

YMCA

Here for young people
Here for communities
Here for you

Facts & Stats

YMCA at 180



2025

INTRODUCTION

Since its creation on the steps of London's St Paul's Cathedral in 1844 to help young men with modern life, the longevity of YMCA is matched by both its scale and adaptability to support young people and communities across the world.

As we celebrate 180 years of YMCA, the seeds of Sir George Williams' Bible study and prayer group have grown into an organisation serving more than 65 million people across 120 countries, regardless of age, race, gender, sexual orientation or socio-economic background, rooted in our inclusive Christian values.

YMCA believes in fairness and opportunity. There are essential building blocks for a full and rewarding life: a safe home; acceptance; guidance; friendship; physical and mental health; academic support; employment skills; and access to real opportunities. Many young people have never known these things; other people have lost one or more as they grew up, but we all need them. All of us. At YMCA, we provide these critical foundations for a fresh, strong start for young people and a better quality of life in the community.

As the founding movement, the England and Wales Federation of 84 YMCAs is proud to support 402,501 young people across 852 locations, made possible by more than 5,300 incredible members of staff and more than 4,000 dedicated volunteers, each of whom enable YMCA to operate as it does today. We work in 708 communities, covering 168 local authorities across the two nations.



This report provides an overview of the work of YMCAs across England and Wales in the 2023/24 financial year, a time when many people across the country contended with the rising cost of living crisis. This is detailed through our five main work areas:

Housing

Providing a home and personalised support services for a fresh start in life

Training & Education

Opportunities to gain qualifications, skills and employment

Health & Wellbeing

Gyms, sport and recreation for fitness, and community hubs for classes, social connection and collaborations

Family & Youth Work

Creating positive outcomes with children and young people in their communities, and support for families with nursery, day care, holiday and year-round programmes

Support & Advice

A safe place to talk and get help through guided groups, mentoring, counselling, and mental health services

FOREWORD BY THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

It goes without saying that the world is a very different place than it was 180 years ago. But still, the desire amongst us all to have somewhere to be supported to be the best versions of ourselves and to be part of something bigger is timeless.

Over this time, YMCA has heeded the needs of our communities, ever accommodating to shifting contemporaneous social challenges. Looking back over our 180 years, I'm struck by the consistency of YMCA's approach to support. From our efforts in World War I and World War II, both on the front line and within communities at home, to tackling more recent threats such as in

the ongoing housing crisis, YMCA continually serves as a beacon of hope in times of turmoil.

It is with this resilience and adaptability that we march on as a Federation of 84 organisations across England and Wales, each one in tune with what is needed from us to provide critical foundations for a fresh, strong start for young people and a better quality of life in the community.

To be frank, things are tough right now. The cost of living crisis has made stretching for everyday essentials more difficult for many people, and spiralling housing costs have made many rental contracts unaffordable. Government funding



for youth services has been depleted over the last several years, and ill mental health precidence amongst young people is worryingly high.

Yet our 9,300-strong team of staff and volunteers will, as they always have, give their time and care to help more than 400,000 young people to belong, contribute and thrive. Our compassion and drive are found in every corner of what we deliver, whether teaching toddlers, coaching budding athletes or serving a hot meal to those seeking company on a cold day.

Our legacy as an organisation is remarkable. As we look forward to the next 180 years of shaping and transforming lives, I have every faith that we will continue to be just that.

Denise Hatton

Denise Hatton
Chief Executive,
YMCA England & Wales



Housing

At YMCA, our approach is always to support the whole person. We provide safe, affordable places to live that feel like home and focus on community spirit and togetherness. Our approach to transforming lives is based on strengths, and our **20,671** residents are always at the centre of their own support plans.

HAVING SOMEWHERE SAFE TO CALL HOME IS AN ESSENTIAL CORNERSTONE TO LIVING WELL, AND SOMETHING 46 YMCAS PROVIDE TO THOSE MOST IN NEED.

We provide **10,432** beds across distinct types of housing to cater for the different levels of support individuals need, and to give them the best possible environment to build their lives.

	Number of beds	Number of residents (annual)
Emergency accommodation	319	3,591
Supported hostels and foyers	7,211	11,479
Supported lodgings and floating support	149	647
Move-on housing	2,017	3,762
Housing First	28	28
Family rooms	197	187
Women's refuge	64	144
Winter night shelters	10	314



Our housing teams provide support to residents based on their strengths, and centre these as part of their support plans. The support they receive reflects their aspirations to access education, training, employment and volunteering, their future housing needs, and addresses any physical and mental wellbeing needs.

Care leavers	1,290
Young and ex-offenders	835
Asylum seekers, refugees and unaccompanied minors	1,906

YMCA is more than somewhere to live. Through one-to-one sessions with key workers, group programmes and courses, residents learn the tools and skills to live independently and build towards a promising future.

SKILLS AND SUPPORT FOR RESIDENTS

	Number people engaged
Life skills	5,704
Budgeting	6,265
Work skills	3,682
Family reconciliation	1,335
Mental health support	5,051

Alongside supported housing, YMCAs provides a place to stay for those travelling and studying, from student housing to a range of hotels, youth hostels and backpacker beds.

	Number of Beds	Number of residents (annual)
Student beds	63	141
Hotel, youth hostel and backpacker beds	630	64,208





Training & Education

YMCA's training and learning programmes enabled **23,886** people to fulfil their potential through formal qualifications or acquiring skills, creating pathways to both the workplace and further education.

Some YMCAs provide education and training themselves; others work with local partners and support people into such programmes, for example by connecting people to local companies for apprenticeship and employment opportunities.

	Annual unique users
Work experience placements or opportunities	676
JobCentre training schemes	250
Foundation programmes	358
Pre-apprenticeships / traineeships	159
Apprenticeships	1,182
Further education (e.g. A-level, GNVQ, BTEC)	1,876
Undergraduate degrees	67

For some younger pupils, we provide extra and specialist support for those at risk of exclusion through pupil referral units and alternative education sites.

	Annual unique users
Alternative education provision	600
Support for those at risk of exclusion from school	439

We offer a range of short courses for people to gain the confidence to enter and develop in the world of work, as well as in their own lives. Our goal is for young people to feel motivated to tackle the challenges they face in employment and at home.

	Annual unique users
Basic life skills	4,392
Literacy and numeracy skills	1,361
ICT skills	1,133
Financial planning and budgeting	3,728
Work and employment skills	3,067

Health & Wellbeing

YMCA seeks to give everyone a place within their community to develop in mind, body and spirit. Our extensive range of gyms, leisure centres, sports halls, games areas and studios create space for people of all ages and abilities to keep fit and socialise, nurturing both themselves and their connection with others.

WHETHER IT'S TEAM SPORTS, AN EXERCISE CLASS, REHABILITATIVE PROGRAMMES, ROCK CLIMBING OR GYMNASTICS CLUBS, WE WELCOME

107,351 PEOPLE

THROUGH OUR DOORS TO TAKE PART IN HEALTHY LIVING ACTIVITIES.

	Number of Locations	Unique annual users
Gyms	40	54,815
Pools	8	73,858
Leisure centres	20	90,389
Outdoor activity centres	12	25,774
Community / recreation	59	48,478
Multi-use games areas	53	27,683

	Unique annual users
Exercise classes	32,190
Sports (e.g. squash, football, gymnastics)	41,611
Community sports	22,679
Healthy living activities	7,904
Disability programmes	1,156
Rehabilitative and other special care	1,803

Family & Youth Work

As the world's oldest youth charity, YMCA supports **228,711** children and their families from birth to early adulthood through our extensive youth services and early years offering.

Our youth clubs help fight loneliness and create fun spaces for children and young people to belong, as well as developing young people's talents and creativity through our music, arts and theatre programmes.

YMCA RUNS 267 UNIVERSAL YOUTH CLUBS EVERY WEEK ACROSS ENGLAND AND WALES.

As well as this, we deliver a further **44 sessions** of detached and targeted youth work every week to meet young people in the places where they are and in environments where they feel comfortable, allowing skilled youth workers to adapt to young people's needs and interests.

	Annual unique users
Youth clubs	18,489
National Citizen Service (NCS)	342
Music programmes	358
Dance, drama and theatre programmes	670
Media programmes	130
Mentoring	1,071

These services are only possible through the passion and dedication of **402** youth work employees and **176** volunteers.

	Annual unique users
Detached youth work	4,716
Targeted youth work	8,204

We work with partners to deliver the support and opportunities young people need, providing access to sport, youth work, workshops, mental health support and advice to more than **40,000** pupils in **634** schools and colleges.

	Number of schools	Number of pupils
Primary schools	299	17,525
Secondary schools	281	20,794
Sixth form colleges	54	2,656

WE HELP WHOLE FAMILIES TO FLOURISH.

We have safe and trusted early years care and developmental activities, family support and mediation help when difficult issues arise at home or school, summer and school holiday camps, and activities that are just plain fun for everyone.

	Number of facilities	Annual unique users
Nurseries and pre-schools	63	6,533
Creches	7	375
Children's Centres	13	12,613
Family hubs	32	38,415

	Annual unique users
Parent and toddler groups	16,682
Before and after school activities	6,571
Holiday clubs	12,899
Soft play	13,468
Birthday parties	23,716
Parenting programmes	962
Breastfeeding support	778
Midwife appointments	100
Health visitor appointments	513
Disability programmes	1,381
SEN / Autistic spectrum condition programmes	290
Family mediation	50
Respite for young carers	1,064



Support & Advice

Sometimes people have experienced real trauma and have nowhere left to turn, and sometimes they just need some guidance to think an issue through and make a good decision. Whatever the situation, YMCA provides qualified guidance to help **69,135** people build — or rebuild — their belief in themselves and a bright future.

	Annual unique users
Drugs and alcohol advice and counselling	1,573
Mental health education and advice	2,392
Mental health counselling	3,001
Sexual health advice	8,309
Mentoring service	1,005
Crime prevention and avoidance	465



Anyone can fall on hard times – and YMCA can provide a helping hand to our communities when they have issues with housing, receiving welfare support or food packages.

	Annual unique users
Employment and careers advice	4,524
Housing advice	4,049
Welfare and benefits advice	3,720
Food banks and pantries	7,693



Community Work

Everyone deserves to feel they have somewhere they belong. YMCA is an active and responsive part of the community, creating programmes for local needs and welcoming people of all ages for communal meals, spiritual guidance or someone to chat with.

AT OUR HEART IS A SPIRIT OF FAITH AND COMMUNITY.

Our Christian roots inspire us to create programmes that nurture both spiritual and social wellbeing for all, with **237** staff, volunteers and faith leaders providing chaplaincy to **4,151** people.

YMCAs in England and Wales are one part of a global movement that is engaged internationally: **42** young people went abroad on exchange, placement or volunteer opportunities, and **48** young people were welcomed from overseas.

Our **31** Youth Ambassadors – a programme led by National Council to train and provide a platform for tomorrow’s leaders – engage on

behalf of YMCA at groups, forums, councils and summits around the world, from parliament to public speaking and international events.

We bring our communities together through social activities like art groups and friendship circles. More than **10,000** people attend our community meals and **86,000** make use of our community cafes, and **2,653** people tended to our community gardens together.



Retail

More than 100 charity shops operate at the heart of local communities, and community is at the heart of everything we do at YMCA.

Money raised at YMCA charity shops goes towards helping transform the lives of hundreds of thousands of young people each year in communities across England and Wales, from providing a warm bed and access to food banks, to vital mental health support for those in need.

In the last financial year, YMCA charity shops sold more than **5 million** donated items, saving them from landfill, and welcomed millions of people through their doors, thanks to 401 fantastic staff members and more than **1,500** dedicated volunteers.

YMCA charity shops are committed to contributing towards a sustainable future, actively installing LED lighting in stores to significantly reduce carbon usage, and fitting physical doors rather than roller shutters and electric doors to store fronts to conserve energy and heat.

As a certified carbon offset participant, YMCA charity shops have balanced greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions associated with their scheduled waste collections and through internal change, resulting in **397.07** tons of CO₂ emissions reduced through carbon offsetting.



ymca.org.uk

For more information, please contact:

policy@ymca.org.uk

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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.

FAMILY & YOUTH WORK

HEALTH & WELLBEING

HOUSING

TRAINING & EDUCATION

SUPPORT & ADVICE