Grantee guidance

This document provides guidance for Youth Endowment Fund grantees.

Contents

1. Introduction

1. Introduction

The Youth Endowment Fund's (YEF) mission is 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 fund:

1. Promising projects that aims to prevent children and young people from becoming involved in violence – especially those aged between 10 and 14-years old.

2. High-quality, independent evaluations of how effective the project is at achieving its intended outcome. The results from all projects will be described in an evaluation report, written by an independent evaluator, and published on our website – www.youthendowmentfund.org.uk.

These outputs are equally important to us and the set-up stage involves setting up the project delivery and evaluation in such a way that the needs of both are balanced.

Establishing a good working relationship with the independent evaluator is critical to achieving the second output, as is committing sufficient time to both delivering the intervention and engaging with and supporting the requirements of the evaluation.

2. Themed grants rounds: process and timeline

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This section provides an overview of the process and timeline of our themed grant rounds and the rest of this document provides further detail on each of these stages. Please visit our website for more information about our funding themes.

2.1 The two-stage application process

Our themed grants rounds follow the two-stage application process outlined below.

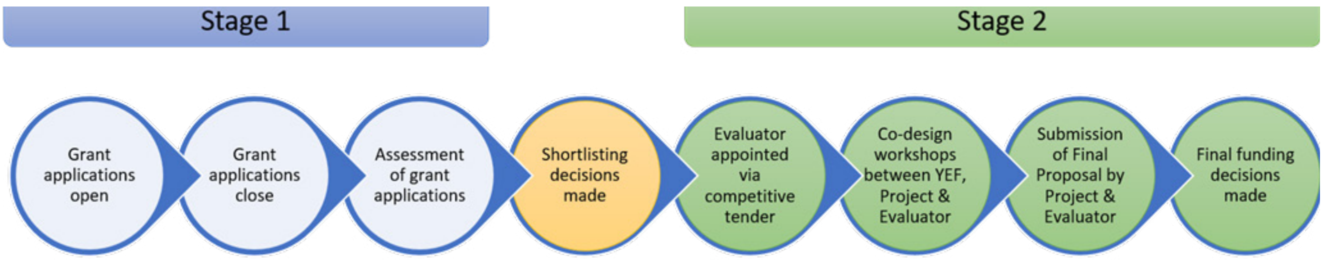

Figure 1. The YEF 'two-stage' grant application process

Stage 1: Grant application and assessment

The first stage in the application process involves the grant applicant completing an eligibility checklist and application form. Applications then go through several assessment stages and for some this will include an interview. Projects are then shortlisted at the end of Stage 1 based on YEF's funding criteria and initial approval by the YEF Grants and Evaluation Committee (GECo).

Stage 2: evaluator appointment and set-up

Following the selection of promising projects, our Programme and Evaluation teams progress the project and its evaluation through the following stages:

- **Evaluator appointment:** our evaluation team designs the evaluation specification and commissions an evaluator through a competitive tendering process.

- **Set-up:** We then works closely with the project team and evaluator over several months to co-design and set-up the project plan, evaluation design and budget. This leads to the final proposal which is then considered for funding by the GECo. If the GECo awards funding, grant and evaluation agreements are put in place and an evaluation plan is published.

2.2 Project delivery, reporting and data archiving

Following final funding decisions, our Programme and Evaluation teams progress the project and its evaluation through the following stages:

- **Project delivery:** There is usually a few months between the GECo approving the project and the project starting to allow for further planning, recruiting participants, delivering training and seeking ethical approval. The grantee will then deliver the intervention and support the evaluators in carrying out the independent evaluation. Any challenges arising should be discussed with the Programme Manager as early as possible.

- **Evaluation reporting:** Once the project is completed, the evaluator will conduct data analysis and write up a report of the results. The report will then be peer reviewed and the grantee will also have the chance to comment on it. Following the review, the report will be published on our website – www.youthendowmentfund.org.uk. We'll produce guidance on the reporting and peer review process in due course.

- **Data archiving:** At the end of the evaluation period (for pilot, efficacy and effectiveness studies) evaluators will securely transfer a single participant level dataset to the Department for Education. This dataset will need to contain: personal identifying data (e.g. name, gender, date of birth, UPN, postcode), information on the intervention received, any characteristic or contextual information on project participants used by evaluators in generating results published in the evaluation report and the main pre-post-test outcome variables used to evaluate the effectiveness of the intervention. Links to all our guidance on the data archive can be found in section 6.3.

More detail is provided on each of these stages as well as roles and responsibilities in the sections below.

Please note:
Projects will only be given final approval and sign-off at the second GECo meeting. If the GECo doesn't approve a project, it's usually because the grantee and evaluator haven't been able to agree on a high-quality evaluation design.

2.3 YEF governance

The final decision about what we fund and evaluate is taken by the YEF Board on the basis of the advice of the GECo and after submission of the Final Proposal.

Recommendations to the GECo are informed by the advice of our expert panel. The expert panel provides advice to our team to ensure that the work of the fund is informed by world-class expertise on youth offending and evaluation.

3. Roles and responsiblities

3. Roles and responsibilities

For the project and evaluation to be successful the evaluator will need to have a strong working relationship with the grantee and the YEF, so it's important to be clear about who is responsible for what at each stage. As shown in Figure 2, the YEF Evaluation Manager (EM) will be the main point of contact for the evaluator and the YEF Programme Manager (PM) will be the main point of contact for the grantee.

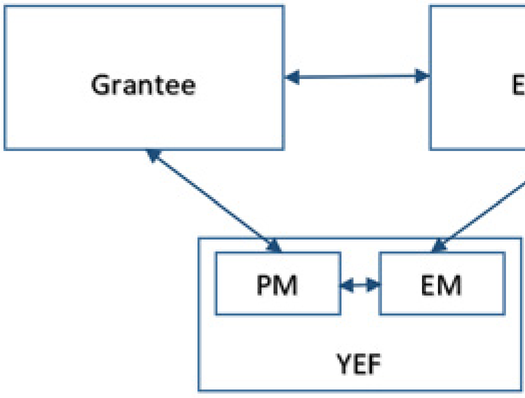

Figure 2. Communication between the evaluator, grantee and the YEF

Below is a summary of the main responsibilities of each team:

The evaluator will:

- Design the evaluation in collaboration with the grantee and the YEF.
- Draft the evaluation protocol and statistical analysis plans.
- Deliver the evaluation, including leading on data collection.
- Maintain a good relationship with the grantee.
- Communicate challenges to the grantee and YEF as early as possible.
- Analyse the data and write-up the evaluation report including peer review.
- Transfer the project data to the YEF's data archive.

The grantee will:

- Collaborate with the evaluator and the YEF during the set-up phase.
- Lead on the recruitment of participants with support from the evaluator (although the precise balance of roles and responsibilities may vary between projects).
- Deliver the project to a high standard.
- Collect regular monitoring data.
- Support the evaluation and communicate the requirements of the evaluation to stakeholders.
- Maintain a good relationship with the evaluator.
- Communicate challenges to the evaluator and the YEF as early as possible. These challenges are an integral part of the learning process and will allow for improved delivery.
- Comment on the independent evaluation report within set parameters
- Agree to the use of YEF core measurement tools.
- Commit to maintaining consistent project delivery throughout the duration of the evaluation (i.e. the project cannot be changed half way through delivery).
- Not conduct their own evaluation of the project that will interfere with the independent evaluation.

The Evaluation Manager (YEF) will:

- Appoint the independent evaluator.
- Be the main point of contact for the evaluator.
- Mediate the evaluation design discussion during set-up, including advising on the YEF's standards of evidence.
- Monitor the evaluation process.
- Provide support and mediate where challenges arise during project delivery.
- Review the evaluation and analysis plans, and the final report, before publication.

The Programme Manager (YEF) will:

- Be the main point of contact for the grantee.
- Support the evaluation design discussion during the set-up.
- Set up, manage and monitor the grant.
- Provide support and mediate where challenges arise during project delivery.
- Support the grantee during the reporting stage.

During the project set-up phase we'll work with the evaluator and grantee to agree the details of how the project will be delivered, and the evaluation design. During the project delivery phase, it's expected that the grantee and evaluator will work together without the need for our support.

If any issues arise during either phase that the evaluator and grantee are unable to resolve, they should contact the PM. We're here to support grantees and would rather know if things go wrong. We'll work with grantees and the evaluator to resolve things if possible. This will help to ensure the highest possible quality of project delivery and evaluation (see also Appendix A: Common Challenges).

Further information

The following documents are available to download on our Resources for grantees webpage

- **Grantee-evaluator relationship policy** - our policy on the grantee-evaluator relationship, which will also be included in Schedule 3 of the Grant Agreement.
- **Glossary of evaluation terms** - common evaluation terms used in this guide.
- **Publication policy**

Box 1: Why is independent evaluation so important to us, and what does it involve?

Our mission is to prevent children and young people becoming involved in violence. To do this, we need to fund really high-quality evaluations to understand which interventions are most effective.

There is a lot of evidence that when evaluations are conducted or funded by the intervention developer or deliverer, the published results are more likely to be positively biased. Drug trials, for example, are often funded by pharmaceutical companies which has sometimes led to negative findings being withheld[1].

For this reason, we'll always appoint an independent evaluator from our panel of evaluators, selecting the organisation that demonstrates the best expertise and ideas for evaluating a project during a competitive selection process. The independent evaluator will lead the design and delivery of the evaluation in collaboration with the grantee, and conduct randomisation (if relevant), primary outcome data collection, analysis and reporting. This is considered good practice, will provide the best evaluation of the project, and ensure that people trust the results.

More information about evaluation and our approach to evaluation can be found online.

1 Goldacre, B., & Heneghan, C. (2014). Improving, and auditing, access to clinical trial results. British Medical Journal

4. Project set up

4. Project set-up

This section provides more detail on what grantees can expect during the project set-up stage.

4.1 Evaluator appointment

Following the selection of promising projects that receive initial approval from our GECo, our evaluation team commissions an independent evaluation of each project through a competitive tendering processes. Evaluators are invited to submit an expression of interest (EOI), which gives a high-level description of their proposed approach, the project team and their motivation. Our evaluation team then selects the top two or three teams who are invited to submit a full 5,000-word proposal after which an evaluator is appointed.

The organisations which evaluate our funded projects are part of our Evaluator Panel. Organisations on our panel have been appointed through a competitive process and have demonstrated their experience related to conducting and managing rigorous evaluations with young people.

The appointed evaluator's proposal may be shared with grantees, but it's important to understand that this proposal was written based on limited information and the final evaluation design will be agreed with grantees during the set-up meetings.

4.2 Set-up meetings

The grantee will be expected to attend a series of set-up meetings and workshops with the independent evaluator and members of our team. A maximum of three people from the grantee team is allowed to attend these meetings. As a suggestion, we have found these meetings work well when there is:

- Someone who can take decisions on behalf of the project, like a member of the senior leadership team.
- Someone who has a thorough understanding of the project and how it is or will be implemented.
- Someone who has experience in data, analysis or evaluation. We appreciate this will not be possible for all projects.

The exact number of set-up meetings and workshops required will vary from project to project but we anticipate that in most cases a minimum of four meetings will be required. These meetings are summarised in the following table.

Table 1. Overview of the set-up meetings and workshops

Meeting/Workshop	Purpose	Organised by	Attended by
YEF evaluation and the Data Archive workshop	Introduce the data archive to the evaluator Panel and provide further information on YEF evaluation.	YEF	YEF Evaluator
Set-up meeting 1: Introduction to the project and evaluation	Provide the opportunity for the grantee and evaluator to meet and discuss the project and its evaluation.	YEF	YEF Evaluator Project team
Project Delivery and Analysis workshop (PDEA)	To further develop the project's theory of change and logic model.	Evaluator	YEF Evaluator Project team
Set-up meeting 2: The Evaluation Design	Provide the opportunity for a more detailed discussion about the evaluation design	YEF	YEF Evaluator Project team

Introducing YEF Evaluation to Projects

This workshop will be hosted by us and attended by project teams only. The purpose of this workshop is to fully introduce the our approach to evaluation and provide the opportunity for project teams to ask any questions they may have.

Set-up meeting 1: Introduction to the project and evaluation

The aim of this meeting is for the project and evaluator teams to meet and work together to understand fully what is being evaluated and agree the broad approach to evaluation. This includes agreeing on aspects of the evaluation that influence the delivery and evaluation budgets. It will be hosted and organised by us, with the EM chairing and the PM taking minutes. It will usually take half a day.

The project team should come prepared to introduce and talk through the content of the intervention and how it's delivered, as well as the mechanisms for how it might impact on youth crime and violence outcomes. Some of the meeting may be spent refining/developing the project's theory of change and logic model[1]. We find that this is important for informing the discussion about the evaluation design.

In some cases, we may group similar projects together and appoint a single evaluator to evaluate all the projects together. The purpose is to enable projects to learn from each other and to ensure limited resources on evaluation can be used to best effect.

1 More detail on what theory of change and logic models are, including templates, can be found in EIF's ten steps for evaluation success and in the YEF glossary of evaluation terms.

Evaluators will be expected to discuss the advantages and disadvantages of different evaluation designs and options for outcome and implementation data collection.

The aim of this meeting is to discuss and agree some of the main aspects of the evaluation design to inform budget planning (for example, the sample size, primary outcome and control condition, if applicable).

Project Delivery and Evaluation Analysis workshop (PDEA workshop)

The PDEA workshop provides the opportunity to further develop the theory of change and logic model for the project. It will be held either between the first and second set-up meeting, or after the second set-up meeting, depending on the stage of the project.

Projects in the early stage of development, for example, typically benefit from having the workshop earlier on, since further work may be necessary to interrogate each causal step in the logic model, understand the project evidence and determine the optimal evaluation design. Grantees will work with evaluators on this and agree what data should be collected.

The aims of this meeting are for the grantee and the evaluator to:

- Further develop the project's theory of change and logic model and how it will be tested;
- Develop detailed project plans; and
- Identify aspects of the project and evaluation proposal that need to change.

The EM and PM will attend the PDEA workshop and agree the overall evaluation design to be presented at the second GECo meeting.

Set-up meeting 2: The evaluation design

This takes place just before the second GECo meeting when the project will hopefully be given final approval. During this meeting we'll discuss aspects of the evaluation in more detail with the grantee and the evaluator. The aims of this meeting are to:

- Further develop plans for recruitment, randomisation (if applicable), data collection, implementation and process evaluation and data sharing;
- Develop a clear plan for the collection of monitoring data;

- Develop a clear plan for communication between projects, evaluators and the YEF, and key stakeholders;
- Develop a detailed timeline for the project and evaluation.

At this stage it is important to clarify roles and responsibilities and have a detailed communication plan so that the grantee and evaluator have clear lines of communicating with stakeholders. Table 2 summarises common documents that will likely need to be developed with the evaluator following the meeting.

Table 2: Common documents to be developed with the evaluator

Document	Description	Who?
Participant information sheets and withdrawal forms	Describing each participant's involvement in the project and evaluation.	Both teams, but usually the evaluator leads.
Memorandum of Understanding	Describing the roles and responsibilities of settings or Local Authorities that are involved in delivering the project.	Both teams, but usually the evaluator leads.
Privacy notice	Describing what will happen with all personal information processed during the project.	Both teams.
Data sharing agreement	Describing how data will be safely shared during the evaluation.	Both teams.
Communications plan	Documenting a detailed plan for communicating with all relevant stakeholders and participants.	Both teams
Monitoring data	Outlining what monitoring data will be collected, how, by who and how often.	Both teams
Ethics forms (please also see section 6.5)	The evaluation design will need ethical approval.	Usually the evaluator uses their standard ethical review process. In some cases ethical approval from a third party must be sought.

4.3 Final Proposal and budget

After the set-up meetings the evaluator and grantee will be expected to work together and submit a final proposal. This proposal will go to the second GECo meeting for approval and will include:

- Overview of the project and budget;
- Revised evaluation proposal and budget;
- Project and evaluation implementation plan.

In the first instance, grantees and evaluators should submit a draft Final Proposal. This will be reviewed by the PM and EM who will provide feedback on the proposal before the final version is submitted. See Appendix B – Full Proposal Guidance.

Budget

Some aspects of the grantee budget will be dependent upon the discussion with the evaluator during the set-up meetings. For example, the sample size for the evaluation will determine the number of participants the project will be delivered to. Additional considerations are:

- Grantees should ensure that the grantee budget includes sufficient staff time to engage with and support the evaluation activities, as well as delivering the intervention itself. The GECo may on occasion approve funding for publicity and dissemination activities after the results of the evaluation (please refer to the YEF publication policy, available to download here).
- We don't fund university overheads. Applicants working in universities can apply for funding for all 'directly incurred' costs (e.g. salary costs of research assistants) and, subject to certain conditions, 'directly allocated' costs (e.g. the costs of support staff where these are specifically needed for the project). However, we do not fund indirect university costs (e.g. estate costs of permanent staff).
- We don't routinely provide funding to the grantee to collect data (qualitative or quantitative) and conduct analyses themselves but instead we separately fund an independent evaluator to conduct the evaluation, using a range of quantitative and qualitative methods. Grantees require prior written approval from us if they wish to conduct and publish their own analyses of data collected during the research. This work must not interfere with the running of the YEF-funded project and is subject to the provisions of the YEF publication policy. Grantees will normally be expected to fund this work themselves.

- We'll pay a substantially lower proportion of the project costs when funding for-profit grantees.

Grantees are required to submit the following two types of budgets for the project:

1. a detailed budget; and,
2. a budget that communicates the headline costs.

Evaluation checklist

Upon submitting the draft Final Proposal, both the grantee and evaluator will be required to complete an 'Evaluation Readiness Checklist' in the online YEF Community. This is to ensure that both the grantee and evaluator have a full and shared understanding of the project and its evaluation and what will be required going forward. A copy of the evaluation readiness checklist can be found on our Resources for grantee webpage.

4.4 Setting up the Grant Agreement

Once the project, evaluation and budgets have been finalised and signed off by the GECo, the PM will produce a Grant Agreement for the project. The Grant Agreement specifies the conditions of the grant and the relationship between the YEF and the grantee and includes the payment schedule and milestones. The payment schedule and milestones need to be carefully designed to ensure that funding is scheduled against activity. Payments are made in advance, subject to the following conditions:

- achievement of the agreed milestones
- 80% spend of the grant received so far
- proof of spend and confirmation of bank details
- satisfactory monitoring and project delivery

4.5 Finalising the evaluation

The EM will set up a Schedule of Work with the evaluator, outlining the conditions of the evaluation and their activities. The grantee will be expected to contribute to published documents describing the evaluation and to the ethical review process.

Published evaluation documents

These documents describe the agreed evaluation design and analysis and will be published on the YEF's website – www.youthendowmentfund.org.uk. The main reason for this is that pre-specifying evaluation designs and analysis reduces the risk of selective reporting and publication bias and is considered best practice. These documents will be drafted by the evaluator and the grantee will have the opportunity to comment. They are:

- **Evaluation study plan:** For pilot or feasibility studies and non-randomised impact evaluations, an evaluation plan will be published outlining the agreed design and rationale for that design.

- **Evaluation protocol:** For impact evaluations (efficacy and effectiveness studies), an evaluation protocol will be published using the YEF's template that follows good practice guidelines for transparent reporting of randomised evaluation designs based on internationally agreed standards[2].

- **Statistical analysis plan:** For impact evaluations (efficacy and effectiveness studies) a statistical analysis plan will also be published alongside the evaluation protocol, that pre-specifies exactly how the evaluation data will be analysed, including the primary outcome, subgroups, missing data and compliance analysis. The statistical analysis plan will also be peer-reviewed.

In addition, if the evaluation is a randomised controlled trial (RCT) the evaluator will register it on the ISRCTN registry, which is a primary clinical trial registry[3].

Ethical review

We require all our funded evaluations to be conducted to a high ethical standard and all evaluators to have a robust ethical screening and review procedure. In some cases ethical approval from a third party must be sought, for example for projects being implemented in NHS settings[4]. It will be important for the evaluator and grantee to work together to submit all the project documentation required, including those documents discussed at the second set-up meeting.

It's the evaluator's responsibility to work with the grantee to ensure they understand the ethical review process and what can and can't happen in terms of recruitment and delivery before the outcome of the ethical review is received. In most cases, it will not be possible for face-to-face delivery with young people to begin until the ethical review has been completed and a decision has been reached. For more complex projects, especially those being implemented in NHS or Criminal Justice System (CJS) settings, this process can take many months and needs to be factored into the timeline for each project.

2 The Consolidated Standards of Reporting Trials can be found here: http://www.consort-statement.org/
3 https://www.isrctn.com/
4 Research Ethics Service and Research Ethics Committees - Health Research Authority (hra.nhs.uk)

5. Project delivery and evaluation

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Once the project and evaluation has been approved by the GECo and cleared by the evaluator's ethics panel, grantees can begin recruiting participants and delivering the project. The evaluation documents will usually have been published by the time project delivery starts, but there can sometimes be overlap with projects that have a particularly tight timeline.

During the project delivery phase the grantee and evaluator will be required to work closely together and without our team needing to be involved. If any challenges or other issues arise, however, these should be discussed with the PM as early as possible.

5.1 Payments

Payments to grantees are scheduled over the life of the project as delivery milestones are completed. We only make payments in line with the payment schedule included in the Grant Agreement, and if sufficient progress has been made.

If a payment is due and the milestones have been met, grantees should issue the YEF with a completed funding request form and relevant proof of spend. These documents should come from the lead organisation (the counterparty from the Grant Agreement) and should make clear which project it is related to, and which payment milestones have been met. All payment requests and associated proof of spend[5] should be submitted via the YEF Community, or sent to programmes@youthendowmentfund.org.uk , copying in the PM.

Grantees should use the monitoring form guidance to submit monitoring reports, and these should be accompanied with appropriate supporting documentation, as specified in the milestones or with the PM. Once the PM approves progress, our finance team will make a bank transfer.

If there has been a delay in achieving the milestones or completing the quarterly monitoring information, we may not be able to make the payment, so grantees should not submit a payment request until that point. We also encourage grantees to submit other useful outputs such as recruitment materials or examples of work where appropriate and possible.

If for any reason a milestone is unlikely to be met, this should be discussed with the PM as soon as possible, and they can raise it with the EM if necessary. We would prefer to be made aware of any problems sooner rather than later, as this makes it more likely that we can find a resolution.

5 A letter on headed paper ratifying project spend for that period of time and signed by the relevant person(s) within the lead organisation. In most cases we will also want a PDF or Spreadsheet providing an overview of project payments made for the associated payment period.

5.2 Variations

It's important that any variation to the project or evaluation is agreed with us. In all cases a request to change or modify a project and/or evaluation must be discussed with the PM and EM to determine whether a variation is needed. Where a variation request is deemed appropriate, the project and/or evaluator will need to complete a variation request form When considering a variation request we'll take into account:

- **Project design** – the overall aims and the eligibility criteria for project participants should remain broadly the same. In addition, adaptations must be viable and sustainable and temporary or short-term project adaptions won't be funded.

- **Evaluation** – projects must be evaluated and where a project has to change we must still learn from it.

- **Budget**

- **Timescales**

- **Ethics** – the duty of care of children and young people taking part in YEF funded projects is paramount. Variations/adaptions must prevent harm and minimise disadvantage to children and young people in YEF funded projects.

5.3 Resolving challenges

Wherever possible, the PM and EM will work closely with the grantee and evaluator to find a shared solution to any challenges that arise during the project delivery stage. Sometimes this may mean the project needs to be modified or the evaluation design changed. Occasionally, we will escalate the problem to the GECo for discussion and their decision will be final. If it is not possible to resolve a challenge, YEF funding for a project may need to be stopped. Further information is provided in clause 9 'Termination' in the grant agreement.

6. Reporting

6. Reporting

After the project is completed the evaluator will analyse the data and write up an independent report of the results. The report will be peer reviewed and published on the YEF's website - www.youthendowmentfund.org.uk.

6.1 Evaluation reports

An evaluation report will be written on every project we fund. They're intended to be accessible to a wide audience, including practitioners, policy makers, parents and carers, programme developers and researchers. As such, evaluation reports will wherever possible be written in plain, non-technical English.

The independent evaluator will submit their report to us following our evaluation template. Grantees will be asked to provide any comments or feedback on the report and, where possible, these comments will be incorporated into the final version. The report will be peer reviewed and published on the our website. Grantees will be sent the final report prior to its publication. The final decision on the content and timing of evaluation report rests with the YEF.

6.2 Timeline

The time taken for the end of grant process will vary between projects. The sequence of events typically looks like:

1. Project is completed.
2. Evaluator submits initial draft report to the YEF (usually at least three months after last data collection).
3. Report is reviewed by the YEF and external experts (this is called 'peer review') and edited by the evaluator following their input.
4. Report is shared with grantee for written comments.
5. The YEF and grantee meet to discuss the report.
6. The YEF passes grantee's comments to evaluator, who then makes further edits.
7. The YEF works with evaluator to ensure the report is as accessible as possible.
8. The YEF publishes the evaluation report (usually 12 months after end of project).

6.3 Data archive

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 sensitive personal data so that we can follow the future progress of the children who've been supported by our projects. The long-term follow-up requires collecting, storing, and archiving data on participants so they can be followed-up and their outcomes assessed against criminal justice records in future years.

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.

There are many safeguards in place to protect this data and to ensure individuals' identities won't be known to those using the data. For more information on how this will work, please see our guidance for projects and evaluators and our Data Protection Impact Assessment, available to download here.

6.4 What happens next?

We have developed a set of regranting principles from which we will make a judgement on whether to continue funding projects and evaluations beyond their original grant agreement. You can find further details here.

6.5 End of grant report

At the end of the project, we require submission of a full set of accounts detailing final project expenditure against each budget line. We agree project budgets at the maximum likely expenditure so it is normal for there to be underspend against the agreed budget. This underspend must be returned to the YEF within 30 days of submitting the end of grant report.

7. Our approach to evaluation

7. Our approach to evaluation

Robust, independent evaluation is central to the our mission to prevent children and young people becoming involved in violence. This section explains in more detail some of our principles and expectations for the evaluations we commission. There's also a glossary of evaluation terms available here.

7.1 Principles of YEF evaluation

The existing UK evidence base on what we can do to prevent children and young people becoming involved in violence is at an early stage. Our aim is to develop the evidence of what works. As such, every project we fund will be independently evaluated by a member of our Evaluator Panel. High-quality, yet proportionate evaluation, which provides real insight into the effectiveness of approaches to tackling serious violence is at the heart of the our mission.

Our evaluations are underpinned by five principles:

1. Be as rigorous as possible whilst balancing the needs of high-quality delivery;
2. Provide insight on the potential of the project to improve child offending outcomes;
3. Be appropriate to the level of development of the project;
4. Be of value to the grantee as well as the YEF; and
5. Be able to track change over time through long-term follow up.

7.2 The Early Intervention Foundation's (EIF) standards of evidence and 10 steps for evaluation success

EIF's standards of evidence

EIF's evidence standards are used to classify interventions and identify the ones that have been shown to improve one or more child outcomes. These evidence standards have heavily influenced our approach to evaluation, and projects are reviewed using these standards during the application process[6].

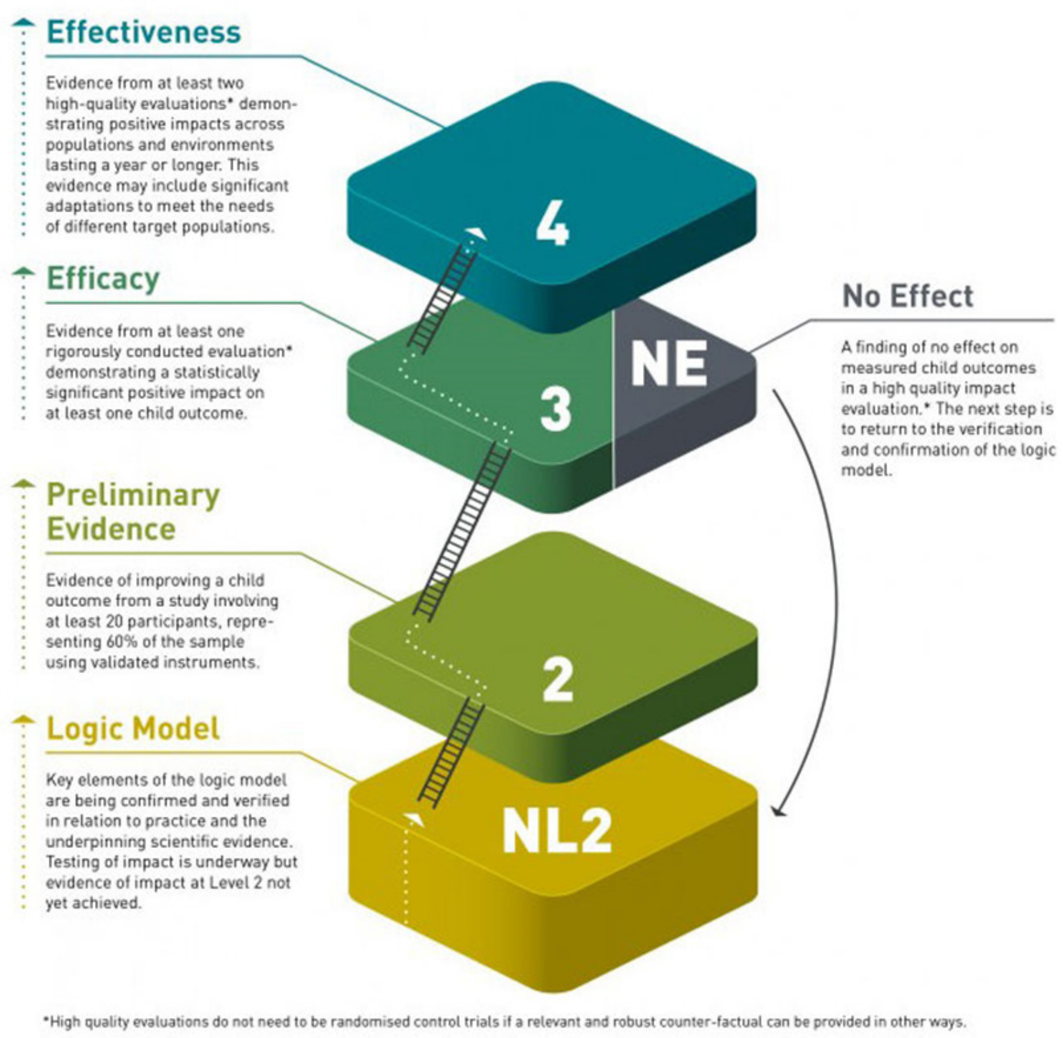
- **Level 4** recognises projects with evidence of a long-term positive impact through multiple rigorous evaluations. At least one of these studies must have evidence of improving a child outcome lasting a year or longer.

- **Level 3** recognises projects with evidence of a short-term positive impact from at least one rigorous evaluation – that is, where a judgment about causality can be made

6 https://guidebook.eif.org.uk/eif-evidence-standards

- **Level 2** recognises projects with preliminary evidence of improving a child outcome, but where an assumption of causal impact cannot be drawn.
- **NL2 – 'not Level 2'** – distinguishes projects whose most robust evaluation evidence does not meet the level 2 threshold for a child outcome.
- **NE — 'no effect'** — is reserved for projects where a rigorous project evaluation (equivalent to a Level 3) has found no evidence of improving a child's outcomes or providing significant benefits to other participants. This rating should not be interpreted to mean that the project will never work, but it does suggest that the project will need to adapt and improve its model, learning from the evaluation.

Figure 3: EIF evidence standards summary



EIF's 10 steps for evaluation success

EIF's guide 10 steps for evaluation success breaks down the EIF evidence standards into a set of achievable evaluation steps that can be used to develop and establish an intervention's evidence (see Figure 4 for a visual representation)[7] . As with EIF's standards of evidence, the 10 steps guide has informed our approach to evaluation.

Ultimately, our goal is to take as many projects as possible to step 10, where they are being effectively delivered at scale. Projects funded by the YEF can enter at any point on the ladder, depending upon their existing evidence and scale. However, most projects we fund will be at the stage of feasibility study, pilot, efficacy and effectiveness (steps 4, 5, 6 and 7).

Figure 4. EIF's 10 steps for evaluation success

7.3 Different types of YEF evaluation

Table 3 briefly summarises the main types of YEF evaluations, their purpose and features. More detail can be found in the evaluation glossary.

Please visit the EIF website for further information about their evidence standards.

7 https://www.eif.org.uk/resource/10-steps-for-evaluation-success

Table 3: Types of YEF evaluation

Design category	Purpose	When it would be appropriate	Common features
Feasibility	To test whether the project can achieve its intended outputs.	• When the project is at an early stage in its development, has undergone adaptations, or is being delivered in a different context; • When it would be useful to test evaluation/methodological decisions ahead of a more rigorous evaluation.	• Will investigate aspects of intervention feasibility such as implementation, recruitment, retention, reach and cost by tracking service usage.
Pilot	To investigate a project's potential for improving its intended child outcomes.	• When the project is feasible but has little prior evidence; • Ahead of an efficacy study to test aspects of the evaluation design.	• Will involve testing for outcomes and piloting outcome measures; • The majority of YEF pilots will involve a small scale experiment to test randomisation procedures and estimate likely effect.
Efficacy	To determine if an intervention works under ideal circumstances ("can this work?")	• When the project has promising, or preliminary, evidence; • When the project has evidence of efficacy in another context; • When the project is amenable to an efficacy evaluation (e.g. considering delivery capacity and the feasibility of different designs)	• Involves an estimate of impact using an experimental or quasi-experimental design; • Implementation and process evaluation (IPE) to understand causal mechanisms; • Ideal delivery, led closely by the developer, on a highly selected population.
Effectiveness	To determine if an intervention works in real-world circumstances ("does this work?").	• When a project has evidence from an efficacy evaluation that it can work under ideal circumstances; • When a project is ready to be delivered in a real-world setting (e.g. considering organisational capacity and readiness).	• Involves an estimate of impact using an experimental or quasi-experimental design; • IPE to understand delivery at scale; • Real world delivery on a representative population, and large sample size.

7.4 YEF outcome measurement

We're committed to measuring youth violence and offending both through self-report measures and the data archive (see Section 6.3).

The way a project is hypothesised to impact on offending and violence outcomes is described in your project's theory of change and logic model, which will be further developed during the set-up meetings. Many projects will be intervening early with children and young people and aiming to address common factors that might influence the likelihood of later violence and offending, such as attitudes and behaviour.

We're therefore interested in measuring broader cognitive and behavioural outcomes for several reasons, including:

They shed light on how the project works;

- To ensure it's possible to understand the short-term and intermediate outcomes of a project;
- As predictors of our ultimate goal (of preventing violence), wider behavioural outcomes provide early indications of the potential effectiveness of the activity we fund.

Choosing outcome measures

Grantees will work with evaluators and our team to choose appropriate outcome measures for the project. Our evaluations must be consistent with EIF's evidence standards, and - to meet the criteria for Level 2 - these measures must be reliable and valid, where:

- validity refers to the extent to which it measures what it claims to measure; and
- reliability refers to how stable, consistent, or reproducible a measure is.

In addition, to meet the criteria for Level 2, measurement tools must:

- be standardised and validated independently of the study and the methods for standardisation are published; and
- capture the project's intended outcomes and be appropriate for the population the project is working with, considering the age, culture and ability of participants.

For an evaluation to meet EIF's evidence standards, scales and measures that are used must not be amended. This includes adding or deleting items, changing any wording or altering the order in which items are captured from participants.

Core measures

Although each project will have its own outcomes, we require common measurement of outcomes wherever possible to ensure our evaluations are as comparable as possible and to maximise learning across the fund. For this reason, we have a set of reliable and valid core measures that will be used in every evaluation, but which may vary by grant round or theme. Examples of the core measures grantees may be required to use are:

- The Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ; Goodman, 1997[8]); and
- The Self-Report Delinquency scale (SRD; Smith & McVie, 2003[9])

We have separate guidance on each of these core measures and how they should be delivered.

How many outcomes?

It's important not to capture too many different outcomes for two main reasons. Firstly, the potential burden it places on participants and the associated risk that some may drop-out. Secondly, capturing many outcomes is seen as 'fishing' for outcomes, and is considered poor practice. For this reason, grantees will work with the evaluator and our team to agree one primary outcome and a small number of secondary outcomes that are closely aligned with the project's logic model and consider our core measures.

What if grantees want to use a measure that is not one of the YEF's core measures?

This will need to be discussed with our team and the evaluator. It may be that grantees can use it alongside the measures we agree with the evaluator, if it is sufficiently reliable, valid and predictive of later violence and offending. However, this will need to be balanced against the risk of over-burdening participants and the question of how the results will be interpreted. Ultimately, the evaluator and ourselves need to approve the choice of outcome measures used in the project.

8 Goodman, R. (1997). The Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire: A research note. Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry, 38, 581–586.
9 Smith DJ, McVie S. (2003). Theory and method in the Edinburgh study of youth transitions and crime. British Journal of Criminology, 43: 169–95

Delivering the outcome measures

The independent evaluator will usually lead on the delivery of the outcome measures. However, grantees will be expected to support the evaluator to ensure outcomes are captured from all participants, and grantees will need to factor in sufficient time to do this.

Evaluators will be expected to deliver, score and analyse the outcome measures in a consistent way to enable comparison of results across projects. They will also be expected to deliver, score and analyse the data 'blind' to determine whether a participant has received the treatment or not, as this is good practice and will reduce bias in the results (see definition of 'blinding' in the glossary of evaluation terms).

8. Other things to know

8. Other things to know

This section summarises some of the other aspects of our grants which is useful to know about.

8.1 Financial audit

We may ask grantees to take part in a financial audit at any time. Furthermore, at the end of the grant, we expect grantees to submit a financial account of monies spent, including any unspent funds that will then be returned to the YEF.

Our financial audits currently include:

- Review of management accounts and balance sheet
- Review of budgets
- Interview with the relevant organisation manager
- Review of financial controls such as bank reconciliations, number of signatories, payroll controls, etc.
- Review of controls on YEF restricted funds and grant milestones achieved.

8.2 Partnership working and external funding

The YEF was founded with a ten-year endowment of £200m from the Home Office with a clear expectation that additional external income would be leveraged as a result.

The Home Office has asked that we record all sources of funding for the projects we support to ensure their full value is captured. This includes any funding contributed to the project by the grantee and/or the grantee's funders. On an annual basis, therefore, we ask that grantees complete a simple one-page form setting out any financial support (in cash or in-kind) which the grantee or others are contributing to the YEF-funded project. A YEF template will be sent to the grantee to complete.

On our part, we actively build relationships with other funders with the aim of attracting financial interest for projects approved by the YEF's Board. This support might be channelled directly to the YEF to distribute or it might need a separate application from the YEF grantee. These funds might be to expand the scope of the project (in discussion with the applicant and the evaluator), or to support the YEF's existing funding of it.

Depending on the results of the project evaluation and the decisions of the GECo, we may also support those organisations looking to scale up their work in seeking financial support.

As a publicly funded charity, we communicate our work through a variety of media. We may, therefore, request that grantees provide us with images that can be used in our communications materials and/or quotes that enable us to communicate the work that we're funding. In addition, we may sometimes hold events for current and potential YEF supporters at which we may request grantee support.

8.3 YEF brand guidelines

Our name:

When using our name, grantees should refer to us as the 'Youth Endowment Fund' and only use the abbreviation 'YEF' if the full name has already been used once.

Describing us:

If grantees wish to describe the YEF, please use the following wording:

The Youth Endowment Fund's mission is to prevent children and young people becoming involved in violence. They do this by finding out what works and building a movement to put this knowledge into practice.

The fund was established in March 2019 by children's charity Impetus, with a £200m endowment and ten year mandate from the Home Office.

For more information, please visit www.youthendowmentfund.org.uk.

Explaining our work:

If grantees wish to explain what we do, please use the following wording:

The Youth Endowment Fund (YEF) funds promising projects in England and Wales that aims to prevent children and young people from becoming involved in violence – especially those aged between 10 and 14-years old.

To find what works, the YEF evaluates every programme and activity it funds. They use this knowledge to scale up effective programmes, spread good practice and guide decision makers on which services or approaches are most likely to keep children and young people safe.

Using the Youth Endowment Fund's logo:

YEF grantees are welcome to use our logo without requesting prior permission on their:

- website (e.g. the funders or supporters page, if you have one)
- social media.

When using our logo for all other purposes, for example on reports, printed materials or videos, prior permission is required.

Grantees should contact our communications team to discuss their needs. They can be reached on media@youthendowmentfund.org.uk.

Grantees can download the logo from our website.

When using the logo:

- Please don't alter the logo's proportions.
- If using against a patterned background, please use the JPEG version with the white box out to ensure its visibility.
- Only use on materials relating directly to the project we are funding.
- Only use for the duration of your funded project.

Online and social media:

Projects funded by the YEF will feature on our website (for example, on our 'Who we fund' page) and possibly on other marketing materials. Details will include the name of the organisation, details of the funded project and the amount of funding awarded.

If grantees wish to reference the YEF on their own website, please use the wording and description outlined above.

If linking to our website, please link to the following address:
www.youthendowmentfund.org.uk

Grantees can follow us on Twitter @YouthEndowFund. Please feel free to tag us in any posts related to the funded project, but please be aware we may not always be able to retweet or share.

PR and media requests

We will include the name of grantees and details of their funded project in a press release to announce the recipients of our funding, and we may approach grantees with other media opportunities as they arise.

Grantees are welcome to publicise their YEF grant once all the relevant documentation has been signed - please coordinate any planned press or media activity with our communications team.

All press releases which reference the YEF require our sign-off before they are externally published.

Please send any related press releases to the following address and allow a minimum of 48 hours for approval: media@youthendowmentfund.org.uk

8.4 Additional support to the YEF

Over the course of the Grant Agreement we may approach grantees to contribute to our wider marketing activities, campaigns and events. We see the involvement of our grantees - and the real-life insight and experience that they bring – as an important part of building a movement to help children get the best support possible.

Additional support requests might include – but are not limited to - featuring you, your funded project or young people ...

- on our website
- in our reports
- in case studies
- in our newsletters
- in our marketing materials and imagery
- facilitating visits to your project by media or VIP guests
- attending or talking at events.

Any such requests are not obligatory. We also recognise that due to the sensitive nature of our grantees' work, it might not always be possible facilitate requests which involve children and young people. The safeguarding of young people is of utmost importance to us, and we'll always be guided by our grantees' recommendations with regards to their involvement.

For further information about our safeguarding policy, please see here.

In return, we are happy for our grantees to invite us to participate in their events or contribute to their own marketing activities. Please note, we might not be able to accommodate every request, as we need to remain independent of the projects we're evaluating. But we are very open to being asked!

Get in touch

We're always keen to hear about any key moments or milestones from your YEF funded project. To share your news or if you would like to discuss media opportunities, please get in touch with us on: media@youthendowmentfund.org.uk

Appendices

Appendix A – Common challenges

Below is a summary of some common challenges that arise during the delivery of YEF projects. If you encounter any of them please notify the YEF as early as possible.

Not recruiting enough participants

Recruiting and retaining the agreed number of participants is critical for the success of the project. If a project is under-recruiting to such a large extent that it will not yield any robust evaluation findings then it is likely that the grant, and therefore the evaluation, will be terminated.

It is really important to work closely with the grantee to agree a plan for communicating to participants the importance and value of both the project and the evaluation, and what both involves.

Participants not complying with the project

During the usual delivery of the project some participants (e.g. young people or families) may be harder to engage with and more likely to drop-out than others. We would expect the grantee to do whatever they would usually do to keep these participants engaged in the project. During an efficacy study we would expect the grantee to do more than they might usually do to keep participants in the project, since here the project is being tested under 'ideal conditions'.

Even when participants drop-out, the evaluator will still analyse their outcomes data, because not doing so may introduce bias in their estimate and violate the principle of 'intent to treat'. For this reason, if participants drop-out of the project, we would expect grantees to still make every effort to work with the evaluator to collect data on their outcomes.

Participants dropping out of the outcome measurement

Measuring young people's outcomes can be a challenging part of running a project and, in conjunction with the evaluator, needs careful planning. It is important that the timeline for collecting data and the responsibilities of the grantee and evaluator are made clear from the start. Instruments will usually be prepared and delivered by the evaluator, but the time needed to do this needs to be factored into grantees' project plans.

It is also important to appreciate that results are needed from all participants. Sometimes it can be more challenging to get results from control participants, or those that have not complied with the project. But in terms of delivery of robust evidence on effectiveness, results from control participants or settings, and those that have not complied, are just as important as results from project participants. It is important to ask participants to still take part in outcome measurement (or consent for their data to still be used in the case of projects using the Police National Computer) even if they drop out of the project.

Poor communication with the grantee

Good communication and collaboration with the grantee are essential throughout the project for it to be successful. It is important to carefully plan how you will communicate with each other and all other stakeholders from the start to balance the needs of both the project and the evaluation.

Appendix B – Full proposal guidance

Completed by?	Section	Examples of things to consider
Project team (grantee)	**Overview of the project, project budget and template**	
Evaluator	**Evaluation proposal - see Appendix B for guidance**	
Project team and evaluator	**Project and evaluation implementation plan**	
	Roles and responsibilities or project and evaluator team members.	A description of the agreed roles and responsibilities for recruiting young people into the project and into the evaluation and for administering the outcome measurement tools.
	How the project team and evaluator will ensure good communication between the two teams and YEF.	Project management.
	Explanation for any discrepancies between the sample size for the evaluation and the number of children and young people receiving the project.	The team's understanding and assumptions of any contexts in which young people would receive the project outside of the context of the evaluation.
	Upload of a Gantt chart that displays a clear and detailed timeline for the project and evaluation.	
	Description of the planned project activities that will take place before the completed ethical review.	Confirmation that young people cannot participate in the project or the evaluation until the review is complete.
	Description of the progression criteria YEF will use to inform decision making about future project and evaluation funding.	
	Upload of draft diagrams of the project's theory of change and logic model.	
	Overview of what has been decided and agreed in regards to the data archive and what still needs to be resolved.	Who will be responsible for collecting what data, who will be responsible for communicating the data archive to children and young people and their families, the legal GDPR basis for processing data, the data sharing agreements that will need to be in place to support the evaluation.

Have a question?

If you have a question or would like to discuss any of the points raised in this guidance please feel free to contact us on:

programmes@youthendowmentfund.org.uk

YOUTH ENDOWMENT FUND

Impetus

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

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

The Youth Endowment Fund Charitable Trust

Registered Charity Number: 1185413