

Youth Endowment Fund

Purpose of Report

For information.

Summary

John Yates, Executive Director at the [Youth Endowment Fund](#), has joined the Board to discuss the work of the Fund and to share how councils can make use of their research.

LGA Plan Theme: Putting people first

Recommendation(s)

That the Board consider the presentation by the Youth Endowment Fund and offer perspectives from their own authorities or views on the Fund's current and future work.

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Youth Endowment Fund

Background

1. [Youth violence is understood](#) as violence either against or committed by a child or adolescent, which can impact on individuals, families, communities and society.
2. Youth violence can be considered a matter of public health concern, as young people's health and social outcomes are worsened through increased exposure to violence. There are resource implications across the system, both in the short term to deal with injuries, but also the long-term implications for an individual's physical and mental health, given that exposure to violence increases the risk of substance abuse, obesity and illnesses (eg cancer and heart disease).
3. Causes of youth violence are complex, and risk of committing or being affected by young violence is associated with: adverse childhood experiences, access and availability of youth support and / or mental health services, and socioeconomic deprivation.
4. The Youth Endowment Fund (YEF) was established by the children's charity Impetus, with a £200m endowment and ten year mandate from the Home Office. The YEF is part of the What Works Network which is an initiative to improve the way government and public sector organisations create, share and use high quality evidence in decision-making.
5. The Fund seeks to prevent children and young people from becoming involved in violence by identifying what works and working with stakeholders to put this knowledge into practice.
6. There are eight focus areas for the Fund at the moment: diversion, family support, focused deterrence, neighbourhood, trusted adults, therapies, presence in schools, positive activities. The YEF funds work across England and Wales. This funding takes place across three types: themed, place-based and targeted.
7. YEF have produced a [toolkit which provides an overview of existing research](#) on approaches to preventing serious youth violence. This includes reviewing of interventions such as those to prevent school exclusion, focused deterrence, mentoring, and sports programmes.

Youth violence in England

8. [Rates of physical violence among young people](#) are broadly similar across the four nations, however England is the only country in which rates are increasing for all age groups. In Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland, physical violence among young people aged 10-24 shows an overall downward or stable trend from 2012-2017. In England, there has been an increase over the same period for all age groups – most notably for 20-24 year olds, which increased from 297.7 to 315.5 per 100,000 from 2012 to 2017. England also has appreciably higher rates of physical violence among children aged 10-14 years than the other UK nations.

9. In the UK, young people aged 20-24 are [more than three times](#) as likely than those aged 10-14 to suffer injury by sharp object.
10. There is [strong evidence linking deprivation and vulnerability to knife crime](#), alongside links between school exclusion and knife crime and serious violence. This evidence points towards adopting a broad population-wide approach focussing on addressing the social determinants of health, with enhanced interventions to support the communities most at risk. In particular, engaging those young people who have had involvement with the justice system (whether themselves or their families) provides an opportunity to influence the trajectory of the most vulnerable young people.
11. The Youth Endowment Fund and Department for Education have [released a series of research reports](#) into serious youth violence with the below findings.
 - 11.1. The drivers of violence are complex, so it's hard to evidence solutions. Children and young people involved in violence are often victims as well as offenders. Many of them are facing issues such as poverty, mental or physical ill health and/or abuse. The complexity of relationships between these factors and violence makes it hard to predict the impact of services which target them. There is also limited evidence on the direct impact of approaches which are likely to be beneficial, such as 'Child First' or multi-agency working.
 - 11.2. Stigmatisation is part of many children's journeys to violence. Children and young people form 'pro-social' or 'pro-offending' identities, and systems can entrench or challenge this. This means young people may associate themselves as an 'offender' through developing social relationships or because they have been seen as 'risky' or an 'offender' by practitioners and then associate themselves in that way. Children who are male, black, neurodivergent or from low-income households are particularly likely to be stigmatised.
 - 11.3. Positive relationships with practitioners can protect against violence. Trust, respect, empathy and stability are key here. These relationships can make children and young people feel safe enough to disclose their need for support. Good relationships then help involve and engage children and young people in services, and support them as they transition between services.
 - 11.4. Limited resources mean that some children and young people don't access the right support in time to prevent violence. Thresholds for accessing supportive services (e.g. mental health services) are high. Also, practitioners have limited time to consider an individual's needs, tailor services to them, or coordinate seamless transitions between services.

Legislation and policy related to youth violence

12. There has been significant government focus on this area over the past five years. This includes, but is not limited to, the below legislative and policy changes.
13. [Anti-social behaviour Action Plan](#) (May, 2023). Includes one million extra hours of youth support will be made available in anti-social behaviour hotspots and we will invest more to intervene early with at-risk young people via 1-1 support. Provides councils tools to

revitalise communities, bringing more empty shops on high streets back into use, and restoring and renovating local parks.

14. [Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act](#) (April, 2022) Includes the serious violence duty which: requires organisations above to work together to share information, analyse the situation locally and come up with solutions, including the publication of an annual strategy to prevent and reduce serious violence on a local basis. The duty also requires the responsible authorities to consult educational, prison and youth custody authorities for the area in the preparation of their serious violence strategy. This commenced January 2023. The Act also made preventing and reducing Serious Violence a statutory requirement for Community Safety Partnerships
15. [Beating Crime Plan](#) (July 2021) outlines the government's strategy for cutting homicide, serious violence and neighbourhood crime.
16. [Violence Reduction Units](#) (2019) The units draw together partners in 18 areas worst affected by serious violence to deliver a full range of coordinated action needed to tackle serious violence at its root. This was initially announced as part of the £100 million Serious Violence Fund in the 2019 March Spring Statement.
17. [The Offensive Weapons Act](#) (2019) introduced new restrictions on the online sale of bladed articles, introduced Knife Crime Prevention Orders (KCPOs) (which can be imposed on children as young as 12) and created a new offence associated with the possession of flick/gravity knives.
18. [Serious Violence Strategy](#) (April 2018) sets out the government's commitment to combat county lines drug dealing through a combination of greater enforcement and early intervention with at risk young people.

Implications for Wales

19. The YEF funds work in England and Wales.

Financial Implications

20. There are no financial implications for the LGA.

Equalities implications

21. The majority of data for equalities implications is linked to the justice system, rather than looking at serious violence specifically. Children and young people from marginalised backgrounds – including black and Asian children and young people and children who have been in care – are significantly overrepresented in the youth justice system.
22. The YEF have partnered with The Phoenix Way to distribute £10 million in funding to Black, Asian and other minority-led charities and community groups that are working to prevent children and young people from becoming involved in violence.
23. Ethnicity: In London, over half of weapon-enabled robbery (59%) and homicide (65%) suspects were Black. Victim profiles were more diverse (i.e., 56% of weapon-enabled robbery victims were white) but the majority of youth homicide victims were male (93%)

and Black (61%) (ethnicity data uses police observed rather than self reported). Black children were involved in 16% of stop and searches (where ethnicity was known). This was a decrease of two percentage points from the previous year, but 12 percentage points higher than the proportion of Black 10 to 17 year olds in the 2011 population.

24. Sex: Boys made up 86% of the offending population compared with 51% of the 10 to 17 population in England and Wales.
25. Age: Children aged 15 to 17 made up 80% of the offending population, while making up 36% of the 10 to 17 population in England and Wales.
26. Disability: of children sentenced to a Referral Order, Reparation Order, Youth Rehabilitation Order or a custodial sentence in 2018/19: for 71% there were Speech, Language and Communication concerns, for 71% there were mental health concerns, for 47% there were physical health concerns

Next steps

27. Officers will take note of the discussion and continue to work with the youth endowment fund in publicising and sharing their research.
28. Areas for discussions may include:
 - 28.1. How youth violence is affecting your local community.
 - 28.2. How the fund can work with local authorities.
 - 28.3. Existing experience of implementing evidence-based approaches to tackling violence among young people.
 - 28.4. How councils and the LGA can support the work of the Fund.
 - 28.5. Emerging trends that councils should be aware of.