



Understanding local violence prevention partnerships and practice across England and Wales

A national survey for the Area Leaders Programme

Summary

- YEF is seeking a team to conduct a national survey of how local multi-agency partnerships across England and Wales are working to prevent children and young people's involvement in, and exposure to, violence. Specifically, we are focusing on the strategic partnerships that hold oversight for violence prevention at the local authority level, and provide governance, leadership and coordination across multi-agency work. We are also interested in how these partnerships interact with broader structures including regional arrangements, violence reduction units and local policing bodies.
- The study will use a national survey to understand how local partnerships are responding to children and young people's involvement in, and exposure to, violence. It will be supported by a document review and case studies with selected local areas, and/or other suitable research methods.
- Alongside learnings from YEF's Area Leaders Programme, the findings will inform YEF's recommendations for local multi-agency partnerships on how to reduce violence amongst children and young people.
- The deadline for proposals is 9 am on the 20th of July 2026. We intend to have appointed the successful team by the week commencing 17th of August 2026. The deadline for the full draft report is the 8th of March 2027.

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 rigorous evaluations to find out what works. We also synthesise the best available evidence from across the world and mobilise what we learn to make a change to the lives of children.

It is 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 violence. Alongside our [programme funding](#), and [evidence synthesis](#) work, we fund a wide range

of research projects (including data analysis, youth understanding work, and practice reviews) to better understand young people's lives, and the systems and services that surround them.

The Area Leaders Programme (ALP)

YEF's Area Leaders Programme works with multi-agency violence prevention partnerships in local authority areas to prevent children and young people's involvement in, and exposure to, violence. The programme aims to equip area leaders with the knowledge, tools and partnerships needed to deliver effective violence prevention strategies. It supports local partners to meet the requirements of the Serious Violence Duty.

The ALP is structured around YEF's five Ps, five things we think local areas need to do well to effectively prevent children's involvement in, and exposure to, violence:

- **Partnerships.** Build strong, accountable partnerships with clear roles, governance, and measurable goals.
- **Profile.** Understand the local drivers, context, and patterns of serious violence.
- **People.** Identify the children most at risk and ensure they get the right support at the right time.
- **Places.** Pinpoint high-risk locations and take action to make them safer.
- **Practice.** Share and apply best practice consistently across all key agencies.

In 2027, YEF will publish Practice Guidance for multi-agency partnerships in local authority areas on how they can reduce children's involvement in, and exposure to, violence. This guidance will be specifically targeted at the following strategic partnerships at the local authority level and their sub-groups that provide governance, leadership and coordination across their joint work with individual children and groups:

- **Community Safety Partnerships.** These bring together local partners (including police, fire and rescue, health, probation and local authorities) to agree and deliver strategies to tackle crime, disorder and anti-social behaviour. They are usually chaired by a senior lead from policing, the local authority or community safety team; however, there is no single national chairing model, and chairing is agreed locally by partners.¹ Serious violence subgroups are an example of a subgroup that may sit under, or report into, a Community Safety Partnership where serious violence is a local priority.
- **Local Children's Safeguarding Partnerships – or Regional Safeguarding Boards in Wales.** ² Multi-Agency Child Exploitation (MACE) panels, are an example of a subgroup that may sit under, or report into, local safeguarding arrangements.
- **Violence Reduction Units.** Provide local leadership and strategic coordination to prevent and reduce serious violence. They bring together police, local authorities, health, education, VCSFE and other partners to work together and use data to understand and respond to local drivers of violence. Governance is often led through a VRU director or lead, but may also sit with the Office

¹ [Community Safety Partnerships - GOV.UK](#)

² [About The Board - Safeguarding Board Wales Working together to safeguard children 2026](#)

of the Police and Crime Commissioner, Mayoral Office or within a local violence reduction partnership board.³

The recommendations in our Practice Guidance report will draw on YEF's existing work in the sector, including:

- Learnings from YEF's Area Leaders Programme
- Projects YEF has funded, evaluated or commissioned in the sector (such as our [Neighbourhood Fund](#); our research on providing protective oversight for children vulnerable to violence but below statutory thresholds (in press); and our insights report on identifying children and young people who are vulnerable to, or involved in, violence (in press))
- The YEF [Toolkit](#)
- Our annual [Children, Violence and Vulnerability](#) survey of young people
- Our work understanding the lives of young people with the [Peer Action Collective](#)
- YEF's published [practice guidance and system guidance](#)

This study will further strengthen our recommendations by helping YEF to understand how local multi-agency violence prevention partnerships are responding to violence in practice, identify examples of promising practice and share insights on barriers and enablers to effective local violence prevention from across England and Wales. It will also be used to inform future delivery of the Area Leaders Programme, including work at the regional or local policing body level.

Context

Violence continues to affect the lives of too many children. By violence, we mean the use or threat of intentional physical force. This can include murder, physical assault, sexual assault, harm – or the threat of harm – with a weapon, and robbery. This also includes violence against women and girls and other forms of gender-based violence such as sexual violence, relationship violence and abuse, and harmful sexual behaviour.

In our 2025 Children, Violence and Vulnerability survey of nearly 11,000 13- to 17-year-olds in England and Wales, we found that, in the past year, nearly one in five had been a victim of violence, one in eight had carried out violence themselves, and half had witnessed violence against someone else. Nearly three in ten victims needed medical treatment from a doctor or hospital.⁴

The key message that we want to emphasise across the Area Leaders Programme and in our ALP Practice Guidance is that **violence is preventable**. But prevention depends on local systems being able to identify and respond to serious harm. Recent evidence, including from the Southport Inquiry, has shown that gaps in multi-agency working can leave serious risks unidentified or unresolved.⁵

[Violence Reduction Units year ending March 2025 evaluation report](#)
[Serious Violence Duty evaluation - GOV.UK](#)

⁴ [The scale of violence affecting children | Youth Endowment Fund](#)

⁵ [Southport Inquiry Report – Volume 2](#)

From existing evidence, there is not a completely clear and consistent national picture of how multi-agency partnerships across England and Wales are currently working to prevent children and young people's involvement in, and exposure to, violence.

Local systems for preventing serious violence also vary widely in their structure, governance and focus. Different areas may organise their response through Community Safety Partnerships, Local Children's Safeguarding Partnerships, Violence Reduction Units, or other local arrangements and sub-groups. These arrangements have often developed over time in response to local need, national policy changes, available funding and existing partnership structures. This variation reflects local context, but it also makes it difficult to build a clear picture of who is doing what, how local systems are operating in practice, and where common strengths and gaps lie.

Existing evidence does give us some useful insights into local practice. For example, evaluations of Violence Reduction⁶,⁷ the ^{7,8} Ofsted's Joint Targeted Area Inspections,⁹ and YEF's learnings from the ALP can tell us about the strengths, challenges and tensions local areas face. However, this evidence does not give us a clear national picture of how local partnerships are working in practice. It does not tell us, consistently, quantitatively and at scale, how effectively local partnerships are delivering violence prevention activity, organising governance, using data, identifying children who need support, responding to high-risk places, applying evidence, or working with communities.

Without a clearer national picture, it is harder for YEF, central government and local partners to target support, share learning and develop practical guidance for local areas. This study will help fill that gap through a large-scale national survey, supported by a document review and case studies. It will give YEF a stronger understanding of how local partnerships are working in practice, what helps or hinders effective violence prevention, and what examples of promising practice are being delivered across England and Wales.

Race equity

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 in the research questions posed in this call for proposals.

Violence affects children from all backgrounds, but not all children are affected in the same way. Evidence shows that children from some racially minoritised backgrounds are disproportionately represented across all stages of the youth justice system. Black children and young people make up 6% of the population, but in 2023/24 represented 10% of arrests, 15% of stop and searches and 24% of the monthly youth custody population. They are also around six times more likely to be victims of homicide.⁵ While most children involved in violence are White, evidence shows that children from Black, Asian and other racially minoritised backgrounds can experience different pathways into violence and different

⁶ [Violence Reduction Units year ending March 2024 evaluation report - GOV.UK](#)

⁷ [Serious Violence Duty evaluation - GOV.UK](#)

⁸ [Multi-agency responses to serious violence: working together to support and protect children - GOV.UK](#)

interactions with services. Understanding and addressing these disparities is crucial to preventing children's involvement in violence.⁶

The aim of this project

The Youth Endowment Fund is commissioning a team to help us build a clearer national picture of how local multi-agency partnerships across England and Wales are working to prevent children and young people's involvement in, and exposure to, violence.

The study should help YEF understand current partnership practice across our five Ps: **Partnerships, Profile, People, Places and Practice**. It should identify strengths, differences, gaps, and challenges across local areas, and draw out practical insights that can inform YEF's 2027 Area Leaders Programme Practice Guidance.

Research questions

1. To what extent are local partnerships across England and Wales currently delivering 'good violence prevention practice' (as defined by YEF's 5 Ps)?
 - a. **Partnerships:** What partnership arrangements are in place locally, how clear is local governance, roles, accountability, and strategic focus on violence, and how well are partners working together across agencies?
 - b. **Profile:** How well do partners understand local data, and the causes and patterns of violence affecting children?
 - c. **People:** How are local partnerships identifying children involved in, or at risk of, violence, and how effective are local pathways in helping children access support?
 - d. **Places:** How are local partnerships identifying high-risk locations, making these places safer, and engaging communities in violence prevention?
 - e. **Practice:** How are local partnerships applying evidence about what works across agencies, and what interventions are local partnerships investing in and commissioning?
2. What violence problems are local areas identifying as priorities, and how are these priorities reflected in local strategies and delivery?
3. To what extent are local partnerships considering race equity within violence prevention activity, strategy and decision-making? And to what extent are they taking actions that will reduce racial disproportionality in children's involvement in violence?
4. To what extent are local partnerships considering violence against women and girls within violence prevention activity, strategy and decision-making? And to what extent are they taking actions that will reduce children's involvement in violence against women and girls?

Expected methodology

We expect bidders to use a large-scale national survey as the main method to answer the research questions. The survey should cover strategic multi-agency violence prevention partnerships at the local authority level across England and Wales. This should include Community Safety Partnerships, Local Children's Safeguarding Partnerships (or Regional Safeguarding Boards in Wales), Violence Reduction Units (or the Wales Violence Prevention Unit), and equivalent local arrangements.

Delivering a high-quality survey with strong reach and response rates is a core priority for this project.

Example survey questions could cover:

- **Partnerships:** Which local board, partnership or sub-group has primary responsibility for coordinating work to prevent children's involvement in, and exposure to, violence? In your view, how clear are local partners on who needs to be involved in the partnership and what their role is?
- **Profile:** How confident is the partnership that it has an up-to-date understanding of the nature, scale, patterns and causes of violence involving children? Which data sources does the partnership currently use to understand violence involving children?
- **People:** How does the partnership identify children involved in, affected by or vulnerable to violence? To what extent are there clear pathways for children identified through local processes to receive timely support? To what extent do particular children (e.g. children with SEND) receive appropriate support?
- **Places:** How confident is the partnership that it can identify the specific places, times and contexts where violence involving children is most concentrated? To what extent does the partnership have clear plans for responding to these priority places, times or contexts? Are there targeted efforts to provide children with support between 4 and 8 pm? Are Youth Clubs funded in areas of high violence?
- **Practice:** Which interventions, services or activities is the partnership currently funding, commissioning or delivering to prevent or reduce children's involvement in, and exposure to, violence? To what extent does the partnership use evidence, including YEF Toolkit evidence and local data, when deciding what to fund, commission or deliver?
- **Race equity:** How confident is the partnership that it understands how children from different ethnic backgrounds experience violence and local responses to violence? What does the partnership routinely do to identify and respond to racial disproportionality, including in referrals, support offers, enforcement activity, outcomes, commissioning and delivery?

We also want bidders to consider other methods that can support the survey findings. These could include:

- **A document review** of strategic needs assessments, response strategies, problem profiles and other publicly available documents related to local violence prevention across England and Wales.
- **Case studies** – including interviews and/or focus groups – to identify examples of promising practice, and explore how local partnerships are organising and delivering violence prevention in practice.

Bidding teams are welcome to propose changes to the research questions or methods where they think this would strengthen the study. We expect to finalise the detailed research questions and methods with the appointed team during the inception phase. Any proposed changes or additional methods should remain feasible within the project timeline and budget and should not reduce the focus on the national survey as the main part of this project.

Please do propose other methods if these will effectively answer our research questions.

Key priorities for the survey

The most important aspect of the project as a whole, is generating a quantitative picture of local practice across England and Wales. We strongly encourage bidders to explain in their proposals how they will address the priorities below, including concrete examples from previous work where relevant. This will form a key part of how we assess bids:

- How would you design survey questions that capture what partnerships are doing in practice, and reduce the risk of social desirability bias?
- Who should complete the survey in each local area, partnership or geography and why?
- How would you identify and reach the right respondents, and the sample size you would aim for?
- How would you secure a strong response rate, drawing on your previous experience of delivering surveys?
- How would you test the survey before launch to make sure the questions are clear, relevant and answerable?
- How would you analyse the survey findings, including any gaps, partial responses or uneven response rates?
- How would you build on existing evidence and avoid duplicating previous work in this space?

If you include other methods in your bid, such as a document review or case studies, please also outline the sample size and reach you would be looking to achieve with the proposed method, and what the approach would entail.

Timeline

The deadline for proposals is 9 am on the 20th of July 2026. We intend to have appointed the successful team by the week commencing 17th of August 2026. The deadline for the full draft report is the 8th of March 2027, after which a peer review process will take place.

We would expect the final written report to include:

- An executive summary
- An introduction
- Methodology
- Findings (written discussion of each of the research questions in turn)
- Conclusion and insights for policy and practice

We also expect the team to find examples of best practice that we can promote to all areas.

YEF will pay for the peer review of the report.

Budget

We expect the project to cost approximately £75–125k. However, we have some flexibility here and will be judging bids on value for money rather than absolute cost. This range gives an indication of the scale of budgets we envisage – we will consistently prioritise proposals that give good value for money and strongly discourage research teams using these figures as the sole driver of their costs. If a team presents a proposal for a higher cost but can justify why a particular approach or additional element of the project adds significant value, we are open to considering it.

We would not expect VAT to be included in teams' budgets. Pass through VAT via sub-granting work to other organisations may in some circumstances be included. However, it is up to the bidding team to decide if they need to include VAT and any charges must be covered within the total grant amount.

We do not require budgets to use a specific template in proposals. Any approach that enables us to see total cost, the cost of project components, day rates, and number of days assigned to each team member is sufficient.

How to apply

YEF will judge applications using the following criteria:

- **Subject expertise (25%).** How much expertise does the team have relating to serious violence, violence reduction/prevention and local multi-agency partnership working?
- **Research experience (25%).** How much experience does the team have in delivering similar research projects? Does the team have expertise and experience in delivering research projects that aim to understand and address racial disparities?
- **Proposed methodological approach (40%).** What approach has the team suggested, how feasible is it, and does it match our needs?
- **Value for money (10%).** 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 clearly set out the team's subject expertise, research experience, methodological approach, budget and value for money, and a project plan and timeline. Proposals should be no longer than 3,500 words. You may attach relevant documents to support your application, but there is no guarantee that these will be read. Attached documents will not be included in the word count.

As noted above, we are open to research teams suggesting amendments or additions to the research questions and methodology.

Please send applications to patrick.olajide@youthendowmentfund.org.uk by 9am on the 20th of July 2026.

Any questions about the tender can also be directed to patrick.olajide@youthendowmentfund.org.uk by 5pm on Wednesday 15th of July.