

Specification for Peer and Community Research

Statement of Requirements

Context

West Midlands Violence Reduction Partnership (WMVRP) seeks to commission the delivery of community and peer-led research projects across a range of topics. Alongside evaluating programmes designed to reduce violence, conducting data analysis to understand local trends, and drawing on academic research about effective interventions for different groups, WMVRP is committed to involving communities and young people in the research process. Our aim is to gain valuable insights from young people, parents, carers and individuals with lived experience about what they believe will help address the challenges they face.

Funding and contract duration

This is a short-term contract scheduled to conclude on 27th March 2026, with a maximum budget allocation of £80,000

Service

We aim to commission a provider capable of overseeing, organising and training community and peer researchers to deliver a series research projects through a range of methods, enhancing our understanding and capacity to implement effective violence prevention strategies.

Based on currently available data, the WMVRP has identified four priority topics that we believe are influencing serious youth violence. These areas would benefit from community engagement to develop a deeper understanding of underlying causes and potential solutions. For each topic, WMVRP will work collaboratively with the appointed provider to agree on one research question. The example questions provided below are indicative and not exhaustive; alternative or refined questions proposed by the provider are welcomed. The four topics are outlined below, along with illustrative examples of the types of questions that may be explored:

- **SEN (Special Education Needs) and Neurodiversity**
e.g. Interviews with young people with SEN and neurodiversity with varying proximity to violence and their parents and professionals on topics such as safety and crime, what makes them feel safer
Literature search relating to how research into neurodiversity and SEN may also apply in areas of violence prevention
- **Counternarratives and messaging**
e.g. What is the narrative that is playing for children who carry knives and use violence, and does this counter that?
Where does narrative and fear come from?
- **Social Harm and Social Capital**
e.g. What do young people feel can help and harm them?

What do people wish we did more/differently and less?

- **Online Harm transforming into in-person violence**
e.g. Sampling and interviewing of victims about presence of online elements before their victimisation
Views of children about online harm and how online interaction affects safety in person.

The Provider

It is important that the projects are conducted by young people or community researchers, that it adds to the current evidence base, that it informs how we might better deliver service, and that voice of children, parents, victims, suspects or people with lived experience is also incorporated into the research overall, even if not incorporated into all elements.

And so, it is essential the provider has access and can readily mobilise a cohort of community members and/or young people as prospective researchers/research partners. In addition, other conditions around the contract require the chosen provider to be able to deliver the project within set parameters. As this is a short-term contract it is essential the chosen provider can deliver the research projects including oversight, training, data collection, analysis and reporting of findings, within the timeframe set. Furthermore, as the WMVRP is a regional partnership, it is essential the chosen provider can source researchers and conduct research across the seven local authorities in the West Midlands.

Beyond this, there is opportunity for this contract to be applied for using a consortium approach, with a core organisation holding funding and commissioning different styles of research from other groups.

The Process

Stage	Process
Stage 1: Application	<p>The application is formed of sections relating to required information about your organisation and supplementary questions on your suitability for the contract.</p> <p>Only applicants that have passed the requirements of Compliance with Specification, Requirements of Supplier and Evaluation of Supplier Questionnaire will be invited to interview. In the event there are 1-5 applications, all applicants will be invited to interview. In the event there are more than 5 applications, only the top scoring 5 will be invited to interview.</p>
Stage 2: Interview	Interviews are expected to be held in person on the 18th December 2025 .

	<p>The interview stage will include a 15-minute presentation and 15 minutes of additional Q&A's.</p> <p>The presentation question is</p> <p><i>“Selecting a research question in one of the four topics, explain how you would approach designing a research project?</i></p> <p><i>including factors you will take into consideration, who your researchers may be and ways you could present your findings for a range of audiences. In addition, we would like to know how your findings could add to the evidence base for this topic”</i></p>
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For more information about this opportunity please contact vrp@westmidlands.police.uk

Appendices

Appendix: 1

Examples of the kinds of project we would like to see being conducted are as follows:

SEN and Neurodiversity

- Interviews with SEN/Neurodiverse/neurotypical children and their families to elucidate their views on safety and crime, what makes them feel safer, whether there are things that are done that they see as meaning well but not making a difference to them, what makes them feel unsafe, and what they feel drives commission of violence. This could also be combined with other workstreams.
- Interviews with young people with SEN and Neurodiverse young people who have, and have not committed acts of violence, to establish whether there are any differences between how they handle situations, and what they feel put them at risk, or protected them from committing offences.
- Literature search relating to how research into neurodiversity and SEN may also apply in areas of violence prevention.

Counter Narrative and Messaging

- Has it reached people, without prompting?
- Does it ring true?
- What do people think of it?

- What is the narrative that is playing for children who carry knives and use violence, and does this counter that?
- Where does narrative and fear come from?
- If it doesn't land, why not?

Social Harm and Social Capital

- What do young people feel can help and harm them?
- What do people wish we did more/differently and less?
- What can be done to make people feel supported and to make them feel safer?
- What are their ambitions and dreams, and what are their fears for the future?
- What is in the community that helps or hinders, and are there things they are wanting for?
- Especially in violent areas.

Online Harm and In Person Violence

- Sampling and interviewing of victims about presence of online elements before their victimisation
- Views of children about online harm and how online interaction affects safety in person.
- Questionnaire research into how much online harm, where it comes from, how much turned into bullying in person, what it led to them feeling and doing, whether retaliation has occurred, and how much turned into reported crime, or to self-harm?
- Self-violence and bullying literature research.

These examples are not conclusive, and we are open to other suggestions if they add to the evidence base, and to our understanding of preventing violence in the West Midlands. All research must be conducted in the West Midlands.