

**Our funding during Covid-19**

**June 2020 update**

This short update is part of our ongoing commitment to clear and transparent communication about our work during, and post, Covid-19

**Initial response**. In the first few weeks (March – May 2020), we:

1. **Reassured and reminded all our partners of the flexibility of our existing grants** and associated conditions and freed up any other grants that did have restrictions so that partners could use those funds in the best way possible, to meet their current needs.
2. Offered the option to partners of **bringing forward scheduled grants** to ease cash flow where appropriate.
3. **Listened to our partners**. We held a space for regional partners to connect, share resources, and discuss issues they felt useful. Where possible we fed in what we heard to other funders and coordination forums so that the specific concerns of the organisations we support at this time were not lost (e.g. that many funders were offering ‘flexibility’ with their grants to deal with Covid - only to ask them to nominate new restrictions in each and every case!) We also drew on their feedback to inform our own strategy and response.
4. **Made new additional unrestricted funding** available to 7 existing partners in the SE region in solidarity with their work with young people during the Covid crisis. We offered these grants as unrestricted contributions to costs, with no strings attached. The criteria for our decision were that organisations:
* were providing an immediate response to young people’s needs
* were supporting young people who were most marginalised
* had a funding need, and our funding was able to make a difference
* were not due an imminent continuation grant payment from us

See our Covid-19 grants here: <https://covidtracker.threesixtygiving.org/>

1. Are investing **new funding** into work focused on the huge implications of Covid-19 on youth employment. In close consultation with others, we have spent the past 6 weeks scoping two pieces of work that we believe can make a valuable contribution to ensuring an adequate policy response to this significant issue that is informed by young people themselves. We are commissioning two pieces of complementary work:
* Research and advocacy which will develop **systemic, ambitious policy solutions** that draw out and connect the longer-term ‘future of work’ trends, the implications of the immediate impact of the crisis, and medium-term policy solutions.
* **a national 'listening' piece of work** and advocacy aimed at capturing what is happening to young people, what they want from their working lives, and to share their ideas for what needs to happen next as part of the rebuild phase. This will support young people to advocate for the opportunity to be involved in discussions and decisions about youth employment over the next 6-9 months.

Both the above pieces of work are highly collaborative – we are working across various funders and delivery organisations and think-tanks to ensure that any response to young people’s pressing concerns are well coordinated, do not duplicate each other’s efforts and will result in clear outcomes for young people

1. As part of the work with the Listening Fund we have commissioned some **research about** **listening in a crisis** which focuses on Covid 19 but could be applied in other crisis scenarios. We want to understand how partners’ listening practice and culture has been affected by the pandemic, and where they have been able to draw on their listening practice, how this enhanced their response to Covid-19. This research, which aims to surface lessons which can be applied in other crises, will be available by end June 2020.

**Moving Forwards** into recovery …

1. We will be **reopening our regional grants programme** in July 2020 for exceptional work with young people in the SE of England (Berkshire, Hampshire, Sussex and Wiltshire). We are committed to supporting organisations that bring lasting change to the lives of young people to enable them to make a positive transition to adulthood. The C-19 crisis has highlighted the true impact of inequality for the young people we seek to serve and the needs of the most vulnerable. We recognise these needs have not gone away in the face of the crisis. We are committed to backing longer term opportunities for innovation, recovery, and re-start by organisations where young people’s feedback is leading.
2. We are exploring **direct funding for young people leading change.** Support and stability for young leaders - particularly those motivated by their own lived experience of social injustice – is critical at this time to ensure they can advocate for systemic solutions to problems as they understand them. In this initial pilot we plan to make a small number of grants of £1,000 to £10,000 for youth led initiatives which have a clear idea and have begun to generate some momentum, and require funding to begin scaling up their work.

We will continue to develop all our other ongoing programmes of work which we consider as important as ever, if not more so. This includes funding that supports young people to lead change themselves (see more about our [Opportunity Fund](https://www.blagravetrust.org/learning/what-we-fund/opportunity-fund/)), and funding that address root causes of the issues we see manifest in young people’s problems and that supports advocacy, policy, research or campaigning.

We will continue to update our website with information on our longer-term plans to keep partners and potential applicants informed of our thinking and actions. If you have any comments or questions please contact us via grants@blagravetrust.org.