

IMPACT REPORT

2020/21



**TRANSFORMING YOUNG LIVES THROUGH HOUSING,
SKILLS, ART, HEALTH, ADVICE AND CARE**

WELCOME

A YEAR LIKE NO OTHER

We are a lifeline for homeless young people in Leicester and pride ourselves on being flexible, adaptable and aware of the political, social and economic environment. Then, just when we thought we knew what it took to run an unshakeable charity, along came a pandemic.

In 2020–21 we really had to think on our feet, responding to factors outside our control, whilst keeping our staff, residents and service users safe.

We implemented several new measures to support our young residents, including providing hot meals, developing tools to address high levels of anxiety, helping with digital access and protecting them from financial adversity. We also appointed new skills coaches to support our young people to get work ready through a range of in-house training.

Our Flat 108 transitions service for young people with disabilities was unable to run during lockdowns and we made the difficult decision not to re-launch it, following consultation with local schools and BBC Children in Need. We're proud of what we achieved over the last five years.

Unfortunately our theatre remained closed for the whole year, however, the Arts Council Cultural Recovery Fund enabled us to keep valuable staff employed and make adjustments to create the right environment for customers and staff in preparation for re-opening.

We wouldn't have been in such a positive position if it wasn't for the support of our staff, stakeholders, community and trustees, to whom we are incredibly grateful.

Paul Brown, CEO



LOOKING FORWARD

- We're launching *Y Events Lab*, where young people can gain events and technical theatre skills
- We're exploring opportunities to roll out our *Shine* project to other YMCAs in the country
- We're assessing options to extend our residential child care provision
- We plan to tender for the re-commissioned young people's supported housing contract, which we have successfully delivered for over seven years

PARK HOUSE CHILDREN'S HOME

In our second year of operation, all our young people were in some form of education whether that was full attendance at school, attendance at an alternative education provision or a combination of both. The pandemic had a huge impact on the education engagement, however, the children were supported with online study and for some this was preferable to navigating the complex dynamics of school.



As Leicester was one of the first cities to enter a localised lockdown, this impacted the access and availability of activities for our young people, but they coped well and on the whole, respected the restrictions placed upon them. Like many others, staff and young people had to isolate together for 10 days. Again our residents responded extremely well and even reported enjoying this time with the team!

We have celebrated successes and events with the children as well as trips to Skegness, Thorpe Park, Twin Lakes, a picnic at Bradgate Park, fishing, shopping, cinema, meals out and even a drive through the Christmas lights at Silverstone!

As a home, we tend to use day to day natural consequences as part of our therapeutic parenting techniques. We recognise that trauma has an impact on decision making and understanding for young people and our team ensure they address behaviours and the reason for any consequences. When our young people move on, they keep in touch and let us know how they are getting on which reflects the strong relationships we've built together.



"The young person has improved tremendously through one to one working, direct work and family 'like' environment. Park House has been able to achieve what most professionals have failed for years, by getting the young person to open up more." **PROFESSIONAL**

"This home has the best atmosphere of any residential home I have visited" **SOCIAL WORKER**

"I know Park House is my home, it is the first time I have felt stable." **YOUNG PERSON**



HOUSING

We are incredibly proud of the way our supported housing service and our key staff adapted to keep residents safe and supported throughout the pandemic, many of whom fall into the COVID-19 vulnerability category. For the first six months we provided hot meals for approximately 40 young people each day, supported by many generous food donations from the community.

Our young residents have understandably experienced higher levels of anxiety and isolation this year. Complex Needs Workers have provided intensive one-to-one support to residents with multiple support needs who found the lockdown periods particularly stressful. 87% of residents had two or more support needs, which include housing, poor mental health, substance misuse, offending behaviour, learning disability, childhood poverty, experience of care, exploitation and abuse.

Our Transitions Workers create trusting and positive relationships in order to help young people build self-confidence, develop their skills and increase opportunities to make positive contributions. We have encouraged residents to engage with partner agencies by supporting them to attend appointments, complete referrals and keep in regular contact, with the shift to virtual communications particularly challenging for many. Despite the challenges this year we have successfully moved 50 young people into their own tenancies.

Working with our Skills Coach we have been able to support more of our young people into educational opportunities and employment. Our three move on houses are suited to young people who are working or in education and still need some support. An additional house is tailored to the specific support needs of unaccompanied asylum seeking children (UASC) aged 16-18, who are then able to move through our internal pathway to our other accommodation when they are ready.

“I’ve had a bad few experiences in my life, but I learnt to block out my emotions since a young age. Me and my grandad are very similar in personalities and we always used to clash, so I decided to move out as it wasn’t fair on his health, he’s battled cancer. I first went to a friend’s but was kicked out. I would have spent nights on the streets but my girlfriend’s mum took me in until I got a place at The Y six months ago.

The staff here have helped me with my mental health and also they have helped me with proceeding with my dreams basically. Last year I was in a car crash and it messed my back up. I was doing work at a building site and now I can’t do that so I finally decided to pursue photography. Staff introduced me to The Y Heritage project and I took pictures at the Lost Legends of Leicester event, it was absolutely fabulous. Photography lets my emotions out, that’s why I like doing it so much. It makes me feel more free.”

- JOSH

50 residents moved on positively

167

young people were accommodated

26

young people were supported by our Complex Needs Workers

11

young people supported in the UASC house



SAFE & SOUND

Safe and Sound focuses on the individual needs of vulnerable young women, providing accommodation in a safe, nurturing environment. The project also places an emphasis on positive mental health, safe and healthy relationships, recovery from gendered abuse and pre and post parenting work.

Launched in February 2020, the project draws upon our regional partnerships inviting experts in child sexual exploitation, mental health and domestic abuse to train staff across the wider organisation and co-produce services.

The profile of the young women included a wide range of impactful life events and high level support needs, particularly mental health, domestic abuse and self-harm. Substance misuse was also an issue for a high proportion and access to support for substance misuse during the pandemic was an obstacle. Half had experienced sexual violence and abuse.

Mental health and well-being was a huge issue for our group, however the combination of counselling sessions and a confidence coach resulted in huge progress in the area of empowerment and self-esteem. This included instilling emotional boundaries, leaderships skills, team work and replacing negative thoughts with positive ones. Education included practical life skills, external excursions and a peer led activity.

We couldn't have achieved all this without our partners and their flexibility; MAST, Women's Aid Leicestershire and Natalie Vernon Counselling Services alongside other key services that have proved invaluable to our young women; Turning Point, Homeless Psychologist, Early Help, Helping Hands, Enablement Team, Supported Living Team, Homeless Mental Health Team, Inclusion Healthcare, Leicestershire Constabulary, Jasmine House and Sara Wright Confidence Coach.

“ There were a lot of arguments in the house between me and my mum. When I got kicked out I was practically homeless, I was sofa surfing before I moved to The Y and I just felt quite nervous. It was put as an emergency as I was 16.

The Safe and Sound activities took me out of my comfort zone at first, but when I kept doing them I started to feel better about myself and interacting with people boosted my confidence. The activities were fun and we got things out of it, like decorating an affirmation jar and baking, that's a life lesson.

I felt comfortable as it was all girls living together and I made friends. Within a month I felt really safe and all the staff were giving so much support that it just started to feel like home. They persuaded me to go to college and find another job. I think I've found who I am as a person, I feel more at peace.

”

- RESIDENT (NOT PICTURED)

16 young women aged 16-22 were supported by this project

90% reported improvements in feeling safe

80% reported progress in their accommodation status and skills



SHINE



Shine is a regional YMCA project working to improve access to accommodation and support for young people experiencing complex needs with participation from six other YMCAs across the East and West Midlands.

This year has focused on supporting YMCAs to continue to embed the project principles across their organisation. We were lucky enough to access National Lottery COVID relief funding which has supported this work through the implementation of a programme of activities including training in developing trauma informed environments, reflective practice groups for staff and case consultations. This work is being delivered by Purple House Clinic Leicester, a clinical psychology group, and has provided essential clinical input to Shine Workers who are working with extremely complex and often very vulnerable young people.

In September we were pleased to receive funding through Paul Hamlyn Foundation to employ a regional Coproduction Coordinator. The Coordinator works across the region, focused on ensuring Shine is actively listening to and working collaboratively with the young people we serve. Our Collaboration and Community principle places coproduction as central to our work and this funding enables us to develop its presence across the project.

As our Lottery funding comes to an end, we will enter the project's self-funded third year and begin to establish sustainable structures for the great work to continue. This includes the development of communities of practice and a learning and development platform to ensure staff are fully equipped to provide the best quality support to the most vulnerable young people using our services. We're excited to see where the year takes us!

“ I had support from my Shine worker when I opened up about my mental health. He helped me to look deeper into myself and the things that happened to me. He helped me to let go of the negative emotions that had control over me and helped me focus on other things instead, like my self-confidence and recognising patterns from experience with the people that were in my life and how to avoid it in the future.

It has made a massive difference for me, I feel validated and more happy and confident within myself. I am better equipped to take care of myself and cope better. Whenever I need to talk it's nice to have someone who isn't biased to listen and give me an outside perspective if I want it.

- ERIN (NOT PICTURED)

Worker wellness

Young person led

Collaboration & Community

Trauma informed

No wrong door

Strengths based



Y HERITAGE

Now in its third and final year, Y Heritage uniquely puts young people at the centre of commissioning and participating in local projects that kick the dust off heritage and give it a youthful perspective. Residents of The Y received training to participate in two rounds of funding each year, where local projects were selected by young people in a Dragon's Den.

Young people clearly value the rich work experience opportunities which all projects provided as part of the criteria. Following lockdowns, residents emerged eager to participate in trips and try out new activities. Some fantastic heritage projects have been brought to life and heritage organisations have also learnt how to engage with vulnerable young people, which will have a lasting impact for future generations.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Secret Stories which explored the heritage of Air Mail letters, personal histories and family traditions created through storytelling at Belgrave library with local families.
- An exhibition about the lost communities of Leicester that once lived on the River Soar, took place at Leicester Gallery, De Montfort University.
- Lost Legends of Leicester saw young people working with local theatre company, Enter Edem, to deliver live shows based on local historic characters in Victoria Park.
- Digital Personas; young people worked with local museums to bring to life artefacts as digital personalities, enhancing the physical and digital experience for museum visitors.
- THOOL, The Heritage of Our Lives, enabled young people to research/curate information, stories and photos from their own lives to showcase on a website and physical exhibition.
- Heritage Open Days 2020; young people helped design and host an interactive event in The Y Theatre. They researched the history of Leicester YMCA and the YMCA movement to develop an exhibition and welcome visitors.

“ Before I came to The Y I was in a really unhealthy relationship which could become violent at times. It’s helped being here because I’m getting the support I need. I get on with the staff, they’re nice. When my anxiety kicks in, if I know the theatre technician is here, I’ll ask if she needs a spare pair of hands. I’ve been helping her paint the stage and rewire the plugs!

I joined in with the Heritage Open Days and we all dressed up as Victorian ladies working in a fair. I was doing the meet and greet and the sweet stall. I met loads of new people; visitors, residents and staff. I would recommend Y Heritage. There’s opportunities out there for young people if they want to get involved.

– RESIDENT (NOT PICTURED)

15 projects funded over 3 years

105 young people engaged to date

10 Digital Personas placements completed by young people

Y SKILLS MATTER



In August 2020 we launched our new skills programme which creates a nurturing environment for young residents to explore their aspirations, overcome barriers and develop new skills at their own pace. This was supported by funding from Homeless Link, Pukka Pies and Highcross.

Our Y Skills Matters programme is designed to give young people opportunities to build their confidence, develop their skills and to come together to support wellbeing and mindfulness. The skills coaches provide positive activities tailored to support individuals to develop their interests, whilst incorporating key skills i.e. communication, self-presentation, budgeting, time-keeping & team work. Sessions included yoga, arts and crafts, music making, cook & eat, food hygiene, CV and interview skills and job club.

During the lockdown periods it was a challenge to motivate young people to attend face-to-face sessions. We therefore developed a free to access Y Skills Matters 'online school' to provide training at the appropriate level for young people to work through at their own pace, in their own space. We also installed wifi at all sites and loaned out laptops to help bridge the digital divide many young people face.

Our long-term goal is to utilise our Victorian Theatre to offer vocational based learning experiences, which will support the young people in developing and honing transferable skills that will lend themselves to working in creative industries and customer service roles.



I was sofa surfing for two months, here, there and everywhere. Sometimes when I wanted to go to sleep, options were running out. As soon as I got into The Y, I got stable. When you've got a roof over your head, you can think. You've got your roof, food, electric, rent... they're the four things that you need to have a stable life. It saved me 'cause I was just gonna end up going back to jail to be honest 'cause there was nothing out there for me.

I met with The Y's Skills Coach and was talking about jobs and how to get them and he helped me get work experience. I'd never been in an office before and I clocked that I can actually be around professional people and I can work. As soon as I saw that, I thought yeah I can do that. I smashed it out the park. Since then my eyes have opened, so it's up from here, because I'm not going back jail.

- RESIDENT (NOT PICTURED)

71

young people engaged in the first 9 months

425

engagements with Skills Coaches

329

attendances at skills sessions



Y SUPPORT PROJECT

As the pandemic started, our day centre for homeless adults moved from the Dawn Centre into No 5, a service run by Inclusion Healthcare CIC, where we delivered frontline services to homeless adults in need throughout the year. The two teams developed solid professional working relationships instantly, based on respect, trust and shared purpose. They pooled resources to keep the provision open, adapted working practices and managed constant change, whilst ensuring a COVID safe environment to enable high level support and face to face work with service users.

Our direct access drop-in service prioritised those rough sleeping or at risk of rough sleeping. We also supported a significant number of people in temporary accommodation who needed basic food provisions and help to contact their support network or partner agencies. With a large proportion of partners working remotely, access to phones and computers became vitally important. Service users continued to be able to access basic needs such as food and showers. We supported many people who had become homeless for the first time due to the impact of the pandemic.

The role of the Mental Health Access Worker continues to be a central part of the YSP team. The flexibility to see people both as 'drop-in' and with 'planned appointments' is key to providing accessibility and continuity. This model has benefited many people struggling for the first time with their mental well-being as well as those whose issues have been amplified due to the pandemic and its wider effects.

“ I was in lodgings and I couldn't pay so had to get out. I went about 7 weeks without money. I walked for 24 hours, I just laid down anywhere just to go sleep, but I had no sleeping bag so every time I got cold I kept going. It was quite an eye opener 'cause you get to understand the people on the streets. It's knowing the places you can get food, so I try and pass it on.

I got lucky, I was only on the streets for 3 weeks. A member of staff from Y Support took a picture of where I was sleeping, down by the river bank. That got me into the Dawn Centre. Y Support helped me to sign back on and then I got into a shared house. Y Support was a godsend to be honest with you, now I look forward to it every morning.

”

- STEVE

183

new clients this year accessing services for the first time

253

Days of direct access service delivery

9,798

Total visits throughout the year



THE Y THEATRE

The theatre was forced to close in March 2020 due to lockdown restrictions, which had a significant impact on our staff. However, we were grateful for the incredible support from the public who donated to the 'Save Our Theatre' campaign, gifted their ticket refunds and the absolutely amazing Grace Petrie and her band who live-streamed a lockdown gig on our stage to raise £5,500.

We successfully applied for two Culture Recovery Fund grants, which alongside fundraising, have been a lifeline allowing us to mitigate the impact of the pandemic and make changes to enable the much-loved venue to re-open.

We have taken this time to focus on strengthening our work, developing our vision to use our Victorian theatre as a route for disengaged young people to gain skills and independence. We're introducing a teaching technician who can provide young people with skills sessions, leading to work opportunities at live events. This creates an enabling environment for our young people to be change makers in the culture and heritage of the city.

During the past year we have worked with the Robot Needs Home Collective, Grace Petrie & The Resistance Band, 14/48 UK, Tin Cat Entertainments, Triple Cee Pee Comedy, Big Difference Company & Honalee Media.

Providing shows digitally from artists and performers including Charlotte Carpenter, Mark Thomas, Ruby Wax, Tim Key, Mark Watson, No More Jockeys, Laura Lexx, Daliso Chaponda and Santa!

“As a Leicester born-and-raised artist, I know what a valuable part of our cultural landscape The Y Theatre has been and can't overstate its importance for the artistic scene in the city. I have hugely benefited from the theatre both as an audience member and as a performer given some of my most important opportunities on its stage, so when I heard The Y was under threat of closure during lockdown I didn't hesitate to try and find a way to help raise funds. I think the huge amount raised is testament to how well loved and deeply appreciated The Y Theatre is by the whole community.”

- GRACE PETRIE, MUSICIAN AND SINGER

17 Live
streamed
shows

1
Fastest selling
Leicester Comedy
Festival show
ever!

3
Video recordings



FUNDRAISING & THANKS

We'd like to shine a light on some incredible businesses, supporters and staff who have gone above and beyond to show they care.

During the toughest months of lockdown there was an unbelievable response from our local community, who continually reached out to help feed our residents and homeless service users. There was also a dramatic shift in fundraising, with the loss of face to face events and community fundraising, which meant building strong, lasting relationships with our supporters had never been so important. Throughout 2020/21 RKH and **Weightmans** continued to support us as their charity of the year and both rallied colleagues to come together virtually for a fundraising sleep out, while **Beauty with a Purpose** chose to Sponsor a House and **STB** provided pro-bono design work and donations for specific needs.

In August we launched Y Skills Matter, which provides a tailored skills programme for young people living at The Y. This project has been sustained through funds from **Pukka Pies**, **Highcross** and everyone that supported our Big Give Christmas Challenge, which beat our target to raise £11,528. With our theatre closed we created the "Save Our Theatre" digital campaign to ensure the survival of Leicester's oldest theatre. We can't thank our supporters enough for their generous donations.

Finally, our amazing staff have kept our core services running with such strong resolve throughout what has been a most challenging year. They have adapted to ensure the quality of service for young people in Leicester remains unbeatable. As a finalist in the Leicestershire Live Business Awards, it was meaningful to receive recognition for all their hard work.

Kathryn Hamlyton, Chair

KEY FUNDERS

Leicester City Council, Leicestershire Partnership NHS Trust, Leicestershire Office of The Police & Crime Commissioner, Homeless Link, Arts Council England, The National Lottery Heritage Fund, The National Lottery Community Fund, Paul Hamlyn Foundation.

At RKH we are passionately supportive of Leicester as a city and always want to be involved with organisations who are making a real difference at a grassroots level. We chose The Y as our charity of the year because they do this in a way that chimes with our organisation - passionately, enthusiastically and with a smile. It's never been more important to work with and invest in young people, both of which The Y does incredibly. We can genuinely see how our partnership has made an impact in our community.

- JAMIE MOLLART & IAN MOORE, ROCK KITCHEN HARRIS

SPECIAL THANKS

Highcross, Pukka Pies, Rock Kitchen Harris, Stocks Taylor Benson, Weightmans, Asda, Beauty with a Purpose, Miss Leicestershire, Mattioli Woods, Mercer Building Solutions, HSP, Utilita, No.5, Inclusion Healthcare CIC, St Leonards Church, Leicester Grammar School, Beauchamp College, Knighton Community, Give For Good, Midland Langar Seva Society, Open Kitchens, Cafe Blends, Kazzoo IT, Zinithya Trust and Fareshare.

£9,821

Cost to run the charity per day

£65,580

raised and donated by our generous supporters and businesses

£21,194

the value of gifts in kind



**WILL
YOU**

PROVIDE A FUTURE WITHOUT HOMELESSNESS

Keep young people safe with a gift in your will: www.leicesterymca.co.uk/legacy-giving



**REMEMBER US IN
YOUR WILL**
Help our work live on...



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*Company Number 159933. Registered Charity 213513.
Leicester YMCA's financial statements to 31st March 2021
are available at Companies House.*

7 East Street, Leicester, LE1 6EY

0116 255 6507