

YJB Pathfinder – Tackling Serious Youth Violence

The Youth Justice Board (YJB) is working to support frontline service improvement through grants and activity which target system-wide challenges. This involves a pathfinder approach whereby local authorities and partners can pilot, develop and disseminate whole system solutions.

Organisation(s)

Manchester City Council Youth Justice Service

What does your project aim to achieve?

The YJB's strategic plan for 2019-22 highlights serious youth violence as one of the YJB's priorities, including an aim to see a sustainable reduction in serious youth violence within the cohort of local authorities in the upper quartile of serious youth violence for at least three out of four periods in the last 12-month data cycle.

The funding allocated to the Youth Offending Teams (YOTs) within the serious youth violence reference group is for the purpose of those YOTs to develop and deliver best practice and disseminate this with others to meet that priority. This fits with the YJB's mandate under S41 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 to make known and promote good practice across the sector.

Overview of planned activity

Manchester City Council Youth Justice Service will run a participatory study into the experiences of young people in serious youth violence,

The study aims to explore young people's experiences of youth justice practice in this area, establish how best to work with young people, and to provide guidance and recommendations on how to reduce instances of serious youth violence.

Research objectives

Acknowledging young people's direct experience and expertise as a unique strength, this participatory study will explore their experiences of youth justice practice to tackle serious youth violence. By doing so, the study aims to achieve the following four objectives:

- To explore young people's own articulations of the causes and drivers of serious youth violence;
- To explore young people's experiences of current youth justice practice (including the use of trauma-informed models);
- To develop our understanding of serious youth violence and its links with trauma/ACEs and exploitation; and,
- To make recommendations on how current youth justice practice could be improved to better tackle serious youth violence.

Outcomes

1. A serious youth violence framework for practice

This project will deliver an empirically-based, co-created and trauma-informed framework to enable more effective working with young people at risk of, or involved with, serious youth violence.

2. Dissemination event

This project will deliver a one-day national dissemination event to introduce the framework to policy makers, practitioners and commissioners. This will cover the academic rationale and empirical basis underpinning the framework, and introduce the framework itself.

3. Practitioner training

This project will include the delivery of local training for all youth justice practitioners at a Greater Manchester level. Through the Greater Manchester Youth Justice University Partnership (GMYJUP), the links with the youth justice services across the ten boroughs in the region are well established, and Manchester YJS will seek agreement for this region to pilot this approach to tackling serious youth violence.

4. A detailed project report

The final project report will provide:

- A detailed description of the project and how it was delivered;
- An enhanced understanding of the underlying causes of serious youth violence and its links with trauma/ACEs and exploitation;
- A detailed description of the resulting framework of practice;
- All materials from the dissemination event;
- All training materials; and,
- Clear recommendations for developing future youth justice research, policy and practice in this area.

Milestones & length of funding

The Grant funding is to run from September 2019 to March 2020.

How will the outcomes and benefits of this work be shared with YOTs and others?

Dissemination Event

This project will deliver a one-day national dissemination event to introduce the framework to policy makers, practitioners and commissioners. This will cover the academic rationale and empirical basis underpinning the framework, and introduce the framework itself.

Details of the event will be shared with youth justice partners via the YJ Bulletin in due course.

How will the project be evaluated?

No independent evaluation is costed into this project. However, by taking an experience-based co-design approach, there is an element of ongoing evaluation built into the project design. That is to say, that academics, practitioners and young people will be actively evaluating the approach taken through the iterative nature of the framework's development.

Additionally, Manchester YJS propose to pilot the new framework across Greater Manchester, providing the basis for a follow up evaluation of the framework that could be used to inform a national roll out.

Contact

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Why this project was chosen:

The grant is designed to develop and share effective practice to reduce the number of children involved in serious youth violence in the YOTs experiencing the highest levels of serious violence.

The Youth Justice Board identified the local authorities with persistent high levels of serious violence. For the purposes of the YJB's analysis, 'serious youth violence' is defined as the most serious robbery, drugs or violence against the person offences (those with a gravity score of 5 or more as outlined in the Police National Legal Database).

We took the rate of these offences per 10,000 of the general 10-17 population for each YOT and identified those YOTs that had been in the top quartile for three or more quarters during the 2017/18 financial year. We applied these criteria so that it would select the YOTs that consistently had high levels of SYV over the year, rather than one anomalous quarter that would increase their rate.

From that group we identified 12 YOTs to fund as pathfinders.

Due diligence:

All Youth Justice Board grants for pathfinder activity have been through the Ministry of Justice Grant Challenge Panel. This panel scrutinises grants made by the MoJ and its arms-length bodies to ensure public money is being spent effectively and responsibly. It provided objective scrutiny of our business case for the grant in line with guidance on managing public money. The YJB will monitor the project at intervals agreed with the grant recipient.