



YMCA SNAPSHOT

2014



“YMCA has helped me with so many things. It’s good to know there are people that care about you”

Support and advice

Health and wellbeing

Family work

Training and education

Accommodation



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Welcome!

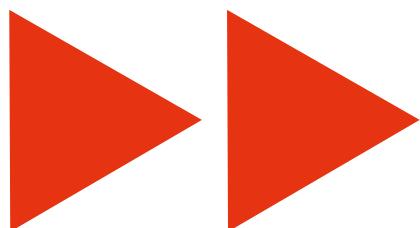
This year, we have had much to be proud of at YMCA. Our successes have reached far and wide as we pursue our goal to transform communities so that all young people can belong, contribute and thrive.

We gave young people a national voice by speaking with government, key policy makers and national media as we advocated for the needs of the most vulnerable young people across England. We helped young people help themselves through our work in providing accommodation, training and education opportunities, support for families, promoting health and wellbeing, and providing support and advice across a range of services.

Our young people, staff and volunteers achieved all that they did in a year of continuing economic challenge. We had fewer funds but more demand for our services, as many of our YMCAs experienced cutbacks and more young people than ever needed our help. Challenges that look set to continue in 2014 and beyond.

We're proud of the work we do and the young people and communities we support. And, crucially, we're also proud of the people who support us. We couldn't do all that we do without your efforts and commitment. Thank you.

So, please enjoy our snapshot of the vital work we've carried out this year. We hope it fills you with enthusiasm for YMCA in the year ahead.



The YMCA Federation in England

YMCA is the largest and oldest youth charity in the world. From our beginnings in England in 1844, we've grown into a global movement, helping more than 58 million people across 119 countries.

Since our earliest days, we've been supporting young people and their communities. Last year, our 114 YMCAs in England impacted on the lives of nearly 600,000 people across more than 530 communities, delivering a host of services including accommodation, education, training, youth clubs, and health and fitness programmes.

Together, we provided nearly 10,000 beds for young people every night. We intensively supported over 228,000 young people and helped nearly 43,000 people engage in education, skills and training to enable them to improve their opportunities in the job market. We provided before and after school activities for nearly 37,000 children and over 33,000 young people attended YMCA youth clubs.

At YMCA England – the national council of YMCAs in England – we represented local YMCAs, giving them a national voice by speaking with government, key policy makers and national media. As a representative body, we advocated for the needs of the most vulnerable young people in England.

We support local YMCAs by promoting high standards of working, sharing best practice, fundraising on their behalf, partnering with them to pilot new projects, and providing training opportunities for their staff and volunteers.

Together, the YMCA federation in England shares a common goal: to create supportive, inclusive and energising communities where young people can truly belong, contribute and thrive.



We believe that every young person should have a safe place to stay.

9,831 beds for young people in England. That's what we supply every night. We're the largest provider of safe, supported accommodation for young people in England, ranging from emergency beds to longer-term supported living.

SUPPORTED LODGINGS

Through Supported Lodgings and Nightstop, YMCAs across England are able to accommodate vulnerable young people, usually 16-18 years old, in a Host's home for anything from a few days to up to two years.

The young person becomes a member of the household, receiving the support of the family they live with as well as YMCA staff. They are supported in everything from budgeting, shopping and cooking healthy meals to claiming benefits, finding work and moving on to their own independent homes.

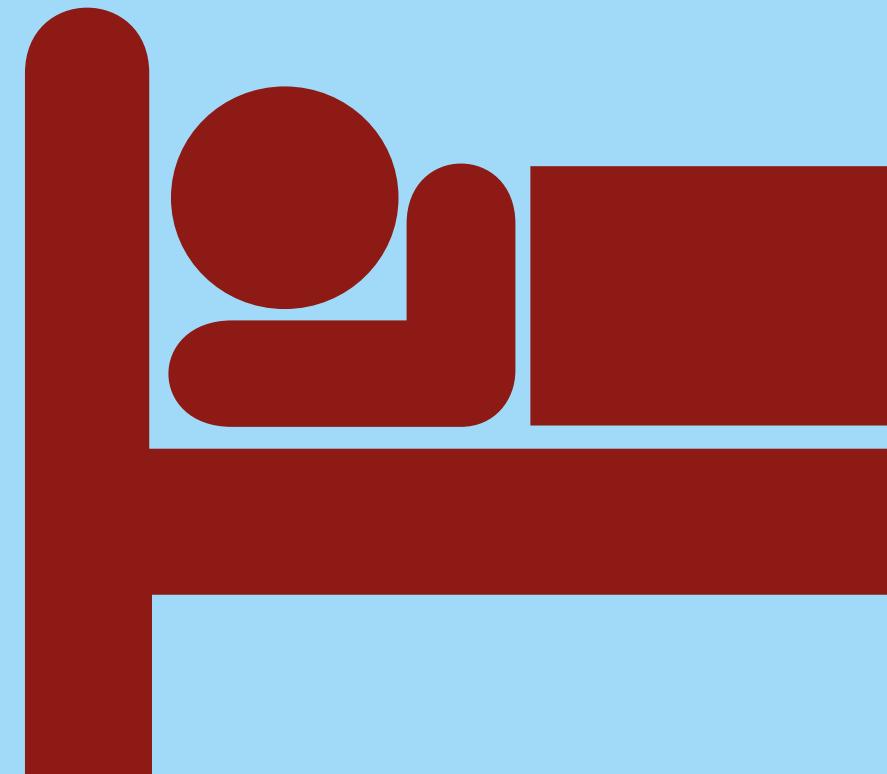
It's a safe environment for young people to learn the skills they need to take care of themselves as adults. And while many in

the scheme have had disrupted lives, they're quickly able to make positive changes when they feel secure and supported.

Originally funded by the Department for Communities and Local Government, further funding was given to YMCA Black Country by a generous donor who gave £30,000 specifically for them to run a 15-bed pilot. YMCA Black Country then used the donation to leverage a further £30,000 in match funding, launching and backing the project for the first year.

There are now 12 YMCAs running the scheme with over 300 Host families approved to provide accommodation and support.

We provide 9,831 beds every night.



Zubairi, 17, YMCA Black Country



Zubairi became homeless after his mother could no longer afford their home. Determined to succeed, he is working very hard in college to become an Aerospace Engineer.

'When I moved to England we lived as a family. My brothers used to help with the bills, but they moved out and mum had a massive house to pay for. She couldn't take it anymore and wanted to move to a one-bed place.'

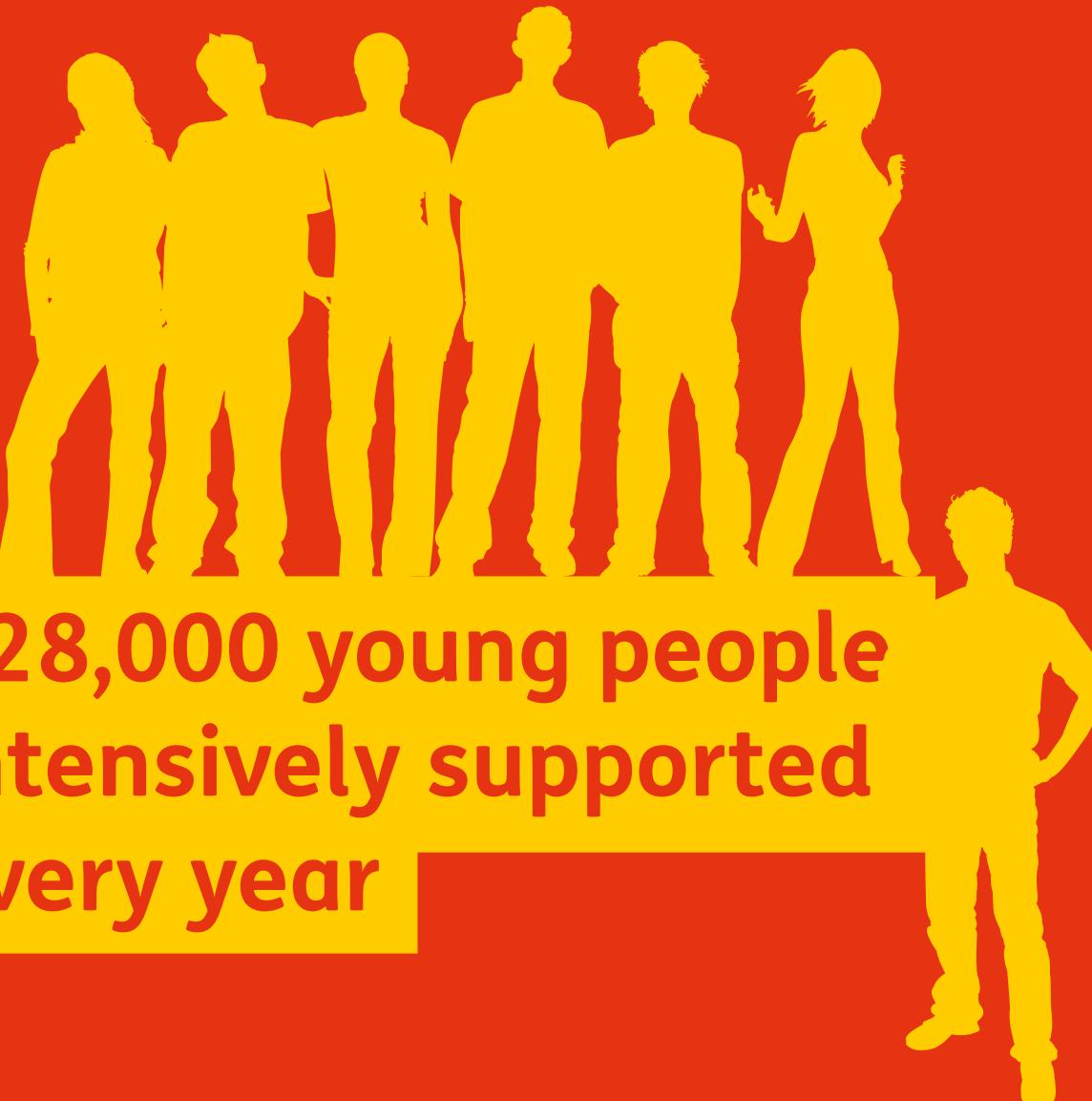
I didn't know what to do until someone suggested YMCA. The best option for me was their

'open door' supported lodgings project (where you live in a volunteer's home) because you have someone around you and you're not on your own. I'm living with Seminita. She is a nice lady and she keeps me in check! If I lived on my own I would be lonely.'

I need to think about my future and I don't get the chance to sit around playing computer games like other 17 year olds. Since I have been living here my life is moving in the right direction. I have more time to do my college work and my tutors are pleased with me.

If YMCA wasn't there I can't imagine what I'd do. If I lived on my own maybe I would be forced to do other kinds of stuff - be like those boys who sell drugs on the street. Seminita is great because she cares. That's all you need sometimes, someone who cares.'

We believe that every person should have someone they can trust.



228,000 young people intensively supported every year

At YMCA, we're there for every young person in the community, supporting them through difficult times with a wide range of services. In each case, our aim is enabling the young person to grow and develop in every aspect of their life.

DOC READY

In September 2013, YMCA Sussex Central launched a new online tool designed to help young people speak to their GPs about mental health and prepare for visits.

The app allows the young person to plan what to say, record what happens and take control of the visit. It also enables them to create and print a personal agenda based on their symptoms.

Young people from YMCA Sussex Central's Right Here mental health project helped develop the app from concept to testing. It was initiated after they carried out research and found that 36% of young people did not feel comfortable speaking to their doctor about mental health issues.

As a result, we hope even more young people will be encouraged to go to the doctor to get the help they need now that the app is launched. Doc Ready is the first of two digital products designed by YMCA Sussex Central to help young people manage their mental health.

Doc Ready even has the approval of actor and mental health campaigner Stephen Fry. He says: 'The teenage years are an important period to address mental health issues and Doc Ready is a great tool to help young people through a difficult time.'

Johnny, 19, YMCA Mendip

Artemis



Johnny came to YMCA following a family tragedy. He attends the youth cafe that provides advice, support and learning opportunities to help him rebuild his life.

'When I was five I had a car crash. I forgot everything and had to re-teach myself, in fact school was a bit tricky. I have faced loss in my life which takes you pretty low, and now me and Dad have lots of arguments. But I have my friends and YMCA to turn to for help.

Before coming to YMCA life was pretty dull. There's not much to do in a small town. At YMCA they have loads of activities and different opportunities. I can put stuff on my CV to show that this guy does a lot and is willing to work.

I'm really outdoorsy. I love free running, biking, and mountain climbing. YMCA is helping me find an outdoor training course to get the qualifications I need. Working outdoors and interacting with people, that's what I want to do. Older people have a bad opinion of youth. We might have hoodies and walk in groups but we're not violent. We are here and we are all willing to help.

YMCA has helped me with so many things. It's good to know there are people that care about you. YMCA gives me opportunities and help to get qualifications and new experiences.'

We believe that everyone should be able to enjoy the benefits of physical exercise.

Young people should be able to lead active lives – that's why we're committed to creating healthy, sustainable communities in which they can fulfil their aspirations. We're the largest voluntary sector provider of services promoting health and wellbeing in England.

INSTRUCTABILITY

InstructAbility is a great scheme that offers disabled people the chance to become a qualified gym instructor. Not only that but it gives them the support they need to find jobs in the fitness industry.

YMCAfit, one of the UK's leading trainers of fitness professionals, joined forces with Aspire, the leading national spinal-cord injuries charity, to create the programme in 2010. Our aim? Addressing the underrepresentation of disabled people in the fitness industry.

Once qualified, instructors carry out voluntary placements in the industry. They work to encourage more disabled people to get active, making

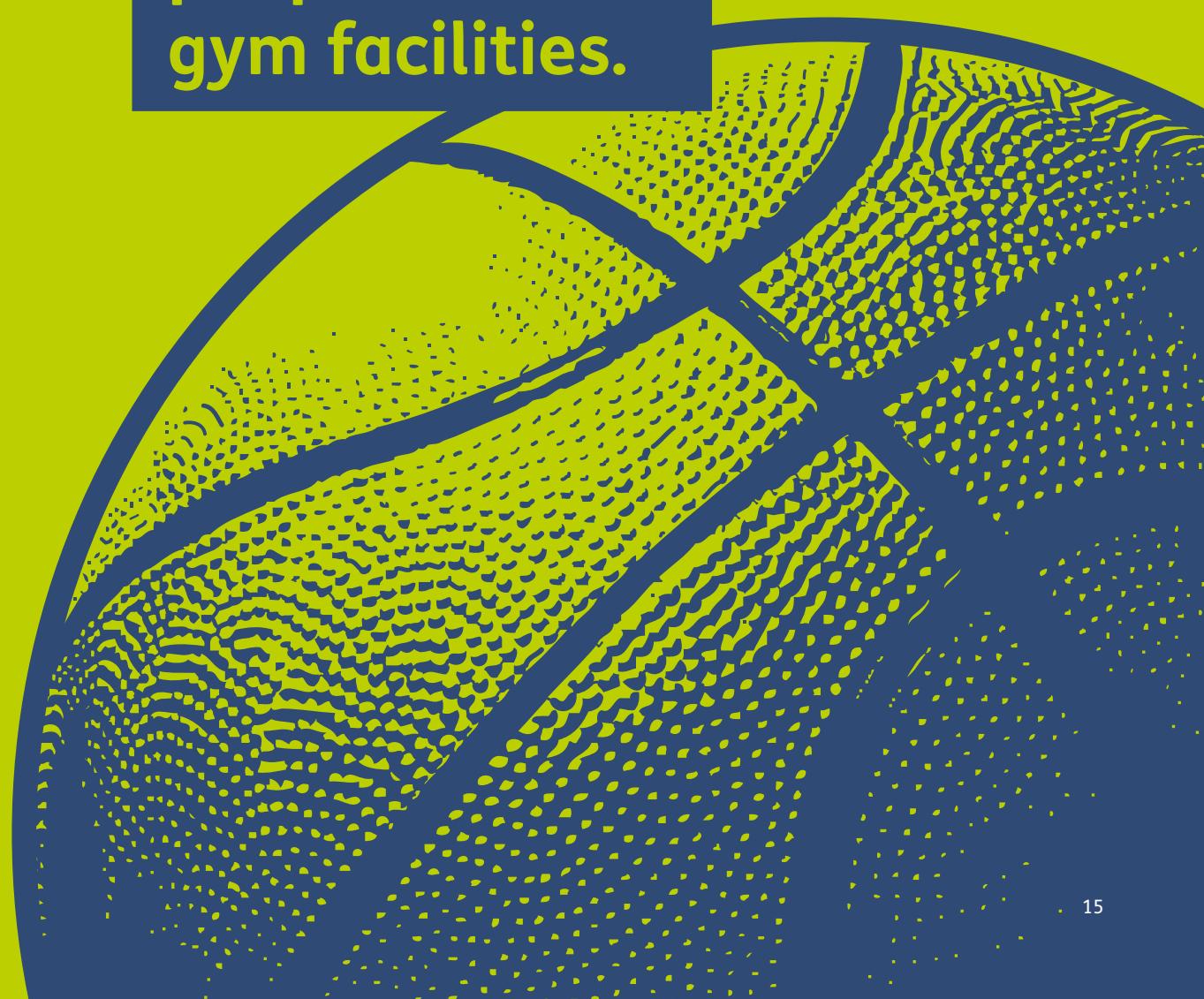
them feel welcome in gyms and sports clubs.

We wanted to challenge negative perceptions, create suitable role models and inspire more disabled people to take part in sport – as a lasting legacy of the London 2012 Paralympics.

With 112 qualified instructors, six courses launched in 2013, 12 courses taking place in 2014 and a further 18 courses in 2015, we're well on our way. What's more, of our instructors, 14 – some with spinal cord injuries, cerebral palsy or limb loss – have gone on to get jobs.

InstructAbility was recognised by David Cameron with a Big Society Award in 2013.

Last year, 292,854 people used our gym facilities.



'Growing up I was very active so some neighbours suggested the Gym Club to mum and dad. It just seemed to click for me. I came into the competition class aged eight and I've been working with my YMCA coach, Jeff, since then. In the early days, the gym wasn't like now with all this stuff, we had to raise all this money. It's been a long build-up of 15 years – all my life really!'

I wasn't very academic at school and there were no other sports that I progressed in.

School can be quite hard for some people but sports clubs are different. Without the gym I don't think I would be making much of my life to be honest. I have worked hard, it's never easy trying to be an elite sportsman, but to have YMCA and Jeff and the people in the gym behind me has been great.

2010 was a big success when I first got my World medal, and getting my Olympic Bronze at London 2012 turned my life

around. It was just so good because my mum and dad, friends and family and coach were all there to see it. A once-in-a-lifetime opportunity – I'll remember that forever.

YMCA is just great. It keeps young kids involved and on the straight and narrow. It gives people a chance in life. I've given a lot to the gym, but the gym has given more to me. It has given me a life. Without YMCA, I don't know what I'd be doing.'

Danny Purvis arrived at the YMCA Gymnastics Club as a child with too much energy. Today he is an Olympic medal winner.



Danny, 22, YMCA Southport

We believe that every young person should be able to fulfil their potential.

2,857 young people receive work and employment skills training in our YMCAs, such as CV writing, interview preparation and job searching.

Helping young people gain the confidence to make decisions about their own lives is an important part of our work. As is providing an environment in which they can flourish.

Education is more than formal schooling – and why individual YMCAs offer a range of education, skills-based training, placement and apprenticeship schemes.

EXETER JOB CLUB

YMCA Exeter Job Clubs service gives young people the tools and confidence they need to find work.

The organisation runs eight job clubs a week. Four specifically for people who are homeless or ex-prisoners and four community job clubs in Exeter's most deprived communities, which are open to anyone who needs support finding work.

Each job club offers a safe, compassionate environment with trained staff and volunteers on hand to give practical advice and guidance. This can involve

helping young people search and apply for jobs, gain qualifications or enhance their work experience by volunteering.

The job club scheme has recently evolved to include accredited and practical Ready for Work training courses, including *Budgeting and Money Management*, and *Prep for Work*.



'Before working here I wasn't very social at all. I had no confidence and wouldn't talk to anyone except my close family. Since being here I have been really confident. Well for me I have. I'm a lot happier.'

School was horrible, I got bullied and wanted to leave. I missed lessons and didn't really try. I really wanted a job but couldn't find anything. I used to worry a lot about what people think of me. When YMCA gave me a job I was really happy.

When I started I was really nervous that everyone would shout at me if I did something wrong. But they are really nice and don't push you to do things if you're not ready. The café is good because you get to know people that you wouldn't normally meet.

Since starting work I've been more mature. It's nice because I feel like I can talk to my mum about my day at work. My brothers are older than me and I always wished I could chat like they do with mum.

YMCA helps people who need support and it gives people confidence. They don't just walk past and not care. They made me realise there really are nice people out there.'

Lauren lacked confidence and was very shy. She is now an apprentice at a YMCA cafe and her confidence grows every day.

Lauren, 16, YMCA Bristol

Being part of a healthy, stable family gives a young person the best start in life. We offer a range of support to families including childcare services, before and after school activities, family mediation and parenting programmes.

BEREAVEMENT SERVICE

YMCA Fairthorne Group on the Isle of Wight offers an innovative bereavement service, provided through YMCA Counselling and Psychological Therapies. The service supports children and young people who've experienced the death of someone close to them, and is the island's only counselling service specialising in bereavement.

We can't take away the sadness or pain our children and young people feel as this is often the appropriate response to loved ones' deaths. But we can help build their self-esteem and resilience.

We've found that children and young people who've used the service manage their daily lives and cope with their losses better. We've seen a

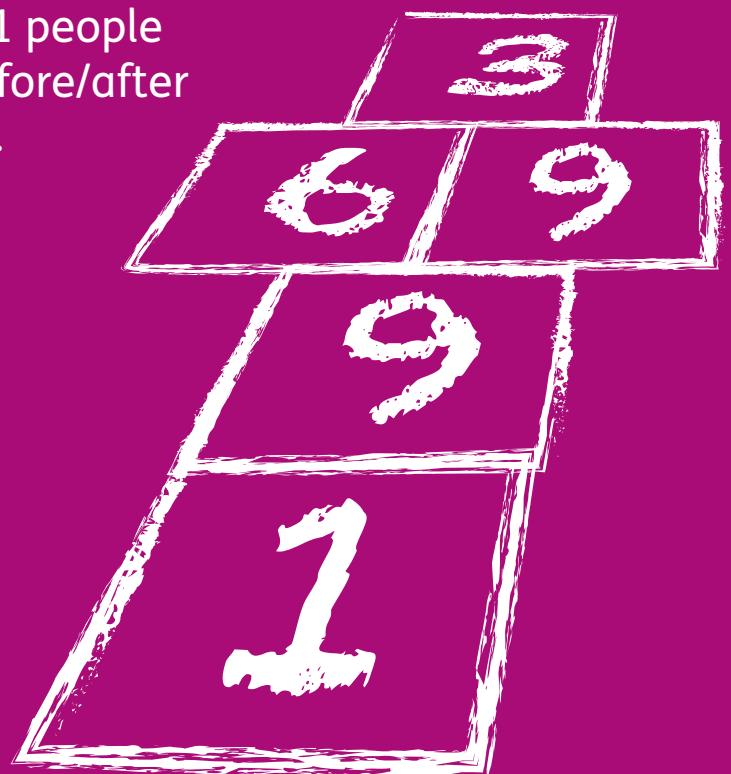
marked improvement in school attendance too, in some cases from less than 30% to 100%. One of the service's proudest moments was when several young people were nominated for the Isle of Wight High Sheriff's Award for their exceptional achievements.

Service user Alice*, 13, says, 'Last week I went and spoke to someone for the first time about my sister, Grace*, dying. I need to keep hearing that I'm normal so that I can get up every day and put one foot in front of the other.'

*Names have been changed

We believe that every family should have the support they need to develop and lead more fulfilling lives.

Last year, 36,991 people accessed our before/after school activities.





'Before I discovered the YMCA youth club my life was hard. I was helping my mum look after my gran who had dementia, I wasn't getting out much and school life was difficult.'

The YMCA youth club gave me the opportunity to get out of the house and have a break from worrying about my gran and other things on my mind. I needed time away from home because I never had a chance.

It was a great way to focus on other things and after a while I really started to enjoy it and get more involved in fundraising and project work.

I've been attending YMCA for nearly four years now and it has changed my life. The workers have helped me through some very rough times, and earlier this year they even helped me trace my biological father. They have given me some amazing opportunities, and overall made me more relaxed and happy about things.

I hope to go to university in 2016 to study musical theatre or performing arts but I'm also interested in becoming a youth worker so I can help people just like me.'

Marianne was only 16 when she started to suffer from depression. Life at home was difficult and she didn't feel like she had anyone to talk to. It wasn't until a friend invited her to the youth club at YMCA Bolton that she found the support she needed and began to feel happy again.

Marianne, 19, YMCA Bolton



Our year in pictures...

Sleep Easy

In total, 1,626 people took part in Sleep Easy across the country to highlight youth homelessness and raised £221,809 for their local YMCAs.

Parliamentary visit YMCA & I exhibition

In December, nine young people from YMCAs countrywide travelled to Westminster to take part in a national debate on youth homelessness with Kris Hopkins MP and Stephen Williams MP.

We held the YMCA & I exhibition at the Royal Institute of British Architects in June, featuring portraits of young people from across YMCA taken by photographer Amanda Harman.



Our year in pictures...

Tour De Y

We designed Tour de Y to get more young people into physical activity through cycling – whether 20-mile routes or the big 120. Our plucky riders raised £25,000 for their local YMCAs.

Youth Matters Awards

Our YMCA Youth Matters Awards took place in London in December. Celebrating our young people's achievements, the Awards featured performances from BBC1's The Voice finalist Leanne Jarvis.

Universal credit guide

We produced a special guide to Universal Credit to help young people understand the payment that will replace six benefits.

Available at YMCAs across England and for download at ymca.co.uk

Thank you now and for the future

'I'd like to say to all YMCA supporters some may say that money is just figures, sums and numbers. But at YMCA, money is people and lives. Not only that – it is saving lives. Thank you.'

Jimmy, 18, YMCA resident

'I just want to say that YMCA saved my life. I'm so grateful.'

Gary, 23, YMCA resident

'Thanks to YMCA, I gained the confidence to face the world. Without their help I would be jobless, homeless and feeling useless.'

Chris, 19

'Without YMCA I don't think I would have my life back on track. I am very grateful for the help and support YMCA has given me.'

Helen, 18

Thank you so much for all your support in 2013. Thank you from all of us who work and volunteer at YMCA, and thanks especially from the 600,000 people whose lives were impacted by your contribution.

It means so much to us that you were there for young people across England in 2013 and we hope you'll be there for them in 2014 too. Without you, we just wouldn't be able to do everything we do.

Apart from cash donations, there are all kinds of other ways you can support us. You could put on a fundraising event like a car boot sale or coffee morning. Take part in one of our organised events – Tour de Y cycling or Sleep Easy, or a challenge event such as the London Marathon. Or volunteer.

If you'd like to find out more about how you can help our young people, please contact Christina Comber on 020 7186 9526, email christina.comber@england.ymca.org.uk or visit ymca.org.uk

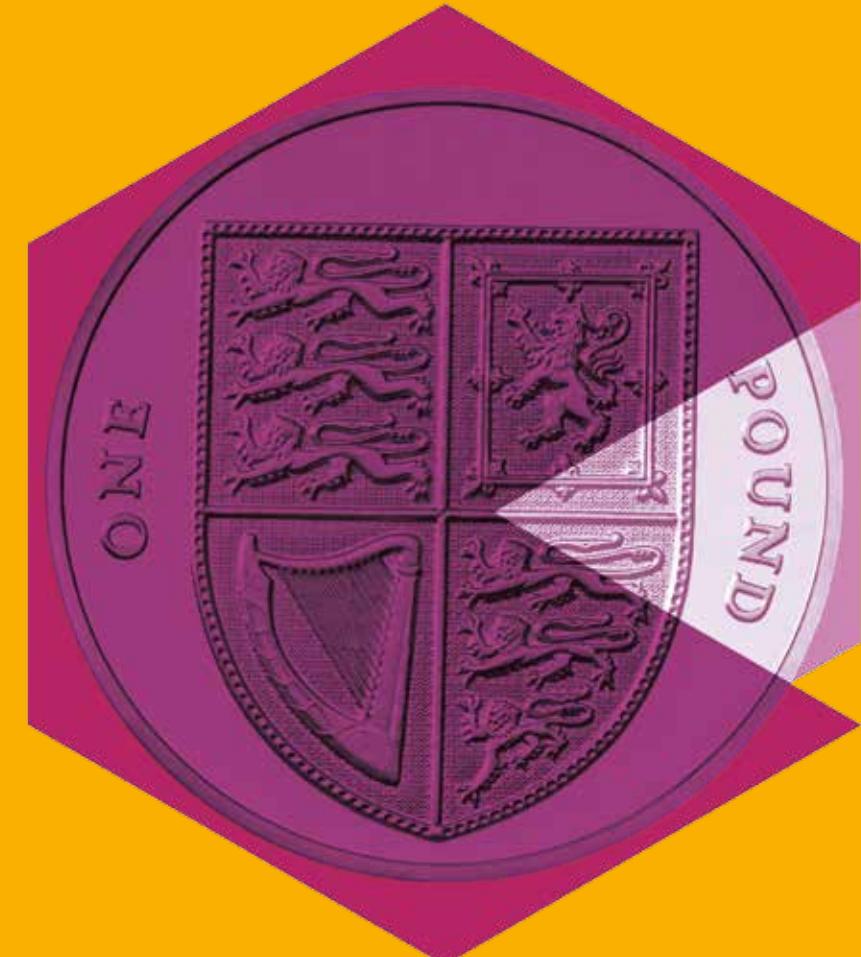
GIVE WITH CONFIDENCE

For every £1 you donate:

88p supports local YMCAs helping young people, children and families (47p of this is spent on housing homeless young people)

11p helps generate more vital funds

1p is spent on governance





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ymca.org.uk
Charity no: 212810



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.