

Family &
Youth Work

Health &
Wellbeing

Housing

Training &
Education

Support &
Advice

YMCA

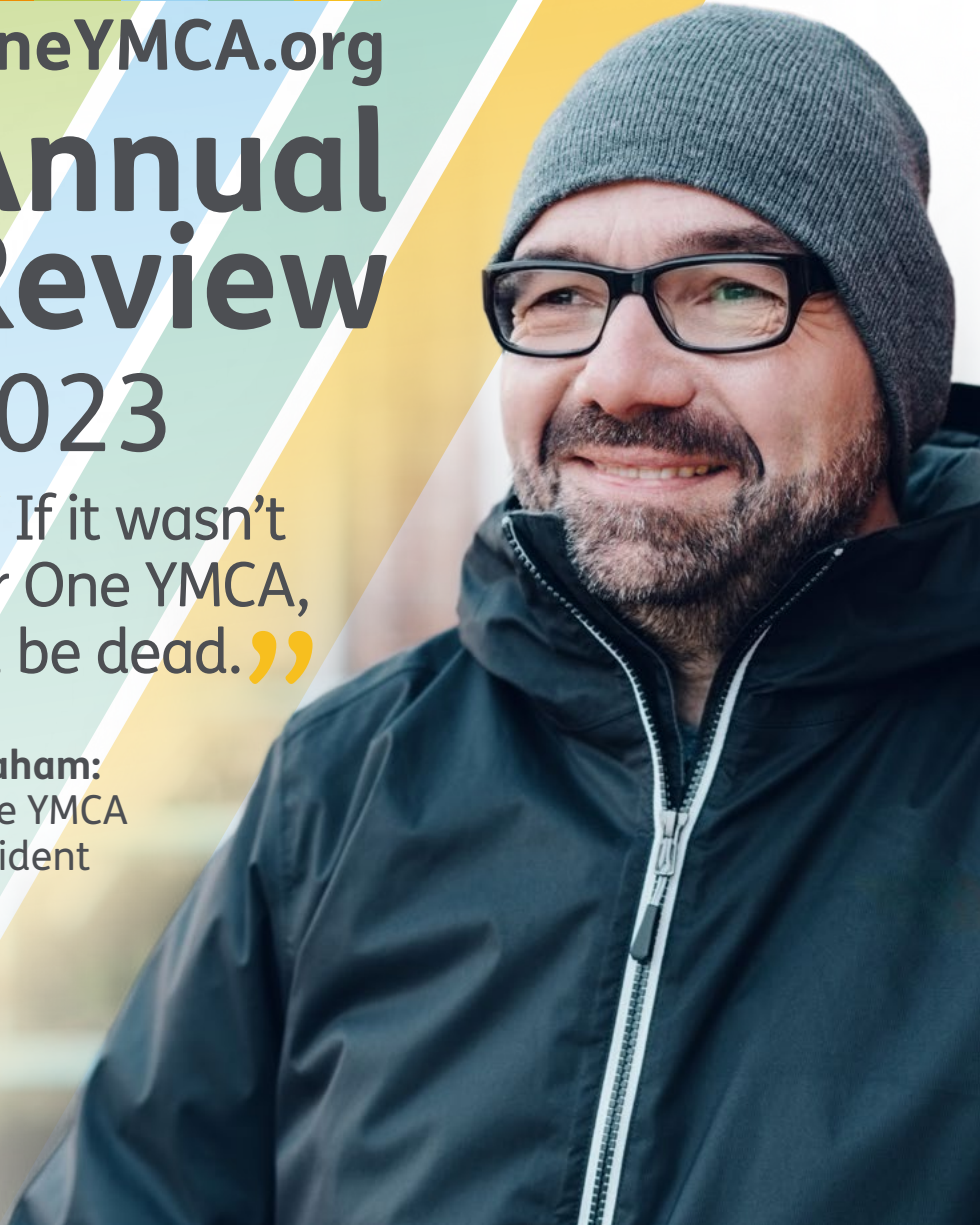
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OneYMCA.org

Annual Review 2023

“ If it wasn't
for One YMCA,
I'd be dead.”

Graham:
One YMCA
resident



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Some names have been changed. Some photos show models.

Our Mission

YMCA enables people to develop their full potential in **body, mind and spirit**. Inspired by, and faithful to, our Christian values, we create supportive and energising communities that are open to all, where young people can truly **belong, contribute and thrive**.

We deliver a range of programmes and services that tackle the issues facing local people and ensure that

there are opportunities for young people throughout our work, from apprenticeships to work experience and childcare to youth work.

We work with all ages, faiths and backgrounds, as part of an International Movement rooted in more than 120,000 communities around the world.

We have served local communities for over 130 years and we reach thousands of people every day.

A word from Guy, our CEO

This last year has been one of contrasts.

Many of the people and communities we serve have been severely affected by the cost of living crisis, having already been challenged by the pandemic and wider issues still facing society. It's no wonder that charities like ours grow and develop - we have to, to meet the growing need, but it would be far better if we weren't needed at all.

This last year we've expanded the number of people we work with to more than 130,000 — with nearly 60% of our beneficiaries being children and young people. We continue to deliver excellent support for children and families through our local authority contracts, plus our day care Nursery and the innovative Airplay programme. We've also delivered a variety of community activities in our Hubs, cafe, gym and youthwork projects. Responding to the emerging needs of the community and averting problems further down the line.

However, there have been two areas where we have needed to increase our services, where early intervention has not been successful in preventing problems: Housing and Therapeutic services.

We have expanded our therapeutic support for the growing number of survivors of domestic or sexual abuse. Our teams support these individuals from disclosure to court cases, potentially over several years. We have also developed our counselling services, especially to

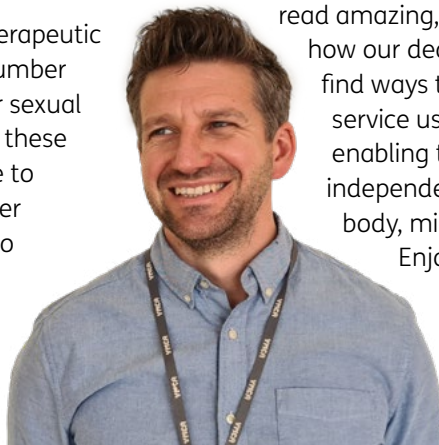
younger people, with new ways of working and additional funding reducing our waiting lists by 75%!

But the biggest area of growth, has been in our supported housing services, our fantastic team delivering more support across more sites, to more people, with more complex needs - changing and saving lives. We have plans to develop this area of work rapidly next year.

We work extensively with many partners across our sectors, but the real stars are our staff and volunteers - this incredibly passionate family of colleagues go above and beyond each and every day for the sake of others. It is truly inspiring and humbling to be part of this team.

Within this Impact Review, you will read amazing, but true, stories of how our dedicated colleagues find ways to unlock our service user's potential, enabling them to grow in independence - thriving in body, mind and spirit...
Enjoy!

Guy Foxell
CEO



We have helped
over **131,229**
local people
**Belong,
Contribute
and Thrive**
in 2022/23

£14.1m
cost saving to the
public purse



£5.7m
added social value



1,500+
volunteer led
sessions of
life-transforming
care and support



61,281
attendances at
our community
centres



204,291
nights of safe and
secure sleep



2,159
people developed
their health and
wellbeing with us



31,600
attendances
at Airplay
activities



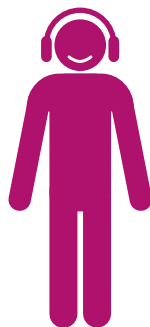
2,350

children and young people registered as Airplay members



3,545

families supported and attended universal sessions



4,000+

young people engaged with our youth team



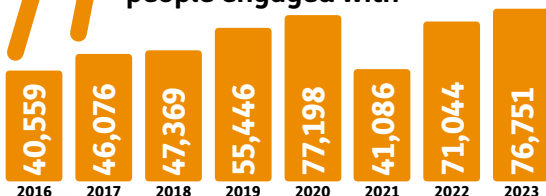
468

residents moved on into settled accommodation



76,751

children & young people engaged with



1,310

domestic and sexual abuse survivors supported (including perpetrators)

87,667

support sessions with residents provided independence



6,000+

volunteer hours delivered



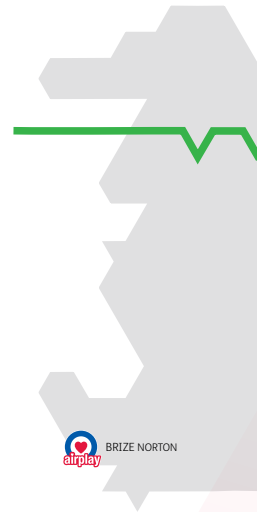
1,334

vulnerable individuals supported to escape rough-sleeping and avoid homelessness

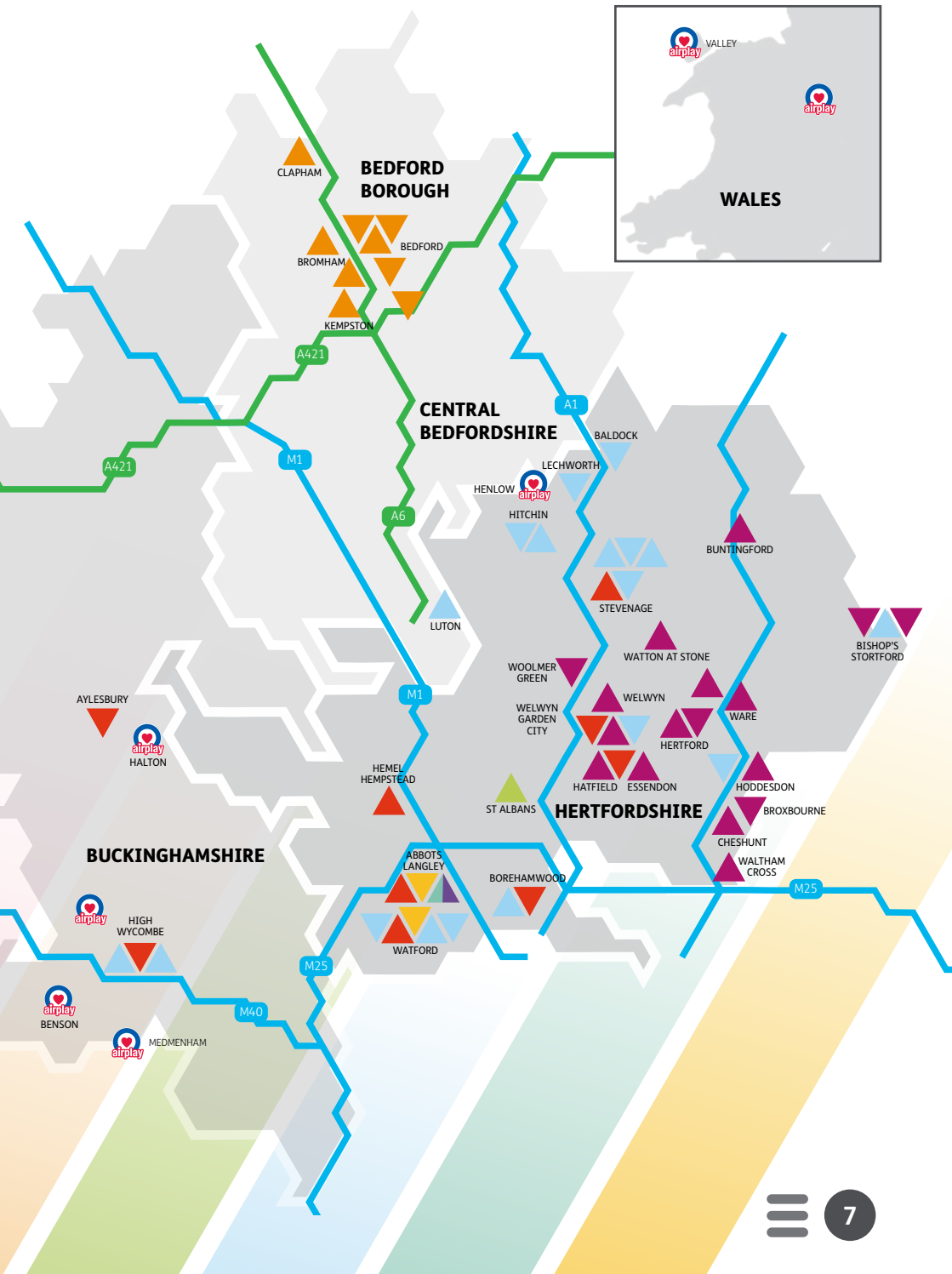


Our Place in the Community

-  Housing
-  Nursery
-  Health & Wellbeing
-  Young People
-  One YMCA Family Support Centres
-  ECP Children Centres
-  Community Centre
-  Airplay



For up-to-date contact details for our different services and locations, please visit [oneymca.org/contact-us](https://www.oneymca.org/contact-us)



BEDFORD BOROUGH

CLAPHAM
BROMHAM
BEDFORD
KEMPSTON

CENTRAL BEDFORDSHIRE

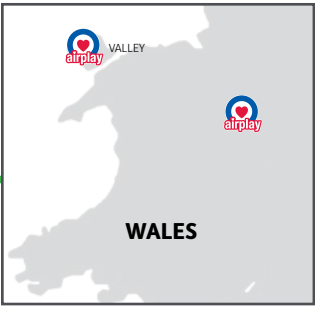
BALDOCK
LECHWORTH
HENLOW
HITCHIN
LUTON

HERTFORDSHIRE

STEVENAGE
WATTON AT STONE
WELWYN
HERTFORD
HATFIELD
ESSENDON
HODDESDON
BROXBORNE
CHESHUNT
WALTHAM CROSS
BISHOP'S STORTFORD

BUCKINGHAMSHIRE

AYLESBURY
HALTON
HIGH WYCOMBE
BENSON
MEDMENHAM



WALSLEY

Corporate Connect Club

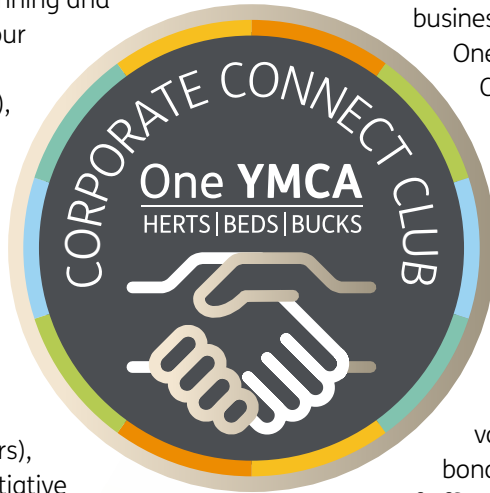
In February 2023, we were thrilled to launch our unique Corporate Connect Club!

After months of planning and development with our founding members; Richard Behan (CAE), Debbie Chadwick (Heart Radio Hertfordshire), Rakesh Dua (DUA Accountancy), David Hewitt (Langley Planning & Design) and William Poole-Wilson (Will+Partners), we launched our initiative to enable businesses to give back to their communities whilst flying the flag of their own company and that of One YMCA.

Corporate Connect Club (CCC), provides a Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) offer in which different levels of commitment make it accessible for all

businesses. The entry level, One Business Community, asks only for members to promote our community critical work and supporting us more generally with activities such as hosting fundraising events, volunteering days, pro bono advice and the loan of office space.

Should your business be able to engage in a greater commitment, there are four further levels of membership to consider.



To find out more about Corporate Connect Club and it's levels of membership, please head to our website:

oneymca.org/ccc





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to discuss your building requirements



www.whitmans.co.uk

IT STARTS WITH WHY

Our Why is the reason we exist.
It is the question we are an answer to.

Technology has an awesome ability to transform, there is no other industry that will drive more change for years to come. But technology will only make that difference when combined with knowledge, passion and empathy that people can bring.

Our service led approach supports you, your team and your business, providing a process that is commercially flexible. **Our approach is what makes us unique.**

At CAE we place our customers at the core of everything we do. We're agile, and we focus on understanding what's required, and recommending and implementing solutions that deliver a truly tailored approach.

thisisca.com



CAE
TECHNOLOGY ON POINT

Youth Work

The youth team have had a busy year delivering universal building-based, outreach and detached Youth Work in Hatfield, Watford, and Abbots Langley. Working in partnership has been key to maximising the breadth and impact of the work and outcomes for young people. These universal groups have supported young

people through youth led activities as well as partnering with external agencies like the police, council, and targeted youth services to

support young people through informal education to take an active role and have a voice in their communities.



Our Teen Gym, Football Sessions and schools-based Strength, Balance, Body and Mind projects have supported young people with their physical and emotional wellbeing. Through our links with Watford Palace Theatre the Young Orbital Drama group has enabled free access to the creative arts empowering young people to express themselves through performance. Meanwhile through our Youth Mentoring 28 young people have received 1:1 support from a youth worker around their specific support needs.

During the year our Youth Team engaged with over 4,000 young people through both universal and project work involving over 230 young people in youth forum and social action activities.

Young people have been recognised through their participation in One YMCA activities at the Welwyn and Hatfield Youth Awards, which saw several young people nominated and two young people win awards.



Alfie's Story

Alfie took part in the Strength, Balance, Body, and Mind project delivered by One YMCA's Youth Team through the Welwyn Garden City & Hatfield School Partnership. Alfie had not been attending school for over a year due to his anxiety and when he was first referred was very shy and found it hard to engage. During the programme the team worked with Alfie on his physical and emotional wellbeing through activities like badminton, volleyball, and the gym as well as supporting him to attend a trip to a ski centre where he then went on to gain a work experience placement.

In March 2023 Alfie was runner up of the Welwyn and Hatfield Youth Awards 2023 for young volunteer and inspirational young person.

“Alfie is more confident, feeling secure, believing in himself and experiences less anxiety. Our relationship is improving, he is able to open up about how he is feeling, including his negative thoughts etc. He can identify when he feels low and can focus on helping himself get out of this.”

Alfie's mum



Nelly's Story

Nelly has been attending Girls Move after being signposted to the group through One YMCA's universal youth work project in Hatfield. She was struggling with her wellbeing and having both family and friendship challenges.

“ It is a safe space where I can talk about anything. I have relied on One YMCA with a lot of my worries and problems and every time I leave the Girls Move group, I am feeling happier and more emotionally stable, the girl's group is an amazing project that has brought a lot of girls from different years at school together, there is a trusting atmosphere that makes us all feel safe. Also, the Girls Move sessions have helped me to feel less nervous, and taught me how to manage my emotions and come to peace with them.

My wellbeing has improved and now I feel I have grown and have understanding of my feelings. I now look forward to being involved in the social action project. Also, I have been receiving mentoring by one of the Youth Workers, this has helped my friendship groups and home life.”



Girl's Move

One YMCA are delivering Girls Move as part of a YMCA England and Wales pilot. Girls Move is a project that aims to build confidence and self esteem in young women from the BAME community through physical activity, wellbeing support, leadership and social action.

This year 41 young women have taken part in the Girls Move project through our universal youth clubs and through our engagement with local schools, completing social action projects like the Stop Bullying campaign.

The young women have reported a 57% increase in their confidence through being part of the programme and a 28% increase in seeing physical activity as an important part of their week.

“The girls are clearly enjoying the group as they return week on week, they are bringing others which is positive and are mixing with people they are not necessarily friends with/in lessons with.

Empowering our young women is vital and I think your sessions have given them food for thought.”

Yulia's Story

Yulia has been attending Sanctuary at one of the hotels for 5 months, eventually joining One YCMA's 6-week well-being programme.

Yulia entered the UK under asylum status and resides in the hotel where her family are allocated one room. When Yulia began attending the wellbeing sessions she was quiet, shy and could be aggressive towards her peers. Her English was not great so communication was also difficult for her. Our workers gave her space to talk and tell us her story through pictures as well as words. By providing a safe space and accepting staff, the team were able

to work with her on how being angry all the time was exhausting and left her unable to focus.

She slowly began to talk more, practising English and helping others in the group. Yulia remained quiet, but began to get involved in activities and learn ways to manage her anger knowing she was able to take time out, breath and come back into the room.

Yulia has attended regularly and gained confidence, making friends and feeling less isolated. She has engaged in sports and arts activities. She is more able to cope in school and is beginning to look forward to moving out of the hotel and to a home.

“ It's nice that I can talk, I have people I can talk to and seem to care about me and what happens to me. I am making friends and don't hate it so much here now. It is good to be safe ”



Name has been changed





Sanctuary

One YMCA, in partnership with Barnardo's has been delivering wellbeing groups to young asylum seekers and refugees (11 to 16 yrs.) as part of a new support service for Hertfordshire called Sanctuary.

Sanctuary aims to create opportunities for these young people to build support and friendship networks, reduce isolation and access universal activity sessions.

Support Available: Group activities to reduce isolation, meet others with similar experiences, learn from each other and rebuild confidence. (Female only groups also available)

Signposting and support to navigate through referral pathways to access universal and targeted activities, including one to one counselling, and One YMCA's well-being programme. Designed to provide young people with the opportunity to learn more about themselves and the world around them. It will equip them with the tools to overcome everyday obstacles and focus their energy on the things that matter most to them. Experienced Youth Workers will be able to deliver this programme over a 6-week period and will provide opportunities to meet other young people.



Young Parent Group

Our Family Support Service noticed that the number of Young Parents aged between 15 and 21 had risen significantly and was more prominent in the Hatfield area. In response to this, and through listening to the Young Parents, we planned a five week Welcome to the World course locally that was tailored to their presenting needs.

The focus areas of the course aimed to give the expectant and new parents the knowledge and skills to enable them to make healthy choices and adopt good practices during their transition to parenthood. The course also provided opportunities for them to share concerns, worries and experiences with one another in a safe and private venue, whilst gaining support from their peers.

We have been thrilled with the success of the course, with eight attendees

forming the group including two fathers, both of whom are now attending our Becoming Dad group too! The group have formed strong connections with each other; creating a space for learning

and reflecting and building on their own strengths. We were delighted that this course was extended for another five weeks focusing on Protective Behaviours with all attendees returning.

Some of the successes from the group have been; welcoming a new baby, all families are accessing the Healthy Start scheme, parents who are experiencing anxiety have been able to access a small group and reduce

their feeling of isolation and a parent facing financial crisis due to the cost of living is accessing financial support.

“ I hadn't been to any other groups with my little girl as there were always older parents and I felt judged. Young parents need groups like this. ”



Graham's Story

Graham, a 57-year-old chef, had ended up sleeping rough after his marriage broke down. Initially he sofa surfed, but soon found himself left with no choice but to live on the streets. His recurrent depressive disorder and subsequent drinking contributing to his fate.

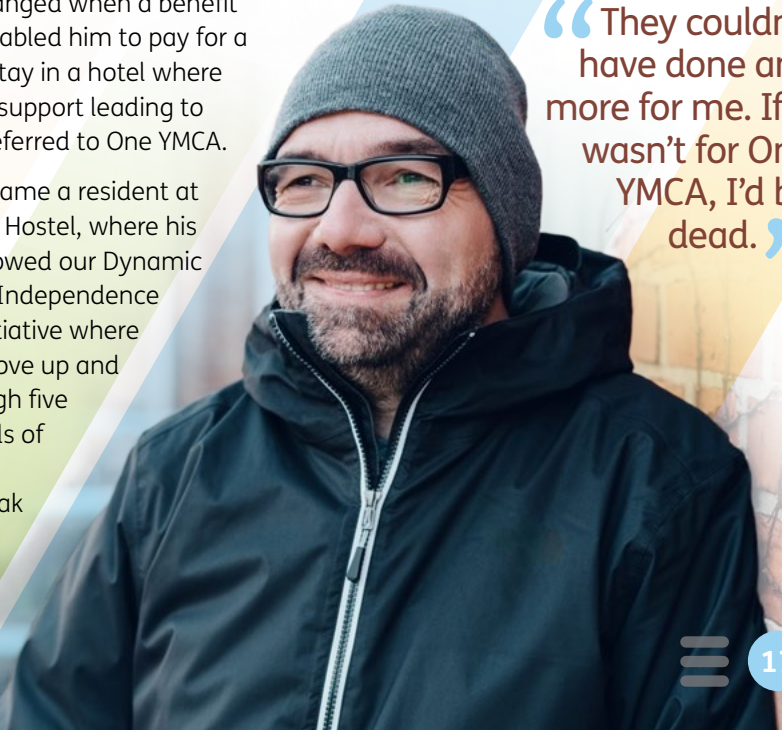
Graham found sleeping rough incredibly challenging, and attempted to take his own life by swallowing 300 pills. Fortunately, he regretted this action and called the police, who arrived within minutes and took him to hospital, however, following treatment he returned to living on the streets. His fortunes changed when a benefit payment enabled him to pay for a few nights stay in a hotel where he received support leading to him being referred to One YMCA.

Graham became a resident at our Watford Hostel, where his support followed our Dynamic Pathway to Independence (DPI). An initiative where residents move up and down through five distinct levels of support. DPI seeks to break the cycle of

homelessness by providing continuous support to the point where residents are able to live independently again regardless of any setbacks they may have along the way. Specialist help from both our own highly experienced support workers and partnering with other local organisations, means we are able to address the underlying trauma and complex needs that sees vulnerable individuals returning to homelessness time and time again.

Clients are encouraged to gradually become more independent during their stay with us and today, we are delighted to say, Graham is living in his very own home.

“They couldn't have done any more for me. If it wasn't for One YMCA, I'd be dead.”



Signpost

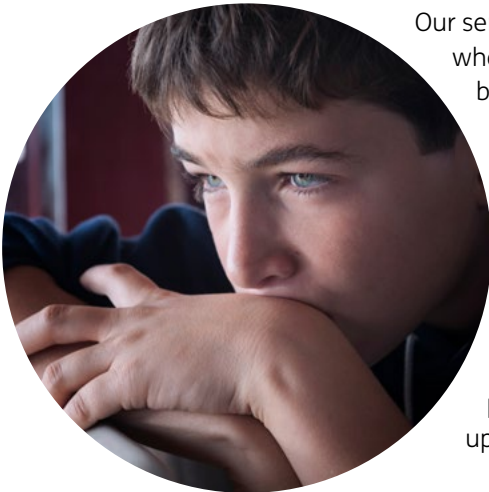
We're here for **young people**

Signpost provides counselling, coaching and other support to help young people aged 10-25 living in Hertfordshire to overcome their mental health challenges. Offering a safe space where young people can reflect on and process their experiences, identify patterns of behaviour and explore coping strategies to navigate everyday life. We are able to offer a limited number of funded spaces for our counselling but would love to offer more with hundreds of young people on our waiting list.



Daniel's Story

Our service supports young people like Daniel who, at 14 years old, was being bullied for being autistic, it got so bad that he refused to go to school. He was referred to Signpost where he learned coping techniques to deal with his mental health and build resilience. One of our Signpost colleagues bumped into Daniel's mum in Watford. Through tears she thanked us for all our support saying how proud she was of her son for standing up for himself at school!



Driven to help

Elenor's lived experience led her to become a counsellor and give back to the counselling service that had supported her years before.

“ My journey to working with young people was one that started at the age of 23 when my GP referred me to Signpost in Watford for some counselling.

I had been driving on the M25 one afternoon when I experienced my first panic attack. Luckily, the police pulled over to help me and drove me home. After this I was having anxiety attacks often and they started to affect my work, relationships, and social life.

I went to my GP, and he was understanding and described what was happening to my body when I got anxious. Racing heart, getting hot and my breathing getting shallow. Luckily, he had heard about

Signpost and suggested some counselling.

I had a few sessions and I learnt different ways to manage my anxiety, but I also learned about why I get anxious. I have learnt that my anxiety is always telling me something, maybe I am ignoring a niggle and not wanting to explore what that is.

I trained to be a counsellor so I could help others in their journey too and of course when I realised that Signpost was still a charity, working with young people, I wanted to come and give back to where it all started for me. ”



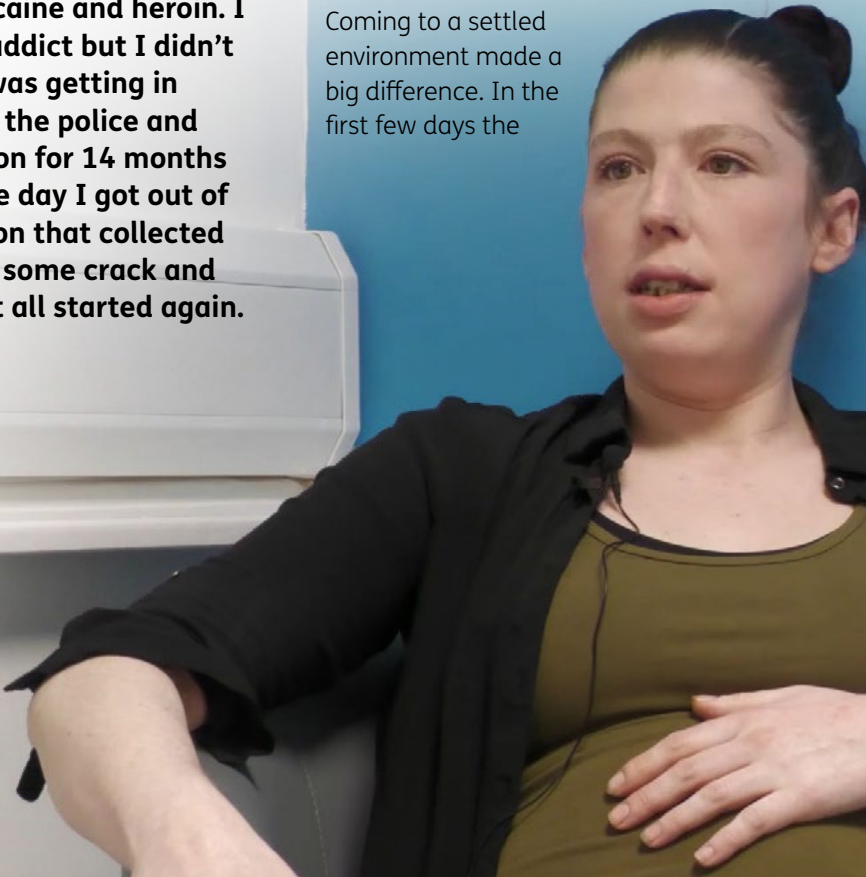
Chantelle's Story

“When I was about 10, my mum and dad separated. I had to grow up very quickly as I also have a disabled brother. Whilst I was at secondary school I tried cannabis and just got in with the wrong crowd. I didn't finish school or do my GCSEs. I was sexually assaulted at 18 and started drinking quite heavily which led to taking cocaine and heroin. I became an addict but I didn't realise it. I was getting in trouble with the police and went to prison for 14 months for theft. The day I got out of jail the person that collected me gave me some crack and heroin and it all started again.

“I lived in a tent outside Tesco with my partner, who also had a habit, for over a year.”

I then lived in a tent outside Tesco with my partner, who also had a habit, for over a year. We were given accommodation but it was rife with drugs. I got a letter one day saying a place had opened up at One YMCA for me. I was reluctant to come here but they gave us the opportunity to come as a couple, everywhere else wanted to separate us.

Coming to a settled environment made a big difference. In the first few days the



withdrawal symptoms were so hard that my support worker stayed late to try to get us some medication from an out of hours surgery. Staff brought us food parcels and did everything they could to make us comfortable. I'd never experienced this before. Admitting that I was in withdrawal was hard because you don't want people thinking you are just a junkie. That was the first time I trusted someone. Staff prioritised getting me on a script and making sure that I could cope with everything. I'm so proud of how far we've come with the staff's support. They don't look down on you, they say 'you've got this'. They help you to build your own courage to do it yourself, that's where I'm getting to now.

Hear
Chantelle
tell her
story here:



I would like to work here and help the younger me. I'm 24 weeks pregnant with twins and I'm looking at getting my own place and I've been clean for 4

“ Staff don't look down on you, they say 'you've got this'. They help you to build your own courage to do it yourself. ”

months. Without an environment like this I wouldn't be any different. I'd still be on the street using drugs without the chance that One YMCA have given me. ”

Since Chantelle shared her story with us she has moved to a home of her own where she lives with her twins and their dad. She has reduced how much she accesses One YMCA's outreach support but knows it is there if she needs it.



Sally's Story

Horizons

“ I have been attending Horizons for 10 months. I was previously in a domestic abuse relationship with my daughter's father. I was not in a good place in terms of my mental health. I needed to get myself on the right path, for myself and my daughter.

“ I'm learning to be stronger, to assess situations before I get into them and be open but not too open. ”

forced to say anything if you don't feel comfortable to speak but I can guarantee you that as the sessions go on you will feel comfortable. It's nowhere near as daunting as you think.

It's fun, it's learning; not like counselling at all. It's like you're with a group of friends. It's really worth taking the time for yourself and you

go away with a variety of knowledge.

At first, I felt embarrassed, nervous and a bit scared but the second I came into the Liberty group I felt welcomed and almost excited for the journey ahead.

It's a group of females and when the session starts you don't have to stand up and introduce yourself. You're never

You can talk about your previous experiences knowing that the people in the room completely understand what you are going through and they're listening to you and you feel valued and not alone. I'm learning to be stronger, to assess situations before I get into them and be open but not too open.

It's ok to be upset or angry. Your feelings are valid. It's ok to be by yourself, you don't need a partner to be the person you want to be. I wouldn't have the strength to continue by myself if I hadn't stuck it out with Liberty.

It's a positive road ahead. ”

Our Liberty groups support women with children who have experienced domestic abuse as part of our Horizons programme.

Maya's Story

Maya and her four children were living in a two-bedroom flat with her abusive partner when they accessed support from our Children's Centres.



from the police, installing cameras and a video door bell, changing phone numbers, and blocking her ex-partner on social media, as well as putting a non-molestation order in place.

There had been several police call outs due to the dad being abusive but Maya would always allow him back after an incident. The domestic abuse was having a major impact on the family's mental health and wellbeing, and the children's development.

We supported Maya by delivering our *My Choice* domestic abuse course, educating mum about the types of abuse, signs to look out for, facts and statistics, safety, effects on children, future relationships and Clare's law. Maya attended the online course each week for 10 sessions and engaged well and came to realise that she was experiencing abuse. She listened to others and shared her experiences, gaining in confidence and appearing brighter each week.

She wanted to escape the relationship, sharing how she couldn't believe she had stayed for so long, putting up with the abuse and allowing her children to live it. Maya put measures in place to protect her and her family with advice

Our Family Support Worker also set up play sessions to provide a safe space for the children to learn, grow and develop. Advice and information were given to support her child with additional needs and we helped Maya to apply for 2-year old childcare and early education funding and find a nursery setting.

Children's social care no longer have concerns about Maya and her children.

“ I am able to be more present and available for my children, we have a good bond and routine in place, I'm a better parent now. ”



Photo shows models, name has been changed

Charters Day Nursery

Our highly qualified team of Early Years Professionals provide the very best nursery experience with a focus on the individual child and their unique needs. The care and commitment of our team was highly praised in our Ofsted report, and we were delighted to be graded Good at our last inspection. We have places for 94 children aged between three months and five years.



“ Our son has been going to Charters for 7 months and has enjoyed every moment. The staff there are friendly and create a warm and caring atmosphere with so many fun activities and chances for our son to learn and develop. They keep us updated with anything we need to know. ”

Liz

“ We are so happy that our daughter goes to Charters Nursery. She started there at 11 months old and settled in so well from the start. The staff are so friendly and you can see they love working with children just from my daughter’s reaction to them. She has recently moved up from the baby room into the toddler room and was sad to leave her usual carers but has settled in great once again with her new group. ”

Gemma

“ The nursery staff are all very knowledgeable and friendly. My son’s keyworker and the general staff in the baby room always take time out to personally speak to, and update me on my son’s development and needs. The facilities are amazing, inside and outside and the general atmosphere is one which welcomes, energises and makes you feel as though you have left your child in very capable hands. ”

Louise



Helen's Story

Helen was a victim of stranger rape whilst visiting friends in London, the support from our Independent Sexual Violence Advisor team (ISVA) enabled her to take her attacker to court where he was sentenced to 14 years imprisonment:

“ He trapped me in an alley and used a knife. It was only attempted rape because I gave him such a hard time. I fought back, which I wouldn't recommend because he got angrier and the violence escalated.

I was in hospital for a while afterwards, but no-one talked to me about the attack. I was left festering about it and was really lost. I felt safer and better once I'd made the first phone call. I didn't feel like I had to explain myself, it was a professional organisation that was geared up to deal with what had happened to me. At first, they just listened. I knew I had

“ At first, they just listened. I knew I had someone who understood and would help me. ”

someone who understood and would help me. I wanted my case to go to court but it was very tough and I couldn't have done it without the YMCA's help, of that I'm certain. The ISVA was with me every step of the way including on court day.

After the sentencing, there was a real sense of relief. I can talk about it but it's a

burden you carry. It's really hard to pick up the phone for help because you are in shock for weeks but if you were to ring the YMCA you'd get a huge amount of support and caring, helping you move forward.”

Hear Helen tell her story here:



Christian Mission

It has been another fruitful and purposeful year for the Christian Mission team, serving colleagues and service users alike in providing pastoral care and building an even stronger sense of togetherness.



The abiding image of our year is a

series of mosaic crosses that now grace communal spaces in our family settings, hostels, and shared offices. Each cross is unique, designed by service users, inspired by the ancient art of

Kintsugi. This is where broken fragments are gathered together and re-shaped into something beautiful. This is core to our Christian faith and the roots of YMCA: the life, example and teaching of Jesus that restores dignity and brings lasting hope.

Independent Sexual Violence Advice

We are delighted this year to serve alongside our specialised ISVA services, our designated Chaplain provided over 106 hours of additional pastoral support to those impacted by sexual and domestic violence – more broken pieces finding restoration.

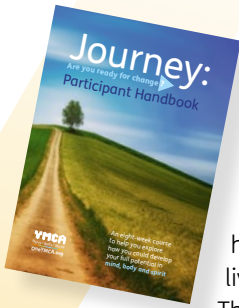
“ [The Chaplains] have an in depth understanding of the impact of trauma, are non-judgemental and have experience working with people facing numerous life challenges. ”

Morag Walters

Herts ISVA Service Manager

This year our Chaplaincy team have provided **3,157 volunteer hours** of chaplaincy support, providing **477 sessions** of group work and helping **436 unique individuals** navigate life in the context of complex needs, addictions and relationship breakdown.

Many of the **2,265 ‘meaningful interactions’** between our chaplaincy staff and colleagues, volunteers, and service users proved to be a lifeline in a crisis, a moment to be listened to without being judged, and in other cases simply a signpost to further support.



Journey

Our 'Journey' programme of spiritual discovery continued to help service users explore how they want their lives to change.

This culminated in

13 people who were experiencing homelessness enjoying an overnight retreat in the Othona community in Essex.



A One YMCA resident

“The time at Othona helped me to get outside and walk which helped me progress towards walking every day as part of my longer-term goals. Now I spend time planning and walking to raise money for charities. I also grew spiritually and was able to see that there is a plan and purpose for my life.”



Together

A further highlight for our team this year was hosting our first 'Together' conference. 250 colleagues, volunteers and trustees enjoyed a warm day of shared learning based on our renewed Values and inspired by guest speaker, author, and activist Elliot Rae.

Authentic Human Connection

The Christian Mission team's work continues to expand beyond chaplaincy, with a key part to play in developing the Mission 25 corporate strategy. This has included training a further 46 people in Authentic Human Connection, feeding into our internal and community Connect groups which enhance relational connectivity across One YMCA.



BODY, mind and spirit

Our Community Gym in St Albans has everything our members need to stay in shape and improve their wellbeing. And just like our Community Hubs, café and nursery, all profits are fed back into the charity to support even more vulnerable individuals.

Membership at the St Albans Gym (also known as the Highfield Gym) is open to anyone and everyone and, with a capacity there is plenty of space for physical activities of all kinds.

As well as the main gym, users can also enjoy access to a free weights room, a sports hall and a badminton court. Whether you're looking to lose weight, bulk up, or make some new friends through team sports, the St Albans Community Gym has everything you need. The building also has an AstroTurf football pitch to hire.



Facilities include:

- ▶ Free weights room
- ▶ Cardiovascular equipment
- ▶ Sports hall
- ▶ Badminton court
- ▶ Dance studio
- ▶ AstroTurf football pitch
- ▶ Weekly fitness classes
- ▶ Free parking
- ▶ Free Wifi
- ▶ Full air-con

“ When I first joined the YMCA, I was struggling with my mental health. I suffer with Paranoid Schizophrenia and would always feel like I was building a lot of pressure in my mind, which would always show physically too. I would feel tense as though I was about to blow a fuse. I was feeling low and even suicidal at

times, I always just wanted to sleep my days away. During my time at the gym I found myself becoming more relaxed and gradually building my energy levels. Having a good workout helped me find a sense of stability. I found myself becoming more grounded and able to cope with the symptoms from my condition. With options for classes to use in the gym it was really good because it gave me more choice and if I became bored by my own workout I could switch it up and take a class.

Every member of staff has always been friendly and welcoming and are always willing to talk about mental health,

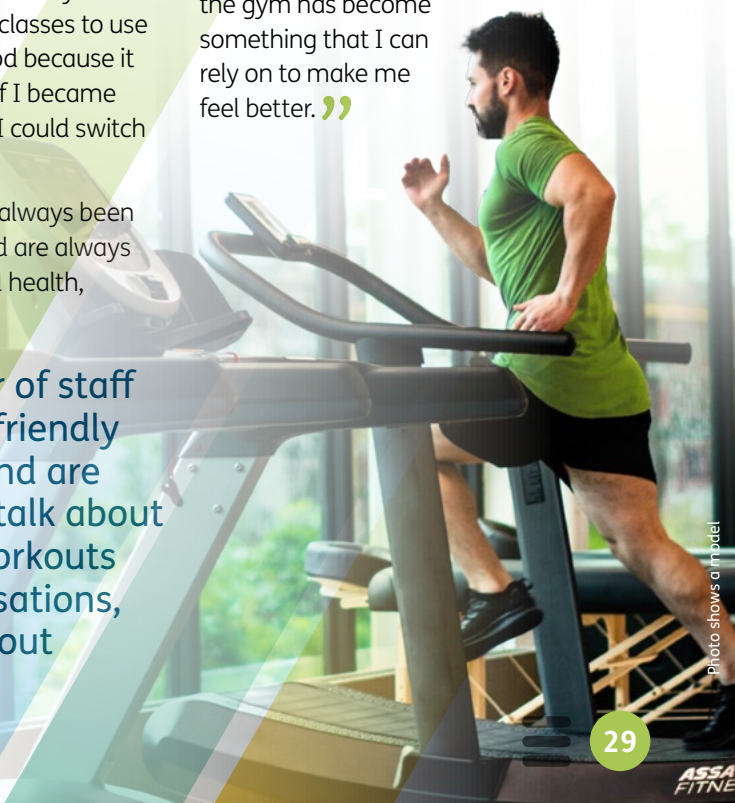
“ Every member of staff has always been friendly and welcoming and are always willing to talk about mental health, workouts and other conversations, even if it’s just about the weather. ”

“ I was feeling low and even suicidal at times, I always just wanted to sleep my days away. ”

workouts and other conversations, even if it’s just about the weather. The YMCA has become somewhere for me to unwind, be part of something positive, and be in a better position to handle obstacles in life. It’s a great place to help me set goals not just for losing weight or achieving a certain body type but also goals I can reach outside of the gym.

The YMCA gym is a great stepping stone for a much better way of life. At first, it was always a bit of a battle to get motivated to go but after a while it just became part of my routine, and now I feel so much calmer and more confident.

Life for me is up and down but the gym has become something that I can rely on to make me feel better. ”



The #Projects

Running alongside our day to day service offers we have launched three schemes, in line with the Making Every Adult Matter (MEAM) approach, helping us to be the best that we can be!

These are:



#ProjectVoice

Embedding the lived experience voice in all that we do, working hard to capture what it feels like to be living 'within' the system. Using that voice to assess, adapt and develop existing and new, highly effective, services on a consistent basis. Driving continuous improvement through consultation with residents and service users who are empowered to direct and influence their own destiny on their journey to independence.

#ProjectFutures

A vocationally focused programme, designed to maximise access to and maintaining of sustainable employment. Experienced and dedicated work coaches engage intensively with vulnerable individuals to help identify, quantify and move forward with goals and objectives. Participants will be provided with training, mentoring and overall support to make it happen.

#ProjectResilience

Dynamic and proactive engagement and delivery of health, wellbeing and physical/sports activities. Helping to develop a sense of personal motivation and energy to maximise the achievement of life changing outcomes for highly vulnerable individuals. One to one and group activities support those who have experienced significant trauma to summon up the self-motivation necessary to engage with short- and long-term goals whilst identifying personal interests.



Every cup makes a difference at Woodlands Futures Cafe!





#ProjectResilience has already successfully launched a wide range of physical activities to support the wellbeing of our residents. Ranging from health walks and sports such as badminton, football and cricket to exercise classes and personal training sessions. These activities provide opportunities to socialise, de-stress, work as a team and more. An inter-hostel football tournament pitted four of our social housing sites against one another to win the prestigious One YMCA Cup through a bit of healthy competition!



#ProjectResilience's impact can already be seen:

Thomas, who, when he first took part in the project rated his fitness level as 3/10 and his happiness with his fitness level as a -2/10, now rates his fitness level as 6/10 and his happiness with it as 5/10. Thomas also shared that he has grown in confidence since taking part in the project, his personal highlight being that he was able to take a phone call by himself.

John, speaks of his enjoyment in taking part in the weekly exercise classes, football and badminton sessions. #Project Resilience has helped him to reduce the amount he smokes and he is considering quitting to improve his performance and physical health. John has also noticed that he is waking and getting up earlier as he has something to look forward to.



Mission 25

#Mission25, our strategy for doubling our impact by 2025 is shaped by our charity's senior leaders and trustees but is led and powered by colleagues



with frontline expertise who know what it takes to make the biggest difference to people's lives. #Mission25 is made up of ten concepts, jointly decided upon at the kick starter event in 2020, with staff invited to choose one to become an ambassador for:



#TeamUs

Nurturing a desire, belief and ambition to do more and better together, equipping and inspiring our staff team to belong, contribute and thrive.



#TeamThrive:5-11s

Providing opportunities for 5-11s to belong, contribute and thrive through a broad pathway of support which is fun and purposeful.



#TeamProjectConnect

Growing our internal connectivity and community impact through sector leading training and transformative group work.



#BetterPlaces

Creating better environments where people can work, live and engage more effectively than ever before. Creating a 'pride of place' culture that will motivate people to reach their full potential.



#TeamGoingDigital

Improving and embedding new digital solutions that will help our staff do more and better together.



#TeamGoingGreen

Improving our environmental impact through reducing, reusing, recycling and educating across the charity. Raising awareness of our impact on the planet and creating an ethos where green thinking is common place.



#TeamVolunteers

Doubling the positive impact of volunteers to become the charity of choice where people come to learn, fulfil their volunteering desires and develop their full potential in body, mind and spirit.



#TeamMakingHomes

Doubling the number of vulnerable people we house and helping individuals to thrive through a more tailored approach to support. Increasing our specialised staff training to help residents.



#TeamYouthVoice

Creating a place where young people feel they belong and contribute to youth forums and surveys. Encouraging young people to lead the way and become young leaders or ambassadors.



#TeamDeveloping People&Potential

Creating sector leading training and development solutions to provide opportunities and encourage growth in our colleagues, volunteers and those we support; enabling them to achieve their goals and aspirations.



As an example of how #Mission25 weaves itself into life at One YMCA, #TeamProjectConnect have devised an Authentic Human Connection training programme where staff and volunteers learn about connecting and interacting more effectively with others across the charity and beyond. This programme has also

been adopted by AirPlay to help the young people that they support with their social and emotional development.

The course incorporates, an immersion day, pairing with a buddy to share your learning experiences with, regular catch-up sessions online and a final gathering to celebrate the learning and personal development achieved. Our Authentic Human Connection training is accredited, enabling it to be rolled out in other organisations.





Airplay

Last year, One YMCA became the lead organisation for the RAF Benevolent Fund's youth support programme, Airplay. Demonstrating the collective strength of the YMCA in its 'more and better together' approach One YMCA leads a consortium of 11 YMCA to deliver the project across 24 RAF stations in England, Wales, and Scotland in conjunction improving outcomes for young people from RAF families who face a unique set of challenges.

In 2022, Airplay delivered over 6,250 hours of youth activities to its 2,350 members. Young people have taken part in universal activities, themed projects, trips and residentials. They have also led on social action projects through a newly launched Special Projects fund open for members to apply directly to make a difference in their communities. Alongside this Airplay delivered over 110 youth forums seeing it's members setting the agenda and discussing the things that matter to them.

As well as delivering Airplay's central functions like the new digital platform Airplay Connect and Airplay's national activity and youth forum residentials, One YMCA delivered at five of the 24 RAF Stations seeing over 7,500 attendances from children and young people.

Nominated for two National Awards in that time Airplay under One YMCA was rated 4.6 out of 5 by its members and 4.7 by parents.

“Reenergised and modernised, the new contract with One YMCA has genuinely supercharged the provision”

Paul Hughesdon
Director Grants, Services
and Programmes RAF
Benevolent Fund



Making Christmas count

On realising some of their peers didn't have an advent calendar, the young people attending Airplay Brize Norton decided to do something about it. After collecting some recycling and ordering some chocolates the young people organised and hosted a community event for families to attend to create their own advent calendars for free!

25 families attended creating over 200 homemade advent calendars for the run up



to Christmas. They also donated calendar building resources to a local lone parent's club to create even more calendars for distribution.

Not only did the young people involved in the project learn valuable skills from organising and delivering the event, but they also built strong connections in their community. Their hard work and selfless actions ensured children and young people could enjoy the Christmas period without additional cost at a time when finances were already stretched.



“ Airplay has helped me to feel more confident in my day-to-day life. I always feel as if my voice is heard and that I am supported by my peers and youth workers. I love coming to Airplay and feeling accepted by the friends I have made. ”

Airplay Member, aged 16



Volunteering

Volunteers come to us for a whole range of reasons, from having a positive impact or bolstering their CV, to finding purpose and forming new friendships. Whatever the reasons, the impact that our volunteers have on our services and the clients that use them is invaluable.



Last year we were delighted to achieve Investors In Volunteers status, demonstrating our commitment to providing a positive

experience for our volunteers. We understand that finding the time to volunteer has become more difficult for many, particularly with continuing financial pressures, and so we have made every effort to be as flexible as we can in our volunteering roles.

Corporate Volunteering.

One area that we have progressed with over the past year is Corporate Volunteering. Many companies are seeking to give back to their communities, and one way for them to do this is to have volunteering days where their employees help us in various tasks, such as painting and decorating or gardening. Recent Corporate Volunteering events have also seen small businesses taking part



by joining with larger company groups. This is a great team bonding opportunity and fits perfectly with the principles of our Corporate Connect Club (pg 8) where businesses commit to giving back to their local community by supporting us, which helps them to stand out from the crowd with us shouting about their support through networking and various media.



Another example of the flexibility within our volunteering roles is the Community Ambassador Volunteer that our Family Support Service has introduced. These volunteers support our Family Centre vision by attending sessions at our centres and out in the community accompanied by their child, whilst sharing information on the Family Centre Service.

Zoe had volunteered with us prior to giving birth to her second child, the new Community Ambassador Volunteer role has enabled her to continue supporting us:



“ I joined the Family Centre Services as an Early Start Activity Volunteer and loved every minute of it. Once I had baby number two, I knew that I wouldn't be able to fulfil my original Early Start role after maternity leave which was upsetting for me. When the new Community Ambassador

role was introduced, I was thrilled. It enables me to champion the Family Centre Service, give support based on personal experience and be part of the children's developmental process. This role is flexible around a busy family schedule and a win-win for both volunteer and their children. I bring my children along to Stay and Plays at Family Centres, getting us all out socialising and playing together. I really enjoy giving back to the Family Centre as they have done so much for me and my children, including supporting me when I was suffering from postnatal depression.

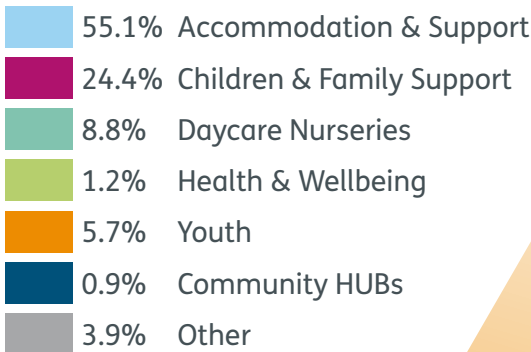
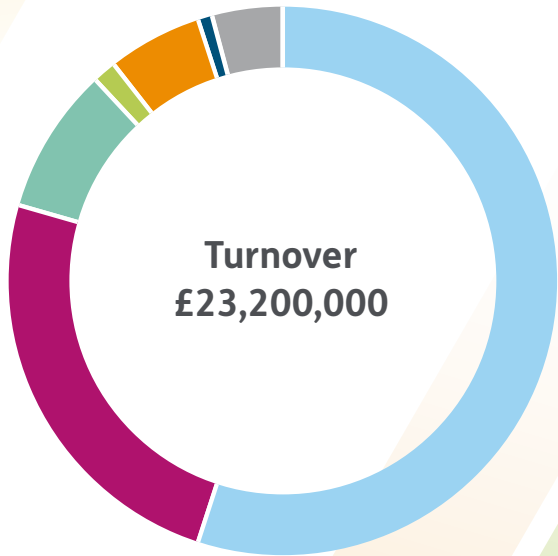
I enjoy being a part of the Family Centre family so much and plan on working with them in the future.”



Our Finances

Where we have invested in the community

YMCA is committed to using its resources to maximise our positive impact on the community. All our spending is scrutinised by our Trustees at Board level, as well as the Audit & Risk and Resource Committees.



With thanks to our funders, commissioners, partners and volunteers:

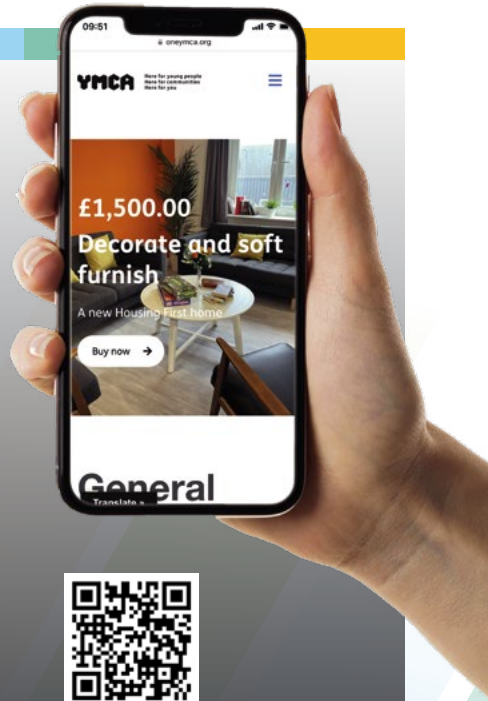
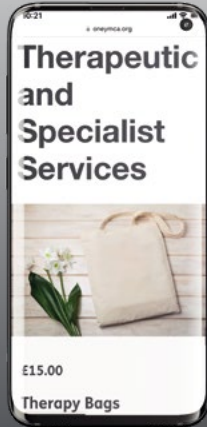
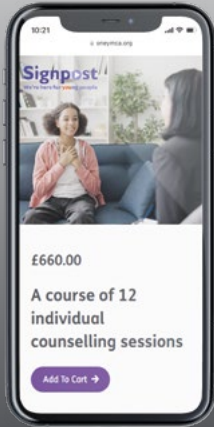


Corporate Connect Club Members and Founders



Your chance to change and save lives

oneymca.org/makeadifference



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Reg. Social Housing Provider: H4418 VAT number: 190 3566 03



Here for young people
Here for communities
Here for you

YMCA enables people to develop their full potential in mind, body and spirit. Inspired by, and faithful to, our Christian values, we create supportive, inclusive and energising communities, where young people can truly belong, contribute and thrive.

FAMILY & YOUTH WORK

HEALTH & WELLBEING

HOUSING

TRAINING & EDUCATION

SUPPORT & ADVICE