

**Blaggrave.**  
investing in  
young people

# Our Strategy 2022–2026

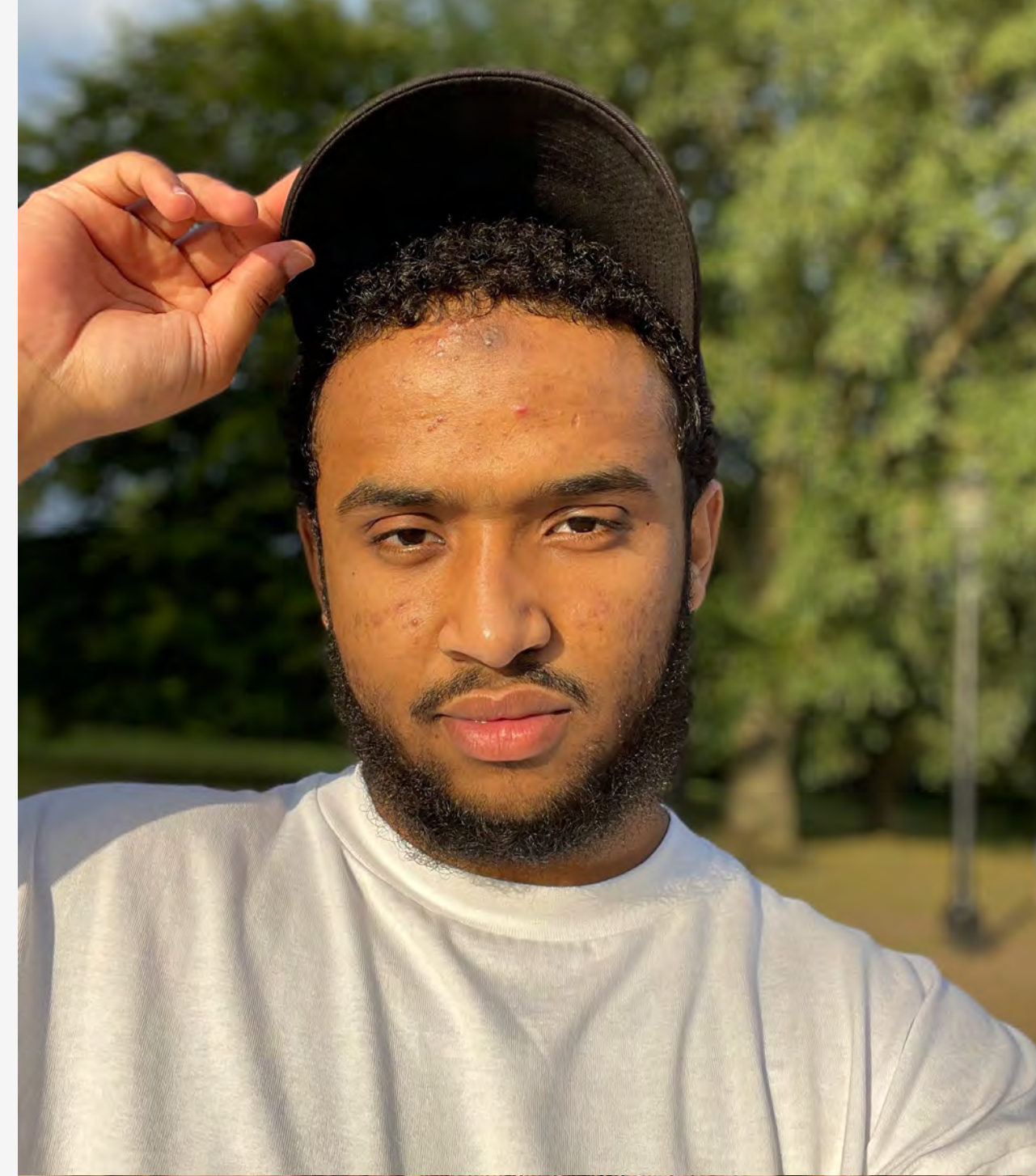


## **Our vision**

**A world where all young people have hope, access to the support they need, a stake in society and influence over their futures**

## **Our mission**

**To bring lasting change to the lives of young people; investing in them as powerful forces for change and acting upon their right to be heard in pursuit of a fair and just society**



# Our values

## Responsible

Alert to any potential negative impacts of our work, always prioritising doing no harm

## Adaptive

Critically assessing our work and evolving in response to what we learn

## Collaborative

Partnering with others

## Intentional

Using all of our resources in pursuit of our mission

## Transparent

Communicating openly and making our decisions and policies public and accessible

## Trusting

Recognising and respecting the lived experience and expertise of those we work with

## Progressive

Willing to challenge the status quo in the pursuit of social justice

## Inclusive & equitable

Bringing diverse people together to redress power imbalances

# Our approach



## The young people we are here to serve

**We exist for young people in adolescence and early adulthood. It is to them that we are accountable.** It is clear that for the majority of young people in the UK, the aspirations and ambitions for the security that their parents or grandparents had, are unlikely to be met. Home ownership is increasingly out of reach for under 35's. For young people entering the job market in 2021 the effects of the pandemic may be long-term and costly. For some young people in particular, poverty, poor mental health, unequal access to opportunities, or other forms of social exclusion from early childhood, will have long-term consequences.

In consulting young people directly about our strategy, we were told that **the majority of young people feel that they are growing up in a system that is not working for them.** It was also clear that the young people we spoke to were uncomfortable with words that could be interpreted as labels and which

might simply reinforce a sense of powerlessness and erode trust.

Therefore, we are here to serve those communities of young people, who are both challenging and experiencing injustice in their individual lives and within society. This means young people who are the most disadvantaged as a result of poverty, social exclusion, discrimination or any other contributing factors. We do not seek to categorise young people or reduce their circumstances to eligible checklists so this description does not attempt to be comprehensive. And we recognise and prioritise funding work that tackles the intersection of issues for example, racial justice and poverty.

We are not here to serve those young people who are fortunate to have stable homes, privileged education, and access to significant financial and social capital.

## Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

Our focus on young people who face the most challenges or biggest barriers speaks to our wider [commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion](#).

In all we do we seek to proactively engage, understand, and draw on a range of young perspectives that represent the rich and varied identities and differences that exist in the UK today. We are proud that our own Board models this commitment.

In upholding equity we believe in equality of opportunity and access to information and resources for all. We believe this is only possible in an environment built on respect and dignity for young people and their contributions.

In affirming the value of inclusion we are building a culture that actively invites the contribution and participation of varied young people. We believe every person's voice adds value, and we strive to create balance in the face of power differences.

## **Our ways of working**

Blagrave has been practising a **relational and trusting** approach to partnership for many years – this continues to sit at the heart of how we fund. We treat our partners – young and old, grassroots and growing, or well-established charities – as equals. We approach those relationships in a spirit of humility, **collaboration** and mutual learning. We do not consider ourselves the experts, and we have much to learn and improve upon. We resist at all times the tendency to reduce relationships to bureaucracy and transaction, respecting the information that organisations already produce publicly, and the value of connection. We wish to stand alongside those who face injustice, working in an empathetic way.

Our funding is rarely for less than 3 years, and where partnerships thrive often for longer. Where an organisation's whole mission and strategy aligns with ours we provide unrestricted grants, investing in the whole of an organisation. We gather anonymous **feedback** to check our own performance on these approaches at key points throughout the year and will make this public on our website.

We take an **holistic and intersectional** approach to what we fund. That is to say, we do not prioritise specific issues or sectors in our work or exclude certain areas. We are here to create impact and place great emphasis on evidence from young people themselves about the effectiveness of an organisation's work or approach.

In particular we believe we should **use all of our resources, including our investments in pursuit of our mission**. We have a responsible investment policy and investments that are actively seeking to avoid harm, benefit society and **contribute to solutions**. We are a signatory to the **Funder Commitment on Climate Change**. And, where we can play a role **convening partners** including funders, capturing and **sharing our learning** to contribute towards a collaborative sector and wider change, we will. We seek to be **transparent** – communicating openly and making our decisions and policies public and accessible via **our website**.

Finally we will always **centre diverse young voices** in our work to advance a **progressive** vision of philanthropy, **challenging the status quo** where necessary. We work alongside young people in various roles across our work to bring direct lived experience into our decision making, and we will continue to grow and build this way of working, at all times prioritising their wellbeing and safety, in how we work.

## **Geography of our funding**

We operate in England, with a historical focus on counties in the South East, particularly Wiltshire, Berkshire, Hampshire and the Isle of Wight, and Sussex. A significant part of our funding is focused in these areas, prioritising areas of deprivation in the region, including rural isolation. The work we do in collaboration with other funders, investing directly in young people creating change and/or policy influence, is often located further afield and/or national in focus. For further information on our geography please contact a member of our team or **visit our website**.

## **Governance**

Our board has a dynamic, diverse and exciting mix of lived and learned experience as well as technical knowledge and expertise which will enable the us to better fulfil our mission and support youth-led change. With a mission that centres on change for young people it is essential that young people are at the centre of our governance to hold us to account at all levels.



# Our objectives



## 1. Increasing civil society's accountability to young people

By investing in its capacity to support, listen and be held to account by young people.

### Key outcomes:

- Young people have their rights respected and needs met by the services that exist to support them.
- Young people have influence on the organisations, systems and institutions which exist to serve them.
- A responsive and collaborative youth sector emerges post-Covid-19.

## 2. Investing in young people to create change

By funding young people directly and building the infrastructure support they need.

### Key outcomes:

- Young people mobilising to create change in their communities<sup>1</sup> have a tried and tested route to access both funding and support for their work.
- Increased numbers of impactful youth-led campaigns.
- The UK field of youth led change grows and builds over time, as distinct and separate from the wider youth sector.

## 3. Investing in better youth policy

By supporting young people's democratic engagement, participation in policy-making and funding experts to research and advocate on their behalf where necessary.

### Key outcomes:

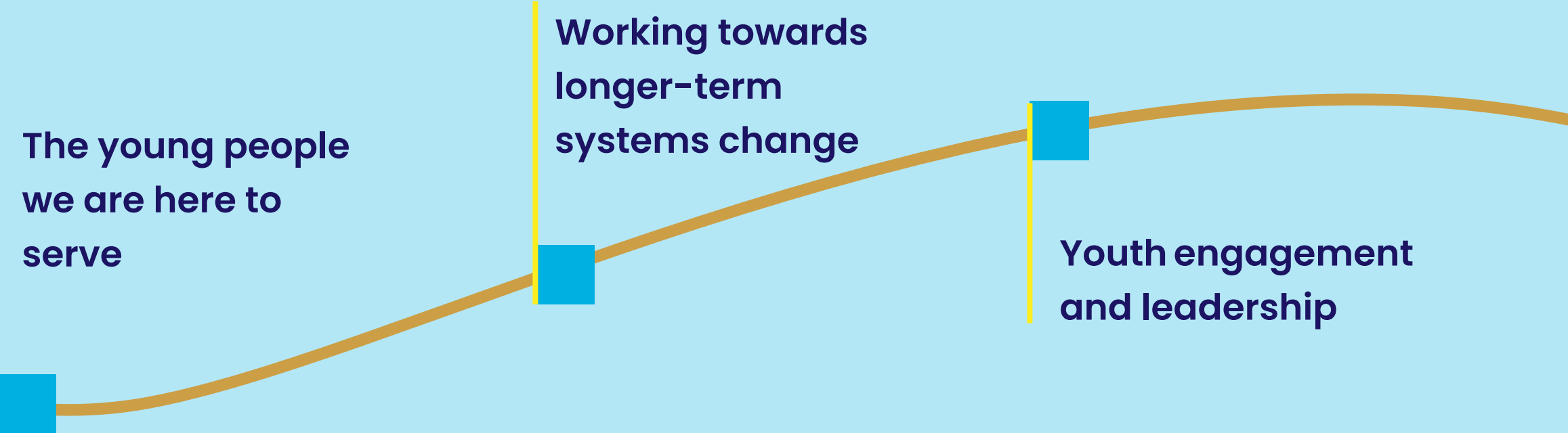
- Young people that are the most likely to be excluded from policy decisions are better represented.
- Young people with experience of social injustice gain agency and power as part of policy-making.
- Increased sector knowledge about how to enable young people to influence policy on local and national levels.

In all our areas of work we will remain open to expanding on what is promising and responding to critical priorities that emerge in the external landscape for young people, maintaining the right balance between established and consistent lines of work and innovating and adapting to what we hear.

<sup>1</sup> Community could be either a physical community of place or a community centered around an issue/area/identity

# Our priorities

When considering what we will fund, we will always prioritise: which young people organisations serve; whether work is contributing to longer-term systems change; and whether work centres youth engagement and leadership. These priorities run throughout all areas of our work.



The young people we are here to serve

Working towards longer-term systems change

Youth engagement and leadership

## 1. The young people we are here to serve

See page 5 to read more about the young people we are here to serve.

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## 2. Longer-term systems change

We acknowledge the value of work that supports young people in the here and now and/or exemplar service delivery work; that meets their need and supports change at an individual level. However, we also recognise that thousands of young people experience complex and chronic rights-related social welfare problems each year, particularly in the 18-24 age group. We therefore also prioritise work that seeks to drive institutional and systemic change, so going beyond just meeting immediate need. We know that many young people want to see decision-makers and power-holders held to account and that they often prioritise wider change for their peers. We are therefore interested in funding work that actively seeks to uphold and respect rights; shares knowledge and learning for wider influence; and challenges policies that perpetuate inequality and unjust systems.

## 3. Youth engagement and leadership

We want the young people we serve to:

- be listened to on issues that matter to them;
- influence and have greater control over the decisions that affect them;
- shape the services they need;
- gain decision-making power over resources (including philanthropic);
- hold other power-holders to account.

We will fund work that advances these goals, supporting organisations to advance practice, funding different models that advance learning in the sector and deliberative processes in the policy arena that advance how young people influence change. For more detailed information on our thinking read our policy on [youth engagement and leadership](#).



# In summary....

**Mission**  
To bring lasting change to the lives of young people; investing in them as powerful forces for change and acting upon their right to be heard in pursuit of a fair and just society

**Priorities**  
The young people we are here to serve; long-term systems change; youth engagement and leadership

**Objectives**  
Increasing civil society's accountability to young people

Investing in young people to create change

Investing in better youth policy

**Outcomes**  
Young people have their rights respected and needs met by the services that exist to support them.  
Young people have influence on the organisations, systems and institutions which exist to serve them.  
A responsive and collaborative youth sector emerges post-Covid-19.

Young people mobilising to create change in their communities have a tried and tested route to access both funding and support for their work.  
Increased numbers of impactful youth-led campaigns.  
The UK field of youth led change grows and builds over time, as distinct and separate from the wider youth sector.

Young people that are the most likely to be excluded from policy decisions are better represented.  
Young people with experience of social injustice gain agency and power as part of policy-making.  
Increased sector knowledge about how to enable young people to influence policy on local and national levels.

**Watch this space.**

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