Blagrave. investing in young people



Impact Report 2023



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Message from the Chair of Trustees

Hello!

Whilst 2023 remained quite a turbulent year across the country for many young people, it was a year that brought some stability for The Blagrave Trust following a year of transition, allowing us to strengthen our roots.

It was also a year where trustees and the staff team embraced their commitment to learning more about oppression and how it works in today's systems.

We started the year by providing a small uplift in our grants to recognise the cost-of-living crisis that is impacting many organisations across the country.

The official launch of the Pathways
Fund and the Partner Development
Fund for youth-led groups has
provided a deeper appreciation of
the need to not just fund young people
directly but support the success and
ambition that may materialise from
that initial seed funding.

The Trust continues to listen and learn and has supported the strengthening of infrastructure around youth organising and youth-led change overall throughout 2023.

The year also saw another very successful, very much appreciated and loved Regional Partners' Day as well as two separate days for young people connected to Blagrave's work, the Youth-led Change Event and a Challenge and Change Celebration Event.

Blagrave continues to appreciate the support and partnership from the Nineteen Eighty-Nine Charitable Trust, BBC Children in Need, the Esmée FairbairnCharitable Trust, the National LotteryCommunity Fund, the Paul HamlynFoundation and the Tudor Trust.

Thank you for being part of our story.



Segun OlowookereChair, Board of Trustees

Message from the CEO

It has been a huge honour to support such incredible people, ideas, organisations, movements and collectives that are transforming society and the realities for young people across England.

I have been so inspired on the visits I have had to meet our partners, and been struck by the true care and deep relationships with the communities they are serving.

These visits hugely impacted my thinking in terms of how we can best support our partners' work and how we share these insights with fellow funders.

As changemakers rise to the challenges and opportunities to create impact, empower young folks and influence structures and policies that govern so much of our lives, we too transform as an organisation.

2023 has been a year of significant change for Blagrave.

Whilst continuing to deliver funding, we turned our attention internally with the understanding that we needed to grow our collective knowledge around anti-oppressive practice, to strengthen our safeguarding culture in accordance with our values, take time to learn more about the needs, hopes and dreams of the young people we exist to serve and step up to confront the climate crisis.

I thank our brilliant team and trustees for all of your hard work and unwavering commitment to young people, you all truly inspire me every day to stay hopeful for the change we all, together, can drive forward.

With warmth,



Eli Manderson Evans CEO

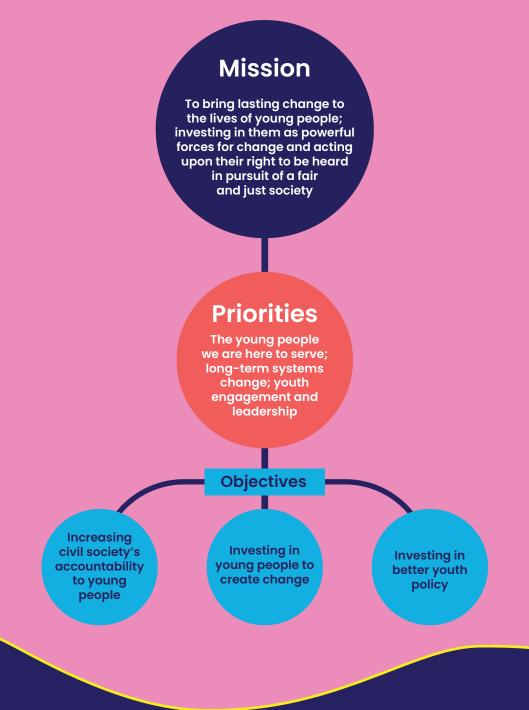
Who We Are

The young people we serve: We are here to serve young people challenging and experiencing injustice in their individual lives and within society. We do not seek to categorise young people or reduce their circumstances to eligible checklists so this description does not attempt to be comprehensive.

We work alongside these young people to bring direct lived experience into our decision making.

Our Values

Transparent Trusting Communicating openly and making Recognising and respecting the lived our decisions and policies public experience and expertise of those we and accessible work with Responsible **Adaptive** Critically assessing our work and evolving in response to what we learn Collaborative Intentional Partnering with others Using all of our resources in pursuit of our mission **Progressive Inclusive & Equitable** Willing to challenge the status quo in the pursuit of social justice

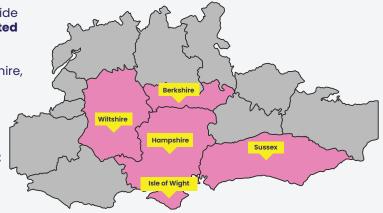


Investing in Regional Organisations

Our Regional Programme invests in youth organisations with the aim of increasing the sector's ability to support, listen, and be held accountable by young people.

We continued to provide long-term, unrestricted **funding** to partners delivering essential services across Berkshire. Hampshire and the Isle of Wight, Sussex, and Wiltshire.

50% of our funding went into the poorest areas of the region and we continued to prioritise these areas wherever possible.



Partner Spotlight: The Agency

The Agency is an exciting youth development programme that empowers young people to create the change that they want to see in their communities.

Starting with the delivery of a 12-week creative programme, young people are supported to explore their ideas for social change and then gain the tools they need to put them into action.

At the end of this first stage, participants pitch for project investment and a further 16 weeks of facilitated support. In year 1, we supported work with 16 young people in Northam, Southampton leading to outstanding results.



"I have learned so many things that I will appreciate for the rest of my life - life is not about finding yourself, it is about creating yourself."

Ali, participant of The Agency programme

Cost of living support

At the start of this year, we committed to topping up all our grants in the year by 10%, reflecting the steep real-time increases in costs that our partners were facing.

"In all other instances, our contracts are not being uplifted in line with additional costs—and many budgets are historic and were already out of date. This means our deficit has increased. At the same time, commissioners are being more particular than ever about every possible penny being spent on delivery, core costs are being heavily scrutinised. We need to grow unrestricted funding and our fundraising income, but that is a major challenge. Blagrave gives us a glimmer of hope!!"

CEO, youth charity, Hampshire.

Peer research

We launched a major research project to find out if there are young people we're missing through our current support. Using a peer-to-peer approach, where young people interviewed each other, supported by a trained research programme, we identified key groups who aren't well served in our region—by us or other mainstream services. These groups include:

- LGBTQ+ young people
- Young people of colour
- **Young people with hidden disabilities** whose access needs are not being met
- Young men who experience **poor mental health** alongside other issues

Based on these findings, we're committed to developing targeted funding for these groups in 2024.

Resourcing a Collaborative Sector

Peer Learning Group

We convened a peer learning group for partners to explore sharing power with young people.

Nearly 50% of our regional partners joined at least one of the four sessions we ran. The group offered a valuable space for sharing challenges and learning from each other's experiences.

Regional Partners' Day

Day at the stunning Winchester Cathedral, with regional partners a chance to connect, collaborate, showcase their work, and learn together.

services and the pressure from rising costs.

Regional Partners Day 2023

Regional Advisers' Fund

The regional advisers' fund was a time-limited funding opportunity where funding decisions were made by young people with experience of services in the region—our regional advisers.

This initiative successfully reached deep into communities, and three out of five of the organisations we funded had never been funded by us before.

The Listening Fund

£575,599 distributed in grants to 24 organisations across England.

has **supported organisations to be more accountable to young people**.

A core part of the Fund is our 10 young advisers from across England, who continued to play a key role this year, selecting eight grassroots organisations as partners.

"Listening is central to creating a more equitable sector and society. It's up to those with resources and power to make sure they have the skills, structures, and culture to truly work alongside young people. We want to blend different kinds of expertise and ensure young people have opportunities to grow their skills and confidence through being heard."

Edd Fry, TLF Project Manager

Partner Spotlight: Carefree Cornwall

Carefree works with young people aged 11–25 who are in or leaving care. For their Listening Fund project, they embedded young people into their internal and external work by establishing a shadow board to deepen



young people's involvement in the organisation, and by supporting young people to lead external training in how to better listen to young people's needs, wants and ideas, and to participate in national policy forums and discussions.

Investing in Young People Directly

Challenge and Change Fund

2023 saw the end of the second iteration of Challenge and Change, our programme that offers grants to collectives, movements and individuals, aged 18–25 with a vision for change. These young leaders have some experience in social justice work but may not have access to the resources they need to develop their ideas and work.



Some of the themes addressed included education reform, migrant justice, racial justice, climate justice, and support for LGBTQIA+ and care-experienced people.

"Of the 26 partners funded, six of them went on to secure further long-term funding from Blagrave through the Pathways Fund, and at least eight gained further funding from other organisations."

Rochell Rowe, Youth Engagement Manager.

A brilliant storyteller co-produced <u>22 stories</u> sharing the partners' work, and three learning reports that will be released in 2024.

Wishing the Challenge and Change cohort of 2022/2023 the best of luck, we're excited to continue watching them grow!



Partner Spotlight: Fola Afolabi

Fola, Founder of the <u>Youth Involvement</u> and <u>Engagement Lab</u>, is working with stakeholders across the health system to centre young people and adults, promote better health outcomes and further health equity.

Pathways Fund

This year saw the public <u>launch of the Pathways Fund</u>—our multi-year capacity building programme for youth-led groups. After piloting with four groups in 2022, we opened applications in September. We received 47 applications in six weeks, 24 of these passing our initial assessment. By the end of year, we made a total of £150k in new grants to <u>seven</u> youth-led groups.

Partner Spotlight: Babylon Migrants Project

Founded in 2022, <u>Babylon Migrants Project</u> tackles the isolation and hostility experienced by young refugees, migrants, and asylum seekers, by bringing together facilitators and participants from refugee, migrant and asylum-seeking backgrounds, to provide creative and social activities.



Partner Development Fund

In response to growing needs, we offered pre-existing youth-led partners up to £1,000 to invest in personal/organisational development or mental health and wellbeing. Over eight months, we distributed nearly £18,000 across 27 payments.

"I would like to thank all Blagrave members involved in the Partner Development Fund and providing this fund. It has been incredibly beneficial and has significantly impacted the lives of many people. I would also like to extend my thanks for your continuous support throughout."

Grant Partner

We look forward to continuing to review how we encourage partners to support their development and wellbeing.

Investing in Building the Field of Youth-Led Change

Youth Organising Movement Building

Over the course of 2023, we partnered with NEON (New Economy Organisers), a training and consultancy organisation working with social movements, to complete field mapping and deliver a four-day residential for key actors within the youth organising space in the UK.

The residential brought together 30 leaders from across the field of youth organising, with the purpose of supporting young organisers and leaders to develop a deeper analysis of how they can collectively create change, and embedding the skills and knowledge that they need.

The residential was well-received and resulted in lots of **rich learning for us to take away as a funder** about the needs of organisers and how we can best support, as well as to benefit the wider field of youth organising.





"I've been drowning in my youth organising and this training felt like four days of hope. The workshop struck the perfect balance between informative and interactive. All the tips that were given felt directly applicable and often gave me that 'aha' moment where everything finally clicked."

Participant on residential

Alliance for Youth Organising

In 2023, we were a founding funder of the <u>Alliance for Youth Organising</u>: an intergenerational collective that will work together to invest in the structures, spaces, networks and organisations needed for youth organising to thrive.

The Alliance is being supported by the <u>Paul Hamlyn Foundation</u>, the <u>Esmée Fairbairn Foundation</u>, and the Blagrave Trust with an initial two-year combined investment of £600,000 and is hosted by the <u>Civic Power Fund</u>.

Youth Led Change Day

On the 2nd of December 2023, we held our second-ever Youth Led Change Day!

- 100% of respondents felt their support needs were met.
- **62.5%** of respondents **rated the event as amazing**, with the other 37.5% rating the event as good.

The day consisted of three workshops covering: mental health and wellbeing as a changemaker, creating your own governance, and tips and tricks for applying for funding, as well as a lovely warm Caribbean lunch, networking time and five wonderful performances delivered by the young people themselves. The feedback from the day was incredibly positive, with a particular nod to the care and effort put into ensuring the day was accessible and inclusive for all in attendance.



"It was wonderful to see proactive inclusion put in place.
I look forward to more and more events with these levels of accessibility."

YLC attendee

Ensuring Better Youth Policy Directly Informed by Young People

In 2023, we continued funding 12 partners under our legacy fund for national policy and advocacy work, supporting organisations to advocate for policy and legislative change on behalf of young people. Some key relationships came to an end with some notable successes:

- Bite Back's youth-led campaign on the food system and the intersection of poverty and health achieved national impact on corporate accountability.
- Our support helped Children England secure the legacy of their campaigns after 81 years as the collective body for children's charities.

Young People in Policymaking Fund

This three-year fund supports **young people to influence policy that affects them, and so redress power imbalances in how policy is made.** Nine partners continued their work with young people on a range of policy issues, from better services for young migrants to improved relationships with the police locally.

Insights from our learning partner, Common Vision, included:

- Youth voice from experience is *key* in policymaking, but there is an essential role for those with knowledge of different institutional practices and levers to 'translate' young people's priorities into clear policy aims.
- It's essential to join the dots between the needs and priorities of different individuals and what this means for the system as a whole.
- Youth welfare must be prioritised, with policy and advocacy organisations budgeting for, and supporting, this work holistically.

Youth Engagement

We began **reflecting on how we work with young people at Blagrave** through interviews with our employees and trustees, as well as advisers and facilitators we've previously worked with.

These conversations helped us **reflect on our past work with young people**, **explore the different understandings of why we work with young people and highlight the importance of language.** The insights showed us where we're doing well and where we can improve.



"We need to accept that our advisers might not be representative, but we should look about how we can listen more broadly to more representative young people."

Interviewee

"It would be inauthentic to do this work without involving young people."

Interviewee

This learning will guide us in ensuring our work with young people remains meaningful, and not tokenistic.

We're excited to explore this further and to implement new processes to continue progressing in this area.

Climate

In 2023 we continued to act on our commitment to climate change, established in 2019 when we became a founding signatory of the <u>Funder</u> Commitment on Climate Change.

This agreement commits us to play our part in climate change mitigation, whether it be through educating and learning; committing resources; stewarding our investments for a post-carbon future; or de-carbonising our own operations.

We partnered with Impatience Earth to **conduct a climate justice audit of our work,** in collaboration with the team. This audit reviewed how we have resourced important climate work to date, such as our support to the Centre for Sustainable Energy's Bright Green Future, an environmental leadership programme aimed at 16–19 year olds. It also highlighted the opportunities for us to resource more youth-led climate justice work.

We received a series of recommendations on how to strengthen our commitment to play aproactive role in addressing climate breakdown through our work.

With Impatience Earth, we also explored opportunities to join forces with other funders to pool our resources to provide much needed resources to young people fighting climate change.



IMPATIENCE EARTH

In 2024, we'll maintain our focus on climate through strategic grantmaking to young people and the embedding of climate consciousness across all areas of the organisation.

Collaboration for Wider Change

2023 truly was a year of collaboration.

We have been fortunate to continue working with a whole host of funders during this financial year, many of which have made substantial or strategic financial contributions to our work.

In particular, we were thrilled to receive continued substantial contribution to our unrestricted funding from the Nineteen Eighty-Nine Charitable Trust.

This generous grant enables us to scale our work and ambition appropriately and is making a significant difference to our ability to be ambitious in our strategy.

We also continued working closely with the <u>Esmée Fairbairn Foundation</u> and the <u>Paul Hamlyn Foundation</u> on the <u>Alliance for Youth Organising</u>. In the final quarter of 2023, we pooled our funds to resource this work whilst collaborating further with the <u>Civic Power Fund</u> to deliver, hold and design this exciting new area.

And we continued in driving forward the Listening Fund, which is a collaboration between the Blagrave Trust, <u>BBC Children in Need</u>, The <u>Esmée Fairbairn Foundation</u>, <u>The National Lottery Community Fund</u> and <u>The Tudor Trust</u>. This fund continues to inform our practice at Blagrave about how we authentically listen to and work with young people.

Additionally, we convened a number of events such as the quarterly peer-learning sessions we resource for our regional partners which are facilitated independently, enabling partners to collaborate with each other.

Operations and Culture

Diversity, equity and inclusion

Diversity, equity and inclusion and centring the people we seek to serve in our work have been key in 2023.

- Inclusive practice in grantmaking We worked with a group of six advisers who drew on their own experience of working in or accessing services in the region to make decisions in our regional funding programme, and continued working with our 10 advisers in the Listening Fund.
- Deep learning on anti-racist and anti-oppressive practice With the support of an external facilitator, staff team and trustees challenged ourselves and our practice to gain a better understanding of how racism and oppression manifest in our work and ourselves, and have intentionally adopted an anti-oppressive, anti-racist approach across the organisation.
- Annual DEI monitoring For the second year, we have published the annual Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) monitoring of employees, trustees and advisers. In addition, working alongside other funders on the DEI data standard for grantmaking, we asked how our regional partners' leadership teams reflect the people they seek to serve. On average, 35% of senior leadership teams and 32% of trustees share aspects of the lived experience of the young people they are working with.
- **Foundation Practice Rating** We continued our support for the Foundation Practice Rating: a rating system assessing foundation practices in relation to diversity, accountability, and transparency. Blagrave once again received an overall score of A for its ability to demonstrate its practice across these areas.

Strengthening our safeguarding culture

Safeguarding review

In 2023, an external safeguarding consultant reviewed Blagrave's safeguarding culture, systems, and processes operating across the range of our programmes, specifically targeting our current and potential future youth-led provision. The report, issued in May 2023, commended Blagrave's safeguarding practice, whilst making recommendations to enable us to further strengthen our practice. Since then, we have established a Safeguarding Committee composed of trustees and the safeguarding team, reviewed our policies, including publishing a robust safer recruitment policy, and have been more intentional in risk management before events.

Safequarding Committee

The Safequarding Committee, consisting of three trustees and two staff members, is an advisory committee with the objective of promoting a culture where all those involved with Blagrave are kept safe from harm and have their welfare promoted. Meeting twice per year, the committee will also consider how, as a funder, we can influence and support better practice in safeguarding in the sector and within our partners. **Bespoke safequarding support**

We developed a new approach to better support our Pathways partners in their safeguarding journey. Combining expert consultancy with Blagrave safequarding team support, the aim is to support the development of a safeguarding framework that is proportionate and aligned to organisational needs, and that promotes a strong safeguarding culture, moving away from mere compliance.

Community Foundations: Endowments

Blagrave holds historical endowments with three community foundations in our area of benefit. They are able to manage these endowments for the benefit of their local areas and support a range of activities.

With our funds, in 2023:

Hampshire and Isle of Wight Community Foundation supported local groups with £32,800 in small grants under their Involving Communities grantmaking strand



Berkshire Community
Foundation awarded £18,986
to local community groups,
recovering in the wake of
the pandemic



Wiltshire Community Foundation awarded £22,500 to local projects supporting older people and young people in the county





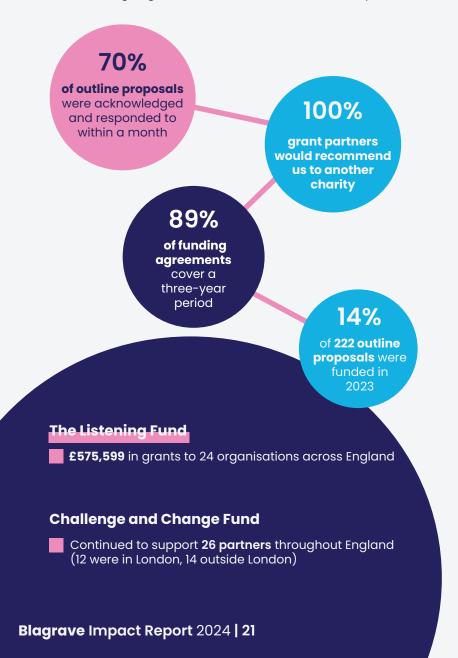
Feedback

In line with our commitment to transparency and ccountability in our grantmaking, in 2023 we continued to collect anonymous feedback from potential and current partners in our grantmaking.

We were very proud that the percentage of current partners who would recommend us as a funder is 100%, which is an important indicator that we are effective and our values-led approach is achieving results. And even those rejected in our grantmaking process rated the clarity of our explanation and feedback at 6 out of 10 overall.

Blagrave in Numbers

In 2023, we made **170** grants, providing a total of **£3,151,065** in funding. Our average grant size was £18,536, with two large grants of £100k each going to the Civic Power Fund and the Foyer Federation.



Partner Development Fund 27 payments released to support **personal development** (22%), organisational development (33%), and mental health and wellbeing (45%) **Youth Led Change Day** 74 attendees, with 20+ young changemakers supporting with the day **Pathways Fund** £260,000 distributed to 11 partners 50.5% of partners primarily support young people regional peer learning in the most group sessions disadvantaged across the region, areas and 1 Regional **Partners' Day** Regional **Programme** 6 £1,318,000 advisers was distributed to influenced regional partners our work including **£452,000** for new partners

Projects and Organisations We Support



1- Ashford

1.1- The Amber Foundation

2- Bath

2.1- Allsorts Youth Project

3- Birmingham

3.1- We Don't Settle

4- Brighton

4.1- aBandofBrothers (ABOB)

4.2- Friends and Families of

Travellers

4.3- Impact Initiatives

4.4- Little Green Pig

4.5- Oasis Project

4.6- Sussex Nightstop

4.7- Sussex Prisoners' Families

4.8- Team Domenica

4.9- The Hummingbird Refugee

5- Bristol

5.1- Babbasa

5.2- Centre for Sustainable Energy

5.3- The Birch Collective

6- Canterbury

6.1- Kent Refugee Action Network

7- Chatnam

7.1- <u>Challenging Behaviour</u> <u>Foundation</u>

8-Eastbourne

8.1- TechResort

9- Greenham

9.1- Bridge for Young People

10- Hailsham

10.1- Peer Power

11- Hastings

11.1- FSN

11.2- Hastings Advice and

Representation Centre (HARC)

11.3- <u>Hastings Furniture Service</u>

11.4- XTRAX (Young People's Centre)

12- Havant

12.1- Citizens Advice Havant

12.2- Music Fusion

12.3- Off the Record (South)

13- Highbridge

13.1- In Charley's Memory

14- Hull

14.1- The Warren Youth Project

15- Isle of Wight

15.1- Sovereign Housing

15.2- Ventnor Exchange

16-Leicester

16.1- Leicester Cares LTD

17- Littlehampton

17.1- Blueprint Youth

18-Liverpool

18.1- ADHD Foundation

18.2- <u>Polish Migrants Organise for Change</u>

(Continued on next page)

19-London

19.1- 4front

19.2- Account

19.3- <u>Babylon Migrant Project</u>

19.4- <u>Become</u>

19.5- Big Change Charitable Trust

19.6- Children England

19.7- Civic Power Fund

19.8- Creative Ops CIO

19.9- <u>Drive Forward Foundation</u>

19.10- Gendered Intelligence

19.11- <u>Joint Enterprise Not Guilty by</u>

Association

19.12- Just for Kids Law

19.13- Launch It

19.14- Leap Confronting Conflict

19.15- Migrant Democracy Project

19.16- Motivez

19.17- OnewiththeVillage

19.18- Our Streets Now

19.19- Prison Reform Trust

19.20- Patchwork Foundation

19.21- Spark Inside

19.22- Sister System

19.23- Tag Agency

19.24- The Advocacy Academy

19.25- The Foyer Federation

19.26- The Mix

19.27- <u>The Social Change Nest-</u>

Radical Body

19.28- The Ubele Initiative

19.29 - UK Youth

19.30- UK Youth Climate Coalition

19.31- We Belong

19.32- Yucan CIC

19.33 - Young Justice Advisors

20- Newton Abbot

20.1- Life Chance Trust

21- Norwich

21.1- Mancroft Advice Project

22- Manchester

22.1- The Proud Trust

22.2- RECLAIM

23- Margate

23.1- ThinkForward UK

24- Muxton

24.1- Emotion Dyregulation in Autism

25- Paignton

25.1- Avocados Advocacy

26- Portsmouth

26.1- The Parenting Network

26.2- <u>Unloc</u>

27- Reading

27.1- No5 Young People

27.2- Readipop

27.3- Refugee Youth Service

27.4- Starting Point

28- Redruth

28.1- <u>Carefree- Fostering</u> <u>Independence Cornwall</u>

29- Southampton

29.1- Energise Me

29.2- Love4Life

29.3- No Limits

30-Slough

30.1- Aik Saath

30.2- The Dash Charity

31- Shoreham-by-Sea

31.1- ESTEEM

32- Swindon

32.1- Prime Theatre

32.2- Smash Youth Project

32.3- The Harbour Project

33- Winchester

33.1- Unite Foundation

33.2- Winchester Youth Counselling

34-Woking

34.1- Big Leaf Foundation

35-York

35.1- Friends Provident Foundation

35.2- Joseph Rowntree Reform Trust



"Blagrave are one of our favourite funders! Why? Because you are clear on what you fund and the types of organisations you want to work with: Clear on expectations of us and the difference we make to the lives of young people; to not impose onerous reporting or metrics; offer support in a way that both encourages whilst also prompts us to think in new ways about how we adapt and evolve our work."

Current Grant Partner

"This is a safe space for me and my organisation to share and learn. Here I feel like I'm part of something, a group of people interested in sharing power with young people."

Current Grant Partner

"The relational approach by Blagrave is outstanding. It's this that has led to share practice and identifying shared values."

Current Grant Partner

To contact us, scan the QR code below



