



**We're Here to Prevent Children
and Young People Becoming
Involved in Violence**

Call for Secondary Data Analysis Proposals

Call open: 11th December 2024 to 21st February 2025

Summary

- We're launching our third call for secondary data analysis projects - projects that use existing datasets to address key research questions for policy and practice in relation to children and young people's involvement in crime and violence.
- This year we wish to fund primarily impact studies with a strong causal design, i.e., projects that employ strategies that allow us to infer the causal effects of policies, practices and interventions for, and drivers of, children and young people's involvement in crime and violence.
- All applications should be submitted via the [online form](#), on or before the 21st of February. Shortlisted applicants will be invited to interview in the first week in March and we intend to inform successful applicants by the 28th of March.

Section 1: Background

At the YEF, our mission is to prevent children and young people from becoming involved in violence. We do this by finding out what works and building a movement to put this knowledge into practice.

As an organisation, we fund a wide range of research, including [systematic reviews](#), [Evidence and Gap Maps](#), [evaluations](#) of programs we fund, and secondary data analysis (SDA). For more details on our strategy, see our [website](#).

SDA can help to address research questions where randomised controlled trials and other research designs are infeasible, unethical, or inefficient. We broadly think of SDA as covering three different types of analysis:

- **Impact studies** – This includes quasi-experimental designs that allow causal inference on the effects of drivers, policies, practices and interventions on crime and violence outcomes.
- **Relationship testing** – This includes regressions (e.g. panel designs/multi-level models) that test for the existence of relationships to crime and violence outcomes, although stops short of being able to make casual inference.
- **Descriptive analysis** – This includes descriptions of population or issues that are not well understood or exploration of research questions related to crime and violence, for which there is very little evidence.

A range of different datasets may be used as part of SDA projects. These could include longitudinal cohort or panel studies, administrative datasets, or locally held linked data from multiple agencies.

Type of data	Example datasets
Administrative datasets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Police National Computer (PNC) • Mental Health Services Data Set (MHSDS) • National Drug Treatment Monitoring System (NDTMS) data
National annual surveys	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Crime survey of England and Wales (CSEW) • Mental Health of Children and Young People (MHCYP) • General Practice Patient Survey (GPPS)

Longitudinal studies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Millennium Cohort Study (MCS) • Avon Longitudinal Study of Parents and Children (ALSPAC) • Understanding Society
Locally held data	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local Violence Reduction Unit/Network datasets • Local authority data (e.g. children’s services or housing statistics) • Mental health services records e.g. Clinical Record Interactive Search (CRIS) data.
Pre-existing trials’ data	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education Endowment Fund’s trials archive (example research here) • Youth Endowment Fund’s trials archive (about our data here)¹
Linked datasets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Ministry of Justice and Department for Education linkage, bringing together education and crime records in England • The ECHILD database, linking the National Pupil Database (NPD) with health² and social care data for England.

For more details on the types of analysis and data that are in scope, please refer to the Frequently Asked Questions (available [here](#)).

Section 2: Details of our latest SDA call

This is our third call for secondary data analysis projects exploring drivers of violence and the effectiveness of different policies and approaches. Through our first and second calls, we’ve funded eight research projects, that use a range of datasets and methodologies. You can find out more about these projects [here](#).

This year we’re looking to fund projects with two main focuses:

1. **The impact of policies, practices and interventions:** Studies with a rigorous design that will allow causal inference on the effects of policies, practices and interventions on children and young people’s involvement in crime and violence.
2. **Drivers and broader context:** Studies that explore the drivers and broader context of children and young people’s involvement in crime and violence. For these questions, whilst we remain interested in funding impact studies, we’re also interested in funding research that is more descriptive or exploratory in nature.

How do we define impact studies?

These are studies employing research designs that allow the estimation of the causal effect of a given determinant on our outcome of interest – children and young people’s involvement in crime and violence. These may cover the impact of policies, practices and interventions for, or the drivers of, crime and violence. Impact studies should be based on natural experiments or rigorous quasi-experimental designs with valid counterfactuals and adequate controls for confounders.

1 We will launch a focused call in 2025/26 for projects that will explicitly aim to draw out learnings from our own trial’s database. Applicants wishing to use the YEF’s data archive should consider waiting for that separate call.

2 Note, health data includes hospital admissions for assault with a knife/sharp object and may be of interest as an outcome for those exploring the impact of violence.

Below we summarise the primary research questions we have in mind. The [annex](#) provides more detail on the evidence gaps these questions aim to fill, as well as secondary questions that might be considered in addition, as part of a successful project.

Research questions

Impact of policies, practices and interventions

The specific impact research questions we welcome bids on include:

- What impact do **youth clubs** have on children and young people's involvement in crime and violence? Are there varying impacts by different types of settings and for different groups of children and young people?
- What are the impacts of **hot spots policing** and **stop and search** on children and young people's involvement in crime and violence, and, specifically for stop and search, its impact on mental health?
- What are the impacts of **media campaigns** (including knife surrender schemes) on children and young people's involvement in crime and violence?
- What are the impacts of being identified as being at risk of **child criminal exploitation (CCE)** on children and young people's involvement in crime and violence?
- What is the impact of placing youth workers or 'navigators' in **police custody** so they can support children and young people when they are arrested?

We're interested in funding multiple studies, from different research teams, on any of these questions, particularly where impact is being tested in alternative contexts and settings (e.g., different locations in England and Wales).

Whilst we're primarily interested in supporting studies that address the questions outlined above (and in the annex [here](#)), we'd also consider funding projects that: have a credible strategy for assessing the **causal impact of any policies, practices or interventions** on children and young people's involvement in crime and violence, related to YEF's [seven priority sectors](#); and address a demonstrated evidence gap.

Research questions

Drivers and broader context of children and young people's involvement in crime and violence

The specific drivers (impact) and broader context (relationship testing/descriptive analysis) research questions we welcome bids on include:

- What is the **age-crime** curve for the current population in England and Wales? How does it vary by type, frequency and severity of offending, and background characteristics of those involved? What are the factors that explain when it peaks and for whom?
- **Where and when** are children and young people most likely to be victims of violent crime, such as knife assault, and how does this relate to the timing of the school day and other locations young people congregate (e.g. youth clubs)? Where is violence perpetrated by children and young people most geographically concentrated, and what predicts where it happens?
- To what extent are certain children and young people more or less likely to be involved in **specific types of offending**?

- What drives the **disproportionality in offending** outcomes, by granular ethnicity, with a particular focus on children and young people from Black Caribbean, Roma and Gypsy or Irish Traveler backgrounds?
- What role do **drug markets** play in explaining children and young people’s involvement in crime and violence?
- What role do real-world **social networks** play in explaining how and why children and young people become involved in crime and violence?
- Which indicators (or combinations thereof) from locally held or other administrative data are the **best predictors** of children and young people’s involvement in crime and violence?

For more details on these areas of focus, see the [annex](#).

Section 3: Assessment criteria

Details of the scoring criteria are provided below. All applications need to be submitted via the [online form](#). For details on the questions asked, see the [annex](#).

Criteria	What’s assessed?	Scoring Weighting
Research questions	Clear specification of research question(s), which evidence gaps they aim to fill and impacts the findings could have on relevant stakeholders’ decision making.	25%
Methodology	Credibility of the proposed methodology in addressing the research question(s), the extent uncertainties are identified, and a plan in place to clarify during the initial phases of analysis.	20%
Data access	Demonstrated understanding of the dataset(s) being accessed, processes for accessing data and handling issues, including UK-GDPR.	20%
Race equity	How will race equity considerations be factored into your project? Will the research generate findings split by ethnicity? How will sources of bias be accounted for in the analysis and interpretation of findings?	10%
Timeline and budget	A credible timeline ³ (including an articulation of the risks to delivering on time and proposed mitigations) and justification for the costs incurred.	10%
Project team and relevant experience	The extent to which the research team has relevant knowledge and experience of the policy context, datasets and proposed methodologies.	15%

³ We recognise that some projects, if successful, will need to hire new staff. We are likely to prioritise applications where projects do not require lengthy recruitment processes or where elements of the project (e.g. data access, agreeing analysis plans etc.) may still continue whilst recruitment takes place. We will also look favorably on applications where there are planned mitigations in the event of key staff loss.

Section 4: Race equity

In addition to the above criteria, at the YEF, we have a particular focus on race equity (for more information, see details on our [race equity commitments](#)). This includes conducting research that sheds light on the experiences of children and young people from Black, Asian and other minority backgrounds. And in a way that accounts for potential sources of bias in the data and methods used and the interpretation of the findings. For our SDA projects, we'd expect applicants to consider race equity in (but not limited to) the following ways:

- **Subgroup analysis:** Wherever possible, projects should be able to produce results by ethnicity. Where subgroup analysis isn't possible teams will need to provide a strong justification why not.
- **Sources of bias:** Applicants should consider how and from whom the data were collected, the nature of the data or variables used, and their modelling assumptions, in terms of how these may lead to bias in the results.
- **Interpretation:** Project teams should reflect on how they will consult a sufficiently broad and diverse set of viewpoints throughout the project, to ensure the racialised context of their research and findings are fully accounted for.

Section 5: Required outputs

All successful teams will be expected to complete three core outputs over the course of the project and have them signed-off by the YEF before progressing to the next phase. These outputs are:

- **Analysis plan and data access approval:** This initial phase will involve the completion of a detailed analysis plan, expanding on the methodology set out in the application. We also expect to see evidence that all aspects of data sharing and access have been fully approved by relevant data owners. The analysis plan will be published on the YEF website.
- **Interim research report:** This will include an initial descriptive analysis of the dataset(s) and evidence of initial testing; or exploration of the feasibility of the research design, underlying assumptions and/or alternative approaches. Interim reports are typically not published, these are internal documents for YEF to review progress against the agreed research questions.
- **Final research report:** This will include a full write-up of the results of the analysis addressing each of the research questions. These will be published on the YEF website.

We recognise that in advance of projects receiving their data, it's not always possible to fully specify the approach or methodology. The interim reporting phase is intended to provide project teams the opportunity to test and explore their data, in relation to the proposed methodology, and refine the intended approach as necessary.

All outputs will go through a process of external peer review, managed and coordinated by the YEF. All analysis plans and final research reports will be published on the YEF website.

Section 6: Budgets

We do not set an upper ceiling on the total amount we're prepared to fund per project. Projects funded in previous rounds have been awarded between £100,000-£180,000 and are anticipated to last between 18-24 months from contract signing to signing-off of the final report. However, it will be up to individual applicants to make the case for the budget and timelines they submit. We expect budgets and timelines to vary according to research complexity, ambition and design.

Applicants will need to complete a detailed budget template with an accompanying narrative. The template and additional guidance is provided [here](#).

Section 7: Submitting Applications

To apply, you'll need to submit an online application, accessed [here](#). For details on the questions asked, see the [annex](#). You'll also need to submit a completed budget template (downloadable [here](#)) which can be attached to the online application form. Note, we will not accept applications or budget templates submitted via email.

Shortlisted proposals will then be invited to interview between the 10th and 21st of March. We plan to confirm which projects we'll take forward by 28th March 2025.

If you have any questions, please refer to our FAQs. Further questions can be directed to Claryn Kung: claryn.kung@youthendowmentfund.org.uk, copying in data@youthendowmentfund.org.uk.

Annex 1: Detailed research questions

Impact of policies, practices and interventions

What impact do **youth clubs** have on children and young people's involvement in crime and violence? Are there varying impacts by different types of settings and for different groups of children and young people?

Youth clubs have the potential for preventing children and young people's involvement in crime and violence, by providing structured [after-school programmes](#), offering a positive alternative, and limiting opportunities for crime and violence in the short term.

However, there is currently limited robust evidence on the effectiveness of youth clubs in reducing children and young people's involvement in crime and violence. Research using longitudinal datasets have found associations between participation in youth clubs and reduced crime and violence outcomes, although the causal evidence derived from this research is limited.⁴ To our knowledge, there is only one study on the causal impact of youth clubs. This study exploits the impact of austerity-related fundings on the resulting closures of youth clubs in London. The author observed a resulting increase in the likelihood of young people committing crimes.⁵ We're interested in funding projects that aim to replicate and extend this study's design in other parts of England and Wales.

Other related questions we'd be interested in studies exploring through this work include:

- What are the moderating factors in the impact between youth clubs and crime and violence outcomes (e.g., type of provision, level of funding, links to other support services, location, level of attendance, peer group that attends)?
- What is the impact of youth clubs on children and young people from different backgrounds, including by ethnicity?
- How has the structure, nature of provision and services provided by youth clubs changed over time?

What are the impacts of **hot spots policing** and **stop and search** on children and young people's involvement in crime and violence, and, specifically for stop and search, its impact on mental health?

Hot spots policing works by focusing policing resources on locations where crime is most concentrated.⁶ Stop and search powers allow the police to search people who they suspect to be in possession of unlawful items, including knives. Following a stop and search, police officers can detain people who have committed offences, thereby preventing further offending via incapacitation. Alternatively, observing or hearing about the use of stop and search may also deter people from offending.⁷ The YEF Toolkit reports moderate impacts of both [hot spots policing](#) and [stop and search](#) on reducing crime.⁸

4 Youth provision and life outcomes research ([Department for Culture, Media and Sport, 2024](#))

5 The effects of youth clubs on education and crime ([Villa, 2024](#))

6 The law of crime concentration and the criminology of place ([Weisburd, 2015](#))

7 Police stops to reduce crime: A systematic review and meta-analysis ([Petersen et al., 2023](#))

8 Hot spots policing of small geographic areas effects on crime ([Braga et al., 2019](#))

However, there remains gaps in our knowledge on the effectiveness of these policing strategies. Few studies on the impact of stop and search or hot spots policing have looked specifically at the impact of offending amongst children and young people. There has been little empirical research on the impact of these strategies on wider outcomes, such as children and young people's mental health. Furthermore, there's been little research into whether the mode of initiation for stop and searches (i.e., self-generated, third-party, or intelligence-led and procedurally-just) influences the size of the effect.⁹

We'd encourage applicants to consider the quasi-experimental research designs that have been used in previous studies as options for addressing these questions.¹⁰ Applicants can choose to focus on either hot spots policing or stop and search - we do not expect applicants to cover both strategies in the same project.

Other related questions we'd be looking to explore through this work include:

- Do hot spots policing and stop and search have differential effects on different crime types, particularly knife crime?
- Do the impacts of hot spots policing and stop and search vary for different types of children and young people, in particular by ethnicity?
- What are the factors moderating the impact of stop and search on mental health outcomes?

What are the impacts of **media campaigns** (including knife surrender schemes) on children and young people's involvement in crime and violence?

There's been growing interest in media campaigns as part of the package of measures to raise crime awareness and in prevention. Some examples include: [knife surrender schemes](#); [We Walk Away](#); [Live Safe](#); [Knife Angel](#); [One Punch](#); [Operation Sceptre](#); and, [Knife Crime Awareness Week](#). However, there is very little evidence as to whether [media campaigns](#) are effective in preventing children and young people's involvement in crime and violence. We'd encourage applicants to consider quasi-experimental research designs used in previous studies to answer the impact question above.¹¹

Other related questions we'd be looking to explore through this work include:

- What are the most effective component(s) of media campaigns in terms of reducing crime and violence?
- What are the range of activities and interventions occurring as part of these media campaigns, including those conducted virtually (e.g., over social media) or in-person, and those led by the local police forces, local authorities, schools, and charities?

9 Applicants may consider using machine learning- or A.I.-based language models to extract such data.

10 Example quasi-experimental studies on stop and search and crime outcomes are [Weisburd et al. \(2016\)](#) using a shift-share (Bartik's) instrument (New York City); [Braakmann \(2022\)](#) using an instrumental variable approach exploiting a high-profile murder (Newcastle upon Tyne); [Tiratelli et al. \(2018\)](#) using an interrupted time-series approach (London).

11 Example quasi-experimental studies on media campaigns from other fields include [Goldfarb et al. \(2022\)](#) providing an overview of quasi-experimental econometric approaches and relevant studies in marketing, [Black et al. \(2024\)](#) using a difference-in-differences approach to estimate the effect of an annual, Australia-wide suicide prevention and mental health awareness campaign; [Ares & Hernández \(2017\)](#) using media coverage of a corruption scandal in Spain as a natural experiment to estimate the effect of such scandals.

What are the impacts of being identified as being at risk of **child criminal exploitation (CCE)**, including on children and young people's involvement in crime and violence, and on broader related outcomes?

Child criminal exploitation is when someone uses a child to commit crimes on their behalf, such as coercing and exploiting a child to sell drugs in county lines operations. Children that are exploited are at significantly greater risk of being victims of violence and committing violence themselves. There are multiple channels through which children may be identified as being at risk of criminal exploitation. The National Referral Mechanism (NRM) is a framework for identifying and referring potential victims of modern slavery and ensuring they receive the appropriate support.¹² Other channels include being identified as a child in need by children's social services or via those being safeguarded by charities and other support services.

Beginning in 2021, the Home Office launched a pilot programme across 10 sites to test a devolved model of decision-making for identifying child victims. In 2023, an additional 10 sites were added, and in October 2024, local authorities not already in the pilot were invited to [submit their interest](#) to be involved.¹³ This devolved model was found to provide quicker decisions and increased awareness and understanding of the NRM process and modern slavery.¹⁴ Identified and potential child victims are also supported by the Independent Child Trafficking Guardianship (ICTG) service delivered by Barnardo's, which covers selected sites in England and Wales.¹⁵

The YEF aims to build the evidence on the effectiveness of mechanisms such as the NRM, the safeguarding processes put in place for potential victims, the criminal justice outcomes for offences committed under exploitation, and any racial disproportionalities therein.

Other related questions we'd be looking to explore through this work include:

- How many children are at risk of CCE and how do the different referral mechanisms vary in terms of coverage? What are the gaps (i.e. which children are not being captured)?
- Is it feasible to obtain and analyse data on referrals (e.g., from first responder organisations, NRM, local authorities), and link these to outcomes including support and safeguarding received and criminal justice outcomes? How does this compare to other referral mechanisms?
- What are the characteristics of and risk factors (e.g., going missing from home, involvement with organised crime or serious youth violence, affiliation with groups or gangs, lack of safe accommodation, perpetration of crime) for children and young people who are referred or identified as victims of CCE, through different channels?

12 Modern Slavery: National Referral Mechanism and Duty to Notify statistics UK, end of year summary 2023 ([Home Office, 2024](#))

13 Devolving child decision making pilot programme: general guidance ([Home Office, 2023](#))

14 An evaluation of the pilot to devolve decision-making for child victims of modern slavery ([Ipsos UK & Home Office, 2024](#))

15 Annex: Independent child trafficking guardianship statistics, year ending March 2024 ([Home Office, 2024](#))

What is the impact of placing youth workers or ‘navigators’ in **police custody** so they can support children and young people when they are arrested?

Custody navigator programmes place a youth worker or other supportive adult in a custody centre. These ‘navigators’ work with children and young people who are brought into custody by the police. The developers of these programmes often claim that arrest could provide a ‘reachable’ or ‘teachable’ moment when the child might be open to support from services. The navigator will try to connect the child to other services - such as education, health and housing - and develop a long-term, positive relationship. Several violence reduction units and police and crime commissioners have funded these programmes,¹⁶ and the [Government has proposed](#) placing more youth workers in custody centres.

There is very little research on the impact of custody navigator programmes on children and young people’s involvement in crime and violence. YEF has previously attempted to test the [feasibility of evaluating custody navigator programmes](#) but they are challenging to evaluate via RCTs. We are interested in exploring whether quasi-experimental evaluations are a feasible alternative.

Other related questions we’d be looking to explore through this work include:

- What are the most effective components of custody navigator programmes for reducing crime and violence? How important is the long-term follow-up compared to the initial engagement?
- What activities and interventions are custody navigators referring children and young people to? Are these referrals happening successfully? Do children and young people receive the support required?

Drivers and broader context of children and young people’s involvement in crime and violence

For questions on the drivers and broader context of crime and violence amongst children and young people we’re interested in funding both impact studies and research that employs descriptive and relationship testing methods.

Nature, location and timing of crime and violence

What is the **age-crime** curve of the current population in England and Wales? How does it vary by type, frequency and severity of offending, and background characteristics of those involved? What are the factors that explain when it peaks and for whom?

Where and when are children and young people most likely to be victims of violent crime, such as knife assault, and how does this relate to the timing of the school day and other locations young people congregate (e.g. youth clubs)? Where is violence perpetrated by children and young people most geographically concentrated, and what predicts where it happens?

To what extent are certain children and young people more or less likely to be involved in **specific types of offending**?

16 As examples, the [South Yorkshire Violence Reduction Unit](#) and [Police and Crime Commissioner for Cleveland](#).

Age-crime curve

The age-crime curve (the observation that the age specific frequency with which offences are committed increases throughout adolescence and peaks in early adulthood), is well established.¹⁷ From those, including us at YEF, who work to prevent children and young people’s involvement in offending, knowing and understanding this relationship is fundamental to improving when and who to support. However, whilst this pattern is generally accepted, there have been few recent studies on the population of young people in England and Wales. One of the challenges of producing robust estimates of the age-crime curve is that police and criminal justice figures do not capture all offending that occurs.¹⁸

We’d be particularly interested in funding projects that:

- provide updated estimates of the latest age-crime curve for England and Wales, including how this has changed over time;
- produce separate estimates of the age-crime curve for different categories of offending, in particular different types of violence crime; and,
- explore how the age-crime curve varies by young people’s backgrounds and characteristics.

Where and when

Another well-established observation is that offending is highly concentrated, both geographically and by time of day.¹⁹ Research has consistently shown that most offending is concentrated in small geographic areas. And studies have also shown that knife offending amongst young people is often concentrated around the timing of the school day.²⁰ Again, knowing when and where violence is mostly likely to happen is vital in efforts to prevent it.

We’d be particularly interested in funding projects that:

- update estimates of when violence committed by young people happens, how this relates to the timing of the school day and how this looks in areas outside of London, where much of the existing evidence is drawn from;
- examine whether there are other locations (e.g. youth clubs) and times of day when violence involving young people is highly concentrated;
- provide granular estimates (i.e. by small geographic areas) of where crime and violence committed by young people across England and Wales is more concentrated, and explore how this varies for different types and severities of violence.

Crime specialisation

The existing literature tends to suggest that people that offend do not specialise in the types of crimes they commit. That is, repeat offenders do not show a preference for committing one type of crime. For

17 Criminal justice reform guided by evidence: social control works—The Academy of Experimental Criminology 2022 Joan McCord Lecture ([Macdonald, 2024](#)).

18 This is because some crime types are underreported and for some offences diversions away from the criminal justice system mean not all offenders are recorded in official offending statistics.

19 Eight key facts about violence ([YEF, 2024](#))

20 Temporal and Geographic Patterns of Stab Injuries in Young People: A Retrospective Cohort Study from a UK Major Trauma Centre ([Vulliamy et al., 2018](#)).

example, Farrington (2019) analysed data from the Cambridge Study in Delinquent Development (CSDD), a prospective longitudinal study of 411 London boys born in 1953.²¹ The study found that 92.1% of offenders up to 61-years-old who had committed violent crimes had also committed non-violent offences. For convictions up to age 20, this was true of 87.2% of those that had committed violent offences. For a more extensive review of the literature on criminal specialisation, see the YEF Toolkit technical guidance (p14-18).²²

Whilst there are existing studies that explore this, much of the existing literature is based on small scale, dated and international studies. There are two interrelated questions we'd expected applicants to be address through this work, which are:

1. **Do children and young people that offend specialise in the types of offences they commit?** In addressing this question applications should consider extending the analysis conducted by those such as Farrington, to consider the degree of specialisation in offence types for contemporary cohorts of younger offenders in England and Wales.
2. **Do risk factors for involvement in offending vary by the types of offences young people commit?** In addressing this, applicants should consider whether there are specific groups of risk factors that predict journeys into particular types of offending. This should include pathways towards different types of violent offending (e.g. robbery, weapons-related offending, sexual violence) and towards violent and non-violent offending.

Applicants will need to consider the types of data they will use to address these questions. Ideally the research questions would be addressed through a single dataset, such as the [Ministry of Justice and Department for Education](#) linkage.

Drivers of crime and violence

What drives the **disproportionality** in offending outcomes, by granular ethnicity, with a particular focus on children and young people from Black Caribbean, Roma and Gypsy or Irish Traveller backgrounds?

What role do **drug markets** play in explaining children and young people's involvement in crime and violence?

What role do real-world **social networks** play in explaining how and why children and young people become involved in crime and violence?

Which indicators (or combinations thereof) from locally held or other administrative data are the **best predictors** of children and young people's involvement in crime and violence?

Disproportionality

It is well established that children and young people from Black and Mixed ethnicity backgrounds are overrepresented at all levels of the criminal justice system. However, when we look beyond these broad racialised groups, we see that those from Black Caribbean and Mixed Black-White Caribbean

21 The development of violence from age 8 to 61 ([Farrington, 2019](#))

22 YEF Toolkit Technical Guide ([YEF, 2021](#))

backgrounds are particularly overrepresented, along with children and young people from Roma and Gypsy or Irish Traveller backgrounds.²³

The Youth Justice Board has undertaken some analysis into the extent and drivers of ethnic disproportionality in remand and sentencing decisions,²⁴. This work categorised children and young people into broader ethnic groups, which may have inadvertently obscured specific experiences of disproportionality for different ethnic groups. We'd be interested in funding projects that can build on this evidence using administrative datasets (e.g., the national [Ministry of Justice and Department for Education](#) linkage) that have more granular data on ethnicity and that allow analysis on the drivers of disproportionality with adequate controls for confounders (e.g., geographical location, deprivation, special educational needs, experiences in school and care).

We'd be particularly interested in funding projects that:

- describe any existing disproportionalities, whether they vary within broader ethnic groups, and whether patterns have changed over time; and,
- assess the extent to which disproportionalities can be explained by the pattern, nature and severity of offending, background characteristics (including experiences prior to entering the criminal justice system), and geography.

Drug markets

There is increasing concern that drug markets lead to not only crime and violence but also child criminal exploitation.²⁵ Children and young people at risk of exploitation, including those targeted for transporting drugs, are much more likely than their peers to commit violent acts.²⁶ There is also evidence that suggests that the dynamics in drugs markets may play a significant role in both the long-run and short-term national and international trends in violent crimes such as homicides.²⁷

Through these projects, we'd like to build a better evidence base on how drug market activities in England and Wales influence children and young people's involvement in crime and violence, the risk and protective factors that moderate these impacts, as well as the extent drugs markets help explain the overall trends in young people's involvement in serious violence.

Social networks

Social networks (that is, the groups of people young people associate with) have been shown to influence children and young people's involvement in crime and violence.²⁸ The majority of research on

23 Beyond the Headlines 2024 Summary ([YEF, 2024](#))

24 Ethnic disproportionality in remand and sentencing in the youth justice system ([Youth Justice Board, 2021](#))

25 Keeping kids safe: Improving safeguarding responses to gang violence and criminal exploitation ([Children's Commissioner for England, 2019](#)); From harm to hope: a 10-year drugs plan to cut crime and save lives ([Home Office, 2023](#))

26 Children, Violence and Vulnerability Report 2024 ([YEF, 2024](#))

27 Trends and drivers of homicide ([Home Office, 2020](#))

28 We use social network to refer to individuals within one's social circle including family, friends and acquaintances; rather than social media websites and online platforms. Key Facts About Violence ([YEF, 2024](#))

this topic has been conducted on gun violence in the USA,²⁹ but recent research has found similar ‘network effects’ in the UK. For example, a study in Merseyside found that knowing someone who had been convicted of violence was associated with a 16% increased chance of committing violence in the future.³⁰

We’d be interested in funding projects that can apply robust methodologies to assess the impact of social networks on children and young people’s involvement in crime and violence, including those that exploit local and national administrative data from other parts of England and Wales, and those that consider different types of offences.

Predictors of violence

There is a significant evidence base on the risk factors associated with children and young people’s involvement in violence. The YEF [Outcomes Framework](#) summarises a variety of family, school, community, societal and developmental factors, known to be associated with children and young people’s involvement in violence. This is largely based on literature drawing on observational and cohort study datasets. Whilst this provides a strong evidence base on what we should be tracking and measuring in our own studies when collecting data directly from children and their families, it is often less useful for those directly working in child protection, when working out which children and young people to prioritise for support, and is limited by the administrative data that’s available to them.

There is also a developing literature which tries to predict which people are mostly likely to become involved in crime and violence. These often draw on data that are available locally to police forces (such as prior offence histories) and linked data collected from other agencies. For example, Durham Constabulary’s Harm Assessment Risk Tool (HART) is an algorithmic model used to predict risk of committing serious offences. The model largely relies on prior criminal offence histories and some sociodemographic data.³¹ There are few examples of such models being developed in the UK and there are limited examples of their use predicting risk for children and young people’s involvement specifically.

We’d be interested in funding research that explores whether locally held data can be used to predict which children and young people are most likely to become involved in violence. The sorts of questions this work could explore include:

- What are the risk and protective factors in data held locally that best predict which children and young people are likely to become involved in different types of crime and violent offending?
- How accurately do these models predict violence involvement (i.e. to what extent do they under or overpredict who is likely to offend)?
- How can the ethical considerations of predicting future criminality be overcome to ensure the results of such models can be used in supporting the right children and young people?

29 Network exposure and homicide victimization in an African American community ([Papachristos & Wildeman, 2014](#)); The company you keep? The spillover effects of gang membership on individual gunshot victimization in a co-offending network ([Papachristos et al. 2015](#))

30 Predicting violence in Merseyside: A network-based approach using no demographic information ([Campana & Giovannetti, 2020](#))

31 Algorithmic Risk Assessment Policing Models: Lessons from the Durham HART Model and ‘Experimental’ Proportionality ([Urwin et al, 2017](#))

Annex 2: Application Form

Below is provided a copy of the questions asked in the online application. You may use this when drafting your submission. However, all submissions must be submitted **online**, along with the completed budget template, **via the online [application form](#)**. **We will not accept applications sent via email.**

Organisation name(s)	
Named lead contact: i) Name ii) Job title	
Telephone number:	
Email address of lead contact	
Secondary contact i) Name ii) Job Title	
Telephone number:	
Email address of secondary contact	

<p>Criteria 1: What is the proposed research question(s) your project will answer?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Please include all research questions answered by the project.</i> <p>(max 250 words)</p>

<p>Criteria 2: Why are these important questions to address?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>What evidence gaps will this project fill?</i> <i>Who are the key audiences and what might they do differently as a result of the findings?</i>

(max 800 words)

Criteria 3: What methodology and techniques do you propose to address the research question?

- *Why is the methodology the preferred approach and what alternatives were considered?*
- *How far will the methodology support causal inference?*

(max 700 words)

Criteria 4: How will you access the data required for the project?

- *Please explain how you will gain access, what partnerships (if any) are necessary to make this happen and the timeline for doing this.*
- *What are the risks around securing data access and how will these be mitigated?*
- *If relevant, please describe any specific uncertainties/risks around proposed new data linkages.*
- *If data privacy and anonymisation risks or UK-GDPR are relevant, please explain how these will be addressed.*

(max 750 words)

Criteria 5: How will race equity considerations be factored into your project?

- *To what extent will the findings be broken down by ethnicity?*
- *What sources of bias exist in the data and how will these be addressed?*
- *How will you ensure that the racialised context of your findings will be fully accounted for?*

(max 500 words)

Criteria 6: Use the box below to provide a detailed timeline for the project. There is a separate budget template. Please complete this and attach it with your application form when you submit.

For budgeting and timeline purposes, the three main areas of activity should include:

- *production of a full research protocol and securing access to your data;*
- *completion of an initial interim report, reporting initial descriptive analysis of the dataset and any methodological exploration or feasibility testing;*
- *final report production, which includes all analysis to address the research questions.*

(max 500 words)

Criteria 7: Provide details of the project team who will be completing the project. Note: You do not need to submit CVs.

- *Please provide relevant experience of the team as a whole, and each individual researcher including their role within the project. Please justify the time allocated to team members and the specific contribution they will be making.*
- *Please indicate how you might respond to any unforeseen changes in staff resourcing (i.e., team members leaving the project early), to ensure the project remains on track.*

(max 500 words)