



YMCA LEICESTERSHIRE

IMPACT REPORT 2022-23

Everyone should have a fair
chance to discover who they
are and what they can become

YMCA

Here for young people
Here for communities
Here for you

Welcome

I wanted to use this year's report to comment on the journey some of our young people have travelled, the resilience they show and their growth within a climate of conflict, financial exclusion and societal challenge.

It has become an ever-increasing challenge to support young people to move on from our accommodation into independent living, because there is a lack of social housing and trying to access the private rented sector with inflated rents is almost impossible. Young people are also finding it more and more difficult to access reduced support services from CAMHS, GPs and Youth Services that are structured to their needs and not funders.

Given these challenges, it still inspires me to see how resilient our young people can be and how, with our support they find the focus and determination to navigate the often frustrating systems, in order to reach their personal goals and independence.

One question I always ask when interviewing potential employees is "what do you like about young people?" Believing our young people have the strengths to thrive, not just problems to be fixed, is critical to how we work. Over many years we have developed our approach through trauma-informed practice and young Experts by Experience helping to shape services. We are now adopting the Foyer Federation's Advantaged Thinking model, which will start with training for managers and trustees and then our whole organisation, ensuring that we operate from a strength-based perspective. This challenges us to involve as well as support young people to discover their abilities, create their own solutions and include them in the development of the charity.

This year also sees the retirement of Kathryn, who has been Chair of Trustees for the last 11 years, supporting fellow trustees and the executive to move the organisation forward both operationally and strategically.

Finally, I could not end this report without a mention of Iris Watson, President of YMCA Leicestershire, who sadly passed away in July this year. Iris was the first woman to serve on our Board joining in the seventies, and following retirement became our president. Iris's contribution to YMCA Leicestershire over many years was recognised when we named one of our move-on houses after her in 2016.

– Paul Brown, Chief Executive

Pictured:
Iris Watson

Chair's Farewell

Pictured:
Kathryn
Hamylton

This is my final contribution to our Impact Report as Chair of YMCA Leicestershire as I retire in December 2023. I leave with considerable personal regret as opportunities seldom occur to make a tangible difference to the lives of young people by being involved with such a vibrant, innovative and forward-thinking organisation.

Over the 13 years of my involvement we have seen many changes, particularly in our housing stock, which we have increased to include "move on" houses for our more independent residents, all renovated to the same high standard.

Since 2019 we have offered accommodation and support to unaccompanied asylum-seeking children as part of our commitment to working with 16-17 year olds. In the same year we opened our first children's home offering residential support to younger children unable to live in their family homes, who may move on into our mainstream accommodation once they leave care.

Our pioneering work on complex needs, which we have shared with others in the same field, has greatly enhanced our understanding of the lives and challenges of many of our residents when they first come to live with us and has enabled us to provide appropriate support.

As custodians of Leicester's oldest theatre, built in 1900, we recognise our responsibility to look after our heritage. We have made several improvements, including energy efficient lighting and a stage lift, to ensure The Y Theatre can continue to offer a vibrant commercial and emerging arts programme and space for community collaboration.

None of this would be possible without our committed and experienced staff team and our Trustee Board. No challenge seems insurmountable to them all working together – I wish them well for the future and have every confidence in Hayley Robertson who takes over as Chair at the AGM.

Sadly, there has been no reduction in the need for our services in Leicester. In common with the rest of the public and voluntary sector we are all required to do more with fewer resources. Homelessness is on the increase and, as I write, we are being told that "homelessness is a lifestyle choice." To anyone believing that I hope reading this report will make you change your mind.

**– Kathryn Hamylton,
Chair of Trustees**

Vision

Our vision is for every young person to have a safe place to call home and the support they need to create lasting change in their lives.



We have
109
rooms for 16-25
years olds

Housing

We are witnessing a number of factors that are prolonging and deepening homelessness. A lack of social housing and affordable private rented options are limiting capacity for young people to move on when they are ready and housing benefits regulations have become more complex. Despite the challenges we continue to enhance the lives of our residents who rely on us for the care and support they need. This is at the heart of what we do. By prioritising the well-being of residents, we aim to go beyond providing housing and create an environment where individuals can thrive. By fostering collaboration, empathy, partnership working and innovation, we believe in our collective ability to overcome the housing crisis and build a brighter future for our residents.

Supported housing for 16-17 years olds must now be regulated, therefore we have been working hard on our Ofsted registration to ensure we can continue to provide high quality support to looked after children. We have increased the number of rooms and the support team for unaccompanied asylum-seeking children aged 16-17 (UASC), who are then able to move through our internal pathway to our other accommodation when they are ready.

Thanks to Getting Help in Neighbourhoods funding for 1.5 complex needs workers, we are able to offer intensive support to those residents who are facing multiple challenges. Using a therapeutic approach and advocacy we have seen 100% improvement in wellbeing and access to available services. The Complex Needs Team have also been delivering training both internally and externally in Trauma Informed Practice and have developed Team Formulation, which utilises six hat thinking. This invites team members to collaborate and explore; the impact of trauma, the views of the young person, how the staff member is impacted, what strengths and assets the young person and team have, and what resources haven't yet been considered.

183

Young people
were housed with
us during the year

33

Young people
received mental
health support
from our Complex
Needs workers

25

Young people
supported through
our UASC Project



Ruby's Story

I have lived with my aunt and friends and been in and out of foster homes since I was a baby because my mum has suffered with mental ill health all my life. Before I moved in to YMCA, I spent a few months sofa surfing with friends and family, then officially lived with my friend. Her mum was going to foster me, but I went back to my mum, then my mum kicked me out again when I was 16 and I got a place here. At first, I was in my room all the time and wouldn't come out, but a friend I made here would drag me out. Before long I was cooking chicken curry with rice and making Sunday roast too. Sometimes other residents join in.

I've been involved in Experts by Experience and recently I was invited to London by YMCA England & Wales for the launch of their Breaking Barriers to Work report. I spoke about being young and unable to find a job, the benefits system and how the rent increases when you do get a job. There were cameras all around as it was televised. I've also been helping the staff to organise events for other residents, like the Staff Vs Residents football match and the summer BBQ.

I was originally going to go to college to study Equine Care, but because of my osteoarthritis and degenerative disc disease I can't do the heavy lifting as the tack is heavy and you have to do the mucking out. I'm at college now and looking to get some work experience at a law firm, but I love horses and eventually want to move closer to my family who go horse riding. I used to feed the horses with my grandad as he has a massive field behind his bungalow and one day I really would love to work with them.

Skills

Young people living at YMCA have a wide range of opportunities to broaden their skills and try new activities, such as cook and eat sessions. The sports offer has included basketball taster session with Leicester Riders, football sessions with Leicester City in the Community and a brand new gym at East Street which is free for residents to boost their fitness.

We have been working in partnership with St Mungo's to help more young people into work, offering job advice sessions and brokering closer relationships with employers. We help residents to budget and understand "better off calculations" as well as giving other support such as paying for travel or work clothes. We have also been able to offer residents the opportunity to gain barrista and customer service experience within our own café bar.

It has been a successful year for our Experts By Experience panel, young people who use their lived experiences of homelessness, supported housing and other challenges to shape the way services are run. Rather than looking at 'what's wrong?' the panel looks at 'what's strong?' and focuses on young people's strengths.

Over the last year they have been on a residential to Beaumanor Hall, completed the Foyer Federation's co-production training alongside staff, created a mental health information leaflet for new residents, helped design the kitchen space at Aylestone, discussed language for new policies and been part of interviews and recruitment of new staff.

71

Residents
engaged in work
readiness sessions

11

Experts
by Experience



Munty's Story

My mum moved abroad when I was 19. I didn't really want to go, so I stayed here. It left me in an awkward situation, as I didn't have anywhere to stay. The transition of having a home, then all of a sudden not having a home... it's like, as a young person, what do I do? What help can I get to not be in this situation? For a whole year I found myself sofa surfing and always figuring out if I had a place to stay or not, then my sister suggested I come to YMCA. I moved in the following week.

I've enjoyed my time living here. It's great having your own room, your privacy and getting on with your own life. My support worker here is really helpful too and regularly reminds me of appointments and helps when I'm running low on food, which has been really good. Through being here I've also been introduced to St Mungo's who have helped me fix my CV and find work. They told me about an opportunity through The Princes Trust who have an employability programme with M&S, so I was put forward for the four-week work placement, then after that for the twelve-week contract and I'm hoping to start in the next few weeks.

YMCA has given me stability, that's the big thing I can say and that's a positive. YMCA helped me a lot, so if anyone is in a similar situation and looking for a safe place to stay, then I'd definitely recommend YMCA, because otherwise, you'll be in a very tough spot.

*not pictured

Chance 2 Change

Our street-based youth mentoring programme was developed in conjunction with local partners and worked with young people aged 15-25 who are involved in or vulnerable to becoming involved in serious violent crime.

The C2C pilot project worked in 3 key areas within the city and county delivering 1-2-1 mentoring for young people who engaged voluntarily in a journey of personal development and change. The C2C Youth Mentors led all activities, group and 1-2-1 sessions through an asset-based and trauma-informed approach.

Each young person was supported holistically in all aspects of their wellbeing including education, earning, mental and physical health. This was monitored and logged within their own personal outcomes star.

Youth Mentors used their coaching skills to enable young people to overcome significant social, mental and physical barriers giving them the support and life tools to make key changes to their lifestyles. These ranged from; reducing the use of drugs and alcohol and minimising social anxieties, to helping with personal budgets and setting up bank accounts, to enabling young people to leave trap-houses, find safe accommodation and rebuild family relations.

The project was funded by Leicester City Council, Police and Crime Commissioner for Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland, Charnwood Community Safety Partnership and Leicester's Violence Reduction Network (VRN).

71

Referrals were made to the project over 14 months

460

Mentoring sessions

55+

Skills or sports sessions



C's Story

I was recently released from prison, suffering from poor mental health, also was feeling suicidal and had previously made attempts to end my life. I felt I had no one to talk to and had no support.

I met a C2C mentor near my area, he approached me and asked if I was okay and explained who he was and what support him and his team are giving. I explained that I had recently been released and had previously been arrested twice for carrying a knife. I did a self-referral there and then.

I have been given so much support around my mental health and just to talk with someone and not feeling alone and scared. My C2C mentor attended most of my appointments with me and I started to get somewhere. I do still struggle in the evening with my mental health but I know I can ring my C2C mentor and get reassured and calmed down.



CHANCE 2 CHANGE

PART OF YMCA LEICESTERSHIRE

Y Heritage

As part of Y Heritage Legacy we supported seven local heritage organisations to create 10-hour jobs tailored to young people, funded by the project for the first 6 months. We helped a number of YMCA residents to prepare their applications, with seven young people going on to take up roles with King Richard III Visitor Centre, 2 Funky Arts, MSDS Marine, Leicestershire Cares, Enter Edem, Leicester Print Workshop and Leicester Gallery at DMU.

The Heritage Youth Forum went on a residential trip to Norfolk, arranged in partnership with Norfolk Museum Service and Norfolk YMCA. Young people from YMCAs in Sutton Coldfield, Rugeley, Erdington, Milton Keynes and Leicester experienced a variety of heritage sites and activities whilst developing their relationships and confidence. The forum went on to collaborate on a young person led conference and a set of exhibition panels reflecting their experiences.

The Bizarre Bazaar was a historic theatre visitor experience created as part of the national Heritage Open Days 2022. It gave young people the opportunity to work alongside creative company Enter Edem to bring to life a Victorian summer fete with characters and games. Two young people took on the roles of assistant director and social media officer. Visitors had the opportunity to see YMCA history and the theatre as it might have been when it opened in 1900.

We are delighted to have been awarded Development Phase funding from the National Lottery Heritage Fund for a new project in 2023, Your Heritage Your Future. Working in partnership with Norfolk Museums Service, this project will work with museums and heritage sites in the East Midlands and East of England, providing a unique opportunity to receive training and support to develop sustainable youth participation and employment opportunities, which will ultimately increase diversity and inclusion within the heritage workforce. The development phase is piloting the delivery and testing the principles of our Youth Heritage Charter, working towards a Round 2 bid submission in 2024.

142

Young people and 9 YMCAs got involved

7

Young people took up a heritage job

150

Heritage Open Day participants



Luke's Story

I've been part of the Heritage Youth Panel for more than a year and I was lucky to get a place on a trip to Norfolk. The history museum had so many artefacts and they were adamant about returning objects that belonged to certain cultures and I was proud to be a part of that. We also got to give feedback to every museum on how to make their services better.

It was very nerve wracking meeting the other young people because I was a very anti-social person then, very nervous. I kept to myself and of course in those 3 days I learned how to talk to people. I really enjoyed the trip because it opened my eyes to the world's history and really helped me to ask questions, go outside of my comfort zone and dive deep into that rich culture and history.

In school I just hated history and I failed everything unfortunately. I was kicked out of home a few months after my 16th birthday, then I was struggling in care and eventually moved to YMCA Milton Keynes aged 18. Then I was able to live more, I did one year of IT in college and I've made so many improvements to myself and my confidence as a person. The heritage panel and my YMCA has really brought that out in me, the staff helped me start a vlog of the last heritage day out and I got chosen to be a youth ambassador.

*not pictured

Children's Home

This year we have cared for three children aged 14-17 years old. We have developed fantastic relationships with each child's family members and supported them to continue to foster meaningful relationships with their family and friends. We have celebrated many different religious and specific celebrations within our home such as Halloween, Christmas and Pagan celebrations, sporting events and Valentine's Day. For a number of months we had only one child placed in our home, who made considerable progress.

We said goodbye to two children as they moved closer to their school and family but have been able to stay in touch and meet up. Both are doing really well and miss their time at Park House. They shared fond memories of some of our fun times such as in-house karaoke and dance competitions. One shared "I wish I could come back. I loved it here and miss you guys. We had such fun!" We remain in phone contact with most of our children and send them birthday cards to let them know that we still think of them and miss them.

We had a difficult journey at the children's home in the change over of our Registered Manager and Responsible Individual. Then in December 2022 we had an unannounced monitoring visit from Ofsted and they were pleased with the progress we had made in a short period of time. Looking forward, we are planning to introduce specific therapeutic and trauma informed approaches into our model of care. We are also planning to refurbish the home to ensure that we continue to have a warm and welcoming place where children can be safe and grow.

3
Children have
been cared for
in our home

2
Children
moved on
positively

2
local authority
partnerships in
Leicestershire and
Nottingham

A child's journey

*During this year we have seen this child grow in confidence and continue to develop trusting relationships with the team, often showing the team how to sing and dance to music videos. We have travelled to many different cities to attend concerts as music is the child's main interest and passion. We have built up excellent relationships with the child's local authority social worker and team manager. They have been working hard on developing their independence skills as they approach adulthood and prepare to leave care. **REGISTERED MANAGER***

We have received some lovely feedback:

"She's had the best support with you guys. Better than anywhere else she has been."
FAMILY MEMBER

"Thanks for everyone's help over the past couple of years. I know it can be hard work but they have shown real progress with you."
FAMILY MEMBER

"You have been wonderful to work with and I am proud of the communication and our team work."
TEAM MANAGER

"Thank you for all your care and support. Other providers would not have done what you guys have done. Worked well as a team together."
PLACEMENTS OFFICER

YASC

After 10 months of delivering our homeless drop in service from The Y Theatre bar at East Street we re-located, for the third time, to shop unit 165 Granby Street, enabling us to create a dedicated space within our city centre YMCA building. We prioritise those rough sleeping, or at risk of rough sleeping, offering breakfast, respite, care and initial assessments. We have also supported a significant number of people in temporary accommodation in need of basic essentials, advice, signposting and help connecting with their support network or partner agencies.

We have been able to welcome back wider partner agencies to deliver surgeries, drop-ins and pre-booked appointments. The Homeless Mental Health Service and St. Mungo's Recovery College have remained instrumental to our multi-agency working. We were also able to introduce twice weekly sessions with Turning Point, offering advice and information, harm reduction strategies and initial assessments. Having key agencies on site enables many of those accessing the service to see specialist practitioners face to face on a regular basis. Many of the changes introduced during the pandemic remained in place having enabled a more targeted, manageable and productive service.

Access to, and support with, computers, telephones and technology has remained vitally important for an increasing number of activities. A significant number of our service user group require assistance, guidance and regular support to navigate and understand on-line processes, forms, journals and applications. Our staff conducted 445 IT based appointments throughout the year.

The flexibility of the Mental Health Access Worker to see people both as drop-in and with planned appointments remains fundamental in providing accessibility and consistency to those struggling with their mental well-being. The Mental Health Access Worker conducted 948 appointment throughout the year.

256

Days of direct
access service
delivery

6,349

Total visits
throughout
the year

718

Food Parcels
provided



Andrew's Story

I was married for 12 years, but when my marriage failed, I moved 5 minutes away from my daughters into a flat share. In November last year I was hit by a car when I was walking across a zebra crossing. I had a couple of weeks off work, then went back to working 12 hour shifts in the factory. Then I had a new landlord and he put my rent up by £200 a month. After a while I started having trouble with my knee and I could no longer make the half hour walk. I lost my job and got into arrears on my flat and it became a downward spiral. I didn't realise at the time but I was also getting a bit depressed. The landlord evicted me and I ended up queuing each night to get a mattress on the floor at the Dawn Centre.

When I came to YASC I was carrying around a psychological burden. The weight of the bag was no joke. Pretty much everything I had left was in it. It was hard saying: 'I've come from living in a home all my life' to now saying 'I've got nowhere to go and everything I own is in this bag'. But here at YASC, Kate and Chris had hearts and saw that I needed to be able to lay that psychological burden down. YASC also gave me food, let me wash my clothes and offered me the use of the gym at YMCA. The gym connects your mind and body and it gave me the focus aside from everything else that's going on and I can't express how grateful I am for this.



YASC

Part of YMCA LEICESTERSHIRE

ADMIT
ONE

21,146

people came
to a show

The Y Theatre

We've enjoyed a hugely successful year, welcoming more visitors through our doors than ever before. We continue to build on our reputation as a fantastic venue for comedy and music, welcoming names including Richard Herring, Fern Brady, Kerry Godliman, Rich Hall, Mike Wozniak, Jen Brister, Wishbone Ash and Seth Lakeman. We were incredibly proud to be named Best Large Venue in this year's Leicester Comedy Festival Awards, as voted for by our audiences, for the second year running!

We continued to grow and develop our support for new and emerging artists, hosting the innovative music event *Forgotten Futures*, and the immersive theatre show *Dido's Bar*. In house, our monthly scratch nights, *Rough Draft*, provide a platform for artists to test new work and we continue to co-produce *14/48 Theatre Festival*, allowing 70 artists from across Leicester and the Midlands to create 14 plays to have their world premieres on our stage. We were very grateful to support the long-term theatre project *In Her Strength*, which provides creative opportunities for women with an experience of homelessness to make work and challenge stereotypes, by providing the space for a performance of a 'scratch' piece mixing music and monologues.

We have strived to develop and improve our Accessibility over the last year. The installation of an accessible lift to our stage in March has allowed us to host more disabled artists, community groups and customers on our stage. We also saw the launch of our Access Scheme, seeking to break down the barriers customers with access needs might face when booking tickets and attending events. With nearly 100 people already signed up to the scheme we are thrilled to be providing a supportive environment for our customers and look forward to continuing the growth and development of what we can offer.

192

Unique
events

17

Sold out
shows

82

People joined
our access
scheme



Reviews

"My first time at this wonderfully restored theatre; what a gorgeous blend of modern and historic. The whole experience was a delight; including the performance. I shall certainly be back." **CUSTOMER**

"Great bit of Leicester's heritage, a real step back in time gem. Small but great venue with good acoustics whether you are watching a comedy show or a band you won't be disappointed." **CUSTOMER**

"Rough Draft has been something that Leicester was crying out for. It's a warm, friendly and safe space to try new ideas in front of an audience. Appearing at Gay Comedy night was a highlight of my comedy festival. Getting the opportunity to perform in a beautiful venue, in front of a sell-out crowd, is something that I'll never forget. It was an amazing night!" **AUTUMN UNWIN, EMERGING ARTIST - COMEDY**



The Y Theatre

Fundraising & Thanks



Pictured: Beth Domingo making a donation from Asda Oadby

Thank you to all our supporters and donors who have felt compelled to make a difference to the lives of young people who have experienced homelessness and adults sleeping rough in our neighbourhoods. Our Big Give Christmas campaign raised £15,370 towards digital resources and skills for our young residents. Whilst The Y Advice and Support Project can continue to help adults to move on from homelessness. So many of you have stepped in throughout the year to provide clothes, food, toiletries and gifts at Christmas, and we're forever grateful for your kindness and the opportunity to see the smiles on the faces of the people we support.

Our first ever Sleep Easy took place in May, when 55 volunteers swapped their beds for cardboard boxes at King Power Stadium raising an incredible £19,000. Although it doesn't replicate what it is really like to be homeless it is an eye-opening experience to spend the night on the cold ground exposed to the sky. We were thrilled to have support from Leicester City Football Club and we would like to thank everyone who slept out or helped out including individual fundraisers and staff from Rock Kitchen Harris, PA Housing, Central England Co-Op, Parallel, Unite Students, Hays, Leicester City Football Club and Leicester City in the Community, VF Corp, YMCA Coalville shop, YMCA Leicestershire, Holiday Inn Express, FU Media and music from Curtis and Steve.

Thank you to all our staff who work with kindness and integrity to bring out the best in our young people, beneficiaries and community partnerships. Many dedicated staff, past and present, have helped the charity evolve and develop services that have a positive impact on our local community.

Write your will for FREE today

Will you provide a future without homelessness? After providing for your loved ones could you leave a gift in your will to provide for young people who have nobody to care for them? Find out more about our free will writing service: www.ymcaleics.org.uk/wills



Key Funders

Leicester City Council
Leicestershire Partnership NHS Trust
Arts Council England
The National Lottery Heritage Fund
Paul Hamlyn Foundation
Leicestershire OPCC
New Opportunities Foundation

Special thanks to our donors

Rock Kitchen Harris Pukka Pies, Parallel, Reed Foundation, Theddingworth Congregational Chapel, Co op (National), HSP Financial Planning Ltd, Westerby Group, V F Northern Europe, rg+p, SCS, Co op Central England, HSP Financial Planning Ltd, Market Harborough Building Society, Amazon Community, LEBC and many generous individuals.

Gifts in kind

Stocks Taylor Benson, V F Northern Europe, Tree Top Adventure Golf, Leicester Grammar School, Beauchamp College, The Cedars Academy, Loughborough University, Euro-Rose, Leicester City in the Community, Oadby Owls Football Academy, B.A.P.S Charities Leicester, The Red Cow, NCS Changemakers, Forest Way School, The Cake and Spoon, The Prince's Trust, Dunkin Donuts, Fairshare, Ladder and Asda Oadby.

I wanted to personally experience rough sleeping for a night to gain more of an appreciation of what people are going through on our streets. It was a more gruelling and painful experience than I was expecting. For me, it was about exploring how PA can get more involved in work to alleviate homelessness.

– **Simon Hatchman,**
Executive Director of
Resources, PA Housing



Pictured: PA Housing



YMCA Shop
5-7 Belvoir Shopping
Centre, Coalville, LE67 3XE
FB: @YMCACoalvilleCharityShop

YMCA Leicestershire's financial statements to 31st March 2022 are available at Companies House, company number 00159933. Registered charity number 213513.



YMCA
**SLEEP
EASY**

SLEEP ROUGH SO OTHERS DON'T HAVE TO



Spend a night out under the sky at King Power Stadium and help local people experiencing homelessness to get back on their feet. One night can make a lifetime of difference.

Sign up for our next Sleep Easy in March 2024 at
www.ymcaleics.org.uk/sleepeasy

YMCA LEICESTERSHIRE

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@ymcaleics



Registered with
**FUNDRAISING
REGULATOR**



**MINDFUL
EMPLOYER**



**Good
Business
Charter**