

Specification for Services: Step Together (Sandwell)

Context:

The West Midlands Violence Reduction Unit (VRU) is seeking to commission services in Sandwell that support local efforts to reduce and prevent violence.

Step Together is a Home Office funded national pilot programme with local implementation led by the VRU. It seeks to connect Education, Police and Community Partners in a collaborative project designed to increase safety and reduce violent crime towards young people along designated school routes at the start and end of the school day. Using the VRU Strategic Needs Assessment (which can be found on our website: <https://westmidlands-vru.org/data-insights/strategic-needs-assessment/>) along with intelligence and data from Neighbourhood Policing Units, key impact routes have been identified to focus this specific detached youth work activity. This programme aims to create frequent points of safety for young people in areas where we see an increased level of antisocial and violent activity at the end of the school day. An evaluation will be conducted by an independent evaluation partner to explore whether the programme can achieve its aims.

Chaperones on designated routes

Services Required:

Providers will be tasked with specific geographical routes in our two target areas across Sandwell, before and after the school day, **during** term time, beginning at a date to be agreed with the VRU, with a view to be live **no later than Monday 4th October**.

Chaperones (adults along identified school routes, will support safety of young people to and from school, and, in doing so, may reduce crime around schools) will be strategically placed along these routes at the start and close of the school day, where we see higher levels of student footfall. Chaperones will seek to develop relationships with young people, offer a point of safety, diffuse and deescalate in the event of incident or rising community tensions.

The total value of this specification is £91,260 to be split proportionately across the two geographical routes within:

- West Bromwich Town Centre (inc. Transport Hub)
- Blackheath

Commissioned providers will need to work collaboratively with school colleagues and partner agencies through regular updates and be active members of the steering group around the project. Providers will also need to work collaboratively with the independent evaluation partner.

Chaperoning on priority routes

Chaperones on identified routes will play a critical role in supporting young people on their travel home from school however, this cannot be delivered in isolation. As such, commissioned providers will work closely with West Midlands Police Neighbourhood Policing Teams and schools to ensure robust information sharing to safeguard young people. Locations will also be determined by local multi-agency partnerships such as Police and School Panels and VRU Locality Networks. As such, commissioned provider(s) will be strong networkers and collaborative in their approach.

Providers will be expected to present the below information within their applications.

- Experience of effectively working in local networks and partnerships and a willingness to work with other providers and be an active part of relevant regional networks/partnerships
- An ability to access physical spaces in local places
- Experience of directly working with vulnerable young people and communities with lower levels of trust and confidence in authorities
- Experience of partnership working with schools