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Department for
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#iwill Take Action

Introduction

The #iwill campaign is a collective effort involving over 800 partners from across the public, voluntary, education and business sectors with a vision to make meaningful social action part of life for 10 to 20 year olds, wherever they live and whatever their background. The #iwill campaign was launched in 2013 with cross-party and cross-sector support after research into how the business, education, public and voluntary sectors could support young people to engage in social action. The campaign was launched and coordinated by Step Up To Serve until 2020. For more information, visit www.iwill.org.uk and follow @iwill_campaign

The National Lottery Community Fund and the Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport each invested £25 million seed funding to create the #iwill Fund. The Virgin Money Foundation is match funding £250,000 from the #iwill Fund to create a £500,000, social action programme for the North East in 2021.

This new Virgin Money Foundation #iwill Take Action Fund takes our learning from the first round (2017 to 2019), advice from the Foundation's Youth Advisors and current funded organisations to re-launch the programme with new themes to reflect young people's current experiences and concerns. Whilst the themes are different, our aim remains to increase the number of opportunities for young people to volunteer and fundraise for, or campaign on, issues that are important to them. The programme will provide funding for high quality opportunities that connect young people authentically to causes they can address, focusing on the issues that matter to them.

COVID-19 has dominated the experience of us all over the last year. We have all, young people included, become acutely aware of the impact the pandemic has had on people's health, wealth and social interaction. There has also been a growing awakening amongst young people to the systemic injustices within our society –the health inequalities and economic inequalities that contributed to the heightened negative impacts of COVID within some communities and additionally the lack of racial equity in our society and the impact this has on people's lives. Through the fund we want to offer a way to channel energy into solutions that are good for communities, bold and youth-led.

All decisions made through the #iwill Take Action Fund are supported by the Foundation's Youth Advisors. You can learn more about our Youth Advisors [here](#).

Who will we support?

Virgin Money Foundation launched with a question. 'What do you see?' We asked people what potential they see in their local communities and they told us of their dreams and vision. We believe that these visions are important and that when resourced and supported, big changes can happen locally. Through the #iwill Take Action Fund we will seek to ask young people this same question and provide the resources and support to enable them to turn their vision into reality through their own social actions.

We are funding work under three key themes:

Crisis, Poverty and Isolation

We want to support youth led initiatives supporting local communities through the challenges that COVID has brought. During COVID we know that people have become more and more impacted by isolation. They may have been isolated in a violent relationship, isolated by poor mental health or isolated because they're shielding. We also know that the pandemic has deepened already prevalent economic inequalities pushing people further into poverty.

We have been inspired by young people we already work with, volunteering in local food banks and community hubs, delivering meals and activity packs, taking face-to-face support services online and campaigning on free schools meals or the current temporary Universal Credit increase.

There will be so much activity we just don't know about yet; young parents running a baby bank, furniture recycle schemes for those most in need of support or non-judgemental digital spaces for those isolated for a multitude of reasons. If young people you are working with have an idea or are active in this space we would love to hear from you.

Arts and Heritage

We want to support youth-led initiatives creating new ways of delivering the arts during a period where social distancing has re-shaped our use of collective spaces in our communities. We know from talking to our Youth Advisors and young people already funded through the #iwill Take Action Fund that the arts can give people a voice where they otherwise feel unheard, give people a creative outlet to help them to maintain positive mental wellbeing and to bring communities together.

The power of the arts as a tool for social action has been strongly evident in the social action projects funded by the Foundation to date. This portfolio has included work by Streetwise on Period Poverty, New Writing North on Racism and Unfolding Theatre on Climate Change. In each of these pieces of work young people have used the arts to make their voices heard, take action on issues they care about and create a sustainable legacy for their social action.

The arts have been particularly impacted by COVID-19, so we want to support young people to use their talents and energy to ensure that the arts can still be used to powerfully engage people with key social issues despite the changing uses of venues.

Community Justice

We want to support youth-led projects that examine and act upon inequalities including equity and justice in our communities. Community Justice brings together themes of concern for many young people, particularly in the current climate. Our Youth Advisors told us that our current system does not support all people equally and that COVID has really highlighted the issues of race related poverty.

We have learnt so much from young equality campaigners across the UK working to increase awareness of the impact inequality has in our communities be that gender, everyday sexism, class, pay, race and racism and many others. We've funded work bringing young women together to explore patriarchy and power and supported young people to lead cultural exchanges or organise events focused on community cohesion. Again, we know there is so much more already happening. If young people you are working with have an idea or are active in this space we would love to hear from you.

Your application

To be eligible to apply to the #iwill Take Action Fund you must be working with young people aged 10 to 20, or with young people with disabilities aged 10 – 25. You must be able to provide evidence that young people have been involved in the planning of your project and describe how the project will be youth-led for the duration of the grant. The Foundation team and Youth Advisors will expect to meet the young people leading the project at assessment; which may be online or by phone.

All funded projects will be working in the North East of England in a community within the top 20% of the UK Government Index of Multiple Deprivation. We will prioritise organisations based in the North East who are deeply rooted within their local context.

All activities must reflect the #iwill definition of social action, 'young people taking practical action in the service of others in order to create positive change that is of benefit to the wider community as well as to the young person themselves'. Activities can be:

- volunteering
- campaigning
- fundraising.

Charity commission guidance on campaigning can be found [here](#).

Applications will be assessed against their ability to meet the #iwill 6 principles that define great social action:



We will welcome applications that promote peer support, encouraging young people who regularly engage in youth social action to pass on their passion and support those who may be getting involved for the first time. We also welcome applications led by young people experiencing racial inequity, those with experience of the offending system, those who have experienced or are experiencing homelessness, young people with experience of or living with poor mental health and young parents.

The Virgin Money Foundation has a wider ambition to harness the Virgin Money brand and the skills and knowledge of our colleagues across the business. Each applicant will need to think creatively about how they can engage the business and capitalise on this opportunity to the benefit of the young people they are working with.

How much will we fund and when?

Applications can be from £10,000 to £50,000 for up to 18 months. Applications after 1st November 2021 will only be eligible for 12 months funding.

This is a rolling programme for 2021 and will close when all funds are allocated.

Applications will be assessed by a programme manager at Virgin Money Foundation and its Youth Advisors. We will expect the young people involved in the design and delivery of your project to be part of the assessment process.

Decisions will be made in June 2021, September 2021 and December 2021. If the fund is not yet allocated an additional meeting will take place in March 2022.

Exclusions

The #iwill Take Action Fund is unable to support:

- Anything that isn't defined as charitable by law.
- International appeals.
- Sponsorship appeals.
- Existing projects looking for backdated funding.
- Services that central or local government would normally pay for.
- Individual appeals.
- Animal welfare charities.
- The day-to-day costs of schools and other educational establishments.
- Medical treatment or research, hospices and medical centres.
- Promotion of religion or political parties.
- The costs of overseas travel, minibuses, holidays and outings.