



The Youth Endowment Fund

Research Lead – Underlying causes of violence

Reports to: Head of Toolkit and Synthesis

Salary: £54,000

Contract: 2 years Fixed term

Location: Central London, Hybrid*

Closing date: 9am Monday, 8th April 2024

About the Youth Endowment Fund

We're here 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.

In recent years violent crime has risen significantly. Homicides, assaults, robberies and offences involving weapons have all seen growth. We have also seen increases in violent crime involving children and young people. This is a tragedy. Every child captured in these numbers is an important member of our community and society has a duty to protect them.

The Youth Endowment Fund exists to try and permanently change things. To succeed, we must build a fantastic body of knowledge about violence affecting young people and how we reduce it. This knowledge has to be both rigorous and highly relevant to those making decisions about how to support vulnerable young people. We need to find out what works and what doesn't through evidence synthesis, data analysis and qualitative research into children's lives.

We also need to understand the underlying causes of violence and which children are most in need of support. This is where your role is so important.

Your key responsibilities

As the Research Lead on causes of violence, you will be an essential part of the YEF team. You will

- Lead the YEF's research into the causes and nature of violence in England and Wales. You'll investigate questions like:
 - *Why does violence happen? What seems to protect children or put them at greater risk?*
 - *Are there particular locations or times where violence happens most often?*
 - *Why do people desist from violence and how can we support this process?*
 - *How can we use this information effectively and ethically?*
- Make sure we invest in research that fills important gaps in knowledge and leads to important changes. This could include commissioning:
 - Systematic reviews on issues like child criminal exploitation, drug markets and children's experiences of involvement in violence.
 - Detailed analysis of individual cases of violence. You'll commission research teams to explore:
 - How we can learn about the causes and contexts of violence through rich mixed methods analysis of individual cases.
 - Whether we can learn generalisable lessons from a sample of cases.
 - Other new primary research such as quantitative analysis of existing datasets, rich qualitative exploration of children's experiences or working with our large number of young people trained as peer researchers (as part of the [Peer Action Collective](#)).
- You will create accessible summaries of key pieces of research. This could include:
 - A [systematic review](#) (funded by YEF) of existing research.
 - Key criminological insights about the nature of crime and violence.
- You'll create useful tools and resources (similar to our [Toolkit](#)) which support decision-makers to apply insights from your work. This could include guidance to commissioners on how to understand the nature of violence in their area, the needs of local children, and
- You'll develop great relationships with experts and represent YEF in external meetings and events. You'll promote our research by speaking at conferences and events.

- You'll work with our Change team to identify opportunities for our research to influence policy and practice, and bring about positive changes that will keep children safe.
- You'll have line management responsibility for a Research Manager. You'll ensure they contribute effectively to your portfolio of work.

About you

You are this sort of person:

- **You want to play a significant part in reducing the level of violence affecting young people.** You care about having an impact.
- **You share our belief that an evidence-based approach is our best hope of preventing violence.** You're fascinated by research, but you're not just interested in research for its own sake. You want to achieve actual changes in outcomes for children.
- **You know a lot about research on violence, where it happens, what causes it and who does it.** You know the key ideas, debates and studies. You're comfortable talking about this research with experts. There are many ways to acquire this knowledge, including professional experience, academic research or study, and personal interest.
- **You're a confident reader of research** (including systematic reviews and quantitative methods) and have strong critical appraisal skills. You know when research can be trusted and when it can't and can confidently articulate your views on the strength of research. You might have gained this expertise through your academic studies, research or professional experience.
- **You have at least three years' experience working in a role that required you to think about research.** This could include a range of roles in policy, academia, funding or practice.
- **You write in a way that people easily understand.** You have that rare skill of writing in plain English. You have experience of translating complex research findings into plain writing that everyone can understand.

- **You have excellent project and time management skills.** You can work independently, quickly and to a high standard.
- **You are good with people.** You're comfortable working with a wide range of people, including senior academics and other research experts, children and their families, practitioners and policy-makers. You're able to provide constructive challenge when required.
- **You learn fast but remain humble.** You like learning. You're very good at synthesising information. You know how much you don't know and that you can always learn more.
- **You work well in a team.** You care more that good things happen than who gets the credit. You support your colleagues to produce excellent work.
- **You're committed to equality, diversity and inclusion.** You believe and act in a way that celebrates and encourages a range of experiences, views and values.

You may have:

- Experience of commissioning research and managing external contractors. You can scrutinise a budget to ensure it provides value for money.
- Confident public speaking skills. You're an excellent verbal communicator. You've delivered dozens of talks on complex or contested topics. You're calm and confident when answering challenging questions.
- Experience of working directly on the prevention of violence or crime. This might mean working directly with young people at risk of becoming involved in crime or working with organisations that fund or deliver relevant programmes.
- Experience of developing a research strategy. You have thought hard about gaps in the evidence base, how they can be filled and how this might influence policy and practice.

We would consider flexible arrangements to find the right candidate. This could include:



- Secondments for candidates with an established record of research on the causes of violence. This arrangement might suit an academic researcher who is looking to gain experience outside of academia but does not want to leave academia entirely.
- Flexible working alongside postgraduate study.

While it's not a criterion, we're especially interested to hear from applicants who have lived experience of youth violence.

It's also important to us that the people we hire do not discriminate. We believe in being inclusive and giving everyone an equal chance to succeed. Applications are welcome from all regardless of age, sex, gender identity, disability, marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, religion or belief, race, sexual orientation, transgender status or social economic background.

Additional benefits include

£1,000 professional development budget annually, 28 days plus Bank Holidays, four half days for volunteering activities.

Hybrid working details

The office is based in Central London. Those living in and around London are expected to be in the office a minimum of 2 days per week. If you live outside of London and work remotely, you'll be expected to work from the London office 2 days per month.

To apply

To apply, please send a CV and cover letter, and complete the monitoring form click on "**Apply for this**" button by **9:00am Monday, 8th April 2024**.

When applying for this role, please ensure that your cover letter can answer, within a maximum of 1000 words, the following questions:

1. Why are you motivated to apply for this role?
2. Give clear examples where your experience directly relates to the "About You" section in the JD.



You should also include the contact details of two referees, one of whom must be your current or most recent employer. Referees will only be approached with your express permission.

You will also be required to provide proof of your eligibility to work in the UK. As part of our commitment to flexible working, we will consider a range of options for the successful applicant. All options can be discussed at interview stage.

Interview process

Interviews will take place in the week commencing the 16th of April 2024.

There will be a task to prepare for in advance.

Personal data

Your personal data will be shared for the purposes of the recruitment exercise. This includes our HR team, interviewers (who may include other partners in the project and independent advisors), relevant team managers and our IT service provider if access to the data is necessary for performance of their roles. We do not share your data with other third parties, unless your application for employment is successful and we make you an offer of employment. We will then share your data with former employers to obtain references for you. We do not transfer your data outside the European Economic Area.