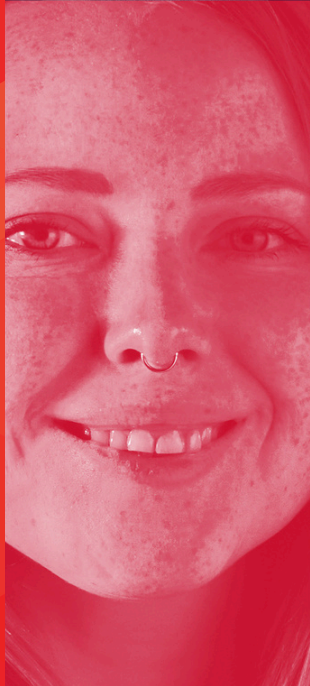
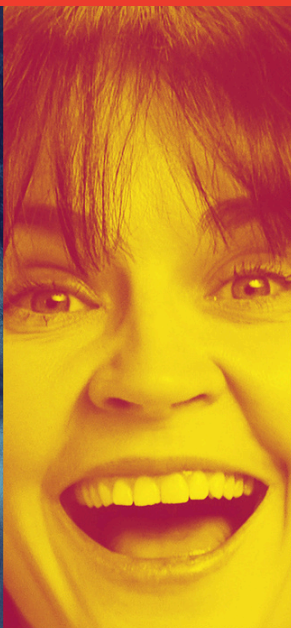


THE TRUSTEE HANDBOOK



YMCA LEICESTERSHIRE

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Here for young people
Here for communities
Here for you

A Message From Our Chair of Trustees

Volunteers are the backbone of the third sector and being a YMCA Leicestershire trustee is a great opportunity to give something back in support of a charity that delivers so much for young people.

YMCA Leicestershire trustees meet as a full board four times a year, and in those meetings, we spend two to three hours encouraging, developing and overseeing the work of the organisation.

The Board of Trustees are responsible for the overall governance and strategic direction of the charity, developing YMCA Leicestershire's aims, objectives and goals in accordance with the governing document, legal and regulatory guidelines.

Being a trustee requires commitment, but it is also rewarding and fulfilling. By joining our team, you can help create new possibilities, applying your skills, talents and energies to make a real and tangible difference for young people.

We look forward to speaking with you soon,

A stylized, handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a large loop and several intersecting lines.

Hayley Robertson, Chair of Trustees



“I now look back on my eight years as a Trustee with fondness and an insight into homelessness which will stay with me forever.”

Janet Bliss, Former Trustee at YMCA Leicestershire

WHAT DO WE DO?



We are YMCA Leicestershire

YMCA Leicestershire is a Christian organisation that has been providing community services within the City and County for over 139 years. It is one of 83 YMCAs within England and Wales and is part of a federated model. Our services and community spaces are open to all, regardless of faith or background. While our ethos remains deep rooted in Christian values, we encourage mutual respect and understanding for all cultural and religious perspectives.

As a charity, registered social landlord, housing association and limited company, we have continuously striven to meet the needs of the community of Leicestershire. Our community services consist of supported accommodation for young adults within the city, a registered children's home, a homeless day centre, and a 320-seat professional theatre.

WHAT DO WE DO?

WHAT DO WE DO?

We are home to 117 young people who have faced family breakdowns or experienced homelessness. We are more than a shelter, we are a foundation for independence. We're proud to offer high quality support and we are now successfully Ofsted registered for our work with 'Looked after Children' aged 16-17.

YMCA Leicestershire is committed to working with some of the most challenging young people and its service includes evidence-based practice for young people with complex needs as a result of their personal experiences culminating in homelessness. It is our aim that all young people are supported to permanently transition out of their temporary state of homelessness and as such, YMCA Leicestershire prides itself on developing and maintaining a living environment that is inspiring and aspirational.

OUR SERVICES

SUPPORTED ACCOMODATION

Our **East Street** site consists of 8 accommodation clusters providing 36 units and 13 individual 1-bedroom apartments. The priority client group consists of those Leaving Care, Young Offenders and Child in Need (16/17-year olds assessed under s20 Children's Act). The site also has a sports hall and theatre.

The **Aylestone Centre** consists of 30 single furnished rooms with shared kitchen and bathroom facilities and 4 self-contained flats across five detached houses. The site also is situated within 17 acres of green belt land.

Move-On Properties (MOHs) are dispersed throughout the city which accommodate up to 5 young people per house with en-suite or shared bathroom accommodation. Through our pathway into employment, education and training, these young people are independent and in the last stages of our supported accommodation pathway before moving onto fully independent living.

Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Child Properties (UASC) are dispersed throughout the city which accommodate up to 5 young people per house with en-suite or shared bathroom accommodation. We provide an average of 6-hours support per person per week, liaising with social workers, health, education, solicitors and the Home Office whilst providing personal support, housing support and resettlement support.

The accommodation is available for both male and female young people aged 16/17 years old on entry.

ADULT HOMELESSNESS SUPPORT

The Y Advice & Support centre (YASC) is a direct access day centre which provides advice, one-to-one and practical support for adults who are experiencing homelessness and/or vulnerably housed.

WHAT DO WE DO?

CHILDREN'S RESIDENTIAL CARE

Our children's residential care service provides a safe, nurturing, caring and warm environment for each young person who lives in our children's home, so that they can stabilise, rebuild and grow. We can accommodate 3 children and young people (any gender) aged 7-18 years old who would benefit and thrive from living in a small, nurturing and welcoming home.

THE Y THEATRE

The Y Theatre is a bustling live performance venue based at our East Street site in Leicester city Centre.

Our eclectic programme includes music, comedy, theatre, dance, new work and family shows. The 320-seat theatre also comfortably hosts candle-lit cabaret style events and standing gigs. Built in 1900, The Y is the oldest surviving Victorian theatre in Leicester.

We support the development of new, emerging & established performance, within an open and welcoming theatre, creating a hub of activity for local artists.



“As Chair of YMCA Leicestershire, it’s truly a privilege to be part of an organisation that makes such a profound difference in young peoples lives. ”

Hayley Robertson, Chair of Trustees at YMCA Leicestershire

YMCA LEICESTERSHIRE'S VISION, MISSION, VALUES & PURPOSE

OUR 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.

OUR MISSION

Our mission is to create supportive and inspiring places where young people and communities can belong, contribute and thrive. We do this through housing, care, support, advice, skills for life, theatre and cultural activities.

OUR VALUES

WE WELCOME - We work with kindness and integrity so that everyone can feel secure, respected and heard.

WE SUPPORT - We build trusting relationships and nurture personal strengths to help people find their path to independence.

WE ENRICH - We create inspiring activities that give people a sense of connection and wellbeing.

WE SEEK OUT - We look for opportunities to collaborate and make an impact in the communities we serve.

OUR PURPOSE

YMCA believes in fairness and opportunity. There are essential building blocks for a full and rewarding life: a safe home; acceptance; guidance; friendship; physical and mental health; academic support; employment skills and access to real opportunities. Many young people have never known these things; other people have lost one or more as they grew up, but we all need them. All of us. At YMCA, we provide these critical foundations for a fresh, strong start for young people and a better quality of life in the community.

OUR THINKING

At YMCA Leicestershire, we believe that young people are more than the challenges they face. That's why we've adopted Advantaged Thinking - a positive, purposeful methodology developed by the Foyer Federation. Rather than viewing individuals through a deficit lens - defined by what they lack or what's gone wrong - we focus on potential. On strengths. On aspirations. On the whole person.

Advantaged Thinking underpins everything we do - from housing and support services to how we lead, hire, develop, and engage across the organisation.

YMCA LEICESTERSHIRE
AN INTRODUCTION TO
**ADVANTAGED
THINKING**



"Whether you're here as a young person, a staff member, a volunteer, or anything in between - we want you to feel three things: That you belong. That you can contribute. And that you've got the chance to thrive."

Hannah Deignan, Advantaged Thinking Lead



“I'm a great believer in the way art can make a real difference to young people's lives and the YMCA , with its unique Y Theatre, is uniquely positioned to do the same.”

Tony Graves, current Trustee at YMCA Leicestershire

YMCA LEICESTERSHIRE STRUCTURE

We have an incredibly talented and dedicated staff team who work hard to make a difference in the lives of the people they are working with and within our local community.

TRUSTEES

The charity is supported by the Board of Trustees, all of whom are volunteers. Our trustees provide the oversight necessary to ensure YMCA Leicestershire is well managed, ethical, financially stable and able to deliver its mission effectively to the community.

Their key duties include: Governance and strategic oversight, financial oversight, legal and regulatory compliance, risk management, monitoring and accountability.

THE EXECUTIVE TEAM

Our Executive team consists of; The Chief Executive, Deputy Chief Executive, Director of Housing, Director of Residential Childcare Services and our Director of People, Policy and Culture.

They all play a crucial role in the day-to-day operations and implementation of YMCA's mission and strategy. While the trustees focus on governance and strategic oversight, the executive team is responsible for

continued...

executing the decisions made by the board and managing the charity's activities. They ensure all our projects and programs are delivered successfully and that YMCA remains financially and operationally sound.

THE MANAGEMENT TEAM

Our management team cover all departments across the organisation and are responsible for managing specific areas of YMCA's operations ensuring that policies and strategies from the executive team are implemented efficiently at department level. Their role is crucial in translating the high-level strategy into everyday actions. Our management team are a vital link between the executive leadership and our operational staff, helping to keep everything running smoothly.

THE OPERATIONAL TEAM

Our operational staff are responsible for the hands-on delivery of YMCA's services and programs, ensuring that the day-to-day activities are carried out smoothly and effectively. These amazing people work directly with our service users, supporting the charities mission and vision through the delivery of their roles. This team is vital in making sure all our activities are effective, impactful and safe for the individuals and communities we serve.

VOLUNTEERS


Volunteers are an important part of YMCA Leicestershire and play a crucial role in our success. Our volunteer team bring valuable and wide-ranging

continued...

YMCA LEICESTERSHIRE STRUCTURE

skills, expertise and talents enhancing our ability to deliver high quality services, making a real difference to the lives of our young people.

Volunteers are vital for YMCA Leicestershire to grow and continue making a positive impact. Your dedication and generosity make a real difference in people's lives.

A photograph of two women in a kitchen. On the left, a woman with dark curly hair tied back, wearing glasses and a red and black top, is pouring a yellow liquid from a small yellow container into a large white bowl. On the right, a woman with long brown hair, wearing a white floral shirt, is looking down at the bowl with a smile. The background is a light-colored wall with a blue sign partially visible on the right. The text is overlaid on a semi-transparent grey box in the center.

“Leicester YMCA holds a special place in my heart, as I used to come here in my teenage years to some groups that ran here. It always felt like a true community organisation. It then felt like the right time to ‘give something back’ . So, this felt like the best way I could use that knowledge and passion to meaningfully contribute. And so here I am! And I’m so proud to be in this position.”

Dr Jenny Mackay, current Trustee at YMCA Leicestershire

THE CHARITY GOVERNANCE CODE

As a charity with an income over £1 million and externally audited accounts, YMCA Leicestershire follows the larger version of the Charity Governance Code.

This Code isn't just a tick-box exercise - it's a tool for continuous improvement and good governance. It's aspirational by design, encouraging boards like ours to aim higher and regularly reflect on how we lead, make decisions, and stay true to our mission.

You can read a full copy of the code here:
www.charitygovernancecode.org

The Code is developed by an independent group from across the voluntary sector. While the principles apply to all charities, big or small, the recommended practices vary depending on size and complexity. For us, as a larger organisation, the extended version is the most relevant.

THE SEVEN PRINCIPLES OF GOOD GOVERNANCE

The Code is built on the assumption that we're already meeting our legal and regulatory responsibilities - and from there, it offers seven principles to keep us effective, ethical, and aligned with our purpose:

continued...

Organisational Purpose

Our Board ensures that YMCA Leicestershire's aims are clear - and that we're delivering them in a sustainable, impactful way.

Leadership

We provide strong, strategic leadership in line with our values and mission - leading by example and with purpose.

Integrity

We create a culture that reflects our values, supports our charitable goals, and earns public trust through transparency and ethical conduct.

Decision-Making, Risk & Control

We make timely, informed decisions - with proper controls, clear delegation, and a healthy approach to risk management.

Board Effectiveness

We operate as a skilled, diverse and united team - using our collective experience and knowledge to make the right calls.

Diversity

We value different perspectives, backgrounds and lived experiences - recognising that diversity strengthens leadership and decision-making.

continued...

Openness & Accountability

We lead with transparency and remain accountable to our stakeholders, funders and the young people we support - being open, unless there's a good reason not to be.

APPLY OR EXPLAIN

Trustees are expected to either apply the recommended practice in the Code or explain how and why we've chosen an alternative approach. It's not about perfection - it's about honesty, reflection, and staying aligned with our charitable purpose.

If in doubt, ask questions, start a conversation, or suggest a review. That's exactly how good governance stays alive.

YMCA Leicestershire's Board of Trustees is made up of a committed group of volunteers who bring a wealth of experience, insight, and energy to help us lead with purpose.

Our Trustees are not paid (apart from the reimbursement of essential expenses), but they play a vital role in helping shape the strategic direction of the organisation. Each one brings something different to the table - and it's that mix of skills, backgrounds, and lived experience that makes us stronger.

Together, we aim to model the culture we want to see across YMCA Leicestershire: professional, inclusive, kind, thoughtful, and grounded in real impact.

HOW WE WORK

Alongside our main Board of Trustees, we have a number of sub-committees focused on key areas of our organisation. These committees meet quarterly and report back into the full Board. All Trustees are invited to sit on at least one sub-committee based on their interests or expertise.

OUR ANNUAL RHYTHM

- 4x Board Meetings per year
- 1x Strategy Development Day per year
- Quarterly Sub-Committee Meetings (Finance, HR, Maintenance)

continued...

TIME COMMITMENT

We ask for a commitment of up to 30 hours per year. In that time, we ask Trustees to:

- Attend Board and relevant sub-committee meetings
- Read meeting papers and organisational updates in advance
- Engage in open dialogue with the executive team as part of our Board Champion approach
- Be a critical friend: challenging where needed, supporting where it matters

WHAT TRUSTEES DO

Being a Trustee is about both legal duty and lived leadership. Here's what that looks like in practice:

Legal and Strategic Responsibilities

- Ensure we follow our governing documents, Charity Law, Company Law, and other relevant regulation
- Make sure we pursue our charitable objectives and use our resources to do exactly that
- Protect and manage YMCA Leicestershire's assets, people, and property
- Appoint, support and monitor the performance of the Chief Executive
- Contribute to strategy development, policy setting and performance monitoring
- Be part of a Board that reflects our Christian ethos while operating inclusively and transparently

continued...

- Help recruit, support and develop a strong, diverse Board that can lead well into the future

Your Contribution

As well as the shared duties above, each Trustee brings their own expertise and perspective. You'll use this to:

- Review and analyse papers
- Lead or support relevant discussions
- Offer insight and advice on areas where you have professional or lived experience
- Contribute to key initiatives that align with your passion and skills

We'll support you every step of the way - including with induction, resources, and ongoing training.

Strategic and Leadership Role

Working alongside the Executive Team, Trustees help shape the long-term vision and values of YMCA Leicestershire. Together, we:

- Set and review our strategy and business plan
- Guide and monitor delivery against objectives
- Make sure we remain responsive to the evolving needs of our community and young people

Board Culture

At YMCA Leicestershire, our Board culture is grounded in respect, honesty, integrity, kindness and collaboration. We champion a space where diverse voices are heard, reflective thinking is encouraged, and everyone plays their part in moving the mission forward.

Fundraising and Communications

Our fundraising portfolio is designed to drive success across different income streams including; events, individual and regular donations, corporate relationships and gifts in wills.

We welcome your involvement in ways that align with your strengths, interests and capacity. Every action, no matter how small, contributes to our success:

- **Fundraising Oversight:** There is clear information in the [*Fundraising Regulator Code of Practice*](#) to help you understand the trustee's responsibilities.
- **Introductions & Networks:** Your connections can open doors we wouldn't otherwise reach and forge impactful partnerships.
- **Event Participation:** Whether it's joining a fundraiser or visiting The Y Theatre, you have the opportunity to show solidarity and strengthen community relationships
- **Amplify Our Message:** A share or comment on our social media platforms helps spread our story further. Your voice makes a difference.
- **Donations & Sponsorship:** Every contribution helps us reach key milestones and build momentum within our community.

Training and Support

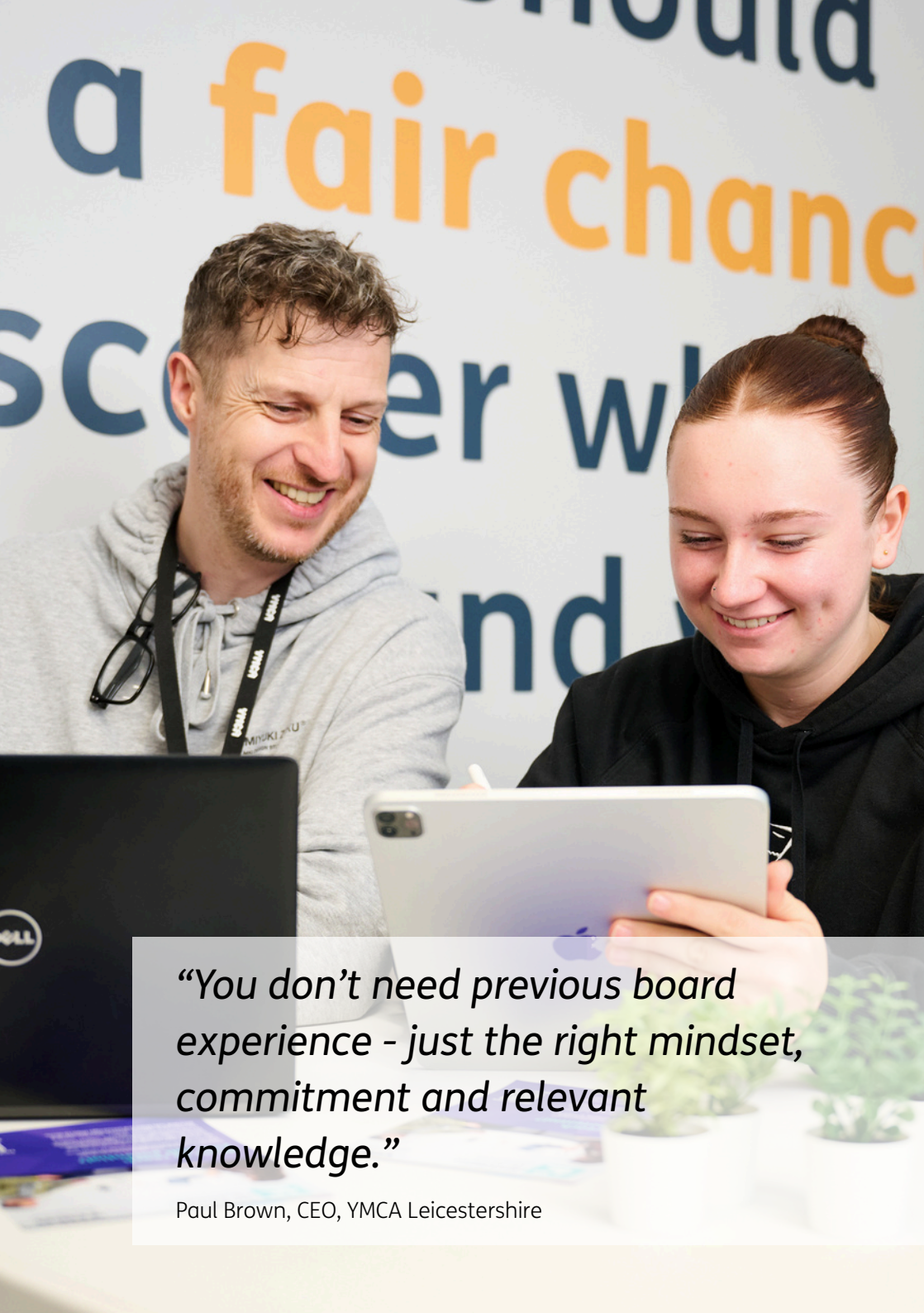
You don't have to know everything when you start - we've got your back.

continued...

We provide:

- An induction programme
- Safer Recruitment, Safeguarding for Trustees and Equality and Diversity training.
- Access to resources and support through YMCA England & Wales and other sector bodies

Being a Trustee is a big responsibility - but also a powerful opportunity to shape the future. If you bring passion, commitment and curiosity, you'll thrive here.



"You don't need previous board experience - just the right mindset, commitment and relevant knowledge."

Paul Brown, CEO, YMCA Leicestershire

At YMCA Leicestershire, we believe brilliant boards are built on more than job titles and LinkedIn profiles.

We welcome applications from anyone who feels they could make a valuable contribution as a Trustee - especially those who bring kindness, empathy, and a genuine passion for helping young people thrive.

You don't need previous board or trustee experience. What matters most is your willingness to engage, your belief in what we do, and your ability to bring workplace knowledge, life experience, or community insight to our decision-making table.

INCLUSION, FAITH AND VALUES

We're proud to be rooted in Christian values, and we support young people of all faiths and none.

We are committed to building a board that reflects the communities we serve - including diversity in race, gender, age, disability, lived experience, sexual orientation, and more.

We especially welcome applications from individuals with:

- Experience working with vulnerable young people
- Legal, financial, housing, or social care expertise
- Lived experience of homelessness, care, or complex life transitions

continued...

At different times, we may seek out specific skillsets to match our strategy and strengthen the Board's collective impact.

HOW WE BUILD OUR BOARD

We use a skills and experience matrix to ensure we have the right balance of professional expertise, lived experience, and sector insight across:

- Trustees
- Advisors to the Board
- Our Executive Leadership Team

This helps us make strong, informed, forward-thinking decisions - for today and the future.

ARE YOU ELIGIBLE TO BE A TRUSTEE?

You must be:

- At least 18 years old
- Properly appointed under our governing documents
- Not disqualified under the Charities Act — this includes having:
 - An unspent conviction for dishonesty or deception (e.g. fraud)
 - Certain bankruptcy or insolvency arrangements

continued...

WHAT TRUSTEES MUST DO (AND WHY IT MATTERS)

As a trustee, you help ensure YMCA Leicestershire is not just legally compliant - but purpose-driven, well-led, and financially responsible.

Here are the key areas every trustee is expected to uphold:

Carry Out the Charity's Purposes for Public Benefit

You must ensure YMCA Leicestershire is delivering on its charitable objectives - and nothing else. That means:

- Understanding our aims and activities as defined in our Memorandum and Articles of Association
- Planning how we deliver impact, not just services
- Ensuring our funds are used only for charitable purposes
- Spending money outside of this remit is a serious matter - and can result in trustees being held personally liable.

Comply with the Law and Our Governing Document

As a trustee, you must:

- Follow our Memorandum and Articles of Association
- Meet charity law and other legal requirements

We'll support you in understanding your legal duties - including training and access to sector guidance.

Act in the Charity's Best Interests

You must:

- Always act in ways that support YMCA Leicestershire's charitable mission
- Make well-informed decisions - balancing short and long-term impact
- Avoid conflicts of interest
- Never benefit personally unless clearly authorised and in the charity's interest (this applies to family members and business partners too)

Manage Resources Responsibly

This is known as the duty of prudence. Trustees must:

- Use YMCA's assets only for their intended purpose
- Avoid unnecessary risks
- Take care with investments or borrowing
- Never over-commit the charity
- Put procedures in place to reduce the risk of fraud, loss or mismanagement

Use Reasonable Care and Skill

We expect every Trustee to:

- Use their skills and experience to help the Board make wise decisions
- Seek professional advice where needed
- Dedicate enough time, thought and preparation to play an active role

continued...

Ensure Accountability

As a Trustee, you help ensure YMCA Leicestershire is:

- Legally compliant with reporting and governance standards
- Open and transparent about our work and decisions
- Accountable to stakeholders - including funders, members, regulators and, most importantly, the young people we serve

This role is a serious responsibility - but it's also an incredible opportunity.

If you want to be part of a team that changes lives, and you believe in young people's potential, you could be exactly who we're looking for.

Let's shape futures - together.



“I can do things you cannot, you can do things I cannot, together we can do great things.”

Mother Teresa

OUR TRUSTEE CODE OF CONDUCT: OVERVIEW AND EXPECTATIONS

As a Trustee at YMCA Leicestershire, you're part of a governing body that's committed to ethical leadership, transparency, and championing the potential of young people across our communities.

This Trustee Code of Conduct sets out the expectations we ask all Trustees to commit to - ensuring we lead with integrity, uphold the public's trust, and support the charity's continued health and relevance.

This section offers a quick overview. You'll find links to the full documents and detailed policies so you can explore them in your own time.

OUR SHARED PURPOSE

YMCA Leicestershire's Board exists to:

"Ensure the continued existence, relevance and organisational health of YMCA Leicestershire by partnering with management to create an environment of ethical and strategic leadership, supported by constructive and proactive challenge, support and guidance."

continued...

To support that mission, Trustees agree to operate in line with the:

- Charity Governance Code
- Seven Nolan Principles of Public Life
- Charity Commission's guidance for Trustees
- And the YMCA Leicestershire Code of Conduct

WHAT TRUSTEES COMMIT TO

Integrity

You'll bring openness, honesty and sound judgement to every decision - always acting in YMCA Leicestershire's best interests.

Accountability

You'll make informed decisions in line with our charitable objectives, legal powers, and core values.

Responsibilities

You'll embrace your governance role, supporting strategic direction and acting as a critical friend to our executive team. You'll champion our values and help shape a culture of respect, insight and impact.

Diversity & Inclusion

You'll actively support inclusion at all levels - from Board culture to community outreach.

Effectiveness

You'll bring care, skill and preparation to your role - and commit to continuous development.

continued...

Breaches & Resolution

We expect open communication if concerns arise.

Review & Updates

This Code is reviewed regularly (at least every three years) to ensure it stays relevant and responsive. Any updates are approved by the full Board.

THE NOLAN PRINCIPLES OF LIFE

We endorse the Seven Principles of Public Life - which underpin ethical public service:

Selflessness – Always act in the public interest

Integrity – Avoid obligations that might influence your decisions

Objectivity – Appoint, recommend and decide based on merit

Accountability – Be answerable for your decisions

Openness – Be transparent wherever possible

Honesty – Declare and manage conflicts of interest

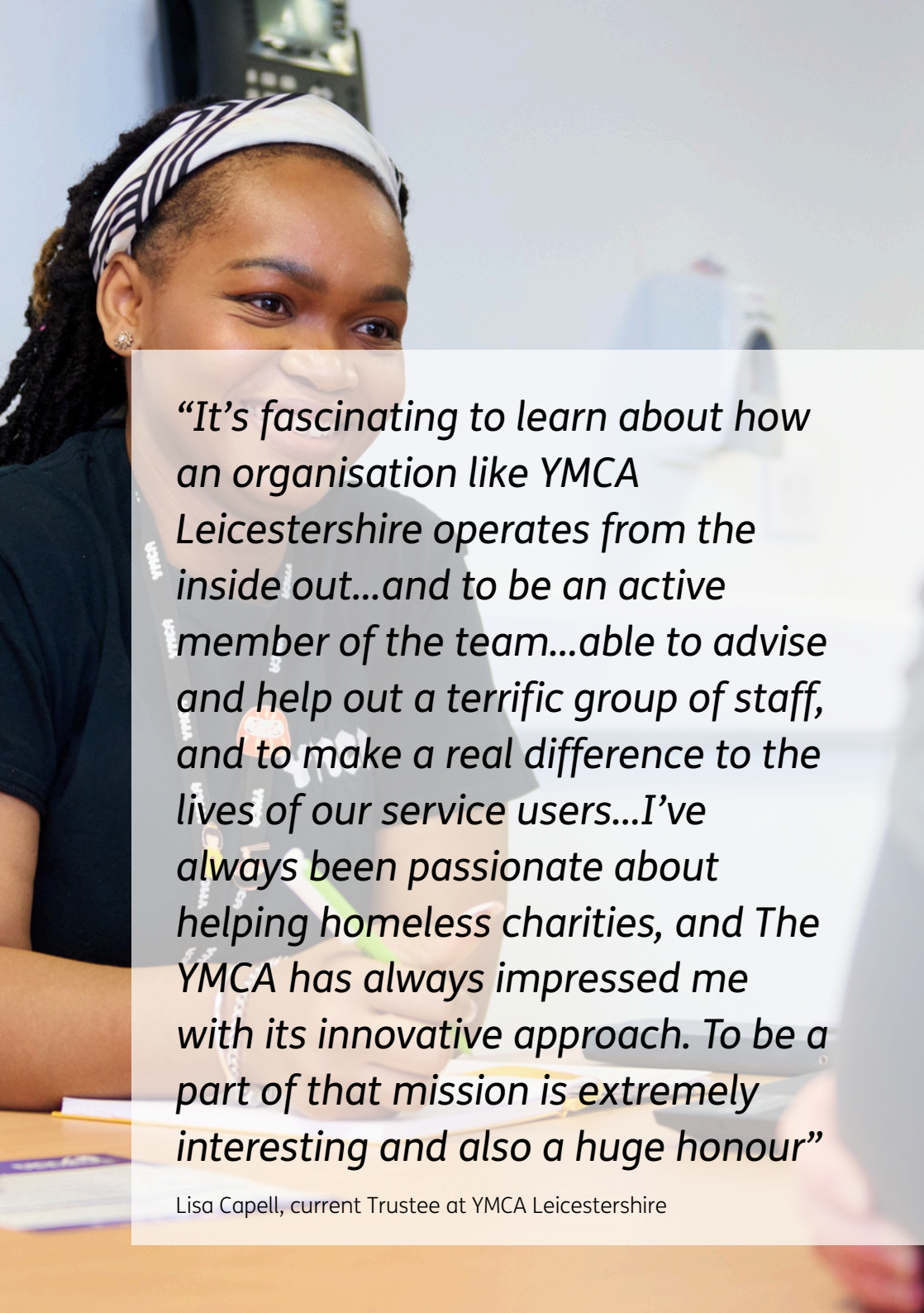
Leadership – Uphold and promote these principles by example

IN SUMMARY

This Code helps us work together with trust, consistency and clarity - so that everyone at YMCA Leicestershire can belong, contribute and thrive.

By signing up as a Trustee, you're joining a team dedicated to creating meaningful, lasting change.

Download the FULL Trustee Code of Conduct PDF [HERE](#)



“It’s fascinating to learn about how an organisation like YMCA Leicestershire operates from the inside out...and to be an active member of the team...able to advise and help out a terrific group of staff, and to make a real difference to the lives of our service users...I’ve always been passionate about helping homeless charities, and The YMCA has always impressed me with its innovative approach. To be a part of that mission is extremely interesting and also a huge honour”

Lisa Capell, current Trustee at YMCA Leicestershire

TRUSTEE APPLICATION SELECTION PROCESS

THE APPLICATION PROCESS

1. Submission of letter of interest
2. If required, an informal conversation with CEO, or Chair of the Board to learn more about our values, the current board and expectations of trustees
3. Submit application
4. Shortlisted candidates will then be invited to an informal interview (in-person or online)
5. Formal interview with CEO, Chair of Board and Treasurer
6. Successful candidates will then be co-opted onto the Board for the first year and then fully adopted at the end of twelve months.

References will be sought during the interview process, and a check with the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) will be conducted.

Providing candidates time with our senior leaders and other trustees, forms an essential part in the decision-making process. After all, we need to be the 'right fit' for you, as much as you are for us.

For further information, please email:
gwinters@ymcaleics.org.uk or call 0116 204 6201

THANK YOU

Thank you for reading.

We're truly grateful you've taken the time to understand the role you'll play at YMCA Leicestershire.

As a Trustee, you're not just helping us govern a charity - you're helping us champion young people, challenge disadvantage, and build a culture where everyone can belong, contribute and thrive.

If you ever have questions, ideas, or just need a conversation - our team is always here.

Here's to making good decisions, having great conversations, and doing some fantastic work that matters.

We'd love to have you on-board.
Let's get started.

THANK YOU

A DIGITAL version of this
handbook, policies and
procedures can be found below



Short link: <https://bit.ly/42fziUk>



Here for young people
Here for communities
Here for you

YMCA LEICESTERSHIRE

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