

## INVITATION TO TENDER: Understanding Referral Pathways for Arrested Children

### Background

Youth Endowment Fund (YEF) and the Department for Education (DfE) are co-funding a research programme called the 'Serious Violence Research Programme'<sup>1</sup>, working to examine how systems of support<sup>2</sup> protect or expose children and their families to involvement in crime and violence.

Children who enter the criminal justice system are some of the most vulnerable children in society. Their offending will often mask underlying vulnerabilities including early childhood trauma and neglect, poor mental health and growing up in poverty.<sup>3</sup>

A recent analysis of cases where a child has come to serious harm found that the police were missing opportunities to identify vulnerabilities and keep children safe.<sup>4</sup> The most common types of vulnerability to be missed included child sexual exploitation and criminal exploitation. Inspection reports suggest that, while police are improving at identifying and responding to signs of vulnerability in children, too many exploited children are criminalised. Too little consideration is given to the reasons why children commit crime when decisions are made about the appropriate response. Recognising these causes could help the police consider more appropriate resolutions when crimes occur.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> For the purposes of this research serious violence was defined using the definition outlined in the 2018 Serious Violence Strategy: "specific types of crime such as homicide, knife crime, and gun crime and areas of criminality where serious violence or its threat is inherent, such as in gangs and county lines drug dealing. It also includes emerging crime threats faced in some areas of the country such as the use of corrosive substances as a weapon" (Serious Violence Strategy - GOV.UK ([www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk)))

<sup>2</sup> For the purpose of this research, a 'system of support' is how different services work individually and together to support children at risk of involvement in violence. Examples include education, health, children's social care, and the criminal justice system.

<sup>3</sup> House of Commons Justice Committee (2020), 'Children and young people in custody', [https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm5801/cmselect/cmjust/306/30606.htm#\\_idTextAnchor006](https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm5801/cmselect/cmjust/306/30606.htm#_idTextAnchor006); HMIP, 'The Work of Youth Offending Teams to Protect the Public', 2017.

<sup>4</sup> D Allnock, J Dawson, and H Rawden, 'The Role of Police in Responding to Child and Adult Vulnerability: A Meta-Analysis of 126 Reviews of Death and Serious Harm' (Vulnerability Knowledge and Practice Programme, 2020) <[https://www.vkpp.org.uk/assets/Files/Publications/VKPP\\_police\\_response\\_MetaAnalysis.pdf](https://www.vkpp.org.uk/assets/Files/Publications/VKPP_police_response_MetaAnalysis.pdf)> [accessed 25 August 2023].

<sup>5</sup> HMICFRS, 'National Child Protection Inspections 2019 thematic report', 2019, <https://assets-hmicfrs.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/uploads/national-child-protection-inspections-2019-thematic-report.pdf>; HMIP, 'Exploring Contextual Safeguarding in youth justice services', 2023, <https://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmiprobation/wp-content/uploads/sites/5/2023/06/Exploring-Contextual-Safeguarding-in-youth-justice-services-1.pdf>

We also know that the faster support is provided following an offence, the more effective it is likely to be in reducing the likelihood of reoffending.<sup>6</sup> Unreliable or unclear referral pipelines slow down the process of a child getting the recommended support. Clear and well-understood processes are key to helping a child move from arrest to support from within the youth justice service, education, health and voluntary organisations.

We are pleased to invite tenders for a research project to examine the systems in place for ensuring that children get the support they need when they come into contact with the police. This includes:

- How police act to safeguard arrested children
- How arrested children are identified for, referred to, and access diversion services

### **Research Questions**

The preliminary<sup>7</sup> research questions are:

- How well do the police act to safeguard vulnerable children they arrest? Are they aware of the available referral pathways and services, and do they use them? If not, why not?
- What are the barriers and challenges to safeguarding arrested children?
- Are the police aware of the National Vulnerability Action Plan and is it having an impact on practice?
- What support is available for arrested children? What are the eligibility criteria? How are children referred to them?
- How do the police, social services, schools and community organisations collaborate and share information to best support arrested children?
- How quickly do children proceed to support after being arrested? How is this impacted by ongoing police investigations?
- What structural changes could ensure children diverted from the criminal justice system access timely and effective support?

### **Budget**

We expect bids for up to £100,000 for this project.

All of our tender opportunities are issued as grant agreements. Therefore, we do not expect bidders to include VAT except in exceptional circumstances where pass-through VAT from a sub-grantee or supplier is unavoidable. In any such situation, the YEF will not provide any extra funds to cover VAT costs, and where they are incurred, they must be covered within the agreed grant amount.

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<sup>6</sup> Centre for Justice Innovation, *Ensuring Effective Referral into Youth Diversion*, 2021 <[https://justiceinnovation.org/sites/default/files/media/document/2021/effective\\_referrals.pdf](https://justiceinnovation.org/sites/default/files/media/document/2021/effective_referrals.pdf)> [accessed 15 July 2022].

<sup>7</sup> We will work with the successful bidder to finalise these research questions

## Methodology

There may be significant local variation in referral pathways and availability of diversionary and other support services for arrested children.<sup>8</sup> Proposals will be expected to outline how they will select focus areas for research across England.

We invite bidders to propose an appropriate methodology. We would expect the project to build on identified gaps in the evidence base through new qualitative primary research. This may mean a phased approach to the research, with desk research and secondary data analysis followed by interviews with the police, practitioners, policy makers and children / young people themselves.

We expect proposals to include how diversity and inclusion considerations can be incorporated into the design and execution of the project.

## Outputs and timeframe

Final outputs will be agreed with the appointed team, but are expected to include:

1. A report of the project outlining the methods and findings
2. An accessible summary report to distil the methods and findings

The final outputs will be reviewed by the YEF and DfE as well as independent peer reviewers. Timelines are provisionally outlined below:

Activity	Expected time frame
Proposal deadline	26 <sup>th</sup> April 2024
Questions accepted until	12 <sup>th</sup> April 2024
Preferred bidder appointed (including all contractual work and kick off completed)	17 <sup>th</sup> May 2024
Work delivered	December 2024
Review and publication process	January – February 2025

## How to apply

We invite bidders to prepare proposals of no more than 3,000 words, excluding references and are aiming to notify bidders on 17 May 2024.

In the proposal, we expect bidders to include the following:

- Objectives of the project, including research questions and rationale for why these are important.
- Your proposed approach to conducting the research, including a detailed description of each stage.

<sup>8</sup> [Supporting the youngest children in the youth justice system: what works to reduce offending and improve outcomes? | Local Government Association](#)

- The relevant experience of the team. Specifically, your credentials for undertaking the research, your knowledge in the subject matter and expertise in the proposed methodology.
- A detailed budget with justification for time spent.

Bidders **have until 26<sup>th</sup> April 2024** to prepare their proposals and will be able to submit questions until 12<sup>th</sup> April 2024. All proposals will be reviewed by the YEF and DfE, using the criteria provided in Appendix 1. We are happy to consider bids from consortiums, as long as consideration is given to communication and how the teams will work well together. We would expect to contract with one lead member of the consortium.

**Please send proposals and / or any questions to Stevie-Jade Hardy at [stevie-jade.hardy@youthendowmentfund.org.uk](mailto:stevie-jade.hardy@youthendowmentfund.org.uk).**

Appendix 1: YEF scoring criteria

- 1. Relevant experience of core project team and understanding of topic area (30%)**
  - a) The extent to which the applicant demonstrates expertise and understanding of youth crime and violence.
  - b) The extent to which the proposed team demonstrates a track record of delivering high quality research.
  - c) The extent to which the proposal considers how diversity and inclusion considerations can be incorporated into the design and execution of the project
  - d) The extent to which the proposed team demonstrate an understanding and track record of good project management and robust quality assurance procedures
- 2. Methodology and approach (50%)**
  - a) Suitability of the methodology to deliver against the research aims and objectives, balancing the need to provide robust qualitative evidence, timely feedback, and flexibility / tailoring with the need to be proportionate, targeted, and low burden.
  - b) Suitability of the methodology to ensure research is pertinent, engaging, and sensitive to participant groups.
  - c) Suitability of proposed strategies to access participant groups and maximise participation rates, especially amongst children and young people with lived experience of serious youth violence.
  - d) Suitability of the proposed techniques to analyse data to deliver against research questions.
- 3. Value for Money (20%)**



- a) Detailed cost of your proposal and how this demonstrates value for money.

<b>Scoring criteria</b>	
0	Totally fails to meet the requirement - information not available
1	Meets some of the requirements with limited supporting information
2	Meets some of the requirements with reasonable explanation
3	Fully meets the requirements with detailed explanation and evidence
4	Exceeds the requirements with extensive explanation and evidence