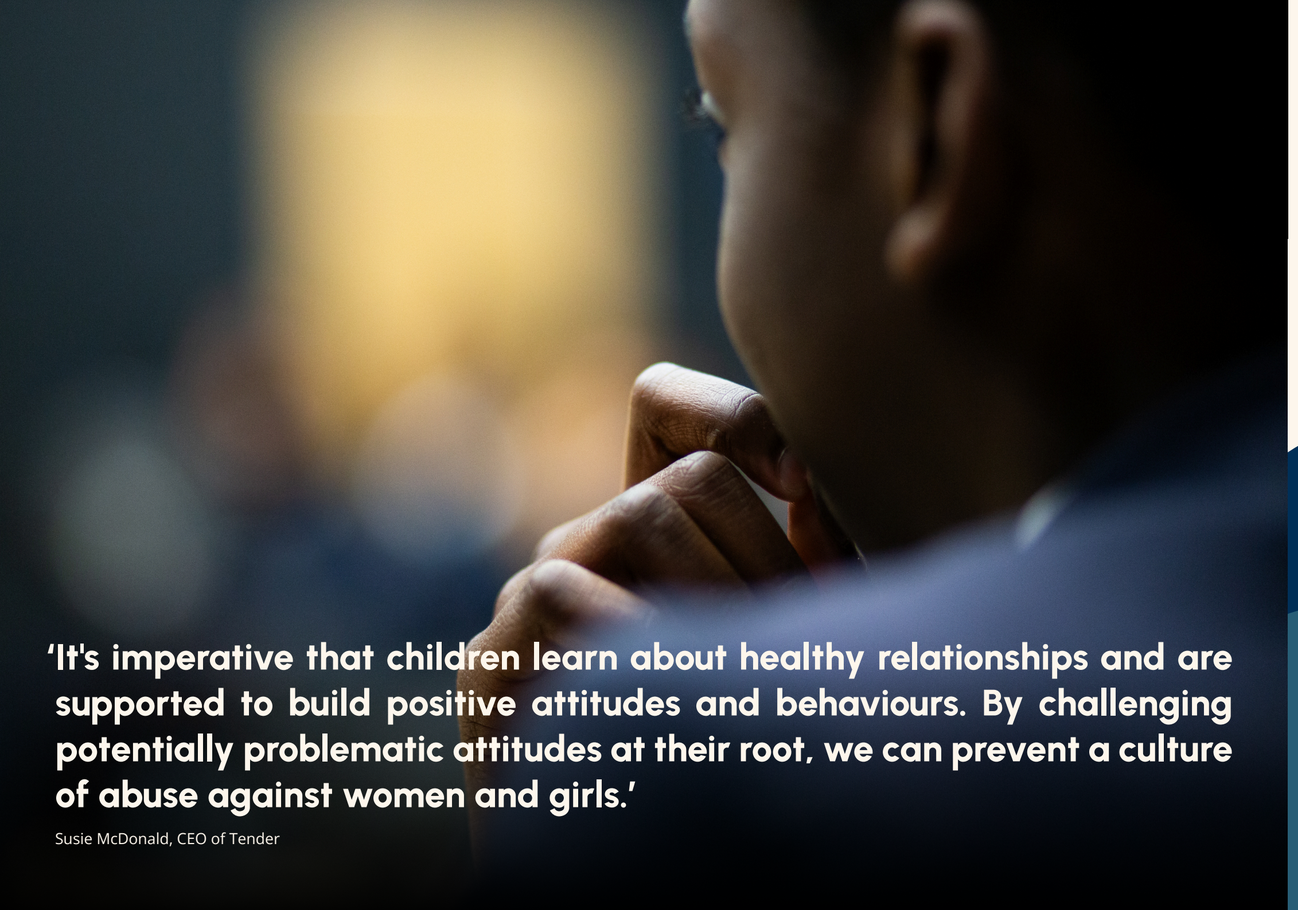


tender

Impact Report

2025 - 2026



‘It's imperative that children learn about healthy relationships and are supported to build positive attitudes and behaviours. By challenging potentially problematic attitudes at their root, we can prevent a culture of abuse against women and girls.’

Susie McDonald, CEO of Tender

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A fine balance: our year of living hopefully

by Susie McDonald, Chief Executive



At a recent meeting, we asked the Tender team to describe their experience, in one word, of the past year. A whirlwind of words emerged including 'change', 'wonderful chaos', 'inspiring' and 'rollercoaster'. The word that stood out most for me was 'hopeful'.

Every year is a fine balance – of creative optimism and grounded pragmatism. We dream big, but those dreams are based on perseverance, hard work and evidence of what we know works. If Tender were a bird, we would be the proverbial swan, legs paddling madly beneath a graceful body.

While 2024-2025 was one of our most challenging years financially, 2025-2026 has seen growth and optimism. Tender remains nimble, tenacious and clear on its purpose, with a clarity of vision that remains resilient, however turbulent the waters.

The publication of the government's long-awaited Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) strategy in December 2025 was the culmination of years of urging policy makers to include prevention in a meaningful way in every strategy, policy or commissioning process. We were delighted to see that prevention is one of the three pillars of this strategy with an associated budget and action plan; thus, recognising the value of preventing harm before it happens, and ensuring that prevention is a central tenet of any plan to end VAWG.

We were not a lone voice – other organisations in our sector have been equally persuasive, and we have welcomed the opportunity to collaborate throughout the year. There is strength in numbers.

The government chose to launch the strategy at a Tender Healthy Relationships workshop, enabling the then Prime Minister Sir Keir Starmer to see the power of our expert preventative education firsthand. This special event showcased the whole Tender community, from the brilliant staff at St. Mary Magdalene C of E School and their equally brilliant students, to our specially trained facilitators. Accompanying Sir Keir were our Patrons Olivia Colman and Ed Sinclair, and Jess Philips MP.

As new Prime Minister Andy Burnham takes the helm, we look forward to seeing this ambitious strategy in action.

This year we continued to focus on what matters – protecting children and young people from harm and ensuring that they are equipped with the support networks, knowledge and skills to build healthy relationships throughout their lives. Tender is ensuring young people can recognise abusive attitudes on and offline and think critically about the content they see.

As the world began to address the dangers of social media, our Youth Board stressed that alongside any age restrictions, the need remains for young people, teachers and parents/carers to understand online dangers, and develop the skills to navigate harmful content (more on page 37).



And so, we continued to do what we do best: deliver at scale, innovate programmes that are relevant for children, gather evidence of our impact, and share that learning with decision makers, policy makers and commissioners. 2025-2026 has been a year of which we are proud. Big dreams, creativity and a healthy dose of pragmatism turn out to be a decent recipe for protecting our children.

I do want to take this chance to thank all those who have given their support and time unquestioningly; there are so many it can feel overwhelming. But a special thanks from me goes to Jermaine Gayle, Assistant Principal at St Mary Magdalene's CofE school. He has shown up every time, always said yes even when my requests were outrageous, and been the best role model any student in his school could wish for.



Susie with Jermaine Gayle

Celebrating creativity

by Olivia Colman & Ed Sinclair, Tender's Patrons



In the world of arts, we know the power of creativity: the spark of an idea, then the imaginative leap that brings it vividly to life. At its most powerful, creativity does more than entertain; it can shift perspectives, open conversations and leave a lasting mark, both on its makers and its audiences.

Creativity, imagination and innovation are what make Tender such an inspiring organisation to stand alongside. Because every idea matters. Every conversation matters. Every creative act brings us one step closer to ending abuse.

Violence against women and girls remains a challenge of immense scale. Yet in the face of an ever-changing landscape - from tech-enabled abuse to shifting trends of violence among teenagers - Tender continues to meet the moment with courage and imagination. It creates spaces where young people can explore ideas and attitudes, answer questions, and explore anxieties safely and constructively, helping them build the skills to navigate relationships with confidence, kindness and respect.

This year has shown, once again, just how imaginative and determined Tender can be.

We are delighted that Tender has now created a programme for the very youngest school children aged 6-8 years old. This gentle, age-appropriate project introduces the vital concepts of kindness and respect with care and playfulness, and we look forward to its roll out in the coming year. Meanwhile, the whole school approach programme, RE:SET, remains a beacon of best practice with its ability to change systems in the most remarkable and long-term way.

There are many young people outside mainstream education who need high-quality healthy relationships education and may be especially vulnerable to experiences of abuse. Tender has adapted its programmes for a range of settings, including LGBT+ groups, those who support care-experienced children, and youth justice settings - delivering more of this specialist provision than ever before.



Following Tender's partnership with the brave and bold Netflix drama *Adolescence*, we were thrilled to welcome series co-creator Jack Thorne and producer Jo Johnson as official Tender Ambassadors. Since being introduced to Tender's work, both have shown extraordinary commitment to its mission, and as patrons we look forward to supporting this collaboration as it grows and flourishes (more on page 33).

We hope you enjoy reading this year's Annual Report. It is a celebration: of ideas, of imagination, of the courage to act. Above all, it is a celebration of Tender.



Olivia and Ed with some winners at the Tender Awards 2026

Everyone has a chance to help prevent abuse

By Matthew Layton, Chair of the Board of Trustees



On behalf of the Trustees, I would like to thank Susie and the whole Tender team for their dynamic work and achievements this year.

It's incredible to see the nationwide awareness of domestic abuse and sexual violence reaching new heights, especially regarding young people.

If last year it was *Adolescence* bringing these issues to the forefront, this year it was Louis Theroux's *Inside the Manosphere*. The searing documentary demonstrated how algorithms are flooding the social media feeds of boys and young men with content that under the guise of money, notoriety and purpose is in fact normalising horrifically misogynist attitudes and behaviour.

And the consequences are palpable. As Tender's Director of Services Kate Lexén said, 'we see male students refusing to acknowledge female facilitators, primary school boys physically squaring up to female teachers, and victim-blaming and perpetrator excusing attitudes being shared.'

But as awareness grows, a problem of such magnitude can often leave people paralysed. What can be done? Can I make a real difference? This is why Tender is so crucial. We offer not only a clear and proven solution, but a broad range of ways that people can use to achieve it.

One of the best examples is Tender's Youth Board. Open to ages 16-25, it brings together creative and passionate young people to consult on the wide scope of Tender's work, from curriculum innovations to fundraising opportunities. This year, this remarkable group have spoken at policy events, interviewed Tender's celebrity Ambassadors, written incisive blogs and so much more, volunteering their time and insight to help Tender move even closer toward our mission.

We've been so proud to welcome former Youth Board stars Ryan and Gaia to join us as Trustees so Tender can continue to learn from and collaborate with these inspiring changemakers.

Meanwhile, our Corporate Advisory Board (CAB) is supporting Tender to deliver the very best in workplace training whilst opening highly beneficial collaborations between Tender and corporate organisations. With representatives from across a range of sectors – including Youth Board member Leanne, currently a trainee solicitor at CMS Law – our CAB has proved invaluable this year, with crucial insight on building our corporate network.

We are so grateful to the individuals who champion this work in their youth settings and who navigate their communities to reach the children and young people who needs us the most. Nearly 2,000 adults have participated in our training this year, taking time out of their schedule to support our mission and ensure the lasting impact of our work.

This report showcases not only the brilliant work of the past year but also the immense opportunity of the next. Everyone has a chance to help prevent abuse. We can't wait to welcome you.

Matthew Layton.





This year at Tender

363
projects, training sessions & events delivered

49
boroughs covered

27,027
beneficiaries reached

78%
of young participants reported confidence in conflict resolution skills

83%
of young participants felt confident in challenging peers' unhealthy behaviours

93%
of teachers understood the nature and prevalence of abuse

84%
of teachers understood the impact of abuse on young people



Tenders works in four regions:
London & South-East, **North**, **East** & **West**.



At Tender we:

Deliver
Innovate
Evidence
Influence

'The children and adults always have so much to take away from sessions. Your warmth and enthusiasm and encouragement have empowered all of our children to step out of their comfort zones and participate in activities that would be seen as challenging or difficult. Genuinely, your understanding of the class, your pitch, your sensitivity, your passion: they are inspiring...Thank you so very much.'

Teacher

Deliver

Delivery of our healthy relationships programmes is the beating heart of Tender. Expertly tailored to the needs and experiences of our beneficiaries, our programmes empower children and young people with vital skills, whilst building staff's confidence to support the young people they work with for many years to come. This year we're proud to have reached more than 27,000 people across 49 boroughs of the UK.

Primary schools

Teaching children about kind friendships

Our creative primary school programmes bring children on a journey to explore healthy relationships in a gentle, fun and kind way.

Over two days, children explore core themes including healthy and unhealthy behaviours in friendships, consent and boundaries, emotional regulation, and resolving conflict.

By nurturing positive behaviours early, we can prevent harmful behaviours taking root and becoming normal.

1935
children participated in a Healthy Friendships workshop

62
primary schools worked with Tender

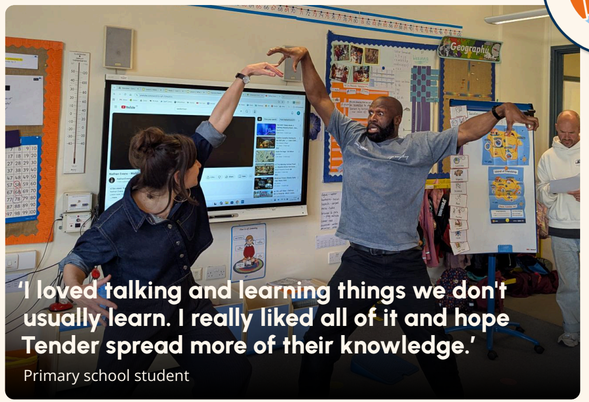
Key Stage 1

This year, we successfully rolled out our first Key Stage 1 healthy friendships programme for children between the ages of six and eight. In this interactive and imaginative workshop, Tender facilitators bring children on an adventure to the Island of Friendship, encountering dragons and trolls, and helping characters navigate their choices.

'This work gives children a world they care about, and the chance to practice healthy friendship behaviours in an unthreatening space.'

Sarah Carpenter, Head of Curriculum and Growth





'I loved talking and learning things we don't usually learn. I really liked all of it and hope Tender spread more of their knowledge.'

Primary school student



Following our workshops

87%
of participants have a strong understanding of healthy and unhealthy behaviours in friendships

37%
increase in participants feeling very confident in their ability to regulate their emotions

82%
of participants know where to find support

45%
increase in participants feeling very confident in their critical thinking skills

Secondary schools

Preparing young people for their future relationships

As young people mature, our curriculum evolves alongside them. In our secondary school workshops, we begin exploring romantic relationships and the knowledge and skills students need as they navigate their future.

Through our creative, interactive approach, young people build skills in critical thinking, conflict resolution and empathy. They each leave Tender workshops with a clearer understanding of harmful behaviours and, more importantly, with a strong sense of what happy, healthy relationships look like.

Whether they need to support a friend or navigate their own relationships, both online and offline, these workshops provide the foundations they need to thrive.



Tackling today's challenges

As public discourse around misogyny and online harms continues to grow, the same trend is emerging in schools.

When enquiring about Tender workshops, **34%** of schools cited misogyny and masculinity as a key motivation, while the same proportion cited online dangers, social media and image sharing.

In the classroom, teachers are reporting the use of 'discriminatory language disguised as banter', 'increase in misogynist language amongst the boys' and the use of social media to spread images and unkind comments about peers and female school staff.

Our workshops have achieved significant results in enabling young people to confidently understand and then challenge ideas and attitudes that blame victims and excuse perpetrators. We also provide teacher training in Misogyny and Online Harms to equip staff with the skills to address these issues and support students effectively (more on pg. 21).

2251
young people participated in a Healthy Relationship workshop

57
secondary schools worked with Tender

'They made the information fun, interactive and easy to learn/think about. And the way they explained everything made me learn things I didn't know.'

Secondary school student

After our workshops

90%
of students know where to find support if they ever need it

78%
feel confident in conflict resolution

65%
increase in students feeling very confident in their critical thinking skills

Inside a Tender workshop

Playing

From the start of every workshop, Tender facilitators use games and theatre techniques to get children up on their feet moving around the room. These games aren't just fun – they are tools for thinking, behaving and interacting differently in order to start conversations about relationships.

Acting

Even the shyest participants can get involved with Tender's script activities, which allow students to step into the shoes of characters and recognise early warning signs of unhealthy relationships, explore where healthy boundaries may have been crossed and rehearse responding to situations they may encounter in everyday life. Not keen on acting? There's plenty of space for budding directors, presenters or conversationalists; everyone can get involved in the way that they feel most comfortable!

Devising

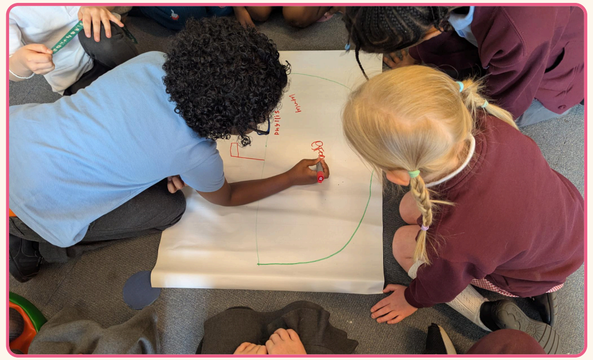
Children and young people are brimming with ideas, and we put their learning into action by encouraging them to devise their own scenes to show how characters might feel or respond in a certain situation. Practising how to challenge a peer or seek support for themselves or a friend is a brilliant way of rehearsing real-life situations, ensuring the learning is fully embedded.

Exploring

Curiosity is welcomed in a Tender workshop! Our creative exercises open a safe space for questions, reflection and opinions. Young people are inquisitive, and by giving them the opportunity to discuss key elements of healthy relationships with their peers and our expert facilitators, we are able to reinforce positive influences and challenge harmful attitudes.

Creating and sharing

Young people who take part in Tender workshops are empowered with the confidence to become Healthy Relationship Ambassadors, sharing their learning with peers and beyond. At the end of a Tender Healthy Relationships project they work together to create a sharing performance or creative campaign, putting their learning into action that ripples the impact way beyond their classroom.











RE:SET

Transforming the whole school community

Tender's whole-school approach programme ensures that conversations about healthy relationships do not stop at the classroom door. Instead, they become part of the culture of the school, expanding into homes and across whole communities.

Our mentors work with schools for a whole academic year and play a crucial role in delivering sustainable culture change. By supporting school leaders to prioritise relationships education, they help ensure that progress continues long after the programme has ended.

Five years since Tender began delivering this programme, we are proud to see schools building on the work they have started with us. In London alone, 17 schools received a continuation of their 'Healthy Relationships Champion Setting' award in 2025, recognising their ongoing commitment to embedding healthy relationship practices.

A powerful part of the programme is giving students the opportunity to lead their own awareness-raising campaigns, choosing the messages they want to share with their peers. Their creativity shines through podcasts, performances and artwork, helping to spark meaningful conversations about healthy and unhealthy behaviours.



'I hope my campaign teaches younger kids to try and understand other people's feelings.'

RE:SET primary school student

'Kindness Crew'

Surlingham and Rockland St Mary are two small primary schools in Norfolk that share a headteacher. From the moment they joined the RE:SET programme, they demonstrated a clear sense of purpose: to strengthen the support available to local families affected by domestic abuse.

Working closely with their Tender mentor, the two schools created a shared action plan to build a culture of safety and respect. This included modelling and promoting healthy behaviours, providing training for all teachers to build confidence in discussing healthy relationships, and actively encouraging pupils, staff and families to embrace these values in their daily interactions.

At the heart of this change is the 'Kindness Crew', a campaign designed by the students to celebrate six inclusive behaviours. Each week, children look out for acts of kindness, respect and care, and nominate someone who embodies that week's behaviour for a special award. The initiative has resonated beyond the classroom too. One parent nominated a year 5 boy for the 'Caring Captain' award after he kindly helped her reception-aged child feel confident staying at school on their own.

Over time, these small moments have added up to something much bigger: a culture shift that celebrates the children, adults and real-life powers that make their school a kinder, happier place.



'Surlingham kids are kind, happy, not angry at anyone. We let people join in. If someone asks to play, we say yes.'

Year 3 student

Regions

From Malton, North Yorkshire to Bromley, South London; from Great Yarmouth, Norfolk to Western Super Mare, North Somerset, our projects have spanned North, East, South and West to reach the young people who need us most. Across all four regions, teachers have praised how sessions created safe, inclusive environments in which all children felt empowered to participate, even when the discussions where challenging.

London & South East

In London & South East, our work spanned a broad range of projects across 33 boroughs.

Our work on the Mayor of London's Toolkit programme began a new phase of delivery. Moving from open-access adult training sessions and focus groups to our two-day Healthy Relationships projects, we maximised the impact of the programme across all London boroughs.



One teacher commented: 'The programme provided practical, age-appropriate activities and resources that were easy to use in the classroom. I found the focus on communication, respect, empathy, consent, and conflict resolution particularly valuable. The toolkit gave me greater confidence in discussing healthy relationships with pupils.'

North

In the North, we continued our long-standing partnerships with primary and secondary schools whilst also delivering projects in new locations and contexts, including our first Healthy Relationships projects in Wakefield, and our first project with an LGBTQ+ youth group.

We were proud to be commissioned by the West Yorkshire Violence Reduction Partnership (VRP) to deliver VAWG prevention work in 10 schools. Students from a school in Huddersfield described our Healthy Relationships project as the highlight of their year.

Tender North delivered projects in its first post-16 special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) settings including the Lighthouse Futures Trust and Future Steps Hub, and a unique summer programme with the Gypsy, Roma and Traveller community through Families First.

'I liked how we played games and we also talked about serious things, but they made it a safe space to talk about things.'

Year 6 student

West

The National Lottery Community Fund enabled Tender West to reach new and diverse groups of young people in the region, including a girls' youth group at the Wellspring Settlement in one of Bristol's most deprived communities (more on pg. 22).

Tender West also delivered its first project to home-educated young people in a special collaboration between Tender, the Green House Education Project and The Meadow in Bath. The settings' commitment to the wellbeing of their young people strongly aligned with Tender's healthy relationships mission, and we look forward to working with more home education settings in future.

We continued our strong relationship with Youth Connect South West, a provider of bespoke youth work and educational support. Our programme had an incredible impact on young people aged 16-25 with Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs), as explained by one staff member: 'It was the most engaged I have ever seen some of those young people in group sessions.'



East



It has been an exciting year for Tender East including our highly successful RE:SET project with Surlingham and Rockland St Mary (more on pg. 17). The school has since received a brilliant Ofsted outcome of 'strong', with inspectors explaining: 'Pupils love coming to school. They value belonging to a caring, compassionate school family. Pupils bound into school, curious to explore the new learning their teachers have prepared for them.'

In Cambridge, a wonderful group of young people who became Healthy Relationships champions following a Tender project, raised nearly £800 for Tender at their school's charity fundraiser. They continue to spread the messages they learnt throughout their school and by speaking at local primary schools, and we celebrated this work at the Tender Awards 2026 (more on pg. 35).

'Your warmth and enthusiasm and encouragement have empowered all of our children to step out of their comfort zones and participate in activities that would be seen as challenging or difficult.'

Teacher

Adult training

To ensure impact is embedded across the whole school community, we deliver expert adult training for a wide range of professionals working with children and young people.

INSET training

A key part of our Healthy Relationships programmes, our INSET sessions support education professionals to develop key knowledge and skills around healthy relationships, with the aim of building their confidence having informed and meaningful conversations with children and young people.

This year, we have harnessed data and feedback to strengthen our INSET projects, and have started exploring more in-depth training to achieve greater impact. We launched a full menu of topics: basic awareness of domestic abuse, control and coercion, understanding and challenging misogyny, and online harms. Our new module in misogyny has since become our most requested topic. We also reviewed and amended our content for primary school staff, to ensure the sessions meet the needs of all beneficiaries.





Expanding our impact

Funded by the City Bridge Foundation, we continued delivering training for third sector organisations about domestic abuse awareness and its impact on young people. This year, we delivered 24 sessions including successful open access events that received consistently positive feedback.

Meanwhile our Toolkit programme, funded by MOPAC, continued with pan-London introductory sessions for primary and secondary teachers and governors generating high sign-ups, waiting lists and strong feedback.

We also strengthened our pool of freelance adult trainers by delivering a vocational OCN Level 3 training course in 'Developing and Delivering Domestic Abuse Training'.

Empowering teachers to support young people

For too long, relationships education has been an afterthought. By helping teachers and safeguarding staff understand why it is so critical in young people's lives, whilst equipping them with the skills and resources they need, we help schools build on our work for many years to come.

Understanding and skills

To create change, teachers must first understand the importance of relationships education. We work with staff to explore the origins of domestic abuse, control and coercion, and demonstrate how exposure to online content and misogyny can be the first spark in these harmful attitudes and behaviours.

Through in-person sessions, online workshops, resources and toolkits, we support staff to develop practical skills in discussing issues like consent and equality with their students, detecting early warning signs, and managing disclosures.

Staff build the confidence to intervene at the earliest opportunity if young people are displaying abusive behaviours or may be experiencing abuse themselves.

Challenging misogyny

From ignoring female teachers to using aggressive language with young women, misogyny is a rising concern in schools across the country. Our INSET in challenging misogyny helps staff build understanding of these issues and confidence in redirecting young people to healthy role models and behaviours.



Following our sessions, a teacher said:

'Prior to the session I would've made a mental note and spoke to safeguarding lead, but I feel confident to challenge it [misogyny] using the correct approach.'

Another said they will

'challenge comments that may have a misogynistic basis, no matter how small.'

Innovate

All Tender programmes have been developed to ensure that the needs of young people are at the centre. We are committed to always innovating to ensure the quality of our content best suits specific groups, prioritising external research, consultation with experts and the young people themselves to develop content has the impact needed. Throughout, we maintain a focus on what makes us unique: prevention and our arts-based methodology.

Specialist provision

Part of Tender's magic is our ability to adapt to a variety of youth settings. Through our specialist provision, we tailor our work to reach young people with different needs and experiences and deepen our impact.

Reimagining our workshops for care experienced young people

Aware that the levels of trauma among care-experienced young people can make it difficult for them to engage with Tender's existing work, we partnered with expert charity Become to develop a bespoke healthy relationships programme for this group.

Led by Tender's Head of Curriculum and Growth, Sarah Carpenter, we collaborated with Become staff and volunteer focus groups of young adult care leavers to assess the suitability of Tender activities for care-experienced young people, and explore modifications that could reduce the risk of re-traumatisation.

The biggest learning from the focus group was a reframing of the idea that we should remove triggering elements: the young people emphasised that they need to be taught the difficult content. We therefore designed this plan without removing content but instead making our sessions significantly more trauma-informed.



Staff training

We supplemented this process with bespoke training for Tender staff and workshop leaders which focused on understanding the context of care, potential barriers to engagement, and specific ways we can align with trauma-informed practice. Following our first year of delivery, we plan to develop a dedicated training programme, informed by our learnings and Become's internal staff training.

Engaging communities



This year, Tender worked with a wide range of out-of-school settings, from vocational colleges to youth justice settings, funded by the National Lottery Community Fund.

We worked closely with each setting to develop healthy relationships education tailored to specific needs of the young people, the staff who support them and the setting in which our work took place.

97% of young people reported an increased knowledge of healthy and unhealthy relationships.

LGBTQ+

Working with an LGBTQ+ youth group in Leeds, we adapted our statistics, types of abuse and myth busting activities so they were specifically relevant for LGBTQ+ relationships. Supported by the group's trusted leader, we also held sessions in the evenings to align with the group's schedule.

Following this programme



of young people in post-16 settings reported increased awareness of the role played by power, control and equality in relationships, and increased skills to practise healthy behaviours in relationships



of adult training participants reported increased awareness of the impact of domestic abuse and sexual violence on children and young people



of staff felt motivated to improve their setting's environment

Corporate training



CAB members at Clifford Chance showcase event

‘I took away an embedded confidence in how to act. But also, that it’s RIGHT to act.’

Feedback from Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office

Prevention in the workplace

Our work doesn’t end with children and young people. Tender is an expert in using interactive training for businesses in multiple industry sectors. We equip organisations with the tools and knowledge to address sensitive issues and create inclusive workplace environments in which employees feel secure and valued.

With the support and drive of our Corporate Advisory Board (CAB), we are making positive progress in building relationships with corporate partners. Over the past year, we have delivered a varied portfolio of training programmes, including induction training for early talent and new starters, sexual harassment awareness and prevention, and domestic abuse awareness and best practice.

The workplace can be an incredible lifeline for those experiencing domestic abuse, offering financial independence, stability and a safe place to retain dignity and autonomy. Increasing general awareness of domestic abuse can create an environment of openness and support where everybody can flourish.

Highlights this year

Tender Talks

Our bite-sized, high-impact sessions, ‘Tender Talks’, continued to grow in popularity, with a particular uptick in requests during our 16 Days of Activism campaign in November.

Showcase event

We held a showcase event at Clifford Chance (pictured left), welcoming new businesses to hear about the impact of our training and to participate in some of the exercises.

Corporate partnerships

Corporate partnerships remain a significant and valued element of our work, and we were delighted to work with LMAX, One Fiinix and HAB Law who are all supporting our programmes in schools.




Andrea Simon, Victims’ Commissioner for London (left), Lib Peck, Director of London VRU (centre), Guddy Burnet – Programme Director, Firebird Foundation (right) and Nicole Jacobs, Domestic Abuse Commissioner (far right).

Evidence

To demonstrate the power of prevention, we embed expert monitoring, evaluation and learning (MEL) processes across all Tender's development and delivery. This crucial work measures the levels of engagement, the effectiveness of our projects and the short- and long-term impact of our work.

Understanding what works to prevent abuse

What we want to achieve

- **Build long-term evidence on the impact of Tender's work**
- **Build evidence into primary school programmes, how well they work, and why**
- **Build evidence into the effectiveness of arts-based methodologies and whole school approaches to prevent abuse**



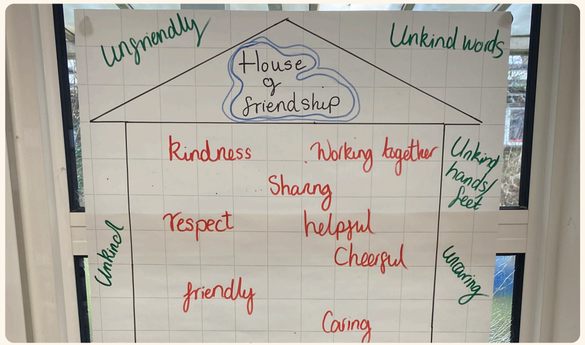
This year, we have put a lot of energy into building our evidence and testing our theory of change.

Our evaluation is built on established behaviour change principles. Put simply, to change what people intend to do, and what they actually do, we aim to shift three things: their attitudes, the social norms around them and their ability to change their behaviour. We now use the same evaluation methods across all our programmes, which has sharpened how we report outcomes: **the changes in participants' knowledge, skills, attitudes and behaviours**. These show us what we can change, and how.

Attitudes

Misogyny, and the pull of online influencers on young people, have rarely been out of the headlines this year. For us, this isn't new. We've long known how important it is to tackle the attitudes that excuse and enable harmful behaviour, and we keep adapting our workshops to meet challenges like these head on.

After every project with young people, we measure whether their attitudes to victim-blaming and perpetrator-excusing have changed. But tackling attitudes alone isn't enough. To stop harmful behaviours before they start, young people also need the knowledge to spot what's healthy and what isn't, and to know where to get help. They need the skills to question their own attitudes and behaviours, and other people's too, and to resolve conflicts with kindness and empathy.



Outcomes among teachers

Teachers matter too, so we measure how our work changes them. We want staff to come away knowing more about domestic abuse and sexual violence, with stronger safeguarding skills and a real drive to support children and improve their school's culture.

Why focus on teachers? Because students cannot be held responsible for environments they do not control. Gender-based violence is rooted in structures and norms, so we need to give the adults who can change those structures the knowledge, skills and confidence to do it. The result: children and young people are ready and empowered to build and keep healthy relationships, in communities and settings that help them stay safe and supported (more on pg. 21).



Evaluating primary school projects

We evaluate both our secondary and primary school programmes. Primary schools are where we think our robust approach can really add to the national picture of what works to prevent unhealthy and abusive relationships.

Most prevention education projects, and most of the evaluations that go with them, focus on secondary schools. But relationship skills should start early, with an age-appropriate spiral curriculum from the early years, long before harmful attitudes and behaviours can take hold.

The government's VAWG strategy in December 2025 announced new pilots and evaluation, but again the focus is on secondary schools. That leaves a gap in the evidence for primary schools, even though the new RSHE guidance (mandatory from September 2026) requires them to teach about respectful relationships.

Our own evaluations show that primary pupils can understand and answer surveys and questions about whether their knowledge and skills have changed. The results are encouraging, with consistent positive change in their outcomes (see page 11). In our whole school approach work, an external evaluation by Anna Freud also found higher engagement among primary schools than secondary schools.

We will keep evaluating our own primary projects. We have also started working with academic research partners to explore and develop more consistent evaluation tools, so every primary school healthy relationships project can be measured more consistently and reliably. This work will run over the next 12 to 18 months, and we're excited to help build a national picture of what works in primary schools to prevent gender-based violence.





Influence

This year, we accelerated our efforts to call on central and local government to embed prevention in violence against women and girls (VAWG) and education policies. Spanning government engagement, vibrant events, national media coverage and our dynamic social and digital media strategy, we have played a significant role in some of the country's most tangible actions to prevent VAWG since Tender began.

Prevention front and centre

After years of lobbying from Tender and our sector partners, we were extremely proud to see 'Prevention and Early Intervention' named a key priority in the government's strategy to end VAWG.

The then Prime Minister, Sir Keir Starmer, joined a Tender workshop at St. Mary Magdalene C of E School in London to launch the long-awaited strategy. Alongside Jess Phillips MP and our Patron, Olivia Colman, we demonstrated how our drama-based approach prevents abuse by supporting young people to explore healthy relationships in a safe and inclusive environment.

Our work was featured across the media throughout the strategy launch on BBC News, Sky News, BBC Radio 4's *Today Programme* and ITV's *Loose Women* and in Cosmopolitan UK.







10 Downing Street

Susie McDonald returned to No. 10 this year, joining MPs and Year 12 boys for a special event: 'The opportunities and challenges facing young men and boys in the UK today'. Hosted by David Lammy MP, this important discussion explored health and wellbeing, opportunities and masculinity, from the perspective of boys and young men today.



Houses of Parliament

Our team headed to the House of Commons to mark the launch of 'Building Bridges: Principles for work with Men and Boys to end Violence against Women and Girls', produced by End Violence Against Women Coalition and Beyond Equality, and endorsed by Tender.

We were joined by Tender Workshop Leader, Paul Andrews, who gave a powerful speech on how we engage young men and boys in prevention.

Long-term supporter Lord Hampton highlighted the importance of Tender's work in the House of Lords on many occasions, from debates around mandatory relationships education for 16–18-year-olds to domestic abuse awareness in the workplace.



Leeds City Council

We were delighted to share Tender's creative approach to tackling misogyny in schools at a special event at Leeds City Hall, hosted by Leeds City Council with support from the West Yorkshire Violence Reduction Partnership (VRP).

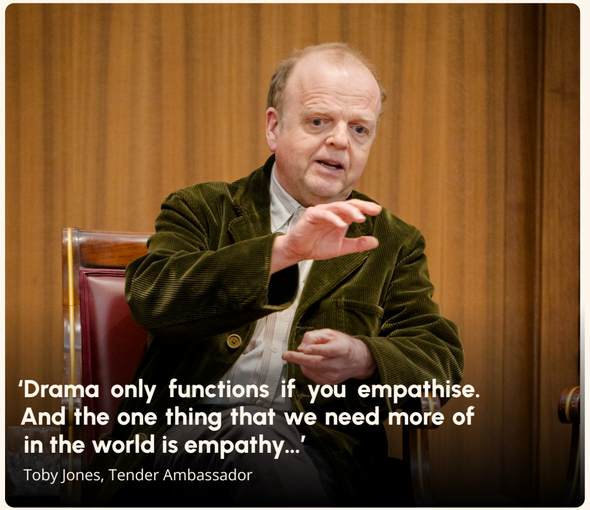
We joined local politicians, sector organisations, teachers and young people to engage in meaningful conversations about prevention education. Tender North Manager, Angharad Turner-Fielder, highlighted how interactive, inclusive and fun workshops create a safe learning environment where our messages have real impact.



No Big Drama

In March, Tender welcomed some of the biggest names from stage and screen to explore the power of storytelling in a special panel event.

Chaired by Susie McDonald MBE, the panel included Tender Ambassadors Jodie Whittaker (*Toxic Town*) and Toby Jones (*Mr. Bates vs. the Post Office*). They were joined by *Adolescence* co-creator Jack Thorne and producer Jo Johnson to explore the real-world impact of series like these.



'Drama only functions if you empathise. And the one thing that we need more of in the world is empathy...'

Toby Jones, Tender Ambassador





Welcoming new Tender Ambassadors

Tender was honoured to officially welcome Jack Thorne and Jo Johnson as Tender Ambassadors following a year's ongoing collaboration.

Jack is a playwright and BAFTA-winning screenwriter whose work includes *This is England*, *Toxic Town* and recent Channel 4 drama, *Falling*.



'Tender is a remarkable organisation dedicated to creating difficult conversation. But the amazing thing about it is it makes that difficult conversation seem easy... I'm so honoured to play a small part in their mission.'

Jo is an experienced producer working across a wide range of television dramas, including Disney+ series *A Thousand Blows* and Channel 4 drama *Ackley Bridge* with fellow Tender Ambassador Amy-Leigh Hickman.



'I did not hesitate to say yes when asked to be an ambassador for Tender. It is a huge honour. What they do is crucial. I look forward to using my voice to help promote their amazing work.'

Education must accompany social media ban

It has been a year of big conversations about social media.

Following our survey and focus group of young people aged 16-18, and analysis of leading sector research, Tender responded to the government's Growing Up Online Consultation.

While welcoming action to protect young people from the harms posed by social media, we called for the upcoming ban to be accompanied by specialist education on online dangers for young people, parents and teachers. We also emphasised the need for greater regulation of social media platforms to enforce safety by design standards and hold platforms accountable for algorithm-driven harm.



'A ban is no use without understanding: teachers, parents and young people need to recognise the potential risks of the online world, and build the critical thinking skills to navigate it safely.'

Susie McDonald, Tender CEO

Social media: Bringing communities together

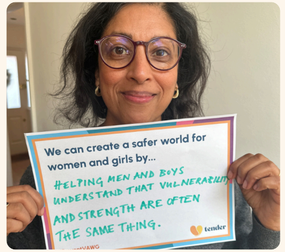
Through our social media channels, we keep supporters across regions informed about the issues that matter most and create opportunities for people to champion our prevention work.

One message can start a conversation. One conversation can inspire change.

During the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence, Tender mobilised its supporters to take part in the global call to end VAWG. Staff, MPs, police cadets, schools, VAWG sector partners, funders, corporate partners and Ambassadors from across all Tender regions shared messages of kindness, respect and equality using our campaign materials.

Together, they helped create a ripple effect of awareness, understanding and action, sparking conversations in communities across the UK and reinforcing the importance of healthy relationships.





Whether supporting another successful Big Give campaign or engaging with our awareness-raising initiatives, our online community plays a vital role in helping us extend our reach far beyond our direct programmes.

Socktopus x Tender



Tender teamed up with playful sock brand Socktopus for a creative Valentine's Day campaign that got people talking about healthy relationships. Together, we brought relationship red flags to life through three Instagram videos, sparking important conversations about relationships in an engaging and relatable way. The campaign launched a special edition sock collection that helped raise funds for Tender's work, including a pair of magnetic socks that 'hold hands' when worn together. They were such a hit that they sold out within the first week!

Tender Awards

Celebrating the Tender Awards 2026

The Tender Awards 2026 celebrated students, teachers and campaigners for their support of Tender's mission: to prevent domestic abuse and sexual violence through creative relationships education.

The annual ceremony was hosted by Tender Patrons, Academy Award winning actress Olivia Colman and her husband, Producer and Screenwriter Ed Sinclair. Olivia and Ed presented awards alongside Tender Ambassadors Jodie Whittaker (*Dr. Who*), Toby Jones (*Mr Bates vs. The Post Office*), Priyanga Burford (*Industry*), and Jo Johnson (Producer of *Adolescence*) as well as guests including actor Kiell Smith-Bynoe (*Ghosts*), Natalie Fleet MP, Jess Phillips MP, poet David Larbi and Nina Goswami, Head of Inclusion at Clifford Chance.

'From teachers and students to campaigners and funders, Tender's work would not be possible without so many people who support us and champion our work. Thanks to their passion, enthusiasm and commitment, we're reaching more and more children and young people, engaging them in the powerful story of healthy relationships and building a future free from abuse.'

Susie McDonald, Tender CEO











Youth Board

At the heart of Tender

Tender's Youth Board plays a vital role at Tender, ensuring that youth voice remains at the heart of all decisions and development. Meeting twice every month, the board is made up of 18 young volunteers aged 16-25. This year, members fed into funding applications, participated in the development of activities for our new Key Stage 1 programme and gave us some insightful ideas to keep scripts updated and relatable to the experiences of young people.

'I feel so incredibly privileged to hold my role on the Youth Board and access such brilliant opportunities. It is truly empowering to be able to talk about the work Tender's doing and really home in on how vital it is in the current climate.'

Libby, Tender Youth Board member





Inspiring healthy relationships advocates

Our Youth Board members have been making their voices heard wherever it matters most. From speaking to the BBC about the importance of prevention in tackling violence against women and girls, commenting on Louis Theroux's documentary about online influencers, or representing Tender at events, they've helped ensure young people's perspectives are part of the national conversation.

This is particularly valuable for our policy and influencing work. Our Youth Board is constantly sharing ideas, feeding into consultation responses, such as 'Tell Nicole' from the Domestic Abuse Commissioner's office, and even attending events such as an All-Parliamentary Group meeting on youth affairs to talk about online harms. They've also been brilliant contributing to our social media channels, creating engaging content for the Tender Awards and our fundraising campaign with Socktopus.

'At Tender's Youth Board, we have been given unique opportunities to engage and assist with Tender's work and build on our skills. We are incredibly excited to continue to grow with Tender and see where this next year takes us.'

Leanne, Tender Youth Board member







Fundraising

Supporting Tender's mission

It was a positive year for local statutory partnerships. We were delighted to continue our partnership with the Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime (MOPAC) to deliver our workshops in more schools. Another highlight was being named the new secretariat for the VAWG Expert Reference Group, which will convene the views of the sector to feed into the oversight of the Mayor's VAWG strategy. In West Yorkshire, we worked closely with the Violence Reduction Partnership (VRP) to work in 10 secondary schools in the region.







We are very grateful for our new long-term partnerships with Trusts and Foundations, which allow us to plan for the future. In the summer of 2025, we started a 3 -year funding partnership with the Julia Rausing Trust to deliver our RE:SET programme in London schools. We also received a multi-year funding commitment from Esmee Fairbairn Foundation to enable us to focus on how we work effectively with other VAWG sector organisations to share evidence of what works in prevention with key policy influencers. We were also grateful for the continued support from the Coutts Foundation and Leathersellers' Company, who supported core costs, an incredibly valuable acknowledgement that unrestricted funding is so vital to support our key operational costs.

We have continued to diversify our funding streams, with a very engaged group of multi-year Tender Guardians and Friends. We were delighted to welcome them on school visits to see our work in action, and it was brilliant to host so many of our donors at our No Big Drama event and the annual Tender Awards (more on page 35).

Our corporate partnerships continue to grow both as funders of our direct delivery and through staff training packages. We were very excited to start delivering workshops to schools in Hertfordshire thanks to a very generous commitment from Hab Law, who are committed to investing in domestic abuse prevention education in local schools. We were also delighted to launch some fantastic 'Socks for Good' with Socktopus, with £1 from every pair sold donated to Tender (more on pg. 34).

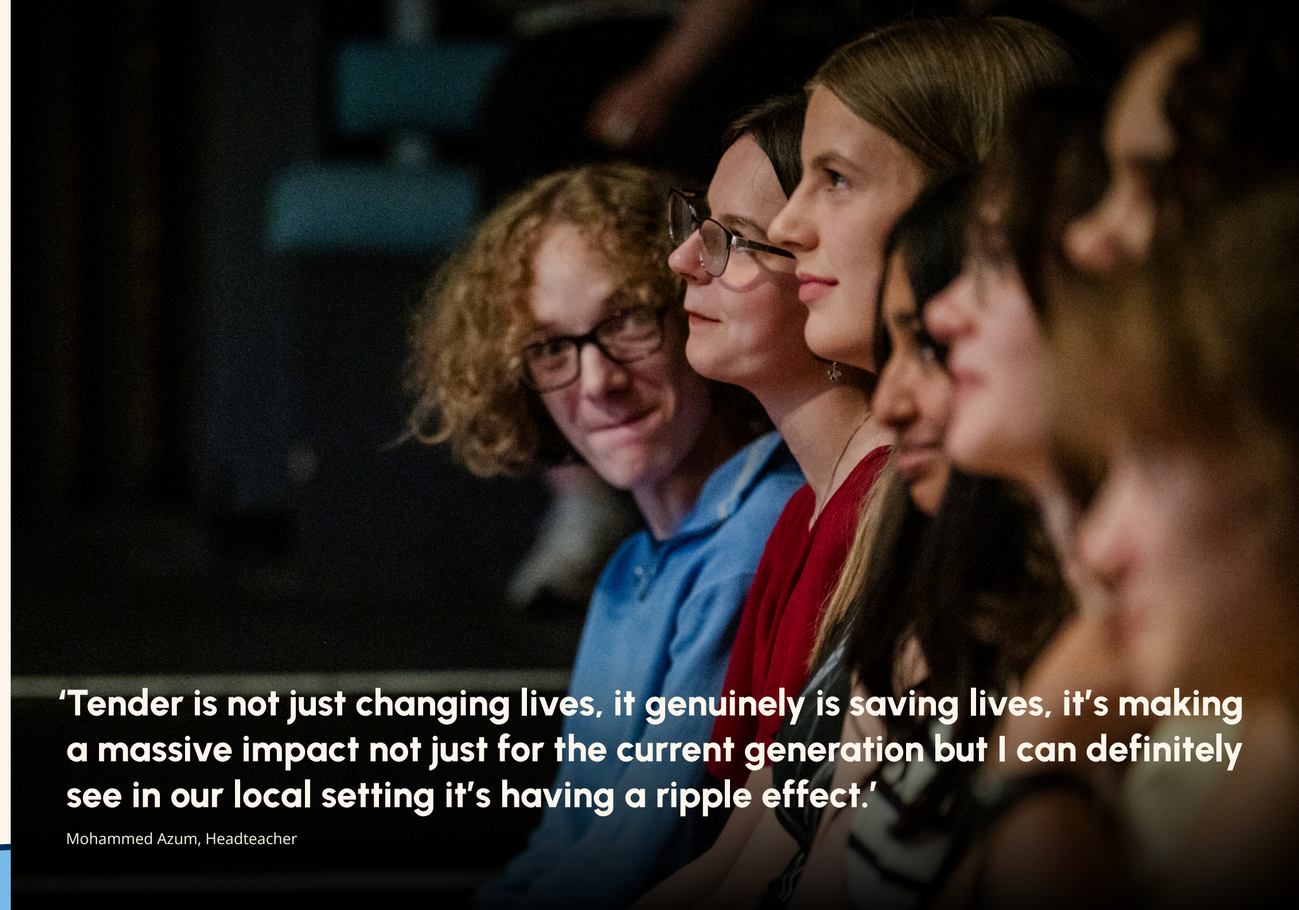


Thank you

A huge thank you to everyone who has contributed to Tender over the last year.
A special thank you to:

4814 Trust
Amy Malik
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One Fiinix
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Sonya Leydecker
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The Dahan Family Foundation
The Foux Foundation
The Julia Rausing Trust
The Leathersellers' Foundation
The National Lottery
The Olwyn Foundation
The Paul Bassham Charitable Trust
The Peter Cundill Foundation
The Prudence Trust
The Shanly Foundation
Westminster Foundation
Wimbledon Community Foundation.





'Tender is not just changing lives, it genuinely is saving lives, it's making a massive impact not just for the current generation but I can definitely see in our local setting it's having a ripple effect.'

Mohammed Azum, Headteacher

Join us

You can help protect young people by supporting our healthy relationships programmes in schools and other youth settings. Join the Tender family today to create a kinder, safer generation tomorrow.

To discuss becoming a Tender Friend, Guardian or Corporate Partner, please contact katedolleymore@tender.org.uk.



tender

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