

## Summary

- YEF is seeking a team to conduct a review of practice and policy in education. It will review school, AP, and college practice in England and Wales relating to:
  - a. Violence reduction interventions;
  - b. Exclusion; and,
  - c. Attendance.
- This project will aim to describe current practice and map systems across these topics, evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of current provision, better understand education leaders' perspectives, and inform YEF recommendations for violence prevention in the education system.
- We are open to different methodological approaches to the work. This might include interviews and focus groups, surveys, analysis of existing datasets, consultation with sector experts, analysis of existing literature,<sup>1</sup> and desk-based research to map and describe various elements of the current system and associated policies.
- The study will be one of several inputs that will inform YEF's recommendations for the education system on how to reduce serious youth violence.
- The deadline for the full, final study is October 15<sup>th</sup> 2024. The deadline for proposals is 19<sup>th</sup> February 2024. We intend to have appointed the successful team by March 1<sup>st</sup> 2024.

## 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. To make sure that happens, we fund promising projects and then use the very best evaluation to find out what works. We also synthesise the best available evidence from across the world, and mobilise what we learn across various sectors to make a change to the lives of children.

It is also imperative that YEF fully understands the context in which children live, and in which services operate to support them. Only then can we make evidence based recommendations on how best to reduce serious youth violence. Alongside our [programme funding](#), and [evidence synthesis](#) work, we fund a wide range of research (including data analysis, youth understanding work, and practice reviews) to better understand young people's lives, and the systems and services that surround them.

## YEF's education work

In Spring 2025, YEF will publish a set of recommendations for how the education system across England and Wales can support the reduction of serious youth violence. These recommendations will draw upon YEF's existing work in education, including:

- School, college and AP based projects that YEF have funded and evaluated (such as [DARE25](#) and [Becoming a Man](#))

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<sup>1</sup> Such as analysis of Inspection Reports, Policy Reports, previously published data analysis, and other existing literature.

- Relevant sections of the YEF Toolkit (e.g. sports programmes, social skills training, cognitive behavioural therapy, mentoring and relationship violence prevention).
- Our extensive work understanding the lives of young people with the [Peer Action Collective](#)
- Several secondary data analysis projects that explore topics such as the association between exclusion, attendance, and offending.
- A Teacher Tapp survey of 9,500 teachers, conducted in November 2023 (see below for more details)
- Our Children Violence and Vulnerability survey of young people.<sup>2</sup>

In addition, YEF is currently commissioning reviews of schools, AP and colleges' role in the safeguarding and SEND system.

### Why are we funding this new project?

This new project will compliment our existing work by:

- Describing the system and policy context for violence prevention in education.
- Describing current practice in key areas, and identifying the strengths and weakness of current provision. This will support us in making recommendations on what needs to be improved.
- Describing the perspectives of primary and secondary school, alternative provision, and college leaders. This will also support us in making recommendations.

The project will focus on three aspects of education, all of which may impact serious youth violence. These include:

- **School, College, and AP-based interventions** that can reduce serious youth violence (see YEF Toolkit<sup>3</sup>). These include: sports; social skills training; mentoring; relationship violence reduction sessions; and therapies (such as Cognitive Behavioural Therapy, or trauma specific therapies).
- **School exclusion.** Children who receive a suspension in years 7-10 are between 4 and 5 times more likely to be cautioned or sentenced for a serious violence offence.<sup>4</sup>
- **Absence from school.** Persistent and severe absence is soaring in both England and Wales,<sup>5</sup> and we know that absence is associated with serious youth violence. Children who are persistently unauthorised absent from school are between 1.2-2 times as likely to commit a SYV offence, after accounting for a range of factors.<sup>6</sup>

### Education and Race

There are significant racial disparities in children's experience of violence, youth justice, and education. For instance, 28% of children in Youth Custody are Black, compared to 6% in the population in England and Wales aged 10-18. The proportion of children in custody who are Black has also risen from 17% in 2012 to 28% in 2022 (while the proportion of those identifying as having Mixed ethnicity has also risen from 7% in 2012 to 15% in 2022).<sup>7</sup> We also see stark racial disparities in education. For example, the exclusion rate

<sup>2</sup> <https://youthendowmentfund.org.uk/reports/children-violence-and-vulnerability-2023/>

<sup>3</sup> <https://youthendowmentfund.org.uk/toolkit/>

<sup>4</sup> [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/1171532/Education\\_children\\_social\\_care\\_and\\_offending\\_multi-level\\_modelling.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1171532/Education_children_social_care_and_offending_multi-level_modelling.pdf)

<sup>5</sup> <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/pupil-absence-in-schools-in-england>;  
<https://www.gov.wales/absenteeism-secondary-schools-september-2022-august-2023-revised-html>

<sup>6</sup> [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/1171532/Education\\_children\\_social\\_care\\_and\\_offending\\_multi-level\\_modelling.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1171532/Education_children_social_care_and_offending_multi-level_modelling.pdf)

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/youth-justice-statistics-2021-to-2022/youth-justice-statistics-2021-to-2022-accessible-version#children-in-youth-custody>

amongst all pupils in England is 0.08 (equivalent to 8 exclusions for every 10,000 pupils). However, amongst pupils of Gypsy, Roma and Irish Traveller Heritage it is 0.31. It is 0.23 among White and Black Caribbean children, and 0.16 among Black Caribbean students.<sup>8</sup> We also see racial disparities in school attendance levels.<sup>9</sup>

The Youth Endowment Fund's mission is to prevent children and young people from becoming involved in violence. We can't achieve this mission if we do not challenge this racial inequity. Addressing these disparities is an important aspect of our work, and race features prominently in the research questions posed in this ITT.

## Research questions and accompanying context

Here, we separate our research questions of interest into our three topics: evidenced-based interventions, exclusion and attendance.

These research questions are only indicative, and we encourage bidding teams to propose amendments to them and/or additional questions that they think could help meet the aims of the project. We would expect to finalise the detailed research questions and methods with the appointed team.

### 1. Evidence-based interventions

The YEF Toolkit identifies several interventions that schools, colleges and AP could deliver to attempt to reduce serious youth violence. These represent the 'best bets' based on the existing evidence, and include targeted sports provision, mentoring, social skills training, relationship violence reduction sessions and therapies (such as CBT, and trauma specific therapies).

In November 2023, YEF commissioned Teacher Tapp to survey 9,500 primary and secondary teachers in England. We asked them whether their schools delivered these interventions. Only:

- 49% report that their school is delivering social skills training
- 22% report that their school is delivering teacher-led sessions on dating/relationship violence
- 23% report that their school is delivering sports activities for poorly behaved children
- 10% report that their school is delivering CBT for poorly behaved children
- 42% report that their school is delivering mentoring specifically for poorly behaved children

Meanwhile, 30% of teachers report that their school is delivering knife crime awareness sessions. This is despite the lack of evidence for this intervention.<sup>10</sup>

### Research questions:

**1a.** What is preventing more schools, colleges and AP from delivering evidence based violence reduction interventions? Is it:

- a. Lack of resource (including time and money) and competing priorities
- b. Lack of knowledge of evidence-based interventions
- c. Limited local availability of provision

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<sup>8</sup> <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/permanent-and-fixed-period-exclusions-in-england/2021-22-summer-term>

<sup>9</sup> <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/pupil-absence-in-schools-in-england/2021-22>

<sup>10</sup> For an insights report into the Teacher Tapp survey we commissioned in November 2023, please email [joe.collin@youthendowmentfund.org.uk](mailto:joe.collin@youthendowmentfund.org.uk)

d. Or something else?

**1b.** How can we ensure that more schools, colleges, and alternative provision across England and Wales, particularly those in serious youth violence hotspots, deliver evidence-based interventions to reduce serious youth violence? (And avoid interventions that lack evidence). What system and policy changes might this require?

**1c.** Is access to school, college, and AP based violence reduction interventions currently racially equitable? If not, how might this be improved?

## 2. Exclusion and AP

Exclusion from school is associated with serious youth violence. However, interventions that aim to reduce school exclusion have only a very low impact on violence,<sup>11</sup> while approaches that focus on school policies (aiming to ‘ban exclusions’) are likely to be unpopular among teachers,<sup>12</sup> and difficult to implement. If we want to reduce youth violence, reducing exclusion alone is not the answer. Attention is better focused on improving in-school behaviour, the quality of alternative provision, and the support available for excluded children.

### Research questions:

**2a.** Does alternative provision currently effectively contribute to the reduction of serious youth violence? If not, why?

**2b.** What support is currently provided to children who are excluded from school? Are there any system and policy changes (such as funding, training, or guidance) that could enable schools, colleges, and AP to better support excluded children? Do these changes differ in Wales?

**2c.** Are schools, colleges, and AP settings using specific strategies to reduce racial disparities in exclusion? Are there case studies of where this has been effective?

## 3. Attendance

Not being in education places a child at greater risk of involvement in youth violence. However, the vast majority (over 90%) of persistently absent children do not commit serious violence, and other risk factors are stronger predictors of involvement in violence.<sup>13</sup> Support to reduce absence should, therefore, be targeted at children most at risk of involvement in violence, including Children in Need, those who have previously been suspended, those in AP, or those who live in areas of serious youth violence.

We lack a robust evidence base on ‘what works’ to improve attendance. However, the EEF’s Rapid Evidence Assessment suggests some strategies, including targeted parental engagement and communications and meal provision.<sup>14</sup> Hearteningly, our Teacher Tapp survey indicated that many schools are delivering these interventions (and others) in an attempt to improve attendance.

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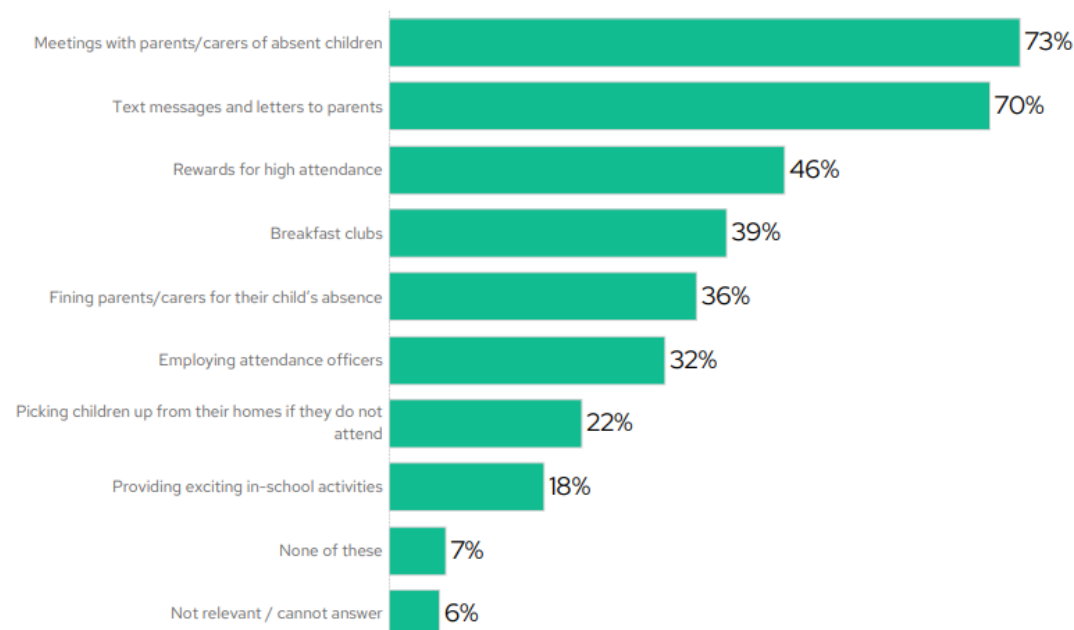
<sup>11</sup> <https://youthendowmentfund.org.uk/toolkit/interventions-to-prevent-school-exclusion/>

<sup>12</sup> In our aforementioned Teacher Tapp Survey (conducted in October 2023), we found that very, very few teachers (only 1%) believe that their school excludes pupils ‘too much’. 31% said their school excludes ‘the right amount’, and 30% ‘too little’.

<sup>13</sup> [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/1171532/Education\\_childrens\\_social\\_care\\_and\\_offending\\_multi-level\\_modelling.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1171532/Education_childrens_social_care_and_offending_multi-level_modelling.pdf)

<sup>14</sup> : <https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/evidence-reviews/attendance-interventions-rapid-evidence-assessment>

## What is your school currently doing to improve attendance?



Question answered by 9,625 teachers on 30/10/2023 (results weighted to reflect national teacher and school demographics)

## Research questions

**3a.** How can we ensure more schools, colleges and AP are delivering evidence informed attendance interventions that target the children most in need?

**3b.** What strategies are education settings using to address racial disparities in attendance? Are there any examples of best practice?

**3c.** What policy and system changes could better support education settings to keep the children most at risk of involvement in youth violence in school? To what extent do these differ in Wales?

## Methods

We are open to teams proposing a range of methods for answering these questions. These could include, but are not limited to:

- Surveys, interviews and focus groups examining practitioners' perspectives and exploring existing practice
- Case studies examining children's experiences or examples of practice.
- Surveys to map existing practice.
- Consultation with subject experts
- Desk based research and review of documents to map and describe elements of the system or policy landscape. For example, this could involve review of Government policy documents, or inspection reports.

## Expected Output

We expect a written report that uses the following structure:

- Executive summary
- Introduction
- Methodology
- Findings (separated by research questions). Within each topic area, we would expect a discussion of the findings.
- Conclusion and recommendations for policy and practice

Upon sharing the final report with us, we would expect the research team to provide a short presentation to the YEF team on the study's findings. YEF will pay for the peer review of the report.

## Timeline

The deadline for the full, final study is October 15<sup>th</sup> 2024. After this, YEF will arrange for a peer review. The deadline for proposals is 19<sup>th</sup> February 2024. We intend to have appointed the successful team by March 1<sup>st</sup> 2024. We would expect research teams to plan in several 'check-in' points with the YEF team, to update us on progress.

## Budget

We expect the project to cost approximately c.£100k–£150k. However, we have some flexibility here, and will be judging bids on value for money rather than absolute cost.

## How to apply

YEF will judge research applications using the following criteria:

- **Subject expertise (20%).** How much expertise does the team have relating to violence reduction interventions, school exclusion and AP, and attendance?
- **Research experience (20%).** How much experience does the team have in delivering similar research projects with education audiences? Does the team have expertise and experience in delivering research projects that aim to understand racial disparities?
- **Proposed methodological approach (40%).** What methodology has the team suggested, and does it match our needs?
- **Value for money (20%).** Does the bid represent value for money?

Where teams may be weak in any of the above areas, we encourage applicants to seek expert consultants and partnerships to supplement their bid.

Proposals should be no longer than 2,500 words, and should set out the team's expertise, experience, methodological approach, and budget. You may attach relevant documents to support your application – this will not be included in the word count.

As noted above, we are open to research teams suggesting their own research questions, and/or suggesting improvements and amendments to our own.

**Please email your application to [joe.collin@youthendowmentfund.org.uk](mailto:joe.collin@youthendowmentfund.org.uk) by 5pm on 19<sup>th</sup> February 2024.**