



Pay It Forward Grants

Summary overview

“Pay It Forward means doing something to help somebody else’s wellbeing, whether that be at school, at a club or at another community organisation”

The Pay It Forward Grant scheme was designed by young people for young people. It provides grants of £250 to £1000 for projects planned and delivered by young people aged 10 to 16.

A trusted adult from the school or community group must apply for the grant but the young people involved should come up with the idea for the project and make all the plans, including a cost breakdown. It gives young people the opportunity to learn planning skills and team work as well as giving them the opportunity to help others in their community.

All applications are assessed by trained young people in local SpeakOut groups with the support of a Participation Worker, using the following criteria:

Minimum criteria

- ✓ Age range 10 to 16 helped apply
- ✓ Signed declaration
- ✓ Application signed off by named adult
- ✓ All sections of form completed
- ✓ Project led by young people
- ✓ Project/club based in a HeadStart area

- ✓ Helps young people, families, or communities to develop activities to enable them to cope better
- ✓ Improves people’s resilience
- ✓ Involves a broad range of young people and community members

Does the project link with HeadStart’s goals for young people?

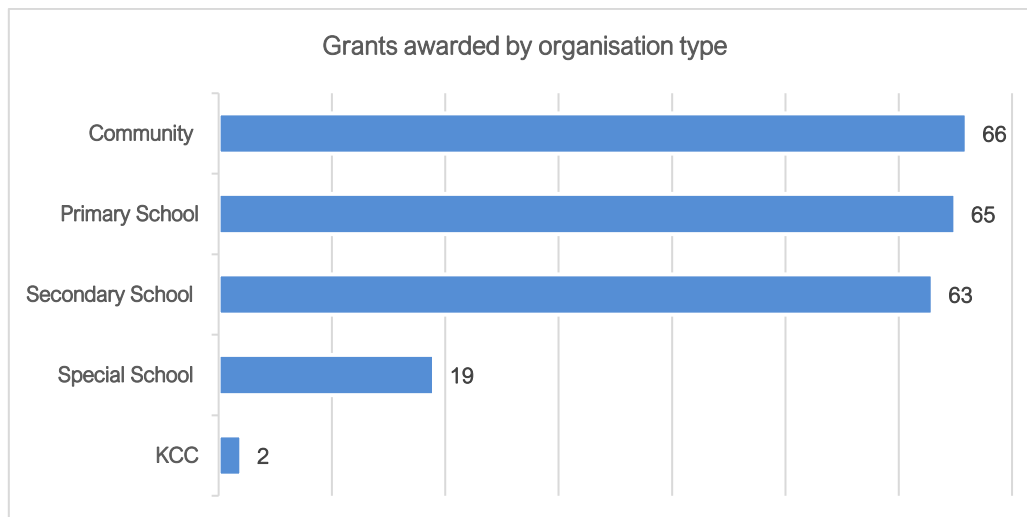
- ✓ “People around me understand wellbeing and how to promote it”
- ✓ “My overall wellbeing is not impacted by the pressure to achieve and to be perfect”
- ✓ “There is always someone for me to talk to”



Reach

The first PIF grant was awarded in June 2017, and as of the end of 2021 we have awarded a total of **216 grants totalling £188,140**.

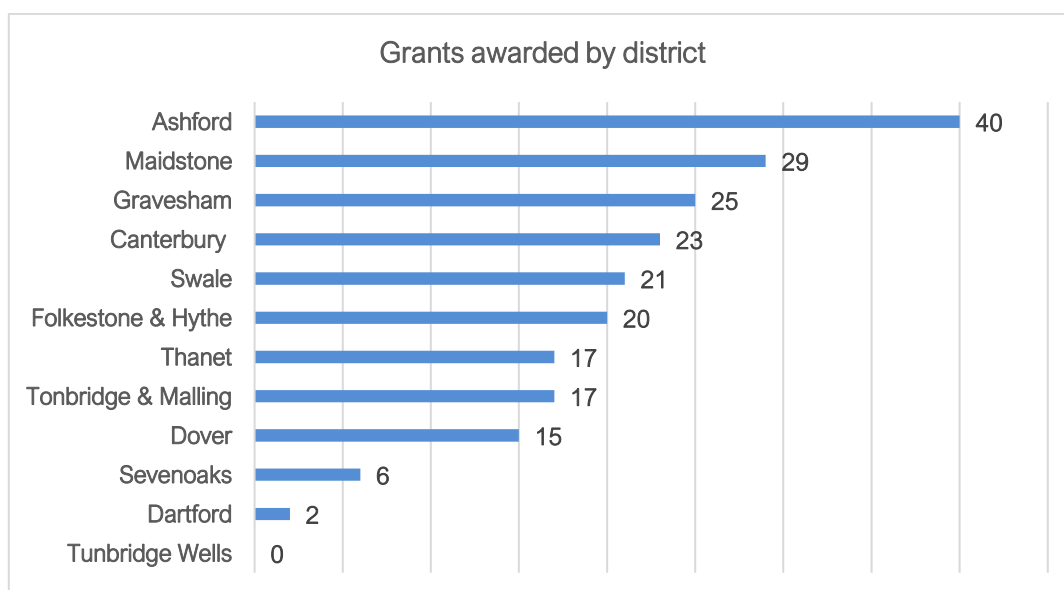
The grant scheme has been very popular with schools, with 147 grants awarded to Primary, Secondary and Special schools combined. 66 grants have been awarded to Voluntary and Community Organisations.



District breakdown

The HeadStart Kent Programme was rolled out across nine of the twelve Kent districts. Although PIF grants have been available and advertised countywide, the greatest take-up has been in schools and community groups in HSK districts. Ashford and Maidstone have had the highest uptake, partly due to some schools applying for a number of grants.

Non-HSK districts Sevenoaks and Dartford received six and two grants respectively, while no applications have yet been received from Tunbridge Wells.



Types of project



The most popular type of project was **Safe Spaces**. We have funded 26 indoor and 22 outdoor safe spaces in schools and community centres. Safe Spaces are a great way to support the wellbeing of a whole school or setting and give young people the chance to get creative with their design and features.

Clubs and groups have been another popular project type, allowing young people to make friends and pursue a hobby. We have funded cookery clubs, a wide variety of sports clubs, arts and crafts and Lego clubs.

Young people have been able to make a difference in their community by leading **Environmental** projects. These include creating garden spaces, growing food for the community and litter-picking.

Groups of young people have helped other students in their schools through Peer Mentoring projects, support with primary to secondary transition, and anti-bullying projects.

Community events and gifting projects have also been very popular and have enabled young people to engage with others in their community such as young families and the elderly.



Impact of Covid 19

The Covid 19 pandemic has had a huge impact on young peoples' wellbeing and has made grants like these even more important. During the lockdown in 2020 there was a big drop off in the number of applications as community centres were closed and most young people were home learning.



However, there were some schools that took the opportunity to run projects with the children of key workers who were still in school.

Since the schools returned, the Pay It Forward grants have been more popular than ever. We awarded 66 grants in 2021 which is the most in any year of the programme.

Case Study 1

Homewood School and Sixth Form in Ashford is the largest school in Kent, they have been engaged with the HeadStart Kent Programme throughout. Young people from Homewood have applied for a number of PIF grants for projects including a safe space, arts and crafts, clubs and sports activities.

Following the Covid 19 Pandemic and lockdown, a group of girls from Homewood realised that physical exercise helped their mental wellbeing and they wanted to inspire other girls in the school to get involved in sport. They planned a week of activities to give girls an opportunity to try out a wide range of sports in a safe environment where they could feel comfortable and breakdown barriers.

They surveyed a number of girls to find out which activities they would like to try and applied for a Pay It Forward grant to enable them to access trial sessions in self-defence, yoga, Zumba, archery and an army-style bootcamp.

Following the event, the school found that there was an increase in the number of girls engaging in PE and extra-curricular sports activities. They felt that the students were mentally stronger and willing to try new things, and that boys in the school had increased respect for female athletes. The girls particularly enjoyed Zumba which led to the school arranging an after-school Zumba club.

The quotes below are from girls aged 13-15 who took part.

"The week made me feel like I could do anything"

"This Girl Can week made me feel more comfortable about my disability and made me feel more confident to get involved"

"I finally found activities I enjoy doing, especially Zumba!"

"This girl can made me feel better about myself and more passionate about exercise"



Case Study 2

Youth Ngage is a community Youth Group for BAME young people in Gravesham. In 2021 they applied for a Pay If Forward grant for the members to learn about healthy food and cooking. 17 young people attended weekly sessions for ten weeks and learnt how to prepare simple, healthy lunches and quick meals.



The healthy meals they cooked included pasta bake with butternut squash, fresh and healthy pizza, Chicken Fajitas, healthy soup for the winter and festive cookies.

“Participants bonded and learnt how to work together as a team and achieved good results. The project was very entertaining, educating, and creative; participants developed valuable skills, made new friends, developed their confidence, look happier and feel good. All participants wish that we continue the project.”

Feedback from young people involved in assessing the applications

The young people who have assessed the project applications have really enjoyed the responsibility of making the decisions. They have said that they feel more confident speaking in a group and participation workers have witnessed an improvement in these young people’s discussion skills. They also say they feel involved in something important as they can see how much the activities being funded can make a difference to young people and their communities.

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