

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)

Sandwell Children’s Trust Limited

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

The funding will be used to significantly increase the use of arts in the delivery of youth justice services with the intention for it to be an academically evaluated programme over a number of years.

If successful, this could significantly add to the research base on successful methods of working with young people in the youth justice system, and improve outcomes.

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? (Both universal offer and any additional intensive support that will be available)

Sandwell will be more than willing to disseminate learning regionally and nationally, through Youth Justice meetings (e.g. the West Midlands Heads of Service meetings) but also through arts organisations e.g. the Criminal Justice Arts Alliance). We have already presented at a national CJAA conference on criminal justice and arts, and have offered to continue to share our experience via case study etc through their channels.

Sandwell will be willing to do regular updates for the Youth Justice Board newsletter with our progress – the highs and lows, and a real picture of the journey to inspire other YOTs.

How will the project be evaluated?

Professor Laura Caulfield (Wolverhampton university) has indicated willingness to academically evaluate the journey.

Arts Connect and the Criminal Justice Arts Alliance have indicated they will be willing to be on a reference group which helps to guide the project, make local connections and facilitate relationships with local arts organisations.

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.