

VOLUME 2: THE SPECIFICATION

MOPAC (VRU) Youth Practitioners' Leadership Programme

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1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The VRU was established to coordinate a fundamentally new public health approach to reducing violence and spreading opportunity in London. We know the best time to stop violence is before it starts. The Mayor's VRU is tackling violence through a programme of investment, partnership with public and voluntary sector organisations, developing research and data, and critically, putting London communities and young people at the heart of its preventative and public health approach.
- 1.2 The VRU strategy has a focus on supporting stronger families as part of that contextual approach to supporting young people, with a range of programmes in place which are aimed to reduce risks faced by young Londoners; support them in staying safe and providing opportunities for young people to fulfil their potential.
- 1.3 When we think about young people and the community in which they live, they are influenced and impacted by the key relationships in their life and the context in which they present themselves; now more than ever because of COVID-19. The VRU has therefore focused their priorities on those key relationships and built on the support they may bring as underpinned by a public health approach. Such relationships include Parents/Carers, Teachers, Peers/Community, Youth Practitioners.
- 1.4 These relationships all link to the wider whole family approach and need for keeping young people in education and reducing exclusions, and better equipping and recognising youth practitioners for a consistent approach.
- 1.5 The VRU workplan therefore is divided into five key priority areas: Youth Work; Education, Schools and Settings; Early Intervention and Whole Family; Neighbourhoods & Local violence Reduction Plans; and Young People – giving them their voice.
- 1.6 More details of the work of the VRU can be found at [The Mayor of London's VRU](#) and the VRU expects that you will review the publicly available material relating to various aspects of this procurement.
- 1.7 The VRU recognises the life-changing work of youth sector practitioners in supporting young people who are at risk of violence in London.
- 1.8 The VRU is commissioning a contract to deliver a Youth Practitioners' Leadership Programme designed to provide high quality, specialist and bespoke training and support to help London's youth sector practitioners on their career journey to becoming leaders in the sector.

- 1.9 The Service will build on a pilot programme funded by the VRU in 2019. This programme, called Rise Up, supported 94 youth workers from across London, who work with young people and within communities that have been affected by violence across London. The development of Rise Up was informed by discussions and feedback from consultation with community-led organisations, including youth sector practitioners, VCS organisations and young people. More details on Rise Up can be found online at <https://londonyouth.org/what-we-do/rise-up-youth-practitioners-leadership-programme/>.
- 1.10 The service will run for a 12-month period from Autumn 2021 to Autumn 2022 with an option to extend for an additional 12 months.
- 1.11 The maximum budget for the contract is £550,000 for the first 12 months of the contract with the option to extend for a further 12 months. The maximum value for the service is £1.1 M over its lifetime.

2 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The VRU recognises the life-changing work of youth sector practitioners in supporting young people who are at risk of violence in London.
- 2.2 In May 2019, the VRU invested £550,000 in the development of a pilot youth sector practitioners' leadership programme called Rise Up. This programme was targeted at supporting 100 youth sector practitioners from across London, who work with young people and within communities that have been affected by violence across London. The development of Rise Up was informed by discussions and feedback from consultation with community-led organisations, including youth sector practitioners, VCS organisations and young people.
- 2.3 Rise Up launched on 30th September 2020 and is led by London Youth in partnership with Leap Confronting Conflict and Clore Social Leadership. Youth Practitioners receive training and mentoring development – including modules on safeguarding, mental health and employment opportunities – to act as a community-led first line of defence for young people most at risk. The programme currently has 94 practitioners.
- 2.4 The pilot leadership programme aimed to provide high quality, specialist and bespoke training and support to help youth sector practitioners on their career journey to becoming leaders in the sector. The key themes which have emerged from the pilot programme and expected benefits included:
- Improved the knowledge, skill base and confidence of participants.
 - Embedded the principles of a trauma-informed practice in the youth sector workforce.
 - Empowered the youth sector with added capacity and accessibility to high quality training and development.
 - Created youth sector leaders of the future with practitioners progressing to more senior roles.
 - Developed an infrastructure to facilitate networking opportunities, a space for shared learning and best practice as well as peer to peer support.
 - Provided valuable and personalised mentoring and coaching support for youth sector practitioners.

3 CORE CAPABILITIES OF THE PROVIDER

- 3.1 The Provider will be required to design and deliver a leadership training programme for youth sector practitioners in London, with a particular focus on those who within communities affected by violence.
- 3.2 The Provider will be responsible for developing and managing the delivery of all elements of the leadership programme.
- 3.3 The Service is expected to be delivered by a consortium partnership (a minimum of three organisations). The Consortium shall work closely with the VRU to support the aims and outcomes to be achieved, including but not limited to:
- the development of specific guidance and policy around high-level aims and objectives of the programme, including the development of a confidence framework.
 - the recommendation of appropriate programme design elements, e.g., training modules, communications and marketing routes, assessment methodologies including participant recruitment assessment criteria.
 - development of a suite of tools and documents to measure and articulate the success of the programme, including appropriate methodologies to measure, track and evaluate the performance of the programme and the overall impact.
- 3.4 To be eligible to receive these funds, the Provider must have:
- Demonstrable capacity, experience, and expertise to lead a consortium programme that will incorporate a range of stakeholders and partners at strategic and operational levels.
 - Demonstrable experience of working with vulnerable young people at risk of being involved in serious violence or their parent(s) or carer(s).
 - Knowledge and understanding of London's youth sector and direct experience of working with youth sector practitioners.
 - Capacity to meet the stated timeframes through having existing, appropriately skilled, competent, and resourced staff in place.
 - Reach into London's diverse communities, and extensive experience of effectively engaging with youth sector practitioners to promote the programme, provide guidance on processes and support with achieving sustainability for the programme.
 - Robust experience of undertaking due diligence, running successful leadership, training, and mentoring programmes and performing associated contract management activities

including final reporting to outline the overall impact and benefits of the programme, as part of providing assurance to the VRU.

- An understanding of the Public Health approach to violence reduction and prevention.
- Be based in London and working with Londoners.

3.5 The funding scope for the programme includes the following core components:

- Programme set up, engagement and recruitment.
- Marketing and communications **(any brand developed as part of the development of the programme design will remain the property of the VRU).**
- Curriculum design and implementation.
- Facilitators and training, including specialist training/consultancy days with partner organisations.
- Project management support.
- Monitoring and data collection to support the evaluation of the pilot.
- Venues and Resources (cover costs to participating organisations).
- Coaching and Mentoring.
- Evaluation.

3.6 The programme is to commence delivery in Autumn 2021 and will run until Autumn 2022 (12 months).

3.7 A high-level indicative timeline for the delivery of this programme is set out in Table 1 below.

Contract Award	November 2021
Programme development/ recruitment	November 2021
Training Project Delivery	January 2022
Mentoring Pairing	January22 – August 22
Youth Practitioner Advisory Board	November 21
Evaluation	January 22 – January 23

Table 1

Equality and Diversity

- 3.8 The Provider shall ensure that all staff, particularly those interacting directly with participants, are appropriately trained, including in:
- 3.8.1 Interacting with members of protected groups to ensure that they do not discriminate by commission or omission in delivery of the contract on behalf of VRU.
 - 3.8.2 Ensuring that their approaches and processes are underpinned by equality and diversity policies which also consider intersectionality and encompass cultural competency.
- 3.9 The Provider shall be required to evidence that reasonable and proportionate adjustments have been made where appropriate to their delivery of the services and management of the programme including, but not limited to, communications (telephone, face to face, web based, print etc) and alternative means of access to the material for those with disabilities.
- 3.10 The Provider shall also be expected to support the participation, as appropriate, in public life of those protected groups who may otherwise be excluded through the design and management of the programme.

Governance

- 3.11 A designated VRU officer will be responsible for contract monitoring the Provider to ensure effective delivery and value for money.
- 3.12 The Provider will be responsible for contract monitoring the programme to ensure effective delivery and value for money.
- 3.13 The Provider will be expected to report directly to the director of the VRU, as and when requested.
- 3.14 This programme will be subject to standard VRU project monitoring approaches including end of project summary report.

4 DELIVERY ELEMENTS

- 4.1 The leadership programme should be designed to combine a mixture of practical and specialist training in subjects most relevant to frontline professionals working with young people who are vulnerable to violence, along with business management skills and individualised coaching so participants receive one-to-one leadership support to support their professional development.
- 4.2 Through learning garnered from the Rise Up pilot programme a hybrid model of face-to face delivery and digital delivery has proven to be the most effective method for this sector.
- 4.3 The Service is expected to be delivered by a consortium partnership (a minimum of three organisations) who are based in London and can demonstrate a track record of working with frontline youth sector practitioners.
- 4.4 The Service should be designed to **provide for 100 programme participants over a 12-month delivery period.**
- 4.5 Curriculum design and course content should reflect professional and contemporary training and development needs specific to the sector. From learnings acquired through the pilot programme the following course content should be considered:
- 4.6 **Mental Health First Aid (MHFA)** has been recognised across the youth sector as a valuable addition to a practitioners' knowledge base, particularly when working with vulnerable young people. There is consistent evidence that MHFA training raises awareness of mental ill-health conditions, including signs and symptoms. Those trained have a better understanding of where to find information and professional support and are more confident in helping individuals experiencing mental ill-health or in crisis. (RR1135 Research Report 'Effectiveness of Mental Health First Aid training in the workplace' - Health and Safety Executive 2018).
- 4.7 **Contextual Safeguarding** is an approach to understanding, and responding to, young people's experiences of significant harm beyond their families. It recognises that the different relationships that young people form in their neighbourhoods, schools and online can feature violence and abuse. Parents and carers have little influence over these contexts, and young people's experiences of extra-familial abuse can undermine parent-child relationships. Therefore, children's social care practitioners need to engage with individuals and sectors who do have influence over/within extrafamilial contexts, and recognise that assessment of, and intervention with, these spaces are a critical part of safeguarding practices. Contextual Safeguarding, therefore, expands the objectives of child protection systems in recognition that young

people are vulnerable to abuse in a range of social contexts. ('Contextual Safeguarding: An overview of the operational, strategic and conceptual framework' Carlene Firmin 2017).

- 4.8 **Trauma Informed Practice:** Violent trauma is often self-perpetuating. Individuals who are victims of violence are at increased risk of becoming perpetrators themselves. The intergenerational transmission of violence is well documented. Community violence is often built around cycles of retaliation. Many of our institutions—criminal justice settings, certainly, but also schools, churches, and hospitals—are too frequently places where violent trauma is perpetuated rather than eliminated. (Trauma Informed Services: Roger D. Fallot, Ph.D. and Maxine Harris, Ph.D.).
- 4.9 **Critical Response to Violence:** Reducing serious violence is a complex issue, requiring significant effort across a range of stakeholders. It is not something that government, the police or local communities can do alone. Sessions designed to encourage shared learning between frontline practitioners on managing critical responses, their wider community impact and sharing practice and experience should form a key learning strand of the training programme.
- 4.10 **Gender Informed Practice:** As research has suggested the needs of young women and girls are not met the same way the needs of young males are met. There is an absence of long-term girls' projects, mentoring and peer-to-peer support for young women affected by trauma. It is important for youth sector practitioners to understand how to develop a gendered approach to their practice ensuring that they take into consideration the intersectionality of the young people affected by violence.
- 4.11 **Online Harms:** To be an effective youth sector practitioner it is important to address all parts of a young person's life, including their digital world. Youth sector practitioners should be given the tools to understand and navigate online harms and how to use technology safely when supporting and engaging services with young people. Social media is an area to include when considering contextual safeguarding conversations. Youth sector practitioners should be given the tools to encourage positive online behaviour. For example, The Social Switch Project is switching the narrative on how social media's relationship to youth violence is understood, tackled, and solved. Initially funded by Google.org, it is co-delivered by social business Catch22 and youth violence charity Redthread. See here for more information: [The Social Switch Project](#).
- 4.12 **Optional Accredited Qualifications:** Many people work with young people without Joint Negotiating Committee (JNC) recognised qualifications, often with related qualifications or extensive experience of working with young

people. Their work is valuable and contributes positively to the lives of young people. However, gaining qualifications specifically in youth work enables a worker to explore the theory behind youth work, the ethos, principles, and practice (Source – National Youth Agency: <https://www.nya.org.uk/youth-work/jnc/>). The Provider will be required to develop options for the programme to facilitate accreditation opportunities and work with individual programme participants to meet their professional development needs.

4.13 **Professional and leadership training:** Course content should be designed to encompass the following thematic topics:

- Organisational Leadership and Strategy
- Business Planning
- Fundraising
- Co-Production
- Understanding the Public Health Approach and Multi-Agency Working
- A residential networking offer for all the participants to network.

4.14 **Coaching and Mentoring:** The leadership programme will provide personal development and leadership support, embedding mentoring and coaching as an integral part of the offer.

4.15 Through matching participants with a dedicated coach, participants will be given the opportunity to explore suitable leadership development opportunities.

4.16 The Provider will be required to establish support to participants, establish needs and create individual growth and development plans. The Provider will need to demonstrate their approach to:

- **Engaging** senior leaders and professionals from a range of organisations as mentors and coaches and ensuring that all coaches will have a certified coaching qualification.
- **Inducting** mentors and coaches to ensure they understand the programme outcomes and use appropriate techniques.
- **Matching** participants with coaches and mentors ensuring a “good fit”.

Youth Sector Practitioners’ Advisory Board

4.17 The Provider will be required to establish, run and facilitate a Youth Sector Practitioners’ Advisory Board. This will provide an opportunity for a limited number of participants to be actively involved in designing further develop strategic leadership skills for youth sector practitioners.

- 4.18 The VRU believes learning from frontline practitioners can help to shape violence reduction work and developing and maintaining personal relationships across the sector is an important part of our work.
- 4.19 The Advisory Board will provide guidance and expertise to help ensure the London Violence Reduction Unit is listening and learning about emerging trends.
- 4.20 The Advisory Board's purpose will be to inform, support and influence the VRU about the key programmes and best practice that are in existence already and explore other environments and opportunities that can be developed and shared. Participants will be expected to make a time commitment to contributing to the work of the Unit.
- 4.21 Additional learning and career development opportunities for board members will be available. For example:
- Opportunities to host seminars and public speaking opportunities.
 - Bursaries for learning and development.
 - Executive mentorship pairing.
 - Work placements within statutory public sector organisations.
 - Recruitment
- 4.22 The Provider will be required to undertake a rigorous recruitment process to identify and recruit youth sector practitioners based in London to participate on the leadership programme.
- 4.23 The Provider will be required to design an equitable recruitment process to target frontline youth practitioners who have the sort of rich lived experience that enables them to reach out to, and connect with the young people most at risk, who are showing leadership and influence in their day-to-day work, but face barriers around progressing into formal leadership roles.
- 4.24 The Provider will be required to develop and deliver an engagement campaign and communication resources to promote the Programme and encourage applications. This will specifically include:
- Production of suitable marketing materials
 - Using pan-London Youth Sector networks
 - A Programme roadshow
 - Utilising the VRU's networks and communication channels
- 4.25 The Provider will be required to design a selection criteria for the recruitment process, seeking potential applicants with the following skills and experience:
- Practitioners with frontline, community youth work experience.

- Practitioners who identify with having lived experience of violence or other issues affecting young people.
 - Practitioners who can demonstrate a passion and commitment to develop their own practice through specialist training to help better support young people affected by violence.
- 4.26 The Provider will be required to design an engaging and creative recruitment programme to attract participants from wide range of youth work experiences, organisations, and disciplines.
- 4.27 The Provider will be required to pay consideration to the recruitment pathways to ensure that those joining the programme are from a broad range of organisations and experiences, including those from the grassroots sector and Black and minority ethnic led groups.
- 4.28 Youth work can be insecure employment with varying levels of access to training and development opportunities. Grants should be available to organisations where participants are employed with turnover of under £100,000 in order to cover backfilling costs.

Alumni and Networking

- 4.29 The VRU values peer- to-peer support for practitioners who deliver services to young people and communities affected by violence.
- 4.30 The Provider will be required to develop an offer for past and current participants to maintain relationships and enable ongoing networking opportunities.

Evaluation

- 4.31 The Provider will be required to commission an evaluation partner to work with the consortium across the duration of the programme towards the following evaluation aims:
- The nature and quality of the leadership programme, reviewing key lessons, strengths, and barriers.
 - The impact produced by the programme, both intended and unintended with a focus on how the programme has supported participants in line with the aims and outcomes of programme.
 - Examine the wider impact and understanding of London's youth sector needs in responding to violence reduction.
- 4.32 The Evaluator will be required to develop the draft theory of change (see Table 1 below) as part of their evaluation design work.

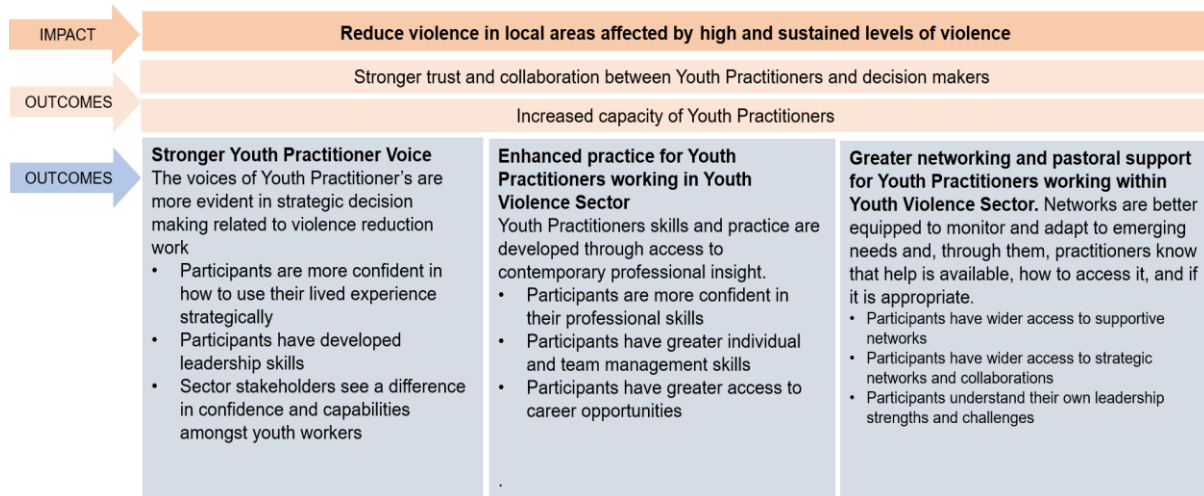


Table 1: Youth Practitioners' Leadership Programme: Draft Theory of Change