

£368 million fund to improve youth services in underserved areas opens for bids

- Scheme is part of government commitment to ensure young people given access to more activities, trips away from home and volunteering opportunities
- Announcement follows 418 youth projects benefiting from £12 million of cash fast-tracked to those in need earlier this year

Youth services in the country's most underserved areas are being encouraged to apply for a slice of a £368 million fund to improve the health, wellbeing, skills and opportunities for young people.

The Youth Investment Fund, designed to create, improve and expand local youth facilities and services, today opens for bids from 45 local authorities and more than 600 district wards in some of the most deprived areas in England. It will provide funding to build or refurbish up to 300 youth facilities over the next 3 years, providing safe spaces in which young people can socialise and participate in a wide range of activities, including those designed to help support them into employment.

The funding forms part of the Government's ['National Youth Guarantee'](#) to ensure every young person right across England will have access to regular out of school activities, adventures away from home and opportunities to volunteer backed by a £560 million investment. These opportunities will help them develop the skills they need for life and work, improving their wellbeing and employability.

The guarantee also includes offering The Duke of Edinburgh's Award to every state secondary school for the first time, as well as increased access to social action projects or the opportunity to meet new people and learn life and work skills like money management or public speaking skills through the National Citizen Service.

Minister for Civil Society and Youth Nigel Huddleston said:

We are committed to ensuring that no young person is left out of reach or left behind, and have put it at the heart of our drive to level up this country.

I encourage eligible youth services to apply for this life-changing funding.

Nick Temple, CEO, Social Investment Business said:

All young people deserve access to high-quality youth services and great youth facilities to thrive in life, but youth provision across the country is sadly unequal. That's why we're proud to be able to apply our 20+ years' knowledge and experience of grant programmes and capital projects to design, manage and deliver the Youth Investment Fund.

Working alongside our partners National Youth Agency, Key Fund and Resonance, we'll enable up to 300 youth facilities to be built or refurbished over the next three years. This is a wonderful opportunity to prioritise the needs of young people in England and create a more equal society for future generations.

Earlier this year £12 million from the fund was fast-tracked to local youth services where supply was short of meeting demand. The aim was to cover small-scale capital improvements such as providing new laptops to youth groups, small redevelopments of buildings and facilities, and improving transport, such as providing a new minibus for a youth club so they can keep young people safe and extend activities beyond their local area.

BBC Children In Need was the grant administrator for the first phase of the Youth Investment Fund and distributed funding to some 418 eligible youth projects in the most in-demand areas which included:

- [The Community Court Yard](#) in Northampton, a social enterprise delivering traditional youth work, bespoke alternative education and creative workshops based on the youth work curriculum. It was awarded a grant of more than £44,740 to fund a vehicle for detached youth work, gaming booth equipment, CCTV and the refit of the gym area. It will help build positive behaviours and communication skills for disadvantaged young people.
- IMO (Inspire, Motivate, Overcome) Charity in Blackburn and Darwen, which aims to help local young people and their families to combat disadvantage and overcome challenges they face. The grant of £32,155, has funded equipment and furnishings for a new Youth Hub which will provide programmes, activities and a safe environment for young people who struggle at school with their mental health and who are in poverty.
- Brunswick Youth and Community Centre in Bootle, which provides a wide range of activities for young people, received £10,325 of funding to update a community garden space for the youth community centre. It will help promote wellbeing and healthy eating programmes for young people facing mental health challenges and/or at risk of exposure to gang culture.

Leigh Middleton, CEO, National Youth Agency said:

High quality, universal youth provision supports all young people to have somewhere safe to go, to socialise and learn new skills, with a trusted adult who is skilled and trained to support them.

We are delighted to be partnering with Social Investment Business on the design and delivery of the Youth Investment Fund. This provides much needed investment for youth centres and dedicated spaces for young people to go in their communities, as part of the government's National Youth Guarantee.

Working with SIB, youth sector partners and young people directly, our shared aim is to ensure the funding enables high quality youth work which will have the best outcomes for young people, and for communities to thrive.

Notes to editors:

- Applications are invited from local authorities. A full list of funded projects for Phase 1 can be found [here](#).
- Further details on the eligibility criteria for the second tranche of the Youth Investment Fund can be found [here](#). DCMS has developed a [detailed methodology](#) underpinning the selection of areas.
- The £380 million Youth Investment Fund comprises capital and resource funding.
- SIB will directly disperse £283 million capital funding and £58.9 million resource funding to successful projects. £5 million capital funding will be dispersed by DCMS. The remaining funds will be used to deliver the programme.
- DCMS will release up to £5 million of this funding through four pilot projects testing user requirements, layouts and construction approaches to meet the needs of organisations working with young people. The bidding window for the pilot projects closed on 3 July and successful projects will be delivered in 2022 and 2023.
- The National Youth Guarantee follows the completion of a [review of DCMS spending on out-of-school youth programmes](#). The review, which was announced in 2020, engaged around 6,000 young people and 175 youth sector organisations, and found that:
- The National Youth Guarantee is targeted at all 11-18 year olds, and up to 25 years old for those with special educational needs and disabilities
- Youth services are a vital part of the response to these challenges, delivering benefits for wellbeing and employability skills.
- Going forward, young people would like the Government to prioritise regular clubs and activities, adventurous trips, and support to volunteer in their local communities.
- [The full findings of the Government's review of public spending on out-of-school youth programmes](#)