



Specification Faith Alliance – Youth Spaces

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1 About the West Midlands Violence Reduction Partnership (WMVRP)

The West Midlands Violence Reduction Partnership (WMVRP) aims to reduce violent crime across the West Midlands region. It benefits from the expertise of partners in public health, criminal justice, sports, education, and policing in order to take on a collaborative approach towards reducing violence. Violence and the causes of violent acts are complex and multi-layered. Tackling the root causes is not straightforward. It takes time and cooperation between organisations with a shared will.

There is a long history of commitment to ending violence across the West Midlands. In 2015 the Violence Prevention Alliance was established. Funded by the Police and Crime Commissioner it saw Public Health England work with West Midlands Police and others to tackle the causes of violent behaviour; an acknowledgement that simply making more arrests on the streets would not solve our problem.

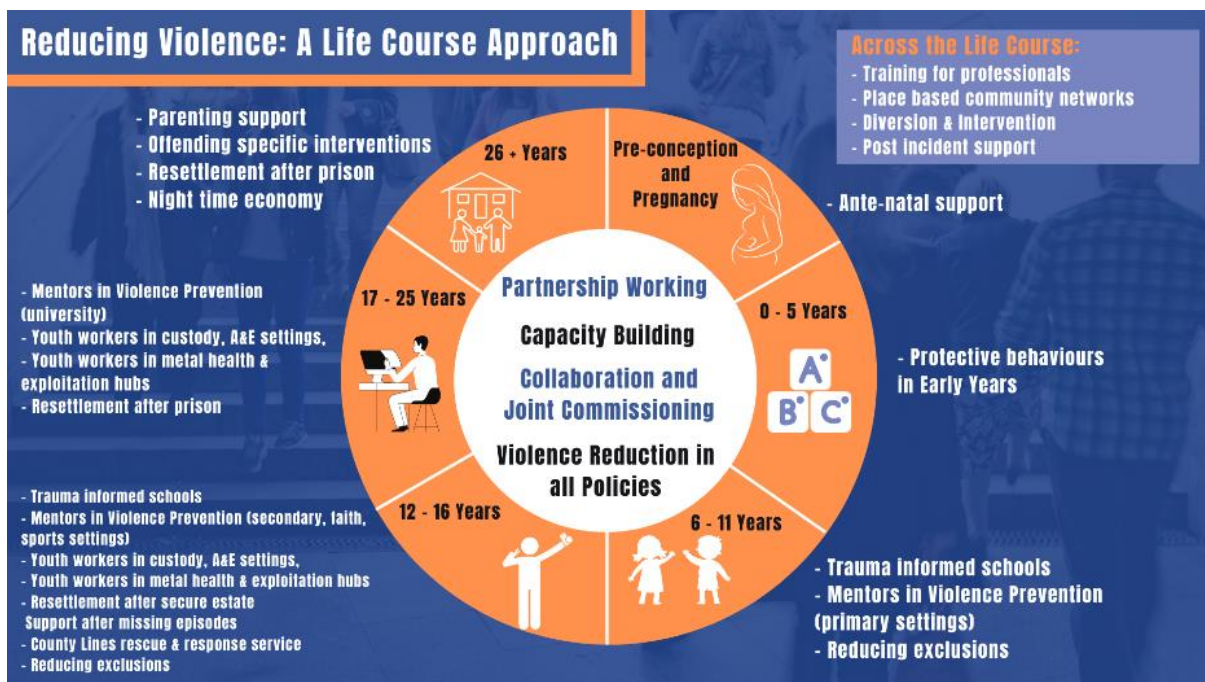
The VRP adopts a public health approach to violence. This means thinking about violence in the same way that medical professionals consider the spread of diseases. It means focusing on understanding the root causes of the problem and on testing, evaluating and upscaling

interventions. Developing stronger data and analysis about the problem is key to working in this way.

The 5 main strands to the VRP’s work include, supporting:

1. Communities and professionals to work together
2. Interventions to prevent violence
3. The use of evidence to inform decisions
4. Leaders to connect around a shared long-term ambition
5. Production of guidance, advice and toolkits

WMVRP takes a life course approach, ensuring interventions and support to prevent violence is available at each life stage. The image below details the support we provide.



2 About the West Midlands Faith Alliance

2.1 Introduction

The West Midlands Faith Alliance (FA) is a multi-faith and community-led regional network that exists to equip, enable and empower communities of all faiths and none across the West Midlands to better understand and prevent violence, particularly violence affecting young people.

The FA seeks to address violence and associated issues in the West Midlands by utilising and promoting faith-based approaches that consider faith and participation in a faith community as potential protective factors against violence and exploitation. The FA also explores how faith-based perspectives and approaches may intersect with and complement a public health approach to tackling violence. The FA will work towards establishing a community-led movement across the West Midlands, and will seek to inspire others to do similar work in other parts of the country.

2.2 Work to date

Founded in 2019, the FA network has undergone significant growth in membership and reach, particularly since the easing of lockdown restrictions in 2021. Much of this earlier work was focussed on networking and developing new resources, including the pioneering *Toolkit for*

Faith Communities in July 2022. As a result, the network now has over 460 members, consisting of faith-based organisations, places of worship, statutory partners and many others from across the West Midlands and beyond.

Since early 2023, emphasis has been placed on developing a long-term strategy for the Faith Alliance, that identifies key priorities and delivers more faith-based violence reduction projects on the ground. Determined to ensure that the strategy was co-produced with young people and communities, several months of consultation were undertaken, leading to the publication of a three-year [Strategy](#) in November 2023, complete with [Action Plans](#) in May 2024.

2.3 Faith Alliance Projects for 2024-25

The VRP has committed £100,000, over the 2024/2025 financial year, to help put Year 1 of the FA's Strategy into practice. The majority of this budget (£85,000) will be spent on three youth-facing projects, each identified as priorities by the co-produced Action Plans. As outlined below, the three projects, although independent grants, are designed to complement and support one another:

Youth Spaces (this specification)

This project will pilot three new multi-faith youth spaces, utilising the shared assets and resources of local faith communities to provide spaces where young people can be safe and access positive opportunities after school. £60,000 has been allocated for this project split £20,000 per pilot youth space.

Youth Voice (separate specification to come)

This project, to promote youth voice, has two parts. Part A will develop a young leadership training programme to equip emerging faith leaders and to enable them to be advocates of violence reduction in their respective communities. Part B will involve supporting existing faith leaders to better value youth voice and create more opportunities for young people to gain leadership and work experience. £15,000 has been allocated for this project. This specification will be published at the beginning of June 2024.

Youth Work and Mentoring (separate specification to come)

This project will establish a new training pathway for responsible adults from across diverse faith communities to be trained in youthwork principles and good practices, and so become volunteer mentors for young people. £10,000 has been allocated for this project. This specification will be published at the beginning of June 2024.

3 Vision for Faith Alliance Youth Spaces project

This is an opportunity to apply for one of three grants worth up to £20,000 funded through West Midlands Violence Reduction Partnership, to develop the work of the regional Faith Alliance via the 'Youth Spaces' project.

The need for more spaces where young people can be safe after school was mentioned frequently during the Faith Alliance's consultations. This has become a pressing need in recent years with council-run youth spaces being closed. Faith communities, with their assets, resources, and volunteers, have the potential to be important partners in helping to protect and provide for local children and young people, through the provision of youth spaces.

Put simply, a youth space is somewhere safe where a young person can be themselves. It is an environment where young people can feel welcome and know that they are truly valued by peers and responsible adults. It is a space where young people can broaden their horizons through access to new opportunities, activities and experiences in a supervised environment. It is a space created and set aside for young people, with young people and by young people. A youth space can be an open access youth club, detached youth work, or any other form of recognised youth work – depending on the needs and wishes of the local young people.

Whilst some individual faith groups offer youth work, they often do so among young people of their own community. By contrast, there are relatively few examples of faith communities working together to co-deliver youth work that is open to all young people, regardless of faith. What this Youth Spaces project enables is the opportunity to pilot how, by faith communities working together and pooling their resources, more opportunities might be offered to many more young people of all backgrounds, not only to stay safe, but to thrive in diverse neighbourhoods.

3.1 Overall Project Requirements for Youth Spaces

Establish three youth spaces in three different locations across the West Midlands which will pilot a multi-faith, community-led approach to delivering youth work in hyper-local neighbourhoods. It will encourage nearby faith communities and youth work organisations to work together and pool their resources for the common good of the young people in their shared neighbourhood.

Provide somewhere safe for local young people to gather, socialise, eat, learn and have fun in the hours after school. Young people will have access to trusted, culturally sensitive and responsible adults (professional youth workers and trained volunteers) who can be mentors to the young people.

Provide spaces where young people of all faiths and none are able to attend, and so encourage positive encounters between young people of different backgrounds and promote social cohesion.

Provide opportunities, through performance monitoring and potential external evaluation, to build the evidence base for faith-based approaches to violence reduction.

3.2 Expectations of providers

- The Faith Alliance is encouraging consortia, groups involving two or more organisations, to apply for this funding. Each consortium should:
- Identify a lead provider organisation for the Consortium. It is expected that this will be a professional youth work organisation whose paid staff can take the lead on setting up the youth space, managing funds, coordinating and recruiting volunteers, and overseeing all necessary policies and procedures (e.g. safeguarding). This youth work organisation may or may not be faith-based.
- The Consortium should contain one or more additional organisations which are affiliated with different faith communities (such as places of worship), and who will work together with the lead provider to co-deliver a youth space in their local neighbourhood. Each organisation in the Consortium will commit to contribute meaningfully to the project, for example, by providing a venue, equipment, volunteers, food or other resources.
- Establish a multi-faith youth space in a local neighbourhood, that will be open for all young people aged 13-17, of all faiths and none, and who reside within a 20-minute walk of the location.
- Understand that the youth spaces are not to be used to promote a particular faith or belief system, but exist for the safety of young people attending the youth spaces,

regardless of faith. If a young person expresses an interest in questions of faith, they can be signposted to separate faith-based youth work, not funded by the VRP.

- Make use of the Faith Alliance’s Youth Voice training and guidance to improve opportunities for young people through the youth space (once this has been commissioned).
- Make use of the Faith Alliance’s Youth Work & Mentoring training to recruit and train volunteer mentors (once this has been commissioned).
- Not contain organisations seeking to apply for more than one youth spaces pilot.
- Explain why their local neighbourhood needs funding for a youth space, for example, lack of existing youth provision, high levels of deprivation, or high levels of violent crime. They may wish to evidence their case by making use of data from the VRP’s [Strategic Needs Assessment](#) .
- Demonstrate their understanding of the assets, demographics, opportunities and challenges of their local neighbourhood.
- Evidence that they have undertaken consultation with local young people and communities to capture their wishes for and needs of any new youth space.
- Outline a robust plan for sustainability (e.g. continuation funding) beyond March 2025.

3.3 Investment over the course of the project

- Consortia can apply for one of three grants worth up to £20,000 each to cover the costs of a single youth space pilot, to be delivered during the 2024/2025 financial year. Costs may include salaries for staff, equipment, food, excursions, external workshop providers, and other relevant costs;
- Payment terms are 30 days payment, quarterly in arrears. Payment will be made on satisfactory monitoring as per section 3.4;
- Investment is for the period 01 June 2024 – 31 March 2025

3.4 Expected outcomes & impact and Performance Monitoring

Quarterly reporting will be due on the 10th day after (financial) quarter end on:

- Progress against project outcomes, measures and targets (see *table 1* below);
- Progress on contribution to the wider Faith Alliance Impacts;
- Narrative on trends and achievements, barriers and risks;
- Describe actions taken to mitigate risks;
- Actual budget spend in relation to forecast spend.

Outcome	Measure	Target
Young people have access to a safe space	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of youth spaces established • Number of young people attending youth space • Feedback from young people on feelings of safety 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Three youth space pilots established across region • Up to 40 individual young people supported per youth space • Increase in young people’s feelings of safety

Young people have access to responsible adults	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of youth workers deployed • Number of volunteer mentors deployed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At least 2 youth workers per youth space • 10 volunteer mentors per youth space
Young people have access to new opportunities and activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of excursions delivered per youth space • Number of external workshops per youth space 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 excursions per youth space • 4 external workshops per youth space
Young people and adults grow in understanding of other communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feedback from young people and adults on perceptions of other communities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase in young people's positive attitudes to other communities

Table 1

Wider impacts (taken from Faith Alliance Theory of Change)

- The prevalence of violence is reduced
- Fewer young people in the criminal justice system
- Faith communities are engaged, compassionate and resilient
- The Faith Alliance is self-sustaining, with community-led activity at its core
- Long-term investment of funds, time and commitment to faith-based approaches
- Increased inter-faith collaboration on social issues of common concern
- Better partnership working between faith communities and local authorities

3.5 Required standards and skills to be an Approved Provider

Staff qualifications/skills/experience

Consortia (all organisations) who deliver the youth spaces will need to demonstrate:

- Strong understanding of safeguarding and issues affecting young people (all staff and volunteers must attend local authority's safeguarding training)
- Any staff and volunteers must be over 18 and safely recruited, including completing an Enhanced DBS check and submitting two suitable references.
- Experience of delivering quality youth work in community settings
- Commitment to being a trauma-informed organisation (for example, by attending the VRP's Trauma-Informed Practice training)
- Commitment to the mission and values of the Faith Alliance

Policy requirements

Consortia who deliver the youth spaces must:

- Have a current safeguarding policy and procedure that has been reviewed in the last 12 months, and that all staff and volunteers in the Consortium are familiar with
- A policy as an employer to comply with statutory obligations under the Equality Act 2010
- National Living Wage Employer Policy

3.6 Project Timescales and Implementation

Task	Anticipated Completion Date
Closing date for receipt of proposals to SUMS online platform Proposals received after the deadline stated or not properly completed will be disregarded.	Deadline of Monday 1 st July 2024 at 5pm

Complete analysis of proposals against pre-agreed criteria.	Monday 8 th July 2024
Interviews	w/c Monday 15 th July 2024
Award Grants	w/c 22 nd July 2024
Project Commencement Date	ASAP thereafter

4 Scoring Criteria and decision process

There is an online application form and interview process to help evaluators decide which Youth Spaces to fund. The application will be worth at 75% and the interview will be worth 25%.

All applications will undergo an initial sifting process to ensure they are eligible for the funding they are applying for. Those applications which are eligible will be scored and the highest scoring applications will be shortlisted to take part in an interview panel.

Project Applications will be scored 75% on quality based on responses to the following questions:

#	Question No	What the evaluator is looking for	Weighting
6	Why would you like to work together and open a Youth Space?	Demonstration of a detailed understanding of the concept of multi faith youth spaces, partnership working, understanding of violence and risk factors/public health approach. Demonstration that faith can provide protective factors. Sense of their positive vision for what they can achieve.	15%
7	What evidence do you have of a need for a Youth Space where you propose it to be?	Use of the VRP's Strategic Needs Assessment and how the project can meet gaps in local service provision. Evidence can be demonstrated through statistics and local knowledge of needs	15%
8	What would be the planned opening days and times of your Youth Space?	Demonstration of more than one session a week, and the decision made with young people views taken into account, linked to need	5%
9	How will you ensure youth Spaces Project meets the expected outcomes?	Demonstration of use of feedback forms, session plans, registers, planning meetings, consultation with young people on activities and trips, appropriate numbers of young people attending and staffing/volunteers to support. To commit to returning the monitoring so the evidence can be built.	15%
10	What contribution will each of your named partners bring?	Demonstration of each partner bringing a meaningful contribution	10%
11	How have you involved young people and local communities in the planning of	Evidence of young people's and communities' involvement in the design of the youth space	15%

	your Youth Space?		
12	What plans do you have to make the Youth Space a sustainable project?	Identified potential alternative sources of funding, commitment of partners beyond the pilot.	10%
14	Explain your Youth Spaces staffing/volunteer structure and qualifications of key staff or volunteers	We are looking for a clear picture of roles and responsibilities for the youth space, what an average session might look like in terms of staff and volunteers.	15%

The panel interview will be held during week commencing **15th July 2024** with faith community and young people representatives, as well as VRP staff. Representatives of all member organisations of the consortium should attend the interview where possible. They will take place in-person where possible but a Microsoft Teams link can be provided if needed.

The interviews will assess the applying consortium's understanding of the project, their motivations and enthusiasm, and the quality of the relationships between consortium members. Interviews will be scored using the same criteria as written answers (see above) and the panel process is worth 25% of the overall application.

Applicants will hear whether they have been successful week commencing 22nd July. Successful applicants should look to commence project delivery as soon as possible thereafter.

The evaluators use the following to score your applications and interview:

Score	Scoring Principles
0	Rejected – the question is not answered or the response is completely unacceptable
1	Very Poor response – Only partially answers the requirement with major deficiencies and little relevant detail proposed
2	Poor response – only partially acceptable with deficiencies apparent. Some evidence provided but response falls short of providing full confidence in the approach/solution described
3	Acceptable Response – meets all or most requirements but limited and/or could have been expanded upon further. Any weaknesses can be addressed.
4	Good response- Meets all requirements fully. Good level of detail, response provides high levels of assurance in relation to the proposal.
5	Excellent response – Exceeds requirement in some or all areas. Comprehensive responses demonstrating a detailed understanding of requirement and/or customer. No weaknesses noted.

5 Contact for any queries

If you have any questions about the application please email vrp@westmidlands.police.uk