Request for proposals for a qualitative systematic review of focused deterrence

Background

On behalf of the Youth Endowment Foundation (YEF), the Campbell Collaboration intends to commission a systematic review of research on the implementation and delivery of focused deterrence.

Focused deterrence is a tertiary prevention strategy that was developed in Boston in the mid-1990s. It recognises that most serious violence is associated with a small group of people who are themselves very likely to be victims of violence, trauma, and extremely challenging circumstances. It attempts to identify the people most likely to be involved in violence and supports them to desist. Focused deterrence is sometimes referred to as ‘pulling levers’ strategy. Pulling levers essentially describes an approach that involves clear messaging from authority and community figures about the consequences of violence, including the use of various sanctions if violence continues, matched with social service and community resources to create opportunities for desistance.

About the proposed review

The proposed review will include a range of literature to address the following research questions:

- How are the three core components (enforcement, support, community influence) of FD delivered? How does this delivery vary across FD projects?
- How are the other components of FD delivered (i.e. the components listed in the YEF framework in appendix 1)? For example: how do agencies collaborate to successfully identify the local crime problem, groups dynamics and individuals involved in violence? What is best practice for delivering messages about community norms against violence?
- What are the main barriers and facilitators to successful delivery of FD and its key components?
- How does local context affect intervention delivery? How have teams attempted to translate FD to a new context? What are the barriers and facilitators to this?
- What is the impact of FD on equity, particularly race equity? How have different projects attempted to implement FD in an equitable way? Were they successful?
- What are practitioners’ and participants’ experience of FD?

Bidders are welcome to elaborate or modify this list if they feel appropriate.
More detail on the planned review can be found in Annex 1.

**Budget and timeline**

Proposals may be submitted for up to £80,000. The budget is part of the bid evaluation criteria (see below).

The successful bidder will be announced by mid-December, and work start in the new year. The first draft of the review should be completed by September 30 2024, and the final report by mid-November. The review team may propose earlier dates for these deliverables.

**Review criteria**

Proposals will be evaluated on the basis of

- **Proposal (30%)**: This will be evaluated against (i) the team showing a clear understanding of the task; and (ii) innovative suggestions for the conduct of the work. A bid must receive at least 18 of the 30 points on this criterion to be considered.
- **Experience of the team (50%)**: This will be evaluated against the requirement that the team have experience for both content and qualitative review methods. A bid must receive at least 30 of the 50 points on this criterion to be considered.
- **Budget (20%)**: This will calculated as \[1 – (\text{Bid} – \text{Minbid})/80000\]x20 where MinBid is the lowest budget from a proposal which meets the minimum technical scores specific in the previous two criteria.

**Questions**

Questions regarding this RFP can be directed to info@campbellcollaboration.org until Friday 17 November 2023. Answers to all questions will be posted on https://www.campbellcollaboration.org/news-and-events/news/request-for-proposals-focused-deterrence.html by Tuesday, 21 November 2023.

**How to apply**

Applications should be sent to info@campbellcollaboration.org by 23.59 Eastern Standard Time Monday, 4 December 2023.

Applications should include:

- A statement of the approach to the work (max. 1,500 words)
- A summary of the expertise of the team
- Timeline for protocol and draft review
- Budget (the attached template may be used, feel free to modify if necessary)
- CVs of senior team members
Annex 1 Scope of work

What is focused deterrence?

Focused deterrence is a tertiary prevention strategy that was developed in Boston in the mid-1990s. It recognises that most serious violence is associated with a small group of people who are themselves very likely to be victims of violence, trauma, and extremely challenging circumstances. It attempts to identify the people most likely to be involved in violence and supports them to desist. Focused deterrence is sometimes referred to as ‘pulling levers’ strategy. Pulling levers essentially describes an approach that involves clear messaging from authority and community figures about the consequences of violence, including the use of various sanctions if violence continues, matched with social service and community resources to create opportunities for desistance.

Specifically, it combines three core strategies, all of which must be present. But the extent to which each is prioritised may vary locally:

- **Support.** Help for people involved in violence to access positive support and social services. Support may include services that can directly address the needs of the individual (e.g., psychological, educational, and occupational needs).
- **Community engagement.** Engaging the wider community to communicate non-violence norms, for example, that they want violence to stop and those involved to be safe. Community influence can also include proactively supporting the focused deterrence intervention and the uptake of support activities and encourage reintegration in the community.
- **Deterrence.** Clear communication of the consequences of violence and swift and certain enforcement if violence occurs. Enforcement can include a sanction or a disruption of group-related activity.

There are three main types of focused deterrence strategy. These are, Group violence Intervention (GVI), Individual Offender Strategy (IOS) and Drug Market Intervention (DMI). However, the most widely delivered strategy is GVI, which focuses on groups or gangs in urban centres who are involved in serious violence.

All three strategies require the co-ordination of multiple agencies and implementation of the three core components outlined above. But these components are tailored according to the specific objectives of each strategy. The key differences between these approaches are in the target populations and the mechanisms through which the intervention aims to reduce crime outcomes. GVI focuses on groups involved in violence and aims to disrupt violence by directly intervening on the group dynamics. DMI targets drug markets and primarily aims to reduce drug related crimes and associated violence by identifying and engaging with key individuals involved. IOS focuses on individuals who are most likely to be involved in crime and aims to reduce reoffending through individualised intervention. Typically, IOS is implemented within prison and probation contexts.
What is the existing evidence base?

The YEF Toolkit assessed that the international research suggests focused deterrence is a highly effective approach to preventing violence. It estimates that, on average, focused deterrence strategies reduced crime by 33%. This estimate is based on a systematic review of the impact evaluation literature by Anthony Braga.¹ Anthony is currently updating this review.

The 2019 review, and Anthony’s ongoing update, focus on the impact of focused deterrence and this leaves gaps in the systematic review literature. Currently there is no systematic review of:

- qualitative research on the delivery and implementation of focused deterrence
- research on young people’s and practitioners’ perspectives and experiences
- research on delivery of individual components of focused deterrence (Appendix 1 contains the YEF framework for FD delivery, which sets out what these components might look like in the UK context)

Scope for a new systematic review on the implementation of focused deterrence

The table below describes the expected scope for the review. We would discuss and refine this scope and research questions with the appointed team.

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### Population
- 14 to 25 year olds already involved in violence (but does not exclude focused deterrence interventions that focus on adults within ‘groups or gangs’ as key players).

### Intervention
- Focussed deterrence strategies including Group Violence Intervention (sometimes referred to as Operation Ceasefire), Individual Offender Strategy and Drug Market Intervention
- Any other Focused deterrence strategy that focuses on a specific crime problem (e.g., intimate partner violence) and draws on the three core components: Enforcement, Support and Community Involvement.

### Context
- We are interested in reviewing the international research.
- The review should explore how implementation could and should vary across different international contexts.
- Focused deterrence can be delivered both in the community and in custody settings.

### What sort of research could the review include?
- Implementation and process evaluations of focused deterrence.
- Qualitative research on individuals’ experience on delivering FD.
- Qualitative research on individuals’ experience of participating in FD.
- Qualitative research on the potential benefits/harms of FD / pulling levers interventions.
- Work that explores the translation of focused deterrence across different international contexts.
- Operation manuals for different implementations of FD.
- Other work that describes the set-up and implementation of FD and its sustainability. (e.g., setting up partnerships, leading inter-agency working groups).

### Research questions
- How are the three core components (enforcement, support, community influence) of FD delivered? How does this delivery vary across FD projects?
- How are the other components of FD delivered (i.e. the components listed in the YEF framework in appendix 1)? For example: how do agencies collaborate to successfully identify the local crime problem, groups dynamics and individuals involved in violence? What is best practice for delivering messages about community norms against violence?
- What are the main barriers and facilitators to successful delivery of FD and its key components?
- How does local context affect intervention delivery? How have teams attempted to translate FD to a new context? What are the barriers and facilitators to this?
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- What are practitioners’ and participants’ experience of FD?
APPENDIX 1: Youth Endowment Fund Focused Deterrence Framework

The YEF framework describes essential and flexible criteria for the implementation of a version of group violence focused deterrence in the UK. The YEF used this framework to develop five new evaluations of focused deterrence England and Wales.²

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<td>1. Focused deterrence must address Serious youth violence, where there is a clear group dynamic</td>
<td>1. Crime problem itself is flexible</td>
<td>By group dynamics, we mean the way members of a group interact with each other (including group norms) and/or the way members interact with other people, or with other groups (for example, retaliating against others). Example crime problems are violent and non-violent crimes such as homicide; knife crime; violence with injury; drugs offences; and weapons carrying.</td>
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<td>2. Focused deterrence must be targeted to those associated with groups involved in serious youth violence</td>
<td>2. People of any age may receive focused deterrence-related interventions</td>
<td>To be effective, people involved in driving group dynamics should be included in focused deterrence interventions – these individuals may be older group members and have the most influence on how other group members engage with the intervention.</td>
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<td>3. Focused deterrence must include an interagency working group made up of law enforcement, community and support services representatives</td>
<td>3. The type of support services can be adapted to local need.</td>
<td>3i) The working group should include members who have experience of violence prevention and who are able to make commitments (for example, related to budget or staffing) on behalf of their organisation. 3ii) The group should include senior police officers. 3iii) Support representatives on the group should act as single point of access for all support providers in the programme. 3iv) The group should be led by a programme manager who is respected by the community and the police, to balance the different deterrence, community and support goals. 3v) There should be sufficient preparation to support effective agency collaboration, including understanding of roles, co-responsibilities and timelines. 3vi) The group should be committed to repairing harm in the community and changing policies and practices to better support young people. 3vii) The group should deliver staff training to ensure consistent and effective delivery across their individual teams.</td>
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<td>4. Focused deterrence must include high quality, structured intelligence gathering and analysis</td>
<td>4. Intelligence gathering and analysis must gather and assess information, about who and what is driving serious youth violence. The purpose of collecting this information is to support the development of a strategy that meaningfully</td>
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² See this press release and the evaluation protocol.
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<td>addresses local issues. 4ii) The intelligence gathering should be police-led with strong inter-agency and community collaboration. Data gathering will usually involve the most knowledgeable personnel and units connected to violent crime, as well as practitioners who have the most knowledge of and experience working with children and young people involved in violence. 4iii) The process of gathering and collating intelligence in new ways could involve additional research expertise (e.g. universities) 4iv) Information should include: details about local groups associated with violence (e.g. group names, territories, numbers of members, alliances.) incident reviews, which assess the link between groups and recent fatal (and nonfatal) violent incidents in the area social network analysis, to illustrate how group members are connected to each other, through contacts or arrests. 4v) Intelligence should draw on mixed methods (quantitative and qualitative data). Quantitative information might assess crime locations and concentrations, the demographics of those involved in crime, street network configurations, weapons used and so on. Qualitative information will need to be gathered by front-line practitioners (including the police and probation officers, youth justice workers and street outreach workers,) to capture the context of violence (for example, who the most influential and/or violent group members are, where groups are active) 4vi) Information and intelligence gathering relationships, processes and protocols must be sustainable. 4vii) Intelligence should be accurate and responsive to the changing dynamics of group violence; getting this wrong could compromise legitimacy. 4viii) Data should (where possible) be organised and analysed using statistical analysis software.</td>
<td>The way that enforcement happens (and the consequences of being involved in violence) can be flexible.</td>
<td>5i) The enforcement operation must not happen before scheduled communication with those people identified as being involved in crime and violence. 5ii) There are legal restrictions in the UK with regards to collective enforcement. This should be considered when considering group consequences in the case that a crime takes place. 5iii) Consideration should be given on how to deal with relapses most appropriately, especially in the early stages of a project. 5iv) Collective enforcement on group</td>
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<td>members could include educational approaches (for example, sessions with group members and the police to learn about the consequences of violence) or anti-violence community messaging.</td>
<td>6i. A partnership’s communications strategy can be flexible 6ii) the use of call-ins is flexible</td>
<td>6i) Messages around the focused deterrence project should be unified across local police, and support services, and should be delivered to all members of the local community. 6ii) If the approach is using ‘call-ins’, these meetings should be reinforced (for example, through visits to group members’ homes). 6iii) Additional communications can also be used to reach group members who do not attend call-ins. 6iv) Before holding a call-in, research should be undertaken to make sure that dynamics within the meeting are well-managed 6v) Communications must provide evidence on why specific groups are the focus. 6vi) Call-in meetings should take place on neutral territory and high numbers of visible police are not recommended. 6vii) For children and young people under 18, delivery of communications should involve parents, child-centred police officers, support providers, influential community representatives and peers who have been affected by youth violence. Call-ins should not involve children and young people under 18. 6viii) Communications need to acknowledge that effectively preventing violence requires organisations and statutory bodies to work differently to how they have in the past. 6ix) When communicating, consideration should be made about discrimination that communities may have experienced when accessing services or in contact with the criminal justice system. The partnership’s commitment to equality and change should be upfront.</td>
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<td>7i) Getting police buy-in to the strategy is essential, this includes buy-in to the collective aim and the co-responsibilities across the inter-agency working group. 7ii) The role of the police should be clear. This will help the partnership avoid potential confusion about the role of focused deterrence in providing support for those involved in crime and violence. 7iii) Officers should have local ties to the places where group members live.</td>
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<td>8. Support services partner: to coordinate and mobilise a breadth of services with fast response times</td>
<td>8. Available support services should be adapted to local needs.</td>
<td>8i) The lead partner must have the ability to coordinate and mobilise a breadth of key services and support. This support could include housing; family support; counselling; education or employment opportunities. 8ii) The lead partner must be able to access information from all other support providers. 8iii) The lead partner must have the ability to report and track the engagement, progress and outcomes of the people receiving support. 8iv) The lead partner must have the ability to provide or refer a young person to immediate and meaningful support (for example, immediate protection from harm, providing food, clothing, shelter or assistance with outstanding warrants.). 8v) Support partners may include both statutory and voluntary sector organisations.</td>
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<td>9. Community partner/s: to express norms, expectations and aspirations, support violence prevention and increase engagement in support services.</td>
<td>9. The extent of community role will depend on local context</td>
<td>9i) The community partner should have high moral standing and credibility with young people. 9ii) There should be genuine opportunities for community members to voice their experiences and narratives. 9iii) The work of the partner should involve a community ‘warm-up’ period, where information about the focused deterrence strategy is spread through multiple methods (for example, door knocking, leafleting, or presence at local events. 9iv) The community need to be involved before any other element of focus deterrence goes ahead. 9v) Work with the media to make sure any communication is accurate and sensitive to communities. Do not do any proactive media engagement before speaking to communities.</td>
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