



Foundation

Co-op Foundation #iwill fund: guidance for applicants

Introduction

The Co-op Foundation has partnered with the #iwill campaign to create a £2 million fund over three years, to support youth social action to tackle loneliness.

In 2017 we are looking for 10 partners, who will be able to apply for a share of the first £400,000 of this fund and join a national network of organisations tackling youth loneliness.

Grants will be awarded for 1 year initially, although partners will be able to re-apply for a further 2 years' funding.

We will fund 1 local project in each English region (9 grants of approx. £35,000 each). Within each region we have a number of specific priority locations.

We will also fund 1 larger national or multi-regional project (approx. £85,000). We expect this project to have significant potential to grow and influence youth social action in disadvantaged areas, sustainably embedding #iwill quality principles and co-operative values into wider provision.

At a glance – is this fund right for you?

- Are you an organisation with charitable status?
- Do you work with young people aged between 10 and 20?
- Can you develop more opportunities for young people to get involved in activities that benefit their communities?
- Do you want to be part of a collaborative national network of organisations tackling youth loneliness?
- Do you work in at least 1 of the English local authority areas listed below?

Barnsley	Islington	Redcar & Cleveland	Thanet
Birmingham	Liverpool	Rochdale	Torbay
Bradford	Luton	Rotherham	Tower Hamlets
Bristol	Manchester	Southwark	
Derby	Newcastle-upon-Tyne	Stoke-on-Trent	
East Lindsey	Nottingham	Sunderland	

If you answered yes to all the questions above, the Co-op Foundation's #iwill fund might be suitable for you – read on!

If not, it might be worth checking these [other possible sources of funding](#) for your organisation or project.

How to apply

If you think you are eligible, you can [complete a simple online expression of interest form](#). We will review this, and if we agree that your organisation is eligible, we will contact you within 3 working days to invite you to make a full application.

The deadline to submit expressions of interest is 5pm on Friday 7 July 2017, but earlier submissions are strongly encouraged. The deadline for full applications is Friday 14 July 2017. The earlier you submit your expression of interest, the longer you will have to work on your full application if invited.

The expression of interest form asks for information about:

- Your organisation's charitable status
- Your work with young people in our target age group
- Your preferred geographical area of focus
- Any other target locations you would be able to work in
- If you want to be considered for the larger national grant, a brief explanation of how you would widely and sustainably grow and improve youth social action provision.

If you are invited to make a full application, we will ask you for:

- Your track record in the local area(s) where you are proposing to work
- An outline of the activity you would like to deliver with a grant (which must focus on creating quality social action opportunities for 10 to 20 year-olds)
- Your organisation's overall strategic priorities, and how youth social action to tackle loneliness relates to these priorities
- Ways in which you strengthen and champion the voices of young people, in your own organisation and more widely
- The main improvements your organisation makes in young people's lives, any wider benefits you deliver for communities, and the evidence you use to assess this impact
- How your organisation learns from the work you do, to improve your impact
- Your organisation's track record of working collaboratively with others.

We will also ask for a copy of:

- Your most recent annual report and accounts
- An overall strategic plan for your organisation, or similar document, if available
- Your policy on safeguarding children and vulnerable adults.

Assessment process

Applications will be scored against 5 criteria:

1. **Strategic alignment** – showing that youth social action and tackling loneliness contribute to your organisation's overall purpose and priorities
2. **Youth voice** – young people having a strong voice within your organisation, and championing young people's voices in the wider community
3. **Learning** – using learning to improve outcomes for young people and communities
4. **Collaboration** – commitment to working co-operatively as part of a national network
5. **Organisational health** – running your organisation sustainably and effectively.

Applications will be assessed initially by the Co-op Foundation team. Up to 5 of the highest scoring applications in each region will be sent for further review by regional stakeholder panels, made up of young people, Co-op colleagues, elected members and external experts. These panels will make recommendations to the Foundation's Board of Trustees, who make the final decisions on selecting new partners.

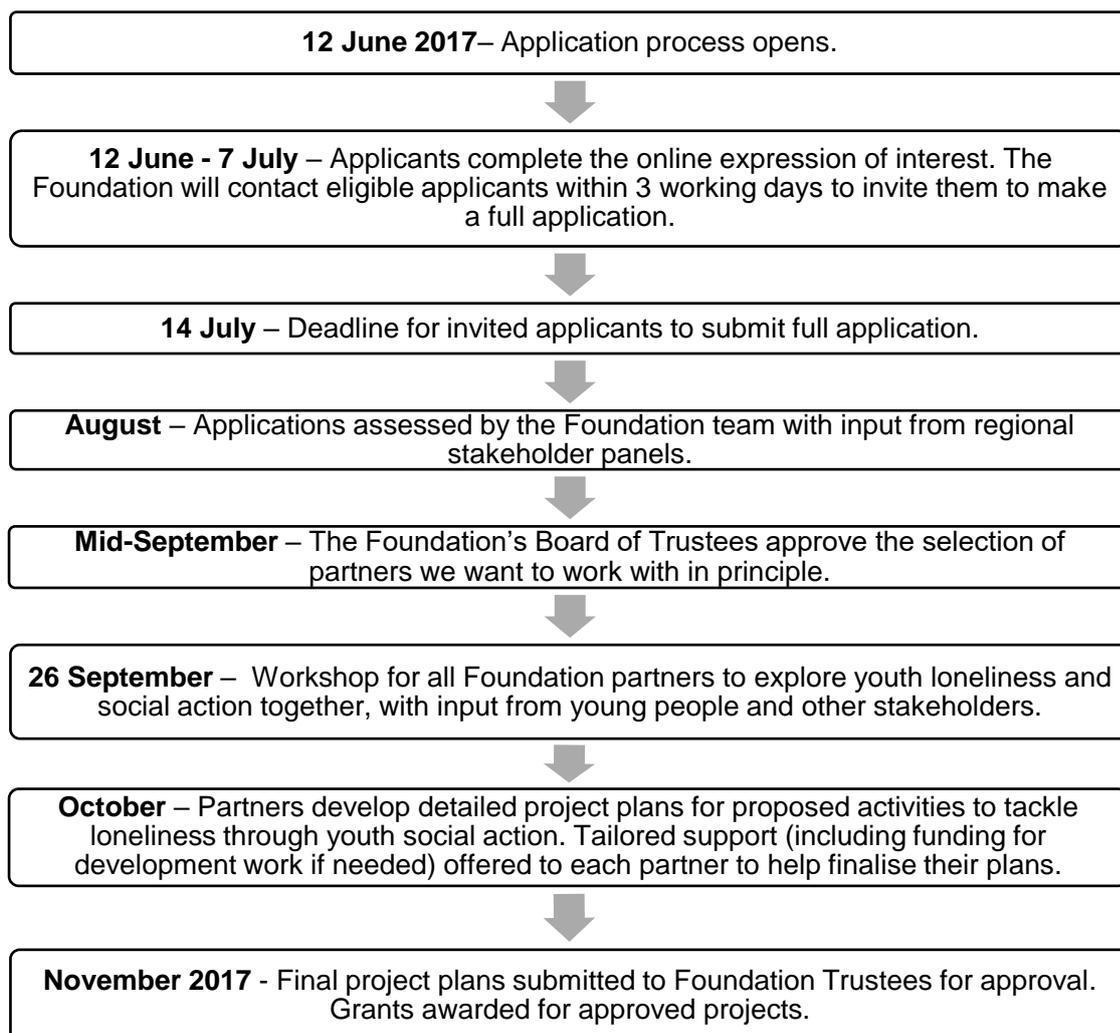
Our partnership approach

Although we ask you to briefly outline activity you would like to deliver, we don't need a lot of detail on this in your application. Our application process is mainly concerned with your organisation as a whole, and its strategic fit with the aims of our #iwill fund.

Once we've identified the partners we'd like to work with in principle, we will invite these organisations to develop more detailed plans, with collaborative input from our youth loneliness network. This will include attending a partner workshop on 26 September.

Being selected as a partner doesn't guarantee an offer of funding – your final project plan will need to meet our expected standards, and be approved by our Board of Trustees. But we will support you to give you the best possible chance of meeting these standards.

Application timeline



About the Co-op Foundation

The Co-op Foundation is a charity set up by the Co-op, helping disadvantaged communities work together to make things better.

One of our goals is to champion young people's ability to contribute positively to their communities and help strengthen their sense of belonging. We are developing a national network of projects tackling loneliness among disadvantaged young people, through activities that connect them to and benefit their communities. This network will have a focus on collaboration and shared learning, stimulating a national conversation and strengthening local practice.

We began piloting this work in 2016, working with some of our previous youth partners. In early 2017 we recruited new partners working with specific groups of disadvantaged young people experiencing transitions that put them at higher risk of loneliness.

Now, through our partnership with #iwill, we are expanding this work to all regions of England and focusing on the role of youth social action in preventing and tackling loneliness. We also plan to develop similar work in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

About #iwill

#iwill is a UK-wide campaign that aims to make social action part of life for as many 10 to 20 year-olds as possible, forming a habit of community involvement they will continue as adults.

Co-ordinated by the charity Step Up To Serve, it was launched in 2013 after Government research into how the business, education, public and voluntary sectors could support young people to engage in social action.

To date more than 600 organisations from across UK society have pledged to support the campaign goal of enabling more than 60% of 10 to 20 year-olds to participate in social action by the year 2020. More information can be found at www.iwill.org.uk.

The #iwill fund

The #iwill fund is made possible thanks to £40 million joint funding from the National Lottery through the Big Lottery Fund, and the Department of Culture, Media and Sport. £1 million from the #iwill fund has been matched by the Co-op Foundation to create this £2 million programme to tackle youth loneliness through social action.

What is youth social action?

Youth social action means young people taking part in activities such as volunteering, campaigning and fundraising, which benefit their communities while developing their character and skills.

The #iwill campaign has identified [six principles of quality social action](#) that help ensure these benefits are maximised.

All work supported by the #iwill fund is expected to demonstrate these quality principles, which closely link to the values of the co-operative movement, as shown below.

Social action quality principles	Co-operative values
Youth-led	Democracy – high quality social action opportunities give young people real ownership over their activities and strengthen their voice in society
Challenging	Self-responsibility – empowering young people to stretch themselves and develop their capacity to overcome set-backs and solve problems creatively
Socially impactful	Social responsibility and caring for others – stimulating young people to give deeper consideration to the impact of their actions on their community and society
Progressive	Self-help – taking part in social action as part of young people’s journey towards achieving their own personal aspirations
Embedded	Equality and equity – focus on disadvantaged areas, particularly those where there are currently fewer opportunities, helps make social action accessible to all young people
Reflective	Honesty and openness – learning from both successes and challenges and sharing of experiences and insights between young people and organisations involved in social action

Why youth loneliness?

Loneliness in older age has been recognised for some time as a costly and damaging health issue. Less attention has been paid to the fact that many young people regularly feel lonely. There is an incomplete understanding of the reasons for this, the full impact it has on individuals and communities, and how it can be addressed.

This is starting to change. In recent years, researchers have begun to highlight the issue of loneliness at different life stages, including childhood and youth. Here are a few examples:

[Trapped in a bubble](#) (Co-op/British Red Cross)

[Coming in from the cold](#) (ACEVO)

[The lonely society](#) (Mental Health Foundation)

[Loneliness across the life course](#) (Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation)

The Co-op Foundation is currently funding a project led by Manchester Metropolitan University in partnership with 42nd Street, working with young co-researchers to investigate their peers’ experiences of loneliness. Findings of this work will be available to our #iwill fund partners to inform the development of their project plans in September/October 2017.

How were priority locations for the #iwill fund chosen?

The Co-op Foundation was set up by the Co-op to benefit the communities where it trades. We focus particularly on disadvantaged communities, and where appropriate aim to offer our partners additional support through our links to the Co-op’s businesses and members.

In this first round of our #iwill fund, we aim to establish a national network with a presence in each of England’s 9 regions. Within each region, we are focusing on local authority areas in the 20% most deprived nationally, and which have a significant Co-op presence.

In regions where more than 3 local areas meet both these criteria, we have further prioritised using the #iwill campaign's [Horizon](#) tool to identify where there are currently fewer social action opportunities, and more detailed analysis of the Indices of Multiple Deprivation (2015).

What about other parts of the UK?

The #iwill fund is currently only available in England. However, the Co-op Foundation is separately developing plans to extend our work on youth loneliness and social action to the devolved nations of the UK. These plans will be announced later in 2017.

Other sources of funding

If you don't meet the criteria for our #iwill fund, or your application is unsuccessful, the following might be useful.

For organisations supporting youth social action – many other local and national grant-makers are also match-funding the #iwill fund. Each of these has a different focus and criteria including the geographical areas and types of social action they can support. [Find out more here](#).

For other types of charitable project – you might be eligible for the Co-op's [Local Community Fund](#) which will be inviting new applications from local causes from late June 2017.

Contact the Co-op Foundation

If you have any queries about our #iwill fund that are not covered by this guidance, please email foundation@coop.co.uk.