



## **Environment Secretary Michael Gove helps launch campaign putting young people at the centre of the Year of Green Action**

***Launch of #iwill4nature at London Zoo attracts young ambassadors and organisations to commit to increasing green action in 2019***

**LONDON, UK — Embargoed until 17.30 31 January 2019 —** Today the Rt Hon Michael Gove MP, the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, at an event at ZSL London Zoo, marked the launch of #iwill4nature, an initiative bringing children and young people to the heart of environmental social action during the Year of Green Action.

2019 is the Year of Green Action, which is an opportunity to encourage connection to the natural environment and collective action to improve it. One year ago the UK Government published “*A Green Future: Our 25 Year Plan to Improve the Environment*”, setting out its approach to protect and improve the environment and demonstrate leadership on conservation, climate change, land use, sustainable global food supplies and marine health.

Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) has pledged to the #iwill campaign, which aims to make social action a part of life for 10 to 20 year olds across the UK. The national campaign, launched by HRH The Prince of Wales in 2013 with cross-party support, will focus on growing environmental youth social action – or green action – with the launch of #iwill4nature.

Examples of green action include taking part in environmental volunteering such as litter picking or planting pollinator-friendly flowers, fundraising for to maintain or enhance green spaces or campaigning for the zero plastic waste agenda.

The 2017 National Youth Social Action Survey, commissioned to run alongside the #iwill campaign, found that 44% of young people who had not been involved in social action in the past year were interested in addressing environmental issues (including animal protection).

At the launch event the **Environment Secretary Michael Gove** said:

“As the future stewards of our planet, children and young people have a leading part to play in tackling the biggest environmental challenges of our time. They have the energy, ideas and drive to address issues in their schools and communities and inspire their peers to do the same.

“That’s why I am delighted to today launch the Year of Green Action – to inspire change across the UK. I praise the work of the #iwill campaign, its partners and its young ambassadors in supporting us to do this. I now invite and challenge every person to consider how they can get involved.”

24-year-old **Step Up To Serve Trustee Pauline Meyer**, and chair of the launch event, said:

“#iwill4nature recognises the impact young people already have on improving the environment and challenges them and others around them to make an even bigger difference. Whether it is looking after and appreciating their local green spaces, encouraging



friends and family to make different shopping choices or choosing a commute that pollutes less. In the process you also get to develop skills, experience and boosting their mental health and wellbeing. I hope young people all over the UK can be inspired and supported to connect with the natural environment.”

Throughout the year, activity around #iwill4nature will draw together local and national initiatives in order to inspire green action. Hosting the launch event, the Zoological Society of London (ZSL) has also pledged to inspire future young people through experiences with wild animals, inform them of future career opportunities through conservation, science and animal welfare programmes, and actively engage young people in campaigns to protect natural habitats such as the world’s oceans.

**ZSL Director General Dominic Jermey**, and host of the launch, said:

“ZSL is committed to our vision of a world where wildlife thrives, and we believe that creating positive relationships between wildlife and people is key to achieving that. We want people to build lifelong connections to wildlife and we know that we have a vital role to play here at ZSL London Zoo.

“By pledging to support #iwill4nature, we commit to further inspiring, informing and empowering young people as we continue to provide a shared space where learning, supported by our scientific research and conservation expertise, will help people to feel closer and more connected to wildlife.”

The #iwill campaign is a collective effort involving over 900 organisations from the public, voluntary, education and business sectors with a vision to make meaningful social action part of life for all 10- to 20-year olds by the year 2020. In addition to Defra and the ZSL, organisations pledging to support #iwill4nature include Action for Conservation, Canal & River Trust, Global Action Plan, Groundwork, The Wildlife Trust, WWF, Royal Botanical Gardens and more.

**ENDS**

### **Event details**

**Event:** Launch of #iwill4nature, supporting the Year of Green Action

**Date:** Thursday 31 January 2019

**Time:** 17:00 to 19:00

**Location:** ZSL London Zoo, Regent's Park, London NW1 4RY

**For media enquiries, interviews or photos of the event, contact:**

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### **NOTES TO EDITORS**

#### **About the #iwill campaign**

- The #iwill campaign is a collective effort involving over 900 partners from across the public, voluntary, education and business sectors with a vision to make meaningful social action part of life for 10- to 20-year olds by the year 2020, wherever they live and whatever their background.



- The #iwill campaign was launched in 2013 with cross-party and multi-sector support after research into how the business, education, public and voluntary sectors could support young people to engage in social action.
- The 2017 National Youth Social Action Survey was run by Ipsos MORI and commissioned by the Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport and Step Up To Serve. More can be found here: <https://www.ipsos.com/ipsos-mori/en-uk/national-youth-social-action-survey-2017>
- HRH The Prince of Wales is Patron of Step Up To Serve and the #iwill campaign.
- The #iwill campaign is coordinated by Step Up To Serve, a charity registered in England & Wales (no. 1154588). For more information, visit [www.iwill.org.uk](http://www.iwill.org.uk) and follow @iwill\_campaign

### **About the Year of Green Action**

- More about the Year of Green Action can be found <https://www.yearofgreenaction.org>.

### **About the Zoological Society of London (ZSL)**

- ZSL (Zoological Society of London) is an international conservation charity working to create a world where wildlife thrives.
- From investigating the health threats facing animals to helping people and wildlife live alongside each other, ZSL is committed to bringing wildlife back from the brink of extinction. Our work is realised through our ground-breaking science, our field conservation around the world and engaging millions of people through our two zoos, ZSL London Zoo and ZSL Whipsnade Zoo.
- For more information, visit [www.zsl.org](http://www.zsl.org)