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Right Honourable
Dr. John Sentamu

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Rt Hon Stephen Timms MP
APPG Faith and Society

13^h August 2012

Dear Mr Timms,

YMCA England's response to the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Faith and Society's evidence gathering into Health and Wellbeing services delivered by faith based organisations.

The YMCA is committed to creating healthy, sustainable communities where all individuals can lead active lives and fulfil their potential in body, mind and spirit. The YMCA believes that the promotion and delivery of physical activity plays a vital role in delivering this aspiration. The YMCA is the largest voluntary sector provider of activities and services that promote health and wellbeing in England.

Sixty-six YMCAs offer dedicated physical activity programmes and the YMCA is the largest provider of fitness training in the UK fitness industry. The YMCA works with all individuals across communities and have particular expertise in engaging with young people and others from traditionally 'hard to reach' groups. The whole focus of the YMCA's work is to provide the right environment and opportunities to enable individuals to change their behaviour and lead healthier lives.

The YMCA has 168 years of experience in working with individuals and communities to increase wellbeing and address reducing health inequalities. We have long recognised the importance of physical health, mental wellbeing and the wider socio-economic factors (e.g. housing, worklessness, education, debt) on the quality of life and behavioural choices that people make.

We work in partnership with local Primary Care Trusts, GP's and hospitals and have much experience of developing innovative and holistic programmes that tackle health issues and provide activities and services that promote personal health and wellbeing. Programmes that YMCAs deliver across England include: GP Exercise On Referral Programmes; Adult Physical Activity Referral Service; Family Health Weight Programmes; Smoking Cessation Classes; Phase IV Cardiac Rehab Programmes; Healthy Workforce Initiative (Y:Active Workforce); Social Prescribing Project; Family Fit ; GO Programme; Leisure Service Management; Sports development; Financial capability advice, training and volunteering opportunities.

Recent evidence of the YMCA's capacity to deliver large national integrated Wellbeing behavioural change projects in the community include two National Programmes, Well London and Young Health Champions project. Supplementary information on these two projects can be provided upon request.



At the core of our work is a commitment to developing health in a holistic way and working within communities rather than marginalized groups. We integrate health and wellbeing across all of our service areas in what we define as a community hub approach. The key aspects of our community hub model are: a community-led approach, holistic integration of all services (housing, youth work, training, health and well-being, parenting and child development), sustainability, flexibility and maximizing impact. Through this model YMCAs across England work with over 1 million people a year to improve their health.

YMCAs work with a wide range of commissioners from most public sector bodies. In discussions with YMCAs around this consultation, questions about faith and delivering services has rarely arisen from commissioners and when it has done so the question has always been about seeking clarity and understanding more than demonstrating an anti-faith position.

There are some funding streams that are not available to faith based organisations but in these cases YMCAs would choose not to apply in the same way YMCAs wouldn't apply for funding from a commissioner that wouldn't fund work with young people.

As a Christian organisation we seek to nurture the holistic development of young people in body, mind and spirit through all of our programs including those that focus on health and wellbeing.

Yours faithfully



Ian Green
Chief Executive

