**The supply and development of Peer Support networks for parents where children are known (or at risk of being known) to the Youth Justice System.**

**Project Specification**

As part of a serious youth violence pathfinder with the Youth Justice Board and seven Youth Offending Services, the West Midlands Violence Reduction Unit (**WMVRU**) via the Office of the West Midlands Police and Crime Commissioner wants to commission an innovative parenting peer support offer to parents who have children known to, or at risk of involvement in the youth justice system.

This is a pathfinder to generate and deliver innovative practice, evaluate and disseminate learning. The agreed concept has arisen via informal feedback from parents with children in the youth justice system, who said that traditional methods of parenting support did not meet their particular needs or speak to their reality.

Information on the Violence Reduction Unit can be found via http://westmidlands-vru.org/

**Project Background**

The Youth Justice Board is working to support frontline service improvement through grants and activity which target system-wide challenges. This involves a ‘pathfinder’ approach whereby local authorities and partners can pilot, develop and disseminate whole system solutions. The Violence Reduction Unit, alongside the seven West Midlands PCC area Youth Offending Services have received funding to become pathfinders to develop and deliver the parenting peer support project, and disseminate learning.

**The Service**

This project seeks to develop and deliver a modern, innovative and engaging parenting offer, including peer support elements. By the end of Year 2 it would be expected that a selection of parents engaged in the project would be trained by the provider to help facilitate sessions.

The intention for this project is to be two years in duration and a delivery plan should be developed on that basis, at £150,000 per year. Funding for year two of the contract between the VRU and the identified provider is however dependent on the grant for year 2 being released from the Youth Justice Board. It is expected therefore that Year 1 will show demonstrable deliverables in its own right and have an evaluative element for capturing and disseminating learning. Upon the achievement of the second year of grant, the project would continue as per the initial two year plan, or an agreed evolution. Funding ends after two years, however it would be expected that the provider would be actively working with the YOTs and VRU to identify alternative funding streams or sustainability through those parents engaged with the project.

Purpose of the project

• To create and facilitate parental peer support networks across the West Midlands YOTs delivery areas that can be accessed (and ultimately facilitated) by parents with children known to (or at risk of involvement with) the youth justice system. The offer should be an appropriate blend of physical meetings (with a physical presence required in each of the areas) and virtual means than have scale across the geography.

• To evaluate the project and contribute to regional and national learning.

Aims:

* The ultimate aim of the project is to contribute to the reduction of serious youth violence across the areas. This is related to a theory of change which aims to demonstrate that positive engagement of parents, through increasing their skills and resilience will lead to being able to support their child to either engage more positively with YOT. Therefore, it will be less likely they will need to re-offend or prevent an engagement with YOT. An aspiration would be that this also has a knock on effect to siblings. Appreciating that reductions in offending take time, the provider will need to work with the evaluation team and the YOTS to show a blend of quantitative and qualitative measures which demonstrate progress and outcomes.

Year 1

• To co-create and co-design supportive spaces for parents in each area to share experiences and learn from each other, building personal resilience, and uses a solution focused approach

* To build an online offer to compliment the physical support sessions.

• To reduce isolation in parents who have children open to (or at risk of involvement with) the youth justice system.

• To deliver and co-deliver awareness raising sessions to parents about key topics they felt they needed help with.

• To develop a forum which involves and gets parents to participate in decisions about statutory service delivery and create a bridge between parents and the YOS/CJS for better working relationships

* To be inclusive and to empower parents
* To be proactive in removing barriers (such as finance, transport, childcare) so that they are able to participate within this forum
* To evaluate and share good practice/learning in conjunction with the overall YJB terms of grant to the VRU.

Year 2

As above, plus:

• To identify and upskill parents within the networks who can become facilitators of sessions and lead further networks/increase capacity of the offer and build sustainability

• To co-develop training to empower and upskill parents within the networks

• To broaden access to include wider referral sources (ASB teams/Pupil Referral Units or self-referral for example).

* To work with the YOTS, the VRU and those engaged with the project to seek sustainability of funding.

A part of the overall grant from the YJB to the VRU is to evaluate and identify good practice. This is not included in the £150,000 but the successful organisation would be required to fully engage with the evaluation, and also to disseminate learning in line with the overall YJB terms to the VRU. The intention is to evaluate the project over the two-year period and subject to agreement and feasibility of exact criteria we would aim to include qualitative and quantitative information.

Accepting that offending and reoffending rates take time, the project will look at factors predictive of offending/reoffending (mediating factors), mapped against elements of YOS assessments. This will also include some longer-term follow-up in the evaluation spec to track offending/reoffending data over time. There is an intention to create a ‘comparison group design’ (taking data from YOS systems etc) for offending/reoffending/mediating factors to ascertain if changes can reliably be attributed to the project. The provider is expected to engage fully with these intentions and re-align where needed to ensure the evaluation has the information it needs.

As examples, we would seek learning on the following, which would also serve as the basis for outcomes required:

• Reduction in offending/reoffending due to the parental change

• Quality of relationships between parent/carer and the child they have involved in, or at risk of involvement in, the youth justice system

• Quality of relationship between parent/carer and other children in the family

• Parent’s own assessment of confidence in parenting pre and post engagement with this project

• Whether parents have shared their knowledge outside of the sessions

• Impact on mental health/emotional wellbeing of parent (reduced isolation etc)

• Any increased engagement (frequency, time and quality of) with the YOS by the young person as a result of better relationships with the parent.

• Changes in parenting style as a result of the peer support

• Impact on offending rates of siblings/other children in the family

• Nature of relationship of the parent with YOS as a result of the interaction

• Parental engagement with local support networks and organisations

• Cultural responsivity of the programme, driven by engagement and views of parents from BAME background

• Benefit of the project to those parents who agree to facilitate sessions

• How parents see this project as different to existing or previous parenting interventions.

**The Provider**

The service provider must be a community-based organisation with experience of working in the West Midlands PCC area. The intention is to create parenting offers that parents find useful and want to engage with, and so the provider must demonstrate significant experience in successful engagement with parents with children in the youth justice sector. Cultural competence is essential. Responding to service use feedback should be demonstrated.

Providers will need to demonstrate that they understand the experiences of parents with children in the youth justice system and that they can design and implement a service which responds accordingly and actively engages them. A particular focus on engagement with parents from diverse backgrounds, and ethnic minorities would strengthen an application. Service providers will be expected to demonstrate their ability to tailor their service in such a way as to maximise the chances of sustained engagement via a variety of face to face and virtual delivery methods, based on the needs of parents. How to develop parental peer support in a safe manner should be included. Ultimately, as the project continues there is an expectation that the service provider can identify parents who might be willing to lead sessions, and upskill those parents. How this will be achieved should be explained by any potential provider.

The service provider will be required to meet participant needs, recognising the need for flexibility with early morning starts, late evenings and weekend working. The service provider must be able to commence delivery at pace.

The provider should show that they understand existing local provision around parenting support for this target group in each local area, including researching where possible, best practice from other programmes nationally and locally.

**Referral Pathways**

The provider will be responsible for engaging with the YOTS to identify potential participants and establish clear referral protocols. This will be tested in the application with the provider demonstrating their track record and ability to build and sustain relationships with these organisations.

A key element to agreeing referral pathways will be the exchange of information relating to risk and personal information and subsequent dynamic factors including changes in circumstances, progression and results.

**Delivery Model and Risk Management**

The service provider will set out in their application their plans to become fully operational and begin commence delivery of the service within two months following contract award, or specific timescales set out in the overall YJB terms. They will set out their approach to staffing and recruitment detailing the qualifications and experience of case workers and other staff working on the project. Staff support and supervision would need to be appropriately demonstrated. Whilst there is no particular qualification advised for staff, the provider should be assured that they are competent and credible to the target audience.

All staff will be required to have a current Enhanced DBS check in line with their organisation’s policies. We encourage the recruitment of staff with lived experience and Providers must be cognisant of the relevancy of any convictions to the role for which the member of staff is to be deployed or recruited.

The successful provider will be required to have risk management policies and procedures in place for their organisation, staff and participants that takes account of the Cohort’s characteristics. Lone working arrangements must be detailed as part of this.

Prior to the commencement of operational delivery, the Provider will be required to have agreed formal protocols on the exchange of information, pertaining to risk and participant data, with referral agents.

During the deployment stage a high level of communication will be required with the relevant WMVRU policy lead and other key strategic partners.

**Information Management**

It will be the provider’s responsibility to provide a compliant case management system that accurately records the work undertaken with individual participants and can provide appropriate reporting.

The service provider must be able to collate and record accurate and timely management information that can be used to update stakeholders regarding individual cases as well as strategic and operational performance.

This database should include the recording which aligns to the intended outcomes of the project and any additional information required as part of the evaluation, both qualitative and quantitative.

An essential element of the service is the provision of regular progress updates to the referral organisation where a participant is subject to statutory provision, and regular returns to the Youth Justice Board.

The service provider must therefore demonstrate their ability to store and manage large amounts of sensitive information in accordance with GDPR requirements. Minimum capability should include:

* Central secure server where information is stored.
* Appropriate access to database by relevant staff members in a manner which supports their operational deployment yet does not compromise security of data.
* Case management system which allows individual cases to be tracked and updated as required by relevant personnel.

The Service Provider must sign and adhere to the following. The documents must be signed at contract award stage:

* Data Processing Agreement with West Midlands Police and/or WMVRU, sending quarterly updates regarding new staff members and volunteers who will have access to this information
* Multi-Agency Information Agreement and associated Referral Pathway documentation
* Security agreements and documentation in relation to the agreed case management system

**Governance**

The service provider must be able to demonstrate sufficient levels of internal and external governance that clearly demonstrate clarity of accountability. This must include a requirement to include a safeguarding policy and procedures and how complaints are progressed.

Any potential provider will need to commit to working with the seven west midlands Youth Offending Teams. Governance of the project is likely to comprise of a working group between the VRU and the YOTs, with returns due to the Youth Justice Board in line with grant requirements.

There is an expectation of provider to operate and monitor an equalities policy and activities in relation to employees, volunteers and service users consistent with the Equalities Act 2010.

**Performance Management**

The WMVRU expects on a quarterly basis:

* A consolidated, comprehensive written update in a prescribed format on each case, detailing outcomes, if objectives were achieved and any recommendations including transformation opportunities/needs assessment.
* Progress against project plan and milestones made since last quarter along with a realistic appraisal of challenges and obstacles to be overcome.

Throughout the duration of the contract the service provider will be required to demonstrate that their service provision is delivering effective outcomes in line with the objectives and criteria detailed above. This will assist in any evaluation that the WMVRU commissions to demonstrate the continued viability of the contract.

The WMVRU will evaluate the success of the service based on criteria agreed with the YJB, and the evaluating organisation. Whilst intentions are set out earlier in this document, the provider should be willing to flex and amend to give the project and evaluation the best chance of success.

**Meetings**

It is expected that the successful service provider will attend regular meetings with the WMVRU and YOTS, OPCC and where relevant with WMP to maintain a close working relationship and provide regular updates. The successful service provider will also be required, on occasion, to attend urgent meetings at very short notice where there is a defined operational need.

The anticipated frequency of project monitoring meetings and the content to be discussed is outlined below. More frequent (monthly) meetings might be required in the early stages of the project.

**Quarterly** - proposed agenda to include review of the commissioned service, referral issues, summary of performance, organisational learning and development and individual case studies.

The application process will include an application and interview.