

MENTORING

Youth Work Programme



The Executive
Programme on
Paramilitarism &
Organised Crime



ea

Education
Authority

**Applicant
Information
Pack**

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Introduction

The Executive Programme on Paramilitarism and Organised Crime is an ambitious, multi-disciplinary and transformational change programme working to deliver the NI Executive's priority of addressing the challenging issues associated with paramilitarism in Northern Ireland. The overall aim of the Programme is to achieve *safer communities, resilient to paramilitarism, criminality and coercive control*. More information about the background to the Programme and Phase 1 can be found [here](#). This pack provides information for applying for Mentoring Programme.

The mentoring programme will provide structured, relationship-based support to children and young people in higher-risk contexts who are vulnerable to harm, with a consistent practice standard, robust safeguarding, and an evidence-informed approach that reduces bureaucracy while strengthening outcomes.

The Education Authority is seeking a single lead reporting organisation, who is registered with the Education Authority as a Voluntary Youth Organisation, to deliver this opportunity across all the targeted areas noted in this information pack, which can include delivery in partnership with other Education Authority Registered Voluntary Youth Organisations based within those communities.

Programme Values

As part of the wider Executive Programme on Paramilitarism and Organised Crime, it embeds and Executive-wide approach with all partners funded under the programme. The programme values are based on the additional commitments to Northern Ireland Ministerial Pledge of Office that were made under the Fresh Start Agreement. These are to:

1. Work collectively to achieve a society free of paramilitarism.
2. Support the rule of law unequivocally in work and deed and support all efforts to uphold it.
3. Challenge all paramilitary activity and associated criminality.
4. Call for, and work together to achieve, the disbandment of all paramilitary organisations and their structures.
5. Challenge paramilitary attempts to control communities.
6. Support those who are determined to make the transition away from paramilitarism.

Funding provided on behalf of the programme must be used by recipients in a manner that is consistent with and uploads these values.

Governance

It is important to note, that all programmes funded under the Executives Programme on Paramilitarism and Organised Crime (EPPOC) as subject to Cross-Executive governance and scrutiny to ensure oversight of all projects at a strategic level (overseen by the Head of the Civil Service). The Programme is also scrutinised externally by The Independent Reporting Commission (IRC), created under the Fresh Start Agreement to monitor progress on tackling paramilitary activity in Northern Ireland.

Delivery Expectations

Target Delivery Areas

Delivery will take place across EPPOC priority localities as follows (Known as the B4 Areas):

- North Down (Kilcooley & Rathgill)
- West Belfast (Lower Falls, Twinbrook, Poleglass, Upper Springfield, Turf Lodge and Ballymurphy)
- East Belfast (Short Strand and Inner East)
- Shankill
- Derry/Londonderry (Brandywell and Creggan)
- Carrickfergus and Larne (Antiville and Kilwaughter in Larne, Northland and Castlemara in Carrickfergus)
- North Belfast (New Lodge and Ardoyne)
- Lurgan (Drumgask and Kilwilkie)

Final site for delivery in each area will be agreed during mobilisation with EA Youth Services and partners.

Service Delivery

The successful provider will design and implement a uniformed mentoring model defined in a sectoral Mentoring Standards and Implementation Toolkit. The model will include clear referral and eligibility steps; consent and data-sharing arrangements; boundaries including duration and exit/referral universal or enhanced support, supervision standards; safeguarding; and a required core dataset captured through Management Information System. Where partners are involved a provider onboarding process (toolkits, clinics,) and a provider-facing RAG dashboard will support consistent adoption.

List the Delivery Expectations (Deliverables)

- Recruit/Identify eight Area Youth Worker II (JNC) grade to deliver on the programme in the targeted areas
- Develop, publish and agree with the Education Authority a sectoral Mentoring Standards to all delivery partners before June 2026.
- Issue an Implementation Toolkit and complete provider onboarding within 30 working days of letter of offer.
- Operate a single referral, eligibility and consent process with GDPR-compliant data-sharing arrangements.
- Apply minimum supervision standards for mentors: monthly 1:1, group reflection, observation, and post-incident debrief.
- Implement a quarterly fidelity assurance cycle (observations, fidelity checklist, corrective actions and re-checks).
- Use a provider-facing RAG dashboard with agreed thresholds and escalation actions.
- Provide case-closure and aftercare, including planned handover to universal or enhanced (including outside of youth work) services where appropriate.
- Submit a Quarterly Benefits Realisation Report aligned to the Benefits Realisation Framework indicators.

Delivery Plan

The successfully awarded organisation **will be required to provide and agree with the Education Authority a delivery plan** in line with the outlined delivery expectations.

Funding Available

The maximum available funding for this opportunity is: **£548,200**

This funding can only be used to support the areas noted in the delivery expectations section of this pack. As the Education Authority is seeking a single reporting organisation there is only a one available award under this scheme.

Applicant organisation will determine as part of their application, in line with the delivery expectations establish their costs under the following headings:

- **Staff Salaries**
- **Programme Development**
- **Overheads**

It will however remain a requirement that the number of established posts and grades are achieved as part of the funding award for delivery.

Submitted costs will form part of the assessment, however any application more than the noted available funding will not be considered. Budgets are based on a 1 June 2024 – 31 March 2025 delivery. It will however remain a requirement that the number of established posts and grades are achieved as part of the funding award for delivery.

Reporting Expectations

Benefits Realisation Reporting

The programme will report against the Benefits Realisation Framework (BRF), using a core dataset that demonstrates social support and connection, psychological resilience and mental health, educational and economic opportunity and community and civic engagement.

Reporting Frequency and Method

You will be required to complete:

- An annual income and expenditure form by 30th April 2027
- Provide a quarterly income and expenditure monitoring form.
- Receive an EA financial verification visits annually

Throughout the programme delivery period the successful organisation will be required to:

- Complete a weekly engagement (number of young people & status) weekly
- Complete an EA Target Monitor on agreed outcomes on a monthly basis
- Complete a monthly summary report
- Receive a minimum of 4 EA Moderation visits per year
- Provide a minimum of 2 case studies annually
- Use the baseline tool devised by EA youth Service with young people at the beginning and end of the process

Application and Assessment

Selection and Award

Organisations who meet the Eligibility Criteria (Essential) will progress to application assessment under the criteria outlined above. The assessment criteria and weighting outlined in this section will be used to score each application and based on merit order (top score to lowest score). The application with the top score will be selected for award.

Eligibility Criteria (Essential)

Applicant organisations must meet the criteria below to be eligible to apply and be in receipt of this funding.

Criterion		Assessment & Minimum Grade Required
1	<p>Be a registered and verified Voluntary Youth Organisation with the Education Authority which includes as part of verified status that your organisation has:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safeguarding and Child Protection Policies that meet the requirements outlined for the scheme (see requirements here) • Organisation Governance Arrangements in place to meet the requirements of Bonafede status (see requirements here) 	<p>Education Authority will base this on the information we already hold on file for your organisation. Unverified organisations can still apply; however, a verification visit will be required</p>
2	<p>Total Application costs in line with published available award</p>	<p>Total budget costs submitted do not exceed the published value of the award.</p> <p>Applications in excess of this value will not be considered for assessment</p>

Application Assessment

All applicants will be required to provide a response and evidence to the following questions. Each of your questions will be assessed against the established assessment criteria outlined to apply a score which will be totalled. Applicants are required to score at least “Meets Requirements” across all questions to be considered for award. **The Education Authority may request additional evidence to validate your response; any additional evidence requested will not form part of the assessment and will be used only to validate the response you have already provided.** All applicants will be required to answer ALL assessment questions:

1. **Quality Assurance (QA), Fidelity and Governance:** Outline how you will ensure consistent mentoring standards across providers and how quality will be assured and improved.
2. **Uniform Approach and Implementation Toolkit:** Outline a uniform approach to delivery and how you will support providers to implement it.
3. **Youth Worker Support, Supervision and Development:** Provide evidence of how you will recruit, vet, train, supervise and retain full time youth workers as mentors.
4. **Proven Track Record and Support in Complex Environments:** Provide evidence of your recent (last 3 years) track record supporting local groups to deliver in complex, multi-agency contexts, framed against EPPOC outcomes.
5. **Evidence, Management Information and Benefits Realisation:** Provide evidence of how you will collect and use data to improve delivery, including your MIS, core dataset and review cycle mapped to the Benefits Realisation Framework.

Budget Assessment

Budget will be evaluated on the basis using the figures provided in the application section by all organisations to this this funding opportunity. Marks will be awarded using the **Lowest Cost Methodology**.

In this methodology the lowest total cost will score full marks (100 marks) and the lowest total cost is divided by each of the other applications to this funding opportunity and multiplied by the marks available (100). **The actual score therefore will be determined by the applicant organisations cost's distance from the lowest applicant organisations total cost.** The cost is to include the following only.

- Staff Salaries
- Programme Development
- Overheads

These costs must be included on your application form where you are instructed to do so. All assessment panel members will not have access to your costs or total marks awarded for cost.

Applicants or Organisations who provide budget figures higher than the available funding will not be considered for assessment by panel.

Assessment Criteria Weighting

Applications which meet the above Essential Criteria will be evaluated by panels and scores weighted as outlined below. Applicant organisations are required to meet the minimum marks in ALL AREAS to be considered for

Criterion	Weighting	Available Marks	Minimum Marks Required
Quality Assurance (QA), Fidelity and Governance	15%	150	50
Uniform Approach and Implementation Toolkit	20%	200	50
Youth Worker Support, Supervision and Development	15%	150	50
Proven Track Record and Support in Complex Environments	30%	300	100
Evidence, Management Information and Benefits Realisation	10%	100	25
Budget (see cost scoring methodology)	10%	100	N/A
Total	100%	1000	

Quality Assurance (QA), Fidelity and Governance

Outline how you will ensure consistent mentoring standards across providers and how quality will be assured and improved. (Maximum 750 Words)

Mark	DESCRIPTION	Score
Excellent	<p>Response includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A clear sectoral Mentoring Standard covering practice model, deliver, supervision, dual-reporting with partners and safeguarding pathways. • A defined fidelity assurance cycle with scheduled observations, file-audits, a fidelity checklist, corrective actions, and formal re-checks evidenced by records. • ETI-aligned moderation addressing outcomes, quality of provision, and leadership/management, with safeguarding sampled on every visit and findings tracked to closure. • A functioning Benefits Realisation Framework (BRF) showing how evidence (engagement, attendance, protective factors, wellbeing, progression) is analysed, translated into actions, and reviewed for impact. • Governance arrangements with roles, escalation routes, and dual-reporting protocols understood by providers. 	150
Good	<p>Response includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regional standards described and mostly complete, with clear supervision, safeguarding, and data requirements. • Quality Assurance fidelity cycle with observations, audits in place and planned corrective actions, though re-check arrangements or evidence tracking. • Periodic safeguarding sampling. • Benefits Realisation Framework described with examples of how evidence informs changes and through impact loops. 	100
Meets Requirements	<p>Response includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stated standards and some safeguarding/data rules, partially evidenced. • Some evidence of quality assurance observations and an outline of corrective actions. • Reference occasional safeguarding sampling. • Benefits Realisation Framework referenced with limited examples of evidence leading to improvements. 	50
Failed to Address	<p>The applicant does not provide enough evidence to demonstrate they meet one or more of the areas within the assessment criteria of “Meets Requirements” in this area of support.</p>	0

Applicants Require a minimum of 50 marks for their application to be considered.

Uniform Approach and Implementation Toolkit

Outline a uniform approach to delivery and how you will support providers to implement it.
(Maximum 750 Words)

Mark	DESCRIPTION	Score Range
Excellent	<p>Response includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A clear understanding on how they will establish a uniformed delivery model with a published Implementation Toolkit • Clear, stepwise referrals/eligibility flow, consent and data sharing procedures, and case closure/aftercare (including planned handover to universal/other services). • An onboarding plan with timelines. • A provider facing RAG dashboard (definitions, thresholds, actions) issued. • Explicit rules on what can be locally adapted and what is non-negotiable model, with examples. 	200
Good	<p>Response includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An outline understanding of a defined model and toolkit. • Processes for referral, consent, and closure; aftercare described but not implemented. • Onboarding supports in place and a RAG dashboard with headline indicators. • Adaptable vs. non-negotiable model elements listed 	100
Meets Requirements	<p>Response includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Model proposed with only brief detail on steps for referral/eligibility and consent. • Closure/aftercare referenced. • Basic onboarding and a simple RAG status method. • Applicant reference local adaptation vs. non-negotiable model. 	50
Failed to Address	The applicant does not provide enough evidence to demonstrate they meet one or more of the areas within the assessment criteria of “Meets Requirements” in this area of support.	0

Applicants Require a minimum of 50 marks for their application to be considered.

Youth Worker Support, Supervision and Development

Provide evidence of how you will recruit, vet, train, supervise and retain full time youth workers as mentors. (Maximum 750 Words)

Mark	DESCRIPTION	Score Range
Excellent	<p>Response includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safe recruitment and vetting procedures with clear timelines and audit trail. • A structured induction and Continuous Professional Development pathway (core, safeguarding, trauma informed practice, reflective methods, data/MIS). • Supervision framework: monthly 1:1, group reflection, quarterly observation, and post incident debrief, with recording templates and escalation. • Wellbeing and retention offer suited to higher risk contexts (e.g. critical incident support, manageable caseload parameters, progression pathways), with evidence of uptake and effect. 	150
Good	<p>Response includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Induction plus planned Continuous Professional Development menu. • Supervision practices covering 1:1 and group reflection; observations or debriefs scheduled but inconsistently evidenced. • Wellbeing/retention measures listed with early indicators. 	100
Meets Requirements	<p>Response includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Induction described; Continuous Professional Development opportunities referenced. • Regular supervision stated, occasional observation/debrief noted. • General wellbeing/retention statements. 	50
Failed to Address	The applicant does not provide enough evidence to demonstrate they meet one or more of the areas within the assessment criteria of “Meets Requirements” in this area of support.	0

Applicants Require a minimum of 50 marks for their application to be considered.

Proven Track Record and Support in Complex Environments

Provide evidence of your recent (last 3 years) track record supporting delivery in a complex, multi-agency contexts, framed against EPPOC outcomes. (Maximum 750 Words)

Mark	DESCRIPTION	Score Range
Excellent	<p>Response includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recent (last 3 years), verifiable track record supporting delivery activity in complex, multi-agency contexts, with specific examples. Evidence of working within Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) and data sharing agreements; consistent dual reporting in safeguarding. Demonstrated capability to stabilise delivery during incidents (contingency plans, redeployment, communication protocols). Outcomes framed in EPPOC terms with evidence 	300
Good	<p>Response includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clear related experience with relevant partners; examples for multi-agency delivery. Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs)/data sharing and safeguarding reporting described; incident response noted. Outcomes mapped to EPPOC with partial evidence across several indicators. 	200
Meets Requirements	<p>Response includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some delivery in related complex environments; general partnership descriptions. References to Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs)/data sharing and dual reporting. Outcomes noted in EPPOC terms with limited evidence. 	100
Failed to Address	The applicant does not provide enough evidence to demonstrate they meet one or more of the areas within the assessment criteria of “Meets Requirements” in this area of support	0

Applicants Require a minimum of 100 marks for their application to be considered.

Evidence, Management Information and Benefits Realisation

Provide evidence of how you will collect and use data to improve delivery, including your Management Information System (MIS), core dataset and review cycle mapped to the Benefits Realisation Framework. (Maximum 750 Words)

Mark	DESCRIPTION	Score Range
Excellent	<p>Response includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An operational Management Information System with a defined core dataset mapped to the Benefits Realisation Framework (engagement, attendance, protective factors, emotional health and wellbeing, and progression to universal/other services). • Data quality controls (validation, completeness, timeliness) and provider access protocols. • A quarterly review cycle turning evidence into service improvements, with change logs and impact checks. • Clear reporting to providers and EA (dashboards; cohort and outcomes analysis) and integration with fidelity. 	100
Good	<p>Response includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Management Information System described with the core dataset substantially covered and Benefits Realisation Framework mapping for most indicators. • Data quality and access rules stated. • Quarterly reviews in place with examples of changes made; impact tracking emerging. 	50
Meets Requirements	<p>Response includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Management Information System in use with basic fields and some Benefits Realisation Framework linkages. • General data controls. • Periodic reviews with anecdotal improvement examples. 	25
Failed to Address	The applicant does not provide enough evidence to demonstrate they meet one or more of the areas within the assessment criteria of “Meets Requirements” in this area of support.	0

Applicants Require a minimum of 25 marks for their application to be considered.

Application Timeline

The Education Authority will release and assess applications to the following timeline:

Action	Dates/Times
Open call for applications	12 March 2026 @ 4pm
Application Support Workshops*	20 March 2026 @10am Or 20 March 2026 @ 2pm
Application Close	25 March 2026 @ 4pm
Assessment of Applications	26 March 2026 @ 4pm
Notification of Award	By 30 March 2026

**Dates and venues will be posted on social media and made available for online sign up*