



Youth Endowment Fund

Evaluation Panel (Autumn 2021) – Expression of Interest Briefing

Background

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. But at the moment, we simply don't know enough about what works. That's why we evaluate every programme and activity that we fund. We want to find out what works, for whom and why.

But none of this will make a difference if all we do is produce reports that stay on a shelf. We need to build agreement about what works and build a movement to make sure that young people get the very best support possible. You can read more about how we'll do this in [our strategy](#).

Our Evaluator Panel

We've opened an **expression of interest (EOI) to join our Evaluation Panel**, in preparation for the launch of our new themed grant round '[A supportive home – helping families to overcome challenges](#)' in Autumn 2021. We're looking to update and add to our evaluation partners to ensure that we have a panel with the skills, knowledge and expertise relevant for our themed grant rounds, as well as ensure we increase its diversity.

Please note that this EOI is only open to new applicants. Members who are already part of the [YEF evaluator panel](#) therefore, **do not need to reapply**.

How to apply

All applications for the YEF Evaluation Panel must be submitted via our [online application form](#). Applications via any other means will not be accepted.

Please read the notes below thoroughly before making your submission. This document sets out the timetable for this process, and the activity that selected evaluators are expected to undertake.

The [online application form](#) requires the following information:

- Your contact details.
- Your areas of expertise, across various evaluation methodologies and with young people at risk of crime and youth violence in particular.
- Details about staff expertise and your organisation’s past experience of delivering process, impact and outcome evaluations in each of these areas.
- Details about the settings in which you have carried out evaluations in the past
- Details about key evaluation staff members in your team.
- The number of evaluations you are likely to be able to deliver in the first round.
- Day rates for evaluation staff at different levels and estimates of how evaluation work will be split across staff levels.
- Details of recent evaluation projects that highlight your relevant expertise, skills and experience.
- Details of your organisation’s safeguarding and research ethics policies, and any potential conflicts of interest in working with the YEF.

If you have any questions about the process, please contact us via evaluation@youthendowmentfund.org.uk

Indicative timetable

| Date | Timetable |
|-------------------------------|---|
| 20th December 2021 | Expression of Interest issued |
| 17 th January 2022 | Deadline for receipt of evaluation panel applications |
| w/c 17 th January | Assessment of evaluation panel applications begins |
| w/c 24 th January | YEF clarification with applicants where necessary |
| w/c 31 st January | Approval of evaluation panel by the YEF Evaluation Team |
| w/c 7 th February | Notification of outcome of evaluation panel applications |
| March 2022 | Evaluator Tender Process to Appoint Evaluator to project launched for Grant Round 2: A Supportive Home. |

Upcoming Grant Rounds

As of Autumn 2021, we’ve launched our second themed grant round focused on supportive homes: helping families to overcome challenges. More information on the scope of this round can be found [here](#). In Autumn 2022 we’ll be launching our third grant round focused on education.

What's expected of evaluators?

General background

We commission independent evaluations to provide rigorous evaluation of the implementation and impact of all the interventions we fund. Organisations joining this panel will be eligible to apply to deliver these independent evaluations.

Typically, we'll run a short competitive process for each project, and evaluators on the panel will be expected to complete a short proposal to apply. This will include detail on the proposed evaluation approach/methodology, key personnel and budget. Applications will be reviewed, and evaluators allocated to projects by our evaluation team, (drawing on external expertise where required). Once selected, evaluators will be expected to work collaboratively with our Evaluation and Programmes teams and the delivery organisation to refine the evaluation design.

There may be occasions, that because of time pressures or the specialised nature of the evaluation, when we allocate specific evaluations to evaluators without going through the proposal process described above.

Evaluators will be responsible for the implementation of all parts of the evaluation, including:

- developing a research protocol;
- data collection (including cost data);
- randomisation (where appropriate);
- and, coordinating and conducting qualitative research and field work.

Finally, evaluators will produce interim and final analysis reports as appropriate and will comply with peer review by external experts.

Providing support to grantees

In 2019, we funded our first projects through our [Launch Grant Round](#). In 2021, we launched two new grant rounds, Grant Round 1 in the Spring and Grant Round 2 in the Autumn, each of which had focus on priority themes.

Evaluators will be paired with grant recipients based on the skills and experience needed to address the key research question being tested. Ideally, we will look to group evaluators by theme, methodology or geography to offer evaluators a package of activity. Please note, there is no requirement that evaluators accept the package of activity offered.

Following the shortlisting of potential grantees, evaluators will need to work closely with these organisations to set-up and design the evaluations (including starting any ethical

review processes), with research proposals for Grant Round 2 being signed off by our Committee in November 2022.

We anticipate that the set-up and design activity will be facilitated by a series of day-long evaluation workshop meetings between ourselves, the evaluator and the grantees, held throughout Summer 2022 (approximately July–September 2022). These workshops will be supplemented with follow-up calls as required.

Evaluation activity in Grant Round 2: A Supportive Home

In Grant Round 2 we anticipate funding more programmes that are ready for a full efficacy or effectiveness evaluations. The only exceptions to this will be for some projects aiming to reduce parental conflict and support families affected by domestic abuse. In these areas we may fund early-stage evaluations for some projects in this round (for example pilot studies). This is because while there's some evidence about how these programmes can help adults, there hasn't been as much research on how or if they work well to support the children in those families and if they could reduce the risk of them becoming involved in violence, so we'd be interested in helping establish that preliminary evidence in these areas.

The exact evaluation methodology will be designed by the evaluator in collaboration with the grantee and our Evaluation and Programme teams. It will be rigorous and proportionate to the available evidence for the programme and will need to ensure it offers maximum insight into the effectiveness of the intervention and its potential to progress to more intensive robust impact evaluation, such as a full-scale RCT or QED.

We're also committed to maximising the learning across the portfolio of interventions funded. To facilitate this, we intend to work with our evaluators to ensure a minimum level of methodological consistency across similar evaluations, such as common measurement tools for similar interventions with the same intended outcomes.

Evaluations commissioned in 2021 are likely to include three broad categories of evaluation, including pilot studies, efficacy studies and effectiveness studies. Further details of these evaluation types can be found on our [website](#). We take a similar approach to the Early Intervention Foundation's [10 steps for evaluation success](#). We provide a brief summary of each below:

1. **Pilot studies** – The YEF commissions pilots where an intervention is relatively well specified and has been shown to be feasible in the UK, but where it is not yet clear whether a full efficacy study is feasible. It involves piloting the research instruments, potential impact evaluation designs and methods (e.g. randomisation procedures) and resolving as many potential problems as possible ahead of an efficacy trial. It is also an opportunity to assess whether changes in

child outcomes demonstrate evidence of promise. The main aim of a YEF pilot is to ensure that the intervention is ready for an efficacy study.

2. **Efficacy studies** – The YEF commissions efficacy studies when earlier stage evaluation has already been undertaken. Efficacy studies are rigorous evaluations designed to determine if an intervention works under ideal circumstances. Key aspects include:
 - a) the use of a comparison group and methods such as random assignment to reduce potential sources of study bias.
 - b) strategies for reducing all sources of potential bias throughout the duration of the efficacy study.
 - c) strategies for increasing the likelihood that the study will take place under ideal circumstances.

3. **Effectiveness studies:** An effectiveness study is a rigorous evaluation designed to determine if the positive child outcomes observed in the efficacy study can be replicated in real-world circumstances. It is also useful if an effectiveness study (or previous efficacy study) can consider whether the intervention can be confidently associated with child benefits that are sustainable for a year or longer. Key aspects of efficacy studies include:
 - a) being conducted in real-world circumstances.
 - b) using methods for measuring change for a year or longer.
 - c) developing an understanding for whom and under what circumstances the intervention has its greatest impact.

We're open to discussing other methods and approaches on a case-by-case basis. For example, feasibility studies:

1. **Feasibility studies/process evaluations** – to test whether an intervention can achieve its intended outputs. These outputs can include both the intervention's core activities, as well its ability to recruit and retain its intended participants. Key aspects of a feasibility study include:
 - a) specification of the intervention's core activities and identify the factors that support or interfere with their successful delivery.
 - b) the use of use qualitative research methods to understand which factors contribute to the success of the intervention from the perspective of those delivering it.
 - c) the use of qualitative methods to understand how those receiving the intervention perceive the intervention's benefits and whether these perceptions are consistent with the intervention's original theory of change.



- d) developing an understanding of how best to recruit and retain participants developing systems for monitoring participant reach and core delivery targets.
- e) applying methods for verifying user satisfaction tracking and documenting user satisfaction.

Interested in joining the YEF Evaluation Panel?

To submit your expression of interest to join our Evaluation Panel, please complete our online application form on the link below.

[Evaluator panel expression of interest form](#)

Submissions must be received by **5pm Monday 17th January 2022**.

If you have any questions about the process, please contact us via evaluation@youthendowmentfund.org.uk