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One YMCA

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ONE YMCA

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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.



One YMCA

Accommodation
Youthwork
Health and Wellbeing
Family Work
Support and Advice

Annual Review 2018

Support & advice

Accommodation

Family work

Health & wellbeing

Training & education



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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 12000 communities around the world.

We have served the communities in Hertfordshire for over 130 years and we reach thousands of people each day.

What we do

The last year has been one of growth and impact for our YMCA. We have helped more people than last year and our new monitoring tools have improved our understanding of the difference we make in their lives.

YMCA works with the whole person in “Body, mind & spirit”. All our projects aim to enhance people’s overall wellbeing and resilience.

This Annual Review tells some of the remarkable stories of the people we worked with, which we hope you will find as inspirational as we do!

Accommodation

We run four hostels for over 430 local homeless people, supporting them into stable accommodation within 18 months. We also supported young asylum seekers to acclimatise to the UK and start a journey to independence, through college and employment.

Family Work

Our Children’s Centres help more than 11,000 families to prepare their children for school and give them a great start to life. From 2019 onwards we will expand this work to reach 16,000 families. Our large community nursery looks after 125 children each week, offering a caring, educational and fun environment.

Health & Wellbeing

Our three community gyms give 11,070 local people access to affordable fitness, as well as delivering specialist exercise sessions and sporting activities to thousands of vulnerable people in the community.

Support & Advice

The Orbital Community Centre caters for 40 community groups each week, working to support and enrich the lives of nearly 32,000 local people.

Through HomelessHub, a partnership with Herts Young Homeless, we are reaching hundreds of 16 and 17 year olds who are at high risk of becoming homeless. The Hub offers a one-stop shop for young people, parents and professionals.

Youth Work

We work with thousands of young people through evening youth clubs, daytime programmes and targeted work with our young unemployed population across the entire county.

Who we’ve helped

This year we have:

Worked with more children and young people than in previous years: **47,369**



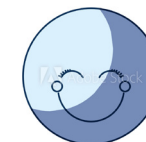
Engaged with **55,000** local people.



Hosted **84,487** exercise sessions to encourage active and healthier lifestyles across Hertfordshire. Delivered **304** sessions for people with disabilities giving access to sport and dance. Macmillan Move More Project supported **452** participants



Saved the public purse **£5.7million** through our support of homeless people



Helped our young people increase their feeling of wellbeing by nearly **20%**



Provided **146,356** nights’ sleep in our hostels and housing supporting homeless individuals.

Assisted **279** people to move into secure and comfortable accommodation.

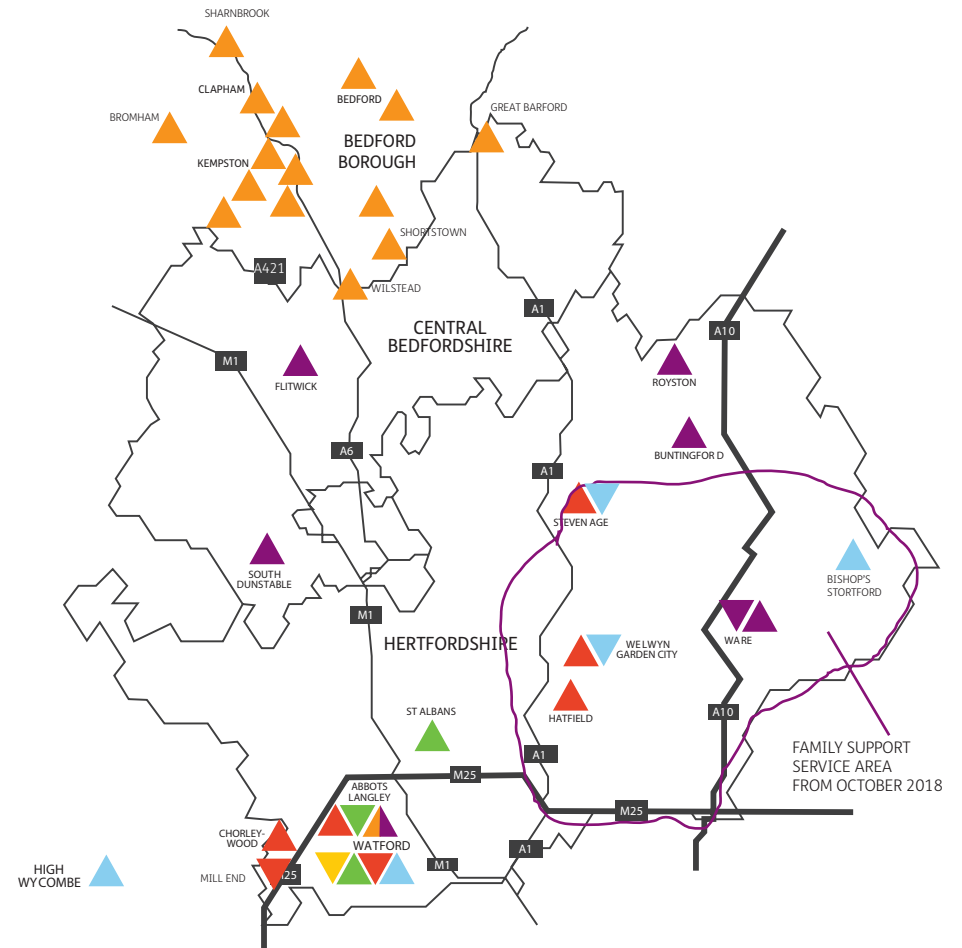


Invested **£9.7 million** to help people in our community belong, contribute and thrive.

Our locations

-  Accommodation
-  Nursery
-  Health & Wellbeing
-  Young People
-  One YMCA Children Centres
-  ECP Children Centres
-  Community Centre

For up-to-date contact details for our different services and locations, please visit oneymca.org/contact-us



Accommodation

One YMCA operates homeless hostels across Hertfordshire and Buckinghamshire, providing 570 bed spaces for our residents and tenants. We work in close partnership with each Local Council and County Council to help deliver their Homelessness strategies, meeting the needs of local people. We also offer eight intensively supported bedspaces for young asylum seekers.

Each of our hostels offers all of our residents and tenants a safe and secure environment to live in for up

to 18 months. This provides the stability and opportunity to get back on track. We give support through our specialist supported housing officers who work with managing debt, training and educational courses, or referral to external specialist support agencies. As well as offering our residents and tenants access to a wide range support services, our Chaplaincy team is available to offer social events, activities and a listening ear.

HomelessHub

We are pleased to be working in partnership with Herts Young Homeless (hyh) to deliver the Hertfordshire County Council contract for **HomelessHub**. This new service is the single point of contact to access homelessness prevention services for hundreds of 16 & 17 year olds across Hertfordshire.



HomelessHub is a single point of advice, information and guidance for young people at risk of homelessness but can also be accessed by parents or professionals needing support. HomelessHub works in partnership with young people and families to reduce conflict and prevent homelessness.

<http://homelesshub.help>

Our Housing Impact

We talked **14,554** times with our residents last year having meaningful discussions.



Over **90%** of our residents gave positive feedback on their support planning sessions.

We provided **139,363** nights of sleep last year. That is the equivalent of **381** years.



An average of **95%** occupancy across all our sites.



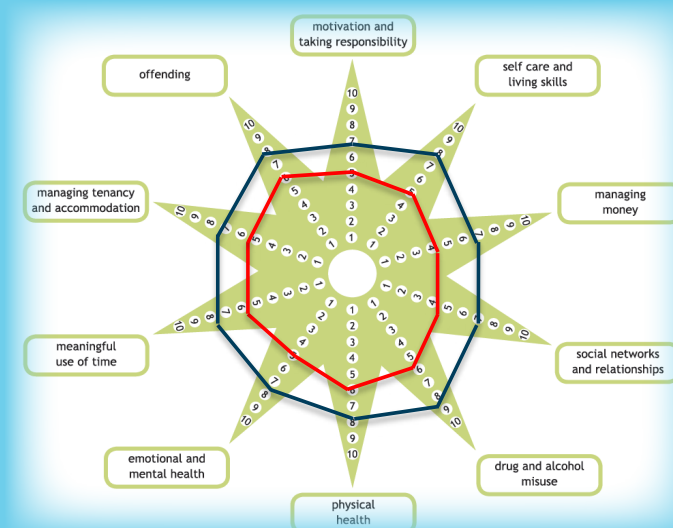
We moved successfully **70%** of our residents. That is **280** residents who now have a home.



Over **95%** of residents leaving our service rated our staff as being helpful, supportive and friendly.

We helped **276** individuals with complex needs.

We assess the overall progress of all our residents on a regular basis using the Outcomes Star. This year we have seen life-changing improvements - especially for those residents with complex needs. In fact, national body HomelessLink estimated that we had a cost-saving and social impact worth **£8.8m**.



Accommodation

Karen's Story

When Karen applied to live at YMCA four years ago, she was a vulnerable, emotional young woman who was trying to keep her head above water. She had a history of self-harming and bulimia.

Her family background had not been an easy one, but despite this she had always presented herself well and met challenges head on. Karen had always worked at least part-time and wanted to pursue her career but did not know which way to turn or how to get the support she needed. She had been labelled as difficult, lazy and over-emotional.

Karen fully engaged throughout her stay at YMCA and regularly attended her key-working sessions. She had her ups and downs but kept battling with poor self-esteem and wellbeing. Over the next year Karen continued to work part-time as an assistant within a taxi company transporting disabled children to and from school.

Karen had a negative perception of herself and worried about the lack of control she thought she had in her life. She felt she was getting old and was not achieving things quickly enough so she would become low and depressed. This impacted her personal relationships and she found

herself in a very controlling and difficult relationship.

We encouraged Karen to engage as much as she could whilst at YMCA: she kept herself busy and gradually her confidence started to grow. It was not long before she was heading up the Residents' Committee and encouraging other residents to have a voice within the hostel. She began to build bridges with her family and re-connect. Karen joined the driving scheme and passed her driving test, which was a very proud moment for her.

Two years ago we helped Karen secure a newly built one bedroom flat. She has now been living there ever since and has decorated her home in her own style. She has become more organised and a very independent young lady. It was at this point that Karen finished her destructive relationship and was able to move forward with her life working full time. She saved up to buy herself a car, obtained her passport and has begun travelling.

Karen has now been working for a company in Hatfield for the last two years as a line manager to a team. She has responsibility for the processing of company stock

throughout the South East. She is able to work alone with very little input from her line manager, who has a high level of trust in her.

Karen kept in touch with YMCA and came back several times to help out at social events. She has since progressed and is a reliable member of the volunteer team and runs a regular evening group for residents to enjoy Arts and Crafts.



Fill the Gap

Give: £40 pays for a New Home Starter pack for residents moving into permanent accommodation.

Act: Some of your time to befriend and mentor residents can make all the difference.

Pray: For YMCA to make stronger links with church volunteers who can help support our residents.

Accommodation

Adrian's Story

Adrian moved into YMCA as an under 18's placement two years ago from Hertfordshire County Council.

Adrian became a Child In Need when his mother moved to Spain.

Adrian was already working full-time as a pharmacy assistant and was demonstrating the ability to manage his finances from a young age and budget accordingly.

Adrian was open and honest when speaking with support staff, his social worker and employer regarding experimenting and using cannabis when he was younger. This disclosure led to Adrian's employer requesting he carry out a drug test, the cost of which he had to cover himself. The test results came back as negative, but after this Adrian began to suffer from anxiety and stress at work which sadly led to him resigning.

Adrian received a lot of support from the support team at YMCA, his social worker and external agencies to help reduce and manage his anxiety and stress and he has been making a lot of progress. When Adrian resigned he had the option to apply for Employment and Support Allowance,

however he chose not to and remained determined to search actively for a job and return to paid employment.

Last spring Adrian completed a 12-week traineeship course at Stansted Airport which has given him the confidence to look for full time employment again.

When Adrian turned 18, he was offered an assured shorthold tenancy with YMCA and has continued to demonstrate his ability to manage his finances and fully engage with support staff to maintain his tenancy.

Adrian received a nomination with East Herts Council and has now successfully moved in to permanent accommodation.



Mo's Story

Mo left Ethiopia in January 2016 after his father had been killed because of his involvement in a political opposition party. Mo was only 15 years old and travelled alone through 5 countries before arriving in the UK in May 2017.

Mo was referred to our YMCA by Hertfordshire County Council in June 2017. He had arrived in the UK two weeks earlier and had been housed in emergency lodgings in Luton before being transferred to us.

Mo was very quiet when he first moved in. He spoke no English and had no personal belongings. However, within a few weeks it became very clear that Mo recognised that he had been given a "life line" and was determined to make the most of this opportunity. Mo was the model resident as he was engaged with support staff, abided by the house rules and got on well with his fellow house-mates. His room was spotless and he was always clean and well-presented.

We supported Mo to enrol onto an English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) course at local college. He had to get up early and take three buses from his placement to the college, but Mo never once complained as he saw this as a learning opportunity. Within two months, Mo was able to

communicate with his support staff using basic English and his tutor was so impressed with him, he was put into a more advanced group at College. A year on, and Mo can virtually speak fluent English.

Throughout his time with YMCA, Mo has been a role model for many of the new arrivals and is always the first to welcome them and help out. He has made some good friendships in the area with some other Ethiopian boys and is a popular student at College.

Mo's asylum claim was initially rejected by the Home Office and he was devastated. However, the claim went to appeal and the judge decided to award him with five years' leave to remain. This means Mo will be entitled to social housing and he can start to look for work.

Mo moved on recently but we are hopeful that he will return to the placement from time to time and continue to be a role model to newer arrivals and encourage them to make the most of their opportunity.

Mo's story demonstrates that although he came with nothing, through hard work and a positive attitude he has made a life for himself. He has become a confident, sociable young man who will undoubtedly go on and thrive in the community.

Charlie's Story

Charlie, 15 years old is training to be a Mental Health Champion.

Charlie was bullied at school for years. At 13 years old he found YMCA who helped him to belong, contribute and thrive.

Here he talks about counselling and support and how important it is to talk to your peers if you are suffering.

"Since coming to YMCA, I've found the confidence to do something I love. I've done lots of acting;

I've worked with Suranne Jones and been in The Bill, it gives me confidence, doing acting.

YMCA has been there for me, every

day I can call them. If I ever have a problem, they are there. They mean a lot to me; they've put all the effort in to me to make sure I'm ok. It's the first time in a long time I've felt wanted and cared about. I've made a lot of new friends here.

The people I've met here, we go through a lot of the same things, so

we can help each other. It makes you feel a lot better because you've made a difference to them as well.

My youth worker has made an incredible difference to me. He's been there for me since day one; he's almost like family to me and supports me in everything I do. He doesn't just care about me though; he cares about every one of us.

I don't think I'd be standing here with a smile if it wasn't for YMCA.

There were times when I wished I was dead; the YMCA was there to change it. I know it's quite hard to say, but that's the truth at the end of the day. I went through a time when I started hurting myself, wishing I was dead. I wouldn't talk to

anyone, I wouldn't smile and I didn't want to do anything, to be honest.

I was bullied at school, I had sticks and stones thrown at me, told to go and kill myself. It was every time, all the time. I didn't like being there at all. Every time I tried to tell someone at school they just ignored me, the school blanked it.

One time I had a panic attack in class. I swore and then I was put in isolation for swearing, they always managed to make it seem like it was me. That was even more depressing. It made me feel bad about myself; because I always thought I was the bad person.

Until I found YMCA and then I got all the support I needed.

The Mental Health Champions Programme is great. I enjoy helping other people and I'm talking to people who have been through the same things I have. When I've helped other people, it's made me feel better about myself. I've met some great people here. The people at YMCA are the nicest people I've ever come across. You help them, they help you and we all understand each other. They've been through hard times and I've never had that before, someone my age that understands what I'm going through.

You need to trust someone and a lot of people don't have that trust. Support and counselling is so important. When I was at school I needed to talk to someone straight away and I didn't have that. I had no one to go to and that made me really angry. I think if I'd had someone to talk to, the bullying would have stopped much quicker. I can't change the past, but I can make an impact on the future and



the future of my friends and the people I've met here.

I don't want what happened to me to happen to anyone, because it was awful. Things aren't perfect, I can't say I'm exactly where I want to be, but I'm in a lot better place than where I was. I've just got to be patient and keep working with YMCA and then hopefully by the time I get to being an adult, I'll be successful and happy."

Mental Health Champions is a local YMCA project working in schools and youth clubs to help improve young people's wellbeing and resilience.

Youthwork

Emma's Story

Emma, along with her sister Ruby, have been regularly attending YMCA youth clubs for four years when they took part in the De Havilland Community Project play session.

Two years ago Emma was diagnosed with Leukaemia and spent months in and out of hospital receiving treatment and recovering.

When Emma started to feel better she returned to her youth club in Hatfield and treated it as a safe place where she could catch up with friends and chat to staff.

Since then Emma has been a regular, active member of the youth club and has even volunteered to help younger children at a play work project and at summer events.

The youth club was Emma's safe place...and helped her to overcome her anxiety ...

Emma says that YMCA helped her to overcome her anxiety about going out and socialising after spending so long in hospital. She tells us that having the support of the YMCA staff helped her to move on from everything that happened and look forward to her future!



Amy's Story

Amy was really unhappy with the college course she was doing so the staff at Welwyn Garden City Youth Club organised for a representative from the Traineeship Scheme to come in and talk to the group.

With the support of the youth team Amy was able to apply for a four-week traineeship she really enjoyed and gained work experience in a local salon.

She is now applying for an apprenticeship starting this year and couldn't be happier with the changes!



Fill the Gap

Give: £40 covers the cost of a mentoring session with one of our youth workers.

Act: Volunteer to assist in a youth club or as a mentor, to give a young person an even brighter future.

Pray: That young people who need support but feel scared or unsure of where to go are guided to YMCA activities.

Health & Wellbeing

Dave's story

CLL is a type of leukaemia that affects the white blood cells, causing too many "immature" or "abnormal" cells to form, taking up space that could be occupied by healthy cells. It is a slow-developing cancer meaning that it can go for months unnoticed.

After his diagnosis, Dave scoured the Macmillan website for information and things that he could do locally to improve the state of his health, when he came across Move More Herts. Once his referral was received he was put in touch for a YMCA consultation.

"I have always had a bit of a preconception about gyms and places of exercise. I felt a bit apprehensive until I met Laura, who showed me five exercises that I was perfectly capable of doing. My main motivation was to prepare myself for the chemotherapy I may have to have in the future."

I am now getting a real taste for it and having lost six kilos in just over three months I can feel my body is in a better condition. I am now doing more exercises in the gym each time and try to get something done each day, even if I can't manage my whole programme. Most importantly I have now been told by my nurse that the chemotherapy can be put off for a while!"

Dave attends the centre every weekday that he can. He has made exercise a routine part of his life and is reaping the rewards. We hope that his hard work will reduce the side-effects of his chemo when it does come along, and we are sure he will conquer that, just like he has conquered exercise.

"Dave has made exercise a routine part of his life and is reaping the rewards!"

In partnership with
**WE ARE
MACMILLAN.**
CANCER SUPPORT



Family Work

Our children's centres work within local communities across Hertfordshire and Central Bedfordshire. We also run children's centres in Bedford Borough through our subsidiary charity, Early Childhood Partnership. We provide parents with the opportunities to attend activities as well as reaching out to those families needing a bit of extra support.

Post Natal Depression

Marcin and Katya accessed the centre for the first time by attending the "Birth, Bumps and Baby Stuff" programme back at the beginning of 2016. Both mum-and-dad-to-be were very nervous but also excited at the prospect of meeting their new baby very soon.

Not long after Piotr was born, Katya came to the centre very distressed and in need of support with her new son. She was finding it very hard to adjust to breastfeeding and a new way of life as a family.

We immediately put in the support needed, this involved the YMCA staff reassuring her that it was okay to feel this way as a new parent, we helped to ensure that she was feeding Piotr correctly, but we were very concerned about her mental well-being. While Katya was being comforted, another member of staff called the health team to

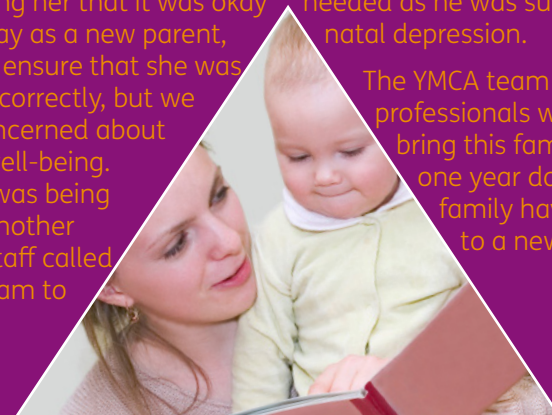
express our concerns, an appointment was made for a home visit to take place by the health visitor the next day.

During the week we called Katya to make sure that she was coping but also to let her know we were there if she needed us.

The following week Katya again came to the centre to have her Piotr weighed; it was then that she disclosed that her husband had not bonded with their son

and that he had been left traumatised following the birth. Katya took our advice and the following week brought Marcin to the centre and we were able to speak with him plus get the support that he needed as he was suffering from post natal depression.

The YMCA team and other professionals worked hard to bring this family together and one year down the line the family have now moved to a new area.



One-to-One Counselling

What's the story?

Seda has 4 children aged 12 years, 10 years, 4 years and 1 year old. Seda was living with her 4 children and husband within the local area. Seda and her family have been working with the children's centre since February 2017. Initially, a referral was made to Children's Services after an incident where Seda was found to be under the influence of alcohol whilst the children were in her care. A "Child in Need" (CIN) Plan was put in place in March 2017.

In April 2017, Seda decided to separate from her husband which meant that her mental health deteriorated. This also meant that her relationship with alcohol increased.

What did we do?

The children's centre has supported the family with the following activities:

- Universal sessions such as Stay and Play and Rhyme Time
- Cookery Sessions
- Freedom Programme (domestic abuse)
- Triple R run by Safer Places
- Parenting Puzzle
- About Boys Course

Seda's mental health deteriorated after the separation from her husband. Children's Services identified the need for Seda to be supported in this area. YMCA was able to provide this support through a member of the team who is a trained Counsellor. By accessing this service within her local area, Seda was able to identify triggers which meant that she relied on alcohol. She was also able to discuss issues around her father passing away as

well as her separation from her partner. Seda has informed professionals at the CIN Meetings that she feels that she is benefitting from the Counselling as she is able to address issues from her past and present.

What difference did we make?

The initial referral to a counsellor would have meant an extensive wait for Seda to be seen. By identifying a YMCA Counsellor who could see Seda within her local community without a waiting list meant that she could engage with this service promptly. The children's centre were able to provide for this service which meant that a parent on a low income could address her wellbeing. By addressing her poor mental health, Seda was able to spend quality time with her children and prioritise their needs before her own.



"Thank you for all of your input, I feel that this is really starting to help me recognise why I have been feeling so low all of the time. I know that I shouldn't turn to alcohol, so hopefully this will help me"

Family Work - Children's Centres

Laura's Story

What's the story?

We first met Laura when she moved into the area she was being seen by social workers and needed follow on support.

Laura is a single mother with two children, aged five and one.

She was a known drug addict who said that she had stopped and was now clean. She did not have the support of her family as they had given up on her. She was having constant problems with her elder son and he was being extremely violent towards her and was also displaying this behaviour at school.

When we first met she was at the end of her tether and did not know what to do. She said that other professionals did not believe how bad the behaviour in the home had become and the effect it had on the rest of the family.

Laura also had issues with her new neighbours regarding her shouting, her language and the constant flow of rowdy people in and out of the property. It was obvious that Laura was still using drugs. During

a home visit we discussed this and she became very defensive and said that she did not need any support. I gradually won her trust and continued working with her.

What difference did we make?

I referred her to local mental health charity for her own wellbeing which helped her to deal with her situation. With YMCA support she worked with her GP and drug counselling course to stop her drug use.

I contacted her housing association who supplied her with a support worker to help her reconcile with her neighbours.

She attended a Parenting Puzzle course and About Boys course to enable her to use strategies to set effective boundaries for behaviour with her children.

We liaised with the school and spoke to other professionals when we thought that they were asking too much from Laura and to let her do things at her own pace.

YMCA staff put Laura in touch with Christians Against Poverty to help with her debts and to help her abstain from drugs. She now attends the church every week with her children. She has met another worshipper at the church who is very supportive and she is getting baptised before their planned marriage next year.

Anna's Story

Early Childhood Partnership staff member Abby tells how we supported a teenage mum to stay on track.

"I started working with teen parents just before Christmas and began by contacting pregnant teens and some who had just had their babies. That's when I first spoke to Anna.

Anna had been in sixth form when she had given birth to Charlie. Now she was panicking about missing her exams. She had no one to mind Charlie whilst she was studying.

I said I would see what help was available and found a scheme which provides funding to parents under the age of 20 to pay for childcare places so that the parent can continue with their studies.

Over the next couple of weeks I supported Anna in completing the forms. She was uncertain about placing Charlie in a nursery, so I gave her a range of options and suggested she visit some of the settings with vacancies.

A short while later Anna emailed me to let me know that Charlie was now with a child minder near to her address, all funded through the scheme that I had given her the information about.

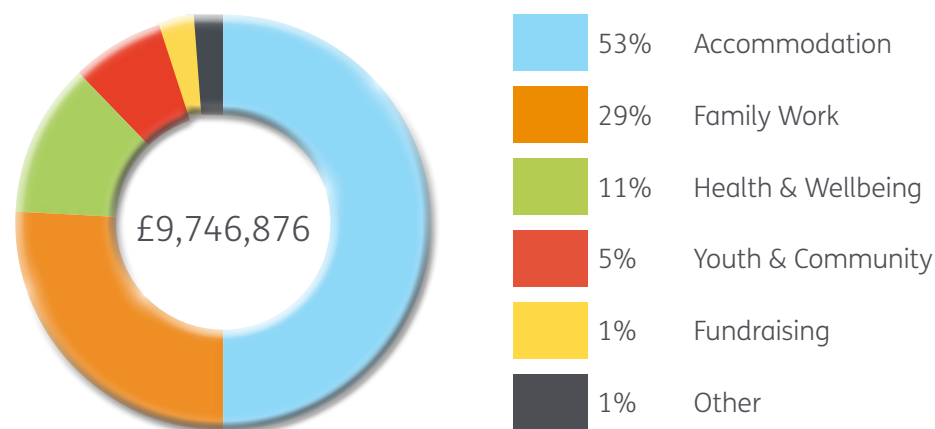
She explained how grateful she was as now she is back in her final year of sixth form where she is trying to get the grades she needs to go to university."



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 and Resource Committees.



With thanks to our funders, commissioners and partners.



A word from the Chaplaincy

We recognise that an important part of a person's wellbeing revolves around their emotional and spiritual health. The Chaplaincy team is here to provide support to staff, volunteers and service users across One YMCA, mainly by being a confidential listening ear and running courses to explore life's big questions.

We are blessed with an amazing team of volunteers who give their time and energy to support our service users. They help residents in the hostels by giving regular one-to-one support, whether spiritual, emotional or practical such as; helping people to use the gym, find work and volunteering opportunities or praying for people in difficult circumstances. They also use their skills to run art and crafts groups and take residents away on retreats, enabling them to explore spirituality.

One of the services they provide is to support our hostel residents who have moved into independent living. In the last year they offered care to 155 people through 284 phone calls and 54 home visits. People

really value the ongoing connection, especially as moving into a new community can be an anxious time.

Our service users very much appreciate all our volunteers do, even if it's simply a smile and a coffee as it reminds them they are valuable and valued.

We are always interested to hear from people who would like to give their time so if you feel able to support us, please get in touch via volunteering@oneymca.org

Fill the Gap

Give: £120 helps one resident to attend a Journey to Freedom course and retreat

Act: Give your time to support someone in our Hostels by being a 'listening ear' or supporting a group activity

Pray: That we will see people coming forward to support God's work in all our areas of need