

Youth Endowment Fund



Evaluation Panel – Expression of Interest

May–June 2019

Background

The Youth Endowment Fund (YEF) is a bold attempt to put early intervention at the heart of efforts to tackle youth offending. It will support programmes and community partnerships working with children at risk of being drawn into crime and violence and build our knowledge of what works to divert vulnerable groups. Activity will focus on 10 to 14-year-olds across England and Wales and the fund will operate for the next 10 years. You can read more about the fund [here](#).

The funding offered by the YEF will test the effectiveness of interventions intended to reduce offending and antisocial behaviour, with the aim that those that are shown to work are scaled to reach more young people. All activity which the YEF funds will be independently evaluated.

We are running this expression of interest (EOI) to build a panel of evaluators with relevant skills and experience to evaluate the interventions we fund. Through this EOI we are interested in hearing from evaluators willing to participate as part of the first round described below, or in future funding rounds.

How to apply

All applications for the YEF Evaluation Panel must be submitted via our [online application form](#). Applications via any other means will not be accepted.

Please read the notes below thoroughly before making your submission. This document sets out the timetable for this process, and the activity that selected evaluators are expected to undertake.

The online application form requires information on:–

- Your contact details
- Your areas of expertise, across various evaluation methodologies and with young people at risk of crime and youth violence in particular
- Details about staff expertise and your organisation's past experience of delivering evaluations in each of these areas
- Details about the settings in which you have carried out evaluations in the past
- Details about key evaluation staff members in your team
- The number of evaluations you are likely to be able to deliver in the first round
- Day rates for evaluation staff at different levels, and estimates of how evaluation work will be split across staff levels

- Details of recent evaluation projects that highlight your relevant expertise, skills and experience
- Details of your organisation’s safeguarding and research ethics policies, and any potential conflicts of interest in working with the YEF.

If you have any questions about the process, please contact us via yef.evaluations@eif.org.uk

Indicative timetable

DATE	TIMETABLE
30 May 2019	Call issued
12pm, 28 June	Deadline for receipt of evaluation panel applications
w/c 1 July	YEF clarification with applicants where necessary
w/c 8 July	Assessment of evaluation panel applications
w/c 15 July	Notification of outcome of evaluation panel applications
23 July	Grant round 1 applications close
24 July – 6 Sep	Grant assessment period
TBC	Evaluation kick-off meetings for evaluators working with successful applicants from grant round 1
25 September	YEF Grants Committee meets
w/c 30 September	Notification of outcome of Grants Committee
w/c 7 October	Commencement of projects

We anticipate that the majority of evaluations over the first 1–2 years will be awarded to providers who have registered via this process. Therefore, we strongly encourage all those interested in working with the Youth Endowment Fund to register now, even if you do not have the capacity to work with successful applicants from our first round from August onwards.

What is expected of evaluators?

General background

The Youth Endowment Fund will commission independent evaluations to provide rigorous evaluation of the implementation and impact of the interventions funded by the YEF. Organisations joining this panel will be eligible to apply to deliver these independent evaluations commissioned by the YEF.

Typically, the YEF will run a short competitive process for each project, and evaluators on the panel will be expected to complete a short proposal to apply. This will include detail on the proposed evaluation approach/methodology, key personnel and budget. Applications will be reviewed and evaluators allocated to projects by the YEF evaluation team, and where required, drawing on external expertise. Once selected, evaluators will be expected to work collaboratively with the YEF Evaluation and Capacity Building teams and the delivery organisation to refine the evaluation design.

Evaluators will be responsible for the implementation of all parts of the evaluation, including: developing a research protocol; data collection; randomisation (where appropriate); and, coordinating and conducting qualitative research and field work. Finally, evaluators will produce interim and final analysis reports as appropriate and will comply with peer review by external experts.

We anticipate reviewing membership of the panel annually, giving other organisations the opportunity to join the panel.

Providing support to grantees in the first grant round

The first grants to providers will be awarded in October 2019 when grantees must start delivery to young people, alongside beginning work with their independent evaluation partner, at this stage. Evaluators will be paired with grant recipients based on the skills and experience needed to address the key research question being tested. Ideally, we will look to group evaluators by theme, methodology or geography to offer evaluators a package of activity. Please note there is no requirement that evaluators accept the package of activity offered.

Following the shortlisting of potential grantees in early August, evaluators will need to work closely with these organisations to set-up and design the evaluations (including starting any ethical review processes) through August and September 2019, to be ready to start delivery and the evaluation in early October 2019.

YEF anticipates that the set-up and design activity will be facilitated by day-long evaluation kick-off meetings between YEF, the evaluator and the grantees held throughout August and September. These kick-off meetings will be supplemented with follow-up calls as required.

Evaluation activity in the first grant round

There may be a small number of programmes ready for a full efficacy or effectiveness evaluations, though we do not expect many through this round. The exact evaluation methodology will be designed by the evaluator in collaboration with the grantee and the YEF. It will be rigorous and proportionate to the available evidence for the intervention and will need to ensure it offers maximum insight into the effectiveness of the intervention and its potential to progress to more intensive robust impact evaluation, such as a full-scale RCT or QED.

The YEF is also committed to maximising the learning across the portfolio of interventions funded. To facilitate this, the YEF intends to work with evaluation teams to ensure a

minimum level of methodological consistency across similar evaluations, such as common measurement tools for similar interventions with the same intended outcomes.

Evaluations in grant round 1 are likely to include three broad categories of evaluation:¹

1. **Feasibility studies/process evaluations** – to test whether an intervention can achieve its intended outputs. These outputs can include both the intervention’s core activities, as well its ability to recruit and retain its intended participants. Key aspects of a feasibility study include:
 - a specification of the intervention’s core activities and identify the factors that support or interfere with their successful delivery
 - b the use of use qualitative research methods to understand which factors contribute to the success of the intervention from the perspective of those delivering it
 - c the use of qualitative methods to understand how those receiving the intervention perceive the intervention’s benefits and whether these perceptions are consistent with the intervention’s original theory of change
 - d developing an understanding of how best to recruit and retain participants
 - e developing systems for monitoring participant reach and core delivery targets
 - f applying methods for verifying user satisfaction
 - g tracking and documenting user satisfaction.
2. **Pilot studies** – are relatively small-scale evaluations which investigate an intervention’s potential for improving its intended child outcomes. Pilot studies are particularly useful for determining which measures are most appropriate for testing child outcomes, as well as how to best recruit and retain a sufficiently large and representative study sample. Key aspects of a pilot study include:
 - a. the use of validated measures to measure pre- and post-intervention change
 - b. an adequate sample size based on the intervention’s anticipated effects
 - c. methods for recruiting and retaining participants from the intervention’s target population
 - d. the application of analytic methods for determining whether changes in child outcomes are statistically significant
 - e. developing insights to help design more rigorous evaluations.
3. **Efficacy studies** – an efficacy study is a rigorous evaluation designed to determine if an intervention works under ideal circumstances. Efficacy studies do this through research designs that systematically reduce potential sources of study bias, so that causality can confidently be attributed to the intervention model. Key aspects of efficacy studies include:

¹ Further details of these evaluation types can be found in the EIF’s resource, *10 steps for evaluation success*, available at: <https://www.eif.org.uk/resource/10-steps-for-evaluation-success>

- a. the use of a comparison group and methods such as random assignment to reduce potential sources of study bias
- b. strategies for reducing all sources of potential bias throughout the duration of the efficacy study
- c. strategies for increasing the likelihood that the study will take place under ideal circumstances.

We are open to discussing other methods and approaches on a case-by-case basis.

Applications for grant funding of interventions

Our first funding round for providers of services and interventions is [open](#). We are looking for interventions that target **young people aged 10–14 years old** and are designed to prevent later offending. Our indicative level of delivery funding in this round is £200,000 per year for 1–2 years.

Interventions need to have a robust and clear **theory of change** which explains how they intend to **reduce offending** and is informed by the available **evidence**.

Funding applicants need to have experience of working with young people, and if the funding is sought for an existing intervention, it must be used to expand this work.

The deadline for applications is midday on Tuesday 23 July. All applications will go through an initial sifting process to establish which proposals we will be taking forward for full review. We will then work with shortlisted applicants to develop an initial evaluation plan and finalise their proposals before presenting them to the YEF Grants Committee in late September.

We may need to speak to and/or visit funding applicants as part of this process, so you as evaluation panel members will need to make yourself available for this stage.