL and YJS teams to ensure that granular detail on non-take-up is captured. For example, we will seek to record coded reasons for non-progression at each decision-point, such as 'practical/access barriers', 'relational or trust issues', 'communication or neurodevelopmental needs', 'cultural mismatch or discomfort', 'fear, shame, or stigma', 'parent/carers objections', 'language or literacy barriers' etc. We will also monitor recruitment and drop-out rates by key demographic groups so we can identify equity gaps early. We will analyse both these reasons for non-take-up and patterns of recruitment/drop-out and review

at monthly meetings, so that we can review these issues of inclusion and address them appropriately and with the support of our Race Equity Associate. We will document any adjustments made to trial procedures and attempt to draw out learning from these.

Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion and has also been carefully considered within the SPM, with key principles embedded and reinforced through both the CPD e-course and face-to-face training sessions.

Our approaches to making the research inclusive of these groups specifically is laid out below and detailed in full in our Equality Impact Assessment.

Age

All young people who have offended will be aged 10-17 years at the time that they engage with the YJS in relation to the current offence. Services do not set a minimum age on participation in restorative justice for victims. We understand from YJS teams that the majority of cases will comprise older young people who have offended.

Younger participants may struggle with abstract concepts like accountability, harm, fairness, and randomisation. They may be more likely to experience anxiety or discomfort in unfamiliar settings or when speaking with unfamiliar adults (e.g. researchers). Parental consent (in addition to child consent) is necessary for young people under 16 years.

The SPM and training will support extensive preparation work to identify communication needs for younger participants and seek to support these. This could include asking the young person what words make sense to them and build shared definitions together, and agree preferred communication strategies. Practitioners may also consider using visual aids or creative methods to support verbal communication. Preparation will also help younger participants to feel more comfortable with the settings and individuals involved by familiarising them with the restorative location and building trust with the practitioner.

We will seek to support communication needs for younger participants through both the SPM/training and the research protocol. We will express abstract concepts using plain language and concrete examples. We will use visual examples and illustrations where possible (e.g. on information sheets) and use an accompanying video for information sheets. We will also be sensitive to communication needs of younger participants in interviews. This could include using creative methods, story-based explanations, and role-playing scenarios. Our research team has experience of using creative methods with young people in previous research studies.

We will seek parental consent for participants under 16 years of age to take part in the research. This mirrors what is required for restorative justice delivery.

We will use peer researchers who are younger and have been through the youth justice system to increase a sense of familiarity with younger participants.

Disability and neurodivergence

Young people or victims with disabilities (including physical disabilities, neurodiversity, and/or SEND) may face challenges in engaging with the evaluation. For example, young people with disabilities may consent to participate in the evaluation without fully understanding what this means or what is required of them, particularly for more complex concepts such as randomisation. Young people with disabilities may face increased pressure/discomfort as a result of the RCT design. For example, young people assigned to the restorative justice trial arm may experience greater distress if this feels unacceptable to them. Self-report outcome measures may be inaccessible to young people with disabilities in terms of the language used, differing interpretation of abstract concepts, and the length of questionnaires. Young people with hearing or visual impairments may face barriers if research materials (consent forms, outcome measures) are only presented in one format and verbal interviews are conducted without support for additional needs. Researchers may assume that young people are unable to consent and meaningfully participate in the evaluation which risks exclusion. Traditional verbal interviews may be challenging for young people with disabilities and/or additional needs, in terms of articulating their views and experiences.

Our approach to the research will be inclusive, focusing on what parties can do with the right support, as opposed to identifying what is not possible. We will seek to make adjustments, offer alternative methods, and bring in specialists/advocates where needed. Researchers will liaise with caseworkers/practitioners to understand if advocates/specialists are needed to support communication at all stages including obtaining consent and completing outcome measures.

We will make consent materials as inclusive and accessible as possible. In practice this means plain language explanations of key terms like randomisation, using a video of a researcher explaining the trial in addition to a written information sheet. We will ensure that the person explaining randomisation uses a teach-back method, asking the young person/victim to explain what they understand by participation to check comprehension.

The option for opting out will be emphasised at all points, allowing participants to opt-out of the trial (either the treatment allocation, data collection, or both) if they feel any aspect (including their randomisation allocation) is unacceptable.

There are challenges with editing the content of validated and copyrighted outcome measures used in this trial. However, we will provide peer researchers will explanations of challenging terms to support comprehension. Peer researchers will offer to read questions and response options (as opposed to completing a written form) in the format of a structured interview.

Similar methods to those described above will be used to support young people and victims with interviews. We will share clear information about the interview beforehand so participants know what to expect, and encourage them to express preferences e.g. location, communication methods etc. We will monitor for signs of distress/shutdown and offer flexible communication strategies e.g. responding using written answers if preferred. During interviews, the researcher will use simple language to communicate clearly and maintain an adaptive approach, responding to the needs of the participant and making it clear that they can ask to pause or stop the interview at any point. The researcher will also suggest a pause or stop if this seems appropriate. We will integrate the use of creative methods in data collection to ensure participants can participate fully in the research to the best of their capacity. We will also have communication support tools on hand, such as pictures and a feelings wheel, to help the participant communicate in a way that feels comfortable for them.

Ethnicity

We are aware that young people from racially and ethnically minoritised communities are over-represented in the justice system, so understanding their perspectives is essential in any research on youth justice. There may be barriers that deter young people and victims from minoritised ethnic groups from participating in restorative justice, or in the pilot RCT. For example, historic and systemic mistrust of research and/or criminal justice systems etc. Young people and victims from minoritised ethnic groups may be less likely to have English as a first language, so there may be greater communication challenges in terms of both delivery and the research. There may be cultural communication differences, relevant to the delivery of restorative justice and research procedures. There may be cultural differences in expressions of remorse. During co-design, one practitioner referenced an occasion where a young person looked at the floor – for them this was an expression of shame whereas the practitioner initially interpreted it as a lack of interest. Similarly, young people from certain ethnic groups may be less likely to admit to the offence/accept responsibility owing to fears around how they will be treated in the youth justice system, especially if they anticipate being treated differently or unfairly owing to their ethnicity. Importantly, ethnicity can intersect with other

characteristics (e.g. immigration status, poverty etc.) that could lead to further barriers to engagement in restorative justice and/or the research.

Our research materials will be as transparent and clear as possible (for example, in explaining the rationale for the research) to help build trust. For example, in our information sheet we will acknowledge the reality of systemic mistrust for young people from minoritised ethnic groups by clearly stating that we know that services haven't heard them and that we hope this research will ensure services and commissioners hear the views and experiences of young people.

We have included funds in our budget for translators and interpreters to support young people/victims/families with limited English proficiency.

We have designed our process evaluation to seek to capture cultural nuances in participant experiences. Two of our research questions contain a specific focus on understanding the experiences of CYP from marginalised communities, particularly those from minoritised ethnic groups.

We will monitor recruitment to our process evaluation (participation in interviews) to ensure that participation across ethnic groups represents the composition of these groups in youth justice services. We will use purposive sampling for interviews so that our sample includes cases where ethnicity or cultural identity may shape the restorative process (such as race-related hate crimes).

We will maintain a REDI log throughout the trial identifying issues in the trial relating to race, equity, diversity, and inclusion as well as assigned actions. We will review this log quarterly with our Race Equity Associate and adapt our processes to address emerging issues. Emily Blackshaw (PI) will be responsible for maintaining the REDI log, but all researchers on the core project team will be responsible for updating with issues arising. As part of this work, we will monitor emerging issues related to diversity, equity, and inclusion with the support of RJ4ALL and their case management system. We will systematically record reasons for non-take-up across all stages of the recruitment, delivery, and measurement process. We will work closely with RJ4ALL and YJS teams to ensure that granular detail on non-take-up is captured. For example, we will seek to record coded reasons for non-progression at each decision-point, such as 'practical/access barriers', 'relational or trust issues', 'communication or neurodevelopmental needs', 'cultural mismatch or discomfort', 'fear, shame, or stigma', 'parent/carer objections', 'language or literacy barriers' etc. We will also monitor recruitment and drop-out rates by key demographic groups and compare these against demographic patterns of involvement with the youth justice system, so we can identify equity gaps early. We will analyse both these reasons for non-take-up and patterns of recruitment/drop-out

and review at monthly meetings, so that we can review these issues of inclusion and address them appropriately and with the support of our Race Equity Associate. We will document any adjustments made to trial procedures and attempt to draw out learning from these.

Researchers at Coram aim to work in a way that is reflexive, maintaining awareness of how intersecting advantages and disadvantages influence social interactions. We try to mirror this in our research, considering how we can make the research process more equitable and inclusive – particularly for people from minoritised ethnic groups, who are often affected by the subjects research touches on and yet are typically sidelined in research. We will keep a responsive and sensitive approach during the research process, looking for opportunities to improve our approach to be more inclusive. For example, we will have our interview materials reviewed by peer researchers and we will then action their feedback. We will also use a trauma-informed approach, with the understanding that many participants may have experienced at least one form of discrimination, if not multiple, and this could influence their experience of the research process. To ensure that this is not deprioritised during the study a named researcher will be responsible for reflexivity – for bringing this to relevant study meetings and ensuring that these plans are actioned. Through this reflexive approach we will seek to interrogate and question Westernised assumptions and interpretations of key concepts, such as remorse, shame, and healing. We will try to build a shared language with participants during our IPE around these concepts by asking how they would show they care about the harm, or what they feel that putting things right would mean, as opposed to assuming that everyone understands these concepts in the same way.

Gender

Female victims may feel unsafe with male staff, particularly in youth justice cases involving sexual or gender-based violence. This may be relevant in baseline/endline data collection meetings and/or in research interviews. Males are statistically more likely to be offenders. Gender may influence how participants engage in restorative justice and in interviews (e.g., communication styles).

Victims of gender-based/sexual violence may be less willing to take part in a trial that randomly allocates the intervention they receive. Gender-related offences can involve sensitive details.

We will work closely with YJS teams to ensure that we understand needs of cases, such as where there may be a preference for a same-sex researcher. We will offer these individuals an option over the sex of the researcher that interviews them and ensure they have appropriate supports in place e.g. a friend or advocate present.

We will handle all data in line with GDPR UK to ensure that there are no breaches to data security and confidentiality

We will seek to contextualise our findings by relevant gender/sex information. For example, if most offenders are male, we will seek to understand SDQ and WEMWBS scores in the context of male score norms/averages as opposed to total SDQ and WEMWBS norms/averages.

We will also use a trauma-informed approach, with the understanding that many participants may have experienced at least one form of discrimination, if not multiple, and this could influence their experience of the research process. A trauma-informed approach will underpin all participant interactions, through the consent process, outcome measurement, and interviews with both children who have harmed and the individuals they have harmed. The research team will prioritise physical and emotional safety, ensuring meetings take place in supportive, non-pressured environments with trusted adults available where appropriate. During consent, information will be delivered slowly, using clear, developmentally appropriate language, with repeated opportunities for participants to ask questions, take breaks, or decline involvement without impact on any services they receive (i.e. access to restorative justice). For outcome measures, participants will be prepared in advance for the types of questions they will encounter, especially those that may relate to difficult experiences, and data collection will be flexible and paced according to their comfort. Interviews will be conducted with sensitivity to potential triggers, recognising that both participants may have experienced fear, loss, confusion, or distress linked to past events. Interviewers will use grounding techniques, collaborative communication, and gentle redirection, avoiding intrusive probing. They will be trained to recognise signs of distress, to pause or stop the session if needed, and to ensure participants retain choice and control throughout. All participants will be reminded of available support services.

Social class

Young people and/or victims with fewer resources may struggle with transport, time off work, or digital access for meetings/interviews. Youth and/or victims from disadvantaged backgrounds may face structural barriers that limit the impact of restorative justice (e.g., lack of community resources for reintegration, material barriers that limit benefits to mental health etc.).

We will compensate young people for any travel related to the research. We will use flexible scheduling to avoid young people/victims taking time off work and offer remote participation options. We will also aim to offer ways to participate that are not dependent on internet access, as we are aware that some participants may experience digital poverty.

Through our implementation and process evaluation we will seek to understand how outcomes are brought (or not brought) about for young people from different backgrounds. To do this sensitively we will ask about perceived impact of restorative justice, as well as challenges, supports, and systemic barriers e.g. by asking ‘Were there things outside your control that made it harder to keep on track?’ etc.

We understand that social class often interacts with other characteristics in a way that means people are socially and politically disadvantaged in multiple and complex ways. We will maintain awareness of this intersectionality during the research and use a trauma-informed approach, so that we are sensitive to the experiences participants may have had related to their identity.

Ethics and registration

Details of the trial protocol were shared with Coram’s Research Ethics Committee (REC) during co-design and their feedback helped to shape the trial design and procedures. Should our proposal to YEF’s Grants and Evaluation Committee be successful, we will submit a full application to Coram REC during the set-up and mobilisation phase.

In line with best practice, the trial will be registered with ISRCTN.

Data protection

In line with YEF guidance, personal data will be processed on the basis of public interest (Article 6(1) (e) of the GDPR UK). Special category data will be processed on the basis of research purposes (Article 9(2)(j) of the GDPR UK). For ethical reasons we will actively request consent from those providing data as part of the evaluation (for example, interviews). In line with YEF guidance, we will be the joint controllers of personal data throughout the evaluation period, along with YJS teams who will also collect participant personal data. We will make decisions together about what data will be collected and how they will be processed for the evaluation.

We will work closely with the 10 YJS teams, local police teams, RJ4ALL, and YEF to develop Data Sharing Agreements (DSAs) and Data Protection Impact Assessments (DPIAs). These documents will cover the flow of data between parties and enable access to YJS data (administrative/monitoring data) and local police data for the purpose of the pilot trial. We will draft clear data privacy notices on handling, collecting and processing personal data, where we will communicate participants’ rights to see or change the data we hold on them, or to have it deleted within a given timeframe.

Access requests for the PNC will be submitted in good time for data to be released. We are advised that requests are typically approved in 8 weeks and that a data sharing agreement will need to be signed. We anticipate receiving the data through the ONS Secure Research Service.

Data will be stored securely on our internal server, only accessible by the Coram study team members. Data transferred from YJS teams and the police will be via a secure folder on SharePoint, only accessible by named users. Once the evaluation is finished, data will be archived. In line with YEF guidance, two datasets will be prepared and submitted by Coram. Datasets will include single rows for each case. One dataset will be submitted to the Department for Education containing young people's identifying data and unique project specific reference numbers for each case and individual. The dataset will be pseudonymised - personal identifying data will be replaced with pupil matching reference numbers (PMRs). The PMRs and reference numbers will then be submitted to the ONS and stored in the YEF archive. The second dataset will include all evaluation data and project specific reference numbers. It will be submitted to the ONS and stored in the YEF archive. Unique IDs will allow the two datasets to be matched. YEF will become the data controllers when the data has been submitted.

Stakeholders and interests

Developer and delivery team

Professor Theo Gavrielides (PhD) is a legal philosopher and one of the world's leading experts in restorative justice, criminal and youth justice reform and human rights. He is the Founder and Director of the Restorative Justice for All (RJ4All) International Institute.

Carmen Costa is the UK Project Manager at RJ4All, overseeing the organisation's core poverty relief and restorative justice casework projects for affected parties. She holds a Master's in Education and International Development from UCL and has a history of working in the overlaps of the education, justice and non-profit sectors. She is the creator and lead trainer of Induction to restorative justice circles – RJ4ALL Education, RJ4All's first CPD certified e-course on circles designed to train community volunteers, youth workers and justice professionals how to facilitate peace making circles for community-building.

Ronja Healy Karlsson is the Restorative Justice Project Officer at RJ4All and comes from a background of Political Science and Gender Studies, specialising through her Master's of Science at Lund Research University. With a keen passion for an intersectional and gendered insight on issues, she focused her work and research on alternative approaches to tackling

gender-based violence, incorporating positive constructions of identity and community building approaches.

RJ4All established a **Restorative Justice Practitioners' Board** (RJPB) in July 2025 to support with project delivery. Comprising five practitioners with experience in restorative justice within the youth justice system in England and Wales, the Board will bring independence, expertise, and critical oversight to the project. The members are Pete Wallis, Marian Liebmann, Stephen Czajewski, Rick Rhodes, and Christopher Straker and the advisors are Ben Lyon, Andrea L Jones, and Julia Houlston Clark.

Evaluation team

Sandy Gulyurtlu, Managing Director of Research Programmes, Coram, will be the senior responsible researcher and provide quality assurance. Sandy has extensive senior leadership experience in research with children and young people across healthcare, social care, safeguarding and children's rights. As former Head of Research at the Children's Commissioner's Office, she led research with children and young people in vulnerable circumstances. She has also established a youth panel for Starlight Children's Foundation, a children's health play charity, and led consultations with children and young people in healthcare settings. Sandy has led research with victims and survivors for two national inquiries into child sexual abuse and exploitation, giving her deep expertise in managing sensitive and emotive research safely, ethically and rigorously. She has extensive experience of working with ethics committees, safeguarding protocols and statutory stakeholders.

Dr Emily Blackshaw, Research Manager, Coram, will be the principal investigator. Emily will provide day-to-day project management and lead the study team. Emily is an expert in experimental research designs and psychometrics. She led the quantitative data collection and analysis for the Coram Family Group Conference RCT study. Emily has previously worked on evaluations of mental health interventions for young people and parenting support interventions at King's College London.

Elizabeth Raws, Research and Evaluation Officer, Coram, will lead the implementation and process evaluation and manage the peer researchers. Izzy is mixed-methods researcher and has a particular interest in using qualitative methods with vulnerable and marginalised people. She previously worked on a large project looking at family access to Family Group Conferencing funded by Foundations, for which she managed and conducted the qualitative fieldwork, analysis, and reporting. She also trained and managed Co-Researchers who assisted with conducting interviews and reviewing project design and outputs.

Hannah Lawrence, Research Manager, Coram, will provide oversight and quality assurance of the implementation and process evaluation. Hannah is an expert in qualitative research and has extensive experience of managing complex, mixed methods evaluations. Hannah has experience of a range of qualitative methods including interviewing children in care, young people excluded from schools and foster and kinship carers. Hannah is also trained panel member for referral orders at a Youth Offending Service. Hannah is principal investigator for YEF's RCT of the EXODUS mentoring programme.

Narendra Bhalla, Senior Research Officer, Coram, will lead on quantitative data collection and analysis. Naren has experience in mixed-method evaluations in South Asia and Africa in Sanitation, Urban Development and Education among other sectors. He holds an MSc from the London School of Economics in Operations Research & Analytics. Naren leads quantitative data collection and analysis for YEF's RCT of the EXODUS mentoring programme.

Eren Ince, Research Assistant, will provide administrative research support to the evaluation.

Jenny Johnstone, Senior Lecturer at Newcastle University Law School, will be an expert advisor for the project having expertise in youth justice as well as equality, race and criminal justice and mixed methods research having previously worked at the University of Glasgow, Sheffield and Leeds, in addition to having been a para-legal focusing on Family Law. Her experience includes working with Police National Computer data. Jenny also served as a Chair Panel Member for the Children's Hearings System in Scotland.

We will recruit two peer researchers to support the trial during the set-up and mobilisation period.

During co-design we consulted young people with lived experience on the nature of the role and had early discussions with individuals who expressed interest in applying.

We will also have support from three pro-bono economists to contribute to and advise on our cost evaluation.

Risks

We provide a detailed account of the project (evaluation and delivery) risks in our risk register, which is a live document that will be maintained throughout the trial. We have summarised key risks below.

Stakeholder engagement

The Youth Justice Board (YJB) and Local Authorities (LAs) may not fully support the project, leading to barriers in implementation, recruitment, and coordination. We think this is quite

likely to occur with a low-medium potential impact, so have rated this risk as medium. To mitigate, RJ4ALL will engage in early discussions to gain buy-in, secure formal agreements which establish clear ongoing lines of collaboration, engage only with pre-identified YJS teams with strong RJ units, secure MOUs early, and hold a closing event to communicate results. Coram will involve YJB and YJS in co-design sessions to support trust building and evaluation buy-in, and in these sessions work to understand capacity of YJS for evaluation and clearly communicate the capacity/resources required to meaningfully participate.

There may be challenges in managing multiple partners, including the umbrella organisation, funder, evaluator, and YJS teams, which could lead to communication gaps, delays, and inconsistent implementation. We have rated this risk as medium, with medium likelihood and impact. To mitigate this RJ4ALL will define clear roles and responsibilities in the Shared Practice Guide, hold regular check-ins, and have clear communication protocols. Coram will have a regular fortnightly internal evaluator meeting for the project. We will communicate directly with RJ4ALL and YJS teams through co-design sessions. We will have monthly extended meetings with RJ4ALL to keep updated throughout the project. We will hold another monthly meeting between the evaluator, funder, and RJ4ALL to keep updated throughout the project.

Significant work has already been undertaken by RJ4ALL to mitigate this risk during co-design. 10 YJS teams have gone through a formal expression of interest and engagement in co-design. These teams have entered a participation agreement with stated intention to continue to pilot implementation stage. Two further YJS teams have signed an agreement to be on a reserve list to engage with the pilot if a team is unable to complete requirements.

Child recruitment

A risk is low caseloads in Youth Justice services, as insufficient numbers of eligible cases may impact the evaluation. This reduces the ability to detect meaningful differences between trial arms (i.e. statistical power) which is less of a concern for a pilot RCT but must still be considered. We have rated this risk as medium-high, as it has a low likelihood but would have a medium impact. To mitigate this, RJ4ALL will engage multiple YJS teams with strong referral rates, maintain a flexible recruitment strategy, stay well connected with all selected YJS, and closely monitor caseloads. During co-design and set-up Coram captured additional data from YJS teams on restorative justice caseloads to calculate realistic recruitment targets. We will monitor referrals in real-time to assess extent to which targets are being met and trigger mitigations/contingency actions.

There may be challenges in recruiting the required number of young people for the project, due to, for example, a lack of interest, or resistance from parents or guardians. We have rated

this risk as medium-high, as it has a low likelihood but would have a medium impact. To mitigate this, RJ4ALL have worked on pre-trial engagement and building buy-in during co-design so that YJS support with CYP engagement and recruitment. RJ4ALL also intend to use targeted outreach strategies, leverage YJS networks, and clearly communicate benefits of participation. RJ4ALL will use flexible recruitment strategies, including calling on reserve YJS teams if needed and providing additional support to YJS teams that struggle with caseload numbers. Coram will involve YJS teams and young people with lived experience in the co-design period, to shape the eligibility criteria, referral processes, and recruitment materials. We will reduce administrative burden by streamlining referral/recruitment processes and using simple forms, clearly communicate the benefits of taking part, for participants, for wider sector, and connect feedback loops to demonstrate impact, and use as wide eligibility criteria for participants as possible to encourage high recruitment rates.

Compliance

There is a risk of high dropout rates in restorative justice process. Young people or victims may withdraw from allocated trial arm due to personal reasons, preference, or lack of engagement. YJS teams anticipate substantial number of participants allocated to the restorative justice arm will drop-out as for many cases restorative justice is unacceptable even following preparatory work (to either/both parties) or inappropriate (following risk assessment etc.). This risks a dilution of the 'treatment' effect for the intervention arm where the intention-to-treat sample will include a substantial proportion of 'untreated' cases i.e. non-compliance with allocation. We have rated this risk as medium-high as there is a medium-high probability and medium impact. RJ4ALL will mitigate this with strong initial engagement strategies, clear planning, trust-generating processes and well-trained facilitators, and support mechanisms. Coram will capture additional data from YJS teams on direct/indirect RJ caseloads and conduct a caseload compliance forecast. We will also analyse and report closely on cases of non-compliance and explore these further in the process and implementation evaluation. The peer researchers will outline expectations of compliance with trial arm allocation with participants at the baseline meeting when discussing consent. The expectation is that participants will adhere to their trial arm allocation, but that control arm participants can access restorative justice in line with the Victim's Code outside of the study. Finally, we will monitor restorative justice delivery throughout the trial and attempt to address issues of non-compliance with YJS teams in real-time.

Fidelity

There may be challenges with implementing the Shared Practice Model. For example, the model may not be adaptable across all YJS teams due to differences in local procedures and

low buy-in may mean that teams do not implement model as intended. Variations in implementation of shared practice model (low fidelity) across different sites may affect internal validity. Results may not be comparable across teams, and it becomes harder to attribute results to the practice model. We have rated this risk as medium, it has a low likelihood of occurring but there could be a medium impact if it does. To mitigate, RJ4ALL will co-design the model with YJS teams to ensure feasibility of delivery and build buy-in. RJ4ALL will also carry out frequent audits, and an RJ4All project officer will be placed in YJS for observations and hands-on support. There will be additional training available if needed. Coram will assess fidelity in the process and implementation evaluation ensuring fieldwork is spread across sites to enable variation to be explored. We will also develop a fidelity questionnaire with YJS partners and RJ4ALL and rapidly feedback to RJ4ALL and partners about any major deviations from shared practice model which will be documented through RJ4ALL's case management system.

There may be poor restorative justice practice quality. Some teams may not deliver restorative justice interventions effectively, potentially even violating legislative requirements. Facilitators may not be equipped to handle RJ sessions effectively. Poor RJ delivery, potential harm to participants. Variability in quality may undermine the credibility of evaluation results and potentially cause harm to participating parties. We have rated this risk as medium-high, as whilst there is only a medium likelihood, the impact would be high. To mitigate against this, RJ4ALL will implement robust quality assurance and ongoing training for YJS teams during the preparatory phase and build on pre-existing connections with experienced staff.

Safeguarding

There are potential risk to the wellbeing of young people during the restorative justice process. This could lead to harm to participants as well as reputational risk and legal challenges. We have rated this risk as medium as the likelihood is low, but the impact medium-high. RJ4ALL will implement strict safeguarding policies, deliver adequate staff training, place project officers with YJS teams to ensure safeguarding standards are met, have YAB overview and steering, and have clear reporting mechanisms.

Young people or victims may disclose abuse, neglect, or risk of harm during interviews or data collection. We have rated this risk as medium as the likelihood is low, but the impact is medium. We will follow Coram's safeguarding policy for handling disclosures and share this with YJS teams, making reporting pathways for disclosures clear. This information will also be shared with participants for transparency.

The evaluation may cause emotional distress for participants. For example, discussing offences or victimisation as part of interviews or data collection (e.g. SRDS) could trigger trauma or distress for participants. This risk is likely higher for participants with complex needs. We have rated this risk as medium as the likelihood is low, but the impact is medium. We will use age-appropriate consent forms that emphasize voluntary participation, so young people who anticipate becoming distressed do not have to take part in the trial. We will create an emotionally safe and trauma informed research environment, by providing clear opt-out or break options during interviews and outcome measure collection. We will create a list of appropriate supports to signpost participants to for further support and all researchers will be trained in trauma-informed approaches.

Safeguarding risks associated with peer researchers are mitigated through clear role boundaries, robust training and supervision, controlled research environments, structured consent processes, and strong organisational accountability. Peer researchers are never expected to manage safeguarding concerns independently, and all activity is conducted within established statutory and organisational safeguarding frameworks. Peer researchers will be provided with scripts explaining the limits of confidentiality and their research role that they can use at the start of every participant interaction. As part of their training they will receive guidance on **boundary-setting**, disengagement, and how to redirect requests for help to appropriate services. When recruiting peer researchers we will not appoint individuals with ongoing involvement with the justice system and/or unresolved trauma closely mirroring participant experiences. We will ensure that peer researchers do not interview individuals from the same locality, peer group, or known network. Baseline and consent meetings will be co-facilitated/observed periodically (not every meeting) by a Coram researcher to quality assure the process and check whether peer researchers require further support. Peer researchers will be supervised by Izzy Raws, which is experienced in lived experience participation in research conduct.

Equity, inclusion, and diversity

Barriers to reaching marginalised groups are detailed in greater detail in the Equality Impact Assessment, but we have also summarised some of these here. Young people from minoritised ethnicity groups may be less likely to engage in restorative justice, due to various structural barriers. Young people from disadvantaged backgrounds may struggle to participate in the intervention and the evaluation due to logistical challenges (e.g., travel, digital access). If we do not address these barriers, the project will reinforce existing inequalities. This would lead to limited quality of findings. We have rated this risk as medium, as there would be a medium-high impact and a medium likelihood of this occurring. RJ4ALL will ensure that the Shared

Practice Model includes steps on EDI (how to address bias, stereotypes etc.) to help ensure targeted outreach and culturally sensitive restorative justice facilitation. The delivery team will provide travel assistance and use digital/remote options where possible. RJ4ALL will also ensure there is access to relevant training and ongoing support and that they review risk assessment processes. They will use of reflective practice focused on ethical decision-making, power dynamics and risk management. They will also provide networking opportunities to bring teams together to share best practice.

Coram have used the Equality Impact Assessment document to ensure that equity is embedded throughout all phases of our evaluation. We will work closely with our Race Equity advisor in co-design to ensure our approach embeds equity. We will detail specific actions (e.g. real-time monitoring of demographic data of recruited participants, involving peer researchers etc.) in the Equality Impact Assessment and our protocol and keep any issues related to equity live using a log throughout the project.

Personnel

There is a risk of capacity constraints in the delivery team, which could lead to overloaded staff, burnout, key deadlines missed, resource constraints, quick staff turnover, and poor coordination. Ultimately the impact would be project delays and reduced effectiveness of implementation. We have rated this risk as medium, with a low likelihood and medium impact. To mitigate this RJ4ALL have ensured that there is strong project management experience. They will assign experienced project managers and ensure sufficient staffing levels.

There is also a risk of capacity constraints in the evaluation team, for example through temporary (e.g. illness) or permanent (e.g. leave role) loss of team members. This could impact the capacity of the team to undertake parts of the evaluation. We have rated this risk as medium, with a low likelihood and medium impact. Having a large project team with experienced core members that can share responsibilities will help to mitigate this. We will ensure that the entire Coram team (15 researchers) is kept up-to-date and briefed through weekly internal meetings so can 'pick up' tasks at any stage and all can access study documents through shared drive. We have a team email address (research@coram.org.uk) monitored weekdays 9am-5pm across the team so that emails can always be picked up. If needed, can draw on the services of Coram associates and/or researchers across Coram group.

Data quality

There is a risk of poor administrative data availability and quality. The evaluation will partly rely on administrative delivery partner data and outcome data from the police. There is a risk that this data (or some of it) may be unavailable to the evaluation team (due to information governance issues, or poor data systems), or that the data provided is poor quality and/or incomplete. There is also a high risk of missing data from the PNC if low-quality identifiers are used. Inaccurate, inconsistent, or incomplete data may compromise evaluation validity. We have rated this risk as medium-high, with a high impact and medium likelihood. To mitigate, RJ4ALL will implement data validation processes, share the Practice Guide and Business case developed with the YJS, provide training on data collection, and establish a Protocol and Data Sharing Agreement with YJS, defining when and how data will be shared to ensure proactive monitoring. There will also be RJ4All project officer presence for the collection of data. Coram will work closely with delivery partners and RJ4ALL to develop data requests which are fit for purpose. This will involve establishing data sharing agreements, supplying a template of required fields, advance warning of data requests, reminders and support, thorough quality assurance including cleaning and checking, and allowing time for querying data with partners. We will work closely with the central PNC and ONS teams to ensure that robust identifiers (including full legal name, date of birth, and gender) are used to minimise missing data. We will acknowledge limitations and data quality issues transparently in reporting.

Data collection

There may be challenges in collecting data from children who have offended and from victims. These groups may be unwilling to provide data or complete required evaluations. This could lead to high amounts of missing data, which impacts on the sample size for analysis. We have rated this risk as medium as there would be a medium impact and a medium-high likelihood. We will co-design data collection materials and procedures with young people with lived experience and YJS partners to ensure these are as acceptable as possible. We will seek to build trust with young person participants by clearly explaining the purpose and value of the research in youth-friendly language, and assuring them that their confidentiality will be maintained. We hope that peer researchers will also help to build trust and rapport. We will make sure data collection materials are unburdensome as possible, and short and engaging. Finally, we will incentivise participation using vouchers.

Trial design

There are challenges inherent to the RCT design. Without safeguards, randomisation to a control arm contradicts Victim's code and may be controversial. Some stakeholders may challenge the fairness of assigning participants to treatment/control arms. We have rated this risk as medium-high, with the impact and likelihood both medium-high. To mitigate this we

have codesigned the trial with YJS teams to help with buy-in and communication of benefits. The trial design will be scrutinised by Coram ethics committee and has already had an initial review. The eligibility criteria will ensure inappropriate cases (e.g. where randomisation is not acceptable as there is a strong preference) are not randomised. There will also be clearly flagged opt-out clauses so that participants can opt-out and access restorative justice if needed.

Budget

There is a risk should we underestimate project costs, leading to an inability to sustain operations and the potential need for scaling down. Additional costs may arise when scaling up activities across multiple YJS teams. Both Coram and RJ4ALL have developed detailed financial plans and monitoring tools. We will monitor the budget closely, reporting overspend to the funder. RJ4ALL also plan for phased scaling and will secure contingency funding.

Legal and compliance

There is a risk of legal and compliance issues should YJS fail to adhere to restorative justice legislation or ethical standards. We have rated this risk as low, as whilst there is a medium-high impact, the likelihood is low. To mitigate this, RJ4ALL will work closely with the YJS, stay up to date with legislation and communicate relevant updates to evaluator and funder, and ensure compliance with restorative justice standards.

Data security

Data breaches or technical failures could compromise participant privacy. This could lead to legal repercussions and a loss of trust. We have rated this risk as medium as whilst the impact is medium-high, the likelihood is low. To mitigate this, RJ4ALL will provide GDPR training for all staff. They will implement strong data security protocols to ensure GDPR compliance. Similarly, Coram will ensure all team members have GDPR and advanced GDPR training. We will reinforce principles of GDPR and data security in communication with YJS and set up secure data sharing systems with YJS teams and put data sharing protocols in place. We will follow GDPR UK principles (e.g. only collecting what is necessary (minimisation)). Coram has secure firewalled data systems (e.g. secure server) with multi-factor authentication access and clear data retention policy and practices.

Timeline

In addition to the items listed below, we will submit quarterly monitoring data to the online YEF community portal, hold quarterly steering group meetings, and quarterly restorative justice practitioners board meetings. A more detailed timeline is provided in our Gantt chart.

Table 8. Project timeline

Dates	Activity	Staff responsible/ leading
30 th June 2025	Kick-off meeting with funder	YEF
August 2025	Develop first draft of Theory of Change (ToC) and submit	Coram
August 2025- January 2026	Develop draft of Shared Practice Model through interviews and focus groups	RJ4ALL
August 2025- January 2026	Co-design protocol and relevant documents (e.g. risk register)	Coram
December 2025	Consult Coram Research Ethics Committee on trial	Coram
December 2025- January 2026	Develop second and 'final' draft of ToC	Coram
9 th January 2026	Submit draft co-design proposal to YEF	Coram and RJ4ALL
19 th January 2026	YEF to provide feedback on draft co-design proposal	YEF
January 2026	Coram/RJ4ALL to action feedback on co-design proposal and re-submit	Coram and RJ4ALL
February 2026	Final YEF review and GEC	YEF
February-March 2026	Finalise consent (information sheets and videos, consent forms) and implementation and process evaluation materials (discussion guide etc.)	Coram
February-April 2026	Develop ethics application for Coram Research Ethics Committee and submit	Coram
March 2026	Allocate 2 Project Officers to each YJS team	RJ4ALL

March-April 2026	Formally launch the SPM and get sector buy-in	RJ4All
March-May 2025	Design training on SPM and gain CPD status (e-course & face-to-face)	RJ4All
April 2026	Online Circles with all selected YJS teams (Onboarding)	RJ4All
April-June 2026	Recruit and train two peer researchers	Coram
March-July 2026	Agree and sign data sharing agreements with YJS and police teams	Coram
June-July 2026	Deliver evaluation training to YJS teams (eligibility screening etc.)	Coram
July 2026	Deliver online CPD certified course on SPM (Onboarding)	RJ4All
July-September 2026	Week-long placement at YJS teams of RJ4All Project Officers (continued onboarding)	RJ4All
July-September 2026	Three in-person CPD certified trainings for all YJS teams (continued onboarding)	RJ4All
October 2026	Recruitment starts including consent, baseline data collection, and randomisation (continuous) and casework (continuous)	Coram and YJS teams
October 2026-October 2027	Oversee case management and delivery (continuous)	RJ4All
April 2027-March 2028	6-month check-ins (continuous)	Coram
October 2027-September 2028	12-month data collection (continuous)	Coram
April-June 2027	First tranche of interviews with young people, victims, practitioners, and stakeholders	Coram
September-November 2027	Survey of referral and delivery staff	Coram

October 2027-January 2028	Second tranche of interviews with young people, victims, practitioners, and stakeholders	Coram
April-June 2028	Third tranche of interviews with young people, victims, practitioners, and stakeholders	Coram
April-June 2028	Cost data collection	Coram
July 2027-August 2028	Interview transcription (continuous)	Coram
October 2028	Self-report data cleaning	Coram
November-December 2028	Self-report and quantitative IPE data analysis	Coram
September-December 2028	Qualitative data analysis	Coram
December 2028 – March 2029	Draft and finalise interim report including analysis of IPE and self-report findings	Coram
March 2029	Request PNC data	Coram
June - July 2029	PNC data cleaning and analysis	Coram
July - August 2029	Triangulating findings	Coram
April - August 2029	Draft final report	Coram
September - December 2029	Report review (YEF, RJ4ALL, steering group, peer review)	Coram
January 2030	Finalisation of report	Coram
January – April 2030	Data archiving	Coram and YEF

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Appendix A – Rationale for expanding remit of trial to include indirect restorative justice activities

YEF initially proposed a pilot RCT of direct restorative justice, defined as a facilitated encounter involving dialogue between the harmed party and the child responsible for the harm. Direct restorative processes are a core component of the restorative justice ethos and are designed to facilitate accountability, victim voice, and relational repair. However, through the co-design phase, Coram and RJ4ALL identified a case for expanding the scope of the RCT to include indirect restorative justice, encompassing forms of mediated or facilitated communication that do not require direct contact between the two parties. This includes, but is not limited to, indirect dialogue and shuttle communication.

While direct restorative justice can offer significant benefits when it is safe and appropriate, limiting the intervention exclusively to direct encounters risks excluding a substantial proportion of cases in which direct contact is neither desired by the harmed party nor assessed as appropriate due to safeguarding concerns, power imbalances, ongoing trauma, or developmental considerations relating to the child. In such circumstances, an exclusive focus on direct encounters would restrict the availability of restorative responses rather than reflect informed choice, going against both victim-led and Child First frameworks. The preparatory and indirect work can still have the potential to deliver positive restorative outcomes, including reflection, emotional processing, and closure (Dignan, 2012). RJ4ALL argue that indirect activities can build confidence, trust, and emotional readiness, and in some cases may later lead to a voluntary decision to participate in direct restorative justice, therefore increasing the potential for meaningful direct engagement. Attempting to separate direct and indirect practices into distinct categories for evaluation would require a removal of parts of the process and provide an inaccurate reflection of how restorative justice functions in practice.

YJS teams consistently reported during co-design workshops that indirect restorative justice forms an essential and routine part of their practice. Practitioners emphasised that indirect approaches often represent the most feasible and ethical means of delivering restorative outcomes, arguing that meaningful dialogue can be effectively realised, enabling accountability, reflection, and reparation to occur even where direct engagement is not possible or desired. There is evidence in the literature to support this, where indirect approaches are associated with reduced recidivism risk (Bouffard et al., 2017). Excluding indirect restorative justice would risk disregarding these legitimate restorative activities and potential outcomes, achieved with the same theory but through a different method of communication.

The delivery partner RJ4ALL also emphasise that expanding the remit of the trial to include both direct and indirect restorative justice is reflective of the literature on the restorative justice ethos. Restorative justice is defined by its principles rather than by a single method of delivery (Braithwaite, 2002). Its core aim is to facilitate dialogue that promotes empathy, understanding, accountability, and repair, enabling those affected by harm (either as harming or harmed) to articulate their experiences and identify what they need in order to move forward. This can theoretically be achieved through a range of restorative approaches (Bouffard et al., 2017; Dignan, 2012). This position is supported by academic and practice-based debate regarding whether restorative justice should be understood primarily as a process or by its outcomes (Popa, 2012). The lack of a fixed definition is viewed not a weakness but a testament to how restorative justice can work, reflecting its inherent flexibility and commitment to prioritising the needs and wishes of those involved and affected by the harm, with certain aims of accountability, reconciliation and understanding (Braithwaite, 2002; Gavrielides, 2007; Menkel-Meadow, 2007). Limiting delivery to direct encounters alone risks undermining this foundational principle and not capturing restorative justice processes accurately, creating a barrier to delivery of the project.

Expanding the evaluation to include both direct and indirect restorative justice therefore reflects the realities of contemporary youth justice practice, as well as the foundational principles of restorative justice and child-first practice, which prioritise restorative principles, meaningful dialogue, safety, voluntariness, and responsiveness to individual circumstances over adherence to a single delivery model. This broader scope strengthens the relevance, inclusivity of the evaluation, while maintaining fidelity to restorative justice principles, representing an enhancement of the original brief, not a dilution of its restorative intent.

Appendix B – Mapping of research questions to methods

Number	Research question	Method	Sample	Analysis	Areas of focus
RQ1.1	To what extent is the restorative justice Shared Practice Model successfully implemented and what are the barriers and facilitators that influence this?	Observation	Restorative justice intervention delivered across four cases	Thematic analysis of structured observation notes	Extent to which intervention delivery reflects SPM, deviations from SPM, adaptations to meet individuals needs, suitability of intervention delivery, differences across direct/indirect delivery
		Fidelity monitoring	Case management data and fidelity questionnaire data across target of 113 RJ cases	Descriptive analysis of quantitative data and synthesis of qualitative supporting information	Intervention delivery including dates and attendance of key activities, delivery of direct/indirect activities, fidelity to SPM checklist, and variation by case type
		Survey of professionals	40 referral and delivery staff	Descriptive analysis of quantitative answers and thematic analysis of open text responses	Experience of training, understanding of SPM, implementation of SPM

		Interviews with professionals	10 referral and delivery staff	Thematic analysis	including barriers and facilitators, reasons for deviations from SPM, variations by case type
		Interviews with RJ4ALL staff	2 RJ4ALL staff		Experience of delivering training and supporting implementation of SPM including barriers and facilitators, observed deviations from SPM
RQ1.2	How do structural factors ¹⁷ affect children who have caused harm and those who have been harmed from different groups (particularly those from Black Asian and	Interviews with children who have harmed	10 children who have harmed and who are allocated to the intervention group and take part in restorative justice activities	Thematic analysis	Experiences of being informed about RJ, consenting to, and preparing for the encounter, responsiveness to lived experience throughout,

¹⁷ For example, institutional racism, lack of diversity in the workforce, failures to acknowledge different experiences and treating CYP as a homogenous group, mistrust of support services or 'system', referral biases, and the lack of coordination between services and agencies.

ethnic minority backgrounds, girls, and children with SEND, or children in care/or who are care experienced) in accessing and receiving the programme?					perceived power imbalances, support received before, during, and after RJ
	Interviews with individuals who have been harmed who take part in RJ	6 individuals who have been harmed and who are allocated to the intervention group and take part in restorative justice activities			
	Interviews with children who have harmed and do not do RJ	5 children who have harmed and who are allocated to the intervention group and do not take part in restorative justice activities			Experiences of being informed about RJ, consenting to, and preparing for the encounter (if occurred), responsiveness to lived experience throughout, perceived power imbalances, decision not to take part
	Interviews with individuals who have been harmed	2 individuals who have been harmed and who are allocated to the intervention group and do not take			

		and do not do RJ	part in restorative justice activities		
RQ1.3	What is the cost of delivering the restorative justice Shared Practice Model?	Cost analysis	Cost data requested from 10 YJS teams	Cleaning and cost reporting	Costs across resource categories for pre-requisite, set-up, and recurring costs
RQ2.1	What is the difference in police-recorded offending rates of children in touch with Youth Justice Services at 12-month follow-up, between those in the restorative justice trial arm (receive restorative justice delivered according to the Shared Practice Model in addition to business-as-usual support) and those in the control arm (receive business-as-usual support)?	Police-recorded data	Target of police-recorded offending data available for 338 children who have harmed	Logistic regression model	Whether proven offending has occurred in 12-months following randomisation

RQ2.2	What is the difference in self-reported offending rates of children in touch with Youth Justice Services at 12-month follow-up, between those in the restorative justice trial arm (receive restorative justice delivered according to the Shared Practice Model in addition to business-as-usual support) and those in the control arm (receive business-as-usual support)?	Participant self-report	Self-report delinquency scores available for children who have harmed	ANCOVA model	Levels of self-reported offending behaviours
RQ2.3	What is the difference in self-reported emotional and behavioural problems and wellbeing of children and harmed parties in touch with Youth Justice Services at 12-month follow-up, between those in the restorative	Participant self-report	Self-report SDQ/WEMWBS scores available for children who have harmed and individuals who have been harmed	ANCOVA model	Levels of self-reported emotional and behavioural problems and wellbeing

	justice trial arm (receive restorative justice delivered according to the Shared Practice Model in addition to business-as-usual support) and those in the control arm (receive business-as-usual support)?				
RQ2.4	What is the difference in satisfaction with case handling of children and harmed parties in touch with Youth Justice Services at 6-month follow-up, between those in the restorative justice trial arm (receive restorative justice delivered according to the Shared Practice Model in addition to business-as-usual support) and those in the control arm	Participant self-report	Self-report case satisfaction scores available for children who have harmed and individuals who have been harmed	ANCOVA model	Levels of self-reported satisfaction with case handling

	(receive business-as-usual support)?				
RQ2.5	What are the experiences of restorative justice for different groups of children who have caused harm and those who have been harmed with the restorative justice process, including, but not limited to, those from racially and ethnically minoritised communities, girls, LGBTQ+ children, children with SEND, or children in care/or who are care experienced?	Interviews with children who have harmed	10 children who have harmed and who are allocated to the intervention group and take part in restorative justice activities	Thematic analysis	Experiences of preparing for the encounter and of the encounter itself, experiences of direct and indirect activities, responsiveness to lived experience throughout, perceived power imbalances, support received before, during, and after RJ
		Interviews with individuals who have been harmed	6 individuals who have been harmed and who are allocated to the intervention group and take part in restorative justice activities		
RQ2.6	What are the perceived outcomes and causal	Interviews with children	10 children who have harmed and who are allocated	Thematic analysis	Perceived outcomes (intended/unintended,

	mechanisms for any perceived change in these outcomes?	who have harmed	to the intervention group and take part in restorative justice activities	Triangulation with Theory of Change Thematic analysis	positive/negative/neutral), attribution of outcomes to restorative justice, how changes happened, differing perceptions between groups/cases types, contextual and structural factors, role of business-as-usual support
		Interviews with individuals who have been harmed	6 individuals who have been harmed and who are allocated to the intervention group and take part in restorative justice activities		
		Interview with professionals	10 referral and delivery staff		Staff perceptions of outcomes, role of RJ, and pathways to change, role of business-as-usual support
		Case management data	Case management data from each of the 10 YJS teams	Descriptive analysis	Offer and take-up of business-as-usual support, participation in RJ activities

		Observations	Restorative justice intervention delivered across four cases	Thematic analysis of structured observation notes	Perceived outcomes in context of delivery, mechanisms of change and causal pathways in action, triangulation with interview accounts
RQ3.1	Are the recruitment and retention procedures effective to support a fully powered trial? And are these procedures equitable for children who have caused harm and those who have been harmed from different groups (particularly those from Black Asian and ethnic minority backgrounds, girls, and children with SEND, or children in care/or who are care experienced)?	Interviews with children who have harmed and	10 children who have harmed and who are allocated to the intervention group and take part in restorative justice activities	Thematic analysis	Experience of recruitment processes and consent, barriers/facilitators of participation, experience of being in the study, perception of engagement strategies, differential experiences by identity and circumstance
		Interviews with individuals who have been harmed	6 individuals who have been harmed and who are allocated to the intervention group and take part in		

			restorative justice activities		
		Interview with professionals	10 referral and delivery staff		Understanding and application of eligibility criteria and recruitment support, referral pathways and processes, practical barriers/facilitators, adaptations/support needed for full-trial, role of power and structural factors
		Interviews with children who have harmed (control group)	5 children who have harmed and who are allocated to the control group		Experience of recruitment processes and consent, barriers/facilitators of participation, experience of being in the study and allocated to the control group, perception of engagement strategies, differential experiences by identity and circumstance
		Interviews with individuals	2 individuals who have been harmed and who are		

		who have been harmed (control group)	allocated to the control group		
		Interviews with children who have harmed and dropped out of intervention	5 children who have harmed and who are allocated to the intervention group and do not take part in restorative justice activities		Experience of recruitment processes and consent, barriers/facilitators of participation, experience of being in and dropping out/withdrawing from the study, decision to drop-out/withdraw, perception of engagement strategies, differential experiences by identity and circumstance
		Interviews with individuals who have been harmed and dropped out of the intervention	2 individuals who have been harmed and who are allocated to the intervention group and do not take part in restorative justice activities		

		Case management data	Case management data from each of the 10 YJS teams	Descriptive analysis	Numbers recruited and retained, recorded timings and reasons for withdrawal/drop-out, variation by characteristics/case type, predictions of sample size and power for a future study
		Survey of professionals	40 referral and delivery staff	Descriptive analysis of quantitative answers and thematic analysis of open text responses	Understanding and application of eligibility criteria and recruitment support, referral pathways and processes, practical barriers/facilitators, adaptations/support needed for full-trial, role of power and structural factors
RQ3.2	Is randomisation feasible and acceptable?	Case management data	Case management data from each of the 10 YJS teams	Descriptive analysis	Adherence to allocated trial arm, recorded reasons for trial arm contamination

		Interviews with children who have harmed	10 children who have harmed and who are allocated to the intervention group and take part in restorative justice activities	Thematic analysis	Understanding of randomisation, acceptability of randomisation procedures and trial arm allocation
		Interviews with individuals who have been harmed	6 individuals who have been harmed and who are allocated to the intervention group and take part in restorative justice activities		
		Interviews with children who have harmed (control group)	5 children who have harmed and who are allocated to the control group		

		Interviews with individuals who have been harmed (control group)	2 individuals who have been harmed and who are allocated to the control group		
		Interview with professionals	10 referral and delivery staff	Thematic analysis	Understanding of randomisation, application of randomisation procedures, acceptability of randomisation procedures and trial arm allocation
		Interviews with individuals who have been harmed and dropped	2 individuals who have been harmed and who are allocated to the intervention group and do not take	Thematic analysis Thematic analysis	Understanding of randomisation, acceptability of randomisation procedures and intervention trial arm allocation, contribution of

		out of intervention	part in restorative justice activities		RCT design to drop-out/withdrawal
		Interviews with children who have harmed and dropped out of intervention	5 children who have harmed and who are allocated to the intervention group and do not take part in restorative justice activities		
RQ3.3	Are the proposed outcome measures and data collection processes appropriate, acceptable, and equitable for children who have caused harm and those who have been harmed from different	Self-report data	Data for all 376 consenting cases (376 harming parties, 376 harmed parties)	Descriptive analysis	Response rates, rates of missing data within questionnaires, variation in response rates/missing data by case type/individual characteristics etc and trial arm

	groups (particularly those from Black Asian and ethnic minority backgrounds, girls, and children with SEND, or children in care/or who are care experienced)?	Police data	Target offending data for 338 harming parties	Descriptive analysis	Rates of data availability, assessment of data completeness and quality, variation by case type/individual characteristics etc and trial arm
		Interviews with children who have harmed	10 children who have harmed and who are allocated to the intervention group and take part in restorative justice activities	Thematic analysis Thematic analysis	Experience of completing outcome measures, acceptability of outcome measures and data collection processes, differential experiences by identity and circumstance
		Interviews with individuals who have been harmed	6 individuals who have been harmed and who are allocated to the intervention group and take part in		

			restorative justice activities		
		Interviews with children who have harmed (control group)	5 children who have harmed and who are allocated to the control group		
		Interviews with individuals who have been harmed (control group)	2 individuals who have been harmed and who are allocated to the control group		
		Interviews with children who have harmed and dropped out	5 children who have harmed and who are allocated to the intervention group and do not		Experience of completing outcome measures, acceptability of outcome measures and data collection processes, role of outcome

		of intervention	take part in restorative justice activities		measures/data collection processes in decision to drop-out/withdraw, differential experiences by identity and circumstance
		Interviews with individuals who have been harmed and dropped out of intervention	2 individuals who have been harmed and who are allocated to the intervention group and do not take part in restorative justice activities		
		Interview with professionals	10 referral and delivery staff		Experience of supporting outcome measure completion and facilitating data collection processes, professional perception of outcome measures and fit with organisational policies and practice

Appendix C – Draft case handling outcome measure

Restorative Justice Pilot RCT – satisfaction with case handling survey for harmers

This survey is for children who have caused harm. Section 1 is for all children. Section 2 onwards is for children who have participated in a restorative justice intervention.

Section 1: Overall case handling

1) How satisfied were you with how this case was handled?

[SELECT ONE]

1	2	3	4	5	6
a) Very satisfied	b) Somewhat satisfied	c) Neither satisfied or dissatisfied / Neutral	d) Somewhat dissatisfied	e) Very dissatisfied	f) I'm not sure

2) Based on how your case was handled, would you recommend youth justice services to others?

[SELECT ONE]

1	2	3
a) Yes	b) No	c) I'm not sure

3) To what extent do you agree with the following statements:

a	It was easy to access the support I needed through the youth justice service
b	I was given clear information about what was happening with my case
c	Staff at the youth justice service treated me with respect
d	I felt listened to and understood at the youth justice service
e	I was involved in decisions about my case
f	My views were taken seriously by the youth justice service
g	The youth justice service were respectful of my background, culture, and identity

[SELECT ONE]

1	2	3	4	5	6
d) Strongly agree	e) Somewhat agree	f) Neither agree nor disagree	g) Somewhat disagree	h) Strongly disagree	i) I'm not sure

Section 2: Early and preparatory interactions with RJ team

4) Who first explained restorative justice to you?

[SELECT ONE]

a	A police officer
b	Someone from a service that provides restorative justice
c	A social worker
d	A probation officer
e	A court judge told me in person or through a court order
f	A lawyer
g	Someone else [PLEASE WRITE IN]
h	I can't remember / I'm not sure
i	I don't want to say

5) How were you given information about restorative justice?

[SELECT ALL THAT APPLY]

a	Someone talked to me about it in person
b	Someone talked to me about it over the phone
c	I was sent a letter about it
d	I was given a leaflet about it
e	I was shown a video/sent a link to a video online about it
f	I was sent an email containing information about it
g	I was sent a link to a webpage/website online with information about it
h	Another way [PLEASE WRITE IN]
i	I can't remember / I'm not sure
j	I don't want to say

6) How did you feel about the amount of information you were told and/or given about restorative justice before you took part in any activities?

[SELECT ONE]

1	2	3	4	5	6
7) Very satisfied	8) Somewhat satisfied	9) Neither satisfied or dissatisfied / Neutral	10) Somewhat dissatisfied	11) Very dissatisfied	12) I'm not sure

7) What information, if any, were you not given that you wish you had been given?

[SELECT ONE]

a	[OPEN TEXT, ALLOW FOR UP TO 500 WORDS]
b	Nothing – I am completely happy with the information I was given
c	I can't remember / I'm not sure

8) Were you told that taking part in restorative justice was your choice?

[SELECT ONE]

a	Yes, I understood that it was voluntary
b	I did not know that at first but it was made clear to me at some point before I took part
c	No, I felt like I had to take part
d	I can't remember / I'm not sure
e	I don't want to say

9) [ONLY FOR THOSE WHO ANSWER 8a, 8b, 8d, or 8e] What were the reasons you chose to take part in restorative justice?

[SELECT ALL THAT APPLY]

a	To understand the impact my actions had on the person I harmed
b	To express my feelings to the person I harmed
c	To bring closure
d	To explain my actions
e	To apologise to the person I harmed
f	To answer any questions the person I harmed wanted to ask me
g	I felt I had a duty to take part
h	To help the person I harmed
i	To avoid going to court
j	For another reason [WRITE IN]
k	I can't remember / I'm not sure
l	I don't want to say

10) How did you feel about taking part in restorative justice?

[SELECT ALL THAT APPLY]

a	I was very nervous
b	I was a bit nervous
c	I was looking forward to it
d	I had mixed feelings about it
e	I was happy about it
f	I did not have any particular feelings about it
g	I can't remember / I'm not sure

Section 3: Intervention itself

11) Which restorative justice activities did you participate in?

[PLEASE SELECT ALL THAT APPLY]

a	A face-to-face conference
b	A shuttle conference
c	Letter writing/reading a letter from the other participant/s
d	An activity in the community, such as litter-picking
e	An educational course, such as managing anger or difficult emotions
f	Other [PLEASE WRITE IN]
g	I can't remember / I'm not sure

12) Which of these activities did you find the most helpful?

[SELECT ONE]

a	[PIPE IN CODES SELECTED AT Q?11]
b	I found them all equally helpful
c	I did not find any of them very helpful
d	I can't remember / I'm not sure

13) [IF THEY PARTICIPATED IN A FACE-TO-FACE CONFERENCE (SELECTED 11a)]

Did you take someone, such as a family member, to the conference to support you?

a	Yes
b	No
c	I can't remember / I'm not sure
d	I don't want to say

14) [IF THEY PARTICIPATED IN A FACE-TO-FACE CONFERENCE (SELECTED 11a)]

Please can you tell us a bit about how you found this meeting.

[SELECT ONE]

a	[OPEN TEXT, ALLOW FOR UP TO 500 WORDS]
b	I can't remember / I'm not sure

15) Did you complete the restorative justice programme?

By "complete", we mean that you and the harmed person were both satisfied with the activities you had participated in and agreed to finish the restorative justice programme.

If you or the harmed person asked to end the restorative justice programme before this point, please choose "No".

[SELECT ONE]

a	Yes
b	No, I only participated in one or some restorative justice activities, but did not complete the whole programme
c	I'm not sure

16) How satisfied are you overall with the restorative justice activities you participated in?

[SELECT ONE]

1	2	3	4	5	6
a) Very satisfied	b) Somewhat satisfied	c) Neither satisfied or dissatisfied / Neutral	d) Somewhat dissatisfied	e) Very dissatisfied	f) I'm not sure

Section 4: Outcome

17) How comfortable were you with the activities the person you harmed or the restorative justice facilitator suggested you take part in?

[SELECT ONE]

1	2	3	4	5	6
a) Very comfortable	b) Somewhat comfortable	c) Neither comfortable nor uncomfortable / Neutral	d) Somewhat uncomfortable	e) Very uncomfortable	f) I'm not sure

18) How satisfied are you with the outcome of the restorative justice programme you participated in?

An "outcome" could include how the programme made you feel, how impacted your sentence, how it affected the person you harmed, or any other outcome you feel came from participating in restorative justice.

[SELECT ONE]

1	2	3	4	5	6
a) Very satisfied	b) Somewhat satisfied	c) Neither satisfied or dissatisfied / Neutral	d) Somewhat dissatisfied	e) Very dissatisfied	f) I'm not sure

19) How did taking part in restorative justice make you feel?

[SELECT ONE]

1	2	3	4	5	6
a) A lot better	b) Slightly better	c) No different	d) Slightly worse	e) A lot worse	f) I'm not sure

20) Please read the following statements about your experience with the restorative justice process and choose whether you agree or disagree.

[SELECT ONE ANSWER FOR EACH ROW]

		Agree	Disagree	I'm not sure
a	I had a chance to explain why I acted the way I did towards the person I harmed	1	2	3
b	I had the opportunity to say what I wanted to say	1	2	3
c	I understood the restorative justice process	1	2	3
d	I felt safe during the process	1	2	3
e	I was treated with respect	1	2	3
f	My worries were taken seriously	1	2	3
g	I had the opportunity to ask any questions I had about the process	1	2	3
h	I had a say in how the process went	1	2	3
i	I was scared to say what I felt to staff and/or the person I harmed	1	2	3
j	I felt supported during the process	1	2	3
k	I felt I could say if I wanted to stop taking part in restorative justice at any point	1	2	3

21) Please read the following statements about your experience with the person who managed and facilitated the restorative justice process and choose whether you agree or disagree.

[SELECT ONE ANSWER FOR EACH ROW]

		Agree	Disagree	I'm not sure
a	They explained the process to me clearly	1	2	3
b	They answered questions I had	1	2	3
c	They let me have my say	1	2	3
d	They guided the process well	1	2	3
e	They were fair to me	1	2	3
f	Overall, I was happy with how they managed the process	1	2	3

22) Did the restorative justice facilitator contact you after the activities you participated in?

[SELECT ONE]

a	Yes, they contacted me after <u>all</u> the activities I participated in
b	They contacted me after <u>some</u> of the activities I participated in
c	No
d	I can't remember / I'm not sure

23) How helpful did you find this follow up contact from the restorative justice facilitator?

[SELECT ONE]

1	2	3	4	5	6
g) Very helpful	h) Somewhat helpful	i) It didn't make much difference	j) Somewhat unhelpful	k) Very unhelpful	l) I'm not sure

24) How did participating in restorative justice make you feel about the criminal justice system as a whole?

[SELECT ONE]

1	2	3	4	5	6
a) A lot more positive	b) A little more positive	c) It didn't change my feelings about the criminal justice system	d) A little less positive	e) A lot less positive	f) Unsure

25) How likely are you to recommend participating in restorative justice to others?

[SELECT ONE]

1	2	3	4	5	6
g) Very likely	h) Somewhat likely	i) Neither likely nor unlikely / Neutral	j) Not likely	k) I definitely would not recommend it to others	l) Unsure

26) How satisfied are you with your experience of the restorative justice process overall?

[SELECT ONE]

1	2	3	4	5	6
a) Very satisfied	b) Somewhat satisfied	c) Neither satisfied or dissatisfied / Neutral	d) Somewhat dissatisfied	e) Very dissatisfied	f) Unsure

27) Is there anything you wish had been difference about your experience of the restorative justice process? If yes, please tell us what this is.

[SELECT ONE]

a	[OPEN TEXT, ALLOW FOR UP TO 500 WORDS]
b	No – I am happy with my experience of the process
c	I can't remember / I'm not sure

This is the end of the survey. Thank you for taking the time to fill it out.

Restorative Justice Pilot RCT – satisfaction with case handling survey for those harmed

This survey is for those who have experienced harm due to a child's offending behaviour. Section 1 is for all individuals. Section 2 onwards is for individuals who have participated in a restorative justice intervention.

Section 1: Overall case handling

1) How satisfied were you with how this case was handled?

[SELECT ONE]

1	2	3	4	5	6
g) Very satisfied	h) Somewhat satisfied	i) Neither satisfied or dissatisfied / Neutral	j) Somewhat dissatisfied	k) Very dissatisfied	l) I'm not sure

2) Based on how your case was handled, would you recommend youth justice services to others?

[SELECT ONE]

1	2	3
j) Yes	k) No	l) I'm not sure

3) To what extent do you agree with the following statements:

a	It was easy to access the support I needed through the youth justice service
b	I was given clear information about what was happening with my case
c	Staff at the youth justice service treated me with respect
d	I felt listened to and understood at the youth justice service
e	I was involved in decisions about my case
f	My views were taken seriously by the youth justice service
g	The youth justice service were respectful of my background, culture, and identity

[SELECT ONE]

1	2	3	4	5	6
m) Strongly agree	n) Somewhat agree	o) Neither agree nor disagree	p) Somewhat disagree	q) Strongly disagree	r) I'm not sure

Section 2: Early and preparatory interactions with RJ team

4) Who first explained restorative justice to you?

[SELECT ONE]

a	A police officer
b	Someone from a service that provides restorative justice
c	A court judge told me in person or through a court order
d	A lawyer
e	Someone else [PLEASE WRITE IN]
f	I can't remember / I'm not sure
g	I don't want to say

5) How were you given information about restorative justice?

[SELECT ALL THAT APPLY]

a	Someone talked to me about it in person
b	Someone talked to me about it over the phone
c	A victim advisor spoke to me
d	I was sent a letter about it
e	I was given a leaflet about it
f	I was shown a video/sent a link to a video online about it
g	I was sent an email containing information about it
h	I was sent a link to a webpage/website online with information about it
i	Another way [PLEASE WRITE IN]
j	I can't remember / I'm not sure
k	I don't want to say

6) How did you feel about the amount of information you were told and/or given about restorative justice before you took part in any activities?

[SELECT ONE]

1	2	3	4	5	6
m) Very satisfied	n) Somewhat satisfied	o) Neither satisfied or dissatisfied / Neutral	p) Somewhat dissatisfied	q) Very dissatisfied	r) I'm not sure

7) What information, if any, were you not given that you wish you had been given?

[SELECT ONE]

a	[OPEN TEXT, ALLOW FOR UP TO 500 WORDS]
b	Nothing – I am completely happy with the information I was given
c	I can't remember / I'm not sure

8) Were you told that taking part in restorative justice was your choice?

[SELECT ONE]

a	Yes, I understood that it was voluntary
b	I did not know that at first but it was made clear to me at some point before I took part
c	No, I felt like I had to take part
d	I can't remember / I'm not sure
e	I don't want to say

9) [ONLY FOR THOSE WHO ANSWER 8a, 8b, 8d, or 8e] What were the reasons you chose to take part in restorative justice?

[SELECT ALL THAT APPLY]

a	To tell the young person who caused me harm about the impact their behaviour had on me
b	To express my feelings to the person who caused me harm
c	To bring closure
d	To hear the person who caused me harm explain why they behaved the way they did
e	I wanted an apology from the young person who caused me harm
f	To ask the person who caused me harm questions I had
g	I felt I had a duty to take part
h	To help the person who caused me harm
i	To avoid going to court
j	For another reason [WRITE IN]
k	I can't remember / I'm not sure
l	I don't want to say

10) How did you feel about taking part in restorative justice?

[SELECT ALL THAT APPLY]

a	I was very nervous
b	I was a bit nervous
c	I was looking forward to it
d	I had mixed feelings about it
e	I was happy about it
f	I did not have any particular feelings about it

g	I can't remember / I'm not sure
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Section 3: Intervention itself

11) Which restorative justice activities did you or the person who caused you harm participate in?

[PLEASE SELECT ALL THAT APPLY]

a	A face-to-face conference
b	A shuttle conference
c	Letter writing/reading a letter from the other participant/s
d	An activity in the community, such as litter-picking
e	An educational course, such as managing anger or difficult emotions
f	Other [PLEASE WRITE IN]
g	I can't remember / I'm not sure

12) Which of these activities did you find the most helpful?

[SELECT ONE]

a	[PIPE IN CODES SELECTED AT Q11]
b	I found them all equally helpful
c	I did not find any of them very helpful
d	I can't remember / I'm not sure

13) [IF THEY PARTICIPATED IN A FACE-TO-FACE CONFERENCE (SELECTED 11a)]

Did you take someone, such as a family member, to the conference to support you?

a	Yes
b	No
c	I can't remember / I'm not sure
d	I don't want to say

14) [IF THEY PARTICIPATED IN A FACE-TO-FACE CONFERENCE (SELECTED 11a)]

Please can you tell us a bit about how you found this meeting.

[SELECT ONE]

a	[OPEN TEXT, ALLOW FOR UP TO 500 WORDS]
b	I can't remember / I'm not sure

15) Did you complete the restorative justice programme?

By “complete”, we mean that you and the young person who caused you harm were both satisfied with the activities you or they had participated in and agreed to finish the restorative justice programme.

If you or the young person who caused you harm asked to end the restorative justice programme before this point, please choose “No”.

[SELECT ONE]

a	Yes
b	No, I or the young person who caused me harm only participated in one or some restorative justice activities, but did not complete the whole programme
c	I’m not sure

16) How satisfied are you overall with the restorative justice activities you or the young person who caused you harm participated in?

[SELECT ONE]

1	2	3	4	5	6
g) Very satisfied	h) Somewhat satisfied	i) Neither satisfied or dissatisfied / Neutral	j) Somewhat dissatisfied	k) Very dissatisfied	l) I’m not sure

Section 4: Outcome

17) How comfortable were you with the activities the person who harmed you or the restorative justice facilitator suggested as part of the outcome?

[SELECT ONE]

1	2	3	4	5	6
g) Very comfortable	h) Somewhat comfortable	i) Neither comfortable nor uncomfortable / Neutral	j) Somewhat uncomfortable	k) Very uncomfortable	l) I’m not sure

18) How satisfied are you with the outcome of the restorative justice programme you participated in?

An “outcome” could include how the programme made you feel, how impacted the sentence of the young person who caused you harm, how it affected you or the young person who caused you harm, or any other outcome you feel came from participating.

[SELECT ONE]

1	2	3	4	5	6
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m) Very satisfied	n) Somewhat satisfied	o) Neither satisfied or dissatisfied / Neutral	p) Somewhat dissatisfied	q) Very dissatisfied	r) I'm not sure
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19) How did taking part in restorative justice make you feel?

[SELECT ONE]

1	2	3	4	5	6
g) A lot better	h) Slightly better	i) No different	j) Slightly worse	k) A lot worse	l) I'm not sure

20) Please read the following statements about your experience with the restorative justice process and choose whether you agree or disagree.

[SELECT ONE ANSWER FOR EACH ROW]

		Agree	Disagree	I'm not sure
a	I had a chance to understand why the young person who caused me harm acted the way they did	1	2	3
b	I had the opportunity to say what I wanted to say	1	2	3
c	I understood the restorative justice process	1	2	3
d	I felt safe during the process	1	2	3
e	I was treated with respect	1	2	3
f	My worries were taken seriously	1	2	3
g	I had the opportunity to ask any questions I had about the process	1	2	3
h	I had a say in how the process went	1	2	3
i	I was scared to say what I felt to staff and/or the young person who caused me harm	1	2	3
j	I felt supported during the process	1	2	3
k	I felt I could say if I wanted to stop taking part in restorative justice at any point	1	2	3

21) Please read the following statements about your experience with the person who managed and facilitated the restorative justice process and choose whether you agree or disagree.

[SELECT ONE ANSWER FOR EACH ROW]

		Agree	Disagree	I'm not sure
a	They explained the process to me clearly	1	2	3
b	They answered questions I had	1	2	3
c	They let me have my say	1	2	3
d	They guided the process well	1	2	3

e	They were fair to me	1	2	3
f	Overall, I was happy with how they managed the process	1	2	3

22) Did the restorative justice facilitator contact you after the activities you or the young person who caused you harm participated in?

[SELECT ONE]

a	Yes, they contacted me after <u>all</u> the activities I or the young person who caused me harm participated in
b	They contacted me after <u>some</u> of the activities I or the young person who caused me harm participated in
c	No
d	I can't remember / I'm not sure

23) How helpful did you find this follow up contact from the restorative justice facilitator?

[SELECT ONE]

1	2	3	4	5	6
s) Very helpful	t) Somewhat helpful	u) It didn't make much difference	v) Somewhat unhelpful	w) Very unhelpful	x) I'm not sure

24) How did participating in restorative justice make you feel about the criminal justice system as a whole?

[SELECT ONE]

1	2	3	4	5	6
m) A lot more positive	n) A little more positive	o) It didn't change my feelings about the criminal justice system	p) A little less positive	q) A lot less positive	r) Unsure

25) How likely are you to recommend participating in restorative justice to others?

[SELECT ONE]

1	2	3	4	5	6
s) Very likely	t) Somewhat likely	u) Neither likely nor unlikely / Neutral	v) Not likely	w) I definitely would not recommend it to others	x) Unsure

26) How satisfied are you with your experience of the restorative justice process overall?

[SELECT ONE]

1	2	3	4	5	6
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g) Very satisfied	h) Somewhat satisfied	i) Neither satisfied or dissatisfied / Neutral	j) Somewhat dissatisfied	k) Very dissatisfied	l) Unsure
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27) Is there anything you wish had been difference about your experience of the restorative justice process? If yes, please tell us what this is.

[SELECT ONE]

a	[OPEN TEXT, ALLOW FOR UP TO 500 WORDS]
b	No – I am happy with my experience of the process
c	I can't remember / I'm not sure

This is the end of the survey. Thank you for taking the time to fill it out.

Appendix D – Checklist provided to practitioners within the Shared Practice Model

This checklist table supports fidelity, coordination and clarity during the SPM pilot. This table explains *when* delivery and evaluation activity is happening alongside your practice. The table is intended to be used throughout the pilot lifecycle and alongside the full SPM of implementing either direct or indirect restorative justice practice.

Stage	Delivery	Evaluation	Checklist
Before practice begins	Ensure relevant members of staff participating in the pilot have access to the related Shared-Practice Model		
Delivery and Evaluation set-up	Practitioner and supporting manager have completed e-course and engaged with guidance material and training	Coram delivers evaluation induction to Youth Justice Service (YJS) teams, outlining key tasks and timelines, and training on eligibility screening and facilitating research tasks (e.g. supporting peer researchers in setting up baseline and follow-up meetings). Data sharing agreements are signed.	
Case-identification	Pilot case eligibility criteria confirmed - 10-17 years old - Consent to take part in pilot and evaluation - Accept responsibility (in accordance to child-first policy level in which a child can assume responsibility) - Identifiable victim or harmed-party including	Cases will be screened against trial eligibility criteria. Cases are eligible for the trial where: 1) A child has offended and is in touch with Youth Justice Service 2) The child is aged 10-17 years at point of first current contact with Youth Justice Service	

	secondary harmed parties / community or proxy representation - No limitations on type of offence as long as adequate support resources are available for complex cases. - Case registered with RJ4All - Case recorded for evaluation - Additional expenses for pilot covered	3) There is an identifiable and contactable harmed party (or representative for the harmed party). Cases will be ineligible for the trial where: 1) Practitioners view there to be an urgent and/or specific need (such as a safeguarding or wellbeing concern) that makes participation in the trial inappropriate 2) Practitioners judge that either party lacks the capacity to consent to the trial. 3) Practitioners assess that either party lacks in-principle willingness to explore restorative justice processes 4) Children do not accept participation or involvement in the offence.	
Consent stage	Pilot consent processes supported Right to withdraw reinforced	The peer researcher will seek consent from both parties (harming and harmed). After consent is received from both parties, the peer researcher at Coram will collect baseline outcome data (questionnaires) from both parties individually. The case will be randomised to either	

		the intervention trial arm (receive restorative justice) or the control arm (care as usual, without restorative justice) by a Coram researcher. The peer researcher will communicate the randomisation outcome to both parties and the YJS. The right to withdraw will be made clear (upholding the Victim's Code).	
Risk & safeguards (ongoing)	Safeguarding, risk assessment and RJ red lines guidance provided. Practice standards reinforced. Anti-bias and power guidance provided restorative justice practices must include: ✓ safe ✓ impartial ✓ confidential ✓ fair ✓ voluntary and ✓ high-quality.		

	restorative justice practices must be free from: ✓ domination ✓ discrimination ✓ bias and ✓ power abuse.		
Practice delivery (Steps 1–10)	Ongoing implementation support delivery of Steps 1 – 10 outlined below.	Coram will access case management data collated by YJS teams with support of RJ4ALL to understand restorative justice delivery.	
Step 1: Beyond Risk-Need-Responsivity ☐ Practice is not driven solely by risk management or deficit models ☐ Harm is framed as relational, not just legal or behavioural ☐ Harmed parties and young people are treated as equal parties ☐ Focus is on repair, accountability, and social connection			
Step 2: Understand and Manage Power ☐ Power dynamics between parties are actively considered ☐ Facilitator power, authority, and bias are reflected on ☐ Power imbalances are named and addressed where appropriate ☐ Practice promotes equitable participation and shared ownership			
Step 3: Child First: Do No [Further] Harm & the restorative justice red lines ☐ Young person is seen and treated first as a child ☐ Risks of secondary harm and re-traumatisation are considered ☐ Readiness and acceptance of causing harm are confirmed ☐ Red lines are identified and respected ☐ Safety is assured or the process is paused/stopped			

Step 4: The restorative justice offer/ referral and the right to be informed ☐ Harmed parties are informed of RJ at appropriate stages ☐ Referral follows a clear, lawful process ☐ Information is accurate, accessible, and ongoing ☐ Consent is voluntary, informed, and withdrawable ☐ Case allocation considers experience and conflicts of interest
Step 5: Preparatory stage ☐ Preparation is not rushed; time and trust are prioritised ☐ Personal contact is made with all participants ☐ Hidden needs (SEND, neurodiversity, communication) are identified ☐ Continuous risk assessment is in place ☐ Participants are fully briefed and supported to reflect ☐ Support needs are explored regardless of exchange proceeding
Step 6: Risk Assessment ☐ Written risk assessment completed and updated ☐ Risks assessed proportionately (probability, not possibility) ☐ Risks of inaction are considered ☐ Power, vulnerability, and equity are factored in ☐ Mitigation plans are tailored and recorded ☐ Risks to connected others (e.g. children) are considered
Step 7: The encounter (direct or indirect) ☐ Form of encounter is chosen by the parties ☐ Participation is voluntary and not imposed ☐ Logistics and environment promote safety and neutrality ☐ Dialogue focuses on harm, impact, needs, and repair ☐ Facilitator remains impartial and non-judgemental ☐ Consent, safety, and fairness are monitored throughout
Step 8: Reaching Restorative Justice Outcomes

☐ Outcomes (if any) are participant-led and needs-based ☐ No pressure is placed on apology or agreement ☐ Agreements are recorded and shared with participants ☐ Non-binding nature of outcomes is explained ☐ Verification and follow-up arrangements are clear			
Step 9: Monitoring Restorative Justice Outcomes			
☐ Outcomes are realistic and achievable ☐ Monitoring period is agreed ☐ Practitioner maintains proportionate contact ☐ Aftercare and follow-up support are provided ☐ Partner agencies are engaged where appropriate ☐ Supervision and debriefing are accessed			
Step 10: Follow-Up Holistic Support – the restorative justice ethos			
☐ RJ is not treated as a standalone intervention ☐ Holistic needs of all parties are considered ☐ Referrals to specialist services are made where needed ☐ Support continues beyond agreements ☐ Participant choice and agency are respected ☐ Restorative values guide ongoing engagement			
Supervision & Support	Reflective supervision available	Both parties receive 6-month check-in phone calls from a peer researcher, to check contact details and ongoing consent and complete the case handling satisfaction measure.	
Outcomes & Follow-up	Support monitoring and follow-up	Peer researchers at Coram meet with both parties to collect outcome data	

		(questionnaires) 12-months after randomisation.	
Alongside timeline of project	Support with follow-up and referrals	Voluntary interviews with a sample of harmed parties, harming parties, practitioners and other key stakeholders will occur throughout the project to help to understand the implementation of the SPM and experience of participants.	
	Provide cost data	At the start of the project, Coram researchers will work with YJS to develop an approach for them to document costs incurred in delivering restorative justice. We will request this cost data in October 2027 at the end of delivery.	



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