

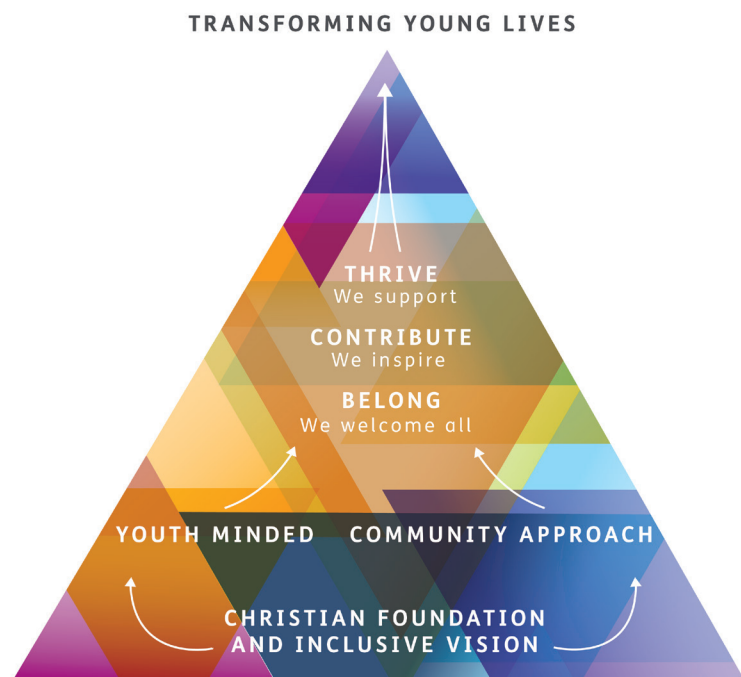
YMCA  
DOWNSLINK GROUP

# SNAPSHOT 2018



Summary of Annual Report  
2017 - 2018

This year we worked to develop a set of organisational values that support our vision and capture what people value about our YMCA. We have been really encouraged by the results of this work and enjoy living these values - ***we welcome all, we inspire*** and ***we support***.



## CONTENTS

4	Welcome from the CEO and Chair
6	Our localities
7	Our projects
8 - 11	<b>We welcome all</b>
12 - 14	<b>We inspire</b>
15 - 18	<b>We support</b>
19	Finance
20	Fundraising
21	Support our work
22	Thank you
23	Our partners and supporters

## KEEP IN TOUCH!

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# Welcome

It has been a year of adapting to significant social, economic and political change. This is a time when so many more young people need our help and support, but a reduction in traditional public funding sources means we have to adapt quickly so we can continue supporting young people to belong, contribute & thrive.

Chas Walker, CEO



John Slater, YMCA DLG Chair



It's at these times we value being part of a YMCA Federation with a 175 year history - the oldest and largest youth charity in the world. It's from this strong foundation and our clear purpose that we are continually motivated to invest in young people.

We were really pleased to complete the development of YMCA Guildford Foyer this year, which saw us invest £1.7 million of our own funds alongside £1.7 million of funding from Homes England. This enabled us to develop a 34 room supported housing scheme that will provide young people at risk of homelessness with a safe place to live and learn new skills.

As well as supporting young people's housing needs, we have been able to invest in the development of our counselling and wellbeing service, YMCA Dialogue. We are excited to be engaged in formal public sector partnerships in West Sussex and Brighton & Hove, providing community focused counselling and wellbeing services to children and young people alongside our existing schools partnerships. Partnerships like these help us reach over 3,000 children, young people and their families a year.

We were pleased to welcome Eastbourne & Wealden YMCA to join YMCA DownsLink Group this year. We have been working closely together over the last couple of years and it was a natural decision by both Boards to take the next step and amalgamate, enabling us to invest further in young people in East Sussex.

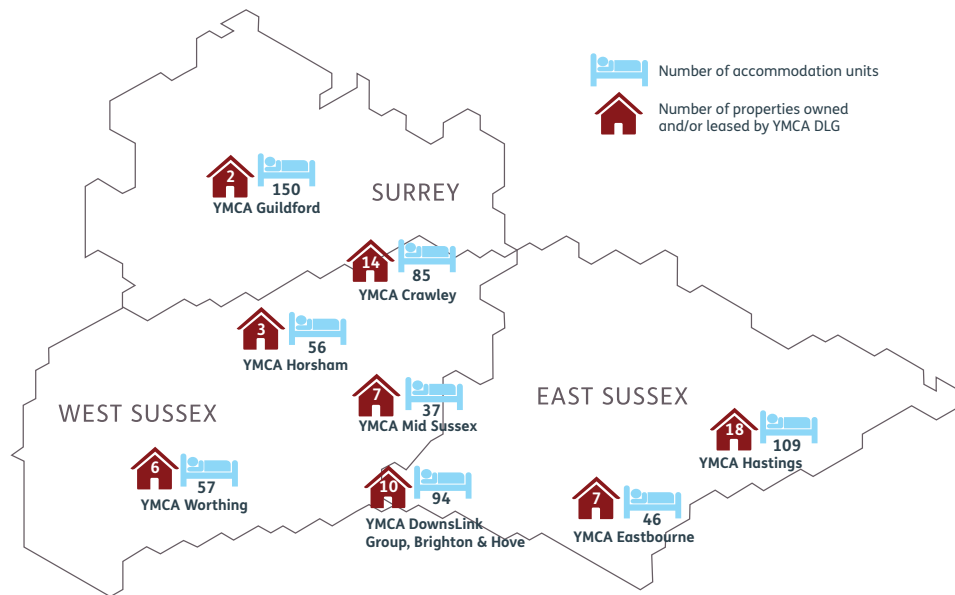
An important part of our work this year was to review our organisational ethos, values and culture. This was a major project and has involved significant consultation with staff and trustees. We identified three important values that will drive forward the culture and nature of our YMCA - ***we welcome all, we inspire, we support.*** This year we strengthened our vision statement by adding to it the importance we attach to having *an inclusive vision* that supports our *Christian foundation*.

The YMCA has always been about the passion of the people who connect with us, and we recognise the contribution of our partners, supporters and local communities. We would also like to take this opportunity to thank our staff and volunteers for their valued work.

Chas and John



# Our localities



*"The positive and non-judgemental attitude of YMCA DLG workers has helped me feel safe and engage with support,"*  
YMCA Guildford Foyer resident

# Our projects



## YMCA SAFE SPACE

Support and first aid for people intoxicated, distressed or injured during a night out



## YMCA ENGAGE

Providing meaningful activity for older adults whilst training young people in a care specific coaching environment



## YMCA YAC

Advice and support for young people aged 13-25



## YMCA EDUCATION & TRAINING

Enabling young people to achieve their full potential



## YMCA CAFÉ

A great place to eat, relax and meet up with friends



## YMCA SOCIAL ENTERPRISE SERVICES

Grounds maintenance, landscape gardening, painting & decorating and handyman

[Click here to watch a film about YMCA Social Enterprise Services](#)



## YMCA WiSE PROJECT

Supporting children and young people to stay safe in their relationships



## YMCA RIGHT HERE

Young people promoting health and wellbeing through education, campaigning and influencing



## YMCA CHAPLAINCY

Providing a non-judgemental space to discuss, explore, listen and support



## YMCA POSITIVE PLACEMENTS

Supporting young people in their journey towards education, employment or training



## YMCA DIALOGUE

Counselling and therapeutic support for children, young people and families

*"YMCA Dialogue counselling has helped me to think about hard problems that had happened in the past and the bad things. It is somewhere to come so I don't have to worry and can have fun,"* Libby\*, primary school student

\*Name has been changed to protect the identity of the young person

# We welcome all

YMCA DownsLink Group strives to be a welcoming and friendly organisation in everything we do. We provide support services to promote the wellbeing of children, young people and families. At the heart of this welcome is our aim to develop services that help the most marginalised young people in our society feel that they belong.

*"I am learning so much by volunteering at YMCA YAC! I am grateful for the training opportunities and well-supported environment which allows me to confidently give advice to young people,"*  
YMCA YAC volunteer

**COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT** Our volunteer programmes across YMCA DLG are vital, and our volunteers add significant value to the work of our YMCA, working with and alongside our committed staff teams. We are proud to work in vibrant communities in Sussex and Surrey and in partnership with local people and organisations:

- ▶ We held a Volunteer Celebration Event in June 2017 to thank our amazing volunteers for giving their time and supporting young people.

**23,050** hours  
given by regular  
**volunteers**



8



[Click here to watch a film from our Volunteer Celebration Event](#)

- ▶ We were proud to be part of a campaign called Galvanise Brighton & Hove this year, seeking to end street homelessness in the city by 2020 and part of the European End Street Homelessness Campaign. We helped organise a week of local action, known as Connections Week, bringing together the local community, those sleeping on the streets and those working in homeless organisations.



- ▶ We entered a float in Brighton Pride 2017, supporting LGBTQ people and a more inclusive community where people are free to be themselves, to express their love and to feel like they belong.



**YMCA CHAPLAINCY** provides a non-judgemental space to discuss, explore, listen and support. Our chaplains are people of all faiths, who come from a variety of professional and personal backgrounds and are there to listen. We aim to demonstrate that faith can be a force for unity.



**29** volunteer  
**chaplains**

9

**YMCA SAFE SPACE** is a project open on Friday and Saturday nights in Brighton & Hove offering support and first aid to people affected by alcohol or substances or who have been injured.



**848** intoxicated, injured or distressed **people were helped** in Brighton and Hove

**123** paramedic call outs and **116** ambulance trips to A&E were avoided



*"It has been a pleasure seeing our residents enjoy their exercise class and listening to them tell new residents and their family and friends about it,"*  
Activities Coordinator at a local home working with YMCA Engage

**YMCA ENGAGE** is a programme of chair based exercise activities with older people in a variety of settings including care, nursing and retirement homes.

YMCA DownLink Group aims to develop local YMCAs across Surrey and Sussex. **We are pleased to have merged with YMCA Eastbourne & Wealden in 2018, which will deliver three strong local YMCAs - YMCA Eastbourne, YMCA Hastings and YMCA Hailsham.**

These YMCAs are able to offer 250 young people in East Sussex a place to live and make an ongoing commitment to youth work and targeted youth services reaching over 500 people each year.

## MICHELLE'S STORY

As volunteer chaplains, each week we prepare a meal for the residents – listening and chatting while we chop and prepare food, and there's often a lot of laughter too!

When I first heard cooking was involved, my heart sank a little bit as I'm no Michelin star chef, but I decided to give it a go and thought if I focus on listening and supporting, everything else will fall into place...and it did.

The best part of the evening and of chaplaincy is sitting around the table and sharing a meal with what now seems like my extended family; residents, staff and fellow chaplains.

I have lived in Brighton for eight years and only became a "proper going-to church Christian" five years ago. In that time I have struggled a little with being someone with a faith in God and being open about my sexuality.



Through the wonderful wisdom and honesty of some of the young residents and the support and acceptance from staff and my fellow chaplains, I now believe that it is possible to be both. I have gained so much more than I have given through volunteering with YMCA DLG.

Michelle, YMCA DLG volunteer chaplain

# We inspire

We are proud to offer a range of services that aim to empower and inspire young people, and help them achieve their goals through employment, education or training. We are committed to involving young people in the development and running of our organisation and enabling them to have a strong influence both locally and nationally.

*"I'm still in shock that I got a [Level 2 in Environmental Conservation] diploma! I am not sure how I managed to do it, I achieved something," Janet\*,  
YMCA Positive Placements mentee*

\*Name has been changed to protect the identity of the young person

**YMCA POSITIVE PLACEMENTS** recruits adult mentors to support young people in their journey towards education, employment or training.



**100** young people seeking education, employment or training accessed our **mentoring scheme**



**54** individual young people were helped to achieve their goals through the YMCA **Life Change Fund**, such as bicycle and safety equipment to get to work on time

12

**YMCA RIGHT HERE** is our specialist youth-led, young people's health and wellbeing project, based in Brighton and Hove. It works with a team of youth ambassadors and volunteers aged 11-25 to improve health outcomes for young people locally and nationally.



**Reached** over **800** children and young people through young volunteers who **worked in schools**



Worked with the NHS and YMCA England & Wales on the

**#IAMWHOLE** campaign which reached **3.7m** people on World Mental Health Day

## YOUTH MATTERS AWARDS

YMCA Right Here scooped up two awards at the YMCA national youth charity awards this year: **Health & Wellbeing Project of the Year** and **Young Campaigner of the Year!**

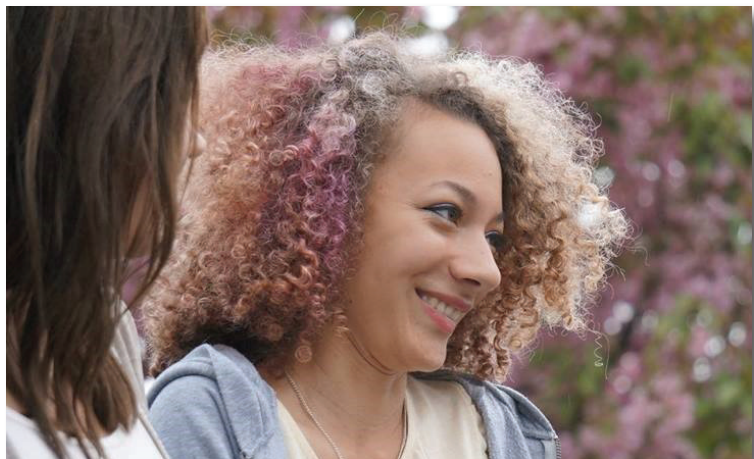


[Click here to watch a film with our Young Campaigner of the Year winner Florence](#)



13





## LUCY'S STORY

I initially joined YMCA Right Here as part of my community engagement module at university. I fell in love with the project and I've now been volunteering for three years. I recommend it to everyone, because I'm so grateful for the skills I've picked up. I am capable of things I couldn't imagine before, such as public speaking.

Being part of a group has helped my confidence, and

I've learnt a lot from our diverse team. Not only am I given opportunities to grow myself, but there is so much to get involved in to support young people in the city.

We really do make a difference, which is amazing. I feel hopeful for the future of young people, and grateful to be part of such a supportive team. I hope to work at the YMCA in the future.

Lucy, YMCA Right Here Ambassador

# We support

We provide a wide range of services supporting young people across Sussex and Surrey, from accommodation and housing advice to counselling, therapeutic support and support and advice for young people at risk from sexual exploitation.

\*Name has been changed to protect the identity of the young person

*"[Living at YMCA Worthing Foyer] has given me a sense of having a family," Sami\*, YMCA Worthing Foyer resident*

**OUR SUPPORTED HOUSING SERVICES** continue to support vulnerable young people in Sussex and Surrey. This year we completed our first major development, YMCA Guildford Foyer, providing 34 units of accommodation for young people. We also refurbished 40 units of existing accommodation, and created a wellbeing centre, at YMCA Crawley Foyer. Our Empty Homes programme continues to turn empty properties across Sussex into accommodation for homeless young people.



Provided **926**  
young people at risk  
of homelessness  
**somewhere  
to live**



**634** total units of  
**ACCOMMODATION**



Completed **44** units  
through our **Empty  
Homes** scheme  
**15**



**YMCA DIALOGUE** provides therapeutic interventions and counselling to children and young people.



YMCA Dialogue provided counselling and wellbeing services to over **3,000** children, young people and their families

YMCA Dialogue provided **COUNSELLING** in over **90** schools and colleges



**YMCA YAC** (Youth Advice Centre) offers support and advice to any young person on a wide range of issues including housing advice, family mediation, sexual health, mental health and relationships.



[Click here to watch a film about our YMCA YAC](#)



Over **3,000** young people sought advice and support at YMCA YAC this year

**YMCA WISE** (What is Sexual Exploitation) is a project that covers Brighton & Hove, East Sussex and Surrey, and offers support and advice to children and young people who are at risk of sexual exploitation.



This year YMCA WISE reached **4,000** children through group sessions and assemblies **raising awareness** about sexual exploitation and healthy relationships

*"YMCA WISE Project has helped me to get to grips with reality rather than living a fake life. I recognise that I have always ended up in relationships with men who exploit me and I'm trying to break that pattern," Alisha\*, YMCA WISE service user*

\*Name has been changed to protect the identity of the young person

## WISE UP TO BOYS

YMCA WISE launched a campaign this year to raise awareness about the sexual exploitation of boys and young men, WISE Up to Boys. It aimed to ensure everyone knows how to spot and respond to anyone who may be at risk of or experiencing exploitation, and to let boys and young men know they are not alone, and there is support for them. It followed a six-month study which revealed a complex picture in Brighton & Hove and East Sussex, with the wider public failing to realise boys may be at risk as well as girls. Sussex Police lent its weight to the campaign, sharing a series of videos on their social channels.



[Click here to watch the WISE Up to Boys films](#)



**5k video views**

## LIAM'S STORY

I was sofa surfing and in a really bad place. I was depressed, on benefits and my relationship with family was bad. I also used a lot of drugs.

I moved into YMCA Worthing Foyer which led me to go to college, get a job and enter a YMCA photography competition about Identity where I came in the top ten.

I am still working, paying my bills and rent and I keep out of trouble. I have stopped using drugs and have made big changes in cleaning my room as this was always a big struggle. My relationship with my family is now really good.

I have always felt lonely but since coming to the Foyer I have not had this feeling and my whole emotional health is so much better.



Overall I am so much happier now and I give credit for this to the support that has been given to me by the YMCA.

My ambitions are to be able to travel, perhaps on a cruise ship, speak another language and eventually to have my own home.

# Finance

Despite the fact that this year has seen a great deal of investment in refurbishment and redevelopment of facilities and services, we are pleased to have ended the year with a modest surplus that we plan to invest in new work and improve our reserves policy.

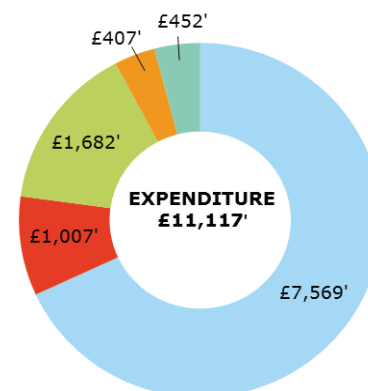
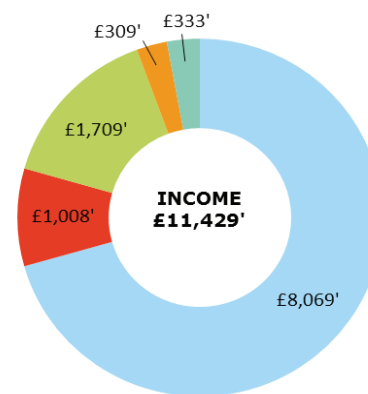
**Our underlying income for the year increased by 1.9%, compared to a 1.2% expenditure increase,** and despite the loss of rental income during the refurbishment programme undertaken at YMCA Crawley Foyer and redevelopment of YMCA Guildford Foyer.

## Value for Money

**We always strive to be an efficient organisation, and provide value for money. Notable highlights this year include:**

- ▶ Added **£257k financial support** for targeted community activity and youth participation programmes through additional fundraising activity
- ▶ Reviewed our broadband, communications and mobile phone contracts resulting in **savings of £17.7k**
- ▶ Worked towards becoming a **Living Wage employer** by September 2018
- ▶ Helped **13,000 people** belong, contribute and thrive

2017 - 2018  
£'000



- Accommodation
- Support & Advice
- Health & Wellbeing
- Family Work
- Training & Education

# Fundraising

Fundraising is an important way we engage with and are supported by our local communities. We want to say a huge thank you to all our supporters for one of our most successful fundraising years yet!

**£257k** raised in 2017/18



**SLEEP EASY** In March 2018, over 170 people took part in our annual Sleep Easy fundraising sleepout, and helped make it our most successful year yet.

**£62k** raised

 Click here to watch the YMCA Sleep Easy film

*"It was one night of cold and discomfort. But I have the luxury of knowing I have a warm home to go back to. I can't believe that that's not the reality for many,"* YMCA Sleep Easy 2018 participant



boxes donated to our young residents for Christmas through our **Love in a Box** appeal



For every **£1** raised, we spend **0.10p** on fundraising costs

# Support our work

Young people in your local community need our help more than ever. There are more young people at risk of homelessness or struggling with mental health that are not able to access the help and support they need. Please consider supporting our work through volunteering, fundraising or by donating so we can provide more young people with accommodation, mental health support and services to keep them safe.

**DONATE** to support our work. This can be a financial donation or via practical items given to support our projects or YMCA shops. A donation can be made online at [www.justgiving.com/YMCADownsLinkGroup](http://www.justgiving.com/YMCADownsLinkGroup) or by texting **YMCA00 £5 (or £10) to 70070**. Regular donations are especially welcome as they allow us to plan for the future, this can be done via JustGiving.

**PARTNER** with us to show your local community that as a company you care and invest in the young people around you.

**ORGANISE** or take part in a fundraising event. This could be a coffee morning, bake-off or one of our organised events such as Sleep Easy.

**VOLUNTEER** with us. We have a wide range of projects and services with opportunities for everyone. You will gain experience, learn new skills, meet some great people and make a difference to the lives of young people.

If you would like to find out more about how you can help our young people, please contact our Communications team at [communications@ymcadlg.org](mailto:communications@ymcadlg.org) or visit our website at [www.ymcadlg.org/get-involved](http://www.ymcadlg.org/get-involved).

*"Mentoring is one of the best things I have undertaken. It really has changed my outlook on life. I hope I am there for my mentee to have someone who listens; who empowers her to see a possible future and believe it can be obtained. For me, I am helping someone in the community to have faith in themselves and I feel I am giving back to the world around me, albeit in a small way,"* YMCA Positive Placements mentor



# Thank you

The work we do to help local young people, children and families to build brighter futures through our many services would not be possible without your help. As we face more spending cuts and ever-increasing levels of need, we will have to increasingly rely upon generous partners and supporters.

Thank you from all of us who work at YMCA DownsLink Group, and from the 13,000 people who accessed our services and who you supported through your contribution this year.

Many thanks to our volunteers, trustees, charitable trusts and funders, partner agencies - statutory and voluntary, churches and individuals. Without you, we wouldn't be able to do everything we do.



## Our partners

YMCA EAST SURREY

YMCA ENGLAND & WALES

YMCA  
BRIGHTON

YMCA  
training



## Our supporters

Guildford Methodist Church  
 Guildford URC  
 Holy Trinity & St Mary's, Guildford  
 New Life Baptist Church  
 St John's, Womersley  
 St Margaret's, Warnham  
 St Nicolas, Cranleigh  
 South African Congregation  
 St Nicolas, Guildford  
 Trafalgar Road Baptist Church  
 St Matthias, Brighton  
 St John the Baptist, Hove  
 Diocese of Chichester  
 Goodnews Evangelical Mission  
 Blockbuster  
 South East Coast Ambulance Service  
 Jagex  
 EMS Services  
 The MET College  
 Experience Guildford  
 Active Surrey  
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 The Anchor Foundation  
 Griffiths Smith Farrington and Webb  
 The Derek and Eileen Dodgson Foundation  
 Surrey Community Foundation  
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 The GYM Group Ltd  
 Wood Mackenzie Ltd  
 WSP Foundation  
 Sussex Downs College  
 Rosaz Charity  
 TurnFit  
 Lancing Prep School  
 Hailsham Community College  
 BHASVIC  
 Horsham YMCA FC  
 Castle Green Bowls Club  
 Tesco  
 Urban Spaceman  
 University of Surrey Students' Union

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ACCOMMODATION

FAMILY WORK

HEALTH & WELLBEING

TRAINING & EDUCATION