



# Strategy

2020 - 2029

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# Introducing the Youth Endowment Fund

**The Youth Endowment Fund is a charity with a £200m endowment and a mission that matters. We exist to prevent children and young people becoming involved in violence.**

Over the past few years there's been a significant increase in serious violence. The number of offences by children involving knives has risen. And as violent crime has grown, so too has the number of children and young people being recorded as victims.

This is a tragedy that's devastating to individuals, families and communities. But it isn't inevitable – it's preventable. As a society we have a duty to protect all children and young people from harm, especially those most at risk.

The **Youth Endowment Fund** is committed to making change happen to keep children and young people safe. Often people who care about young people feel they know what needs to be done to improve things, but nothing changes. Why is this? There are three reasons.

It's partly because it isn't clear enough – especially to those with power and influence – what it is that works. That's why we'll use our resources to fund and evaluate promising work that intervenes early in the lives of children and young people, so we can show what's effective and what isn't.

It's partly because knowledge about how best to support children isn't easy to access. That's why we will do everything we can to make sure the knowledge about what works best is easy to find, easy to understand and easier to apply. And we'll listen to children and young people themselves, to build a deep understanding of their lives.

It's partly because there haven't always been strong enough networks – cutting across the youth sector, education, children's social care, mental health and the police – striving together for change. That's why we'll work hard to build these networks and connections, so that we don't just produce reports that sit on a shelf. We'll work with everyone who cares about children and young people to build a consensus about what needs to happen.

In all of this, we will also never forget why we are here – to make sure that all children and young people across the country can live a life free from violent crime. We know that together we can make things better.

#### Sources:

[Crest Advisory](#). *Serious violence in context: Understanding the scale and nature of serious violence*.

[Youth Justice Board](#). *Youth justice statistics: 2018 to 2019*.

[NHS Digital](#). *Hospital admitted patient care statistics (various years). Admissions where the external cause was assault with a sharp object (code X994)*.





# Our vision, mission and commitment to equality

## Our vision

A world where no child or young person becomes involved in violence.

## Our mission

We're here to prevent children and young people becoming involved in violence. We do this by finding out what works and building a movement to put this knowledge into practice.

## Our commitment to equality

Children and young people from marginalised backgrounds – including Black and Asian children and young people and children with experience of the care system – are significantly overrepresented in the youth justice system. If we don't work alongside our partners to understand and address this inequality, we can't achieve our mission. We know that we can do better and we're determined to be part of the solution. We'll strive to make sure that our staff, our partnerships, our governance and our funding reaches and represents the children we are here to serve.

# Our approach

**The Youth Endowment Fund is a charity with a ten-year £200m endowment, focused on keeping young people safe from violence. The endowment is significant, but so too is the work to be done.**

We know that to make a lasting difference we must do more than just fund and evaluate promising programmes. We need to establish consensus about what works and build a movement around making sure that young people get the very best support possible. And we need to gather and share the evidence that shows the urgent need for change.

Together we can then look to change not just programmes and practice, but the the policies and systems that let too many young people down.

To do this well, we will follow five principles in our work.



## We will DEEPLY UNDERSTAND YOUNG PEOPLE'S LIVES

We will listen to young people, including those with experience of violence. We will give them a stake in our decision-making. Their experiences and opinions will build our understanding and, together with research, will influence the choices we make. We will make sure that all young people who contribute are properly rewarded and supported.

## We will FOCUS ON EARLY INTERVENTION

We want to prevent children becoming involved in violence. That's why our focus is on intervening early to support children and young people – especially those aged between 10 and 14-years old.

## We will WORK OUT WHAT WORKS

We will evaluate, test and research the most effective ways to support children and young people at risk of becoming involved in violence. In building and sharing this knowledge together, we will help people in power make good decisions based on evidence. And we'll help everyone to use the best approaches and share what works.

## We will ACHIEVE LASTING CHANGE

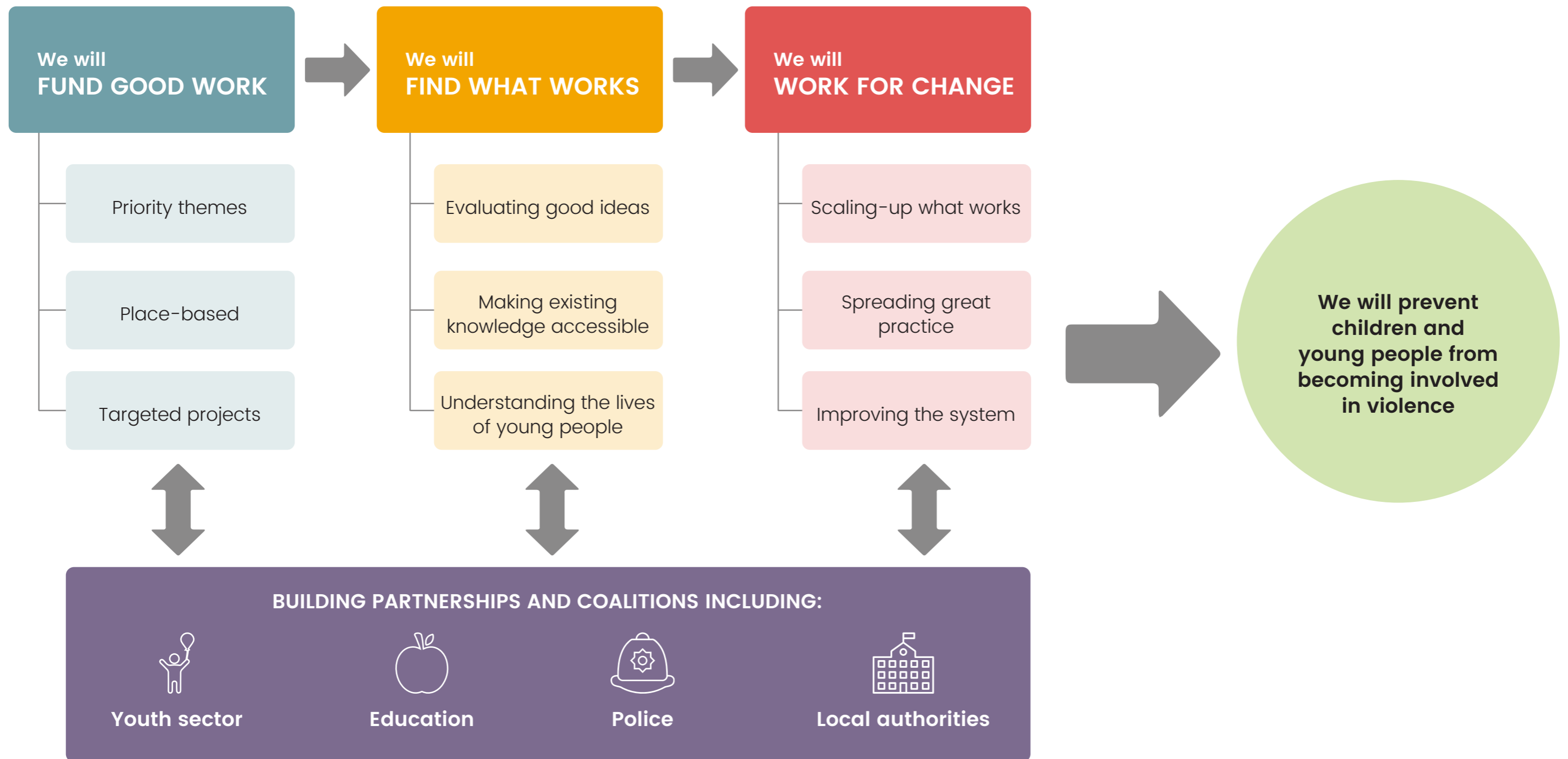
We won't be happy just producing reports. We will work with anyone who cares about keeping children and young people safe to put what works into practice.

## We will WORK WITH OTHERS

We will partner with organisations who work to keep children safe and want their decisions to be based on the best available knowledge. We can't achieve our mission alone. Together we can make things better.

# Making change happen

We will work to make significant and lasting change for children, young people, families and communities. Here's how we will do it.



# We will fund good work

**We will fund work in England and Wales that aims to prevent children and young people from becoming involved in violence. It is important to understand why we will do this. We fund activity to learn how it works. We will use this knowledge to work for lasting change not just short-term funding.**

## Priority themes

If we want to change things, we will have to focus. That's why much of our funding will be on a series of priority themes, one or two at any one time. These might include churn of staff in social care, criminal exploitation, school absences or detached youth work. How will we choose our themes? We'll focus on areas where change is possible, where we can learn about what works and build a coalition with those who want to do things differently.

## Place-based

We know that a lot of violent crime happens in very specific local areas. To make a difference, we need to work with the people and organisations who live and work there; they know their communities best. That's why we'll work closely with them through our Neighbourhood Fund. Together, we'll build a better understanding about what's happening locally and test out the approaches that'll work best for the area. We also know how important it is that agencies and services working with young people share information, data and power. So we'll fund activity to help them work together. And we'll do all we can to help Violence Reduction Units make sustainable, evidence-based change in their areas.

## Targeted projects

Sometimes there will be promising projects that don't fit into our priority themes or our place-based funding. We won't ignore these. If we identify practices that are widely used but as yet untested, we will provide the resources to evaluate and learn from them.

## Funding partnerships

Our funding will make a difference. But we will be able to achieve so much more by working together. That's why we will be looking to partner with like-minded funders to fund great work, learn what works and work for change together.





# We will find what works

Put simply, not enough is known about the best ways to protect children and young people from becoming involved in violence. Evidence in the UK is limited and hard to find. On top of this, far too little is known and understood about the difficulties faced by many young people or how to build on their strengths and talents. This needs to change. That's why we're focused on building knowledge of what works and getting this insight into the hands of decision makers.

## Evaluating good ideas

We will evaluate every programme and activity that we fund. The aim is to find out what works, for whom and why. We will work closely with our grantees and evaluators to design robust and proportionate evaluations. None of this will matter though if the results are hard to understand. Everything we learn will be easily available. We'll explain what we've found in plain English.

## Making existing knowledge more accessible

We want to make it much easier to find the information you need when making decisions about how best to keep young people safe. We will summarise existing research about what works and make it easy to find, easy to understand and easy to use. We will also work to understand what data everyone needs when making decisions and look to find ways to make it easier to access and apply.

## Understanding the lives of young people

We want to change things to make children and young people safer. Knowing which programmes and practices work is critical to this. But just as important is finding out about children and young people's lives. We will work to have a better understanding of children, young people and their families. We will examine the impact of discrimination and inequality, including racism and poverty, as well as the role of families and peer relationships. We all need to hear their voices, understand their needs and make sure decisions are informed by their experience.

## The Youth Endowment Fund Toolkit

We'll bring together information on the effectiveness of different approaches, practices and programmes in a single, accessible online resource. This resource will help guide decision makers on which services or approaches are most likely to keep young people safe.



# We will work for change

**We will build a movement of people and organisations throughout England and Wales passionate about keeping children safe. Together we will spread and scale what we know to work and challenge the policies and systems which lead to ineffective outcomes and investment.**

## Scaling up what works

When an activity is shown to be effective, we will look to expand it. We will help organisations strengthen their internal structures and capacity, so they're ready to scale up their work. That could include expanding their existing provision or replicating programmes in new locations across their networks.

## Spreading great practice

When a practice is shown to be effective, we will work with others to spread it. We will build networks and coalitions of people and organisations who are passionate about spreading ideas that work. We will look to provide the best possible evidence on what does work and then work together to spread great practice.

## Improving the system

Sometimes what will be needed are changes to the system itself. We will need to work together to change the structures, processes or institutional biases that decide how and where resources are directed and how children and their families are supported. Where there's evidence that change is needed, we will work with others to make that happen. Sometimes this will be hard, sometimes it may make us unpopular. We will always seek to put children and young people first and ask what is needed to keep them safe.

## Coalitions and networks

None of this will be possible alone. It will only be possible if we come together and work for the change we want to see. We'll build partnerships and coalitions with those who are passionate about protecting the children most at risk and want their decisions to be based on the best available evidence. Their knowledge, ideas and networks will shape our work and influence the decisions we make. Alone we can't make children any safer. Together we can make a difference.



# Our partners

The Youth Endowment Fund is an independent charitable trust overseen by Impetus, in partnership with the Early Intervention Foundation and Social Investment Business.



## Impetus

Impetus transforms the lives of young people from disadvantaged backgrounds by ensuring they get the right support to succeed in school, in work and in life. They find, fund and build the most promising charities working with these young people, providing core funding and working shoulder-to-shoulder with their leaders to help them become stronger organisations. In partnership with other funders they help their charities expand and influence policy and decision makers so that all young people get the support they need.

[www.impetus.org.uk](http://www.impetus.org.uk)



## Early Intervention Foundation

The Early Intervention Foundation champions and supports the use of effective early intervention to improve the lives of children and young people at risk of experiencing poor outcomes. Its work focuses on the developmental issues that can arise during a child's life, from birth to the age of 18, including their physical, cognitive, behavioural, social and emotional development.

[www.eif.org.uk](http://www.eif.org.uk)



## Social Investment Business

Social Investment Business provides finance to create fairer communities and improve people's lives. They do this by providing the money and support they need directly, partnering to support them effectively and using their knowledge to inform their own work and influence others.

Since 2004, SIB has deployed £400m of loans and grants into over 2,000 organisations and supported 1,000 more through programmes.

[www.sibgroup.org.uk](http://www.sibgroup.org.uk)



## The What Works Network

The Youth Endowment Fund is part of the What Works Network, an initiative to improve the way government and other public sector organisations create, share and use high quality evidence in decision-making. It supports more effective and efficient services across the public sector at national and local levels.



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