London VRU – Research into Online Harms

**STEERING GROUP ADVERTS**

**Join the London VRU Steering Group on Online Harms**

The London Violence Reduction unit (VRU) is expanding work to support young Londoners to stay safe online. To guide this work, we are establishing an expert Steering Group and are seeking passionate individuals with relevant expertise to join us.

**Background to London VRU’s work on Online Harms**

The VRU is committed to keeping young people safe and connected to positive opportunities in the physical world as part of our commitment to prevention and early intervention. However, it is just as critical to provide this assurance in the online world. The VRU has already partnered with charities Catch 22 and Redthread to deliver the [Social Switch Project](https://www.thesocialswitchproject.org.uk/), which provides online harms training to trusted adults and digital skills opportunities to children and young people.

The VRU has listened to intelligence from our children and young people, our programme insights and further engaged a range of partners to scope its online harms work and commits to three areas of work:

* We will empower young people with the skills to safely navigate the digital world and upskill parents, carers, teachers and trusted adults with the knowledge and tools needed to support and protect young people in the online environment.
* Through our commissioned research, we will seek to better understand the online world, how to effectively support young people, and address how the online environment contributes to and exacerbates the exploitation of young people.
* We will place a particular focus on disproportionalities including the impact of gender-based violence facilitated through online platforms.

The Steering Group will provide expert advice on the development of the VRU’s approach to online harms, including playing a key role in the development and delivery of the VRU’s research on violence online.

**Why Participate?**

* Play a pivotal role in shaping the future of online safety for young Londoners.
* Provide your expertise to guide research, policy development, and strategic direction.
* Engage with professionals from various sectors, including academia, youth work, education, technology, and law.

**What participation involves:**

* Contribute to quarterly steering group meetings (mix of face-to-face and remote) to review progress of the VRU’s Online Harms research, offer insights and give guidance on key decisions relating to the workstream.
* If interested, Steering Group members may be invited to attend task & finish groups to address specific challenges related to online harm.
* Please note that this is a 1-year unpaid opportunity. Light refreshments will be provided for all face-to-face meetings.

**Who are we looking for?**

* Academics
* Education Professionals
* Tech & Social Media Experts
* Legal Professionals

The group will also be attended by:

* Young Londoners from the VRU’s Youth Participation Action Group (YPAG)
* Youth practitioners from the VRU’s Youth Practitioners Action Board (YPAB)

**How to apply**

Please express your interest using [this MS Form](https://forms.office.com/e/ckCK600qhh) by midnight the 20th October. We will be in contact with all applicants by 25th October and will liaise with those invited to join the steering group with information about the first meeting.

For further details, please reach out to Ella at ella.burton@london.gov.uk directly.