



Beyond Grants

Blaggrave grants and programmes strategy

Executive Summary

Our grant making remains focused on young people who face deep-rooted inequalities and who are leading change. However, it is shifting from national and regional programmes to deeper work with young people and communities in three local areas: Birmingham, London and Portsmouth. We'll gradually adapt existing programmes so that more of our funding focuses on these three areas. The shift reflects what we've learned: lasting change grows from deep, trusting relationships within specific communities, not from funding that's spread too thinly across the country.

We'll continue backing young people directly through our Challenge & Change programme and Pathways Fund. Over the coming three years, these programmes will transition to support young changemakers in our three focus areas. We'll also fund the local organisations and infrastructure that create the conditions for them to thrive.

Moving into Place

We'll listen closely to community voices to co-design new programmes, responding to local needs and helping to create pathways to changemaking, sometimes through community-run buildings or youth hubs where young people can gather, learn and lead. Every new programme will follow inclusive, participatory, principles, with young people shaping the decisions that affect them.

Eventually, this may mean that Blaggrave transitions from traditional grant making to long-term community infrastructure investments in Birmingham, London and Portsmouth. This is a long-term goal over the next 10–15 years, as Blaggrave works with local communities, partners and young people to ensure their readiness for this self-supporting approach.

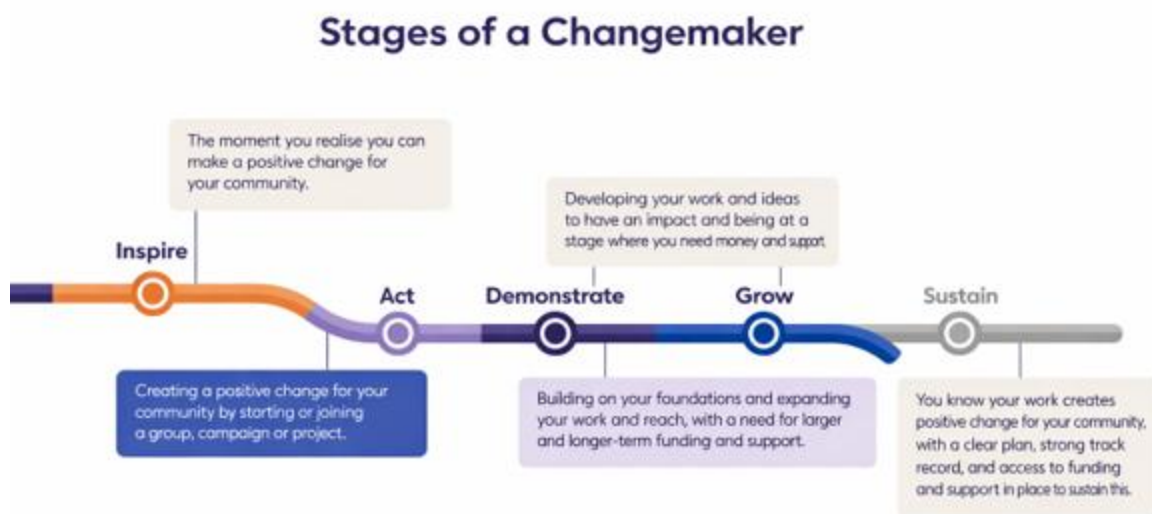
Beyond Grants

Across all of this, we remain committed to support beyond grants – offering partners the care, trusting relationships and practical support that goes beyond financial investment. This includes youth-work-informed grant managers, wellbeing and organisational development support, events, lending profile, and opportunities to connect with peers and influence nationally.

The changemaker journey

In July 2024 we commissioned research which aimed to identify the different stages a changemaker will typically go through in their journey. We know the journey is not linear, and can go forwards and backwards, but it's important because it helps us better understand what support changemakers need and how we can best provide it. We used this knowledge, which was co developed with young changemakers, to guide the development of this strategy.

Through our grant making, we aim to create the supportive conditions that enable young people to follow their journey as changemakers – feeling inspired that they can make a difference, acting on their inspiration, demonstrating a different possible future, and growing beyond those foundations to sustain long-term change in place of deep-rooted inequalities.



Beyond Grants

Blaggrave grants and programmes strategy

At a time when inequality deepens, polarisation hardens, and opportunity shrinks, the Blaggrave Trust chooses hope. We begin with a fundamental truth: young people and their wider communities are already transforming their places and society for the better. What holds them back is not vision or courage, but unequal access to resources – money, time, capacity, and space – and the burden of entrenched social and economic barriers.

We recognise that our vision will take time to build, so this grants strategy describes how we will continue grant making in the meantime, to resource this transformative change now and for the future.

Blaggrave’s strategy focuses on future generations, recognising that young people are – and are likely to continue to be – disproportionately impacted by inequalities, injustices and climate crises. In response we will build up young people’s capacity to create change, now, and for future generations.

A transition strategy

Blaggrave’s work is in a time of transition. By 2030 we will be working in three locations, Birmingham, London, and Portsmouth. From 2026 to 2030 we will move our currently national programmes to support these areas.

This strategy sets out how we will transform our national programmes into supporting place-based needs, and the principles we will use to develop new grant programmes. We recognise that we will need to bridge from the national to the local, and that this requires

Young people will remain at the heart of our work as we transition from national to local focus. Even within our place-based approach, we recognise that young people will still need support to come together and be heard nationally to support their communities.

We will remain a grant maker that provides grant funding directly to young people, through our flagship programmes Challenge and Change and the Pathways Fund.

We will fund established organisations in each of the three areas that support young people to thrive, and the national and local infrastructure that, in turn, supports those organisations so there is wrap-around support.

We will also fund organisations that enable community wealth-building¹ and youth-led changemaking to thrive, with young people at the heart.

We are aware that this strategy means we must listen and design alongside local communities. We are committed to slowing down, surfacing questions, listening to feedback and adapting as we go.

¹ **Community wealth building** is a place-based approach to economic development that focuses on keeping wealth within communities and using it to deliver shared, long-term benefit. It is about creating a resilient and inclusive economy for the benefit of the local area, and emphasises democratic ownership, the development of shared community assets such as buildings and spaces, and inclusive participation, ensuring that economic value is held and reinvested locally rather than extracted.

How and why we think change will happen:

The change we seek can only succeed if young people are able to generate solutions and sustain themselves. For young people to lead successful social justice projects that centre long-term community leadership, we need to create a supportive ecosystem around them.

Even though their focus may be place-based, if we support young people to engage in national conversations, they can create deeper impact at a local level, gaining inspiration from others; they can also achieve wider impact nationally as they share their local learning beyond their immediate community.

We have documented the stages of a changemaker's journey (see page 13) and understand that an individual goes through five distinct stages to feel confident in their abilities.

By funding work that supports all stages of a changemaker's journey, we can build the collective capacity of young people to lead the community 'wealth' we are creating.

Stages of a changemaker – and how Blaggrave grants programmes support

Stages of a changemaker	Blaggrave programmes
01 Inspire	Inspire Grants: Funding for established organisations that support core needs and support young changemakers on the start of their journey
02 Act	Inspire Grants: Funding for established organisations that support core needs and support young changemakers on the start of their journey
03 Demonstrate	Challenge & Change: Funding and a programme of capacity building for young changemakers
04 Grow	<p>Pathways Fund: Long-term (three year) grant funding for lived experience youth-led groups to increase their sustainability and impact</p> <hr/> <p>Roots & Routes: A national, pooled fund, which supports youth-led groups, young changemakers and infrastructure organisations working on climate justice</p>
05 Sustain	<p>Transition Grants: Legacy grants for local Community Foundations in areas we are exiting</p> <hr/> <p>Challenge & Transform: Funding and support for youth organisations led by and for Black and racially minoritised communities</p>

Definition of infrastructure

We understand national infrastructure to be the organisations, movements and alliances that support learning, skills, regulation and advocacy on behalf of the sector as a whole. (Definition inspired by the Funders Collaborative Hub, 2025.)

We understand local infrastructure to be the framework of institutions and physical spaces that support shared civic life in a place or community. (Definition taken from Local Trust, 2025.)

We expect to be supporting both over the coming years of the strategy and will make long-term commitments where we can.

Learning from our 2022–2026 strategy

- We learned that young changemakers exist across the country but frequently lack access to funding, support and opportunities.
- We learned that we can achieve greater impact by working in a concentrated area, and national-level programmes require much greater resources than we have.
- We learned that funding young people directly leads to deep-rooted, long-term change, yet much of the current funding system excludes them.
- We learned how to support young people to become empowered within established organisations, institutions and in policy making; ensuring their rights are realised and acted upon.
- We learned that young people need significant non-financial support as well as a grant to truly thrive, including development/capacity building, wellbeing, and a strong peer network.
- We learned how important relationships are in supporting youth-led changemakers and that youth-work skills in our team are vital.
- We learned that events offer vital opportunities for community building, inspiration and connection that are not currently available elsewhere.

How will this work?

There are three stages to this process for the Grants team:



01 Closing

We are bringing two of our current programmes to a close: the Young People in Policy Fund and the Regional Programme.

Young People in Policy Fund: We're ending our funding of this programme because we recognise the scale of resources required to have impact. We have a unique role in the sector as a smaller funder that has the processes, culture, and knowledge to fund young people directly, so we will build on our strengths to bring young people to the forefront of policy-influencing activities rather than supporting organisations acting on their behalf.

Regional Programme: Through our ten years of funding incredible partners across the Southeast region, our learning has been that true transformation comes from deep long-term relationships based on trust, which is best achieved within a specific community or place. Therefore, we will no longer be funding across such a broad geographic area.

Through the end of our current strategy, we aim to:

- communicate clearly to partners past, present and future;
- bring existing grant partnerships to a close as positively as possible; and
- support partners who may be reliant on Blagrave funding to access other sources of funding.

02 Adapting

We will continue to provide funding for young people directly through Challenge and Change and the Pathways Fund, to fund established organisations in the

three agreed areas, and continue our commitment to a pooled fund for climate activists in the short term.

The rationale for choosing these programmes to sustain:

We have chosen to sustain these specific programmes for three key reasons:

- Our direct funding for young people is unique in the sector. Challenge and Change and Pathways Fund reflect our risk tolerance and expertise, filling an essential gap that others are less able to meet.
- We have the expertise, track record and skills in running these programmes well, particularly in the vital area of safeguarding support.
- We understand all these programmes, including events, are essential for youth-led change to thrive – forming a core part of our theory of change.

Our commitment to anti racism and anti-oppression in our grant making

We will continue to explore how we can build on our anti racist practice, as the first step to increasing our commitment to equity and inclusion.

Taking a baseline in 2026, we will increase the amount of funding we provide to partners that are led by and for Black and racially minoritised people by 2030. We will learn from our current grants and from other funders promoting racial equity in their approach. We commit to actively promoting anti-racist best practice in grant making. Our commitment to anti-racism and inclusive practice document can be found [here](#).

Our Beyond Grants approach

Our strategy commits us to utilising all our resources in support of our mission. In the same way, we are committed to supporting our partners with much more than just funding.

Our investment in partners includes the strength of our people, culture practice and relationships, our significant capacity-building offer (which includes organisational development and wellbeing support), and the events and profile-raising opportunities we offer them.

From 2026, **all** partners – existing and new – will receive our minimum support offer of:

- A named account manager

- At least one catch-up meeting a year to reflect on progress and learning
- At least one shout out on social media, celebrating their work
- Invitation to events
- Endorsements and recommendations with other funders, e.g. references and recommendations
- Access to work and meeting space

All youth-led partners will **also** get:

- Named account manager with youth-work experience
- Wellbeing support
- Organisational development support (budget and/or masterclasses)
- Programme cohort related events and/or workshops
- Youth Led Change Day: an opportunity for connection and inspiration with other changemakers across the country
- Storyteller support and a comms platform
- Access to a library of resources (tools, templates, signposting) alongside a trusted grant manager
- Access to our alumni network

This is what we mean by 'Beyond Grants'.

Staffing skills

Our new investment approach requires us to think differently about the skills we need in the team. All youth-led change grant managers and officers (anyone holding grant management relationships) will be offered:

- Youth-work training
- Mental health first aid training
- Training on a coaching approach
- Grant management training
- Training on equity, inclusion, and anti-racism.

03 Creating

Once we have moved into place-based working, we will develop additional new grants programmes that are appropriate for the area.

These will be led by the needs of the local communities. This means we will have a deliberate, iterative process, which allows us to listen to communities and bridge

that with our knowledge of youth-led change. We will co-design solutions with the local community that will enable them to engage in community wealth-building that both integrates and supports youth-led change.

Our youth hubs or community spaces will only be established in areas where they have been identified as a need by local communities and young people. Another vital condition is the community desire to support youth-led change.

All new grant programmes will follow Blaggrave's 'approach' and we commit to embedding participatory approaches in all new programmes.

Impact Measurement

We will know when our programmes are successful when:

<p>Challenge and Change</p>	<p>Young people from Birmingham, London and Portsmouth are supported to demonstrate their lived, learned and practiced experience in service of wider deep-rooted, long-term change.</p> <p>Young people leave the programme as active changemakers.</p>
<p>Pathways Fund</p>	<p>Social justice organisations led by and for young people with lived expertise leave the programme more sustainable for the future.</p> <p>A strong local civic society is built in Birmingham, London and Portsmouth with young people and youth-led groups at its heart driving innovation for themselves and future generations.</p>
<p>Established organisations</p>	<p>We have contributed towards a thriving youth civil society in Birmingham, London and Portsmouth.</p> <p>Young people are inspired on their changemaking journey.</p> <p>Young people facing significant inequalities have their basic needs met.</p> <p>Youth organisations in each area increase their own internal accountability to young people.</p>
<p>Roots & Routes</p>	<p>More funding is available for youth-led grassroots groups working on climate justice.</p>

Our Grants and Programmes

