

# Randomised Controlled Trial -Trauma Informed Schools UK

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Memorandum of Understanding

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For schools participating in the Trauma Informed Schools UK trial.

Once completed, this document should be returned to support@traumainformedschools.co.uk

## Introduction

This information is for schools wishing to take part in the Trauma Informed Schools UK (TISUK) trial in the academic years 23-24 and 24-25. **The aim of this study is to understand the impact of trauma informed practice on young people's outcomes related to behaviour and wellbeing.**

The intervention will be delivered by TISUK; an international provider of training to schools and communities, working to date with over 5000 organisations. The study will be funded by the Youth Endowment fund (YEF) and the independent evaluation will be undertaken by IPSOS in partnership with the University of Kent and TONIC.

The intervention will consist of training courses and support for school staff carried out by TISUK trainers and consultants. The evaluation team will measure the impact of TISUK training on:

- Externalising behaviours of young people
- Psychological distress
- Wellbeing and school connectedness in staff and students
- Exclusions and attendance
- Retention, absences and attitudes to Trauma Informed Practice among staff

Schools that agree to participate in the study are being asked to sign this Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to ensure that the roles and responsibilities of the delivery and evaluation teams are clear to all partners and that schools understand what involvement in the study means for them. **In signing the MoU, schools are confirming that they have read and understood the requirements set out in this document.** Further details about the intervention and associated training can be found in the link below.

<https://www.traumainformedschools.co.uk/summary-of-training-for-intervention-schools>

**The intervention is 'whole school' but the focal year group for the evaluation will be pupils who begin Year 8 in September 2023.**

## The study is a 'randomised controlled trial' (RCT)

In October 2023, eligible schools that have completed the pre-requisites will be **randomly assigned to either a 'control' or 'intervention' group (akin to a 'coin flip')**. This means that each school has a 50:50 chance of being in the intervention condition, but it is the *comparison* between pupils in intervention and control schools that makes the study possible and worthwhile.

Between January 2024 and March 2025, schools assigned to the **intervention** group will be provided with:

- 2x3 hours of training for the entire staff,
- 11 hours of training for 6 senior leaders,
- 7.5 hours of network consultancy meetings,
- 20 hours of reflective supervision for 2 staff members,
- 6 hours of webinar input and discussion for staff and students, and
- 60.5 hours of training for 6 diploma practitioners.

Control schools will be expected to facilitate the collection of data on outcomes which can be compared with outcomes in intervention schools. Schools in both the control and intervention groups will receive a financial incentive of £500 upon completing all data collection along with a results pack outlining the findings. In addition, five schools within the intervention group will be selected for a case study and will receive a further £500.

The RCT aims to measure the impact of TISUK by comparing student and staff outcomes within schools that have received the intervention and control schools that have not. The trial will provide robust evidence informing the education sector about the impact of trauma informed practice and how best to implement it in schools. The

study will collect survey data in all schools in the control and intervention groups at two points in time; in October-November 2023 (before the TISUK training is delivered in intervention schools) and in March-April 2025 (after TISUK training has been delivered in intervention schools). **It is integral that all schools that choose to participate in the study commit to involvement for the duration of the study.**

This study is currently being reviewed by University of Kent ethics board. No data collection will take place until the application has been approved.

## Eligibility criteria

To be eligible for inclusion in the study, schools must meet all of the following criteria:

Eligibility criteria	Check (✓) if condition met
Schools should have pupils in both Year 8 and Year 9	
Schools should not have a staff member who has completed the TISUK 11-day diploma	
Schools should not have received TISUK whole staff training in the last three years	
If a member of staff has completed TISUK SLT or SMHL training, then they should not have made changes to policy or wider staff practice within the school (e.g., staff training around PACE)	
Schools should not be a fee-paying school	
Schools should not be an alternative provision or special school with 'SEMH' focus	
Schools should not be part of an existing randomised controlled trial	

**If your school has received training in trauma informed approaches from an alternative provider within the last three years, then please give details below:**

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If you are not sure if your school fulfils these criteria, then please contact a member of the evaluation or delivery team to discuss (contact details at the end of this form). If your school is eligible and wishes to participate, **the first step is to get this MoU signed by the Headteacher and another contact who will lead the project within the school** and returned via email to the delivery team.

For a school to be officially part of the study and considered for randomisation there are further requirements that must also be fulfilled (detailed below). **Owing to high levels of interest in the trial, schools will be enrolled in the study on a first-come, first-served basis.** (Note that pre-requisites relate *solely* to inclusion in the study, not getting the TISUK training since the intervention is allocated via 'coin flip' as noted above.)

## If your school is eligible...read on...

### Roles and responsibilities

There are three 'actors' involved in making this study successful: **schools**, the **delivery team** and the **evaluation team**. For the study to work, each actor must understand their responsibilities and undertake their tasks as required. Schools are, of course, crucial to all of this so we need to be as clear and up-front as possible about what schools need to do in the lead-up to, and when participating in, the study.

The school's responsibilities along with the roles and responsibilities of the delivery and evaluation teams are detailed below. Following the description of the schools' role, we set out the pre-requisites for inclusion in the study – tasks that schools need to complete before they can be part of the project.

## Roles and responsibilities for all schools (both those in intervention and control group) to enable the study activities to take place:

Schools in both the intervention and control group will be required to complete the following activities to ensure satisfactory administration of the study:

- Assign a key contact to liaise with the evaluation team and TISUK delivery team.
- Distribute privacy notices and parental opt-out forms as directed by the evaluation team.
- Administer surveys to all school staff and all students presently in Year 8 at agreed time points (see table below).
- Agree to share school and pupil level information about demographics, SEND, exclusions, attendance, eligibility for Free School Meals and number of looked after children.
- Agree to share school level data regarding staff retention and absence numbers.
- Notify the delivery and evaluation teams in a timely manner if the school needs to withdraw from the trial for operational or other unavoidable reasons. Wherever possible, evaluation data should still be provided.
- In schools within the **control group**, one key staff member will be asked to complete a BAU survey to gather essential information regarding mental health, wellbeing, and trauma-informed training available to school staff.
- Schools within the **control group** will agree not to undertake training from Trauma Informed Schools UK for the duration of the study (until June 2025).

## Additional roles and responsibilities for schools allocated to the intervention group to enable the TISUK activities to take place:

It is important to keep in mind that the intervention consists of six different training elements. If your school is allocated to the **intervention group**, you will be expected to support the intervention in the following ways:

- Ensure that all staff attend the 3 hour online whole staff trainings in Spring 2024 and Autumn 2025. There will be a minimum of ten different dates available for each and so how this is facilitated will be up to each school.
- Consider carefully TISUK guidance about choosing staff to undertake the 11-day practitioner diploma and support at least 5 to do this (this number may be less for a particularly small school).
- Ensure that at least 4 members of SLT attend the 2-day Senior Lead Training in Spring 24 (there will be multiple dates available and members of SLT do not all need to attend the same training).
- Ensure that SLT attend three termly network consultancy meetings and complete school based audits/checklist regarding implementation of trauma informed practice.
- Ensure that all staff and pupils have the opportunity to watch three webinars provided by TISUK and all staff watch the webinar: *Conversation that matter: From Racial trauma and discrimination in schools and communities, to respecting and celebrating difference and diversity.*
- Enable at least one member of staff to complete the 4-day reflective supervision workshop and implement a reflective model across your setting.
- Provide a list of pupils who have received targeted support from staff who have completed the TISUK 11-day practitioner diploma.

## Roles & responsibilities of the delivery team: Trauma Informed Schools UK

As part of the delivery of the intervention, the delivery team is responsible for the actions below to allow activities to take place:

- Recruiting schools.
- Distributing and collecting participation documents from schools (EOIs, MoUs)
- Providing schools with information to explain the purpose/design of the intervention. This will include holding information sessions for interested schools and providing guidance on which staff should attend which training.
- Providing whole staff, SLT, diploma and reflective supervision trainings to school staff as well as facilitating network consultancy meetings and providing schools with webinars.

- Liaising with any school staff who were unable to attend a training due to sickness and where possible, facilitating them accessing the missed content on a different course.
- Ensuring that all TISUK trainers and consultants follow guidance set out in our safeguarding policy and that any serious safeguarding concerns/incidents that arise during project delivery will be reported to YEF as per their safeguarding policy.
- Providing a contact for all participating schools staff for a support desk service at any time [support@traumainformedschools.co.uk].

## **Roles & responsibilities of the evaluation team: Ipsos UK, TONIC and the University of Kent**

The evaluation team will design and conduct the study and collect all relevant data and is thus responsible for the actions below:

- The random assignment of schools to intervention and control groups.
- Acting as the first point of contact for any questions about the evaluation and providing ongoing guidance to schools via a dedicated School Liaison Officer (Ipsos), to answer questions from schools and support the administration of data collection activities.
- Providing information about the trial for parents of participating pupils.
- Developing primary data collection tools (student survey & staff survey), administration instructions and other guidance.
- Conducting baseline and end of study surveys with school staff.
- Conducting case study visits to 5 schools during the trial.
- Monitoring changes in policy and school operating environment to identify whether external factors may influence schools' capacity to engage with the study or influence outcomes between baseline and follow-up periods.
- Collecting school and pupil level data including names, demographics, SEND, exclusions, attendance, eligibility for Free School Meals, staff retention and staff absence.
- Providing financial incentives to schools that complete evaluation activities.
- Organising a Data Sharing Agreement to be put in place with schools.
- Leading data analysis and disseminating research findings through YEF report and conferences and academic papers.

## Overview and timings for the Evaluation and Delivery of the Intervention

Year→ Term →	Academic year 2023/24			Academic year 2024/25			Responsibility: Evaluation Team (E) or Delivery team (D)
	T1	T2	T3	T1	T2	T3	
Activity↓							
Recruitment of schools	✓						D
Randomisation	✓						E
BAU survey (C)			✓	✓			E
“Baseline” pupil survey (I/C)	✓						E
“Follow-up” pupil survey (I/C)					✓		E
“Baseline” staff survey (I/C)	✓						E
“Follow-up” staff survey (I/C)					✓		E
Staff interviews (I)*			✓	✓			E
Case studies (I) *					✓	✓	E
Whole school training (I)		✓		✓			D
11-day practitioner diploma (I)		✓	✓	✓			D
SLT 2-day training (I)		✓	✓				D
Network consultancy meetings (I)			✓	✓	✓		D
Webinar content (I)				✓	✓		D
Reflective supervision training (I)				✓	✓		D

\*IPE activities consist of qualitative data collection in schools. Case studies will be done on 5 schools selected within schools in the intervention arm.

Research activity     Programme activity

Throughout the study, we will collect data for the evaluation. It is important to keep in mind that **both intervention and control schools will need to engage with the pupil and staff surveys.**

Only **intervention schools** will be invited to participate in an Implementation and Process Evaluation (IPE) undertaken in parallel to the trial (the RCT). The IPE aims to assess how well trauma-informed practice is implemented throughout schools. This will involve a series of longitudinal interviews with two staff members

from 10 schools, alongside case studies with 5 schools, with each case study comprising interviews and focus groups with students and interviews with staff who have taken part in the programme. It is not compulsory for schools to participate in the IPE, individual participants must opt-in to the qualitative activities part of the IPE.

## Pre-requisites to be considered for randomisation

This table shows the steps a school needs to take before they can be included in the randomisation (which is the point at which the school is officially 'in' the study).

Pre-requisites to be considered for randomisation:
MoU signed by Head + at least 1 other staff member who will lead administration of data collection activities and be the key contact for evaluation team
School staff informed about the study
Parental opt-out forms distributed (and collected where applicable)
"Baseline" staff online survey administered in October
"Baseline" student survey administered in October

**Informing parents.** Schools will need to distribute **opt-out consent letters**, drafted by the evaluation team, to parents of children in participating schools e.g. via Parentmail (schools are free to send out on their own headed paper). Note that in nearly all YEF-funded school-based projects, pupils are automatically enrolled in the study so their parent/guardian has to return the opt-out letter with an indication if they would like their child withdrawn from the study. Two weeks before any data collection, schools will confirm that the opt-out letter has been sent to parents. Once the study is underway, a list of opted-out pupils (if there are any) will need to be returned to the evaluation team, and these pupils will not be asked to complete any surveys.

**School staff 'baseline' survey.** All staff will need to be informed about the study in advance and will be given the option to withdraw from the dataset. However, schools are asked to encourage all staff to complete the anonymous surveys as these will be used for the trial. **Before a school can be randomised, at least 80% of school staff must have completed the baseline staff survey.** Participating schools are expected to support these surveys by distributing the survey link assigned to each school.

**Schools will be asked to provide administrative data to support the study.** Data Sharing Agreements between Ipsos UK, TISUK, TONIC, and the University of Kent are in place to ensure that this happens in a way that maintains security of data. Providing data, therefore, relies on schools consenting to the sharing of data with the intervention and the research team. The evaluation team will develop data sharing agreements (DSAs) with schools to enable sharing of school administration data including pupil level data including names, demographics, SEND, exclusions, attendance, eligibility for Free School Meals, staff retention and staff absence will. This will be provided to schools in late 2023.

## Data protection

The evaluation team will collect and store all study data in accordance with the Data Protection Act (1998). All child data and any other personal data used for the project will be treated with the strictest confidence and will be used and stored in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) (2018) and the Data Protection Act (2018). Study data will be stored on secure servers. Data transferred between the delivery and evaluation teams containing any identifying information will be passphrase encrypted. Data transferred between schools and the evaluation team will be via encrypted files or secure file transfer.

No-one who participates in the study will be named in any publications arising from the study and results will be presented on aggregate. Schools will have the option of allowing their participation in the study to be known.

The selected legal bases for processing personal and special data align with the public task basis under the UK General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). The Evaluation team (Ipsos UK, Tonic and the University of Kent) is the **joint data controller** and is committed to conducting the evaluation in the public interest and exercising official authority vested in the controller. The collection and processing of personal and special data are

essential for this trial's research and statistical purposes. The overarching goal is to contribute to children's and young people's and school staff's well-being

All respondents to trial surveys and questionnaires will be provided with an option to withdraw personal data from the study up until July 2025. This will be outlined within the Privacy Notices and information sheets. Please refer to the Privacy Notice below which outlines how personal data will be collected, processed and secured.



Privacy Notice.docx

In addition to assessing the impact of our projects over this evaluation period, YEF also wish to evaluate the long-impact of TISUK in the future. At the end of the study, data collected will have any identifiable information removed and stored in a secure Data Archive. This data might be analysed in the future along with data from other sources. This may include, for example, assessing whether children and young people who took part in YEF-funded projects were less likely to be excluded from school or get involved in crime in the future.

This process involves sharing the data with the Department for Education who replace all personal data with their unique Pupil Matching Reference Number, and all personal data is then deleted. The YEF Data Archive is held in the Office for National Statistics Secure Research Service. Further information on the Data Archive can be found here: <https://youthendowmentfund.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/YEF-Data-Guidance-Participants.pdf>



## Signature – Agreement for school to participate

In order to participate in this study, schools must ensure that this MoU is signed by the Headteacher and an additional member of staff who will be the lead contact for the trial. This document should then be emailed to the delivery team (support@traumainformedschools.co.uk)

By signing this memorandum of understanding we:

- (i) **confirm** that we have read and understood the eligibility requirements for this study and that we fulfil all applicable eligibility requirements;
- (ii) **confirm** that we have read and understood the pre-requisites for participating in this study and that we commit to completing these in order to be included in the study;
- (iii) **confirm** that we have read this document and the privacy notice, understand and agree that pupil data will be processed under the legal basis of public task
- (iv) **confirm** that we have read and understood the section above that sets out ‘roles and responsibilities’ for the evaluation team, the delivery team and schools;
- (v) **agree** to engage with the evaluation and delivery teams to facilitate the study tasks;

School Name and Address:			
Number of pupils in school:			
Number of staff:			
Number of staff in SLT:			
Is your school part of a Multi-Academy Trust?			
Head Teacher Name:			
Head Teacher Signature:		Date	__ / __ / __
Head Teacher Email Address:			
School Lead Contact Name:			
School Lead Signature:		Date	__ / __ / __
School Lead Contact Email Address:			
School Telephone Number:			

Space for notes about the study/questions/reminders:

Evaluation Team (IPSOS) contact:	Lottie Hayes – <a href="mailto:Lottie.Hayes@ipsos.com">Lottie.Hayes@ipsos.com</a>
Delivery Team (TISUK) contact:	Rowan Jones 01752 278477 support@traumainformedschools.co.uk

