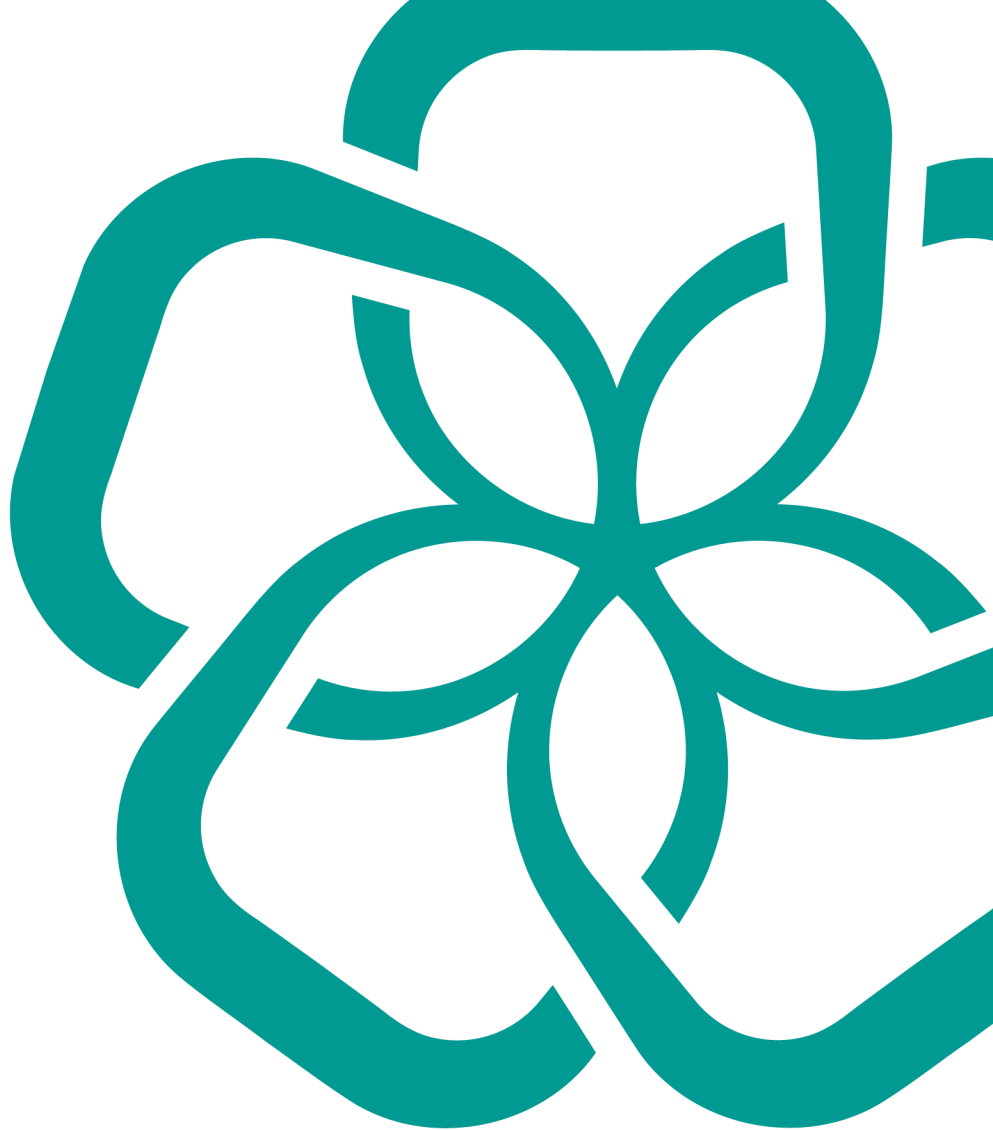




West
Yorkshire
Combined
Authority

Tracy
Brabin
Mayor of
West Yorkshire



West Yorkshire | Building Digital Resilience, Critical Online Literacy and Healthy Relationships
Programme

Supporting information

October 2026

Introduction

The West Yorkshire Violence Reduction Partnership (VRP) are seeking to commission provider(s) to deliver a programme building Digital Resilience, Critical Online Literacy and Healthy Relationships, which is targeted at those in Years 5 and 6 to bolster these skills prior to harm occurring.

Background

Research consistently identifies that children encounter harmful online content before they have developed the critical capacity to interpret it and bolstering this critical capacity could support the mitigation of harms experienced online ([Babic et al, 2026](#); [Abrams, 2023](#)).

London VRUs research noted that teachers, practitioners and young people themselves identified younger adolescents (aged 12-14) as having the widest gap between platform access and critical capacity ([Babic et al, 2026](#)). One described the "negative impacts of social media" as most visible in "key stage three, year seven to year nine", while also noting a spike during transition into secondary school. This is true for intimate images sharing also, where teachers reported sexualised image sharing and coercive digital behaviour appearing among younger age groups than many schools were prepared for, including pupils in Years 7 and 8.

As such, we are seeking to commission an external provider to deliver a programme in schools targeted for those in Years 5 and 6 to bolster skills prior to harm occurring, to build:

- Digital literacy and critical capacity;
 - Misinformation and disinformation
 - AI generated content, including deepfakes
 - Recognising coercion, manipulation and exploitation online
 - Understanding algorithms and recommendation systems
- Healthy relationships and identity:
 - Respect, consent and boundaries
 - Online Relationships
 - Intimate image sharing
 - Identity, belonging and peer influence
 - Influencers and harmful online narratives
- Digital Resilience and support;
 - Recognising online conflict escalation and de-escalation skills
 - Bystander skills and action
 - Emotional regulation
 - Consequence mapping
 - How and where to seek support to online harm

In addition to these topics, it's also important that the programme is interactive and engaging for children and utilising real platform examples where possible (Babic et al, 2026; Rocket Science, 2024).

The programme should aim to meet the following outcomes (there may be other relevant outcomes that provider may identify and achieve):

Increase children's critical understanding of online influence, algorithms and misinformation.
Increase understanding of healthy relationships, boundaries and consent.
Increase resilience to harmful online narratives, coercion and manipulation
Improve children's confidence to identify and respond to online conflict.
Strengthen protective factors including belonging and positive identity development.
Improved understanding of 'what works' when delivering content around these topics.

Through accomplishing these outcomes, we intend for the impact of the programme to lead towards a reduction in harm experienced by children that originates online, as well as reducing the likelihood of children becoming involved in violence.

Accompanying Evaluation and Learning

The VRP takes a public health approach to violence reduction, which includes being evidenced in understanding what works in reducing violence. This includes evaluating the programmes we deliver and commission to understand their reach and impact.

The Building Digital Resilience, Critical Online Literacy and Healthy Relationships Programme will be evaluated internally by the Violence Reduction Partnership. The VRP will work with the successful provider(s) to review the Theory of Change, establish an evaluation framework and relevant measures, and create the relevant materials.

Equity, Diversity and Inclusion

Under the Equality Act 2010, the West Yorkshire Combined Authority has an ongoing legal duty to pay 'due regard' to the need to: eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other prohibited conduct; advance equality of opportunity between different groups (those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not); and foster good relations between different groups.

The provider must:

- Act in accordance with this duty, as well as the more general provisions of the Equality Act.
- Understand the diversity of West Yorkshire and ensure the service is accessible, with focus and commitment to equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI).
- To proactively, and through an intersectional lens, consider how interventions are supported and embedded both within the organisation and in work with local communities and partners, to achieve quality social and inclusion outcomes.
- Actively attract, nurture, and retain a diverse and talented workforce.

Safeguarding - Disclosure and Barring Service

Due to the nature of the provision, we require suppliers to check someone's criminal record as an employer and for those working on the contract to have Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) in place. Disclosure and Barring Service checks carried out on those who have direct contact with vulnerable groups or potential vulnerable groups

Link to Disclosure and Barring Service <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/disclosure-and-barring-service>

It is required that any staff member or volunteer involved in delivering the service have Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) in place. Disclosure and Barring Service checks carried out on those who have direct contact with vulnerable groups or potential vulnerable groups.

Find out more
westyorks-ca.gov.uk

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All information correct at time of writing