

The Youth Endowment Fund

Senior Research Manager (Policing and Youth Justice)

Reports to: Guidance Lead

Salary: £51,300

Contract: 2 years fixed term

Location: Central London, hybrid*

Closing date for applications: 09:00am, Thursday 3rd October 2024

Interview dates: week commencing the 14th of October

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.

Last year, 244 people in England and Wales tragically died after being assaulted with a knife. Of these, 32 were children. Every child captured in these numbers is an important member of our community and society has a duty to protect them. Even beyond knife crime, we know that the fear of violence has a terrible effect on children's daily lives.

The Youth Endowment Fund exists to try and permanently change things. To succeed, we must build an exceptional 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 then need to convert this into highly accessible content on what works, how delivery organisations need to change their practice and how the systems they operate in need to be reformed.

At the heart of our work is getting clear on what works. We are looking for someone who can lead our research work in finding out what works in policing and youth justice to keep all of our children safe from violence.

Policing and Youth Justice

YEF works across seven sectors, all of which can play a role in protecting children from involvement in violence. Policing and Youth Justice are two of these sectors, and play a critical part in YEF achieving our mission.

Whether it is focused deterrence, stop and search, hotspots policing, or police in school, the police deploy a variety of strategies to attempt to keep children safe from violence. These strategies have [varying levels](#) of evidence to support their use, but interventions like hotspots policing do illustrate how particular policing strategies can keep children safe.

In addition, when children come into contact with the police, this is an opportunity to identify children who need support and to address the underlying causes of crime. However, [a recent analysis](#) of cases where a child has come to serious harm found that the police were missing opportunities to identify vulnerabilities and keep children safe. Inspection reports also suggest that, while police are improving at identifying and responding to signs of vulnerability in children, too many exploited children are criminalised.

[Youth Justice](#) is important to YEF because improving the support offered to children who come into contact with the justice system can reduce their later involvement in crime. Diverting children to effective services is a crucial opportunity to reduce re-offending. Evidence from many rigorous reviews, summarised in the [YEF Toolkit](#), shows that approaches such as cognitive behavioural therapy, mentoring or sport programmes can reduce offending. Conversely, approaches such as prison awareness programmes are known to be ineffective or can even increase the chances of re-offending. We are also concerned by the conditions that children face in certain parts of the youth justice system, particularly youth custody.

Across both sectors, we are acutely aware of racial disproportionality and aim to address it across all our work.

About the Research Team

The Research Team is at the heart of our efforts to learn what works and put it into practice. We do this by commissioning research (including qualitative research, systematic reviews of intervention evidence and data analysis), and use this research to write and publish guidance across YEF's [sectors of interest](#).

We're a high-performing team which values intellectual rigour and getting to the truth, compassion for children, ambition about what we can achieve and humility about what we know. We love to discuss the latest developments in research methods, but we're not just interested in research for its own sake. We want research to lead to actual changes in outcomes for children.

Our team is responsible for a range of activities, including:

- **Creating evidence-based guidance for practitioners and policy makers.** We commission research to better understand how to keep children safe from involvement in violence, and then use this research to write guidance for practitioners and policy makers across our seven sectors. For example, we have recently published [guidance for the youth justice system](#), and guidance for [schools, colleges and alternative provision](#).
- **Developing the YEF's funding strategy across our seven sector areas.** We make sure our £200m endowment (granted to us by the UK Home Office in 2019) is focused on the evidence gaps that matter and our decisions are based on rigorous research. We identify opportunities to fund research that will have an impact.
- **Expanding a new workstream dedicated to understanding the drivers of violence and which children are the most vulnerable to it.** We'll fund innovative research on the causes of violence and create useful resources that make this research useful and accessible.
- **Developing a new workstream of cutting-edge projects looking at how systems of support are working to keep children safe.** For example, we're funding projects examining access to psychological therapy and the role of key workers in effective agency collaboration.
- **Communicating the findings from YEF-funded evaluations.** We make sure that evaluation insights are accessible to all and lead to an impact on children's lives.

The Senior Research Manager will be an essential part of the YEF team and will develop a portfolio of impactful projects.

You'll...

- **Lead the development of evidence-based recommendations in policing.** You'll draw on research and expert insight to write and publish a guidance report on the policing system. This will include recommendations for policy makers and system leaders on how policing can protect children from involvement in violence.
- **Lead the development of the YEF's strategy and research agenda on policing and youth justice.** This is a great opportunity to influence large amounts of funding and direct it towards the most impactful projects. You'll make sure we invest in research that fills important gaps in knowledge and leads to important changes. You'll ensure that our strategy and decision-making are informed by the best available research.
- **Become the YEF's expert on policing and youth justice.** You'll make sure we understand the key issues, stay on top of the latest research and are connected to the right people.
- **Develop great relationships with experts and represent YEF in external meetings and events.** You'll promote evidence-based policy and practice by speaking at conferences and events.
- **Work with our Change Team** to produce resources and accessible summaries for policing and youth justice colleagues on the evidence.
- **Produce accessible summaries of YEF evaluation reports** that can be used by policy makers, practitioners and service commissioners.

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. This might mean you've worked directly with young people at risk of becoming involved in crime, for organisations that fund or deliver relevant programmes, or have conducted research on this topic.
- **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 policing and/or youth justice:** You know the key ideas and debates, recent policy developments and key people. You're

comfortable talking about policing and/or youth justice with experts. There are many ways to acquire this knowledge. You might have worked in the police or youth justice, in associated organisations, or learnt about either during a degree.

- **You're a confident reader of research 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 have experience of managing contractors or budgets.
- **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.

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 annual leave 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:

Please click on the "Apply for this" button by 9:00 AM on Thursday, 3rd October 2024.

When applying for this role, ensure you complete our Monitoring Form and attach your CV. Additionally, please submit a supporting statement that answers the following questions. Your response to each question should be no longer than 400 words:

- 1. Why do you want the job?**
- 2. Can you give an example where you've had to summarise evidence on a specific topic that was highly contested? How did you manage the process and communicate the result?**
- 3. Please provide an overview of your experience in relation to policing and/or youth justice and explain why this experience makes you a good fit for this role.**

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 14th of October 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.