

Proudly supporting
youth social action



Department
for Culture,
Media & Sport



Dear Partner

Thank you so much for your interest in being a Host Organisation for the Blue Influencers Scheme. [The Ernest Cook Trust](#) is excited to work with young people in coastal, river and estuary communities, towns and cities to connect them to their local area and build confidence and resilience through environmental youth social action.

Within this document you will find all the information you need to enable you to be a Host Organisation.

If you have any further questions, please contact Robyn Riddoch (Programme Manager) at blueinfluencers@ernestcooktrust.org.uk.

What is The Ernest Cook Trust?

The Ernest Cook Trust is one of the UK's foremost funders and providers of Outdoor Learning. Our vision is for an environmentally engaged society, with increased connections to nature. We want to address the fact that Britain currently has one of the lowest levels of connection to nature and associated levels of wellbeing in Europe. Such disconnection has significant implications for health, social inclusion, educational attainment and environmental stewardship, particularly for underserved young people who tend to spend less time in outdoor spaces and nature than their peers.

What is the #iwill movement?

#iwill was set up to promote youth social action and was designed to make participation in social action the norm for young people under 20. Currently only four in 10 young people participate in meaningful social action and those from less affluent communities are much less likely to take part than their wealthier peers.

To achieve this, the #iwill movement communicates with, connects and challenges organisations across the UK to embed support for youth social action into their culture and practice. Youth social action refers to activities that young people do to make a positive difference to others or the environment.

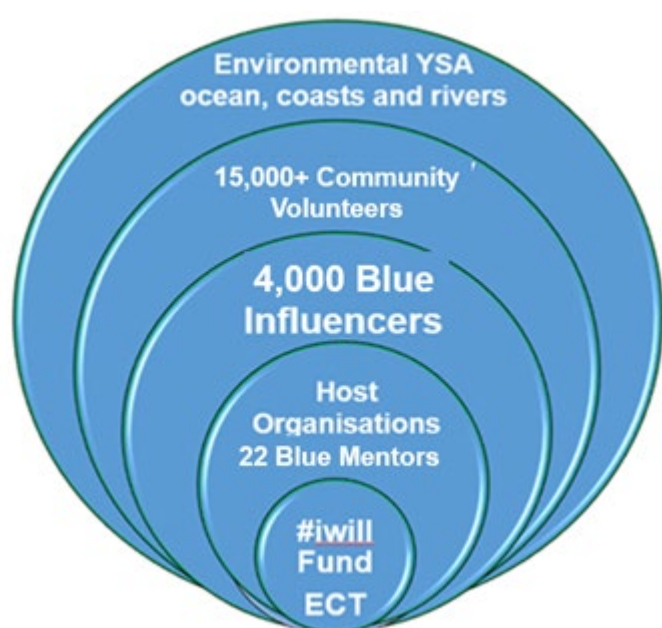
What is the Blue Influencers Scheme?

The Blue Influencers Scheme is a match-funded programme for environmental youth social action, funded by The Ernest Cook Trust and the #iwill Fund. The #iwill Fund is made possible thanks to £66million 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. The Ernest Cook Trust is acting as a match-funder and awarding grants on behalf of the #iwill Fund.

This Scheme has been developed in response to environmental concerns raised by young people living in coastal, river and estuary communities. These areas are likely to be severely

affected by climate change and are experiencing floods, raised sea levels and coastal erosion, as well as challenges for people, coastal economies and local industry. Evidence suggests that, despite living in proximity to the ocean, many deprived coastal communities do not feel welcome in these blue spaces or connected to their immediate environments.

The mission of the Blue Influencers Scheme is to assist young people to create deep, lasting and meaningful connections with the natural environment and their communities via their local blue spaces. We hope that they will learn and build skills which will help contribute to the local community and build a sense of pride by taking care of the natural world that surrounds them. They will also have the opportunity to learn about blue and green careers. The Scheme facilitates learning around effective engagement methods for young people for the benefit of the natural world, using these to address issues of pollution and biodiversity loss in UK waters as well as water usage and conservation.



The Ernest Cook Trust will provide grants to **registered charities** (*Host Organisations*) **across England** to employ *Blue Mentors*. Once employed, these Blue Mentors will recruit groups of passionate and motivated young people (*Blue Influencers*) to learn about key issues affecting their local oceans, rivers and estuaries, designing and delivering projects to tackle these. Examples could include a plastic reduction scheme in a local school, a youth group organising a litter pick of a local beach or an awareness-raising event in a community centre.

Blue Influencers Scheme 'ripple effect' for environmental youth social action

As a **youth-led project**, our Youth Advisory Board which comprises of 10 young people aged 14 to 20 will make key decisions on selecting Host Organisations and on steering the direction of the Scheme over the next three years.

Project grant funding will be available for Blue Influencers groups from The Ernest Cook Trust.

- Every Blue Influencers group (target age 10-14) meeting basic criteria will be eligible for an initial **360° Grant** of £360 (to represent 360° circle of influence) for a project idea.
- Groups are then invited to apply for **Blue Influencers Project Grants** of up to £5,000 to develop their projects and maximise outcomes for their communities and the environment. It is anticipated that these grants will go directly to the school or youth group that your Blue Mentor is working with. Our Youth Advisory Board will make decisions on awards for Blue Influencers Project Grants.

Blue Mentors will be part of a network of practitioners across England and will be required to attend regular training, networking and skill-sharing events with their fellow Blue Mentors and other outdoors educators.

Am I eligible to be a Host Organisation?

Host Organisations must be:

- A registered, exempt or excepted charity
- Located or working in an underserved community (ranking highly on the Multiple Deprivation Indices), near a blue space e.g coast, estuary, waterway or river in England
- Experienced in marine, river, watercourse environmental issues, community/youth work or both
- Be able to support a Blue Mentor through regular line management

What does a Host Organisation need to do?

- Have up to date and relevant policies and procedures including Safeguarding, Health and Safety, GDPR, Equality, Diversity & Inclusion and Complaints.
- Create a job description and contract for a Blue Mentor to work in your organisation, based on role description provided by The Ernest Cook Trust (see Appendix 1)
- Ensure understanding of requirements of the Blue Mentor role including outcome measurements and reaching targets
- Ensure appropriate line management and support for the Blue Mentor to reach targets, record outcomes and deliver projects
- Ensure continuation of role, including covering any periods of re-employment.
- Submit yearly reports (when requested) on results of funding
- Support Blue Mentor by building on existing and potential partnerships in the local community

What does a Blue Mentor need to do?

- Actively build partnerships with local schools and youth groups in underserved areas in order to recruit Blue Influencers
- Work with a minimum of 180 young people (target age 10 -14 years old) over the three years of the Scheme.
- Work with groups of young people to develop youth-led project ideas focused on 'blue' environmental issues affecting their local communities (eg plastic waste, beach/river litter, flooding); projects must be designed and delivered by young people and led by them
- Support the groups in reaching out to community organisations, neighbourhoods and peer groups to work with them on their projects and ensure they are embedded in the local community and create a sense of connection to place

- Apply for 360° Grant and Project Grant funding from The Ernest Cook Trust on behalf of Blue Influencers groups
- Ensure long-term viability of group projects by researching further funding opportunities, creating community connections or setting up structures that ensure long-term impact of projects
- Ensure all reporting requirements for delivery are completed and using qualitative and quantitative methods for gathering data and impact measurement. This will include ensuring young people complete start and end of project monitoring forms, carrying out facilitated group evaluation and completing project updates via an online database
- Actively participate in online and in-person meetings and conferences with fellow Blue Mentors and other outdoor educators

More details can be found in Appendix 1: Blue Mentor Job Description

What will The Ernest Cook Trust do?

- Provide funding for Blue Mentor role of £20,000 per Host Organisation per year (inclusive of £3,000 for overhead and management costs) plus technology requirements for the new role
- Provide funding for Blue Influencers group projects via 360° Grants and Blue Influencers Project Grants
- Provide regular opportunities for informal networking and formal training and skill-sharing between Blue Mentors
- Provide funding for Blue Mentors to travel to events and networking opportunities arranged by The Ernest Cook Trust
- Provide a toolkit for Blue Mentors with responsibilities and resources for their role
- Provide monitoring and evaluation guidelines and input frameworks, including training for Blue Mentors on requirements for assessing the impact of the Scheme
- Provide regular support to line managers and Blue Mentors to carry out the Scheme
- Provide regular check-ins with Blue Mentors to check on issues and challenges with delivery and to assess training needs of the group

Timetable for Host Organisations

Friday 1 September 2023	Open for Expressions of Interest from potential Host Organisations
Monday 25 September 2023	3pm Expressions of Interest close
By Friday 6 October 2023	Selected invitations for Full Applications issued
Thursday 26 October 2023 at 3pm	Deadline for Full Applications
by Friday 24 November 2023	Successful Host Organisations notified Recruitment for Blue Mentors begins
Friday 15 December 2023	First funding instalment paid
January - March 2024	Delivery of Blue Influencers Scheme begins
December 2024	First Host Organisation report due Second funding instalment paid
December 2025	Second Host Organisation report due Third funding instalment paid
January - March 2027	Blue Mentor contracts end Delivery of Blue Influencers Scheme ends

Next steps:

If you are interested in becoming a Host Organisation for the Blue Influencers Scheme please use the link below to send us an Expression of Interest by 3pm on Monday 25 September 2023.

Our Youth Advisory Board will select organisations that will be invited to apply for Full Applications and you will be notified by 5 October 2023.

Click the link here : [Expression of Interest Application Form](#)

If you have any further questions, please contact Robyn Riddoch (Programme Manager) at blueinfluencers@ernestcooktrust.org.uk

Appendix 1: Sample Blue Mentor Job Description

Job Title: Blue Mentor

Directly responsible to: Local Host Organisation management

Pay range: £30,000 – £34,000 FTE

Contract: 0.5 part time to full time – 3-year fixed term contract

About The Ernest Cook Trust and the Blue Influencers Scheme:

The Blue Influencers Scheme is a match-funded programme for environmental youth social action, funded by The Ernest Cook Trust and the #iwill Fund. The #iwill Fund is made possible thanks to £66million 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. The Ernest Cook Trust is acting as a match-funder and awarding grants on behalf of the #iwill Fund.

Our vision at The Ernest Cook Trust is for an environmentally engaged society with increased connections to nature. The mission of the Blue Influencers Scheme is to assist young people (target age 10-14 year olds) from coastal river and estuarine communities to create deep, lasting and meaningful connections with the natural environment and with their local communities and to embed a culture where youth social action becomes the norm.

Purpose of the role:

- Build a network of organisations, charities, groups and institutions in your area that support young people and are looking to enable environmental youth social action
- Engage with 60 young people (target age 10-14 year olds) per year of the project *or* a total of 180 young people across three years
- Facilitate Blue Influencers learning around coastal and marine environmental issues and other environmental issues affecting their communities
- Support the Blue Influencers groups in the conception, planning, delivery and continuation of youth-led environmental social action projects of their choosing, to the benefit and involvement of their local community and to the benefit of the natural world
- Actively connect Blue Influencers groups with other local organisations to embed projects in local communities and facilitate intergenerational and cross-cultural projects
- Support local networks in communicating and embedding environmental change beyond the life of the projects
- Be an active member of regional and national network of Blue Mentors

Role responsibilities and tasks:

Supporting Blue Influencers to deliver inspiring projects

- Identify Blue Influencers from a diverse range of the local community via connections with schools, youth groups or other groups specifically targeting areas of disadvantage:
 - Neighbourhoods high on the Multiple Deprivation Indices
 - Schools with high levels of Free School Meals/Pupil Premium
 - Pupils at risk of exclusion
 - Young people from the LGBTQ+ community
 - Minoritised ethnic groups
 - Young carers
 - Refugees and asylum seekers
 - Children with adverse childhood experiences
 - Looked After Children
 - SEND young people
- Facilitate the creation of Blue Influencers groups providing the support, encouragement and advice where required
- Enable the groups to conceive youth-led environmental youth social action projects with a clear plan for funding, delivery and evaluation
- Support the groups in reaching out to community organisations to work with them on their projects to ensure projects are embedded in the local community and create a sense of connection to place
- Help Blue Influencers share their youth-led projects via social and other media to engage their community, build momentum and share their successes
- Ensure youth-led social action projects meet #iwill's six principles of quality youth social action ie youth-led, challenging, socially impactful, progressive, embedded and reflective

Creating a network of community partners

- Identify local organisations that work with and support young people and those that are actively looking to work with more young people
- Create opportunities for Blue Influencers to build their own community networks
- Act as a link between Blue Influencers groups and community partners to build ongoing support for projects and groups

Evaluating, communicating and sharing the project outcomes

- Ensure evaluation is embedded into each Blue Influencers project using qualitative and quantitative evaluation tools provided by the Trust and the #iwill Fund
- Report on project outcomes and evaluation data using reporting methods provided by The Ernest Cook Trust and the #iwill Fund

- Work with The Ernest Cook Trust's Programme Manager to ensure projects meet funding criteria and are administered in line with due diligence guidance
- Actively communicate the work of the Blue Influencers groups both regionally and nationally through the wider project network and social media

Build local and regional momentum for environmental action

- Share best practice and lessons learnt with the wider network of Blue Mentors
- Act as an ambassador for youth social action and youth-led work for your Host Organisation including encouraging senior leadership to sign up to the #iwill Power of Youth charter and, where possible, implementing youth-led decision making in other areas of your organisation's work
- Support Blue Influencers to continue environmental action beyond their initial project, identifying further funding, partners or opportunities
- Where possible, link with other Blue Mentors at a regional level to create a network of influencers and mentors
- Attend national training and networking events (in-person and online) organised by The Ernest Cook Trust to further develop professional skills that expand the range and impact of local activity

Personal Specifications:

Knowledge

- Good knowledge of the local community and of local youth provision
- Good understanding of health and safety practices in an outdoor setting
- Good knowledge of youth engagement techniques, working in a youth-led way or youth work principles
- Knowledge of blue and green environmental sector

Skills and Experience

- Facilitating groups of young people
- Working in youth voice, youth leadership or youth empowerment contexts
- Organising outdoor visits and resources
- Writing risk assessments and safety procedure documents
- Experience evaluating learning experiences and outcomes
- Experience in budget management or grant applications
- Experience in managing projects for community and environmental benefit
- Good IT skills including Microsoft programmes, databases and social media

Qualifications

- Outdoor first aid - minimum 16hrs (training provided)
- Youth leader, coaching or mentoring or equivalent experience
- Background in marine science or environmental engagement/communication

General

- Satisfactory enhanced DBS disclosure
- Sympathy with the aims and values of The Ernest Cook Trust and the #iwill Fund