**Social Media and Offline Violence Research- Early Market Warming Session**

The London Violence Reduction Unit (VRU) would like to invite your organisation to a market scoping & information session. The session will discuss the upcoming commissioning of a research provider to *investigate the relationship between social media and offline physical violence affecting children & young people in London*.

The VRU recognises that social media is ubiquitous in young people’s lives. Young Londoners are often exposed to violent and harmful content which may increase the risk of physical violence or criminal exploitation. Social media content has been increasingly utilised in the criminal justice system to argue a causal link between online behaviour and instances of offline violence. However, the specific links between online content, interactions and real-world physical violence are not well understood.

Given the scale of social media, the VRU is particularly interested in understanding the impact of specific types of online content:

1. **Violent content** - defined as content that encourages, promotes or provides instructions for an act of serious violence against a person; depicts real or realistic serious violence/injury against a person in graphic detail; or depicts real or realistic serious violence/injury against an animal or fictional creature in graphic detail. For example, violent content may include fights and injury, use or promotion of weapons, infliction of pain or gang violence.
2. **Online Violence Against Women & Girls (VAWG)** – defined as online acts underpinned by misogyny, including but not limited to cyberharassment, cyber bullying, online sexual harassment, cyberstalking, and sexist, homophobic and transphobic speech.

**The research specification, currently in development, aims to:**

1. Investigate high level trends exploring the links between instances of offline physical violence affecting young people in London and social media content & interactions online.
   * *The VRU wishes to explore the potential for quantitative analysis to support this question – for example, drawing on sentiment analysis of social media content, analysis of reported/ flagged content and crime data.*
2. Conduct in depth analysis of specific instances of offline violence to understand the role social media content and activity may have played.
   * *The VRU wishes to explore various sources of data relating to violent incidents – for example, looking at data collected through schools or the justice system.*

**Objectives of the Market Scoping Session**

1. Discussion of methodology: During the session the VRU will present their scoping work and invite a discussion from researchers on feasibility & methodological approaches.
2. Networking & Partnership Building: The VRU encourages partnership approaches to commissioning, for example, a university or research consultancy pairing with grassroot community groups, or peer research groups. We intend for the session to also act as a networking space for potential collaborations.
3. Q&A/ Approach to commissioning: The VRU procurement team will be available to discuss the commissioning process and guidelines.

**Research outputs**

The research will also be included in the VRU’s [Evidence Hub](https://www.london.gov.uk/programmes-strategies/communities-and-social-justice/londons-violence-reduction-unit/our-research/vru-evidence-hub), a bank of London-specific evidence around the root causes of violence and what works to prevent and tackle it. The hub is used as a resource by local authorities, schools, statutory bodies, community groups and academics

**We will be holding an online information session on the 15th October from 13:00-14:30 where VRU will present further information on the rationale behind commissioning this research, before gathering views from attendees on the different methodological approaches that could be taken to investigate this topic.**

**If you would like to attend, please sign up via this link** [Social Media and Offline Violence Research- Early Market Warming Session Tickets, Tue 15 Oct 2024 at 13:00 | Eventbrite](https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/social-media-and-offline-violence-research-early-market-warming-session-tickets-1034846934037?aff=oddtdtcreator)

**Feedback Questionnaire**

A questionnaire will be circulated during/ after the session for prospective bidders to feedback. This will cover:

* Reflections on scope of research
* Feasibility of methodology
* Barriers to bidding
* Feedback on pricing