

DMPC Decision – PCD 1610**Title: Education Programmes Extensions 2024-2026****Executive Summary:**

The Violence Reduction Unit (VRU) prioritises working in education. All of the VRU's education investments, research and policy work promotes healthy relationships and inclusive practices to reduce disengagement and tackle all forms of exclusions, including suspensions, managed moves, and the rising levels of absenteeism.

The VRU has contracted a Research Partner (CEOD 26.2023) to help develop, and produce evidence to underpin, London's Inclusion Charter - a partnership between young people, parents, schools and local authorities to tackle rising suspensions and absenteeism that has led to thousands of children losing out on learning. The research partner's contract ends March 2024, however there is a need to extend this contract to enable a thorough and successful mobilisation of London's Inclusion Charter after its launch, through the production of strategic guides to embed inclusive practices and processes in schools across London.

As part of the VRU's aims to increase inclusion, improve positive relationships and drive up attendance, the VRU invested in the AP/PRU Mentoring Programme (DMPC 1078; 1359) across April 2022 to March 2025. 22 boroughs have mentors who successfully support children and young people to increase their attendance, and improve positive behaviour and engagement in education, all key to driving down exploitation and violence.

After some positive consultations with unfunded boroughs, the VRU is seeking approval to

1. expand the provision from 22 boroughs to all 32 boroughs in London across 2024 – 2025; and
2. to extend the funding to all 32 boroughs for a further year to August 2026, to enable the development of a borough-wide AP/PRU network and an evaluation to take place.

Recommendation:

The Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime is recommended to:

- Approve extension of Inclusion Charter Research Partner contract by up to 3 months (01.04.24-30.06.24), and allocation of £19,600 additional spend from the VRU Research budget
- Approve the expansion of the AP/PRU Mentoring Programme to provide grants to a further 10 boroughs across 2024/2025, allocating additional £335,000 from existing Mayoral funding

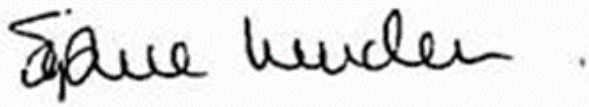
- Approve the £1,250,000 extension of the AP/PRU Mentoring Programme into 2025/2026, enabling grants to run until Aug 2026, funded from the VRU budget smoothing reserve.

Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime

I confirm I have considered whether or not I have any personal or prejudicial interest in this matter and take the proposed decision in compliance with the Code of Conduct. Any such interests are recorded below.

The above request has my approval.

Signature



Date 01/03/2024

PART I - NON-CONFIDENTIAL FACTS AND ADVICE TO THE DMPC

1. Introduction and background –

1.1 London's Inclusion Charter

We know that children and young people are safer in school. Yet, London has experienced rising suspension rates of 14% in schools. In the post-Covid landscape, persistent absenteeism is also on the rise, with rates more than doubling since 2018/19. That is why driving up attendance and tackling forms of exclusion like suspensions is at the heart of the London Violence Reduction Unit's (VRU) prevention work. London's Inclusion Charter is a partnership approach. It's built on the voice of young people and informed by parents and carers, schools, education specialists and local authorities.

1.2 We want to see all London schools creating more inclusive, safer environments for London's children, and are investing in London's Inclusion Charter, a partnership, evidence-driven approach, to create more inclusive schools. Underpinning the Inclusion Charter is commissioned research that evidences what practices and key principles ensure that children feel safe and a sense of belonging in schools, both fundamental to inclusion.

1.3 One of the fundamental foundations of the Charter is recognition that schools cannot do this work alone, that learning partnerships are key. The AP/PRU Mentoring Programme is one such example of a crucial learning partnership that supports the improvement in inclusion, and children's feelings of safety, and belonging in schools.

1.4 AP/PRU Mentoring Programme expansion –

London's Pupil Referral Units (PRUs) and Alternative Provisions (APs) are islands of support for some of the most vulnerable young people in the city. Passionate, dedicated staff are working hard, in extremely challenging circumstances, to best meet the needs of young people.

1.5 The VRU is funding 22 boroughs through the AP/PRU Mentoring programme (approved in DMPC 1078; 1359) across April 2022 to March 2025, to provide crucial mentoring support around resilience, careers, re-engagement, families, academic support and girls and young women.

1.6 The programme has seen some encouraging impact on attendance, behaviour, and engagement in education. For example, in Camden, the PRU saw an increase in attendance from 33% to over 60% in 6 months, which the head attributes directly to the VRU-funded Families Mentor.

1.7 University of Bath Inclusion research in London Schools, contract extension-

The University of Bath have undertaken a piece of research (approved in CEOD 26-2023) commissioned by the VRU to establish views from young people, education leaders and parents and carers about key indicators of inclusion; school belonging and safety, pointing to both enablers and barriers. Findings highlighted the fundamental importance of a secure sense of belonging and safety to students' inclusion in education. Students identified respect, fairness and being listened to as vital features of the caring, nurturing relationships needed to feel included in school.

- 1.8 The research was informed by over 3,500 children and young people, 129 educators, 145 parents/carers, from 76 schools across 32 London boroughs. The findings point to a set of principles, values and impacts underpinning school inclusion, which is central to London's Inclusion Charter.
- 1.9 The original specification and procurement for the research was centred around identifying three key factors that would inform the Inclusion Charter:
- What children and young people, teachers, parents/carers feel is important in terms of belonging and safety
 - What they would need for an improved system of inclusion
 - What promising practice exists.
- 1.10 It was intended that the results of this would inform:
- The 4 principles of inclusion (i.e. – drawing from what is important) that forms the basis of the inclusion charter
 - A research report which would provide the evidence-base for why this work is important to key stakeholders (CYP, parents/carers, school leaders), and what school strategies could lead to improved inclusion in London.
- 1.11 Since the research was originally commissioned, the target audience for the inclusion charter document has shifted to be directed more towards Local Authorities. Stakeholder engagement carried out by the VRU, and 19 school leader interviews carried out by the University of Bath (more than double what was originally commissioned) indicated an unforeseen gap in resource that the data captured by the research would be able to fill.
- 1.12 The VRU would like to extend this contract further to utilise the data captured on a strategic level. Whereas before the intention of the research was to form the evidence-base as to why this work is important and what practices are promising at a school level, work since then has revealed it would also be important to utilise the volume and breadth of data captured to create strategic guides for local authorities. This would be a central output for the inclusion charter, as future funding will now be targeted at local authorities and seek to be in line with their strategic inclusion planning.

2. Issues for consideration

- 2.1. The contracts and grants which the VRU would like to approval to extend are -
- 2.2. **AP/PRU Mentoring Programme Expansion -**
The VRU is seeking permission to expand the current AP/PRU Mentoring programme to all 32 boroughs, with the additional 10 boroughs receiving a grant of £33,500 for funding year 2024 – 2025, which mirrors the funding level to the existing 22 boroughs. This would see an additional £335,000 allocated from mayoral core funding, taking the total 2024/2025 funding for this programme to £1,072,000.
- 2.3. Expanding the programme would give the VRU reach across all boroughs, strengthening the VRU's ability to influence inclusive practice across the capital. Funding was originally offered to all 32 boroughs when the programme began however due to commissioning time constraints

not all boroughs were able to take up the offer. Unfunded boroughs are keen now to be involved and the VRU will support them to mobilise in time to provide mentoring in their PRU/AP settings from start of the school year 24/25.

2.4. **AP/PRU Mentoring Programme Extension -**

The VRU would like to evaluate the programme, and develop a pan-London PRU/AP Network, which currently does not exist, and would therefore request permission to extend the programme for another year, until the end of the school year, August 2026, to enable both to happen. Allocating additional £1,250,000, to funding year 2025/26 from existing budget smoothing reserves.

2.5. **University of Bath Inclusion research in London Schools (extension)-**

The vast amount of rich data obtained through the research, unique in its focus on safety, belonging and identity as indicators of inclusion, gives the VRU an opportunity to further utilise this data through a contract extension of up to 3 months (01.04.24 – 30.06.24) to create strategic guides for government and local authority officers, school leaders and other strategic education actors aimed at supporting them to embed the fundamental principles of inclusion into the fabric of London schools.

- 2.6. The University of Bath are in a unique position, having undertaken the initial research, to build on their findings to develop these guides providing contextual information on applying the principles across different parts of the education system. The guides will apply data from the research, and also draw on the extant literature, to show what the ideal kind of school policies, and strategic-level practices and processes look like within schools to best promote the principles. Alongside providing education leaders with evidence-based guides to engender inclusion systemic change, this will enable the VRU to develop its future work in education and invest in evidence-based inclusive practices in schools.

3. **Financial Comment**

- 3.1. The VRU currently have approval to provide grant funding in 2024/25 to 22 boroughs for the AP/PRU Mentoring Programme at a cost of £0.737m.
- 3.2. This report is seeking approval to invest an additional £1,640,600 in the University of Bath Research Contract and the mentoring programme enabling the programme to be expanded across all 32 London Boroughs in 2024/25 and extending the programme through to 2025/26. A breakdown of the costs and the funding source is set out in the table below.

	2024/25 £	2025/26 £	Funding Source
University of Bath Research contract extension	19,600		Research budget
AP/PRU Mentoring Programme expansion (10x additional grants)	335,000		Mayoral core
AP/PRU Mentoring Programme extension (all 32x grants)		1,250,000	Budget Smoothing reserve
Total	354,600	1,250,000	

4. Legal Comments

- 4.1. MOPAC's general powers are set out in the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011 (the 2011 Act). Section 3(6) of the 2011 Act provides that MOPAC must "secure the maintenance of the metropolitan police service and secure that the metropolitan police service is efficient and effective." This is a broad power, and the initiatives appear to be part of a number of proposals which are aimed at supporting victims of crime to enable the efficiency and effectiveness of the police service. In addition, under Schedule 3, paragraph 7 MOPAC has wide incidental powers to "do anything which is calculated to facilitate, or is conducive or incidental to, the exercise of the functions of the Office." Paragraph 7(2) (a) provides that this includes entering into contracts and other agreements.
- 4.2. Paragraph 4.8 (8) and 4.13 (1), (2) of the MOPAC Scheme of Delegation and Consent provides that the Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime (DMPC) has delegated authority to:
- Approve bids for grant funding made and all offers made of grant funding; and/or where appropriate a strategy for grant giving.
 - Approve the strategy for the award of individual grants and/ or the award of all individual grants whether to secure or contribute to securing crime reduction in London or for other purposes.
- 4.3. Officers can confirm that the DMPC has the legal authority to agree this decision.

5. Commercial Issues

AP/PRU Mentoring Programme

- 5.1. This decision is seeking approval to accept an allocating additional £335,000 for the expansion of the AP/PRU Mentoring Programme to provide grants to a further 10 boroughs across 2024/2025. The original grant agreement value is £737,000 and will increase to ££1.072m.
- 5.2. We can confirm that MOPAC has the legal powers to issue these grants as demonstrated in the legal comments. The Local Authorities are asked to submit costs to deliver the outcomes they have outlined in their application, the costs are mainly salary costs and expenses. Programme managers assess the full application including the costs to ensure that the VRU is obtaining value for money.
- 5.3. The overall nature of the grant agreements has not changed, the initial grant agreement will be shared with the new 10 boroughs. The VRU will continue to work closely with these new 10 boroughs to achieve the outcomes and outputs stated in the initial programme set up.

Inclusion Charter Research Partner

- 5.4. Approval of the extension of Inclusion Charter Research Partner contract by up to 3 months and allocation of £19,600 additional spend to £118,000 this will increase the total spend to £137,600.

5.5. The above increase in price does not exceed 50% of the value of the original contracts.

6. Public Health Approach

- 6.1. The spend plan takes a public health approach to tackling violence, which means looking at violence not as isolated incidents or solely a police enforcement problem. Instead, this approach looks at violence as a preventable consequence of a range of factors, such as adverse early-life experiences, or harmful social or community experiences and influences.
- 6.2. Both the research report and the AP/PRU Mentoring programme was developed and set up in a way that ensures fidelity to the VRU's public health approach to violence reduction. In scoping and developing the programme and the research, hearing from young people and communities, as well as families, and professionals in the education system was emphasised to understand what is important, what can be improved, and how. This is in line with the VRU's public health approach to violence reduction focusing on tackling the causes of violence to enable effective early intervention and prevention.
- 6.3. By recognising the link between exclusion, absenteeism, violence and exploitation, the VRU's education work aims to inform future policy and investment in preventing forms of educational exclusion at an early stage, improving access quality education and positive opportunities for all young people.

7. GDPR and Data Privacy

- 7.1. MOPAC will adhere to the Data Protection Act (DPA) 2018 and ensure that any organisations who are commissioned to do work with or on behalf of MOPAC are fully compliant with the policy and understand their GDPR responsibilities. Suppliers will be asked to provide a Data Protection Impact Assessment.
- 7.2. All contracts will include clear provisions relating to compliance in this area, and in relation to the processing of personal data. These terms will be drafted following consultation with MOPAC's GDPR Project Manager.

8. Equality Comments

- 8.1. MOPAC is required to comply with the public sector equality duty set out in section 149(1) of the Equality Act 2010. This requires MOPAC to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations by reference to people with protected characteristics. The protected characteristics are: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.
- 8.2. The VRU are committed to promoting equality and participation in all their activities, whether this is related to the work we do with our external stakeholders or whether this

is related to our responsibilities as an employer. As public authorities we are also required to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity, and foster good relations when making decisions and developing policies. To do this, it is necessary to understand the potential impacts of the range of internal and external activities on different groups of people.

- 8.3. An equality impact assessment has already been undertaken for the programme and the Inclusion Research to ensure that all protected characteristics are considered in the commissioning and delivery of this work.
- 8.4. This work will pay particular attention to the stark disproportionalities seen in school exclusion and focus on equitable practices in education looking at areas such as school curriculums and anti-racism.

9. Background/supporting papers.

CEOD 26-2023 – Education Developments

PCD 1078 – VRU Work Programme 2022 – 2025: Education

PCD 1359 PRU Mentoring Support Programme Addition

Public access to information

Information in this form (Part 1) is subject to the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA) and will be made available on the MOPAC website following approval.

If immediate publication risks compromising the implementation of the decision, it can be deferred until a specific date. Deferral periods should be kept to the shortest length strictly necessary.

Part 1 Deferral:

Is the publication of Part 1 of this approval to be deferred? No

If yes, for what reason:

Until what date: N/A

Part 2 Confidentiality: Only the facts or advice considered as likely to be exempt from disclosure under the FOIA should be in the separate Part 2 form, together with the legal rationale for non-publication.

Is there a **Part 2** form – No

ORIGINATING OFFICER DECLARATION	<i>Tick to confirm statement (ü)</i>
Financial Advice The Strategic Finance and Resource Management Team has been consulted on this proposal.	√
Legal Advice Legal advice is not required.	√
Equalities Advice: Equality and diversity issues are covered in the body of the report. The Workforce Development Officer has been consulted on the equalities and diversity issues within this report.	√
Public Health Approach Due diligence has been given to determine whether the programme sits within the Violence Reduction Unit's public approach to reducing violence.	√
Commercial Issues The Contract Management Team has been consulted on the commercial issues within this report. The proposal is in keeping with the GLA Group Responsible Procurement Policy.	√
GDPR/Data Privacy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A DPIA is not required. 	√
Drafting Officer Coralyn Burge has drafted this report in accordance with MOPAC procedures.	√
Director/Head of Service The Director of VRU has reviewed the request and is satisfied it is correct and consistent with the MOPAC's plans and priorities.	√

Chief Executive Officer

I have been consulted about the proposal and confirm that financial, legal and equalities advice has been taken into account in the preparation of this report. I am satisfied that this is an appropriate request to be submitted to the Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime.

**Signature****Date 27/02/2024**