

VAWG Prevention Programme

Application guidance



**Objective 2: Responding to Inappropriate
and Problematic Attitudes and Behaviours
on Gender Norms and Relationships in
Educational Settings**

About the YEF

The Youth Endowment Fund (YEF) is a charity with a mission that matters. We exist 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.

The charity was established in 2019 with a 10-year, £200 million endowment from the Home Office.

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Foreword from the Department for Education (DfE) and Home Office (HO)

In December 2025, the government published “Freedom from Violence and Abuse: a cross-government strategy to build a safer society for women and girls”, setting out the vision and actions for meeting the ambition to halve violence against women and girls in a decade.

Prevention and early intervention are fundamental to the approach. It is vital that we tackle the root causes of violence against women and girls instead of only responding to the impacts, including supporting the education system to teach children about respectful and healthy relationships and consent.

The strategy introduced a landmark package of measures for children and young people, including action to support teachers and schools to embed the new RSHE curriculum which will be taught in schools from September 2026, and early intervention targeting support to young people who may be displaying harmful behaviours.

The approaches we use to address VAWG must be based on the strongest possible evidence. That is why we are working with the Youth Endowment Fund to implement and evaluate a range of projects and understand ‘what works’. We recognise the experience and expertise that is already out there in the sector and look forward to working together on this important initiative.



Foreword from the YEF VAWG Lead

All young people deserve to develop relationships that are happy, healthy and rooted in equality between partners. They also deserve to learn in safe and respectful environments, free from harassment and abuse. Yet too many young people currently experience attitudes and behaviours in school that fall far short of these standards.

YEF's Children, Violence and Vulnerability survey (2025) underlines the scale of the problem. Twenty-nine percent of teenage children in relationships report having done emotionally or physically abusive things to their partner. While most young people recognise that sexual harassment is never acceptable, a concerning minority consider behaviours such as making unwanted sexual comments, sharing intimate images without consent, or pressuring someone into sexual activity to be sometimes or always acceptable.

While the seriousness of the issue is clear, knowing how to prevent this is a significant gap in the UK evidence base. This call comprises the second Objective of the Youth Endowment Fund's (YEF) VAWG Prevention programme – part of a wider programme of YEF funding, evaluation and research focused on what works to prevent and respond to violence against women and girls (VAWG).

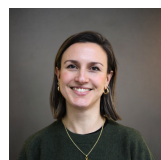
This funding round (Objective 2) focuses on schools-based early intervention – providing targeted support to children and young people (aged 10–18 years old) who are displaying inappropriate or problematic attitudes, perspectives on gender norms and behaviours that, if unaddressed, could lead to escalating harm in the future.

This sits alongside [Objective 1](#), which seeks to improve the provision of quality universal Relationship, Sex and Health Education (RSHE) in secondary schools. The work supported through this fund is critical to the delivery of the government's ambition to prevent VAWG, as set out in its Freedom from Violence and Abuse strategy (December 2025).

We know that gender-inequitable attitudes, beliefs and norms are key drivers of VAWG. Evidence suggests that changing attitudes towards acceptable behaviour in relationships, including around consent and coercive control, can play a role in longer-term behaviour change. Strengthening relationship skills, challenging stereotypes that uphold strict gender roles, and shifting the social norms that justify or minimise violence are all critical levers for prevention.

This fund will support young people at a point where their attitudes and behaviours are still developing and responsive to change, and before the point where a response from statutory services such as children's social care, policing or youth justice is necessary. By intervening early, these approaches aim to prevent abuse or violence from happening in the future.

Violence against women and girls is preventable. The evidence and practice generated through this programme will help build understanding of how to do this, playing an important role in shaping future policy, strengthening practice, and contributing to a growing body of knowledge on how we prevent violence before it escalates.



Jess Southgate
Violence Against Women and
Girls Lead
Youth Endowment Fund



Responding to Inappropriate and Problematic Attitudes and Behaviours on Gender Norms and Relationships in Educational Settings

This Objective is the second in YEF's VAWG Prevention Programme and forms part of a wider YEF programme of funding, evaluation and research over the next three years on what works to prevent and respond to VAWG, as part of our central mission to prevent children and young people becoming involved in violence. The first Objective of the VAWG prevention programme centred around the provision of Relationships, Sex and Health Education (RSHE) in schools, and [can be found here](#).



We are seeking to fund and evaluate interventions that support educational settings in England to identify and respond to inappropriate and problematic attitudes and behaviours around gender norms and relationships among children and young people aged 10–18 in England. We know that targeted programmes for children and young people displaying emerging inappropriate and problematic attitudes and behaviours is important in preventing escalation into more severe forms of harmful behaviour, which require statutory intervention. This funding round is seeking to generate evidence on how educational settings can best be supported to identify and address these emerging challenges before they escalate, and ultimately reduce violence against women and girls.

This Objective supports Pillar 1: Prevention and Early Intervention in the government's Freedom from violence and abuse: a cross-government strategy, particularly its focus on protecting young people, challenging dangerous attitudes and preventing problematic behaviours from escalating. It also aligns with commitments in Freedom from violence and abuse volume 2: action plan to strengthen prevention and early intervention for children and young people and improve the education system's response to misogyny and emerging risks.

We see this funding round not just as a critical step in generating robust evidence for pupils and schools, but also an important opportunity for ongoing learning about the conditions required for successful implementation. We look forward to working collectively with selected projects, and the wider sector, throughout this funding to share experiences, learning and reflections.

This is the first round of funding under Objective 2. We expect to launch a second call for proposals in Summer 2027, informed by what we learn through this initial round. This learning will help shape the programmes we prioritise in Round Two, the evaluation approaches we support, and the guidance and support offered to future partners.

For successful proposals, we will fund both intervention delivery and evaluation. If a proposal is successful, YEF will appoint an independent evaluator from a VAWG-specific evaluator pool (selected from the YEF Evaluator Panel) to co-design and deliver the evaluation. We cannot fund delivery that is not part of an evaluation, nor appoint an organisation as the lead evaluator that is not from our Evaluation Panel.

Where does this funding fit with other funding opportunities around VAWG?

There are several other planned and concurrent funding rounds targeted towards building the wider evidence base around VAWG:

YEF VAWG Prevention Programme Objective 1

Promoting Healthy and Respectful Relationships in Secondary Schools: we have launched a separate funding round focussed on the early stages of VAWG prevention through the quality delivery of universal education on healthy and respectful relationships in state secondary schools (11-16 year olds). We are looking for interventions which are ready for impact evaluation through Randomised Controlled Trials (RCTs). The funding call [can be accessed here](#) and the deadline for applications is 9am, Monday 27th July 2026.

The Home Office will also launch a helpline for young people who are concerned about their behaviour in relationships. The helpline is due to be launched later in 2026.

Evaluator Accelerator Fund

The Government Evaluation Task Force are calling for proposals to build evidence and evaluation capability to support the government's VAWG strategy. The funding cannot be used to fund service delivery and must be utilised by March 2027. This call for proposals has now closed - information about the funding can be [found here](#).

The Home Office is investing in interventions for Child to Parent or Caregiver Abuse (CPCA) and Teenage Relationship Abuse (TRA)

These interventions will be commissioned via Police and Crime Commissioners who will work with specialist delivery partners and produce local evaluations as part of this requirement.



What we'll invest in

We expect interventions to focus primarily on children and young people who are displaying inappropriate and problematic attitudes and behaviours around gender norms and relationships. Applicants are also encouraged to consider how their intervention can include elements to help schools respond appropriately to children and young people who have experienced harm as a result of those attitudes or behaviours.

Interventions may support children and young people of all genders. However, because VAWG-related harms are more commonly perpetrated by boys and young men, proposals may focus primarily on boys where this is appropriate to the intervention model and target cohort. Applicants should ensure that their approach remains inclusive, proportionate and sensitive to the different ways that concerns, needs and behaviours may present across genders.

We are only able to fund delivery in England.

Secondary prevention

This Objective focuses on targeted (or ‘secondary’) prevention: providing support, through schools, to children and young people who are beginning to demonstrate inappropriate or problematic attitudes or behaviours related to gender norms and relationships. These interventions are designed to engage those displaying emerging concerns—such as early-stage behaviours, risk factors, or problematic attitudes—before harm escalates.

A summary of the different kinds of prevention services, and their relevance for this Objective, can be seen below:

TYPE OF PREVENTION	DESCRIPTION	WITHIN SCOPE FOR THIS OBJECTIVE?
Primary prevention	Delivered universally (to a full class/ year group/ school) without any targeting for risk factors	
Secondary prevention	Focus on early, targeted intervention with children and young people who are beginning to display inappropriate and problematic attitudes and behaviours related to gender norms, relationships, and harm	
Tertiary prevention	Addresses harm after it has escalated into serious forms of abuse or violence, requiring involvement from statutory services such as children’s social care, the police or youth justice services	

Inappropriate and problematic behaviours

For this Objective, we are seeking targeted interventions that address inappropriate and problematic attitudes and behaviours around gender norms and relationships before they escalate into more serious harm. Interventions must focus on behaviours that have not reached a threshold for statutory intervention, such as from health services or the police. However, cases which have been referred to statutory agencies and are not taken forward would still be eligible for this work.

The following indicators reflect early stage or lower level behaviours, including micro-aggressions, emerging attitudes and boundary testing actions. These may signal increased risk, but are not necessarily indicative of serious harm in isolation. They can include everyday behaviours (e.g. sexist language or low-level harassment) as well as early signs of boundary violations (e.g. misunderstanding or disregarding consent in developmentally typical ways).

Examples of inappropriate and problematic behaviours may include, but are not limited to, the examples below:

- ◆ Sexist and misogynistic language or attitudes that demeans or humiliates others.
- ◆ Sexual harassment or unwanted sexualised behaviour.
- ◆ A disregard for boundaries, respect or consent in relationships with peers or partners.
- ◆ Coercive, controlling, possessive, or intimidating behaviours in friendships or intimate relationships.
- ◆ Harmful online behaviours, including sharing inappropriate content, online harassment, or engagement with misogynistic content.
- ◆ Attitudes that normalise gender inequality, disrespect, or violence towards women and girls.
- ◆ Other indicators of unhealthy relationship behaviours that may increase the risk of future harm.

It is important to recognise that these behaviours sit along a spectrum. Where behaviours move beyond emerging or lower-level concerns into harmful, coercive or abusive patterns, rather than remaining inappropriate and/or problematic, they should be identified and responded to through formal safeguarding and statutory pathways. We are not looking for interventions which primarily deal with cases requiring statutory, criminal or clinical intervention.

Cohort and delivery settings

We are primarily interested in supporting interventions delivered to children and young people aged 10–16, though we will also accept proposals that include delivery for young people aged 17–18. Our focus on the 10–18 age range reflects the full span of upper-primary and secondary education, including post-16 settings (such as sixth forms and further education colleges), where key relationship dynamics continue to develop. Extending to age 18 also aligns with statutory definitions of childhood and safeguarding frameworks, supporting continuity across education, youth justice, and wider system responses.

We recognise, however, that young people aged 18 may increasingly sit across different systems (for example, adult services), and that thresholds, responses and service pathways may begin to diverge at this point. In addition, some pupils in specialist schools for children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) may be educated up to age 19 within school settings. Interventions working with these cohorts will remain in scope, where delivery is clearly connected to an educational setting and consistent with the aims of this funding.

Delivery may take place within a range of educational settings, including:

- ◆ Secondary schools
- ◆ Middle schools (limiting delivery to ages 10+)
- ◆ Primary schools (limiting delivery to ages 10+)
- ◆ Alternative Provision schools (including through work related learning programmes with a relevant focus – such as hypermasculinity)
- ◆ Further Education colleges
- ◆ Sixth Form colleges
- ◆ Specialist schools for children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)



Proposals can focus on one specific age/year group, or across multiple ages within 10–18. Where proposals are seeking to work across age groups, we will give preference to interventions that can be tailored appropriately for children and young people at different ages and stages of development. Applicants should show how their approach can remain consistent in its core components while being responsive to the needs and legal status of different cohorts, including through:

- ◆ Adapting content, materials and delivery methods so they are developmentally appropriate, accessible and engaging for children and young people across the proposed age range for the intervention.
- ◆ Explaining how the intervention will respond safely and coherently to differences in legal status, safeguarding responsibilities and service pathways for children under 18 and young people who are 18 and legally adults (where the proposed intervention includes 18 year olds).

Schools may identify children and young people through existing safeguarding, pastoral, behaviour, attendance, or wellbeing processes. Identification should be based on emerging concerns, contextual risk factors, or professional judgement, rather than requiring a formal diagnosis, criminal justice involvement or a statutory intervention threshold.

Projects are expected to operate primarily within educational settings.

However, delivery does not need to take place exclusively on school or college premises. We recognise that some effective support may be delivered in community or partner settings, where there is a clear and substantive link to an educational setting – for example through joint delivery arrangements, or hybrid models combining in-setting and external provision.

We are unlikely to support programmes delivered primarily in the community unless they have a strong and substantive link to educational settings. As this Objective is intended to help schools and colleges identify and respond to emerging problematic behaviours among their pupils, projects with only limited links to educational settings, such as referral-only arrangements, are unlikely to be eligible.

Types of interventions

The types of interventions we are interested in include, but are not limited to:

- ◆ Targeted age-appropriate work with children and young people who may be displaying, experiencing, or at increased risk of demonstrating these behaviours, focused on:
 - Developing healthy attitudes and building on positive behaviours
 - Boundaries and consent
 - Respectful relationships

We expect that this will be the core element of most interventions we fund and evaluate.

- ◆ Training and support for teachers and school staff to recognise, assess, and respond to emerging inappropriate and problematic attitudes and behaviours around gender norms and relationships.
- ◆ Developing and delivering evidence-informed tools, resources, or intervention models that support early identification and prevention.
- ◆ Helping schools understand safeguarding thresholds and referral pathways, without providing statutory or specialist casework





We would particularly welcome applications which:

- ◆ Supplement a school focus with a holistic approach to children and young people by addressing multiple levels of the socio-ecological model. This may include individual factors (such as attitudes and behaviours), relational factors (such as peer and teacher relationships), and institutional factors (such as school policies, systems and cultures). This may also include considering the significance of the family context, particularly where children and young people are exposed to these norms or harms at home. Together, these elements can support a more comprehensive and context-sensitive approach to secondary prevention.
- ◆ Consider how their work helps children and young people understand what it means to take responsibility for inappropriate and problematic behaviours and attitudes, and how harm can be repaired.
- ◆ Recognise that children and young people who display inappropriate and problematic attitudes or behaviours may also have additional needs or experiences of harm, and show how the intervention will respond inclusively. This may include children and young people who:
 - Have experienced harm themselves, including domestic abuse, coercive control, exploitation or other forms of trauma.
 - Are neurodivergent or have special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), and may require adapted approaches to engagement, communication and support.

Applicants must explain how their approach draws on existing research, theory, literature, or established practice. We would expect relevant interventions to take place over multiple weeks/ months/ terms in order to support sustained behaviour change for pupils or change to the wider school context. We are not looking for only standalone classroom workshops delivered either to teachers or pupils.

Support for schools

We expect interventions funded through this Objective to focus primarily on direct support for pupils who are displaying inappropriate and problematic attitudes or behaviours. However, we also want projects to strengthen the capacity of educational settings to identify these pupils earlier, respond to concerns, and sustain support beyond the funded delivery period. Applicants should therefore consider how their intervention will build staff confidence, improve referral and support pathways, and leave schools and colleges better equipped to respond to emerging issues around gender norms and relationships in the future.

Consideration of victim-survivors

Proposals are also expected to demonstrate a clear consideration of victim-survivors, including through a trauma-responsive and safeguarding-led approach to their delivery. This should include:

- ◆ **Recognition of potential impacts:** A clear acknowledgement of how delivering the intervention within an educational setting may affect victim-survivors (including those within the same peer groups, classes, or wider school community).
- ◆ **Identification and support pathways:** Consideration of whether, and how, the intervention supports educational settings to:
 - Identify children and young people who may have experienced harm as a result of these attitudes and behaviours
 - Respond appropriately, including through safeguarding processes and referral pathways
 - Strengthen staff confidence and capability in supporting victim-survivors
- ◆ **Safeguarding and risk reduction:** Robust safeguards to ensure that the intervention does not inadvertently increase risk or exacerbate harm, and to prevent further victimisation. This may include:
 - Managing group dynamics and peer interactions safely
 - Avoiding victim-blaming or normalisation of inappropriate and problematic attitudes and behaviours
 - Clear links to safeguarding leads and procedures
 - Processes for responding to disclosures or emerging concerns

Expectations around intervention maturity and prior delivery

We anticipate that many interventions in scope for this call will not be ready for a full robust impact evaluation, because the intervention design requires further refinement and testing, the intervention is not manualised enough, or the delivery organisation does not have the capacity to deliver at the scale needed for an efficacy randomised controlled trial (RCT) evaluation. We therefore anticipate that interventions will be most suitable for a feasibility evaluation or pilot RCT evaluation.

A feasibility evaluation focuses on practicalities (e.g. recruitment, procedures, acceptability, barriers and success factors in implementation) and tests whether the intervention can be implemented and evaluated. A pilot RCT evaluation tests whether a full randomised control trial design works in practice (and is a 'dress rehearsal' for a full-scale RCT).

At a minimum, proposals must meet at least one of the following criteria:

1. The main components of the intervention have previously been delivered within the parameters of this Objective: in a small number of educational settings, with a targeted cohort of children and young people aged 10–18.
2. The main components of the intervention have previously been delivered in England, but in a different setting or with a different cohort, and the delivery model would need to be refined for delivery in educational settings with the target age group.
3. The proposal seeks to refine and deliver an intervention that draws on evidence-informed components previously implemented by the applicant, while combining them in a format that has not been delivered before.
4. The proposal is to deliver an international evidence-based intervention which has already gone through an adaptation process for delivery in England. For these interventions, we would expect that the initial intervention developer would join the proposal in partnership with the applicant. If you would like to propose an international project that would need to be adapted for the UK context, please get in touch.

We are unable to accept proposals to develop entirely new interventions from scratch. However, we recognise that interventions may need further refinement, adaptation or testing before they are ready for a more rigorous evaluation. At a minimum, we would expect each intervention to:

- ◆ Have an outline of a Theory of Change that explains how the intervention is expected to improve outcomes for children and young people, with reference to the best available evidence.
- ◆ Draw on relevant evidence for addressing inappropriate and problematic behaviours around gender norms and relationships, including evidence from related fields where direct evidence in educational settings is limited.





Our commitment to equity

We know that some children and young people are disproportionately affected by violence or harmful behaviours and/ or struggle to access mainstream support services. Applicants should demonstrate how their delivery would appropriately support the needs of different groups. This includes children and young people from Black, Asian and other minority ethnic groups, and children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (including neurodivergence). Applicants should also demonstrate how their intervention engages with a diversity of views around gender norms, relationships and sexuality whilst ensuring provision adheres to legal and statutory guidance.

We also recognise how important it is for equity to not just be built into project delivery, but to also be a key part of the organisations that work in these spaces. As part of YEF's equity commitments, we are interested in understanding applicants' organisational commitments to gender and race equity, and would be particularly interested in receiving applications from organisations led by women or by Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic leadership.

Our approach to evaluation

As a What Works Centre, the YEF evaluates every programme and activity that we fund in order to find what works to prevent children and young people from becoming involved in violence. We partner our grantees with an independent evaluator who helps determine a suitable evaluation design (during a co-design period) and collects data throughout the delivery of the funded project to facilitate robust evaluation. As a YEF grantee, you'll be required to cooperate with the independent evaluator throughout your project's delivery and work together to produce robust evidence. The evidence produced can then be used by your organisation to improve outcomes for the children you serve and refine service models, presenting a unique opportunity for collective learning.

Evaluation type

We expect applications from interventions at different stages of development. While the evidence base for dating and relationship violence prevention is relatively well established for universal provision, there is less evidence on targeted interventions for young people at elevated risk of experiencing or carrying out inappropriate and problematic behaviours. As a result, many interventions may still need to test key aspects of delivery feasibility, implementation, and evaluation readiness before progressing to more rigorous evaluation.

For these reasons, we anticipate that many applications may be best suited to feasibility studies or pilot RCTs, which can help build the evidence needed to support future impact evaluations. These studies may explore:

- ◆ Whether the intervention can be implemented as intended.
- ◆ Whether participants can be successfully identified, recruited and retained.
- ◆ Levels of participant engagement and the acceptability of the intervention.
- ◆ The practicality of collecting outcome and implementation data.
- ◆ The acceptability and feasibility of future evaluation designs (for example, whether randomisation would be acceptable).
- ◆ Early indications of impact on relevant outcomes.



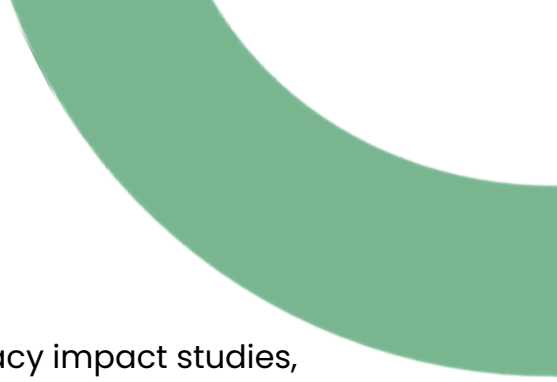


It is important to note that the aim of a feasibility study or pilot RCT is not to determine whether the intervention ‘works’ – the scale and design of these studies do not lend themselves to robust conclusions around the intervention’s impact. The aim of this work is to build a stronger pipeline of promising interventions that can progress to more rigorous impact evaluations in the future where sufficient readiness and evidence of promise are demonstrated.

Proposing an evaluation type

The table below indicates the most likely suitable evaluation design depending on the characteristics of your intervention. We invite applicants to propose the evaluation design they believe their intervention is most suitable for, and to propose a delivery scale and budget to match. Applicants should consider the scale requirements of the proposed evaluation design and the feasibility of achieving this within the available timeline (see ‘Timeline’ section). The final evaluation design will be determined collaboratively with successful applicants and will be proportionate to the maturity of the intervention and the strength of the existing evidence base. Please note that the table on the following page is highly provisional.

EVALUATION TYPE	CHARACTERISTICS OF INTERVENTION	PURPOSE OF EVALUATION	LIKELY SCALE REQUIREMENTS
Feasibility study	• Small-scale delivery across several sites • Initial Theory of Change articulated • Some confidence in delivery but not yet tested systematically • Key uncertainties remain (recruitment, retention, data collection)	• Test whether intervention can be implemented as intended in schools • Assess recruitment, identification, and retention of CYP • Assess acceptability of the intervention and the perspectives of practitioners and young people • Test data collection processes and outcome measures • Explore whether a future impact evaluation is viable	e.g. ~50 CYP/5 schools
Pilot Randomised Controlled Trial/ Pilot RCT A pilot RCT is a smaller scale version of a full RCT evaluation	• Moderate prior delivery (> 50 CYP across several sites) • Well-defined, manualised intervention • Delivery model largely stable • Evidence of feasibility and acceptability already established • Clear target group and recruitment pathways • Organisation has capacity for multi-site delivery	• Test full evaluation procedures (e.g. randomisation) • Assess implementation fidelity at scale • Provide implementation and process learning on challenges and success factors in implementation, who this might work for and under what circumstances • Test outcome measurement at scale • Generate indicative outcome trends	e.g. ~75-150 CYP/10 schools <i>For a Pilot RCT, the same number of children and young people or groups would need to be recruited for a (randomly-assigned) comparison group</i>



We are not anticipating to commission full-scale efficacy impact studies, and applicants should apply with the expectation of collaborating on a feasibility study or pilot RCT. An efficacy study tests whether an intervention works under robust, controlled conditions by comparing outcomes for those who receive it with a control group – and would be a larger-scale equivalent of a Pilot RCT. We may be able to consider efficacy studies for interventions which demonstrate a high degree of manualisation, a highly stable intervention model, a strong Theory of Change supported by prior evidence and the applicant's ability to deliver at scale. If this is a possibility, we would discuss this with the delivery and evaluation partners early in co-design.

In a pilot RCT, the evaluation will include:

- ◆ **An Implementation and Process Evaluation (IPE)** to understand how the intervention works, for whom and under what circumstances. This often includes reviewing monitoring data, interviews, focus groups and case studies with relevant stakeholders in the project.
- ◆ **A Cost Analysis** exercise to understand the costs associated with delivering the intervention, and the cost per participant.

Feasibility studies are less likely to contain an IPE element but this will be determined early in co-design.

If you are involved in a pilot RCT or full-scale efficacy study, all data collected through the study is securely stored in our Data Archive to facilitate research into the long-term effects projects have on children's lives. For further information on the YEF's approach to evaluation, please see [here](#).

There may be scope for select projects to progress from one early evaluation design to the next step within YEF's remaining endowment period (e.g feasibility study to pilot RCT). However, this would be assessed late in the initial evaluation stage.

Outcomes

We are primarily seeking to fund interventions that have a long-term aim of **reducing violence against women and girls and the reduction of harmful behaviours** in teenage relationships. Within this funding round, we would expect that interventions would aim to generate an observable change in participants' knowledge, attitudes or behaviour over the available evaluation timeline (see 'timeline' section), though these behaviours may be proximal and 'upstream' of the long-term outcomes of reducing VAWG and harmful behaviours in relationships.

For feasibility studies and pilot RCTs, outcome measures will be used to assess the plausibility of intended outcomes, explore differences across participant groups, and test the feasibility of outcome data collection, including survey completion rates, data quality, and levels of missing data. This learning will help inform readiness for future impact evaluation or further intervention development if an impact study is not deemed viable. For efficacy studies, outcome measures are used to test the effectiveness of the intervention.

The main outcomes of interest will be for children and young people and will likely include:

- ◆ Behaviour change
- ◆ Knowledge of harmful behaviours
- ◆ Attitudes towards harmful behaviours in dating and relationships

There may also be broader outcomes **for teachers and school staff**, particularly in terms of increased confidence in responding appropriately to emerging harmful behaviours, and for **peers who have been victimised** by gender and relationship abuse. However, the primary focus of the evaluations will be on improving behaviours, knowledge and attitudes for children and young people who are displaying inappropriate and problematic behaviours.

We are still considering which measures will be most appropriate for this work. The measures used will need to be suitable for the age and needs of the children and young people taking part, practical to use in educational settings, sensitive to the nature of the topics being explored, and rigorously validated. We anticipate proposing a core outcome set during co-design to support outcome selection. The final choice of measures will be agreed during co-design with YEF, the evaluator and each funded project.

Sharing learning

A core ambition of for this funding round is to strengthen understanding of what works to prevent violence against women and girls (VAWG) and harmful behaviours within teenage relationships. As a result, learning generated through this programme will be shared throughout the delivery and evaluation period, where appropriate, as well as following publication of findings. We will look to work collaboratively with funded partners to share implementation insights and disseminate learning more widely to support practice, policy and future evidence generation.

Readiness for evaluation

We are inviting applications for interventions at various stages of evaluation-readiness, and will assess proposals in a way that is proportionate to the intervention's stage of development. We will also consider how far interventions align with the government's cross-governmental strategy around violence against women and girls. For all proposals, we will assess that the intervention:

- ◆ Addresses a clear and important need relating to emerging inappropriate and problematic attitudes and behaviours around gender norms and relationships.
- ◆ Fits the scope of this call, including delivery to children and young people aged 10–18, with a clear link to educational settings.
- ◆ Is informed by available evidence.
- ◆ Has a credible rationale for why the proposed approach could reduce harm or improve responses, even where the intervention model is still being refined.
- ◆ Is sufficiently developed for the type of funding sought.
- ◆ Shows a realistic plan to strengthen the intervention design, theory of change, delivery model, or evaluation readiness where these are not yet fully developed.
- ◆ Demonstrates appropriate safeguarding, escalation and risk-management arrangements.
- ◆ Shows that the organisation has the capability, partnerships and contextual understanding needed to deliver the proposed work well, and has a track record of delivering similar interventions.
- ◆ Is feasible to deliver with the intended cohort, in the proposed settings, and at an appropriate scale for its stage of development.
- ◆ Has the potential to generate useful learning about design, implementation, feasibility, or future evaluation, practice or investment.

Who can apply

Applicants must be a registered charity, company, statutory body or Community Interest Company (CIC).

Partnerships

Partnerships between organisations are welcomed. Partnership applications should identify a lead organisation that would act as YEF's primary grantee and main point of contact. Applications from partnerships should clearly articulate the role and value each partner brings to the project.

Where partnerships are formed in order to be able to share the scale of delivery, there should be a clearly defined and consistent intervention model that all partners deliver to.

Required experience

Applicants must be able to demonstrate relevant organisational experience that is appropriate to the maturity and prior delivery of the intervention they are proposing. This may include experience of delivering the specific intervention, or experience of delivering similar targeted support to children and young people in relation to either inappropriate or problematic attitudes and behaviours around gender norms and relationships, or harmful sexual behaviour.

Applicants do not need to have delivered the specific intervention they are proposing before, provided the proposal meets the expectations set out in the intervention maturity section above. For example, the intervention may have been delivered with a different cohort or setting in England, or may be an international intervention that has been adapted for delivery in England, but not yet delivered. In these cases, we will assess applications based on the strength of the organisation's relevant experience, its understanding of the target cohort and delivery context, and the quality of its plan for adapting, refining or implementing the intervention for the proposed settings and groups of children and young people.



Coordinating with a preferred evaluator

YEF's standard approach is to assess delivery organisation applications independently and to commission an evaluator separately from its Evaluator Panel. However, where a delivery partner has a preferred evaluator, both parties may indicate this within their respective submissions while still applying through the standard processes:

- ◆ **Delivery partners/ applicants to this call** should apply to this funding round in the usual way, using the application form, and clearly state in the relevant 'partnerships' section the name of their preferred evaluator from the YEF Evaluator Panel.
- ◆ **Evaluators** must also apply in the usual way through YEF's Call for Proposals (launched 1st July). As part of their submission, they should specify the intervention they wish to evaluate and set out how they would design and deliver an evaluation tailored to that intervention.

Both delivery partners and evaluators should note that applications will be assessed separately. Progression of an intervention application does not guarantee that the named evaluator will be appointed. YEF retains full discretion to appoint an alternative evaluator from its panel, and both parties should be prepared for this possibility.

All applications will also be subject to YEF's requirements on evaluator independence and the management of potential conflicts of interest.

For further information, please contact grants@youthendowmentfund.org.uk.



Budget

We do not have set limits for the amount of funding that can be requested, but we do assess budgets based on the value for money of the proposal. Budgets should cover all costs associated with delivering the intervention at the scale indicated in the evaluation section above. Costs specific to the evaluation (such as data collection) will be covered by a separate budget for the evaluator. Please note, that the budget you submit with your application is only indicative. Should your project progress to the co-design stage (please see the application process section below), we'll work with you and the appointed evaluator to design the evaluation and the exact scale and timeframes required for this, and this may involve changes to the budget you propose.

There is no requirement for applicants to have any other funding to support their proposal beyond what they are requesting from YEF. However, we are interested in knowing whether applicants have secured/ are likely to secure any supplementary funding for their interventions. Supplementary funding can include other grants or contributions you make through your unrestricted funding. In-kind support is an organisation's non-monetary contribution to deliver the project. This can include back-office staff costs (e.g. the time of your CEO, admin support, financial or legal assistance if not covered under the overheads of your budget), staff time from other organisations supporting delivery, pro-bono support or the use of organisational facilities, such as meeting rooms. You can find further details and examples of in-kind funding [here](#). Supplementary funding and in-kind support are important as they strengthen the long-term sustainability of your project and reduce the dependency on any one funder.

Application process and timelines (July – November 2026)

A note on timelines

We recognise that the application and delivery timelines for this aim are ambitious and may require a significant investment of time and resource from applicant organisations and delivery partners. These timelines reflect:

- ◆ The need to deliver and evaluate projects within YEF's current endowment period, which runs until Spring 2029.
- ◆ Ensuring that findings can inform relevant policy and practice discussions within government and the wider sector in a timely way.

YEF is grateful for the commitment, flexibility and collaboration of organisations choosing to participate in this work and recognises the contribution this makes to strengthening the evidence base on preventing violence against women and girls.



*This is based on a standard four-month co-design phase. We recognise that some project teams may need longer. For more information, please see pages 35–36.

Step 1: Developing and submitting your application

To apply, complete an application via the forms and templates available on the YEF website. You will need to complete:

- ◆ **An application form**

- ◆ **A budget proposal**

Using our template.

The deadline for applications is **9am, Wednesday 2nd September 2026**. We cannot consider any applications which are received after that date and time. Completed applications and accompanying documentation should be submitted to the YEF Grants inbox (grants@youthendowmentfund.org.uk) using the title '**VAWG Prevention Proposal – Objective 2**'.

Please direct any questions to the Grants inbox.



Step 2: Assessment

We'll begin assessing applications as soon as they are received and **we would encourage applicants to submit their applications as soon as they are able**. In rare instances, we may reach out to applicants with clarification questions at this stage.

Based on your application, and any further information received, our assessment team will make a recommendation on whether your application should be shortlisted for interview stage. We will inform you whether your application has progressed to the next stage no later than **Wednesday 16th September**.

Step 3: Interview

If successful at application stage, we will invite you to participate in an interview with a small panel of assessors at YEF. This may include external assessors or members of our Youth Advisory Board. We will use this interview to learn more about your organisation, your proposal and the intervention's evaluation readiness. This will also be your opportunity to ask us any questions about the funding round and the likely evaluation design.

Interviews will be held between **Tuesday 2nd September – Friday 9th October**. We request that applicants ensure they have good availability during this period.

Step 4.1: YEF and Grants and Evaluation Committee (GEC) review (early November)

YEF will review all eligible applications and make recommendations to our independent Grants and Evaluation Committee (GEC) on which interventions should **progress to the co-design stage**. GEC's role is to provide oversight and scrutiny of the assessment process and to make final decisions on which interventions move forward.

Step 4.2: Matching you with an evaluator (early November)

Concurrent with GEC decision-making, provisionally successful applicants will be **matched with an evaluator** from YEF's evaluator panel, who have been selected to support this work. The panel comprises approximately 35 research organisations and universities with expertise in conducting rigorous evaluations of the implementation and impact of programmes supporting children and young people.

Evaluators will competitively bid to support this work. Matching decisions will be based on a range of factors, including the quality of the evaluator's proposal, their subject-matter knowledge and research experience and their expertise in the evaluation methods most appropriate for the intervention.

To support this process, YEF will share redacted summaries of shortlisted proposals with selected evaluators. Personal and budgetary information will be removed. By applying to this funding round, applicants consent to YEF sharing proposal information with evaluators for the purposes of evaluator matching. Further information on how we process your personal data in relation to your application can be found on our website [Privacy Policy](#).

Co-design and submission of your final proposal

Subject to GECO approving your intervention, you'll be introduced to your corresponding evaluator, and then enter a 'co-design' period where you'll work with your evaluator to:

- ◆ Develop or refine your **Theory of Change** (if necessary)
- ◆ Propose the most suitable **evaluation design**.
- ◆ Determine the most appropriate **outcomes** for your evaluation and what data/surveys will be used to measure them.
- ◆ Determine the **sample size** required for the evaluation (and therefore the scale of delivery), informed by the evaluator's power calculations
- ◆ Develop a **recruitment plan** and schedule for schools
- ◆ Refine your **timeline**
- ◆ Refine your **budget proposal**
- ◆ Conduct initial scoping for **recruitment of schools**
- ◆ Potentially conduct **small-scale testing of the intervention**

The co-design stage will be led by the evaluator, and will primarily consist of a series of workshops, with some work required outside of those sessions. We recognise the time and engagement that this phase will require from organisations and so if you reach this stage you will be asked to submit a co-design budget outlining the resources required for full participation in this stage – up to a maximum of **£20,000** for a 4-month co-design process and scaling up moderately for extended co-design stages (please note your application budget does not need to include this co-design amount).

Throughout this stage, you will be in regular contact with a Programme Manager at YEF. We'll work with you to make sure co-design is done thoughtfully and strategically. We will work collaboratively with you and the evaluator to work through any design, budget or timeline changes to your initial proposal that may be required. We may also be able to provide limited capacity-building support to organisations during this period, to ensure they can then meet the demands of the evaluation, and reach the required scale in their delivery.

During this stage we will also carry out due diligence checks on your organisation, ensuring that relevant financial, organisational and safeguarding processes and policies are in place.

We will review a draft proposal one month prior to the submission deadline for your final proposal, ensuring that you're able to respond appropriately to any feedback before final decision-making. At the end of co-design, you will need to submit (in partnership with the evaluator):

- ◆ A draft evaluation protocol summarising the intervention, the intended evaluation design, outcomes and measures, and sample size requirements. This plan will need to include justification for the choices made during co-design.
- ◆ A refined Theory of Change.
- ◆ A joint programme-evaluation timeline.
- ◆ A joint risk register.
- ◆ Plan for the recruitment of schools.

Separately, you'll also submit a **refined budget proposal** for the delivery of the intervention.

YEF will review your proposal, and make a final decision on whether or not to progress into set-up and delivery of the intervention and evaluation. Please note that co-design is still part of the application process and we cannot guarantee that all proposals will progress into set-up and delivery. All applicants who fulfil all the requirements of the co-design stage will receive the agreed co-design grant payment, regardless of the outcome of their proposal.



Timelines

The overall timeline for each project will depend on two linked decisions made during co-design: the length of the co-design period itself and the evaluation design agreed with the appointed evaluator.

- ◆ **An application form:** Applicants should plan on the basis of a 4-month co-design period. However, we recognise that some interventions may need more time to refine the delivery model, strengthen the Theory of Change, agree the evaluation approach, or complete small-scale testing before moving into set-up and delivery. Where there is a clear case for doing so, YEF may agree an extended co-design period of up to 13 months in total. Please note that, for longer co-design processes, partners may be required to complete some set-up activities (such as recruitment of schools) during this stage.
- ◆ **Evaluation design:** The time required for set-up, delivery, follow-up data collection and reporting will vary depending on whether the project progresses as a feasibility study or a pilot RCT, and on school term timetables (depending on the project).

The indicative timelines on the next page show how different co-design lengths and evaluation designs may affect the overall project schedule. Applicants should use these scenarios when planning their application and should tell us if they would be unable to participate in any of the possible timelines. Please note that these timelines are indicative only and are likely to change during co-design. Any final timeline will need to accommodate school academic periods and YEF's need to publish all evaluations no later than December 2030.

EVALUATION DESIGN	FEASIBILITY STUDY			
	4 months Nov 26 – Feb 27	7 months Nov 26 – May 27	10 months Nov 26 – Aug 27	13 months Nov 26 – Nov 27
Co-design length				
Submission of final proposal and decision-making	Mar 27	June 27	Sept 27	Dec 27
Set-up	Apr-Aug 27	Jul-Oct 27	Oct – Dec 27	Jan – Aug 28
Delivery	Sept 27 – Apr 28	Nov 27 – Apr 28	Jan – May 28	Sep 28 – Mar 29
Follow-up data collection	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Publication of report	Apr 29	Apr 29	Dec 29	Apr 30

EVALUATION DESIGN	PILOT RCT			
Co-design length	4 months Nov 26 – Feb 27	7 months Nov 26 – May 27	10 months Nov 26 – Aug 27	13 months Nov 26 – Nov 27
Submission of final proposal and decision-making	Mar 27	June 27	Sept 27	Dec 27
Set-up	Apr-Aug 27	Jul-Oct 27	Oct – Dec 27	Jan – Aug 28
Delivery	Sept 27 – Apr 28	Nov 27 – Apr 28	Jan – Jul 28	Sep 28 – Mar 29
Follow-up data collection	May-Jun 28	May – Jun 28	Sept – Oct 28	Apr – May 28
Publication of report	Jul 29	Jul 29	Dec 29	Jul 30

If your application is not successful

Our standards are high and meeting the criteria for a robust evaluation can be challenging. A rejection does not necessarily mean we feel your intervention is ineffective or unpromising but simply that it is not suitable for our portfolio at this time, or we cannot identify an approach to a successful evaluation.

Due to the volume of applications that we receive, we are unable to provide individual feedback on applications which do not reach at least the interview stage. However, we will circulate a summary of common reasons for approval and rejection across the applications. We hope this will be of use to applicants as they pursue future funding and evaluation opportunities.

Objective 2: Second round of funding/projects and Theory of Change learning processes

We plan to run a second funding round for delivery organisations under Objective 2 approximately one year after this first one (i.e. summer 2027). We are keen to ensure that organisations across the sector have the opportunity to learn from the projects and evaluations undertaken in the initial round, and to apply those insights to the design of projects for the second round—particularly in relation to effective mechanisms of action and theories of change.



Find out more

YEF hosted a webinar on this Objective, covering the aims of the funding round, key requirements for applicants, and practical guidance on the application and assessment process, including partnerships, evaluation design, and budgeting. The session also included a substantial Q&A. [Click here to watch the recording and download the slides.](#)

A Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) document is available on the YEF website, alongside this guidance. The document will be regularly reviewed and refreshed throughout the funding call.



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The Youth Endowment Fund Charitable Trust

Registered Charity Number: 1185413
