



PRESS RELEASE

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Young people join forces to help the environment

A groundbreaking scheme to engage young people in environmental social action projects has ended on a high with more than 6,700 taking part.

Projects across England joined the Green Influencers Scheme, which has now come to an end after three successful years.

Under the Green Influencers Scheme, UK educational charity The Ernest Cook Trust helped 36 Host Organisations to fund the employment of 44 Green Mentors. Each Green Mentor enabled young people to lead the way as 'Green Influencers' on environmental social action projects.

The Scheme was match-funded through the #iwill Fund. The #iwill Fund is made possible thanks to £66 million joint investment from The National Lottery Community Fund and the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) to support young people to access high quality social action opportunities.

Green Influencers, mainly aged between 10 and 14, have been devising and delivering a range of innovative schemes, including seed swaps, hedgerow mapping, recycling old phones, and creating wildlife spaces. Eco classrooms have been built using bricks made of recycled plastic, and areas have been cleaned of litter.

The Scheme has enabled young people to improve their wellbeing and connection to nature, through carrying out projects that benefit their community.

Suzie Paton, Head of Grants & Partnerships at The Ernest Cook Trust, said:

“The Green Influencers Scheme showcased the importance of youth-led environmental action, which benefits the young people taking part and their wider communities, as well as the natural world as a whole. Young people have increased in confidence and skills, and communities involved are expressing more faith in the younger generation and more confidence in the future as a result.”

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Although the Green Influencers Scheme has come to an end, many of the Green Mentors will remain in post, and young people are continuing to work for the environmental benefit of their schools and communities.

In its place, a Blue Influencers Scheme is soon to be launched. This will connect young people to their local communities via blue spaces such as rivers, seas and estuaries, and has a particular focus on deprived areas.

The Ernest Cook Trust is one of the UK's foremost funders and providers of Outdoor Learning. It runs Outdoor Learning opportunities for children, young people, their families and communities on its own land as well as with partner estates. The Trust currently gives around £2M in grant funding every year to further Outdoor Learning and connecting young people to nature.

For information about The Ernest Cook Trust visit <https://ernestcooktrust.org.uk/>

