

Memorandum of Understanding – Positive Pathways

Referral Organisations

Positive Pathways is being funded by the [Youth Endowment Fund](#) (YEF) to find out if taking part in adventure-outdoor learning and mentoring makes a difference to young people's behaviour, prosocial skills, the likelihood of engaging in criminal activity and their wellbeing. To do this Sheffield Hallam University (SHU) is running a research study called a Randomised Control Trial (RCT).

A. How will the Positive Pathways Randomised Control Trial (RCT) work?

This RCT will compare the outcomes for two different groups – those who have taken part in the **Positive Pathways intervention** (adventure learning and mentoring), and those who have not – these are called a **control group** (a different activity). As the study is a trial, half of the young people recruited will be assigned to the Positive Pathways programme and half will be assigned to the control group. In this research study the control group will receive what we call an 'enhanced business-as-usual'.

Young people are allocated to the intervention and control groups randomly.

All young people must complete surveys at the start of the research study (baseline) and at the end (endpoint), so the responses of the two groups of young people can be compared. Other data such as observations of taster days/residentials, focus groups/interviews with young people, mentors and a survey with referral leads are also collected by the researchers.

The study is not an assessment of individual young people, schools or other referral organisations but is about understanding any impacts of the programme overall.

What is the Positive Pathways intervention?

The Positive Pathways intervention is delivered and run by [Ingeus](#), a global provider that began offering services in the UK from 2002. It is a referral group-based adventure learning and mentoring programme to be delivered across the East and West Midlands, aimed at 15–17¹ year-olds who are at risk of violent offending or are already involved in the Youth Justice System.

Positive Pathways consists of:

- an outdoor taster session to be held locally
- an initial mentoring session

¹ Young people must still be 17 when they agree to take part

- a residential adventure week run by [Action4Youth](#) at their [Caldecott](#) site, either at Easter, the May half term or summer holidays with outdoor activities and input from speakers with lived experience
- two follow-up mentoring sessions
- a graduation/celebration event
- the opportunity for young people to contact their mentor via telephone or email informally outside of scheduled inputs to discuss concerns or to check-in on anything related to the programme.

What do the control group receive?

Those young people allocated to the control group receive a gift voucher (£50) from Ingeus, funded by Sheffield Hallam University, that is considered an enhanced business-as-usual (BAU) offer. This is intended to keep the control group engaged in the research and offer them an attractive alternative to the Positive Pathways intervention. Young people are encouraged to spend their voucher on activities that are enjoyable, such as trips to the cinema, meals out, or supporting arts or sports interests

B. Who is eligible for the Positive Pathways RCT?

There are criteria based on previous behaviour, criminal activities, age, ability and willingness to take part in the trial, place of residence and previous involvement in activities funded by YEF.

Criteria 1: Young people who have either been:

- Convicted of a criminal offence
- Arrested, but have not received a criminal conviction
- Considered at high/medium risk of offending due to demonstrating one or more of the following factors:
 1. Carrying weapons such as knives
 2. Known association with peers known to be involved in criminal activity
 3. Known to have siblings already involved in criminal activity
 4. Displaying overt coercive or violent behaviour
 5. Excluded or at risk of exclusion from mainstream education i.e. persistent absences and suspension due to displaying behaviours including offending, bullying, aggression, violence
 6. Professional concern around or signs of possible criminal exploitation e.g., burner phones, unexplained change in finances, missing episodes
 7. Drug use or possession

- Have had current or previous involvement with youth offending services, the police or probation service either on a voluntary basis (non-statutory), preventative intervention (out of court disposal or diversionary outcome² or court mandated disposal³
- Individuals **will not be excluded based on offence categorisation** instead Ingeus will risk assess everyone to ensure that they are able to keep them, other participants, staff and the public safe whilst they are on the programme, irrespective of any recorded convictions other than for a sexual offence or murder.

Criteria 2: Young people must be:

- 15-17 years old at the point they sign consent
- Living in East or West Midlands

Criteria 3: Young people must be willing to voluntarily engage with and take part in all elements of the Positive Pathways RCT, i.e. give consent, take part in surveys, and other research activities whether in the intervention or control group.

Criteria 4: Young people will **not be eligible** if they are currently serving a custodial sentence or have previously served a custodial sentence for murder or a sexual offence. These are the only exclusion criteria that would be applied if the young person has satisfied the inclusion criteria.

Criteria 5: Young people **will not be eligible** if they are participating (or have previously) in any of the following YEF funded programmes:

- StreetGames (Toward Sport)
- Dallaglio RugbyWorks
- Trauma Informed Schools UK CIC
- National Children's Bureau (Fostering Connections)
- Peer Action Collective (Bringing Hope)
- Knowledge Change Action (More Good Days At School)
- UK Youth (Summer Jobs Programme)
- DfE SAFE Taskforces
- Violence Reduction Network for Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland (Reach Project)
- West Midlands Violence Reduction Unit (Focussed Deterrence)

² for example where a young person has been arrested but not charged

³ statutory – convicted at a magistrates or crown court - this may also reduce some (but not all) concerns around disproportionate policing and potential discrimination. The sole use of statutory orders (those issued through a court) may result in disparity due to the disproportionate number of young people from non-white backgrounds who have had disposal imposed by the Court. The intention is to consider all outcomes including those that have not gone through court process or who have been referred on voluntary basis or where need has been identified for intervention.

- Nottinghamshire Violence Reduction Unit (Focussed Deterrence)
- Alternative Provisions Specialist Task Forces

C. What does a referral to the Positive Pathways RCT mean for young people?

1. **Onboarding** The first step is confirming that a young person meets the criteria in the section above. This is followed by an onboarding meeting with Ingeus staff, the young person and their parents/carers/guardians. At or following this meeting the young person **AND** their parent/carer/guardian **consent** to participation in the research study by filling out online consent forms.
2. **Survey** The next step in the completion of an **online survey**⁴ by the young person about themselves, their behaviour and wellbeing. This is called the baseline survey.
3. **Group allocation** After this is completed, the young people are randomised into either the group that takes part in the Positive Pathways programme OR into the control group. A computer does the randomisation, and the outcomes are nothing to do with the individual, their characteristics or answers to the survey.
4. **Programme participation** The young person takes part in the programme over 5-7 months or receives the control condition.
5. **Survey** When the Positive Pathways programme is completed, and the control group have taken part in the business-as-usual activities, both groups of young people will be asked to complete a further online survey – this is called the endpoint survey. The young people that complete this will receive a £20 high street voucher as a thank you.

D. Responsibilities of Referral Organisations

As a referral route, referrals made by the Police (Neighbourhood, Safeguarding or Community team, school outreach, youth policing) are asked to consider the following:

- Please carefully assess the inclusion/exclusion criteria as outlined in **section B**
- Encourage young people to commit and engage in the research programme, whether in the Positive Pathways or control group

⁴ [*Self-reported offending behaviours \(Self-Report Delinquency Scale SRDS, Volume Score, see Smith & McVie, 2003\). Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire \(SDQ\) total difficulties and pro-social scales, hyperactivity, conduct problems, emotional problems and peer problems subscales \(Goodman, 2005\), ONS Wellbeing Scale \(Dolans & Metcalfe, 2012; ONS, 2018\)*](#)

E. How to refer a young person to the programme

Following careful consideration of the eligibility criteria, please liaise with Ingeus to put forward any young people that you feel qualify to be involved in the trial. This can be done via the website: <https://ingeus.co.uk/services/youth/positive-pathways>

Or via email: positivepathways@Ingeus.co.uk

If it is determined that the young person is eligible for the Positive Pathways RCT will be asked to confirm the following, to the best of your knowledge:

- Young person's name
- Young person's telephone number
- Whether the young person has, to your knowledge, been arrested before
- Whether the young person has, to your knowledge, been convicted of a crime
- Referral route i.e. who you work for

F. Responsibilities of Sheffield Hallam University

Consent and ethics

- The research study has been approved by the SHU ethics panel. Staff will strictly comply with current legislation in relation to data processing, storage.
- Under General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) Article 6, Paragraph 1e, the legal basis for this project is it being a 'public task'. However, in keeping with good research ethical practices, YP and guardian consent will be sought for participation in this programme.
- For any qualitative data, verbal consent will be taken before proceeding.
- SHU will provide an information sheet that makes YP and guardians aware of the expectations underpinning involvement in the trial.

Data

- At all points, SHU is responsible for retrieving and processing data as part of this trial using password protection and secure encrypted transfer methods.
- For the purpose of research, the responses will be linked with information about the pupils from the National Pupil Database and shared with the YEF, the YEF's data processor for their archive and, in an anonymised form, with other research teams and potentially the UK Data Archive.
- All data collected will be anonymised.
- SHU are responsible for the qualitative and quantitative analysis of all the data collected.
- SHU are the data controllers.
- A data sharing agreement will detail the personal data to be shared, and a fair processing notice will be sent to all participating referral organisations as per GDPR requirements.
- Full details of our data protection policies and further links can be found in our fair processing notice that can be accessed at <https://www.shu.ac.uk/about-this-website/privacy-policy>.

G. Next steps and contact details

We hope having reviewed this document, you are keen to refer young people to this programme. We are excited to work closely with them.

What should I do next?

- carefully review Section D on your responsibilities as a referral organisation
- get in touch with Ingeus with the details of the young people you feel are eligible

If you have any questions relating to this document or anything else, please contact:

- Simon Smithson/Emma Watson for queries relating to the delivery of Positive Pathways:
positivepathways@Ingeus.co.uk
- Ben Willis/Dr Josephine Booth for any queries relating to the evaluation on:
Positivepathways@Shu.ac.uk