

## YMCA Manifesto 2015

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Accommodation

Family Work

Health and Wellbeing

Training and Education

Youth and Democracy



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## Foreword

YMCA is over 170 years old yet our mission today is as relevant as it was in 1844. From humble beginnings in the shadow of St. Paul’s Cathedral, YMCA has grown to be the largest and oldest youth charity in the world whilst still remaining true to the principles of why Sir George Williams founded the charity – the desire to love, support and develop those around us.

The world may be a different place to what it was all those years ago but the aspirations of the young people that YMCA works with are no different – to be educated, to work, to have a purpose, to have a place to call home and to be loved. However, the world we live in is one where access to employment remains a challenge for some, the services our communities depend on have been reduced and the economic realities in which YMCAs must operate are increasingly challenging.

YMCA understands that governing means difficult decisions and requires tough choices to be made. However we want to ensure that young people, who are often the forgotten voices in society, are not disproportionately affected by those decisions.

YMCAs have had the privilege of being around for so long because they have constantly adapted to the needs of the communities in which they serve. This approach is one which enables YMCA to truly reflect the needs of our

society – not through top down direction but by responding at a grass roots level; by listening to the young people and families we support.

In order to be true to the nature of our foundations, this manifesto is rooted in the views and experiences of those YMCAs seek to serve. As such this has been the most engaging manifesto consultation in our history, focussing on those who breathe the day-to-day life into YMCAs – its staff, chief executives, trustees, service users and most importantly young people.

From the outset YMCA England wanted to present a manifesto which truly reflected the feelings of our Federation. Contained within this manifesto are messages of change to government; not always ones which are easily achievable but ones which are necessary if we want to live in a society which truly supports and develops young people in our communities. One message that is absolutely clear is that YMCA today – like every other day for the past 170 years – stands ready, willing and able to deliver this change for government, society and young people.

**Denise Hatton**  
Chief Executive, YMCA England

## Introduction

YMCA is the largest and oldest charity working with young people in the world. Across England there are 114 YMCAs. Each one a thriving and active community – a community that seeks to change the lives of young people and their families.

YMCA enables people to develop their full potential in mind, body and spirit. Inspired by, and faithful to, our Christian values, YMCA creates supportive, inclusive and energising communities, where young people can truly belong, contribute and thrive. YMCA works with all young people regardless of their background, gender or faith. However, central to our work is supporting those most vulnerable and in communities with the greatest needs. It is these needs that this manifesto seeks to address.

Within the UK there are 3.5 million children living in poverty<sup>1</sup> and this impacts on every area of a young person's development. From their long-term health, attainment at school, access to employment – poverty is the single biggest factor in determining the future prospects of a child.

YMCA cannot solve the problems of poverty alone. What we can do is work with government and key policy makers to put in place the necessary measures to tackle the causes of poverty; whilst also every day working to mitigate the impact that poverty has upon young people.

All of the recommendations made within this manifesto will help many young people to play active and fulfilling roles within their communities; offering key opportunities to them and lifting them out of poverty.

YMCA hopes our elected representatives in the next Parliament will share our vision. Our young people are great – let's celebrate their achievements and support them to achieve their full potential.



Josh, 18

## Accommodation

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

Not having access to quality housing can have a huge impact on the life of a young person. Poor housing increases the risk of a young person suffering from ill health, lower educational attainment, unemployment and poverty.

It is recognised that not enough new homes have been built over the past generation and this has contributed to a lack of low cost housing available for young people and first time buyers. As such there are now over 7.6 million households in England living in rented accommodation.<sup>2</sup> Such is the demand for housing that it is critical that the next Government takes what will be bold decisions to address the supply of housing. For YMCA we are particularly concerned about the supply of housing for young people; their experiences within the rental market, and with soaring house prices how young people will ultimately be able to get on the housing ladder.

The next Government needs to invest in the development of alternative models of

housing to solve the current housing crisis in this country. YMCAs, recognising this as an issue, have already developed their own alternative models such as Y:Cube.<sup>3</sup>

The introduction of a 'Help to Rent' scheme nationally would give people who are not in a position to be able to save the initial deposit an important helping hand in moving into the private rented sector. There are excellent examples of these already being run by local authorities, housing associations and charities, but we urge the next government to be at the forefront of introducing a national scheme, similar to the concept of the 'Help to Buy' scheme.

In addition to the large deposit young people identified high charges by letting agents as a significant barrier to individuals being able to access the private rented sector. The recent upsurge in the private rental market seems to have exacerbated the situation and YMCA believes that this whole area needs to be regulated.

We provide just under 10,000 beds every night.

Housing benefit has become a vital component in allowing young people to access the private rented sector; acting as a safety net for those most in need of support by supplementing affordability. However low pay and increasing rent has meant that Housing Benefit is now also supplementing those in work to be able to sustain a home. There has already been public debate about the prospect of removing automatic Housing Benefit entitlement for young people and YMCA believes strongly that such a move would have a catastrophic impact upon young people.

YMCA has significant concerns that recent welfare reforms seem to be having a disproportionate impact upon young people. For example 26% of welfare claimants are under the age of 25, yet 41% of sanctions that are being applied are against young people.<sup>4</sup>

YMCA is not necessarily opposed to a form of sanctions. Indeed research undertaken by YMCA England has consistently shown that young people are in favour of a sanctions regime.<sup>5</sup>

However there are two clear issues at present within the system:

- There is little consistency in how sanctions are being applied across the country. As a result young people have little confidence in Jobcentre Plus, who to them, seem to sanction on the basis of needing to deliver financial savings, rather than a thorough evaluation of the facts in each case. This is perhaps underlined by the fact that in nearly half of cases reconsidered, the decision was not to apply the sanction.<sup>6</sup>
- The level of sanctions are too severe and needs to be more graduated. Even for what is deemed a low level offence such as missing an appointment, benefits can be stopped for at least a month. This is having an immense impact on young people and YMCA argues that this needs to be changed.

## Recommendations

- ▶ Promotion of further investment in building low-cost homes specifically targeted at single young people.
- ▶ Introduce a national ‘help to rent’ scheme.
- ▶ Introduce a rental cap to reduce the amount landlords can increase rents annually.
- ▶ Reduce the upfront costs to tenants by regulating the fees letting agents can charge them.
- ▶ Young people moving into the private rented sector from supported accommodation are assisted through a more graduated tail off in the benefit system.
- ▶ Housing Benefit entitlement remains unchanged for young people.
- ▶ The current benefit sanction regime should be reformed. New guidelines should be introduced to ensure a consistent approach is taken throughout Jobcentre Plus in the application of sanctions; together with changes to the length of sanction periods to make them less draconian for first and less serious offences.
- ▶ Funding to be made available to enable significant research and development in alternative models of accommodation.
- ▶ Utilise previously occupied business spaces and redevelop them into suitable low-cost accommodation.





Dylan, 15

## Y:Cube – YMCA London South West

Recognising that young people were increasingly struggling to afford the cost of private rent YMCA London South West, in partnership with Roger Stirk Harbour + Partners, developed Y:Cube.

Y:Cube provides self-contained and affordable starter accommodation for young people who are unable to either gain a first step on the housing ladder or pay the high costs of private rent.

The unique off-site construction and design system provides high quality accommodation which can be built quicker, and crucially cheaper, than using traditional methods of construction.



Y:Cube uses a pre-constructed 'plug and play' modular system which enable the streamlined units to stack easily on top or alongside each other, making it completely adaptable to the size and space available and therefore perfect for tight urban sites.

Construction of the first Y:Cube Housing scheme in the UK started in November 2014, providing 36 homes for local people in need of housing. The scheme will be built on a brownfield site in the London Borough of Merton.

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## Training and Education

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

Often the young people who access YMCA services will have few qualifications and little or no experience of the workplace. As a result job opportunities can be limited and a young person can quickly find themselves in a succession of short-term, part time, zero-hour contract based jobs with periods in and out of benefits. There are many contributing factors as to why a young person reaches a YMCA in this position and there is much the Government could be doing to address this.

Leaving secondary education without the necessary qualifications can potentially damage a young person's prospects. As such, additional funding should be made available to schools to target those young people less likely to succeed, raising their attainment levels and allowing them to have an equal chance of success.

Regardless of ability, it is difficult to make the right educational and career choices without being fully informed of the raft of options available and the quality of careers information, advice and guidance (IAG) has traditionally been patchy at best. Whilst the duty being placed on schools to deliver this is welcomed, there is evidence

to suggest it is not being treated as a specialist service and is being delivered by teachers rather than IAG professionals.<sup>7</sup>

As such young people are not being made aware of the different pathways available and especially those alternatives to mainstream educational pathways such as vocational training and apprenticeships. The inclusion of employers and businesses in the classroom and introducing work experience as a compulsory element of secondary school education would also aid the widening of a young person's level of understanding prior to making decisions on their future.

The Government's focus and drive for apprenticeships as an alternative option for young people is welcomed. However, the application of this in practice has not been as successful. There still remains a difficulty in availability for particular age groups in accessing apprenticeships<sup>8</sup> and being able to maintain participation on one is challenging when in receipt of Housing Benefit or a low wage.

At the heart of YMCA's beliefs is that young people should always have the opportunity



**We help 43,000 people engage in training and education every year.**

to better themselves. However despite having the opportunities in front of them, for some young people the traditional journey through the education system can be disrupted by having to deal with difficult personal circumstances that prohibits them from progressing the first time around. It is for these young people that accessing training and education at a later stage is vital. However, a barrier to this is the removal of entitlement to full-time education for those over 19 years old.<sup>9</sup>

Furthermore, one of the most consistent complaints from young people is the regulations around the 16-hour rule and the impact it has on their ability to gain adequate training whilst on benefits.<sup>10</sup> Due to the limited number of part-time courses available, the 16-hour rule stops a substantial amount of training being undertaken and hinders the development of young people whilst in receipt of benefits.

### Recommendations

- ▶ The Government should extend the upper age limit for funding of education and training from 19 to 21 years old.
- ▶ A review of the current apprenticeships policy should be undertaken with a particular focus on what additional incentives would help encourage more companies to take on apprentices – particularly those aged 16 to 24.
- ▶ Free or heavily discounted travel should be provided to those studying an apprenticeship when travelling to and from their training.
- ▶ The provision of information, advice and guidance in schools and colleges should be delivered by professional careers specialists.
- ▶ Engage employers and businesses from the local community into schools to give an insight into work and alternative pathways to higher and further education.
- ▶ Workplace experience should become a compulsory element for schools to provide to students in years ten and eleven.
- ▶ An inquiry should be set up into the effectiveness of Jobcentre Plus in getting young people into employment.
- ▶ Amend the regulations which prevent young people from participating on courses or training for over 16 hours per week whilst still claiming Jobseeker's Allowance or Universal Credit.
- ▶ Jobcentre Plus should expand its list of preferred training providers to include voluntary sector organisation within the local community.
- ▶ Jobcentre Plus advisors should be trained and supported to better understand the difficulties and barriers that young people commonly face to enable them to provide more tailored support.
- ▶ Young people in the first instance should be able to source their own training schemes and have the opportunity to make the case to their job centre work coaches as to why it will improve their employment prospects.
- ▶ Young people should have travel costs for agreed training funded upfront and held against their benefits if receipts are not returned.
- ▶ Those who are in receipt of Housing Benefit should be entitled to continue receiving the higher rate when participating on an apprenticeship.
- ▶ Refocus funding available to schools to provide early intervention and targeted support for those young people not meeting national attainment levels.



## Teesdale YMCA Training Centre

Teesdale YMCA Training Centre was set up as a direct result of listening to the needs of young people in the area who were struggling within a traditional school environment and in need of accessing education delivered in a different way.

The aim of the project is to allow young people to learn in an environment that suits their own style of learning. A more practical way of learning rather than classroom based.

Teesdale YMCA offers English, Maths and Science at GCSE standard and is also an accredited centre for NCFE, a vocational equivalent to GSCE. These courses are designed to help students problem solve and learn through 'designing and making'.

The project is supported by three tutors; a science teacher, a design and technology teacher specialising in textiles and a carpentry/joinery teacher. The training centre has contracts with three local secondary schools delivering sessions one-to-one or in small groups.

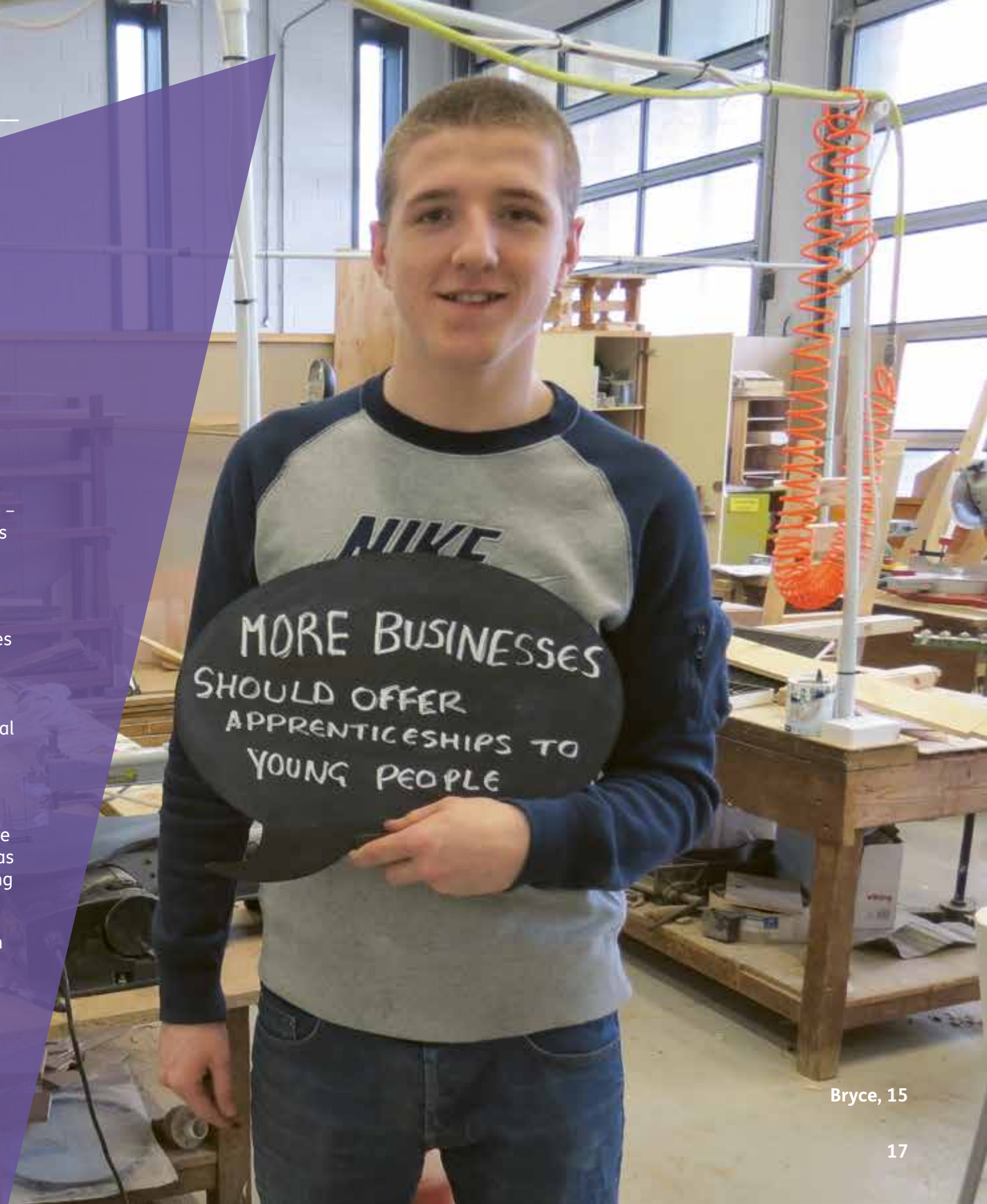
Teesdale YMCA puts the 'product making' at the centre of the learning experience and uses an innovative approach to

cross-curriculum learning: Research – IT, Materials – Maths/Science, Drawing out and Scaling – Design and Technology, Narrative – English, Product Presentation – Enterprise. These core learning objectives are matched to the student's individual learning styles with fantastic results.

Teesdale YMCA tackles issues around behaviour, attainment, respect and issues outside of school to engage students in a flexible way tailored to the individual based on the learning style and support required; adapting to both their emotional and educational needs.

The results have been remarkable, alongside a real shift in the students' mindset towards education; where before it was a struggle and to some, not seen as relevant or important: it is now something they enjoy and aspire to progress in.

Teesdale YMCA had an Ofsted Inspection in December 2014 and was graded outstanding.



Bryce, 15

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# Health and Wellbeing

## We believe that everyone should be able to enjoy the benefits of physical exercise, from improved health to better education and life chances

YMCA has a unique approach to health and wellbeing. We recognise the relationships that exist between the three pillars of health; physical, psychological and social wellbeing, and take an approach that aims to treat health holistically. Through our own research, we also believe that a service-user led approach adds significant value to a traditional health and wellbeing delivery model. Certainly when working with disengaged young people we know that they are more likely to take health advice from a peer than from an adult or person in authority.

Staying healthy is about the lifestyle choices we make and cost is seen by many as one of the biggest issues to being healthy and active. Where previously cost would not be a factor when accessing facilities the reduction in community spaces in which young people can play sports has resulted in the only options available being the ones which have a financial cost associated with them. Nearly half of 16-25 year olds fail to play sport once a week for 30 minutes or more<sup>11</sup>

and only 18% of 15 year olds achieve the Chief Medical Officers recommendation for physical activity.<sup>12</sup> The awareness of these guidelines outside of the sector is poor and the guidelines themselves are difficult to understand and communicate to people. Poverty is also a significant indicator in the likelihood of suffering health inequalities and it is clear that the toughest communities require the most support.

The reduction in youth provision budgets has also created a lack of activities for young people to engage with and this has contributed to more young people staying within their homes and engaging in non-physically based activities. The impact a family has on a young person's engagement in physical activity is vital for long-term engagement; physically active young people are far more likely to go on to be physically active adults and parents who will then pass on their lifestyle behaviours to their own children. With physical inactivity contributing to more deaths than smoking it is vital we build a culture and communities that promote active lifestyles.

Alcohol has a major impact on the health and wellbeing of young people. Although there has been a recent decline in the amount of time young people drink during the week they are now more prone to heavy episodic or binge drinking when they do.<sup>13</sup> Accordingly this has resulted in an upward trend in admissions to hospitals in England.<sup>14</sup>

From speaking to young people we know that limiting access to drugs and alcohol is the most effective way to stop usage. Accessing alcohol from shops is still too easy and there should be stricter punishments for selling alcohol to young people. Likewise those who attempt to buy alcohol on behalf of young people should also face stricter punishment.

When accessing alcohol, price is also a factor maintaining its widespread availability. At the lower end of the market alcohol is far too cheap and for very little expense young people can become easily intoxicated. Alongside this the rise of shops which sell 'legal highs' to young people is a worrying trend; currently there is little action which can be taken to protect young people from accessing these highs and more powers should be given to the police to combat this.

We know that what it means to be healthy is of importance to young people and the way their body and image is perceived matters immensely. More than half the

UK population suffers from body image anxiety, a leading cause of depression, low self-esteem, poor participation at school and lack of progression at work. It particularly affects young people, with children as young as five now worrying about how they look, and appearance the largest single concern for a third of girls and a fifth of boys by the age of ten.<sup>15</sup>

This is why YMCA is playing a major role in the **Be Real Campaign**,<sup>16</sup> a national movement made up of individuals, schools, businesses, charities and public bodies. YMCA believes that government has an important role to play in regulating the use of negative body imagery in advertising and encouraging health and body diversity. Alongside this the education received by young people at school should also reflect concerns around body image and the introduction of Personal Social Health Education (PSHE) as a mandatory subject on the national curriculum and body confidence to be taught at primary and secondary level would support this.

## Recommendations

- ▶ Commitment to protect and enhance investment in community sport initiatives which engage young people in physical activity, particularly in areas of high deprivation and where traditionally communities have been most hard to reach.
- ▶ Consider simplifying the Chief Medical Officer guidelines on physical activity (or at least have simpler public facing guidelines supported by the existing quantifiable guidelines). Whilst these guidelines may often be communicated to the public by professionals they should be aimed and understood by everyone.
- ▶ As deliverers of commissioned health and wellbeing projects, including interventions to reduce inactivity, YMCA feels that there should be better understanding and training across health professionals of the importance of physical activity.
- ▶ A coordinated awareness campaign to be launched which tackles the dangers of using alcohol and drugs irresponsibly. This should be delivered in schools and youth clubs through innovative and interactive methods which use strong and shocking examples and imagery.
- ▶ The Government's 'Talk to FRANK' campaign was highlighted as being outdated and ineffective. This should be reformed and updated.
- ▶ Introduce a minimum unit price of alcohol.
- ▶ More powers introduced to support local police in combatting the use of 'legal highs' by children and young people.
- ▶ Expansion of early intervention programmes to support parents who have drug and alcohol problems to help break the cycle of these problems being passed down to their children.
- ▶ Stronger punishments on shops that supply alcohol to underage customers and those who try to buy alcohol illegally.
- ▶ PSHE to be made mandatory on the national curriculum and body confidence to be taught at primary and secondary level.
- ▶ The Department of Health policies should focus on promoting healthy living and wellbeing before weight loss and appearance.
- ▶ The Government should put pressure on media, businesses and advertisers to act responsibly and actively promote different body shapes, sizes, ages and ethnicities.
- ▶ The Government has an important role to play in regulating the use of negative body imagery in advertising and encouraging health and body diversity.



**712,000 children and adults get active with us every year.**

## Rise in poor mental health amongst young people

Poor mental health can have a dramatic impact on the prospects of a young person's life and more than half of all adults with mental health problems were diagnosed during their childhood.<sup>17</sup> Although it was diagnosed in childhood less than half of these were not treated appropriately at the time and there are still worrying trends that negative consequences, such as self-harming amongst young people, are increasing.<sup>18</sup>

Awareness is still a significant issue with young people suggesting that there is inadequate information in the media, at school and on the internet around what mental health is and how support can be accessed.

The importance of delivering mental health guidance in settings familiar with young people is paramount. Nurses and practitioners should come into schools and work with young people to talk about the issues. Additionally, more information should be available to those who interact with young people frequently. Teachers and youth workers would be ideally placed to support young people at an early stage but would need training to enable a greater understanding of mental health.

Another area which could benefit from more training on mental health issues would be Jobcentre Plus. Our research has shown that those young people who

access the job centre found that staff were not aware of the complexities of their needs and unresponsive when informed.<sup>19</sup> Training on how to support young people accessing both Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) and Jobcentre Plus would be welcomed.

For both young people and YMCA staff there is a complete lack of trust or confidence in the National Health Service (NHS) to support them with poor mental health. CAMHS are seen as ineffective, unhelpful and poorly operated. The waiting lists for an appointment are too long and YMCAs have seen some instances where the wait for an appointment can be in excess of six months.

YMCA believes that the CAMHS age range needs to be reviewed. A number of cases have been identified where a young person transferring from CAMHS into adult mental health services has not been adequate and they have effectively become lost in the system. Those who have accessed CAMHS described the child element of the service to be good but the services for adolescents to be extremely poor. It was felt that extending the age range for which CAMHS are responsible for to 21 would increase continuity and renew focus on the 16-21 years where young people often have the highest support needs.

## Recommendations

- ▶ A campaign should be introduced which raises awareness of mental health issues and the available support targeted specifically at young people.
- ▶ Mental health should be given the same priority as physical health with NHS budgets.
- ▶ The waiting times for Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services need to be cut with access to a first appointment available within one week.
- ▶ The age limit for Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services responsibility to provide care should be increased to 21 years old and where possible a single key worker should be assigned to each young person to ensure that continuity and trust can be developed.
- ▶ Professionals working or frequently interacting with young people should be trained in mental health issues.

## Young Health Champions – YMCA Worcestershire

The Young Health Champions project was a YMCA signature pilot programme that was funded by the Department of Health. The ethos of the programme was to recruit and train young people as peer educators who can deliver across five key health topic areas.

The project's aim was to reduce health inequalities among young people living in areas of disadvantage by using young volunteers as peer leaders. The Young Health Champions (YHCs) provided support and leadership to hard-to-reach young people so that they engaged more effectively with local health and social care services. The YHCs took the lead in working on session ideas and came up with the idea to make a mental health film with young people in Worcester.

The idea was to get young people talking about their own experiences, dispel some of the myths that surround mental health as well as signpost young people to the appropriate services. The finished film was used by the YHCs when delivering mental health awareness sessions in youth clubs and schools around the local area.

After three successful years of the YHCs project YMCA Worcestershire decided to focus the next stage on raising awareness of mental health issues in the Redditch area. This branch of the project has been funded by Early Help and the CYP mental wellbeing task group and is called the Mental Health Champions.



Shannon, 17

# Family Work

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

The right start in life is crucial for the long-term development of a young person. It is for this reason that YMCA work with young people from birth through to adulthood – maintaining the support for them both as individuals but also within a family unit.

One way of addressing poverty within families is to engage more parents into the job market. Currently the Government's policy of free childcare for three and four year old children for 15 hours per week and for the 40% most disadvantaged two year olds goes some way to achieving this. However, this does not go far enough or reach all families. As such there needs to be parity across the age ranges and the 15 hours should be extended to all two year olds and not just the most disadvantaged.

The development of a young person is not just confined to schools and parents as there are many other influencing actors in their lives and the youth service is an example of one which often plays a positive role.

Over the past five years this role has diminished significantly as local

authorities have had to operate under reduced budgets and there is consistent evidence which shows that youth services have been an easy and frequent target when looking to make savings.<sup>20</sup> Whilst a statutory youth service would be ideally placed to be a third pillar in supporting the development of young people it must be done within the context of the economic climate. As such in order to be sustainable the youth service must adapt its model to deliver for young people in different ways.

There is significant scope for areas of non-formal learning and pastoral care, which are often part of a youth service, to be delivered within schools by qualified youth workers – supplementing the reduction in funding from local authorities to be driven back into positive activities for young people.

Although there has been a statutory duty to provide Sex and Relationships Education in secondary schools since 2010 there is still a significant lack of the relationship education element being taught. Relationships education should include exploring issues such as

domestic violence, overcoming breakups, an understanding of respect, the different types of relationships and the signs of a good and bad relationship. Whilst an important element of relationship education should be around how to act within one there should also be an understanding that young people do not have to be in a relationship to be happy.

**55,000 children and young people attended our out of school and holiday clubs last year.**

## Recommendations

- ▶ The 15 hours of free childcare available to the most disadvantaged should be extended to all two year olds.
- ▶ An appropriate framework should be introduced to inspect the scope, quality and impact of a local youth work offer.
- ▶ A national strategy on childcare should be implemented to address the failure of the current system to meet parental requirements.
- ▶ The relationship element of Sex and Relationships Education should be more explicitly set out within the statutory guidance placed upon secondary schools.
- ▶ The Government should reclassify youth services as a statutory service. Local authorities should be required to have in a place a youth services strategy.

## Nursery Provision – YMCA Bath

YMCA Bath has six nurseries with the first established in the City of Bath in 1988 and the remainder of the group in nearby Wiltshire. Four of the nurseries are in areas of deprivation and three of these share the site with local primary schools and children centres.

The successes of the nurseries have been based on their immersion into the communities and the development of relationships with parents. Given the areas in which the nurseries are placed, debt is a common community issue and the policy is to tackle this as it arises and work with families to manage their fees without compounding their financial problems. This enables them to stay in work and contribute to the economy.

One of the high performing locations is next to the YMCA hostel in Bath and serves a number of deprived families including those in poverty and those abusing substances. It has a high number

of children with additional needs and English as an additional language. Using innovative new techniques the staff help children to accept closeness and affection where this has been missing in their lives. YMCA helps them learn to express and show their feelings and this can begin to repair their emotional damage.

Alongside the emotional and educational needs of children, the development of their health is paramount to their chances in life. As such an initiative has been put in place by Bath YMCA where parents are encouraged to engage with the nursery cook. This ranges from providing parents with copies of recipes to speaking individually with those interested or those who are less confident on how to prepare nutritious meals.

# Democracy and Youth Engagement

**We believe that all young people should have a voice within society and be engaged fully in local and national democracy**

YMCA is committed to young people's access and participation in democratic life and civil society.

The young people that interact with our services or receive intensive support from us are passionate, articulate and active within their communities. As such YMCA remains a long standing partner in the Votes at 16 Coalition and continues to advocate for young people both voting in elections from this age and standing as candidates.

## Recommendations

- ▶ The Government legislates that the voting and candidate age for all elections is lowered to 16.



Sabrina, 19

# Notes

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# YMCA

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.

SUPPORT & ADVICE

ACCOMMODATION

FAMILY WORK

HEALTH & WELLBEING

TRAINING & EDUCATION