



London Vanguard Independent Evaluation

commissioned by NHS England

Vanguard is a way of supporting children, young people, parents, carers and communities living in complex situations and who may be affected by violence.

The project aim

The Vanguard was developed by an expert advisory group convened by the Violence Reduction Programme in response to London's vision priority. The four key components of the Vanguard are: i) a focus on addressing inequalities for marginalised and vulnerable communities; ii) genuine co-production; iii) embedded community model; iv) collaborative partnership working.

CORC were commissioned by NHS England to conduct an independent evaluation of Vanguard, which is being piloted across 13 boroughs in London. The overarching aims of the evaluation are:

1. To examine the overall impact of the Vanguard pilot as a whole on children, young people and their parents and carers, workforce and organisations
2. To explore best practice and learning that can be used to develop recommendations to inform service improvement and the future sustainability of Vanguard.

"In the London Vanguard evaluation I have been working as a part of the team in the role of a peer researcher. The project has allowed me to approach new opportunities while learning new skills such as, engaging with young people, liaising with wider community networks and playing an active role in analysing data. These opportunities in the project have empowered me as a member of staff and I feel much more confident to assist in further projects across Anna Freud".

Erin N - PPA with London Vanguard Evaluation

Young people participation

We have a peer researcher embedded into our team, who is involved in all stages of the evaluation including decision making and the operational conduct of the evaluation (e.g., co-facilitating the **young people's advisory group (YPAG)**), data collection, analysis and report writing.

We recruited members of the YPAG via social media and existing networks. The YPAG will meet regularly throughout the lifetime of the project, to advise on the data collection approaches and wording of materials, and to help provide context and understanding to the findings. The YPAG meetings are co-facilitated by the peer researcher and researcher in the evaluation team and take place online every few months.

The evaluation runs from 2022 to December 2025. Results expect to be published Spring/Summer 2026.

So far we have met with the YPAG to review data collection materials and recruitment approaches. Attendees were engaged and offered valuable input. The group's feedback was incorporated into the final versions of the participant information sheets, consent forms and interview topic guide.

Keeping and maintaining a safe space during the young people's advisory group (YPAG) meetings was important to gain as much relevant feedback as possible. Creating a safe space included allowing members of the group to engage however they felt comfortable; for example, using the chat function in Microsoft Teams or speaking with their camera switched off. We feel that this creation of a safe space encouraged honest feedback. From this position, we were able to use the feedback to make relevant changes to our data collection materials.

A brief case study