



An invitation to tender (ITT) for a systematic review of how best to deliver and evaluate place-based approaches to tackling local youth violence

April 2021

The Youth Endowment Fund (YEF) is commissioning a systematic review of how best to deliver and evaluate place-based approaches to tackling local levels of youth violence. This will include a review of theory, evidence of effectiveness, current and historical practice and the optimal methods for evaluating place-based approaches and be completed within one year of commissioning.

About the Youth Endowment Fund

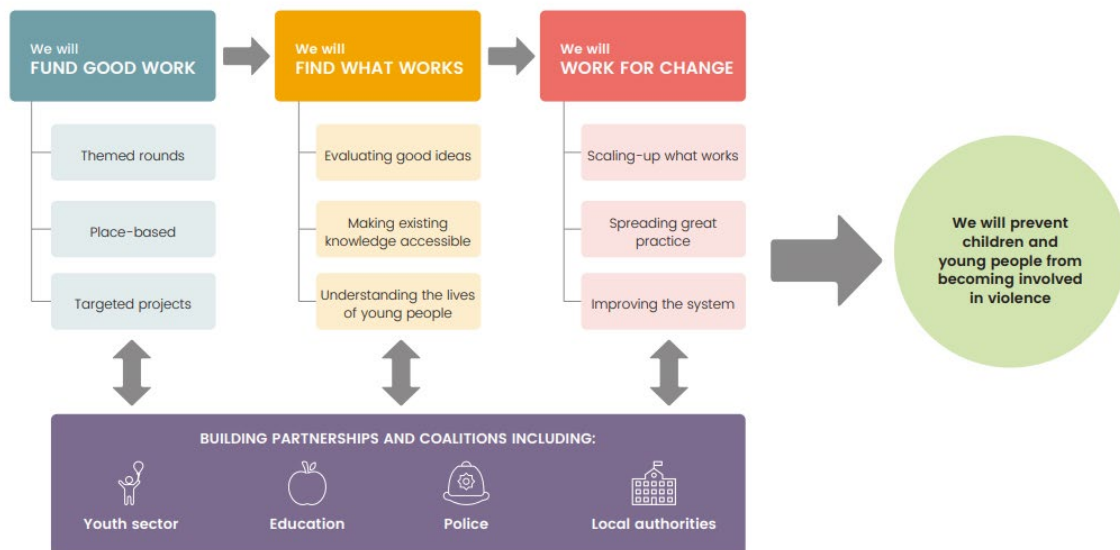
The Youth Endowment Fund (YEF) is a charity with a mission that matters. We exist to prevent children and young people becoming involved in violence. We do this by finding out what works and building a movement to put this knowledge into practice.

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'll fund promising projects and then use the very best evaluation to find out what works. Just as we benefit from robust trials in medicine, young people deserve support grounded in the evidence. Through our grant rounds, we'll build that knowledge. And just as important is understanding children and young people's lives. Through our Youth Advisory Board and national network of peer researchers, we'll ensure they influence our work and we understand and are addressing their needs.

But none of this will make a difference if all we do is produce reports that stay on a shelf. Together we need to look at the evidence and agree what works, then build a movement to make sure that young people get the very best support possible.

Our [strategy](#) provides further detail about how we will do this and is summarised in Figure 1 below.

Figure 1: YEF's strategy



The YEF's place-based work

This review will inform the YEF's place-based approach to working with local communities in selected areas of high need. The Neighbourhood Fund is part of YEF's place-based work and is the first example of YEF taking a place-based approach to tackling youth violence. The first round of the fund involves engagement, co-design, delivery and investment of up to £7.5m in five 'hyper-local areas' starting in 2021 and will inform the second round of the Neighbourhood Fund starting in 2022. Further details on the Neighbourhood Fund, its rationale and theory of change are provided in Appendix 2.

It is expected that the systematic review being commissioned in this ITT will inform the later stages of the first round of the Neighbourhood Fund, its theory of change and evaluation, as well as the second round of the Neighbourhood Fund and future YEF place-based work.

Review focus

The overarching question that we are looking to answer is:

How should the YEF and its delivery partners best design, deliver and evaluate place-based approaches to reducing local levels of youth violence?

We anticipate that a comprehensive review could comprise four parts:

1. A review of theory.

Making use of a wide range of evidence,¹ this part of the review would aim to answer the following questions:

- a) What models are there of a place-based approach, and how can they be defined and conceptualized, including their common features?
- b) How might place-based approaches be applied, in theory, to address local levels of youth violence? What would a theory of change for an effective place-based approach to addressing local youth violence look like?²
- c) What types of studies (in terms of designs, outcomes, and contexts) should be included in the evidence mapping stage?³

2. A review of evidence.

Making use of a range of impact and other evaluation evidence, this part of the review would aim to answer the following questions:

¹ For example, this may include existing UK reviews of place-based approaches such as [Lankelly-Chase's historical review](#) (2017), the [Place Based Social Action Learning Review](#) (2018), international reviews or research, and could also incorporate theoretical literature on systems change. It may also draw on the views of experts.

² Including, for example, common mechanisms of change and contextual factors that need to be considered.

³ For example, should the evidence review only include studies of the impact of place-based approaches on youth violence specifically, or incorporate evidence on the impact of place-based approaches that tackle any of the antecedents to youth violence, such as those that address poverty or physical and economic regeneration? Should designs include not just counterfactual approaches (e.g. experimental or quasi-experimental impact designs) but also theory-based (e.g. generative causation designs) or participatory approaches (e.g. developmental evaluation)? See [HMRC's Magenta Book Supplementary Guide](#) on handling complexity for a discussion.

- a) What evidence is there for the impact and implementation of the different place-based approaches described in part 1 on youth violence outcomes (and / or its antecedents)?
- b) What lessons can be drawn from youth justice (and / or other fields) about the most effective ways of delivering hyper-local place-based approaches to addressing youth violence?

It is expected that this part of the review will identify and map all studies that have investigated the impact, effectiveness and implementation of place-based approaches on youth violence and other outcomes identified in the review of theory.⁴

The descriptive map will provide information on the types of place-based approaches that have been delivered, the contexts, intended outcomes and designs used and will be a useful resource in its own right. It may also be worth using similar coding frames and considering how it might best be integrated into YEF's existing [Evidence and Gap Map](#), and forthcoming Toolkit of evidence on what works in keeping young people safe from violence.

Once the evidence on place-based approaches has been mapped, the YEF, in partnership with the review team, will discuss and agree which area(s) of the evidence should be systematically reviewed, with the aim of answering the overarching question of how best to design and deliver place-based approaches to tackling youth violence.

3. A review of practice.

To contextualise and understand how the YEF's Neighbourhood Fund relates to similar place-based approaches being currently or historically delivered, the YEF is also interested in answering the following questions:

- a) How have place-based approaches been used historically to address local levels of youth violence (and / or its antecedents)?

⁴ Including impact and implementation and process evaluation studies.

- b) How are place-based approaches currently being used in the UK?⁵

The first question may be answered using the evidence map in stage two of the review.

The second question may require further primary research and interviews with a range of experts such as policy-makers, funders and delivery organisations.

4. A review of methods.

Finally, the YEF is interested in understanding how best to evaluate place-based approaches to addressing local levels of youth violence. This part of the review would aim to answer the following question:

- a) What are the optimal methods and methodologies that can be used to evaluate place-based approaches to addressing local youth violence?

It is expected that the review of methods would map the range of approaches, methodologies or frameworks that could be used to evaluate place-based approaches, including their advantages, disadvantages and common features.⁶

The methodological review would need to cover both formative and summative approaches, covering impact and process evaluation (and the balance between the two) and aim to draw conclusions about best practice. The reviewer will then work with the YEF to draft guidance for YEF's panel of evaluators on YEF's expectations regarding the evaluation of place-based approaches to addressing local levels of youth violence.

Please note that these research questions are provisional, and subject to discussion with the successful review team.

⁵ It may also be of interest to understand how place-based approaches are currently being used internationally to address youth violence and/ or other outcomes, and YEF is open to discussing this.

⁶ This might draw on existing methodological reviews and frameworks such as the [Canadian CED network's 2011 report on the evaluation of place-based approaches](#), [HMRC's Magenta Book Supplementary Guide](#) on handling complexity in policy evaluation or the [Australian Department for Social Services Framework and Toolkit](#) for evaluating place-based approaches. It could also draw on wider methodological literature, such as those used to evaluate systems change.

Approach

The YEF would expect a systematic review approach to be taken for the second part of the review (see Box 1). The YEF is open-minded about whether a systematic or rapid evidence review approach should be taken for the other parts and is open to discussing this. The YEF is also open to discussing the optimal order or structure of the different parts of the review and interested in bidders' perspectives on the optimal approach that can be delivered within one year of commissioning.

Box 1: The case for a systematic review

The strengths of systematic reviews are well-documented: they provide the best available evidence, on a research question, which is identified, selected, appraised and synthesised in a transparent or unbiased way.* Full systematic reviews produce higher quality results than rapid evidence assessments and tend to include the following features:**

Clear research questions;

Transparent inclusion criteria;

A published review protocol, subjected to peer review;

Searches that attempt to locate all relevant published and unpublished studies to limit impact of publication biases and use methods to reduce bias in study selection (e.g. using double screening);

Data extraction that is determined by the research questions, and may include methods to reduce bias in data extraction (e.g. double independent extraction);

Critical appraisal that examines in a systematic manner the methods used and investigates potential biases in those methods;

Transparent methods to synthesise and reach conclusions.

Outputs and timeframe

The YEF will work to finalise the specification with the successful team and the resulting protocol(s) will be reviewed by the YEF, two independent academic peer reviewers and the

YEF place-based advisory group, before being published on YEF's website.⁷ The final outputs will also be reviewed by the YEF, peer reviewers and the advisory group.

The YEF anticipates that the final outputs will include:

1. A conceptual piece on the theory and rationale for place-based approaches to addressing local levels of youth violence, and how this relates to current and historical practice (parts 1 and 3);
2. A coded database of studies on place-based approaches (part 2);
3. A report summarizing the results of the review of evidence on the impact and implementation of place-based approaches to addressing local levels of youth violence (part 2);
4. A report summarizing the results of the methods review, including the range of methods and methodologies that could be applied (part 4);
5. A brief guidance document on best practice in evaluating place-based approaches to addressing local youth violence (part 4);
6. A technical appendix, fully documenting the rationale, methods and results of the reviews (all parts).

Please note that these outputs are provisional and subject to discussion with the appointed review team. The YEF would like applicants to consider the minimum time it would take to produce a high-quality set of outputs. We expect the review to be completed within a year of commissioning.

⁷ The YEF is planning to appoint an advisory group to provide advice on the methodology for the evaluation of round one of the Neighbourhood Fund, and this group could also provide advice on this review.

How to apply

The process will involve two stages:

1) Expression of interest

Applicants should submit a short expression of interest to the YEF of no more than 1,000 words. The expression of interest should include:

- Relevant experience of the project team and credentials for undertaking the work, including;
- Knowledge and experience of delivering and/or reviewing youth justice evaluations;
- Knowledge and experience of place-based approaches and how to evaluate them;
- Experience in conducting systematic reviews;

A brief summary of the overall approach that would be taken and key considerations for the design of the review.

The YEF will review the EOIs based on the criteria provided in Appendix 1. **Please send your expression of interest to evaluation@youthendowmentfund.org.uk by 5pm 7th June 2021.**

2) Proposal stage

The YEF expects to request up to three teams to prepare proposals of no more than 4,000 words, excluding references and are aiming to notify bidders on the 14th June 2021. In the proposal, bidders will be expected to include the following:

- Objectives of the review, including research questions and rationale for why these are important;

- Your proposed approach to conducting the review, including a detailed description of each stage of the review and how relevant literature will be identified, selected and appraised (including clear inclusion criteria);
- The relevant experience of the team. Specifically, your credentials for undertaking the review, your knowledge in the subject matter and expertise in the proposed methodology;
- A detailed budget with justification for time spent on the research.

Bidders will be given just over two weeks to prepare proposals and the deadline is likely to be 5pm 30th June 2021. Bidders will be able to submit questions by the 18th June 2021. All proposals will be reviewed by the YEF, using the criteria provided in Appendix 1. The YEF is likely to want to have follow up interviews with the preferred bidders during the week of the 1st July 2021 before making a final decision.

The YEF is happy to consider bids from consortiums, as long as consideration is given to communication and how the teams will work well together. The YEF would expect to contract with one lead member of the consortium.

Appendix 1: YEF scoring criteria

EOI scoring criteria:

- 1. Relevant experience of core project team and understanding of topic area (50%)**
 - a) The extent to which the applicant demonstrates expertise and understanding of youth justice and place-based delivery and evaluation;
 - b) The extent to which the proposed team demonstrates a track record of delivering systematic reviews.

- 2. The suitability of the proposal overall approach and key considerations identified for the review (50%)**

Proposal 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 serious youth justice and place-based delivery and evaluation.
 - b) The extent to which the proposed team demonstrates a track record of delivering systematic reviews.

- 2. Methodology and approach (40%)**
 - a) The suitability of the proposed scope of the review and understanding of the research aims and objectives.
 - b) The suitability of the proposed approach to identify, select and appraise the available theoretical literature.
 - c) The suitability of the proposed approach to identify, select, and appraise the available evidence of effectiveness and implementation.
 - d) The suitability of the proposed approach to reviewing current and historical practice.
 - e) The suitability of the proposed approach to review and develop guidance on place-based evaluation methodologies and methods.

- 3. Value for Money (30%)**
 - a) Detailed cost of your proposal and how this demonstrates value for money.

Scoring criteria	
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

Appendix 2: About the Neighbourhood Fund

Background

We know that a lot of violent crime is highly concentrated in specific local areas. To make a difference, many believe that it is essential to work with the people and organisations who live and work there as they know their communities best. The Neighbourhood Fund will use evidence-informed community engagement and co-design to deliver improved outcomes for young people engaged in or at risk of becoming involved in violence in these areas.

There are three reasons why we think a place-based approach is important:

- 1. Disproportionate impact:** We know that a lot of violent crime happens in very specific local areas. For example: nearly 70% of knife-related homicides happen within just 1% of small geographic areas⁸; 42% of youth victims of knife crime⁹ are reported to be within 22% of local authorities; and, 62% of violent offences occur within just 12% of small geographic areas within Westminster¹⁰. This means that, to make the biggest impact, we need to work in the areas most affected.
- 2. Local knowledge and buy-in:** Local residents' knowledge and buy-in is fundamental in securing lasting change. People who live and work in an area understand their area, which means they are best able to help decide what their community needs. They can help to make sure interventions reach the people who need them.
- 3. Sharing data and power:** We know that many children at risk of becoming involved in violence are known to local agencies. By getting agencies to work together to share information, data and power, we could make an impact in preventing

⁸ Measured at the Lower Super Output Area (LSOA) level.

⁹ Data from the Mayor's Office for Policing And Crime (MOPAC) between September 2018 and August 2019
Weapon-enabled Crime Dashboard ([here](#))

¹⁰ MOPAC (2020) Recorded Crime: Geographic Breakdown ([here](#))

children becoming involved in crime. Successful initiatives in Glasgow¹¹ and Cardiff¹² have demonstrated the impact of intelligence gathering, data sharing and multi-agency collaboration in tackling serious violence.

Approach

We will build long-term partnerships in five hyper-local areas where violence affecting young people is highly concentrated and there is opportunity for change. In these areas we will aim to understand the problems these communities face, then co-design, deliver and evaluate solutions that aim to be both evidence-informed and responsive to their local needs and context. There are four phases to this work (see Figure 2).

The YEF selected five local authority areas to work with,¹³ using Youth Justice Board data and a combination of rates and absolute numbers of offences, whilst aiming to include a variety of contexts.¹⁴ The YEF has also recently tendered for five Community Research and Co-Design Partners (CRCPs), who, during the **feasibility** phase, will work with the YEF and statutory partners in each local authority area to identify the hyper-local area where crime is highly concentrated and there is opportunity for change. These areas are likely to vary in terms of size and focus. However, all areas will be at a neighbourhood level, such as a housing estate, a ward, an area around a shopping centre, or an area straddling two neighbourhoods.

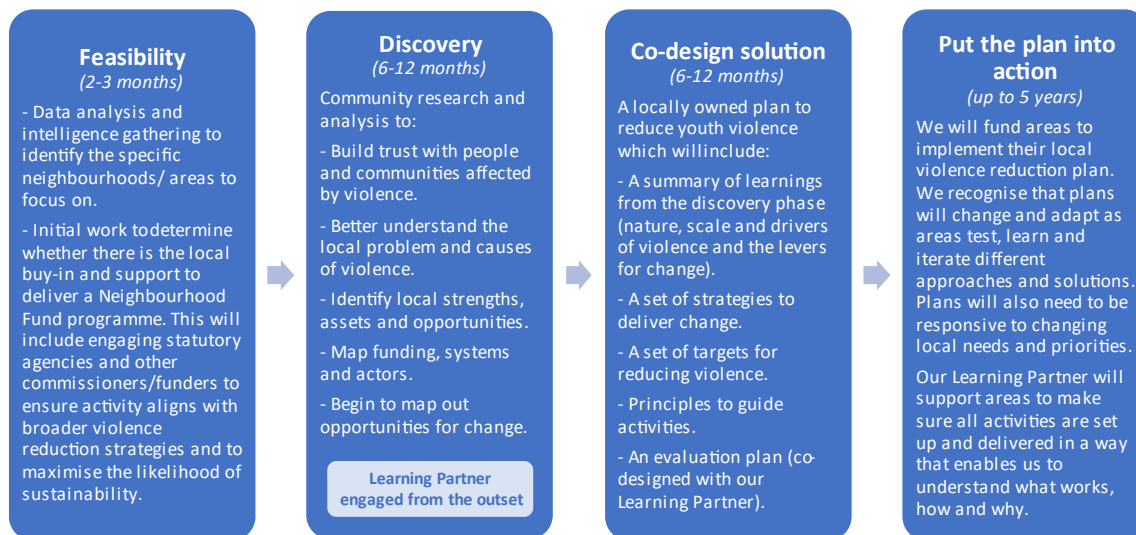
¹¹ Williams, D. J. et al. (2014) "Addressing gang-related violence in Glasgow: A preliminary pragmatic quasi-experimental evaluation of the Community Initiative to Reduce Violence (CIRV)," *Aggression and Violent Behaviour*, 19(6), pp. 686–691. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.avb.2014.09.011>.

¹² Florence, C. et al. (2011) "Effectiveness of anonymised information sharing and use in health service, police, and local government partnership for preventing violence related injury: Experimental study and time series analysis," *BMJ*, 342(7812). doi: 10.1136/bmj.d3313.

¹³ The five local authorities are Birmingham, Bradford, Manchester, Norfolk and Cardiff.

¹⁴ Louette, L., Teager, W., and Gibbons, G. (forthcoming) *Building safer neighbourhoods: Our approach to finding out where violence happens*. YEF

Figure 2: Four phases of the Neighbourhood Fund



During the **discovery** phase of six to 12 months CRCPs will conduct research and engage with the local community¹⁵ to understand the nature, causes and consequences of violence. They will also develop local partnerships, trust and a thorough understanding of local needs, stakeholders, perceptions and opportunities.

During the **co-design** phase of six to 12 months CRCPs will work with the local community to develop a local action plan to reduce local youth violence. The plan will be informed by both local knowledge and evidence of what works, brokered by the CRCPs and the YEF. A range of community engagement approaches may be used by the CRCPs (see Box 1).

Finally, once signed off by the YEF, the **plan will be put into action** over up to five years. It is likely that a local partnership will deliver the plan, supported by the CRCP or another capacity-builder. The plan will need to be responsive to changing local needs and context.

¹⁵ By 'local community' we mean the people who live and work in the area.

The YEF will support the delivery of these phases. As well as funding and monitoring the CRCPs, implementation plan, and evaluation, the YEF will broker evidence of what works in reducing youth violence, to inform the co-design of the delivery plan, and also work to influence the wider system and societal issues that are identified as being relevant locally. The YEF will also aim to develop funding and partnerships to support the sustainability of local action plans after the initial five-year investment provided by the YEF.

The YEF is also tendering to appoint a Learning Partner who will evaluate the Neighbourhood Fund and support learning throughout the discovery, co-design and action phases. YEF will work with the Learning Partner to disseminate lessons from the evaluation both between areas, and more broadly.

Box 1: The Community Engagement Spectrum

The YEF's [Community Engagement Spectrum](#) is adapted from the Spectrum of Public Participation designed by the International Association of Public Participation. The aim of the spectrum is to provide a common language talk about the range of different engagement approaches that CRCPs might use and that could be explored through the Neighbourhood Fund. The optimal level of engagement is likely to vary depending upon the local context and conditions, desired outcomes and phase of the project. A project might even use different levels of engagement for different stakeholder groups within a particular phase and will need to be flexible and responsive to learning.

CRCPs are encouraged to be creative about developing the most effective ways to engage with communities and broker evidence of what works to tackle the problems identified. For example, CRCPs could use interactive sessions to bring evidence to life, or could bring local residents together with experts. YEF is interested in understanding

Theory of change

The YEF has developed a draft overarching theory of change for the Neighbourhood Fund and this is provided below. The theory of change aims to identify the main activities of the YEF, delivery partners and the Learning Partner, as described above, and link these to the intended outcomes and ultimate impacts of the Fund. The theory of change will be refined with CRCPs and the Learning Partner, once appointed. It is expected that each Neighbourhood Fund hyper-local area will also develop its own theory of change and action plan, based on its specific needs and context.

The ultimate **intended impacts** of the Neighbourhood Fund are:

1. Evidence is generated on whether and how community engagement and co-design approaches can reduce local levels of young peoples' involvement in violence.
2. Learning from the Neighbourhood Fund informs place-based policies and practice in other areas.
3. Fewer young people become involved in violence in areas where violence is highly concentrated.

A commitment to evidence

The YEF is committed to generating high quality evidence of what works to keep children and young people safe from involvement in violence. The YEF has already published its [Evidence and Gap Map](#), which is the world's largest resource mapping evidence on what works to keep children safe from violence. It is quite technical, which is why YEF is also developing its Toolkit, which will be an accessible, online resource for people who work with and commission services for children and young people. It will be launched in June 2021 and will be available to inform the co-design phase of the Neighbourhood Fund, the aim of which is to combine local knowledge with the best available evidence.

The systematic review being commissioned in this ITT will inform the second round of the Neighbourhood, as well as the later stages of the first round, and its evaluation.

Theory of change for the Neighbourhood Fund

