EVALUATION REPORT

New Chapters

Pilot trial report

Dr Charlotte Lennox, Lucy Smith, Rheanna Pereira, Dr Diana Peel, Selman Mirza, Dr Jo Deakin, Dr Claire Fox, Dr Kim Turner, Professor Prathiba Chitsabesan, Dr Lesley-Anne Carter

October 2026

MANCHESTER 1824
The University of Manchester

YOUTH ENDOWMENT FUND

About the Youth Endowment Fund

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

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

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

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

For more information about the YEF or this report, please contact:

Youth Endowment Fund
C/O Impetus
10 Queen Street Place
London
EC4R 1AG

www.youthendowmentfund.org.uk

hello@youthendowmentfund.org.uk

Registered Charity Number: 1185413

Contents

About the Youth Endowment Fund 2

About the evaluator 5

Acknowledgements 5

Glossary 6

Executive summary 8

Introduction 10

- Background 10
- Arts-based interventions within justice settings 10
- The Children and Young People's Secure Estate 11
- Education within the Children and Young People's Secure Estate 12
- Rationale for the trial 13

Intervention 14

- New Chapters 14
- How New Chapters is hypothesised to work 15

Research Questions 18

- Primary research question 18
- Secondary research questions 18
- Success criteria 18
- Ethical review 19
- Data protection 20
- Project team/stakeholders 20

Methods 22

- Trial design 22
- Participant selection 22
- Inclusion criteria 23
- Exclusion criteria 23

Rationale for inclusion/exclusion criteria 23
Trial data collection 24
Process evaluation data collection 27
Randomisation 29
Business as usual 30
Analysis 30
Timeline 31
Findings 32
Intervention delivery 34
Internal pilot decision 37
Implementation and process evaluation 38
Quantitative data – baseline 50
Quantitative data – follow-up 53
Evidence of promise 54
Readiness for trial 56
Conclusion 59
Interpretation, limitations and lessons learnt 60
Future research and publications 61
References 62

About the evaluator

This evaluation was conducted at the Health and Justice Research Network in the Division of Psychology and Mental Health and at the University of Manchester. The University of Manchester's Research Excellence Framework 2021 results highlight its position as a global research powerhouse. The university retained fifth place for research power and achieved a grade point average of 10th, an improvement from 19th in the previous year. It ranked in the top three nationally for nine subjects and is recognised for its research impact, which includes positive contributions to culture, creativity, economic development, health and wellbeing, innovation, commercialisation, and sustainability and climate change.

Our research within Health and Justice mainly involves the disciplines of psychiatry, nursing and forensic psychology, with a particular focus on applied multidisciplinary research using a combined (mixed) methods approach. As a research group, we have substantial expertise in intervention development and intervention evaluation, including pilot, feasibility and large-scale randomised controlled trials. We have expertise in both quantitative and qualitative methods.

For more information about this evaluation, please contact the chief investigator of this study:

Dr Charlotte Lennox
Senior Lecturer, Forensic Psychology and Mental Health
The University of Manchester
Jean McFarlane Building
Oxford Road
Manchester
M13 9PL

Charlotte.lennox@manchester.ac.uk

Acknowledgements

We would like to thank each individual young person who gave us their time to share their story with us. We'd also like to thank the sites and the staff working there for their support in setting up this evaluation.

Glossary

Term	Definition
BAU	Business as Usual
BES	Basic Empathy Scale
CASES	Creative Self-Efficacy Scale for Children and Adolescents
CRF	Case Record Form
CYPSE	Children and Young People Secure Estate
EHCP	Education, health and care plan
GDPR	General Data Protection Regulation
IPE	Implementation and process evaluation
NLT	National Literacy Trust
PIDS	Pro-Social IDentity Scale
RCT	Randomised controlled trial
SCH	Secure Children's Homes
SDQ	Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire
SEM-P	Self-Esteem Measures for Prisoners
SEND	Special education needs and disabilities
STC	Secure Training Centre
SWEMWBS	Short Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale

TIDieR	Template for intervention description and replication
YCAB	Youth Custody Assurance Board
YEF	Youth Endowment Fund
YOI	Young Offender Institutions

Executive summary

The project

New Chapters is a creative writing programme developed and delivered by the National Literacy Trust (NLT). The programme aims to enable participants to express themselves through different forms of creative writing, helping them to build their confidence and self-esteem, share their stories and feel that their voices are heard. For this trial, Youth Endowment Fund (YEF) funding enabled NLT to deliver the programme in 12 sessions for boys in custody aged 15–18. The programme was delivered face-to-face within the education department of each site, in groups of no more than six boys and with each session lasting between 60 and 90 minutes. Ten of these sessions were led by an NLT Project Manager and two by professional authors with personal stories of overcoming adversity. Boys explored poetry, spoken word, lyric writing and social and cultural issues through structured but flexible activities. At the start of the programme, each group developed a code of conduct and participants worked with the Project Manager to identify a personal goal for their writing. The programme concluded with a celebration event and a recording with National Prison Radio, although recordings were not broadcast due to the boys' ages.

YEF commissioned an efficacy study of New Chapters, beginning with an internal pilot to establish whether it was feasible to progress to an efficacy trial. The trial was intended to examine whether New Chapters reduced behavioural difficulties and incidents, and improved children's empathy, pro-social identity, self-esteem, mental wellbeing and creativity. The internal pilot assessed whether the criteria for progressing to the definitive trial were met, whether the programme was delivered with fidelity and whether there were any programme-related adverse incidents. Participants were randomised to receive either the programme and business as usual or business as usual only. Data was collected at baseline and follow-up through questionnaires and records of behavioural incidents. The pilot also included an Implementation and Process Evaluation, which used feedback forms, interviews with boys and NLT staff, and session observations.

The initial pilot aimed to recruit 150 children. However, only 39 children were recruited across five settings, of whom 38 completed baseline measures and were randomised. Only 11 boys completed follow-up measures. Fourteen interviews were conducted with boys and key stakeholders. Of the 38 boys who were randomised, 19 identified as White; seven as Black, Black British, Caribbean or African; seven as Mixed or multiple ethnic groups and five as Asian or Asian British. The internal pilot was due to run from November 2024 to January 2026; however, it terminated in November 2025 and did not meet the criteria to progress to the definitive efficacy trial.

A decision was made in October 2025 to terminate the trial because the sample size needed for an efficacy study would not have been feasible within the timeline:

- Recruitment was significantly below the target (only 39 boys were recruited compared to a target of 150).
- Recruitment was constrained by the small and changing population in the secure estate, which included approximately 450 boys at any one time. Of the 405 boys assessed, 318 did not meet the eligibility criteria for reasons including their age, having insufficient time remaining in custody, or being unable to mix safely in a group.
- Follow-up retention was also significantly below the target (only 28.9% compared to a target of 70%)

As part of the evaluation, baseline data was collected from 38 boys and follow-up data from 11 children by January 2026.

Lessons learnt

This report documents the activities carried out as part of the trial and incorporates any lessons learnt and recommendations for future research and/or evaluation.

- Boys were willing to participate in the research, and those recruited generally completed the baseline questionnaires. Interviews and observations provided some early indications of perceived confidence in writing and self-expression, although these were perceived changes rather than demonstrated impacts.
- Sessions with professional authors were particularly engaging. Boys valued hearing about the authors' experiences and saw them as positive role models. Celebration events were also valued as they gave boys an audience for their work. These components should be retained in any future delivery.
- The content was not always sufficiently tailored to boys' interests and needs. Any future delivery should ensure Project Managers adapt content to boys' interests.
- Secure-estate security arrangements meant that boys could only attend the group sessions with others in the small community group they were permitted to mix with. These restrictions made it difficult to form stable groups of boys.
- Operational pressures in the secure estate, such as limited staff availability and lack of suitable space, disrupted delivery. Eight groups were formed, but two did not start, and only four reached the end of the programme. These four groups received all the core components – creating a code of conduct, taking part in a professional author session and holding a celebration event.
- The programme tested in the trial differed considerably from the usual New Chapters model. It had previously been delivered in the adult secure estate more flexibly with sessions mostly led by professional authors. For the trial, it became a structured 12-session programme for stable groups of no more than six boys, with 10 sessions led by NLT staff and two by professional authors. Several features of this model had not been previously tested, such as the regularity of the sessions and the delivery by NLT staff. A separate feasibility study would have helped test the acceptability and practicality of this model before the internal pilot.
- The evaluation design was complex to deliver because the combination of small community groups, eligibility criteria and restrictions on mixing meant that relatively few boys within each community group were available to randomise. The trial depended on most or all boys in a community group being eligible. Individual randomisation then divided this small pool between New Chapters and business as usual, leaving intervention groups with only two or three boys in some cases. Retention was also substantially below target. Before undertaking a future trial, feasibility work should establish whether enough boys can be recruited and retained and whether the eligibility criteria, mixing arrangements and proposed randomisation approach can work together.

Introduction

Background

Arts-based interventions include dance, literature, libraries, museums, music, theatre, combined arts and the visual arts (Arts Council England, n.d.). There is rapidly gaining acceptance among researchers and health professionals that engaging with art can improve mental and physical health. A recent meta-analysis of 26 quantitative studies found evidence of a significantly positive, but modest, relationship between creativity and wellbeing (Acar et al., 2020). Several other recent publications have concluded that arts-based interventions improve health and wellbeing among individuals, including better mental health, a lower risk of physical illness and a significant impact on psychological health and wellbeing (Bone & Fancourt, 2022; Fancourt & Finn, 2019; Mastandrea et al., 2019). The World Health Organisation recommends that arts-based interventions are included in routine clinical practice (Fancourt & Finn, 2019). However, the health outcomes of arts-based interventions are often overstated in reviews and reports because the included studies are not critically evaluated (Kaasgaard et al., 2024). Therefore, arts-based interventions are not currently recommended by UK national bodies, e.g. the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence, due to the lack of evidence for their effectiveness.

Some arts-based interventions have their roots in more formalised psychological interventions and therapeutic models, such as play, music and art therapy. Understanding the mechanisms by which arts-based interventions might be effective is still developing, but there is increasing evidence to suggest arts-based interventions, and arts therapies in particular, can be effective for children exposed to trauma (Morison et al., 2021). For example, it is proposed that traumatic events may not be available in the form of explicit memory but are instead stored implicitly, making it difficult for children to verbally describe the traumatic event. Creative expression through art, music or play can allow these ideas to be conveyed without words. Creative arts–based interventions can also provide a way of working with socially and culturally diverse groups and those with different levels of verbal development, as they can transcend language barriers (Karkou, 2010; Malchiodi, 2015; van Westrhenen & Fritz, 2014).

Arts-based interventions within justice settings

Educational experiences during custody have been demonstrated to act as a turning point, associated with desistance and more pro-social outcomes upon release, as they reconnect young people with normative developmental contexts that divert them away from offending, and facilitate investment in further education and employment (e.g. see Blomberg et al., 2011; Cavendish, 2014; Hirschfield & Gasper, 2011). Within a custody setting, the mechanisms through which educational experiences lead to positive outcomes are through enabling a maturation process and subsequent internal transformation (e.g. see James et al., 2013; Todis et al., 2001). The reason creative arts-based interventions are particularly useful in a custody setting is that they encourage this internal self-transformation by fostering social development, self-esteem and autonomy (Clennon, 2013; McNeill et al., 2011; Tett et al., 2012). Research has demonstrated that changing offending behaviour is not successful if self-esteem is not addressed (e.g. see Smeijsters et al., 2011). Arts-based interventions may be a stepping stone to empowering and encouraging engagement with formal education, which, in turn, is associated with desistance (Blomberg et al., 2011; Cavendish, 2014).

Qualitative studies reviewed from a recent mixed-methods systematic review of young people at risk of offending suggested that arts-based interventions may lead to positive emotions, development of a sense of self, successful engagement in creative processes and practices, and the development of positive personal relationships (Mansfield et al., 2024). The qualitative studies reviewed mainly included music-based interventions, including song writing (Massó-Guijarro & Montes-Rodríguez, 2020), music composition (Baker & Homan, 2007) and learning to play a musical instrument (Tett et al., 2012; Thompson, 2022), while drama programmes (Bowey & Alex, 2006; Cesar & Decker, 2020), video game interventions (Ruggiero et al., 2013) and poetry (Lea et al., 2019) were also studied. However, the review found insufficient evidence from quantitative studies to support the effectiveness of arts-based interventions on behavioural, psychosocial, cognitive and offending outcomes.

Similarly, a recent rapid review of UK-based studies focussing specifically on programmes aimed at preventing, addressing or reducing crime among children and young people aged 10–21 in secure or community justice settings found that most studies focused on the evaluation of softer outcomes rather than reducing risk of offending, and that rigorous evidence is severely limited (Smith et al., 2025). Research in this area has been predominantly qualitative with only a small number of quasi-experimental studies demonstrating statistically significant positive outcomes based on quantitative data including: improvements in compliance Youth Justice Orders (Caulfield et al., 2019); self-reported improvements in attitudes towards offending, engagement with education, training and employment and wellbeing post-programme (Tarling & Adams, 2012; van Maanen, 2010); reduced self-reported likelihood of carrying a knife post-programme (Badger et al., 2023); and reduced Asset Score risk classification (Varley, 2019). Although studies report a range of mechanisms through which arts/culture programmes engage children and young people and consistently describe outcomes that are linked with the desistance process, the dearth of longer follow-up data assessing whether the changes reported, and the degree to which improvements were sustained, meant it was difficult to ascertain whether changes recurred as a result of the programmes (Smith et al., 2025).

The Children and Young People's Secure Estate

The Children and Young People's Secure Estate (CYPSE) consist of three accommodation types: young offender institutions (YOIs), secure training centres (STCs) and secure children's homes (SCHs). A new type of accommodation was introduced and opened in 2024 called a Secure School and is categorised as a SCH. All types of secure accommodation can hold young people who are serving custodial sentences. Those aged 15 to 18 tend to be held in YOIs, the largest setting type. In November 2024 (at the start of this study), there were approximately 520 young people aged 15 to 18 in custody in England and Wales (HM Prison and Probation Service & Youth Custody Service, 2024). However, the population in the CYPSE is never static, and by March 2025 (six months into the trial) the population was down to 420 (Youth Justice Board, 2026). Also, several policy initiatives during the trial changed the population in CYPSE. Operation Safeguard was implemented as a policy aimed at reducing overcrowding in the adult prison estate, which shifted the date at which a young person transitions from their 18th birthday to their 19th – the population within the CYPSE changed as a result, with an increase in those over the age of 18, approximately 22% of the youth custody population (Justice Select Committee, 2022). The policy has been suggested to have overloaded the capacity of the CYPSE and negatively impacted children and young people in custody (Alliance for Youth Justice,

2025). The policy has since been disbanded. Another policy initiative to reduce adult prison overcrowding was the implementation of the Early Release programme, with some young people being released after serving 40% of their sentence rather than 50% (HM Prison and Probation Service & Youth Custody Service, 2024; Ministry of Justice, 2024).

Within the CYPSE, there are high levels of violence and behavioural difficulties. From January to March 2025, the rate of assault incidents was 362.2 per 100 young people (Ministry of Justice, 2025). Alongside the violent incidents inside the secure estate, the rate of young people in custody due to committing a serious violent offence has almost doubled in recent years, from 33% in 2015–16 to 65% in 2022–23 (Youth Justice Board, 2023). In addition, the impact of COVID has led to operational challenges that have resulted in fewer opportunities for young people to mix in groups within the CYPSE (Lennox et al., 2024). A review of 26 inspection reports to understand the impact of COVID on the delivery of usual care found that COVID policies such as 'bubbles' appear to have created unintended consequences as sites have moved into recovery, leading to increased violence, stress and continued limits on mixing in larger groups.

Education within the Children and Young People's Secure Estate

Boys, specifically those from racially marginalised backgrounds and those with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) or other vulnerabilities, such as mental health difficulties, are all overrepresented within the CYPSE when compared to the general population (Crosweller et al., 2022; Youth Justice Board, 2024). While the overall number of young people in the CYPSE has been declining (HM Inspectorate of Prisons, 2023), the proportion of those from racially marginalised backgrounds and those with multiple and complex needs is increasing (Case & Browning, 2021).

Even before entering the CYPSE, boys, young people from racially marginalised backgrounds, and those with SEND – often with intersecting disadvantages – have poorer educational experiences and outcomes. The gender gap in education attainment is well documented, with girls outperforming boys at all stages (Bolton & Lewis, 2024). Schools can often foster gender-stereotypical attitudes that disadvantage male academic achievement (Downey & Vogt Yuan, 2005; Hartley & Sutton, 2013). Being macho is often equated with athletic ability, defiance of authority and a poor academic record, and masculinity is rarely connected to studying, excelling in school or getting good grades (Moreau & Brownhill, 2017). The normative feminisation of school culture – in part a result of the fact that the teacher workforce is predominantly female – is argued not to provide boys with positive examples of masculinity in a school setting (Moreau, 2014). Same-sex teaching role models are needed to promote a sense of a positive self-identity related to educational attainment (Francis et al., 2008).

There are also educational attainment gaps for the racially marginalised, but the picture is complex and heterogeneous. Gaps have widened for pupils from black backgrounds, and for pupils with English as an additional language who arrived late to the school system (Hutchinson et al., 2020). A similar argument to the gender gap has been made for recruiting more teachers from racially marginalised backgrounds to provide role models to address underachieving pupils. Children with SEND are often not identified until several years into their formal education. Research has shown that children from ethnic minority backgrounds are less likely to have SEND, but this may reflect structural inequalities in identification, access

to services and support within ethnic minority families (Emerson, 2012; Golson et al., 2021; Moody, 2016; Schmaus, 2021).

Problems at school and poor attendance are risk factors for criminality (Hirschfield & Gasper, 2011; Shepherd & Purcell, 2015), and there is substantial research showing that school exclusion is a risk factor for later criminal involvement (e.g. Arnez & Condry, 2021; Henry et al., 2012; Maynard et al., 2015). For example, the Edinburgh Study of Youth Transitions and Crime found that young people excluded from school at the age of 12 were subsequently four times more likely to be incarcerated (McAra & McVie, 2010). Little (2015) found that 90% of young people in contact with the justice system had dropped out of school prior to incarceration. While school exclusion does not cause criminal behaviour, it is a strong predictor of offending (Assink et al., 2015; Scott & Brown, 2018). Boys, specifically those from racially marginalised backgrounds and those with SEND, all have higher exclusion rates (Bolton & Lewis, 2024; Nasen, 2022; Timpson, 2019).

The interplay between gender, ethnicity and SEND is complex, and these young people are at risk of experiencing accumulated disadvantages. While in custody, young people are entitled to receive education. Currently, the CYPSE aims to provide 30 hours of education a week (Youth Justice Board, 2016); however, lower levels of educational attainment have been found in those who have received a custodial sentence (Ministry of Justice & Department for Education, 2016). Only 1% of young people sentenced to less than 12 months in custody achieved five or more GCSEs (or equivalents) graded A* to C (Ministry of Justice & Department for Education, 2016). Literacy levels of those sentenced were particularly low, with 56% of young people achieving the expected level in reading and only 28% in writing at Key Stage 2, compared with 87% and 68% of total pupils in the cohort respectively (Ministry of Justice & Department for Education, 2016). Additionally, education quality is poor and reported to be declining. Inspections of prisons judged that only 27% had educational programmes that were ‘good’ or ‘outstanding’ (Ofsted, 2025). Specifically, Ofsted and HM Inspectorate of Prisons (2022) deemed reading in prisons to be extremely poor, stating that reading ability was improving too slowly and interventions were needed to improve reading ability (Ofsted, 2024).

Rationale for the trial

Taken together, the preceding evidence highlights a clear contextual and methodological rationale for evaluating New Chapters within the CYPSE. Young people in custody experience multiple and intersecting disadvantages, including high levels of behavioural difficulties, disrupted education, poor literacy outcomes, SEND, mental health needs, and wider disparities linked to gender, ethnicity and exclusion from mainstream education. Arts-based and creative writing interventions may offer a promising way to engage young people who have often had negative experiences of formal education, by supporting self-expression, confidence, relationships and pro-social identity. However, while qualitative evidence suggests that arts-based interventions can be meaningful and acceptable in justice settings, there remains a lack of robust experimental evidence about whether such interventions can improve behavioural outcomes. This gap in the evidence and experience of the few robust evaluations that have taken place within the CYPSE led to the design of the current evaluation (Chitsabesan et al., 2022; Lennox et al., 2020; Mitchell et al., 2011).

Intervention

New Chapters

New Chapters is a creative writing programme delivered by the National Literacy Trust (NLT) to people in YOIs (aged 18–21), adult prisons, an STC and to under 18s in the community through youth justice teams. The programme began in 2018 and, as of 2022, was delivering sessions in nine YOIs/prisons across England. The programme aimed to enable individuals to express themselves through their own forms of creative writing, building self-esteem and supporting people to share their stories and feel their voice is heard. New Chapters, in its original form, which is still delivered in settings, involves one-off creative writing sessions which are open to all with no formal cap on numbers, although groups of no more than 12 are recommended. Delivery is typically a full day of activity approximately once per quarter, with sessions delivered by people with relatable lived experience or other inspiring writers. Participants take part in a range of creative writing activities, create their own pieces and share work at the end, with some sessions recorded by National Prison Radio. Participants are provided with copies of the visiting author's book, a New Chapters notebook and pen, and are invited to submit their work to the annual New Chapters anthology via submission sheet or freepost envelope. Each contributor is provided with two copies of the published anthology. Outcomes for the sessions are recorded via self-report surveys, including measuring confidence in expressing yourself in writing, desire to write more and self-confidence in general.

Preliminary evidence presented in the 2022 New Chapters impact report suggests the intervention has a positive effect. The report found that 85% of the sample of 178 young people (aged 15–21) engaging with the project reported that the sessions made them 'feel better in general'. Also, 82% said that the sessions 'inspired them to think about their futures more'. In terms of literacy outcomes, 80% of the sample said the sessions encouraged them to write more, followed by 71% who felt more encouraged to read. Additionally, almost three-quarters (73%) of the sample felt the sessions made them enjoy writing more and 82% felt more confident expressing themselves in writing. The quality of the intervention was also rated highly, with 93% rating the sessions as 'excellent' or 'good'. Furthermore, the report highlighted qualitative support for the positive impact of New Chapters, identifying three key impacts of the intervention: improving confidence with, and enjoyment of, writing; improving wellbeing and raising aspirations; and encouraging participants to tell their stories and feel their voice is being heard (National Literacy Trust, 2022).

New Chapters for the purpose of this trial was extended and intensified. This was due to the funding provided by the Youth Endowment Fund (YEF), which allowed more intense delivery and may allow for more measurable outcomes than when delivered as one-off sessions. For this trial, it took the form of a 12-session manualised creative writing intervention, delivered face-to-face within the education department at each site, in a group of no more than six. Each session lasted for 60 to 90 minutes. Ten sessions were delivered by a NLT Project Manager who developed sessions to be structured, yet innovative, flexible and creative. The Project Manager guided the young people through a variety of texts and writing exercises, including poetry, spoken word, lyric writing, and life writing. Professional authors delivered two sessions. All professional authors had inspiring stories of overcoming adversity, and some also had lived experience of the criminal justice system. The session format ran as follows:

- Session 1–3 – poetry, spoken word and lyric writing

- Session 4 featured a professional author
- Session 5–7 – writing about social and cultural issues
- Session 8 featured a professional author
- Session 9–11 – life writing
- Session 12 – the celebration event

In the first session, the Project Manager co-created a code of conduct with the young people so that everyone was clear on what the sessions were for and what spirit they were attending. The code would include things such as being respectful, encouraging each other and agreeing that whatever happens in the sessions is not to be shared outside of the group. If the sessions consistently took place in the same room, the code of conduct would be placed somewhere visible. A typical session featured an icebreaker, a warm-up writing exercise, writing exercises and discussion, and time for sharing at the end. On-unit one-to-one check-in sessions following the group session were planned to ensure that young people were encouraged and given feedback between sessions. These were also offered where young people missed a session so that they could catch up. The Project Managers worked with each young person to develop a clear, tailored goal to work towards and so that they had a clear purpose for writing. The end of each 12-session block culminated in a celebration event and a recording via National Prison Radio. There was an agreement between NLT and Youth Custody Service that none would be broadcast on the radio due to the ages of the participants, but this still ensured a similar experience of the celebration event.

New Chapters content was developed to be flexible, inclusive and responsive to the interests and needs of each group of young people. For example, materials/text were sourced from a wide range of writers, ensuring that global majority voices were present and visible, as well as ensuring inclusion of lived experience voices and sessions focusing on the Quran for young people who wanted to explore religion through the lens of creativity. This was achieved by NLT always seeking feedback from participants about their experiences of their projects and what they could do to improve them. NLT gathered feedback regularly following sessions and workshops and held focus groups on a regular basis to get insight from young people. Two groups of young people in one YOI gave their thoughts on New Chapters, and this was incorporated into the development of the sessions.

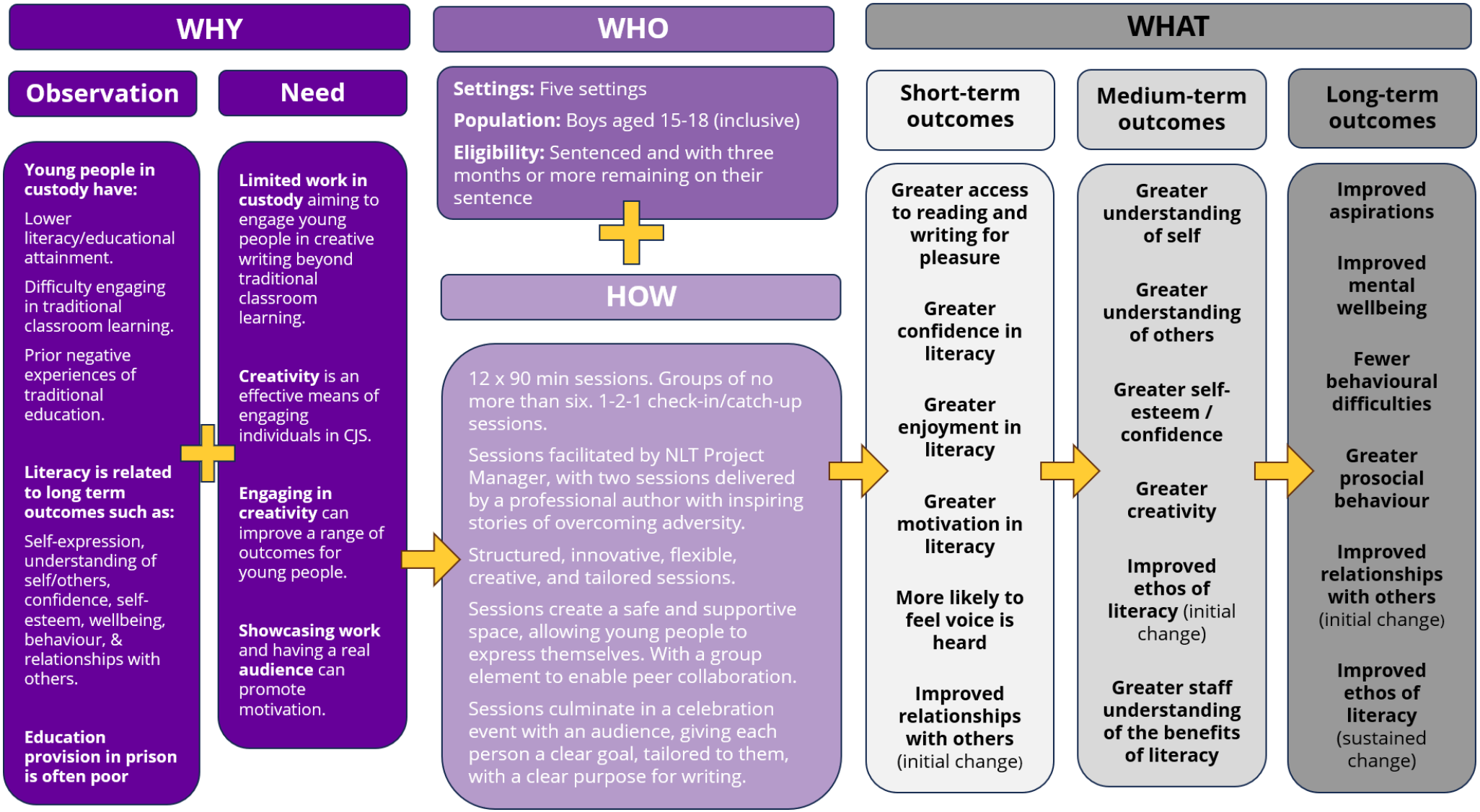
How New Chapters is hypothesised to work

During the co-design phase, before the start of the internal pilot NLT, the evaluation team worked collaboratively to develop a logic model (Figure 1) and a shared understanding of the Theory of Change for New Chapters. This involved a desk-based review of the literature related to New Chapters, broader arts-based interventions and desistance from antisocial and offending behaviour; workshops with NLT staff to understand the principles and development of New Chapters; and the co-creation of a template for intervention description and replication (TIDieR) checklist (Hoffmann et al., 2014). This created a narrative description of the core components of New Chapters, which was then mapped against the evaluation outcomes.

The core components of New Chapters were to **move beyond a model of traditional classroom learning**. Being guided through a **structured yet flexible programme and working towards key milestones** that young people might not have thought possible (i.e. finishing their own piece of creative writing or performing their

own poem) **encourages young people to think about their future** personal goals and improve aspirations. Creating a **code of conduct** in the first session creates a shared vision and clear expectations. Having sessions with authors who have the status of **professional authors and who have inspiring stories of overcoming adversity** (including lived experience of the criminal justice system) allows young people to see that positive change is possible. Furthermore, **celebration events provide recognition and validation of what they have achieved**, helping them to shift how they see themselves, partly through others recognising this change. By having the **opportunity to express themselves how they want to via their own forms of creative writing**, New Chapters aims to build self-esteem, confidence, and general wellbeing, enabling young people's voices to be heard. Being **exposed to different forms of writing, exploring relevant topics and encouraging reflection** can lead to improvements in young people's understanding of the self and others and is therefore critical to the intervention. The group element of the intervention enables **peer collaboration**, enabling the young people to share experiences and understand others' perspectives. **Seeing young people engage in creative writing in this way may encourage staff to challenge their own perceptions of the young people**. This also aims to lead to a change in the culture of reading for pleasure through greater staff understanding of the benefits. A key aim is to support the young people to build a more pro-social identity, displaying fewer behavioural difficulties with improved relationships in the long term, through these key elements, and via short- and medium-term outcomes.

Figure 1: Logic model for New Chapters



Research Questions

The original research questions set out in the trial protocol are listed below. However, this trial did not progress past the internal pilot, which limits this report's ability to answer all these research questions. The reason the trial did not progress was that the internal pilot did not meet all the criteria set for progression. The internal pilot only recruited 39 young people, whereas the target set was 150, and the internal pilot was only able to retain 28.9% of young people at follow-up, whereas the target was 70%.

Primary research question

Question 1: Does a group-based creative writing intervention (New Chapters) plus business as usual, compared with business as usual alone, reduce behavioural difficulties for boys aged 15–18 years old in a custodial setting?

Secondary research questions

Question 2: Does an internal pilot in the first 12 months demonstrate evidence to move to a definitive trial?
Question 3: Does a group-based creative writing intervention (New Chapters) plus business as usual, compared with business as usual alone, increase empathy, pro-social identity, self-esteem, mental wellbeing and creativity?
Question 4: Does a group-based creative writing intervention (New Chapters) plus business as usual, compared with business as usual alone, reduce behaviour incidents?
Question 5: Does the implementation and process evaluation (IPE) demonstrate fidelity and acceptability of New Chapters?
Question 6: Does the IPE demonstrate evidence to support the Theory of Change?
Question 7: Are there adverse events related to New Chapters?

The trial protocol is available on the YEF website at New-Chapters-Evaluation-Protocol-October-2024-1.pdf.

Success criteria

The design incorporated an internal pilot, initially for six months, but this was extended to 12 months (due to eligibility and recruitment challenges, discussed in detail later in this report), to examine whether moving on to complete a definitive trial was warranted. See Table 1 for the success criteria.

Table 1: Internal pilot criteria

Criteria	Target Set	RAG Rating
Recruitment	150 young people consented within the first 12 months of data collection, representing 40% of the overall recruitment target and the production of between three and four New Chapters groups at each site.	Green ≥ 80% Amber = 79% to 70% Red ≤ 69%
Randomisation	The percentage of young people randomised. Number randomised/Number consented.	Green ≥ 90% Amber = 89% to 70% Red ≤ 69%
Retention (i)	The percentage of young people not explicitly withdrawn. Number not explicitly withdrawn/Number randomised.	Green ≥ 80% Amber = 79% to 70% Red ≤ 69%
Retention (ii)	The percentage of young people not lost to follow-up. Number attended follow-up session/Number outside the end of the follow window.	Green ≥ 70% Amber = 69% to 60% Red ≤ 59%
Fidelity (i.e. extent to which the intervention is delivered as planned)	Using the fidelity checklist, the percentage of intervention groups assessed as meeting the criteria (see IPE for criteria). Number of groups meeting criteria/Number of groups completed.	Green ≥ 80% Amber = 79% to 50% Red ≤ 49%
Outcomes	The percentage of Case Record Forms (CRFs) rated as silver and above. Number of CRFs rated silver or gold/Number of CRFs completed.	Green ≥ 80% Amber = 79% to 70% Red ≤ 69%

Ethical review

The study received a favourable ethical opinion from the University of Manchester (2024-20067-34975) on 13th August 2024 and HM Prison & Probation Service (2024-1053) ethical approval on 15th August 2024. The

trial was registered at https://www.isrctn.com/ISRCTN34665642 [isrctn.com].

The NLT team applied to the Youth Custody Assurance Board (YCAB) to have New Chapters classed as an intervention. This would have allowed delivery to be prioritised in the same way education and offending behaviour interventions are. However, the application did not meet the threshold for an intervention. Further details of the reasons and implications of this are detailed in the findings section.

Data protection

As stated in the University of Manchester Charter, research outcomes are in the public interest. The University of Manchester followed the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR) and the UK Data Protection Act 2018. The University of Manchester was the data controller for this evaluation along with the NLT. UK GDPR requires being explicit about the legal basis upon which we rely to process information about research participants. For research, the legal reason is: 'Processing is necessary for the performance of a task carried out in the public interest or in the exercise of official authority vested in the controller' (Article 6 of the UK GDPR). For sensitive information, the legal reason is: 'The processing is necessary for archiving purposes in the public interest, scientific or historical research purposes or statistical purposes…which shall be proportionate to the aim pursued, respect the essence of the right to data protection and provide for suitable and specific measures to safeguard the fundamental rights and the interests of the data subject' (Article 9 of the UK GDPR). A copy of the privacy notice for the University of Manchester can be found here at Privacy notices | The University of Manchester.

All data was kept strictly confidential and held in accordance with the principles of the Data Protection Act. Any information about the participant obtained following their consent was recorded against a trial identification number (pseudonymised format). Data was recorded on paper Case Record Forms (CRFs). Interviews were recorded using an encrypted dictaphone.

Consent forms, CRFs and session logs were stored at each site until the research team could transport them directly to the University of Manchester. Audio recordings were stored securely (indexed by study number only) on an encrypted and password-protected University of Manchester computer. Only the research team has access to this data.

Paper copies of the relevant trial documentation will be stored at the University of Manchester for a minimum of 15–20 years after publication of the trial results. For audit purposes, electronic copies will be retained for five years. All trial data is held in pseudonymised format.

Project team/stakeholders

Evaluation Team

Dr Charlotte Lennox – Principal Investigator, University of Manchester
Dr Lesley-Anne Carter – Co-Investigator and Trial Statistician, University of Manchester
Dr Jo Deakin – Co-Investigator and IPE Lead, University of Manchester
Prof Claire Fox – Co-Investigator and IPE Lead, University of Bristol
Dr Kim Turner – Co-Investigator, Manchester Metropolitan University

Prof Prathiba Chitsabesan – Co-Investigator, Pennine Care NHS Foundation Trust
Dr Diana Peel – Research Associate, University of Manchester
Rheanna Pereira – Research Assistant, University of Manchester
Lucy Smith – Research Assistant, University of Manchester

Intervention Team

Rebecca Perry – Head of Criminal Justice and Adult Literacy, National Literacy Trust
Melisa Muhanguzi – Senior Project Manager, National Literacy Trust
Anne Teravainen-Goff – Senior Evaluation Manager, National Literacy Trust
Nicholas Millet – Programme Manager, National Literacy Trust
Russ Litten – Project Manager, National Literacy Trust
Rachel Faturoti – Project Manager, National Literacy Trust
Mary-Kate McGrath – Project Manager, National Literacy Trust
Jamie Thrasivoulou – Project Manager, National Literacy Trust

Trial Steering Committee

Prof Nathan Hughes – Adolescent Health and Justice, University of Sheffield
Simon Ruding – Theatre in Prisons
Dr Diahann Gallard – Educational Psychology and Prison Research, Liverpool John Moores University
Prof Stephen Bremner – Statistics & Epidemiology, King's College London
Shelley Kyle – Head of Education, Youth Custody Service
Kye Horne – Education Lead, Youth Custody Service

Methods

Trial design

Young people were individually randomised into one of two trial arms: a group for New Chapters (plus business as usual) or into the business-as-usual arm (no group). Randomisation used randomly permuted blocks, stratified by site and an allocation ratio of 1:1. Researchers collecting the outcome data were not blind to arm allocation. This was a decision made due to the previously reported challenges of blinding researchers in prison studies, where, due to the confined environment and all rooms having windows for safety, evaluation teams will nearly always see participants with intervention delivery staff, thus unblinding them (Lennox et al., 2018). Instead, as previously used in other research, a standardised script approach was used for the collection of the primary outcome measure to minimise bias (Byng et al., 2023).

Evaluation changes to trial design and intervention delivery

Due to challenges with eligibility, recruitment and engagement with the intervention, several changes were made to the trial design and intervention delivery during the internal pilot phase. These included the addition of a new recruitment site, expanding trial eligibility criteria, reducing intervention delivery time and reducing the length of follow-up. The study also extended its internal pilot from six months to 12 months to see the impact of these changes on trial recruitment and retention, before deciding to progress to a full efficacy trial. The rationale for these changes and the impact is discussed in detail in the next few sections.

Culturally responsive data collection

We employed culturally responsive data collection methods to capture a comprehensive understanding of the participants' experiences. Young people's data pertaining to their ethnicity was collected at baseline. The categories used reflect the 2021 Census of England and Wales. The overall categories were: Asian or Asian British ethnicity; Black, Caribbean or African ethnicity; Mixed or multiple ethnic groups; White; Other ethnic group. In addition to identifying ethnicity as set out in the census, participants were invited to self-identify within their own definitions of ethnicity and race. This captured wider definitions of identity incorporating race, ethnicity, religion and other cultural indicators. By considering these, we aimed to acknowledge and account for the cultural diversity and specificities of the young people involved. The evaluation team are experienced in culturally responsive data collection and approached the interviews with cultural sensitivity, adapting key features to accommodate diverse communication styles and cultural norms. The trial was not powered to undertake detailed subgroup analysis.

Participant selection

The aim of the internal pilot was to recruit up to 150 young people to be able to produce between three and four New Chapters groups at each site over 12 months. Recruitment initially opened in four settings within the CYPSE, but due to recruitment challenges, a fifth site was added during the internal pilot (the reasons for recruitment challenges are discussed later).

Initial identification of eligible young people was conducted by education staff at all sites against trial eligibility criteria (see below section on eligibility). There was site variation in how eligibility was assessed,

and this was due to the site's level of engagement with the project, the availability of staff with the capacity to deliver the intervention, and the level of security/regime issues within each site. At some sites, when a screen for eligibility took place, the sites reported eligibility for each young person, whereas in other sites, where there were more challenges with the number of young people who could mix with each other, trial eligibility was assessed only from units that had young people who could mix in a group. Both processes followed the exclusion criteria, but at sites where whole units were excluded, the evaluation team only knew the total number not eligible and not all the reasons why a young person was not eligible.

Following identification by education staff, eligible young people were approached in person by the research team, education team or the intervention team to give an overview of the trial and allow for any questions to be asked. Young people were provided with the Participant Information Sheet and given a minimum of 24 hours to consider involvement in the trial. Following the minimum 24-hour period, young people were approached for consent in a private, in-person meeting with the research team. If participants were aged 16 or above, they could provide written consent, but if under 16, parent/guardian consent was required, and the young person provided assent. All participants approached and recruited in this study were aged 16 or above, and therefore the process for parental consent for 15-year-olds was not required.

Participants were eligible for the trial if they met all the following inclusion criteria and none of the exclusion criteria applied.

Inclusion criteria

- Aged 15–18 years old;
- Serving a custodial sentence (original eligibility); serving a custodial sentence or on remand (amended eligibility)
- Having at least three months remaining on sentence (original eligibility); having eight weeks or more until release or eight weeks or more until the next scheduled court date for those on remand (amended eligibility).

Exclusion criteria

- Not able to provide informed consent
- Parental consent not provided for those aged under 16
- Requires an interpreter
- Those presenting a risk to the research or intervention team
- Those identified by the site as being unable to mix with others in a group setting or are in a small community group (fewer than four young people who can mix).

Rationale for inclusion/exclusion criteria

Sentenced/remand – For prison trials to maintain high attrition rates, an important consideration is whether to include people on remand. People on remand can leave very unexpectedly, which can have an impact on the delivery of an intervention but can also make conducting follow-ups in the community more challenging. It is widely accepted that in prison and offending population trials, attrition rates are approximately 50% (Butler et al., 2021; Byng et al., 2023; Kraanen et al., 2013). Byng et al. (2023) achieved one of the lowest attrition rates of 44% at six months involving adult males (sentenced only) released from prison. In another

trial within a YOI, Chitsabesan et al. (2022) achieved an attrition rate of 22% at three-month follow-up, but most sentenced young people remained at the same site at follow-up and had not been released. One of the requirements (red lines) of YEF-funded trials is to keep attrition rates as low as possible. YEF's starting point for attrition is for it to be less than 10%. However, this is much lower than achieved in any other prison trial. During the setup of this project, we discussed with YEF the likely higher attrition rates, and we agreed to set attrition for this trial at 30%. To try and achieve that rate, we needed to create as stable a recruitment group as possible and, in the same way as other prison studies, decided to exclude young people on remand (Byng et al., 2023; Chitsabesan et al., 2022). However, we recognised that this would also limit the availability of eligible young people, as approximately 50% of the population in custody are on remand.

Having at least three months remaining on sentence (original eligibility); having eight weeks or more until release or eight weeks or more until the next scheduled court date for those on remand (amended eligibility) – Here we needed to balance having a large enough pool of eligible participants while minimising the risk of attrition. From previous prison studies, we knew that once people are released and in the community, completing successful follow-up data collection can be more difficult. The average length of stay for young people in the CYPSE was about three months (Beard, 2022). In addition, when the NLT was commissioned by YEF to deliver New Chapters, this was initially conceived as a 12-session, once-a-week delivery format (therefore fitting into three months). To maximise completion of the intervention and follow-up rates, a decision was made to only include young people with at least three months remaining on their sentence.

Those presenting a risk – As New Chapters is a group-based intervention, young people needed to be able to mix with others in a group setting. The study could not randomise young people to New Chapters groups who were unable to mix, as this could lead to serious security issues or harm to young people and staff.

Trial data collection

Table 2 sets out a summary of all the data collection methods, data sources and which research question they relate to.

Table 2: Methods overview

Data Collection Methods	Participants/Data Sources	Data Analysis Methods	Research Questions Addressed	Implementation/Logic Model Relevance
Case Record Forms (CRFs) (including demographics, all questionnaires and behavioural incident information)	CRFs collected all self-reported questionnaires from young people and file records at baseline and follow-up	Descriptive statistics	Question 1, 2, 3 & 4	Impact on outcomes
Intervention compliance checklists/session logs	Fidelity checklists/session logs completed by New Chapters Project Managers	Descriptive statistics	Question 2, 5 & 6	Adherence to the delivery model leads to better outcomes
National Literacy Trust feedback questionnaire	Feedback questionnaires completed by the young people after session 1 and the last session	Descriptive statistics	Question 5 & 6	Adherence to the delivery model leads to better outcomes Understanding acceptability
Semi-structured interviews	Interviews with young people, staff and intervention deliverers	Thematic analysis	Question 5 & 6	Understanding acceptability, unintended consequences, barriers and facilitators can identify modifications to be made
Observations	Observations of New Chapters sessions	Thematic analysis	Question 5 & 6	Adherence to the delivery model leads to better outcomes. Understanding barriers and facilitators can identify modifications to be made
Adverse event forms	Adverse event forms completed by evaluation and intervention team	Descriptive statistics	Question 7	Important to understand any unintended consequences of the research or intervention

The researchers delivered the data collection using a narrative conversational format. Demographics, all standardised questionnaires and other open-ended questions were incorporated into a specially constructed, flexible interview that avoided duplication to reduce disengagement and burden. Data was recorded in the CRF, using a paper document. The CRF was constructed to standardise (minimise bias) and prioritise (minimise attrition) the collection of the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ; primary outcome). The researchers recorded in the CRF completion quality (Gold = Full CRF completed, Silver = Young

person self-reported information completed but missing parts in other sections, Bronze = parts missing in young person and other sections; Not completed = whole CRF not completed). In addition to the baseline data collected directly from the young person, data was also collected from prison records, e.g. index-offence category and other business as usual data relating to the young person.

Follow-up data collection took place between 91 and 152 days (original eligibility) post-randomisation or between 57 and 113 days post-randomisation (after eligibility criteria were changed to shorten New Chapters' delivery to six weeks).

Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ; Goodman, 1997) – The SDQ is a measure of internalised and externalised behaviour difficulties. The 25 items are divided into five subscales (i.e. emotional problems, conduct problems, hyperactivity, peer problems and pro-social behaviour); each subscale has five items which are summed to give the subscale score. The SDQ total difficulties score is the sum of subscale scores but excludes the pro-social behaviour scale due to reverse scoring. Higher scores indicate greater behavioural problems. The total score was used as the primary outcome. The SDQ is a valid and reliable measure which is sensitive to change in short interventions, with studies across diverse populations finding internal consistency as measured by Cronbach's α above .70 (Ali & Singh, 2024; Giannakopoulos et al., 2013) and a recent systematic review finding test-retest reliability and temporal stability to be acceptable (r>.60) (Bergström & Baviskar, 2020).

Basic Empathy Scale (BES; Sánchez-Pérez et al., 2014) – The BES consists of 20 items, divided into two factors: cognitive empathy (nine items) and affective empathy (11 items). Each item has a 5-point scale, ranging from 1 (no agreement) to 5 (full agreement); the total score is calculated by summing responses to all items, where higher scores indicate greater empathy. A recent systematic review highlighted that the BES was one of only a few scales that had been validated with children and those in contact with justice systems (Euler et al., 2017; Nunes et al., 2018; Pechorro et al., 2017) and clinical samples (Cristofani et al., 2020; Gambin et al., 2016; Gambin & Sharp, 2018; McLaren et al., 2019).

Pro-Social IDentity Scale (PIDS; Hazel & Birkbeck, 2024) – PIDS is a seven-item validated instrument designed to measure 'pro-social identity', on an axis from pro-social to antisocial, with an additional (seventh) item to measure 'identity resilience'. Items are summed to give the total score. Higher scores indicate stronger identification with pro-social identity. The scale fills the need for quantitative assessment of a concept that qualitative research has found is critical to positive behavioural outcomes and desistance from offending. It has been developed to be suitable for research, evaluation and practitioner assessments of service users. All items are positive/pro-social, which limits potential stigmatising effects and makes them appropriate for young people.

Self-esteem measure for prisoners (SEM-P; Debowska et al., 2016) – The SEM-P is an eight-item self-report measure assessing self-esteem among incarcerated populations. The measure consists of two subscales: prison-specific self-esteem (four items), which assesses self-esteem in a specific context, and personal self-esteem (four items), which assess self-esteem without reference to a specific context. Responses are indexed on a 4-point Likert scale (1 = never, 4 = always). Items are summed to give the total score. Higher scores indicate greater levels of self-esteem. Debowska et al. (2017) demonstrate composite reliability >.70 for both personal self-esteem and prison self-esteem scales. People strive to attain a positive social identity

in order to protect their self-esteem. Seeing self-esteem as context-free is misguided, and it is strongly associated with an individual's social setting. Therefore, general context-free self-esteem questionnaires may not be appropriate for this study (Boduszek et al., 2012; 2013).

Short Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale (SWEMWBS; Vaingankar et al., 2017) – SWEMWBS is a seven-item scale about thoughts and feelings, which relate more to functioning than feelings and so offer a slightly different perspective on mental wellbeing. The seven statements are positively worded with five response categories from 'none of the time' to 'all of the time'. The seven items are summed to form the total raw score. Total raw scores are then transformed into metric scores using the SWEMWBS conversion table (Stewart-Brown et al., 2009). Higher scores indicate greater positive mental wellbeing. The SWEMWBS has been validated for populations of young people aged 15–21 (McKay & Andretta, 2017; Ringdal et al., 2017) and has shown high internal consistency (McKay & Andretta, 2017).

Creative Self-Efficacy Scale for Children and Adolescents (CASES; Valquaresma et al., 2022) – CASES is a nine-item scale about creativity. Items are scored on a 5-point scale from not confident to totally confident. Higher scores represent greater confidence. Composite reliability was judged to be good (CF >.80) and satisfactory convergent and factorial validity (Valquaresma et al., 2022). Creative self-efficacy can be defined as the belief one has in their ability to do something creative in a specific time and context. It is active during and after a person's engagement with a task. However, there are very few questionnaires to assess it in young people. The CASES is a very recently developed tool, with promising psychometrics (Valquaresma et al., 2022) and a small number of items.

Behavioural difficulties (incident data from site records)

Accessing young people's site records (with their consent), we collected the number of incidents young people had been involved with, including self-harm, assaults, fines and disorder. Data recorded includes information at incident and person level. In addition, we collected information regarding their offence, education details and business-as-usual timetable.

Process evaluation data collection

Intervention compliance logs

New Chapters attendance was recorded in compliance logs completed by New Chapters Project Managers and included the start date and end date of the intervention, number of sessions offered, number of sessions attended, number of sessions completed, which sessions were missed (if any), and, if missed, whether a 1-2-1 session took place to cover the work and the reason for the session not going ahead. The compliance logs also recorded fidelity, which was a log of the core components of the intervention as described in the logic model and Theory of Change. A young person was defined as completing where they had attended 50% or more of the session, had at least one author session, and had contributed in some way to the celebration event. This was agreed in the co-design phase as being sufficient content to ensure core components of New Chapters were delivered. Fidelity of each group was assessed as being met where a code of conduct had been created, at least one author session had been delivered, and the group ended with a celebration event. A total of 13 compliance logs were completed.

National Literacy Trust feedback questionnaire

We used an adapted version of the standard NLT feedback questionnaire used in all NLT-delivered work. This was given to the young people to complete at the end of their first and final sessions. Questions included: What did you think of the session you attended? How much do you enjoy writing? How confident are you in your writing skills? What did you think of the New Chapters programme? Have you done anything differently in terms of your writing since participating in the workshops? Fifteen feedback forms were received.

Semi-structured interviews

Individual semi-structured interviews were conducted with young people receiving New Chapters, the New Chapters Project Managers, those supervising the Project Managers, and the authors. We had planned to interview staff employed in key roles within each site, e.g. education staff and unit staff, but no interviews were conducted. This was due to either limited delivery of New Chapters taking place or staff being approached and not taking part in interviews.

Young people

For young people participants, across the five sites, we planned to recruit up to 40 young people across the whole trial who received New Chapters. Some young people were to be interviewed once (breadth) and some to be interviewed twice (depth). The rationale for this approach is discussed in the trial protocol New-Chapters-Evaluation-Protocol-October-2024-1.pdf. However, due to the trial not progressing beyond the internal pilot, it was not possible to interview young people twice, and fewer interviews were conducted. We had planned to purposively sample young people to obtain a subsample of participants and use a sampling framework to ensure that we captured a range of experiences. However, due to the small number of young people who received the intervention, we approached all young people who had received at least one session and who had provided consent to be approached for the IPE (n = 9). The topic guides were developed to understand participants' experiences and aimed to last approximately 30 minutes. The interviews took place in a private room within the site. Due to issues finding private rooms within sites for interviews to take place and some young people not wishing to take part in interviews (n = 2), a total of three interviews with young people took place. Other methods to conduct interviews, e.g. via phone or online, are not possible within the CYPSE due to security issues and limited technology availability onsite.

Staff

New Chapters Project Managers directly involved in delivering New Chapters (n = 4), the professional authors (n = 2) and NLT staff providing management and supervision to the New Chapters Project Managers (n = 2) were invited to take part in semi-structured interviews, and all agreed to do so. To capture early implementation challenges faced by the New Chapters Project Managers, as well as obtaining a good understanding of how such challenges are resolved or persist, we interviewed New Chapters Project Managers twice. The professional authors and NLT staff providing management and supervision to the New Chapters Project Managers were interviewed at one time point. They were approached by email by a member of the research team, inviting them to take part in the interview study. They were sent a copy of the relevant information sheet and invited to contact the researcher if they were interested in taking part.

Interviews took place in a suitable location that was convenient for the staff participants, via telephone or Microsoft Teams, and interviews lasted approximately 60 minutes. Seven interviews were conducted with the four NLT Project Managers: three were interviewed twice (before and after delivery commenced), and one was interviewed before. Two interviews were conducted with professional authors and two with the NLT senior team.

Staff participants were identified in sites as having key roles related to New Chapters delivery, e.g. education staff and unit staff. Individuals working in these roles in sites where New Chapters delivery had occurred were invited to take part; however, no staff took up the offer.

Observations

Across sites that delivered New Chapters sessions, we observed one session for each group. The researchers who completed the baseline assessments with the young people completed the observations so that the young people already knew the researcher. Staff and young people were informed of the purpose of the observation and what data would be collected and provided informed consent for the sessions to be observed. Six observation sessions took place.

The observations were focused on those sessions containing the core components of the intervention, such as the initial session, author session and the final session. Data was collected in the form of researcher field notes using a template. This had three columns: description of the core component, the researchers' observation of that component and then their reflection on the observation. For example, *is there a clear goal that the young people are working towards during the session? Are those goals tailored?.* These field notes were anonymous and contain no identifiable information.

Randomisation

The young people were randomised on a 1:1 basis using concealed random allocation conducted using an online pseudorandom list hosted by Sealedenvelope.com with random permuted blocks of 2 and 4. Randomisation was stratified by site. Randomisation minimises selection bias, and stratification addressed site-based differences such as demographics and different education providers. The evaluation team understood the issues around resentful demoralisation from those young people allocated to business as usual. Prior to randomisation and when allocation was communicated, this was conducted in a way that emphasised the importance of their involvement regardless of randomisation outcome, and that reassured young people that they were involved in something important and valuable, but that did not oversell the potential benefits of the project. The evaluation team had developed and refined this approach to communication in previous trials (Chitsabesan et al., 2022).

Post-randomisation, the researchers visited the young person to deliver an allocation letter. This informed the young person of whether they had been randomised to New Chapters or business as usual. The researchers went through the letter with the young person, ensuring that they understood which group they were in. Confirmation that randomisation had been performed was communicated via email in an unblinded fashion to the research team and the New Chapters Project Managers.

Business as usual

All young people in both trial arms received business as usual. There is currently no direct comparator to New Chapters offered in the CYPSE. Business as usual in this trial was the standard education offer (30 hours of education per week). Young people in both trial arms also continued to access all other services available (e.g. offending behaviour interventions), enrichment activities (e.g. sports) and other arts activities. Business as usual at each site and for each young person varied. For example, each site has a different education provider, and what enrichment activities are offered varies from each site. Randomisation stratified by site aimed to balance out any business-as-usual differences.

Analysis

Quantitative analysis

Statistical analysis for internal pilot outcomes was primarily descriptive. Outcomes are reported as frequencies and percentages, means, and standard deviations with associated 95% confidence intervals and Hedges' g effect sizes. Hedges' g effect sizes were derived by calculating the mean differences between groups and dividing these numbers by the sample size-weighted pooled standard deviation.

Feasibility outcomes were assessed against the prespecified progression criteria. The percentage of missing data is also reported descriptively. Missing data was not imputed, as there would not have been a meaningful difference in the findings, given the small sample sizes. Quantitative process evaluation data (e.g. recruitment, adherence, fidelity) was descriptively analysed.

Details of the planned statistical analysis for the efficacy trial can be found in the trial protocol New-Chapters-Evaluation-Protocol-October-2024-1.pdf. The full statistical analysis plan was not published as this was only required once a decision to progress to an efficacy trial had been made.

Qualitative analysis

We combined interview transcripts, field notes recorded from the observations and information on feedback questionnaires into NVivo. We inductively coded data and used thematic analysis to create higher-order themes which aimed to answer the specific IPE research questions.

A reflexive research process helped to position the researchers and participants within the research. The evaluation team supported researchers by running training sessions throughout the evaluation to engage in self-reflection, critically examining their own biases, assumptions, positions of privilege and sensitivity to the cultural contexts and power dynamics inherent in this evaluation. Regular mentoring and debriefs were in place to support the research team to engage sensitively with participants, foster a respectful and inclusive environment and navigate the potential cultural or social challenges that may arise during the evaluation process. This also helped the team to examine their own biases and backgrounds and ensure that they approach the study with an inclusive mindset. We worked in collaboration with the YEF Race Equality Consultant to reflect on terminology, biases and ethical issues.

Details of the full trial analysis for the IPE can be found in the trial protocol New-Chapters-Evaluation-Protocol-October-2024-1.pdf. Analysis as planned was not conducted due to the trial not progressing to an efficacy trial.

Timeline

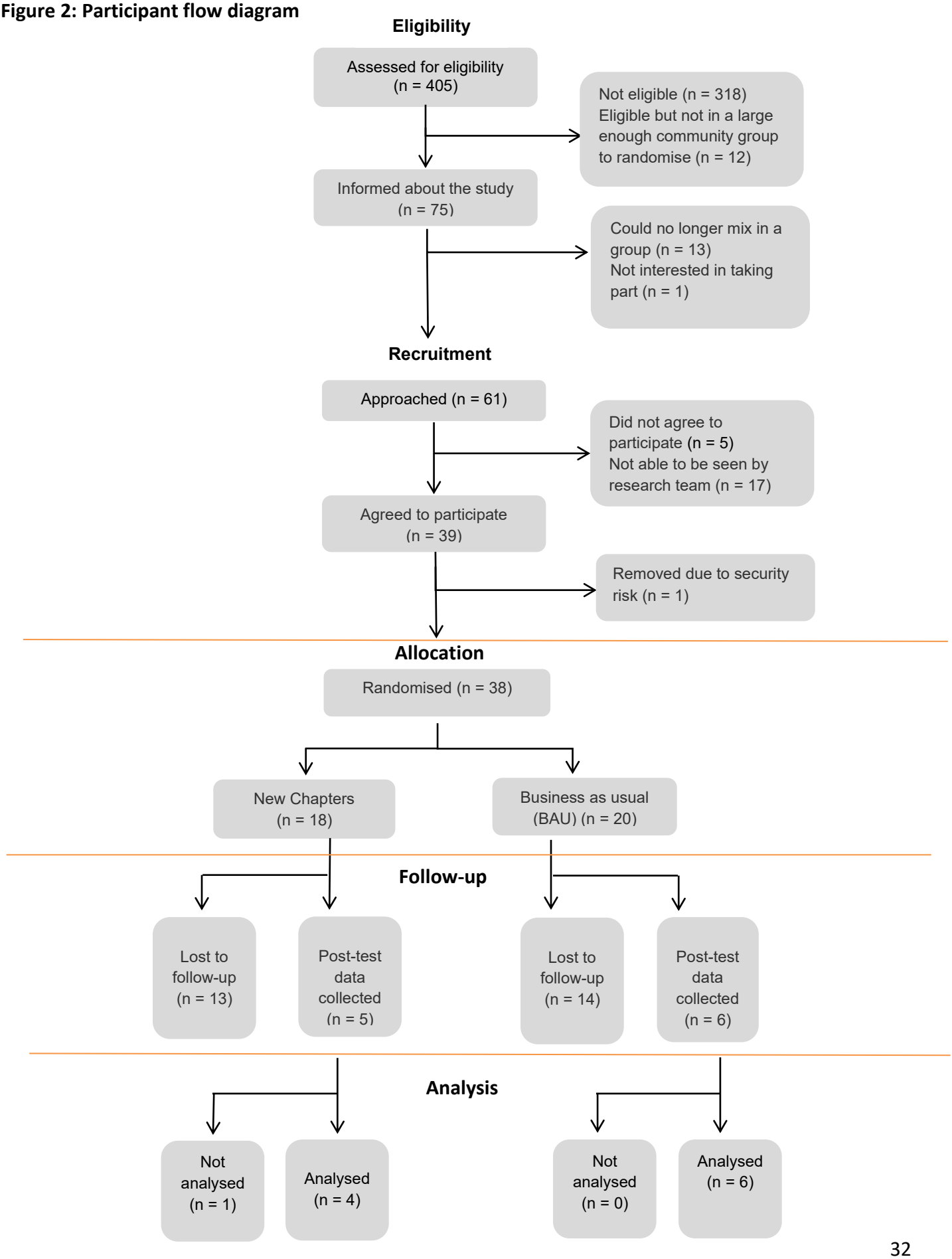
The study took place between November 2024 and November 2025. The trial ended at the internal pilot phase, as it was determined by the evaluator and YEF that it was not feasible to proceed to the full efficacy trial (see the evaluation feasibility section for a summary of the findings in relation to the success criteria). Table 3 provides the timeline of the study.

Table 3: Timeline

Date Start	Date End	Activity	Staff Responsible/Leading
		Project and evaluation set-up and mobilisation stage – internal pilot	
01/05/24	30/02/24	Recruitment of sites	Evaluator
01/05/24	30/06/24	Evaluator completes protocol	Evaluator
01/08/24	30/08/24	Youth Endowment Fund (YEF) reviews protocol; protocol sent for peer review.	YEF, Evaluator
01/09/24	10/10/24	Evaluator incorporates feedback and submits final protocol	Evaluator
15/05/24	15/05/24	Evaluator submits ethics application	Evaluator
15/05/24	30/08/24	Recruitment, vetting and Disclosure and Barring Service checks for research and intervention delivery team	Evaluator, Project Team
01/09/24	15/10/24	Research staff and intervention delivery staff training	Evaluator, Project Team
01/10/23	15/10/24	Building and testing database	Evaluator
		Project and evaluation delivery – internal pilot	
01/11/24	30/09/25	Assess for eligibility and commence recruitment	Evaluator
01/11/24	15/11/25	Deliver the intervention	Project Team
01/11/24	30/09/25	Baseline data collection	Evaluator
01/11/24	30/09/25	Randomisation	Evaluator
01/01/25	31/12/25	Follow-up data collection	Evaluator
01/11/24	31/12/25	Process evaluation interviews	Evaluator
01/11/24	31/12/25	Transcription	Evaluator
30/09/25	30/09/25	YEF makes a decision on whether to progress to an efficacy trial	YEF
30/11/25	31/12/25	Data entry and cleaning	Evaluator
30/11/25	31/03/26	Analysis	Evaluator
31/03/26	31/03/26	Submission of final report to YEF	Evaluator
01/04/26	30/09/26	Evaluator supports YEF publication process	Evaluator

Findings

Figure 2: Participant flow diagram



The study opened for recruitment in November 2024, and the first participant was randomised on 14th November 2024. Recruitment ended in September 2025, and the last participant was randomised on 16th September 2025. Figure 2 sets out the participant flow over the internal pilot.

Over the 11 months, a total of 405 young people were assessed for eligibility. Due to variations in how sites assessed eligibility, e.g. some screened all young people on site while others only screened units that they knew contained young people who could mix in groups larger than four (which was our minimum to be able to produce a group), we anticipated that the number actually needing to be screened would be higher.

A total of 318 young people were excluded for not meeting the eligibility criteria: 95 due to sentence length, 25 for being over the age of 18, three for being under the age of 15, 62 due to not being able to mix with other young people, 37 due to being on remand (original eligibility), one due to being female and 95 where sites did not provide a clear reason or provided multiple reasons. Twelve young people were assessed as being eligible but were not in a community group of other young people large enough for us to randomise a group. A further 14 were excluded between initial approach and being provided with the information sheet, mainly because their mixing ability had changed since the eligibility screen (which in most cases was just a matter of days).

A total of 61 were approached to take part by the research team; five did not agree to take part, and 17 were unable to be seen by the research team. In total, 39 young people consented to take part, and 38 were then randomised. One young person was excluded after consenting but before randomisation due to a security issue. Eighteen young people were randomised to receive New Chapters, and 20 were randomised to business as usual.

In total, we were able to successfully follow up 11 (28.9%) of the young people. The reasons for loss to follow-up include: young people being transferred to the adult prison estate and not being able to negotiate a legal visit to see them (n = 2), young people being released to the community and not being able to maintain contact using contact details provided (n = 18), young people unavailable due to an incident or timetable clashes (n = 5), and young people not wanting to complete follow-ups (n = 2).

One young person was excluded from the analysis for missing data within the primary outcome measure (SDQ).

Table 4 reports the baseline demographic characteristics of the sample overall and by group allocation.

Table 4: Demographic characteristics

		BAU (n = 20)	New Chapters (n = 18)	Overall (n = 38)
Age (years)	16	**4 (20.0%)**	**1 (5.6%)**	**5 (13.2%)**
	17	**15 (75.0%)**	**15 (83.3%)**	**30 (79.0%)**
	18	**1 (5.0%)**	**2 (11.1%)**	**3 (7.9%)**
Gender (self-described)	Male	**20 (100.0%)**	**18 (100.0%)**	**38 (100.0%)**
Ethnicity	Asian Bangladeshi	**0 (0.0%)**	**0 (0.0%)**	**0 (0.0%)**
(census categories)	Asian Chinese	**0 (0.0%)**	**0 (0.0%)**	**0 (0.0%)**
	Asian Indian	**0 (0.0%)**	**0 (0.0%)**	**0 (0.0%)**
	Asian Pakistani	**2 (10.0%)**	**3 (16.7%)**	**5 (13.2%)**
	Other Asian	**0 (0.0%)**	**0 (0.0%)**	**0 (0.0%)**
	Black African	**2 (10.0%)**	**1 (5.6%)**	**3 (7.9%)**
	Black Caribbean	**0 (0.0%)**	**2 (11.1%)**	**2 (5.3%)**
	Other Black	**0 (0.0%)**	**2 (11.1%)**	**2 (5.3%)**
	White and Asian	**1 (5.0%)**	**0 (0.0%)**	**1 (2.6%)**
	White and Black African	**0 (0.0%)**	**1 (5.6%)**	**1 (2.6%)**
	White and Black Caribbean	**2 (10.0%)**	**3 (16.7%)**	**5 (13.2%)**
	Other Mixed	**0 (0.0%)**	**0 (0.0%)**	**0 (0.0%)**
	White British	**8 (40.0%)**	**4 (22.2%)**	**12 (31.6%)**
	White Irish	**1 (5.0%)**	**0 (0.0%)**	**1 (2.6%)**
	Gypsy or Irish Traveller	**0 (0.0%)**	**0 (0.0%)**	**0 (0.0%)**
	White Roma	**1 (5.0%)**	**1 (5.6%)**	**2 (5.3%)**
	Other White	**3 (15.0%)**	**1 (5.6%)**	**4 (10.5%)**
	Arab	**0 (0.0%)**	**0 (0.0%)**	**0 (0.0%)**
	Other ethnic group	**0 (0.0%)**	**0 (0.0%)**	**0 (0.0%)**
Known to social care	No	**11 (55.0%)**	**13 (72.2%)**	**24 (63.2%)**
	Yes	**9 (45.0%)**	**5 (27.8%)**	**14 (36.8%)**
Refugee status	No	**20 (100.0%)**	**17 (94.4%)**	**37 (97.4%)**
	Yes	**0 (0.0%)**	**1 (5.6%)**	**1 (2.6%)**
English as first language	No	**3 (15.0%)**	**3 (16.7%)**	**6 (15.8%)**
	Yes	**17 (85.0%)**	**15 (83.3%)**	**32 (84.2%)**

Intervention delivery

NLT employed four Project Managers to deliver the intervention and one Senior Programme Manager to provide oversight and management. Two Project Managers worked or had previously worked for NLT; three of the four had experience delivering groups in prison settings, and all had writing experience. The initial

plan was for there to be one Project Manager allocated to each site, but this changed when a 5th site was added (due to the low recruitment rates). Therefore, the Project Manager allocated to site 4 that never opened to randomisation worked in partnership with another Project Manager in site 2, meaning that sessions in this site were facilitated by two Project Managers (not what was originally planned). One Project Manager covered site 1, and one Project Manager covered sites 3 & 5.

As highlighted previously, New Chapters did not meet the threshold to be defined as an intervention by YCAB. YCAB suggested that while they considered New Chapters to be a positive activity for children, they concluded that it did not meet the threshold for an intervention as defined in the Prison Service Order 4350 and the YCAB Terms of Reference. In particular, they raised several points:

- New Chapters would fit in well with the education pathway, but there was some concern around fitting the intended activity into the youth custodial regime. For example, New Chapters sessions would be delivered in 90-minute slots, but YCAB felt that this would not be feasible due to existing regime delivery. It was also suggested by NLT that a dedicated room would be used, but it was felt that this was unlikely to be facilitated by the sites. However, NLT did already have experience of delivering 90-minute (and sometimes longer) sessions during education hours, and sites providing dedicated rooms. Therefore, NLT felt that there appeared to be some inconsistency between the YCAB feedback and what they had already experienced happening in practice.
- There was useful information in the application about how New Chapters had worked in the adult estate, although it was felt that there was a lack of clarity about how this would work with children and how it would be tailored to their needs. YCAB were concerned about a specific lack of focus on children. New Chapters was initially designed for delivery in the youth estate (18–21-year-olds), not for the adult estate, and NLT did considerable consultation work and adaptation in response to feedback from young people over a number of years, including centring lived experience voices. NLT responded at the time to YCAB, as they felt they had misunderstood the background of the project as well as the experience of the delivery team.
- YCAB said that they were reassured that there would be appropriate clinical supervision, although there was concern around some individuals involved not being experienced in the Criminal Justice System. This would be particularly concerning if working with more complex children. NLT responded at the time to YCAB, highlighting the extensive training in the lead-up to the delivery, and noted that this requirement to have Criminal Justice System experience was not a requirement for education staff working in the CYPSE and therefore appeared inconsistent.
- Behaviour change was identified as an intended outcome in the application, although YCAB felt that there was a lack of clarity as to how this would be achieved, particularly in terms of how the short-term education outcomes will feed into the more long-term identity outcomes.

YCAB did endorse New Chapters as an enrichment activity. However, because New Chapters did not meet the criteria for a programme, it would not take priority over other activities delivered. A decision was made to progress with New Chapters as proposed rather than revise the proposal, as project timelines did not allow this.

National Literacy Trust training and supervision

All staff completed a National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children safeguarding of children and young people course and received in-person training on group facilitation techniques, with a specific focus on people in custody in mind, and a separate training focusing on inclusive delivery to neurodivergent participants. Project Managers also shadowed existing members of the Criminal Justice team at NLT, accompanying them on their prison visits and observing, participating in and leading workshops.

All Project Managers were line managed by the Programme Manager for the New Chapters project, with whom they had weekly individual one-to-ones as well as a weekly group meeting for the New Chapters team and a monthly meeting with the wider Criminal Justice team. The Programme Manager was supervised by the Head of Criminal Justice through multiple check-ins throughout the week. The entire Criminal Justice team also attended monthly clinical supervision sessions led by a psychotherapist with a specialism in work in custodial settings. All initial meetings with settings were attended by the Programme Manager and Head of Criminal Justice, in addition to the Project Manager allocated to that setting.

The 18 young people randomised to New Chapters formed eight different groups. Table 11 shows each group, from which site, how many participants the groups contained and how many sessions were delivered. No young people were randomised at site 4. Two groups did not start, one in site 2 and one in site 3, due to young people being released unexpectedly and to security risk issues. Therefore, the five young people in these groups did not receive the intervention at all.

Thirteen young people were in New Chapters groups where sessions did run, and of these, six were defined as completing (they attended 50% or more of the sessions, had at least one author session and contributed to the celebration event). One young person did not attend any sessions. Of those young people who did attend sessions (n = 12), the minimum attended was one, and the maximum was 11; the average number attended was five. Of the six groups where sessions ran, four groups had all the core components of the intervention delivered, i.e. a code of conduct had been created, an author session had been delivered and the group had ended with a celebration event. Table 5 also shows the number of sessions young people attended and did not attend and the reason for non-attendance, i.e. refused to attend (purple) or were unable to attend due to an issue at the site (red). Here, it can be seen that session delivery was impacted by prison issues.

Table 5: Session attendance

		Session Number and Attendance														
Group	ID	S1	S2	S3	S4	S5	S6	S7	S8	S9	S10	S11	S12	Total Sessions Attended	Young Person Completed	Core Components Delivered
Site 5 Group 1	50001	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	11	Yes	Yes
	50003	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		11	Yes	
Site 2 Group 2	20009		X		X		X			X				4	No	Yes
	20011		X		X	X				X	X		X	6	Yes	
Site 2 Group 3	20014	X	X	X	X		X		X				X	7	Yes	Yes
	20015	X	X	X	X		X		X		X		X	8	Yes	
Site 2 Group 4	20018				X		X	X		X	X			5	No	Yes
	20019	X												1	No	
	20020	X			X		X	X		X			X	6	Yes	
Site 2 Group 5	20023													0	No	No
	20026				X	X	X		X	X				5	No	
Site 1 Group 6	10003	X	X	X	X									4	No	No
	10001	X	X											2	No	

Code: Gold = author session; Green = celebration event; Red = prison issue young person did not attend; Purple = young person refused to attend

Internal pilot decision

Table 6 shows the criteria set for the internal pilot. As shown, recruitment and retention rates were well below target. These were the primary reasons a decision was made not to progress to an efficacy trial.

Table 6: Trial outcome against internal pilot trial criteria

Criteria	Target Set	Outcome	Status
Recruitment	150 young people Green ≥ 80%; Amber = 79% to 70%; Red ≤ 69%	A total of 39 (26%) young people were recruited during the internal pilot.	**Red**
Randomisation	Percent of young people randomised Number randomised/Number consented Green ≥ 90%; Amber = 89% to 70%; Red ≤ 69%	38 young people were randomised out of 39 who had consented (97.4%)	**Green**
Retention (i)	Percent of young people not explicitly withdrawn Number not explicitly withdrawn/Number randomised Green ≥ 80%; Amber = 79% to 70%; Red ≤ 69%	No young people randomised explicitly withdrew (100%)	**Green**
Retention (ii)	The percentage of young people not lost to follow-up Number attended follow-up session/Number outside the end of the follow-up window Green ≥ 70%; Amber = 69% to 60%; Red ≤ 59%	We followed up 11 young people. This gives a retention rate of 28.9%.	**Red**
Fidelity (i.e. extent to which the intervention is delivered as planned)	The percentage of intervention groups assessed as meeting the criteria Number of groups meeting criteria/Number of groups completed Green ≥ 80%; Amber = 79% to 50%; Red ≤ 49%	Eight New Chapters groups were formed. Only four groups were completed, and of these, all met the criteria.	**Green**
Outcomes	The percentage of Case Record Forms (CRFs) rated silver/gold Number of CRFs rated silver or gold/Number of CRFs completed Green ≥ 80%; Amber = 79% to 70%; Red ≤ 69%	A total of 49 CRFs (38 baseline and 11 follow-up) have been completed. Of these, 35 CRFs are rated silver or gold (71.43%). The Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire was fully completed in 46 of 49 CRFs.	**Amber**

Data was submitted to YEF in September 2025 against the internal pilot checklist, and a decision was made not to progress the project to efficacy.

Implementation and process evaluation

The following section presents the IPE findings by research question.

Question 1: What does business as usual look like?

Due to the issues highlighted above in relation to access to completion of the CRFs and accessing the file information for the young people, which was challenging at many sites, we could not reliably describe what business as usual looked like for each young person. A broad description was provided in the methods section.

Question 2: Are there any unintended consequences to delivering New Chapters?

During the internal pilot, we had one serious adverse event for a security concern which required reporting. This resulted in the participant being removed from the study (prior to randomisation).

During the trial, we had two protocol deviations. In both cases, young people randomised to business as usual were provided with New Chapters content by the Project Managers.

Question 3: To what degree are the core components of New Chapters as detailed in the Theory of Change and manual delivered?

<u>New Chapters as an alternative to traditional education</u>

NLT staff explained New Chapters as a literacy intervention that aims to move beyond traditional education. There were examples of this happening in practice. This was evident in the observations that took place, as well as in the interviews.

'So, I think that's probably [what] made them really want to be there because it's nothing like school, it's similar to it, but it's nothing like it, and they get the attention that they almost definitely did not get in school as well. It's[the] attention that they get; they get heard, they get attention, they get told that what they are doing is good; it's all good quality, not ethically or morally, although it probably feels that way' (Professional Author 2).

One of the young people explained that this is what had motivated them to take part*: 'It sounded like it might be something different to education and worth trying out'* (Young Person 3).

Another young person reflected on this, seeing it as both positive and negative, partly because it's something they are not used to: *'New Chapters is weird, it's a weird way of learning. I don't understand it. It's interesting but confusing'* (Young Person 1). Later they said: *'It's better than normal school*', and *'Very interesting, very different to what I am used to, school-wise'.* One of the Project Managers reflected that young people might need time to adjust to this new way of working.

<u>New Chapters is relatable</u>

The Project Managers and Professional Authors explained how they attempted to engage the young people through using different mediums and by making the content relatable to the young people's lives. This was particularly evident in the Professional Author interviews, who drew on their own lived experience:

'When I was their age, I had no one to even tell me there is a way that you can be heard without having to go out and be mad and do madness and respond in a physical way' (Professional Author 2).

The same Professional Author gave an example of how one of their poems resonated with the young people:

'So, for example, I've got a line in a poem of mine that talks about my mum's [redacted] at this time was so heavy, and one of the boys afterwards was like, man, I know that [thing] that you are talking about. He enacted the [gesture], and I was like, brother, how do you know my mum, that's insane' (Professional Author 2).

Tailoring and adaptability

The observations showed some variation, with some sessions clearly tailored to the young people's interests and others more generic and 'one-size-fits-all'. From the interviews, there was some evidence of adapting and tailoring to young people's strengths/weaknesses, wishes, interests, moods on the day, etc., to some extent. However, the interviews suggested that the Project Managers did not always discuss the young people's preferences and needs with them from the outset, at least not directly, to enable each session to be tailored.

One of the Project Managers did mention managing to talk to the young people ***before*** the first session:

'So, I'd gone in for maybe 15 minutes just to talk to the boys, just to find out about their interests, any hobbies like writing, if they liked it or not. So, I think that was the main preparation, just finding out more about them and how I could use that to inform the New Chapters programme', and, *'And just asking more questions about them and what they expect, like if they know about the programme, what they wanted to do. So, I used that to almost help me inform what I was going to do later*' (Project Manager 4).

The same Project Manager gave an example of how they needed to adapt the content:

'One of them had never finished a book before. He loved manga and comics, but he'd never finished a novel before. He said that he found it hard to concentrate, and he would stop halfway. So, I think things like that I had to rethink not only how I was going to enter different parts, like poetry, but if someone hasn't read a novel before, in terms of structuring stories, would they know how to do that? So yeah, I would say little details like that made me rethink how I was going to approach certain topics and parts in the curriculum' (Project Manager 4).

One of the young people explained that they ***did*** have an input*: 'It is [tailored], but to interest, not to ability. It teaches the same stuff, but if you can't do it, just leave it out. Push it aside'* (Young Person 1). Another young person, when asked if they had a say in what happened, said: *'Not really. It was really organised rather than us shouting what we wanted to do. We just turned up and sat down and talked about stuff'* (Young Person 3).

Young people did suggest that the Project Managers tailored the teaching to their individual ***learning*** needs: *'Education is just a lot of coursework. I'm doing level two business studies. Bashing out courses. It's like a second school. But school don't explain in detail, but [she] fully explains in depth. She helps me'* (Young Person 2).

Professional Author visits

Although some of the Professional Author visits were disrupted, these were viewed positively by the young people: *'He was amazing. He was telling us his background, the famous comics he's published'* (Young Person

2). One young person explained that they preferred the Professional Author sessions to the others: *'I enjoyed [his session] a lot more. My preference is the way he does stuff. The content was more engaging. He spoke about how he went about doing what he did and becoming big. He gave a lot of advice. Little things to achieve what we want to achieve'* (Young Person 1).

The Project Managers also spoke highly of the Professional Authors: *'You could see this confidence in the room, and they asked if he was going to come back and they really wanted to see him again, which was hugely connecting and special'* (Project Manager 1). This highlights the value in exposing young people to other positive role models in this setting.

The Professional Authors explained that their sessions went well:

'So, it was an amazing session for myself because I got to help two young people who I know felt that they hadn't been given enough chances', and '*However, going back to the two young men that were actually in this session, they were impeccable. They were amazing, and they were willing to give forth their ideas'* (Professional Author 1).

However, one of the Professional Authors said that their sessions needed to be more than a one-off:

'So, I think if I would have come back and did a follow-up session, I think that would have consolidated the information, but also it helps build a certain level of trust as well. Not just with me, but the fact that people can be consistent in their lives' (Professional Author 1).

<u>Celebration events</u>

The celebration events were seen as a core component by all key stakeholders. As noted in the Theory of Change, having an audience was seen as important to promote motivation. However, in practice, these events did not go as planned:

'So initially what it was supposed to be was that National Prison Radio was supposed to come in and do a podcasting session with the boys. They were scheduled to come, and then at the last minute [site] said that we couldn't bring any recording equipment in, which was a bit of a letdown because I'd been prepping them [young people] towards that, and that was the end goal: that these men would come in, record them, they would feel celebrated and then they would get a copy of that recording. But as soon as I knew that wasn't possible, we had to rethink how we could do a celebration event', and*, 'So I got some certificates made and laminated for them, and instead invited my colleague, [name], to do his own interview with them, and I transcribed that for the pamphlet. So that was the celebration event. I had biscuits for them, but by then the security rules had changed, and I couldn't bring them in either'* (Project Manager 4).

One of the young people, although sceptical at first about the value of the pamphlet, saw the value in keeping this after someone told them they had read it: *'The stuff we wrote got put into a book. I didn't know what it was when it was put under my door, so I actually put mine in the bin. But then someone else said to me they'd read it and saw my initials in it. So I asked for a new one and got a copy'* (Young Person 3).

For at least one of the groups, the young people did appear on National Prison Radio, which they saw as a very positive experience:

'Yeah, it was great actually. I think we got the first group for 45 minutes or something, so that session went [brilliantly]; it was really good. We had [name] from National Prison Radio; he came in and got the boys asking each other questions, interviewing each other, getting each other, sharing each other's work. Yeah, it was brilliant, man, brilliant. I heard some of it edited back, and it sounded great, the boys did so well', and, *'So yeah, they basically produced their own episode of National Prison Radio, which was cool, and they'll get to listen back to it. We're also curating an anthology of their work'* (Project Manager 2).

<u>One-to-ones</u>

Although the Theory of Change specifies the use of on-unit one-to-ones, especially for those who have missed a session, to catch up on activities, these did not typically occur, even when scheduled sessions did not take place: *'No. If we missed it, that was it. We just saw them again at the next one'.* (Young Person 3). If the one-to-ones did happen, it tended to simply be to find out why they hadn't come: *'No, our one-to-one sessions were catching up with the boys, finding out why they didn't come'* (Project Manager 2). Another Project Manager mentioned one-to-ones taking place early on to build rapport and how this was challenging:

'Only at the beginning when I was trying to build rapport and check in with them. So that would be telling them, I'll come and see you on wing. The difficulty of doing one-to-ones in [site] is that it all has to happen through their cell door, so they're very conscious of everyone around them. You're literally shouting through a door, so it's difficult, but yeah, that did happen' (Project Manager 1).

Question 4: To what degree are the key mechanisms of New Chapters as detailed in the Theory of Change activated?

<u>Engagement in sessions</u>

Engagement in sessions is positioned within the programme as a key gateway mechanism through which change is expected to occur. Without it, other mechanisms (e.g. relationship building) are less likely to be activated and intended outcomes may be harder to achieve. However, the level of young people's engagement in the sessions varied. Young people and staff both described engagement that developed gradually rather than being immediate. Some young people initially showed some reluctance about attending the programme and some early ambivalence about participating in sessions. One young person described his initial feelings about the programme: '*I wanted help with my English, but I didn't really want it (New Chapters), I'm not bothered, I'm just going along with it'* (Young Person 1).

Facilitators also described participants who seemed to be disengaged in some of the earlier sessions, as they appeared not to click with the idea of writing.

'It was a really good session, and I feel like for this particular participant, who didn't really seem to click that well with poetry, didn't click too well with lots of the more traditionally creative parts of writing, I feel like that was a session where he really got his teeth into it and spoke a lot. And I could feel he was a lot more confident in that session than he had been in the past' (Project Manager 1).

<u>Developing relationships</u>

It was evident that relationships were central to the running of the programme. This was highlighted throughout the interviews with young people and staff, with rapport, trust and mutual respect seen as central. Young people described staff as supportive, consistent and responsive, particularly when they felt unsure or faced specific challenges (from lacking confidence in writing to managing the session with a broken finger). The small group setting was mentioned by young people as something that enabled the relationship to develop as it allowed space for individual attention. Similarly, staff framed the relationships with young people as supportive, collaborative and respectful (rather than hierarchical). They avoided 'talking down' to young people in a way they may have previously experienced in education settings and positioned themselves as being 'in this together' with young people to achieve a shared goal: '*When I do a teaching session, I'm not talking down to you. What I'm doing is, I'm saying, look, we're in this together, I want to help you to do what you want to do, so let's do it*' (Professional Author 1).

Project Managers provided examples of the trust within their relationships with young people by describing the way young people shared their experiences, engaged with the topic and sometimes followed up with further reflections at a later session. This follow-up was seen as evidence that the young person had been influenced by the session, reflected on the content and then felt safe enough in their relationships with staff to continue the conversation.

The feedback provided by staff on young people's work was also seen as an important element of the relationship. One Project Manager described the significance of feedback, beyond simply critiquing work, in terms of providing recognition for the young person and strengthening their relationship:

'Even just telling them, oh yeah, that piece of writing's really great mate, the wordplay you've used there is fantastic. Just having that come from a man, and sometimes I could just see the look on their faces, do you know what I mean? I could read their body language, read their facial expressions, and just see, like, yeah, shit, that's not something that they're used to, do you know what I mean?' (Project Manager 2).

There was evidence of the young people themselves supporting each other too. For example:

'I [was] continuously struck by…how much in the sessions they held each other up', and, *'And for the other participant in that group, he was quite quiet at the start. They were still really active, and I think he didn't have a lot of confidence in his own ability, and by the end, very much with the help of the other participant who was holding him up massively and bigging him up every time he read aloud, I just had this sense that his confidence had really grown'* and*, 'They really respected each other, those two. And when the other one was absent, they spoke very fondly of each other. They weren't…as far as I can tell, they're not close friends, those two, but they were very respectful of each other'* (Project Manager 1).

<u>Seeing they matter – agency and influence</u>

Another key mechanism of change in New Chapters that was mentioned across the interviews is young people seeing they matter. One young person spoke about being listened to and having his ideas and concerns acknowledged: '*She cares about what we think about it*.' (Young Person 1). Others spoke about valuing the opportunity to write about themselves and share their own stories during the sessions. One young person reflected: *'I liked that I got to write about me and my experiences'* (Young Person 3), giving him a sense within the sessions that his voice mattered.

Project Managers and Professional Authors explained the importance of ensuring the young people feel recognised and affirmed. A Project Manager emphasised the importance of young people being heard.

'I think another thing that's really important for me from the New Chapters' side is giving young people a voice and a space where…existing in an environment in a prison or a YOI, all of your agency is removed. All of it is removed. And I think that New Chapters is one of those projects that allows people the space to reclaim a sense of agency and have their voice be heard' (Project Manager 1).

Hearing different perspectives

New Chapters intentionally exposes young people to varied perspectives, life paths and experiences that may be different from their own. This is intended to provide a mechanism that feeds into a greater understanding of self and others. Opportunities for hearing different perspectives are created by engaging with a variety of materials and sharing experiences between staff members and peers. Project Managers talked about how new perspectives allowed young people to empathise with others, using that to reflect more on their own experience and express their thoughts in writing:

'Introducing them to different schools of thought and different ideas, different things that they hadn't thought of before, I think was the main thing, having them almost empathise more about people's experiences, their experience, and write more about how they were thinking and feeling was really good, I think' (Project Manager 4).

Broadening perspectives also expanded beyond simply hearing other people's experiences to include introducing young people to diverse cultural experiences during the sessions, as one Project Manager explained:

'I do want to invest in them, like, culturally in terms of things they haven't done yet. Because I know some of the boys have short sentences, some of them have long sentences, so if they're not able to go to an exhibition, for example, read this or do this about how can I bring it to the room for them. I think that's a big thing, I would love to incorporate that, things they haven't experienced yet, how we can get that inside the classroom' (Project Manager 3).

Professional Authors were described as having a particularly important role in introducing new ideas about future pathways, alternative life perspectives and new ways of thinking about their own experiences. One NLT staff member explained:

'External authors are a really powerful way of inspiring young people through their own stories, through different mediums of expression. So they're going to be really important, I guess, in energising and keeping the young people engaged in the project, but also giving them alternative perspectives about life, and about how they can think about their story, and what they're living through' (NLT 2).

Young people's testimonies here are limited. Their descriptions of New Chapters influencing their thinking are less explicit than in staff accounts; however, there were some expressions of sharing or changing perspectives*: 'It gets at a lot of stuff I struggle with for years'* (Young Person 1), and '*We got to share stuff and bounce ideas'* (Young Person 3).

Sharing and expressing

A central assumption within New Chapters is that opportunities for young people to share their stories and open up about their feelings are intended to function as a key mechanism for change, where creative writing (especially autobiographical work) can provide a tool for this to happen. There was evidence from the interview data that this mechanism was activated, at least in some sessions, and that the creative tasks were reported to operate as intended, allowing young people to disclose personal and difficult experiences they may otherwise not have voiced.

One young person talked about exploring the personal circumstances that preceded his conviction*: 'I told you that story at the radio thing, that I wrote about not listening to my mum, and how I was groomed into bad stuff*' (Young Person 3).

A Project Manager discussed the range of things young people had opened up about:

'Yeah, I mean, you know, we had some really nice open conversations about many things, about family, about forgiveness, about regret, about dealing with life on life's terms as well, like how it's been, 'cause, you know, a lot of these boys, I don't think they really thought about what they were getting into…And just the vulnerability they allowed themselves, speaking about memories and family homes, and family members that have died, old holidays, all those kinds of things. It's very vulnerable stuff to talk about' (Project Manager 2).

Project Managers used creative activities, such as story-games, poetry and comics, as a way of providing less pressurised, indirect ways of exploring questions about the self, identity and experiences.

There was also some evidence to suggest that the peer connection that was developed in some of the sessions allowed young people to explore shared backgrounds. One young person said, *'We spoke about where we came from a bit. Me and [participant name] came from quite similar experiences. So, we got to talk about things that we both understood*' (Young Person 3).

Greater confidence in literacy ability

Developing young people's confidence in literacy is seen by NLT as a main short-term outcome and is listed as a short-term outcome in the Theory of Change. It is the area that was most talked about in the interviews. Across the interviews, confidence in literacy was discussed frequently. Young people expressed confidence that they attributed to the programme, in areas such as writing and vocabulary. For example, one young person described: *'It helps me be more confident, English-wise, and learn new words'* (Young Person 2).

Overwhelmingly, facilitators commented on the incremental strides young people had made in their literacy confidence as they progressed through the programme: *'They became more confident with sentence structure, punctuation, and narrative sequencing as sessions progressed'* (Project Manager 4).

Literacy engagement

In the interviews, there was also evidence of greater access to reading and writing for pleasure, greater enjoyment in literacy and greater motivation in literacy, as set out in the Theory of Change. Project Managers provided reflections on these improvements as observable developments rather than evidence of

measurable improvements. One young person said, *'I am reading more now. I'm getting there'* (Young Person 2). Another mentioned enjoying creating comics and feeling motivated to gain literacy skills.

Self-esteem/confidence and identity

There was some evidence across the interviews that young people's wider confidence, self-esteem and identity had shifted. This ties in with one of the medium-term outcomes listed in the Theory of Change 'Greater self-esteem/confidence'. As a medium-term outcome, it is not expected to be evidenced until after the programme has ended; however, the accounts of young people and staff suggest some early change.

One young person said he now saw himself as a more creative person: *'It's shown me I'm more creative than I thought'* (Young Person 3).

This was also reflected by the Project Managers:

'I think the impact's quite obvious, if you know the boys. You see how they were when they came in the room, and how they are now they're out of the room, they've definitely got more confident, and taking ownership of their stories, language, etc.' (Project Manager 2).

One Professional Author described how they felt the celebration events, in particular, had the potential to contribute to a young person's self-worth:

'It probably feels cathartic, and it feels like in these moments, I am a person that I didn't think I could be, that nobody told me I could be. I see value in myself, I see what I have to offer, I see that for myself, and then somebody comes in who does it professionally and tells me that and verifies that' (Professional Author 2).

Aspirations

There was some evidence that, at the time of the interviews, participation in New Chapters had contributed to aspirations and future-thinking. This was listed as one of the longer-term outcomes in the New Chapters Theory of Change that were not expected to be achieved until post-programme. Project Managers reported that through exposure to new experiences and positive feedback during the sessions, as well as seeing what they can produce and achieve, young people are encouraged to see possibilities for the future. Long-term hope and possibility were explicitly mentioned: '*I hope that at least one person who does it [New Chapters] goes right; I've seen a path that I can take that will help me. That's my hopes and dreams for New Chapters*' (Project Manager 5).

For young people, aspirations were practical, directly linked to qualifications (e.g. GCSE English, apprenticeship) and future careers (e.g. business) rather than abstract ambition or achievement. This was reflected in an interview with a young person, who stated how New Chapters had led him to feel more motivated to write:

'I felt better because I want to write more. Help me towards my level 2 English next week. Being in New Chapters will help me expand my vocabulary. Writing and speech is good. I always use the same words, but I want to be more, like, professional' (Young Person 2).

Question 5: How acceptable is New Chapters from the perspective of participants, staff and key stakeholders?

Sessions were disrupted

Despite support for New Chapters from Senior Management at the sites and careful planning and communication at the outset, many of the sessions did not take place as planned, with missed sessions and other sessions being cut short, mainly due to issues in getting the young people to the room where the session would take place, including when Professional Author visits were planned. This was more of a problem in site 2, where four groups did run. Ultimately, this led to frustration and undermined the aim for the young people to have a sustained intervention.

'*There wasn't a single session where we had 90 minutes for those boys',* and *'You're talking about some sessions; we were having 25 minutes; sometimes we'd see them for 15 minutes'* (Project Manager 1).

This was a combination of site and staffing issues, as described by this young person: *'The officers would come to get us, take us to the room that the session would be in. Sometimes they wouldn't, though, or sometimes we'd be late'* (Young Person 3), but it was also due to New Chapters not fitting into the timetabling regimes, as highlighted by YCAB.

This led to frustration on the part of the Project Managers because they thought that plans had been communicated and agreed, only to be left waiting for the young people to arrive and having to chase them down themselves:

'Yeah, it's really hard to be honest, we had to do so much chasing, you know, the boys not being brought to us when they should, guards just not making the movements that they were meant to make, even though it's in their notes, and they know they've got to bring them to us' (Project Manager 2).

While the above was a very common experience, there was also evidence of staff being supportive*: 'You've got certain guards that are good, and you can tell that, because they'll come and pick the boys up and be interested in what the boys are doing*' (Project Manager 2).

For some young people, there were scheduling conflicts, whereby another activity had been planned at the same time that they were more motivated to attend: *'He usually had cooking or…what was his other one? Cooking and I think his education gym session always seemed to clash'* (Project Manager 1). This also affected this young person's engagement: '*There was one of the participants I would have said, that wasn't as engaged as the others, but I do wonder how much of that was down to our classes [clashing] with his cooking class, that he really liked doing'* (Project Manager 2).

Disruption also impacted the ability to deliver some of the core components, especially the Professional Author visits, one of the Project Managers said:

'So I just think they're letting the kids down', and, *'Yeah, so I think in my opinion, the boys are being failed. We spoke quite a lot; the subject of rehabilitation came up quite a few times during the sessions, 'cause the boys are quite open in their conversations, and they're quite forthright in giving their opinions, which I really admired. And they were all of the opinion that being in there didn't rehabilitate them; it probably made them*

worse', and, *'And I think I just find it incredibly sad really, 'cause I know at least a couple of boys that potentially have long sentences, I know one of them definitely is, 'cause he mentioned it, and you just think, well, the least that they should be doing is getting their education right then, yeah?*' (Project Manager 2).

Another Project Manager, when reflecting on the sessions being disrupted and the impact on the young people, said:

'So yeah, I think they were [bothered], but they also commented that it was just the way things were in this place. I think they were used to being let down, which is a bit sad, especially because I promised. I hate promising and then not being able to fulfil that promise. So they were, but I think they were like, well, it is what it is. So not too disappointed, I would say' (Project Manager 4).

Communication with sites

Communication with the sites posed a prominent barrier to implementation, especially in terms of putting a group together. One Project Manager said:

'I think first was just the communication with [name] and the [site] itself. So getting the group started was hard because [name] was just so busy. So I think just the communication between us and the [site]' (Project Manager 4).

NLT staff also highlighted the lack of communication with the sites, acknowledging this was likely a symptom of greater regime issues:

'Getting responses from the YOIs. Again, it speaks to how busy they are, and how stretched they are, that even when we've got a group baselined, they're not necessarily responding to us when we want to start. And I think it's because they are overwhelmed, and their focal points change quite a lot as well, which means we can have one engaged staff who wants to support us, and then they disappear and then we need to find a new person' (NLT 2).

One of the Project Managers expressed frustration with the lines of communication:

'I think that's surprised a couple of people at NLT, do you know what I mean, that were not used to…because there are questions like, have you had an email back, no. But you emailed them yesterday, yes, but it's a prison; they might not email me back. They've got other concerns' (Project Manager 5).

Mixed engagement

Engagement with the sites was mixed. While NLT reported enthusiastic engagement when the sites were initially approached and had senior management buy-in, this did not translate into mobilisation support. One NLT staff member explained the challenge:

'So in our initial engagement, there's been a lot of appetite and support for the programme, in how we've described it and presented it. I think, what we've found as we've gone along is, when it comes to actually trying to pull it together, we're competing with different needs in the different institutions, and the demand on time can be quite difficult to navigate' (NLT 2).

However, a Project Manager suggested that the lack of engagement was a fundamental problem further down the prison hierarchy, where the people responsible for ensuring that the intervention took place were not engaged or supportive of New Chapters:

'Some guards care, some guards don't care, and that's all it comes down to in my opinion, 'cause you can speak to people higher up all you want, you can get things in place, but it still just keeps happening. So I think, ultimately, I think everybody in there is pretty good at playing dumb, if you know what I mean, 'cause it just makes life go easier' (Project Manager 2).

Mixing issues

The ability for young people to mix in a group was a significant barrier. One of the Project Managers talked about the impact of starting a group:

'I think the whole making sure all the boys can mix, that was the main challenge, because I would come in and [name] would say there are these great boys that want to be a part of it but they can't because they can't mix or there are just a group of boys that don't meet the criteria, they want to do it but they can't. I think that was the main challenge, knowing that there were just so many boys or people in [site] or in [site] that wanted to do the programme but they just weren't eligible' (Project Manager 4).

The mixing problems posed by putting together a group meant that boys who could mix one day couldn't always do so on the next, and this made recruitment very challenging. An NLT staff member pointed out the problem that the eligibility criteria posed not just to group formation, but also the additional burden it placed on the prison staff:

'If it was just New Chapters, and it didn't have eligibility criteria, I think it would have been much easier to roll out, but because of the eligibility criteria, and then, I guess, the volatile nature of these different institutions, it has meant that the demand on the educational staff has been much more than it typically would be, and that has been more difficult to navigate from our side' (NLT 2).

Trial equipoise

Some of the Project Managers found the concept of trial equipoise a barrier. This is the idea that there is genuine uncertainty of superiority between the intervention and business as usual. One Project Manager expressed:

'Yeah, and knowing that there were other boys who were keen and put into control groups I think was a real…Getting to meet one particular boy who was in the control group, he had such a flair for writing, and in a couple of weeks…I kept reflecting on how beneficial that programme would have been for him, and it's a real crying shame that he didn't get that resource' (Project Manager 1).

As already mentioned, there were two reported incidents of protocol deviations where boys in the business-as-usual arm received New Chapters materials from Project Managers.

Quantitative data – baseline

Table 7 shows the sites young people were recruited from, recruitment type and the completeness of the baseline CRFs.

Over 50% of the sample were recruited from site 2. There were no randomisations from site 4. At site 4, young people were approached during school holidays (a requirement of the site); however, no young people could then be seen by the research team. When the research team attempted to return to recruit again (this time in term time), the site had several security issues and subsequently closed on a temporary basis. This site never reopened during the project, and so no recruitment took place.

Half of the sample were recruited under the original eligibility criteria and half under the new criteria. In addition, most young people were sentenced rather than on remand (see Table 7). This suggests that changes to the eligibility to add young people on remand did not result in any uplift in eligible young people over the course of the internal pilot. While we do not have the data on this, feedback from the sites suggested that many on remand also have limited opportunities to mix with other young people.

The CRFs were rated under three categories of completeness. A total of 29 (76.3%) of baseline CRFs had all young person self-report sections completed, and in 94.7% (36 out of 38) of baseline CRFs the primary outcome (SDQ) was completed correctly. Information collected in other sections that were to be collected from young people's records was inconsistently completed, mainly due to difficulties in negotiating access to the sites' records systems (despite having consent from the young people) and sites having different types of records systems that recorded information in different ways.

Table 7: Recruitment type and completion of baseline Case Record Forms

		BAU (n = 20)	New Chapters (n = 18)	Overall (n = 38)
Site	Site 1	**2 (10.0%)**	**2 (11.1%)**	**4 (10.5%)**
	Site 2	**13 (65.0%)**	**12 (66.7%)**	**25 (65.8%)**
	Site 3	**2 (10.0%)**	**2 (11.1%)**	**4 (10.5%)**
	Site 4	**0 (0.0%)**	**0 (0.0%)**	**0 (0.0%)**
	Site 5	**3 (15.0%)**	**2 (11.1%)**	**5 (13.2%)**
Criteria used to recruit	Original	**10 (50.0%)**	**9 (50.0%)**	**19 (50.0%)**
	New	**10 (50.0%)**	**9 (50.0%)**	**19 (50.0%)**
Prisoner status	Sentenced	**18 (90.0%)**	**16 (88.9%)**	**34 (89.5%)**
	Remand	**2 (10.0%)**	**2 (11.1%)**	**4 (10.5%)**
Case Record Form completeness	Bronze	**4 (20.0%)**	**5 (27.8%)**	**9 (23.7%)**
	Silver	**6 (30.0%)**	**6 (33.3%)**	**12 (31.6%)**
	Gold	**10 (50.0%)**	**7 (38.9%)**	**17 (44.7%)**

BAU: Business as Usual

Table 8 shows the data collected from the sites' records systems for the young people we could access it for. However, due to issues highlighted above regarding access to records and staff availability to support this, we could only collect this data on 11 young people. The data here is just presented for information.

Table 8: Offence, regime, incidents and education information

		BAU (n = 6)	New Chapters (n = 5)	Overall (n = 11)
Index offence	Violence against the person	**5 (83.3%)**	**4 (80.0%)**	**9 (81.8%)**
	Robbery	**1 (16.7%)**	**0 (0.0%)**	**1 (9.1%)**
	Multiple offences	**0 (0.0%)**	**1 (20.0%)**	**1 (9.1%)**
Regime status	Basic	**3 (50.0%)**	**0 (0.0%)**	**3 (27.3%)**
	Standard	**1 (16.7%)**	**4 (80.0%)**	**5 (45.5%)**
	Enhanced	**2 (33.3%)**	**1 (20.0%)**	**3 (27.3%)**
Number of incidents within the last three months	Mean	**6.7**	**5.8**	**6.3**
	Standard deviation	**7.3**	**3.6**	**5.7**
	Median	**6.5**	**6**	**6**
	Interquartile range	**0, 7**	**5,6**	**1,7**
	Range	**0 to 20**	**1 to 11**	**0 to 20**
SEND and/or EHCP plan	No	**3 (50.0%)**	**2 (40.0%)**	**5 (45.5%)**
	Yes	**3 (50.0%)**	**3 (60.0%)**	**6 (55.5%)**
Previous qualifications	No	**5 (83.3%)**	**4 (80.0%)**	**9 (81.8%)**
	Yes	**1 (16.7%)**	**1 (20.0%)**	**2 (18.2%)**
Type of previous qualification	Entry	**0 (0.0%)**	**0 (0.0%)**	**0 (0.0%)**
	Level 1	**1 (50.0%)**	**1 (50.0%)**	**2 (50.0%)**
	Level 2	**1 (50.0%)**	**1 (50.0%)**	**2 (50.0%)**
Currently working towards qualifications	Entry	**1 (20.0%)**	**1 (33.3%)**	**2 (25.0%)**
	Level 1	**1 (20.0%)**	**1 (33.3%)**	**2 (25.0%)**
	Level 2	**3 (60.0%)**	**1 (33.3%)**	**4 (50.0%)**

BAU: Business as usual; SEND: Special educational needs and disabilities; EHCP: Education, health and care plan

Table 9 shows the baseline data for all questionnaires completed by the young people. Scores on the SDQ are higher than those reported by van Domburgh et al. (2011), but this was a first police contact group rather than a custodial group. The SDQ scores are comparable to our previous trial within the CYPSE (Chitsabesan et al., 2022). Scores on the BES (empathy) scale showed higher scores in comparison to previous research both with justice and clinical samples (Gambin & Sharp, 2016; Nunes et al., 2018); here, higher scores indicate greater empathy. The total score on the SEM-P (self-esteem) is similar to that previously reported for people in prison (Debowska et al., 2016). For the SWEMWBS, higher scores indicate greater wellbeing,

and the average UK score for young people in the general population usually falls between 24 and 25 (McKay & Andretta, 2017). Young people in this sample were slightly lower than this at 22.5. There are still limited studies reporting data on the CASES and PIDS to provide mean comparisons.

Table 9: Baseline data

		BAU	New Chapters	Overall
SDQ Emotional Problems Scale	Mean	2.8	1.7	2.3
	SD	2.6	2.1	2.4
	N	19	18	37
SDQ Conduct Problems Scale	Mean	3.9	2.9	3.4
	SD	1.8	1.6	1.8
	N	20	17	37
SDQ Hyperactivity Scale	Mean	5.6	5.6	5.6
	SD	1.7	1.7	1.7
	N	20	18	38
SDQ Peer Problems Scale	Mean	5.7	4.9	5.3
	SD	1.3	1.4	1.4
	N	20	18	38
SDQ Pro-Social Scale	Mean	7.2	7.2	7.2
	SD	2.3	2.0	2.2
	N	19	18	37
SDQ Total Score	Mean	18.0	15.4	16.8
	SD	4.8	4.5	4.8
	N	19	17	36
BES Total Score	Mean	56.9	59.1	57.9
	SD	4.7	5.0	4.9
	N	16	13	29
PIDS Total Score	Mean	24.9	24.9	24.9
	SD	5.4	3.9	4.7
	N	18	14	32
CASES Total Score	Mean	28.4	25.5	27.2
	SD	5.9	6.2	6.1
	N	17	13	30
SEM-P Total Score	Mean	12.6	11.1	12.0
	SD	5.0	2.9	4.3
	N	17	12	29
SWEMWBS Total Score	Mean	22.3	22.8	22.5
	SD	4.4	2.4	3.6
	N	14	12	26

BAU: Business as Usual; SDQ: Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire; SD: standard deviation; BES: Basic Empathy Scale; PIDS: Pro-Social IDentity Scale; CASES: Creative Self-Efficacy Scale for Children and Adolescents; SEM-P: Self-Esteem Measure for Prisoners; SWEMWBS: Short Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale

Quantitative data – follow-up

Only 11 young people were successfully followed up (28.9%). Table 10 shows the completion of the 11 follow-up CRFs completed. Overall, six (54.4%) were rated gold or silver, which was the metric for the internal pilot.

Table 10: Completion of follow-up Case Record Forms

		BAU	New Chapters	Overall
Rating	Bronze	2 (33.3%)	3 (60.0%)	5 (45.5%)
	Silver	2 (33.3%)	1 (20.0%)	3 (27.3%)
	Gold	2 (33.3%)	1 (20.0%)	3 (27.3%)

BAU: Business as Usual;

Table 11 shows the follow-up data for all questionnaires completed by the young people and incident data collected from site records. There was too little data at follow-up during this internal pilot phase to make any comment on intervention efficacy. Data here is presented for information only.

Table 11: Follow-up data

		BAU	New Chapters	Overall
SDQ Emotional Problems Scale	Mean	2.3	2.0	2.2
	SD	2.3	1.9	2.0
	N	6	5	11
SDQ Conduct Problems Scale	Mean	4.0	3.8	3.9
	SD	2.3	1.6	1.9
	N	6	5	11
SDQ Hyperactivity Scale	Mean	6.0	5.2	5.6
	SD	1.3	0.8	1.1
	N	6	5	11
SDQ Peer Problems Scale	Mean	5.7	5.8	5.7
	SD	1.8	1.0	1.4
	N	6	4	10
SDQ Pro-Social Scale	Mean	7.8	6.2	7.1
	SD	3.0	2.4	2.7
	N	6	5	11
SDQ Total Score	Mean	18.0	17.0	17.6
	SD	6.6	3.6	5.4
	N	6	4	10
BES Total Score	Mean	59.8	58.5	59.3
	SD	5.1	2.1	4.1
	N	4	2	6
PIDS Total Score	Mean	23.5	21.0	22.7
	SD	5.1	1.4	4.2
	N	4	2	6

		BAU	New Chapters	Overall
CASES Total Score	Mean	24.3	21.0	23.2
	SD	6.6	8.5	6.6
	N	4	2	6
SEM-P Total Score	Mean	13.0	17.0	14.3
	SD	5.1	9.9	6.3
	N	4	2	6
SWEMWBS Total Score	Mean	21.5	20.8	21.2
	SD	5.7	2.2	4.5
	N	4	2	6
Number of incidents since baseline	Median	2	6	2
	IQR	0, 2	3, 9	2, 3
	Range	0 to 2	3 to 9	0 to 9

BAU: Business as Usual; SDQ: Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire; SD: Standard deviation; BES: Basic Empathy Scale; PIDS: Pro-Social IDentity Scale; CASES: Creative Self-Efficacy Scale for Children and Adolescents; SEM-P: Self-Esteem Measure for Prisoners; SWEMWBS: Short Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale; IQR: Interquartile range

Table 12 shows the standardised mean differences between the groups on each of the primary (SDQ) and secondary outcome measures. As previously discussed, there was too little data at follow-up during this internal pilot phase to make any comment on intervention efficacy. Data is presented for information only.

Table 12: Standardised mean differences for primary and secondary outcomes

	N	Standardised Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval	
			LB	UB
SQD Total Score	10	0.16	-0.99	1.30
BES Total Score	6	0.22	-1.16	1.57
PIDS Total Score	6	0.45	-0.96	1.81
CASES Total Score	6	0.36	-1.03	1.72
SEM-P Total Score	6	-0.48	-1.85	0.94
SWEMWBS Total Score	6	0.11	-1.26	1.46
Incidents	5	-1.29	-2.85	0.40

Standardised mean difference was estimated using Hedges' g; SDQ: Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire; BES: Basic Empathy Scale; PIDS: Pro-Social IDentity Scale; CASES: Creative Self-Efficacy Scale for Children and Adolescents; SEM-P: Self-Esteem Measure for Prisoners; SWEMWBS: Short Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale

Evidence of promise

We are unable to make any statements of evidence of promise from the quantitative data due to the limited outcomes data collected.

As noted, intervention delivery was heavily disrupted, with only four of the eight groups formed completing all minimum core components. The interviews highlight the perceived impact of the disruption on the facilitators (e.g. frustration) and the young people themselves (e.g. being let down). Where sessions did take place, these were often shorter than planned. The main reason for this is likely due to the 90-minute session not fitting into the regime (as highlighted in the YCAB rejection letter). There were examples of not agreeing

to a code of conduct, missing out on warm-up activities, facilitators having to adapt on the spot to use the time remaining, and time often spent settling the young people after the disruption.

The Professional Author visits were very well received and sometimes preferred over the Project Manager sessions. Where celebration events did take place, such as a recording for National Prison Radio, these were viewed positively by those involved. There were examples of Project Managers adapting when the planned activity with National Prison Radio did not take place, such as producing a pamphlet of the young people's work to promote a sense of achievement. The one-to-ones planned at the outset did not, in practice, typically take place. This may have been due to the challenges of Project Managers having access to keys and needing to talk to young people through their cell doors. There was evidence of New Chapters deliberately taking an alternative approach to traditional education with its focus on creativity, and with the content being engaging and relatable. However, there was mixed evidence around the extent to which young people could 'co-create' sessions. There were examples of facilitators trying to find out more about the young people's needs and wishes, but adaptability was limited by the need to offer some consistency for evaluation purposes.

The facilitators were well placed to deliver the sessions given their previous experience and the training provided by NLT, with many examples of the Project Managers and Professional Authors showing a good understanding of the backgrounds of the young people in a secure setting and the need to take a trauma-informed approach. There was careful attention to establishing a safe and supportive environment, and the group element appears to have led to high-quality peer interaction, with some examples of the young people supporting each other, as well as the benefits of reflecting on other people's perspectives.

In terms of the mechanisms of change set out in the logic model and Theory of Change, our findings indicate that programme staff were clear about the purpose of the intended mechanisms for change, but these could not always be implemented as planned. The programme created conditions for the mechanisms to operate (including respectful safe spaces, trusting relationships, adapted content and activities); however, the data available does not provide sufficient evidence to assess whether the programme triggers consistent mechanisms of change. Given the larger number of staff responses, the findings presented here are skewed towards staff perceptions and are not firmly evidenced through young people's accounts. As a result, some parts reflect staff experiences and programme theory and expectations rather than the lived experiences of young people attending the programme.

Regarding qualitative outcomes, there were some promising early signs of change, particularly in relation to perceived confidence in literacy and self-expression, as well as more focused aspirations. While these are only some of the outcomes expected over time from New Chapters, they are broadly consistent with the short-term outcomes expected. However, understanding how and whether these translate into any long-term, sustained and measurable outcomes beyond the immediate programme is not possible from the data available in this evaluation.

Readiness for trial

In this section we provide evidence to suggest that New Chapters cannot be evaluated within the restrictions of an efficacy trial and within the context of the CYPSE. That is not to say New Chapters could not be evaluated at a larger scale in the future with a different experimental design and different context.

Recruitment

The number of young people currently in the CYPSE at any one time is approximately 450, which made an overall recruitment target for the efficacy trial of 375 very challenging to achieve. Recruitment also took place during the time of several operational policy and population changes within the CYPSE, e.g. the implementation of early release schemes and accommodating older young people (18–19 years) within the CYPSE, all to manage adult prison overcrowding issues. In addition, two sites received negative inspection reports, and one site closed on a temporary basis (HM Inspectorate of Prisons, 2024; Ofsted, 2025a; Ofsted, 2025b). These policy changes changed the profile of the CYPSE, increasing the number of over-18s within CYPSE who were not eligible to take part or increasing the number of young people leaving due to early release. The negative inspections meant that staff priorities shifted to responding to the inspection needs, which significantly limited staff ability to support research, which was not seen as an organisational priority.

As already discussed, we had agreed with YEF to set the attrition rate at 30%, which was much higher than most YEF-funded projects. To try and minimise attrition rates, we initially focused eligibility on sentenced young people, as we knew from other trials (Chitsabesan et al., 2022) that follow-ups are more likely to happen if a young person was still in prison, and sentenced young people have a release date that is more certain. However, it became clear that recruitment was being severely limited by eligibility. Even when we changed the eligibility to include young people on remand, very few young people on remand were included, as they were not eligible for other reasons.

By far, the biggest impact on recruitment was that young people were not able to mix in groups large enough for us to randomise and form New Chapters groups. As highlighted in the background section, group mixing for young people has become more challenging since COVID, and while we had tested the ability to recruit into a trial within the CYPSE before, that intervention was received individually, rather than in a group and took place just before COVID. It is likely that it was the combination of the rigidity of a trial design with randomisation into a group that limited recruitment. NLT was delivering group sessions of New Chapters post-COVID in YOIs but had much more flexibility of who could be in a group, and attendance could change (also these were more one-off sessions than the 12-session programme trialled here). In hindsight, a feasibility study may have been useful prior to the internal pilot to test the ability to deliver stable groups within the CYPSE.

Randomisation

Randomisation was successful as per the criteria set. However, randomisation was compounded by the limited availability of young people to mix. Randomisation in this project was 1:1 allocation; however, other strategies such as 2:1 randomisation (to allow more young people to be allocated to New Chapters groups, given that business-as-usual young people did not form groups), or cluster randomisation (where pre-existing community groups that could mix were randomised together) may have been better suited,

although these have other implications for sample size. A wait-list control design may have also been an option and may have been more acceptable to the NLT Project Managers, as this would have avoided the protocol violations. Again, a feasibility study may have been useful prior to the internal pilot to test these options.

Attrition

Our attrition rate for the internal pilot was 71.1%. Our ability to follow young people up was more likely if, at the time of follow-up, they were still in prison. Where young people had been released or transferred to the adult prison estate, these were much harder to complete. There was an unintended consequence of making changes to the eligibility and intervention delivery. While speeding up the delivery of New Chapters and shortening the window of follow-up to speed up trial delivery and minimise attrition provided a solution to one challenge, it presented another. Having a longer follow-up window was an advantage for those in the community and adult estate, as it can take a long time to engage and arrange a visit. Having a shorter follow-up window made it harder for us to follow up with this group within the time frame. A feasibility study may have been useful prior to an internal pilot to test these options.

Intervention components

As previously stated, prior to YEF funding NLT, New Chapters, as an intervention, looked quite different. It mostly consisted of one-off creative writing sessions which are open to all with a maximum capacity of 12. There is also much more flexibility about who can join and when, as the programme is less structured and there is more flexibility of content, due to not needing to offer similarity of content and delivery over time for trial evaluation. Delivery is typically a full day of activity approximately once per quarter, with sessions all delivered by the Professional Authors. Participants take part in a range of creative writing activities, create their own pieces and share work at the end, with some sessions recorded by National Prison Radio. Participants are provided with copies of the visiting author's book, a New Chapters notebook and pen, and invited to submit their work to the annual New Chapters anthology via submission sheet or freepost envelope.

This meant that there were several key aspects of the new version of New Chapters that had never been feasibility tested, including:

- Limited delivery in the under-18 population
- No testing of running weekly or twice-weekly sessions
- No testing of sessions delivered solely by NLT staff

The evidence from the intervention delivery and IPE would suggest that staff and young people wanted more adaptation and tailoring to the individual needs and interests of the young people. The course designed for consistency for trial evaluation appeared to be a potential barrier to flexibility. There is evidence that young people were less engaged with some content, but that the Project Managers tended to follow the set programme. The young people preferred the Professional Author sessions over the other sessions. The Professional Authors also felt that they needed at least one follow-up session to consolidate the work with the young people. Delivering 90-minute sessions once a quarter was likely to be accommodated by the prisons due to how infrequent the sessions were, but running weekly or twice-weekly

sessions for 90 minutes challenged the timetabling in the sites. As already mentioned, had a feasibility study been funded, many of these intervention aspects could have been tested.

Conclusion

Figure 2: Summary of internal pilot findings

Research Question	Finding
Does a group-based creative writing intervention (New Chapters) plus business as usual, compared with business as usual alone, reduce behavioural difficulties for boys aged 15–18 years old in a custodial setting?	As this study is not progressing to an efficacy trial, we are unable to answer this question, as the internal pilot was not designed to be able to test a difference between the groups.
Does an internal pilot in the first 12 months demonstrate evidence to move to a definitive trial?	No, the internal pilot does not demonstrate evidence to move to a definitive trial.
Does a group-based creative writing intervention (New Chapters) plus business as usual, compared with business as usual alone, increase empathy, pro-social identity, self-esteem, mental wellbeing and creativity?	As this study is not progressing to an efficacy trial, we are unable to answer this question, as the internal pilot was not designed to be able to test a difference between the groups.
Does a group-based creative writing intervention (New Chapters) plus business as usual, compared with business as usual alone, reduce behaviour incidents?	As this study is not progressing to an efficacy trial, we are unable to answer this question, as the internal pilot was not designed to be able to test a difference between the groups.
Does the implementation and process evaluation (IPE) demonstrate fidelity and acceptability of New Chapters?	Eight New Chapters groups were formed, but only four reached the end. Of these four groups, all the core components of the intervention were delivered. New Chapters was largely acceptable to the young people, although they would have liked more tailoring of the content to their interests and would have liked more of the Professional Author sessions. The 90-minute sessions showed limited acceptability for the sites, as many sessions were cut short.
Does the IPE demonstrate evidence to support the Theory of Change?	Yes, the IPE found evidence of relationship development, feeling heard and acknowledged, understanding different viewpoints, and sharing and expressing ideas, all of which were mechanisms identified in the Theory of Change. Regarding outcomes, there were some promising early signs of change, particularly in relation to confidence in literacy and self-expression as well as more focused aspirations.
Are there adverse events related to New Chapters?	During the small internal pilot, there were no adverse events related to New Chapters. But this is largely untested as we are not progressing to an efficacy trial.

Interpretation, limitations and lessons learnt

This study was funded as an efficacy study with an internal pilot and not as a separate pilot trial with distinct research questions. Research questions set out here and in the protocol were for the efficacy trial, and as the study is not progressing to efficacy, our ability to answer those research questions is limited. In this section we set out our interpretation of the internal pilot, the limitations, why the study is not progressing to efficacy and the lessons learnt from this.

The internal pilot demonstrated that young people in custody were willing to take part in research, despite not receiving any incentives (as would be common in community research, but the Youth Custody Service do not allow incentivisation), and no young people withdrew from the study. The level of missing data directly from the young people was low, with the majority of the SDQs being completed. Baseline data was well completed by the young people, but those we could follow up often did not always want to complete all the same questionnaires for a second time. We prioritised the completion of the SDQ over all other outcomes at follow-up, but this is something to be mindful of in future research within the CYPSE to minimise wider data loss at follow-up. When the evaluation team got to see and speak to the young people, engagement was good; the main challenges were navigating the context of the CYPSE, e.g. security issues, limited staffing and room availability.

The evaluation team and NLT secured senior manager agreement and buy-in in the trial, and many set-up meetings took place at each site during the mobilisation phase. The evaluation team also invited Youth Custody Service Education leads to be involved in the trial Steering Committee and reached out to them on several occasions to help with site engagement. Despite all this being in place, higher-level management support often did not result in on-the-ground, frontline staff engagement. Due to the location of the recruitment sites and the limited resources available to the evaluation team, our engagement with frontline staff was via phone or email. From experience of many other prison trials, this approach was likely to be ineffective. Due to the complexity of the environment and the fact that things can change very quickly, staff often have very little time to respond to phone calls or emails. Having the evaluation team based permanently at each site, or at least a few days each week, would have helped build a better relationship with staff and more flexibility in having conversations with staff, which would have facilitated the evaluation better. The interviews with Project Managers highlight that this was a similar approach taken by the intervention team, which was also mostly ineffective. Having the intervention team more permanently based within the prison would also have been beneficial. We did start to see momentum in engagement happen in site 2, whereby towards the end of the pilot trial we were able to recruit every six weeks and deliver groups, albeit with some disruption.

The complexity of the CYPSE cannot be underestimated. During the trial, we had the total number of young people in the CYPSE continue to drop further, with policy changes around early release and transfer to the adult prison estate, which all impacted eligibility. Sites received poor inspection reports, and one site had to shut; these sites limited or completely stopped engagement with the study (Youth Justice Board, 2026; HM Inspectorate of Prisons, 2024; Ofsted, 2025a; Ofsted, 2025b). But by far and away the biggest impact on the evaluation was the limited numbers of young people who could mix with each other, which meant randomising to form a group intervention in most sites was impossible. Where we were able to randomise and form New Chapters groups, these consisted of two or three young people at most, because most

community groups, i.e. the groups that young people are allowed to mix with, tended to be no bigger than eight to 10 young people. Often, we were relying on whole community groups to be eligible so that we could randomise. Due to all these issues, but especially the level of mixing, we do not think it is possible to randomise to a group-based intervention within the CYPSE currently.

Study attrition was 71.1%, much higher than the 30% set and higher than that found in other prison studies. Most young people were lost to follow-up due to them being released from custody and us not being able to secure a follow-up meeting with them. Following people up after release into the community is very resource intensive and can take many failed attempts to make contact and then plan to see them. We had tried to mitigate this as much as possible, initially by only including sentenced young people so that we could be more certain of the date of release and ensure that they were still in prison for their follow-up window. However, even though the CYPSE does not have the same capacity issues as the adult prison estate, young people were still eligible for the early release scheme, and many were released before their follow-up was due; some even before finishing New Chapters.

The complexity of the CYPSE also impacted intervention delivery, with many sessions disrupted. If NLT had considered taking on board the YCAB feedback and reducing the session lengths, this may have resulted in less disruption, but this is untested and may have made little difference to the level of disruption. The components of New Chapters that were delivered prior to this evaluation (e.g. professional authors and celebration events) were the best received and, from the interviews and observations, appear to be the parts likely to have the most impact. The scaling up of New Chapters from quarterly sessions to a 12-week programme probably needed more feasibility testing and planning. The need to modify New Chapters to be suitable for trial evaluation (e.g. offering consistency of content over the 12 sessions) appears to have impacted acceptability. Also, the one-to-one sessions didn't seem to function as planned.

Future research and publications

The questions around ABIs within justice settings remain unanswered following this evaluation. Qualitatively, there is genuine evidence of promise that New Chapters' core components (professional authors and celebration event) may effect change in the way expected. However, New Chapters likely needed a trial design which was much more pragmatic to allow the flexibility it needed. While we did find some qualitative evidence of promise for self-reported perceived short-term outcomes, antisocial behaviour is a complex phenomenon to change and, in the Theory of Change, was defined as a long-term outcome; this was at odds with the requirement for an efficacy trial and again points to evidence that a more pragmatic effectiveness trial may have been a better fit for New Chapters, and perhaps also the CYPSE. Therefore, we would recommend that future trials of ABIs and/or those in the CYPSE are adequately funded and resourced to be pragmatic so they can work alongside the complexity of the interventions and the setting. Trials in prison settings are difficult, but not impossible; however, they do need to be adequately resourced. We recommend that interventions are not adapted or scaled up to make them fit a certain trial design, at least not without significant feasibility and acceptability testing.

The data from the qualitative components of this evaluation is rich, more so than we've been able to cover here in this final report; therefore, we are planning to publish an analysis of the experiences of delivering and taking part in New Chapters.

References

Acar, S., Tadik, H., Myers, D., Sman, C. and Uysal, R. (2020). Creativity and well-being: a meta-analysis. *The Journal of Creative Behavior*, 55(3), pp. 738–751. https://doi.org/10.1002/jocb.485

Ali, A. and Singh, A. (2024). Evaluating the reliability and validity of the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire in a heterogeneous ethnic young cohort from northeast India. *Archives of Mental Health*. 25(2), pp. 140–145. https://doi.org/10.4103/amh.amh_87_24

Alliance for Youth Justice (2025). *Adultifying youth custody: learning lessons on transition to adulthood from the use of youth custody for young adults*. [online] Available at: https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5f75bfbbfb67fc5ab41154d6/t/67990b6ff22fd560cb274c08/1738083192482/AYJ-Adultifying-Youth-Custody+FINAL.pdf

Arnez, J. and Condry, R. (2021). Criminological perspectives on school exclusion and youth offending. *Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties*, 26(1), pp. 87–100. https://doi.org/10.1080/13632752.2021.1905233

Arts Council England (n.d.). Great art and culture for everyone. [online] Available at: https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/sites/default/files/download-file/Great_art_and_culture_for_everyone.pdf

Assink, M., van der Put, C. E., Hoeve, M., de Vries, S. L. A., Stams, G. J. J. M. and Oort, F. J. (2015). Risk factors for persistent delinquent behavior among juveniles: a meta-analytic review. *Clinical Psychology Review*, 42, pp. 47–61. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cpr.2015.08.002

Badger, S., Kaur, P., Wilkinson, D. and Chopra, I. (2023). *Exploratory evaluation of Round Midnight Virtual Decisions.* [online] Available at: https://data-and-insight-hub-wmvru.hub.arcgis.com/documents/880f54b918e34a07b7e8c04d0032ea0d

Baker, S. and Homan, S. (2007). Rap, recidivism and the creative self: a popular music programme for young offenders in detention. *Journal of Youth Studies*, 10(4), pp. 459–476. https://doi.org/10.1080/13676260701262566

Beard, A. (2022). Youth custody. *House of Commons Briefing.* [online] Available at: https://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/CBP-8557/CBP-8557.pdf

Bergström, M. and Baviskar, S. (2020). A systematic review of some reliability and validity issues regarding the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire focusing on its use in out-of-home care. *Journal of Evidence-Based Social Work*, 18(1), pp. 1–31. https://doi.org/10.1080/26408066.2020.1788477

Blomberg, T. G., Bales, W. D., Mann, K., Piquero, A. R. and Berk, R. A. (2011). Incarceration, education and transition from delinquency. *Journal of Criminal Justice*, 39(4), pp. 355–365. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jcrimjus.2011.04.003

Boduszek D., Hyland P., Dhingra K. and Mallett J. (2013). The factor structure and composite reliability of the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale among ex-prisoners. *Personality and Individual Differences* 55(8), pp. 877–881. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.paid.2013.07.014

Boduszek, D., Shevlin, M., Mallett, J., Hyland, P. and O'Kane, D. (2012). Dimensionality and construct validity of the Rosenberg self-esteem scale within a sample of recidivistic prisoners. *Journal of Criminal Psychology*, 2(1), pp. 19–25. https://doi.org/10.1108/20093821211210468

Bolton, P. and Lewis, J. (2024). *Equality of access and outcomes in higher education in England*. House of Commons Library Research Briefing: Number 9195. [online] Available at: https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/research-briefings/cbp-9195/

Bone, J.K. and Fancourt, D. (2022). *Arts, culture & the brain: a literature review and new epidemiological analyses*. London: Arts Council England. [online] Available at: https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/arts-culture-brain

Bowey, L. and Alex, M. G. (2006). The youth crime reduction video project: an evaluation of a pilot intervention targeting young people at risk of crime and school exclusion. *Howard Journal of Criminal Justice,* 45(3), pp. 268–283. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2311.2006.00421.x

Butler, T., Schofield, P. W., Knight, L., Ton, B., Greenberg, D., Scott, R. J., Grant, L., Keech, A. C., Gebski, V., Jones, J., Ellis, A., Weatherburn, D., Wilhelm, K., Jones, A., Churchill, A., Allnutt, S., Mitchell, P. B., Chappell, D., D'Este, C., Villa, D. and Carr. V. (2021). Sertraline hydrochloride for reducing impulsive behaviour in male, repeat-violent offenders (ReINVEST): protocol for a phase IV, double-blind, placebo-controlled, randomised clinical trial. *BMJ Open*, 11(9), e044656 https://doi.org/10.1136/bmjopen-2020-044656

Byng, R., Kirkpatrick, T., Lennox, C., Warren, F. C., Anderson, R., Brand, S. L., Callaghan, L., Carroll, L., Durcan, G., Gill, L., Goodier, S., Graham, J., Greer, R., Haddad, M., Harris, T., Henley, W., Hunter, R., Leonard, S., Maguire, M., Michie, S., Owens, C., Pearson, M., Quinn. C., Rybczynska-Bunt, S., Stevenson. C., Stewart, A., Stirzaker, A., Todd, R., Walter, F., Weston, L., Wright, N., Taylor, R. S. and Shaw, J. (2023). Evaluation of a complex intervention for prisoners with common mental health problems, near to and after release: the Engager randomised controlled trial. *British Journal of Psychiatry*. 222(1), pp. 18–26. https://doi.org/10.1192/bjp.2022.93

Case, S. and Browning, A. (2021). *Child first justice: the research evidence-base*. [online] Available at: https://repository.lboro.ac.uk/articles/report/Child_First_Justice_the_research_evidence-base_Full_report_/14152040

Caulfield, L., Sojka, B. and Massie, R. (2019). *An evaluation of Sandwell Youth Offending Service – a creative approach to working with young people*. [online] Available at: https://wlv.openrepository.com/server/api/core/bitstreams/596b5101-2504-44a0-8462-7c1c7f2cc645/content

Cavendish, W. (2014). Academic attainment during commitment and postrelease education–related outcomes of juvenile justice-involved youth with and without disabilities. *Journal of Emotional and Behavioral Disorders*, 22, pp. 41–52. https://doi.org/10.1177/1063426612470516

Cesar, G.T. and Decker, S.H. (2020). 'CPS Sucks, but…I think I'm better off in the system:' family, social support, & arts-based mentorship in child protective services. *Children and Youth Services Review*, 118, p. 105388. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.childyouth.2020.105388

Chitsabesan, P., Hall, C. L., Carter, L., Reeves, M. M., Vaseem, M., Beresford, B., Young, S., Kraam, A., Trowse, S., Wilkinson-Cunningham, L. and Lennox, C. (2022). Using an objective computer task (QbTest) to aid the identification of attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) in the Children and Young People Secure Estate (CYPSE): a feasibility randomised controlled trial. *BMJ Open*, 12(12), e064951–e064951. https://doi.org/10.1136/bmjopen-2022-064951

Clennon, O. (2013). How effective are music interventions in the criminal youth justice sector? Community music making and its potential for community and social transformation: a pilot study. *Journal of Music, Technology and Education* 6(1), pp. 103–130. https://doi.org/10.1386/jmte.6.1.103_1

Cristofani, C., Sesso, G., Cristofani, P., Fantozzi, P., Inguaggiato, E., Muratori, P., Narzisi, A., Pfanner, C., Pisano, S., Polidori, L., Ruglioni, L., Valente, E., Masi, G. and Milone, A. (2020). The role of executive functions in the development of empathy and its association with externalizing behaviors in children with neurodevelopmental disorders and other psychiatric comorbidities. *Brain Sciences*, 10(8), p. 489. https://doi.org/10.3390/brainsci10080489

Crosweller, S., Stafford, M. and Bathgate, H. (2022). The education and social care background of young people who interact with the criminal justice system: May 2022. Office for National Statistics. [online] Available at: https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/educationandchildcare/articles/theeducationandsocialcarebackgroundofyoungpeoplewhointeractwiththecriminaljusticesystem/may2022

Davies, J. (2009). Book Review: Cathy A. Malchiodi (Ed.), *Creative Interventions with Traumatized Children*. London: Guildford Press, 2008, 332 pp. ISBN 9781593856151, £25.95. *Clinical Child Psychology and Psychiatry*, 14(4), pp. 628–629. https://doi.org/10.1177/1359104509339124

Debowska, A., Boduszek, D. and Sherretts, N. (2016). Self-esteem in adult prison population: the development and validation of the self-esteem measure for prisoners (SEM-P). *Deviant Behavior*, 38(11), pp. 1240–1251. https://doi.org/10.1080/01639625.2016.1246034

Downey, D. B. and Vogt Yuan, A. S. (2005). Sex differences in school performance during high school: puzzling patterns and possible explanations. *The Sociological Quarterly*, 46(2), pp. 299–321. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1533-8525.2005.00014.x

Emerson, E. (2012). Deprivation, ethnicity and the prevalence of intellectual and developmental disabilities. *Journal of Epidemiology and Community Health*, 66(3), pp. 218–224. https://doi.org/10.1136/jech.2010.111773

Euler, F., Steinlin, C. and Stadler, C. (2017). Distinct profiles of reactive and proactive aggression in adolescents: associations with cognitive and affective empathy. *Child and Adolescent Psychiatry and Mental Health*, 11(1). https://doi.org/10.1186/s13034-016-0141-4

Fancourt, D. and Finn, S. (2019). What is the evidence on the role of the arts in improving health and well-being? A scoping review. [online] Available at: https://www.who.int/europe/publications/i/item/9789289054553

Francis, B., Skelton, C., Carrington, B., Hutchings, M., Read, B. and Hall, I. (2008). A perfect match? Pupils' and teachers' views of the impact of matching educators and learners by gender. *Research Papers in Education*, 23, pp. 21–36. https://doi.org/10.1080/02671520701692510

Giannakopoulos, G., Dimitrakaki, C., Papadopoulou, K., Tzavara, C., Kolaitis, G., Ravens-Sieberer, U. and Tountas, Y. (2013). Reliability and validity of the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire in Greek adolescents and their parents. *Health*, 05(11), pp. 1774–1783. https://doi.org/10.4236/health.2013.511239

Gambin, M. and Sharp, C. (2016). The differential relations between empathy and internalizing and externalizing symptoms in inpatient adolescents. *Child Psychiatry & Human Development*, 47(6), pp. 966–974. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10578-016-0625-8

Gambin, M. and Sharp, C. (2018). Relations between empathy and anxiety dimensions in inpatient adolescents. *Anxiety, Stress, & Coping*, 31(4), pp. 447–458. https://doi.org/10.1080/10615806.2018.1475868

Golson, M. E., Haverkamp, C. R., McClain, M. B., Schwartz, S. E., Ha, J., Harris, B. and Benallie, K. J. (2021). Influences of student race/ethnicity and gender on autism special education classification considerations. *Autism*, 26(6), p. 136236132110504. https://doi.org/10.1177/13623613211050440

Goodman, R. (1997). The Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire: a research note. *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry*, 38(5), pp. 581–586. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1469-7610.1997.tb01545.x

Hartley, B. L. and Sutton, R. M. (2013). A stereotype threat account of boys' academic underachievement. *Child Development*, 84(5), pp. 1716–1733. https://doi.org/10.1111/cdev.12079

Hauch, D., Fjorback, L. O. and Juul, L. (2023). Psychometric properties of the Short Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Well-Being Scale in a sample of Danish schoolchildren. *Scandinavian Journal of Public Health*, 51(8), pp. 1214-1221. https://doi.org/10.1177/14034948221110002

Hazel, N. and Birkbeck, C. (2024). The Pro-Social IDentity Scale (PIDS) – user guide. University of Salford

Henry, K., Knight, K. and Thornberry, T. (2012). School disengagement as a predictor of dropout, delinquency, and problem substance use during adolescence and early adulthood. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence,* 41, pp. 156–166. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10964-011-9665-3

Hirschfield, P. J. and Gasper, J. (2011). The relationship between school engagement and delinquency in late childhood and early adolescence. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, 40(1), pp. 3–22. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10964-010-9579-5

HM Inspectorate of Prisons (2023). An analysis of 12–18-year-olds' perceptions of their experiences in secure training centres and young offender institutions. [online] Available at: https://cdn.websitebuilder.service.justice.gov.uk/uploads/sites/19/2023/11/Children-in-custody-web-2023-amended.pdf

HM Inspectorate of Prisons (2024). Report on an independent review of progress at HMYOI Wetherby. [online] Available at: https://cdn.websitebuilder.service.justice.gov.uk/uploads/sites/19/2024/12/Wetherby-IRP-web-2024.pdf

HM Prison and Probation Service and Youth Custody Service. (2024). Youth custody data December 2023. GOV.UK. [online] Available at: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/youth-custody-data#full-publication-update-history

Hoffmann, T. C., Glasziou, P. P., Boutron, I., Milne, R., Perera, R., Moher, D., Altman, D. G., Barbour, V., Macdonald, H., Johnston, M., Lamb, S. E., Dixon-Woods, M., McCulloch, P., Wyatt, J.C., Chan, A.-W. and Michie, S. (2014). Better reporting of interventions: template for intervention description and replication (TIDieR) checklist and guide. *BMJ*, 348, g1687 https://www.bmj.com/lookup/doi/10.1136/bmj.g1687

Hutchinson, J., Reader, M. and Akhal, A. (2020). Education in England: Annual report 2020. *Education Policy Institute*. [online] Available at: https://epi.org.uk/publications-and-research/educationin-england-annual-report-2020/

James, C., Stams, G., Asscher, J., De Roo, A. and Van Der Laan, P. (2013). Aftercare programs for reducing recidivism among juvenile and young adult offenders: a meta-analytic review. *Clinical Psychology Review*, 33, pp. 263–274. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cpr.2012.10.013

Justice Select Committee. (2022). *Letter from the Minister of State for Justice – Youth custody update*. [online] Available at: https://committees.parliament.uk/publications/33331/documents/180392/default

Kaasgaard, M., Grebosz-Haring, K., Davies, C., Musgrave, G., Shriraam, J., McCrary, J. M. and Clift, S. (2024). Is it premature to formulate recommendations for policy and practice, based on culture and health research? A robust critique of the CultureForHealth (2022) report. *Frontiers in Public Health*, 12. https://doi.org/10.3389/fpubh.2024.1414070

Karkou, V. (2010). *Arts therapies in schools: Research and practice*. London, Philadelphia: Jessica Kingsley Publishers

Kraanen, F. L., Scholing, A., Emmelkamp, P. M. G., et al. (2013). The comparative effectiveness of integrated treatment for substance abuse and partner violence (I-StoP) and substance abuse treatment alone: a randomized controlled trial. *BMC Psychiatry*. 13(1):189 https://doi.org/10.1186/1471-244X-13-189

Lea, C., Malorni, A. and Jones, T. (2019). "Everybody is an Artist": arts-based education and formerly incarcerated young black men's academic and social–emotional development in an alternative school. *American Journal of Community Psychology,* 64(3–4), pp. 333–347. https://doi.org/10.1002/ajcp.12378

Lennox, C., Duncan-Zaleski, M., Nasim, S., Shirley, O., Ross, K., Chitsabesan, P., Robinson, L., Shaw, J. and Leonard, S. (2024). The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic for children in custody: an analysis of inspection reports. *PLoS ONE*, 19(6), pp. e0304862–e0304862. https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0304862

Lennox, C., Hall, C. L., Carter, L.-A., Beresford, B., Young, S., Kraam, A., Brown, N., Wilkinson-Cunningham, L., Reeves, M. and Chitsabesan, P. (2020). FACT: a randomised controlled trial to assess the feasibility of QbTest

in the assessment process of attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) for young people in prison—a feasibility trial protocol. *BMJ Open*, 10(1), e035519. https://doi.org/10.1136/bmjopen-2019-035519

Lennox, C., Kirkpatrick, T., Taylor, R. S., Todd, R., Greenwood, C., Haddad, M., Stevenson, C., Stewart, A., Shenton, D., Carroll, L., et al. (2018). Pilot randomised controlled trial of the ENGAGER collaborative care intervention for prisoners with common mental health problems, near to and after release. *Pilot and Feasibility Studies*, 4(1), p. 15. https://doi.org/10.1186/s40814-017-0163-6

Little, R. (2015). Putting education at the heart of custody? The views of children on education in a young offender institution. *British Journal of Community Justice*, 13(2), 27. [online] Available at: https://mmuperu.co.uk/bjcj/articles/putting-education-at-the-heart-of-custody-the-views-of-children-on-education-in-a-young-offender-institution/

Malchiodi, C. A. (2015). Neurobiology, creative interventions, and childhood trauma. In Cathy A. Malchiodi (ed), *Creative interventions with traumatized children*, 2nd ed. Guilford Publications

Mansfield, L., Daykin, N., O'Connell, N. E., Bailey, D., Forde, L., Smith, R., Gifford, J. and Ashdown-Franks, G. (2024). A mixed methods systematic review on the effects of arts interventions for children and young people at-risk of offending, or who have offended on behavioural, psychosocial, cognitive and offending outcomes: a systematic review. *Campbell Systematic Reviews*, 20(1). https://doi.org/10.1002/cl2.1377

Massó-Guijarro, B. and Montes-Rodríguez, R. (2020). Educational and social uses of music and video creation for a group of young offenders. *The International Journal of Interdisciplinary Cultural Studies*, 16(1), pp. 1–14. https://doi.org/10.18848/2327-008x/cgp/v16i01/1-14

Mastandrea, S., Fagioli, S. and Biasi, V. (2019). Art and psychological well-being: linking the brain to the aesthetic emotion. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 10(739). https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2019.00739

Maynard, B. R., Brendel, K. E., Bulanda, J. J., Heyne, D., Thompson, A. M. and Pigott, T. D. (2015). Psychosocial interventions for school refusal with primary and secondary school students: a systematic review. *Campbell Systematic Reviews*, 11(1), pp. 1–76. https://doi.org/10.4073/csr.2015.12

McAra, L. and McVie, S. (2010). Youth crime and justice: key messages from the Edinburgh Study of Youth Transitions and Crime. *Criminology & Criminal Justice*, 10(2), pp. 179–209. https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/1748895809360971

McKay, M. T. and Andretta, J. R. (2017). Evidence for the psychometric validity, internal consistency and measurement invariance of Warwick Edinburgh Mental Well-Being Scale scores in Scottish and Irish adolescents. *Psychiatry Research*, 255, pp. 382–386. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.psychres.2017.06.071

McLaren, V., Vanwoerden, S. and Sharp, C. (2019). The Basic Empathy Scale: factor structure and validity in a sample of inpatient adolescents. *Psychological Assessment*, 31(10), pp. 1208–1219. https://doi.org/10.1037/pas0000741

McNeill, F., Anderson, K., Colvin, S., Overy, K., Sparks, R. and Tett, L. (2011). Inspiring desistance? Arts projects and 'what works?' *Justitiele Verkenningen 37* (5), pp. 80–101 [online] Available at:

https://discoveringdesistance.home.blog/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/8ae81-mcneill-et-al.-2011-inspiring-desistance.pdf

Ministry of Justice (2024). Lord Chancellor sets out immediate action to defuse ticking prison 'time-bomb'. GOV.UK. [online] Available at: https://www.gov.uk/government/news/lord-chancellor-sets-out-immediate-action-to-defuse-ticking-prison-time-bomb

Ministry of Justice (2025). Safety in the children and young people secure estate: update to March 2025. GOV.UK. [online] Available at: https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/safety-in-the-children-and-young-people-secure-estate-update-to-march-2025/safety-in-the-children-and-young-people-secure-estate-update-to-march-2025

Ministry of Justice & Department for Education (2016). Understanding the educational background of young offenders: full report. GOV.UK. [online] Available at: https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/understanding-the-educationalbackground-of-young-offenders-full-report

Mitchell, P., Smedley, K., Kenning, C., McKee, A., Woods, D., Rennie, C. E., Bell, R. V., Aryamanesh, M., Dolan, M. (2011). Cognitive behaviour therapy for adolescent offenders with mental health problems in custody. *Journal of Adolescence*. 34(3), pp. 433–443. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.adolescence.2010.06.009

Moody, M. (2016). From under-diagnosis to over-representation: black children, ADHD and the school-to-prison pipeline. *Journal of African American Studies*, 20(2), pp. 152–163. https://doi.org/10.1007/s12111-016-9325-5

Moreau, M. (2014). *Inequalities in the teaching profession: a global perspective*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.

Moreau, M.-P. and Brownhill, S. (2017). Teachers and educational policies: Negotiating discourses of male role modelling. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 67, pp. 370–377. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2017.07.001

Morison, L., Simonds, L. and Stewart, S.-J. F. (2021). Effectiveness of creative arts-based interventions for treating children and adolescents exposed to traumatic events: a systematic review of the quantitative evidence and meta-analysis. *Arts & Health*, 14(3), pp. 1–26. https://doi.org/10.1080/17533015.2021.2009529

Nasen. (2022). Exclusions for pupils with SEND four times higher show new government figures. [online] Available at: https://nasen.org.uk/news/exclusions-pupils-send-fourtime-higher-show-new-government-figures

National Literacy Trust. (2022). New Chapters: impact report 2022. [online] Available at: https://nlt.cdn.ngo/media/documents/New_Chapters_2022_Impact_Report.pdf

Nunes, C., Ayala-Nunes, L., Pechorro, P. and La Greca, A. M. (2018). Short Form of the Social Anxiety Scale for Adolescents among community and institutionalized Portuguese youths. *International Journal of Clinical and Health Psychology*, 18(3), pp. 273–282. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijchp.2018.06.001

Office for National Statistics (2022). The education and social care background of young people who interact with the criminal justice system. *Office for National Statistics*. [online] Available at: https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/educationandchildcare/articles/theeducationandsocialcarebackgroundofyoungpeoplewhointeractwiththecriminaljusticesystem/may2022

Ofsted (2024). A decade of declining quality of education in young offender institutions: the systemic shortcomings that fail children. GOV.UK. [online] Available at: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/thematic-review-of-the-quality-of-education-in-young-offender-institutions-yois/a-decade-of-declining-quality-of-education-in-young-offender-institutions-the-systemic-shortcomings-that-fail-children

Ofsted (2025a). Oasis Restore Trust inspection report. [online] Available at: https://files.ofsted.gov.uk/v1/file/50274986

Ofsted (2025b). Oakhill Secure Training School inspection report. [online] Available at: https://files.ofsted.gov.uk/v1/file/50285690

Ofsted & HM Inspectorate of Prisons (2022) The quality of reading education in prisons: one year on. [online] Available at: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-quality-of-reading-education-in-prisons-one-year-on#:~:text=Ofsted%20and%20HMIP%20jointly%20published,HMPPS%20and%20its%20prison%20governors

Pechorro, P., Kahn, R. E., Abrunhosa Gonçalves, R. and Ray, J. V. (2017). Psychometric properties of Basic Empathy Scale among female juvenile delinquents and school youths. *International Journal of Law and Psychiatry*, 55, pp. 29–36. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijlp.2017.10.008

Ringdal, R., Bradley Eilertsen, M. E., Bjørnsen, H. N., Espnes, G. A. and Moksnes, U. K. (2017). 'Validation of two versions of the Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Well-Being Scale among Norwegian adolescents', *Scandinavian Journal of Public Health*, 46(7), pp. 718–725. https://doi.org/10.1177/1403494817735391

Ruggiero, D., Garcia de Hurtado, B. and Watson, W.R. (2013). Juvenile offenders: developing motivation, engagement, and meaning-making through video game creation. *International Journal of Game-Based Learning*, 3(2), pp. 112–129. https://doi.org/10.4018/ijgbl.2013040107

Sánchez-Pérez, N., Fuentes, L. J., Jolliffe, D. and González-Salinas, C. (2014). Assessing children's empathy through a Spanish adaptation of the Basic Empathy Scale: parent's and child's report forms. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 5. https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2014.01438

Schmaus, M. (2021). Disproportionate identification of special needs for ethnic and language minority students in England–patterns and explanations. *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, 43(1), pp. 40–62. https://doi.org/10.1080/01425692.2021.2002682

Scott, T. and Brown, S. (2018). Risks, strengths, gender and recidivism among justice-involved youth: a meta-analysis. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*, 86 (11), pp. 931–945. https://doi.org/10.1037/ccp000343

Shepherd, S. M. and Purcell, R. (2015). What are the factors associated with criminal behaviour for young people with mental health problems? *Psychiatry, Psychology and Law*, 22(6), pp. 869–879. https://doi.org/10.1080/13218719.2015.1015399

Smeijsters, H., Kil, J., Kurstjens, H., Welten, J. and Willemars, G. (2011). Arts therapies for young offenders in secure care – A practice-based research. *The Arts in Psychotherapy*, 38(1), pp. 41–51. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.aip.2010.10.005

Smith, H., Deakin, J., Lennox, C. and Ruding, S. (2025). The effects of arts and culture programmes on youth crime: a rapid review. [online] Available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/68adc1ea960e2d135b4c8e2d/Final_Report_August_2025.pdf

Stewart-Brown, S., Tennant, A., Tennant, R., Platt, S., Parkinson, J. and Weich, S. (2009). Internal construct validity of the Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Well-being Scale (WEMWBS): a Rasch analysis using data from the Scottish Health Education Population Survey. *Health and Quality of Life Outcomes*, 7(1). https://doi.org/10.1186/1477-7525-7-15

Tarling, R. and Adams, M. (2012). *Summer arts colleges* [online] Available at: https://cdn.fld.nz/uploads/sites/creativewellbeingnz/files/Images/2019/files_2019/Summer-Arts-colleges_evaluation-report_2009.pdf

Tett, L., Anderson, K., McNeill, F., Overy, K. and Sparks, R. (2012). Learning, rehabilitation and the arts in prisons: a Scottish case study. *Studies in the Education of Adults* 44 (2), pp. 171–185. https://doi.org/10.1080/02660830.2012.11661631

Thompson, B. (2022). Beyond the corner: introducing a string music program to youth in detention. *String Research Journal*, 12(1), pp. 61–83. https://doi.org/10.1177/19484992221094818

Timpson (2019). *Timpson review of school exclusion. [online] Available at:* https://data.parliament.uk/DepositedPapers/Files/DEP2019-0527/Timpson_Review_of_School_Exclusion_May_2019.pdf

Todis, B., Bullis, M., Waintrup, M., Schultz, R. and D'Ambrosio, R. (2001). Overcoming the odds: qualitative examination of resilience among formerly incarcerated adolescents. *Exceptional Children,* 68, pp. 119–139. https://doi.org/10.1177/001440290106800107

Vaingankar, J. A., Abdin, E., Chong, S. A., Sambasivam, R., Seow, E., Jeyagurunathan, A., Picco, L., Stewart-Brown, S. and Subramaniam, M. (2017). Psychometric properties of the short Warwick Edinburgh mental well-being scale (SWEMWBS) in service users with schizophrenia, depression and anxiety spectrum disorders. *Health and Quality of Life Outcomes*, 15: 153. https://doi.org/10.1186/s12955-017-0728-3

Valquaresma, A., Coimbra, J. L. and Costa, P. (2022). Creative self-efficacy scale for children and adolescents (CASES): a development and validation study. *International Journal of Psychological Research*, 15(1), pp. 55–69. https://doi.org/10.21500/20112084.5410

van Domburgh, L., Doreleijers, T. A., Geluk, C. and Vermeiren, R. (2011). Correlates of self-reported offending in children with first police contact from distinct socio-demographic and ethnic groups. *Child and Adolescent Psychiatry and Mental Health*, 5(1), p. 22. https://doi.org/10.1186/1753-2000-5-22

van Maanen, K. (2010). Miss Spent: a drama project for young women at the Josephine Butler Unit HMP Downview. [online] Available at: https://web.archive.org/web/20240327024452/http://artsevidence.org.uk/media/uploads/evaluation-downloads/clean-break-miss-spent-evaluation-2010.pdf

van Westrhenen, N. and Fritz, E. (2014). Creative arts therapy as treatment for child trauma: an overview. *The Arts in Psychotherapy*, 41(5), pp. 527–534. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.aip.2014.10.004

Varley, D. S. (2019). Acting around in young offender rehabilitation: investigating how psychological theory fused with drama techniques can create a model (the V² model) for reducing crime when working with young offenders within the community. [online] Available at: https://www.open-access.bcu.ac.uk/8853/

Youth Justice Board (2016). Protected education – 60/40 split: Definition and guidance. [online] Available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5a81a262ed915d74e6233520/Protected_Education_60-40_split_definition_and_guidance.PDF

Youth Justice Board. (2023). Youth justice statistics: 2021 to 2022. GOV.UK. [online] Available at: https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/youth-justice-statistics-2021-to2022/youth-justice-statistics-2021-to-2022-accessible-version#children-in-youth-custody

Youth Justice Board. (2024). Youth Justice Statistics: 2022 to 2023 England and Wales. GOV.UK. [online] Available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/65b391a60c75e30012d800fa/Youth_Justice_Statistics_2022-23.pdf

Youth Justice Board (2026). *Youth justice statistics: 2024 to 2025*. GOV.UK. [online] Available at: https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/youth-justice-statistics-2024-to-2025/youth-justice-statistics-2024-to-2025