



# **Targeted projects**

## **Guidance**

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# 1. About us

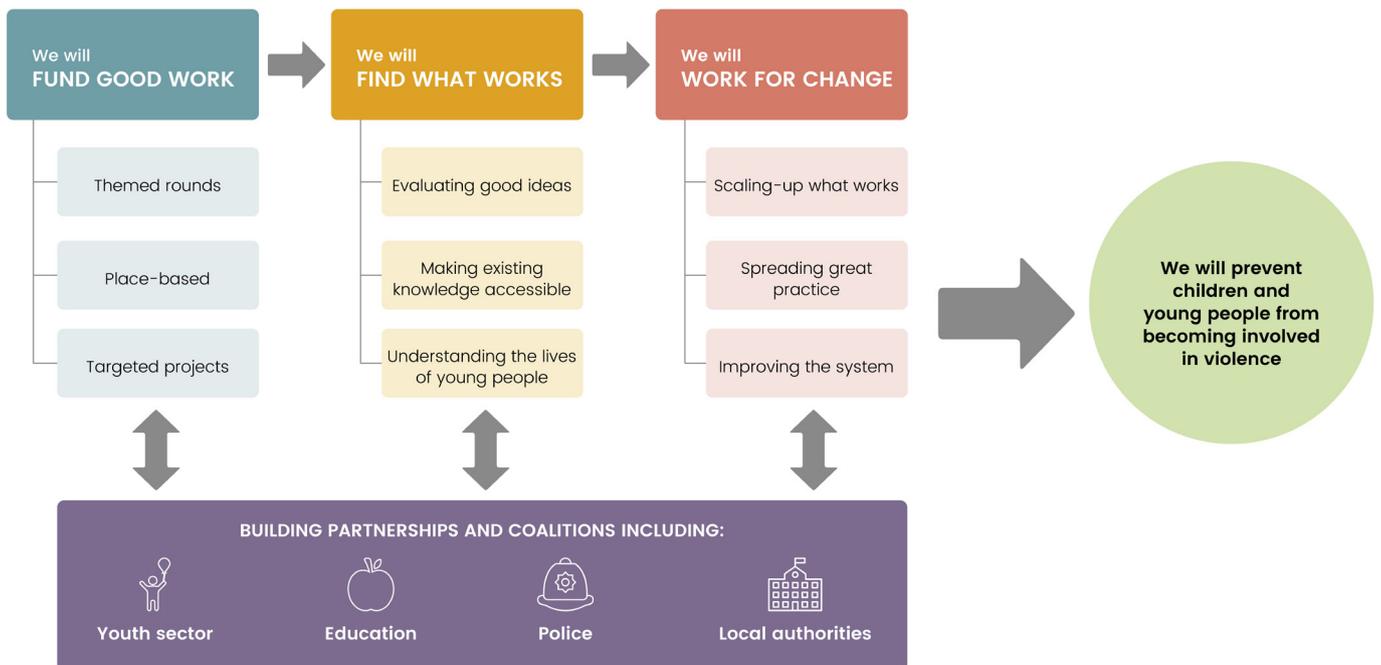
The Youth Endowment Fund (YEF) is a charity with a mission that matters. We exist to prevent children and young people becoming involved in violence. We do this by finding out what works and building a movement to put this knowledge into practice.

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 activity.

And just as important is understanding children and young people's lives. Through our Youth Advisory Board and national network of peer researchers, we'll ensure they influence our work and 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.

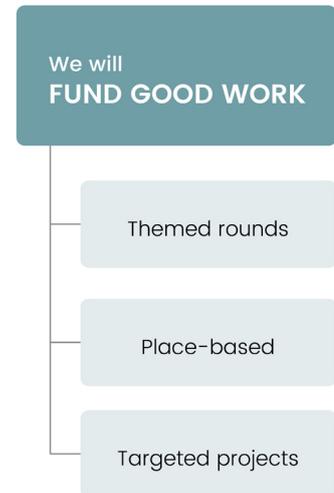
Our strategy sets out how we'll do it. At its heart it says that we will fund good work, find what works and work for change. You can read it [here](#).



## 2. This guidance

As our [strategy](#) says, we'll fund good work in three ways:

- 1 Themed rounds.** We'll focus much of our funding on a series of themed rounds, one or two at any one time.
- 2 Place-based.** We'll focus on specific areas where violent crime is high. We'll build partnerships with local people and organisations through our **Neighbourhood Fund** to create and test approaches aimed at addressing local challenges. And we'll help local agencies to share power and information through a dedicated **Agency Collaboration Fund**.
- 3 Targeted projects.** If we identify interventions and approaches that don't fit into the themed rounds or place-based funding but are widely used or promising with the potential to scale, we will provide the resources to fund, evaluate and learn from them.



This document is focused on the third of these: **targeted projects**. It:

- Explains the eligibility and assessment criteria for our **targeted projects** funding.
- Sets out the process to apply for **targeted projects** funding.
- Explains our approach to evidence and knowledge and what it means to be a YEF grantee.

### 3. Targeted projects: eligibility and assessment criteria

#### Eligibility

Organisations can apply for targeted projects funding against two strands of activity. Across both strands there is a requirement for organisations to have significant match funding. This can include in-kind contributions or previously secured grant funding. For example, if project staff time is already paid for – by you, a partner or other funder – those staff costs will count as match funding. We are also open to applications from organisations that have secured all delivery costs and are only seeking YEF support to cover the evaluation. In this instance, all delivery costs will count as match funding.

If you are applying for YEF to cover only the cost of evaluation, we do not need you to know the exact costs for that at this stage. We will help you work that out as part of the next stage of the application process (the co-design phase).

1

**Strand one:** To fund and evaluate **popular and commonly used interventions and approaches** to better understand their effectiveness. Projects applying under this strand must:

- Be able to clearly explain what the project involves and how the activity achieves its intended impact. This is sometimes called a **theory of change**, which is a method to help describe long-term goals and map backwards to explain how an intervention will get you there.
- Be actively reaching hundreds of children each year in England and/or Wales.

2

**Strand two:** To fund and evaluate **promising interventions and approaches** that draw on good evidence and have the potential for impact at scale. Projects applying under this strand must:

- Be able to draw on evidence to clearly explain what the project involves and how the activity achieves its intended impact (**a theory of change**).
- Be willing and likely to deliver to hundreds of children within two years.

We may also need to see existing evidence that your project is likely to achieve the outcomes set out in your theory of change. The level of evidence required will depend on:

- How long you have been delivering your activity.
- Its scale.
- The size of grant you are applying for.
- Whether you are seeking YEF funding towards delivery costs, evaluation costs or both.

For example, if your programme is already fully funded and you are applying to YEF to fund a robust evaluation, the level of evidence you need may be lower as we are keen to help generate evidence on approaches that are already widespread.

### Useful resources

We have some useful resources you can use to think about the evidence and how it applies to your project:

- For an introduction to what we know about what works, read our [What Works briefing](#).
- To find where studies do – and don't – exist, you can use the [YEF Evidence and Gap Map](#). It's the world's largest resource mapping evidence on what works to keep children safe from involvement in violence.

Applicants across both strands must be willing to work with one of our approved evaluation partners to take part in a robust independent evaluation (like a randomised control trial or quasi-experimental design). This doesn't mean that we won't consider applications at an earlier stage of evaluation, but we will look for projects that would be ready for a robust trial within at least two years.



We explain more about what we mean by existing evidence in [Section 5: Our approach to evidence and knowledge](#) and what it means to be a YEF grantee.



There is no minimum or maximum grant amount, but **we are unlikely to fund projects which have a total value of less than £500,000.**

## Understanding the child's journey

We're still developing our evaluation strategy for our place-based and system change work. This means that before winter 2021, we are most interested in applications that focus on the delivery of a specific intervention. We are most interested in applications that can clearly and consistently describe the activity that each child will receive.

We want to understand the 'journey' the child will go on: what support will they receive, in what order, from the start of our funding to the end of our funding. Recognising that there will sometimes need to be flexibility in this timeline and the approach to meet the child's needs.

This means that we are currently:

- Looking for applications that describe very clearly the experience and the timeline from the child's point of view. What do they experience, in what order? This is likely to be easier to achieve if your application describes a single, consistent journey for most young people. For example, they all attend a series of CBT sessions weekly, whilst also meeting with a mentor fortnightly.
- Less interested in funding applications that are vague or from the practitioner's point of view. For example, if you tell us that you will provide mentoring, youth clubs and detached youth work, but you don't explain the journey from the point of view of the child. We would want to understand that the child builds a relationship of trust with someone through detached youth work, is offered the chance to join a weekly youth group and a weekly mentoring meeting, which they take up and attend most weeks for a year.
- Less interested – in this round – in funding activity that is not a direct intervention with young people, for example, changes to the system (we will be very interested in this in later rounds).

We are only likely to make up to **five targeted project grants each year**. Applications will be therefore assessed both individually and competitively against other proposals submitted during the same rolling period. We will prioritise applications from organisations that:

- Are reaching the highest number of children across multiple regions (strand one).
- Are ready for large scale trials earlier.
- Have the greatest potential to achieve change at scale. This could be through you directly scaling up your programme, others learning from what you do or by your programme leading to a change in the system.
- Have secured significant match funding.

### We can only fund organisations that:

- Are registered, for example, a registered charity, company or CIC or who are a statutory agency.
- Are requesting funding for work in England and/or Wales.
- Believe their work reduces the likelihood of young people becoming involved in violence later in life.
- Are willing to work with an independent evaluation partner to learn more about what does – and doesn't – work to reduce youth violence.
- Are willing to track the long-term impact of their work. Our independent evaluators do this by safely collecting participant's names and addresses and storing it in our secure data archive. To find out more about the data we'll collect, how we'll store it and how we'll keep it safe, you can read the FAQs and guidance on [our website](#).
- Meet the targeted projects [eligibility criteria](#).
- Are already actively reaching hundreds of children each year in England and/or Wales (strand one) or are willing and likely to reach hundreds of children each year within two years (strand two).
- Have match funding. This can include in-kind contributions or previously secured grant funding. For example, if project staff time is already paid for – by you, a partner or other funder – those staff costs will count as match funding. We are also open to applications from organisations that have secured all delivery costs and are only seeking YEF support to cover the evaluation. In this instance, all delivery costs will count as match funding.

The YEF's core focus is on children aged between 10 and 14, however we will also consider strong proposals focused on children outside of this age range, from ages 6 to 18. We are unlikely to fund projects that have a very broad age range, as they are difficult to evaluate.



If you would like to talk to us before submitting your proposal to get a steer on whether it is likely to be a strong fit, please email us to arrange a call on [targetedprojects@youthendowmentfund.org.uk](mailto:targetedprojects@youthendowmentfund.org.uk).

## Assessment criteria

When we're making decisions about which applications to fund, we'll use ten criteria to help us choose projects that best fit with our programme aims, have a great plan, strong capability to deliver it and have secured matched funding.

What we are looking for	What this means to us	Description in more detail
<b>Eligible programmes</b>	Strong fit with programme aims	Your programme has a strong fit with our targeted project <a href="#">eligibility criteria</a> .
<b>A great plan</b>	A worthwhile outcome	<p>You are aiming to change things that are likely to ultimately reduce the risk of young people becoming involved in violence, such as:</p> <p><b>Offending outcomes:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Reduced violent offences, e.g. assault</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Reduced non-violence offences, e.g. weapon carrying or drug offences</a></li> </ul> <p><b>Behavioural outcomes:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Improved academic attainment</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Reduced aggression</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Reduced alcohol use/misuse</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Reduced bullying perpetration</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Reduced behavioural problems, e.g. fighting, stealing, vandalism</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Reduced drug use/misuse</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Reduced gang involvement</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Improved school engagement</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Improved school attendance / reduced truancy</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Reduced school exclusions</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Reduced victimisation</a></li> </ul> <p><b>Psychosocial and cognitive outcomes:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Reduced impulsivity</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Improved self-esteem</a></li> </ul>
	Planned activity is likely to achieve target outcome	You are delivering an intervention that is likely to achieve the outcomes you are aiming at. We will prioritise projects where you can show us evidence.
	Aiming to reach the right type of young people	You are aiming to reach the young people who are most likely to be at risk of becoming involved in youth violence.
	Likely to lead to change	If what you deliver is shown to be effective, it is possible that it could reach many more young people (either through you scaling up, others learning from what you do or a change in the system).
<b>Strong capability to deliver the plan</b>	Likely to reach the right type of young people	You are likely to be able to reach and work with the type of young people you aim to work with.
	Able to deliver	You are likely to be able to deliver the plan you have laid out.
	Able to deliver at the required scale	You will be able to deliver at the size that you propose.
<b>Evaluable</b>	We can evaluate what you do	You are committed to understanding more about your programme. You are collaborative about working with us and an independent evaluator to rigorously evaluate your programme at scale, such as through a randomised control trial.
<b>In-kind or match funding</b>	You have funding or in-kind support committed.	You have secured grant funding or in-kind contributions. For example, if project staff time is already paid for - by you, a partner or other funder - this will count as match funding. We are also open to applications from organisations that have secured all delivery costs and are only seeking YEF support to cover the evaluation. In this instance, all delivery costs will count as match funding.

## 4. Targeted projects: application process

Due to YEF's approach to evidence and understanding, the application process can take up to six months to complete. If your project is time sensitive, for example you are only applying for evaluation costs for a programme due to begin within the next six months, email us to arrange a call to discuss your proposal before applying.

We are likely to only make up to five targeted project grants each year. We are therefore looking for those operating at the greatest scale (under strand one) and those with the greatest potential (under strand two). If you would like to talk to us before submitting your proposal to get a steer on whether it is likely to be a strong fit, please email us to arrange a call on [targetedprojects@youthendowmentfund.org.uk](mailto:targetedprojects@youthendowmentfund.org.uk).

### Step 1: Confirm eligibility

- Read this document.
- Complete the targeted projects online [eligibility checker](#) to confirm you are eligible to apply.



### Step 2: Initial proposal

- Send a proposal (no longer than one page) setting out which strand you are applying for, your funding request, proposed timeline of activity and how you meet the programme [assessment criteria](#) to [targetedprojects@youthendowmentfund.org.uk](mailto:targetedprojects@youthendowmentfund.org.uk).
- We will email within six weeks to confirm if you have been successful at the initial proposal stage.
- If you are successful, we will send you guidance to complete a full application.



### Step 3: Full application

- Complete the full application.
- We will email within eight weeks to confirm if you have been successful at this stage.
- If you are successful, we will be in touch to arrange for any further information required to take your proposal forward to our Grants and Evaluation Committee.



## Step 4: Committee Review

- Successful applications will be taken forward for review at our quarterly Grants and Evaluation Committee. We will let you know the date your application is due to be reviewed and will update you on the outcome within one week of that date.



## Step 5: Evaluation design

- All YEF funded programmes must be independently evaluated.

We will work with all applicants to design an evaluation which works for you and your project. Designing an evaluation normally requires your proposed project plan to be adapted in some way. We don't expect you to have a clear idea of how your programme could be evaluated when you apply. But you will have to work with us to shape your project so that it can be robustly evaluated by one of our approved evaluation partners.

This may involve, for instance, adjusting some elements of delivery, or delivering your programme on a larger scale than you initially proposed. To enable this to happen, programmes will need to engage in an extensive co-design process which may take up to three months (depending on the size and complexity of your programme).

We're looking to work with partners who are committed to understanding more about their programme, and who are collaborative about working with us and an independent evaluator. It's important that everyone's happy with the agreed project and evaluation design before any delivery starts. We wouldn't be able to go ahead with the project otherwise.

We will also try to understand how your programme works. Alongside the impact evaluation, the independent evaluation team will conduct a detailed process evaluation. This usually involves speaking to participants in depth, conducting surveys, interviews, and case studies to learn as much as possible about your approach.



## Step 6: Committee Review

- Once YEF, you and your appointed evaluator are happy with the evaluation design, we will make a final recommendation to our YEF Grants and Evaluation Committee for approval.
- The Committee may come back with clarification questions which we will work through with you and your appointed evaluator.
- If the Committee approves your grant award and evaluation design, we will share a draft grant agreement for your review and signature.



## 5. Our approach to evidence and knowledge and what it means to be a YEF grantee

### Our commitment to finding out what works

The Youth Endowment Fund exists 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.

To do this, we not only need to find and fund great interventions and approaches, we also need to evaluate them as rigorously as possible. In our targeted projects, we'll prioritise applications from projects that are either already delivering at scale to reduce or prevent serious violence or which can show us some existing evidence that they work and will be ready for a robust type of evaluation (like a randomised control trial).

This doesn't mean that we won't consider applications at an earlier stage of evaluation, but we will look for projects that would be ready for a robust trial within two years.

### What do we mean by needing existing evidence?

When we talk about prioritising projects where you can show us evidence, we mean:

- You can clearly explain what your project involves and how it leads to the change you want to see for the children you work with. This is sometimes called a theory of change, which is a method to help you describe your long-term goals and maps backwards to explain how your intervention will get you there.
- You've already done some evaluation of your project. This doesn't need to be a large trial – our funding is here to develop that level of evidence. What we would like to see is some evidence that your project can be successfully implemented.
- If you are applying under 'popular and commonly used interventions' we would like to see that your programme is actively reaching hundreds of children each year in England and/or Wales.
- If you are applying under 'promising interventions' we may also want to see evidence that your project will lead to positive outcomes for children and young people (for example, it reduces school absences).

The level of evidence required will depend on how long you have been delivering your activity, its scale, the size of grant you are applying for and whether you are seeking YEF funding towards delivery costs, evaluation costs or both. For example, if your programme is already fully funded and you are applying to YEF to fund a robust evaluation, the level of evidence you need may be lower as we are keen to help generate evidence on approaches that are already widespread.

## What about programmes that haven't been evaluated? Or smaller programmes?

Strand Two is open to smaller programmes and those that haven't yet been evaluated, but we will prioritise programmes that are already delivering and can show some evidence of their outcomes because it helps us to undertake more robust kinds of evaluation (like randomised control trials) more quickly. That's important, because children deserve services that we've tested. By investing in evidence, we can build our knowledge and make sure we're offering every child the best support possible. And great evidence can help you adapt and scale your programmes, win further funding and ultimately help you deliver better outcomes for children.

We are unlikely to fund a programme which would not be ready for a robust trial within two years.

Our focus on programmes that have the potential to scale doesn't mean we want to miss finding out about the work of smaller, community organisations. We know that we can only build up a full picture about what works if we understand the programmes those organisations are delivering too. Right now, we're working out the best ways to do that, from piloting new ways of running multi-site trials of practices to flexible learning projects. It's also why we're ringfencing £5 – 10 million for Black, Asian and minority ethnic-led charities working with young people at risk of becoming involved in violence.

You can read more about our plans in our [2021 Prospectus](#).

## What will evaluation mean for me as a YEF targeted projects partner?

As partner, we'll work with you to evaluate your project to find out if and how it works. We'll appoint an evaluator to help you by co-designing the research elements of the project to make sure the evaluation works for your programme.

One of the most robust ways to do that is through a randomised controlled trial (RCT). This helps us to test programmes and approaches, so that we can make sure the programmes we're providing for our most vulnerable young people have the best possible chance of making a difference.

## What is a randomised controlled trial (RCT)?

In an RCT, one group receives the intervention (the 'treatment group') while the other group doesn't (the 'control group'). By looking at both groups before and after your work to support young people, and to see the impact of your work (for example, seeing if it leads to reduced aggression or weapons carrying), we can see the difference it has made.

## How does designing an evaluation work?

We don't expect you to have a clear idea of how your programme could be evaluated when you apply. But you will have to work with us to shape your project so that it can be robustly evaluated by one of our approved evaluation partners.

Designing an evaluation normally requires your proposed project plan to be adapted in some way. This may involve, for instance, adjusting some elements of delivery, or delivering your programme on a larger scale than you initially proposed. We have an extensive co-design process, which may take up to three months, to support this.

## Understanding the difference you make in the long-term

Right now, we just don't know enough about the policies, programmes and approaches that successfully protect children from becoming involved in violence in the long-term.

To find out what works, we need to understand the difference a project makes over time. That means we need to collect and store information so that we can follow the future progress of the children who've been supported by our projects. In the future, this will help researchers see how the projects we fund have changed young people's lives over the years that follow their participation.

For our partners, this means that we'll need you to help us collect relevant information about the children you work with. We have robust systems and protocols to ensure we're keeping their information safe, from the point it's collected, to when it's accessed by future researchers. We use a secure data archive for all data. You can read more about it [here](#).

While the main responsibility for conducting research and storing personal information will be with the independent evaluators, it's important that you're happy to support them.

## What happens to the findings of the evaluation?

The collective aim of both the YEF and our evaluation partners is to give each programme the best possible chance of success. We want to make sure we're all learning as much as we possibly can. And we hope in doing so we generate great evidence that can help you adapt and scale your programmes, win further funding and ultimately help you deliver better outcomes for children.

We might not always find that a programme has a positive effect on those children and young people most at risk of becoming involved in violence. But that's still helpful knowledge which contributes to our collective understanding and helps to keep children and young people safe. That's why we're committed to publishing the results from every project that we fund, even if it turns out that a programme didn't have the impact we expected.



**Check your eligibility today!**

To check whether your project is right for our targeted projects funding, visit our online eligibility checker.

**[Click here to find out](#)**



Home Office



[youthendowmentfund.org.uk](https://youthendowmentfund.org.uk)



[hello@youthendowmentfund.org.uk](mailto:hello@youthendowmentfund.org.uk)



[@YouthEndowFund](https://twitter.com/YouthEndowFund)

This document was last updated in **April 2021**.

We reserve the right to modify the specification and guidance at any time, without prior notice.

The Youth Endowment Fund Charitable Trust

Registered Charity Number: 1185413

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