



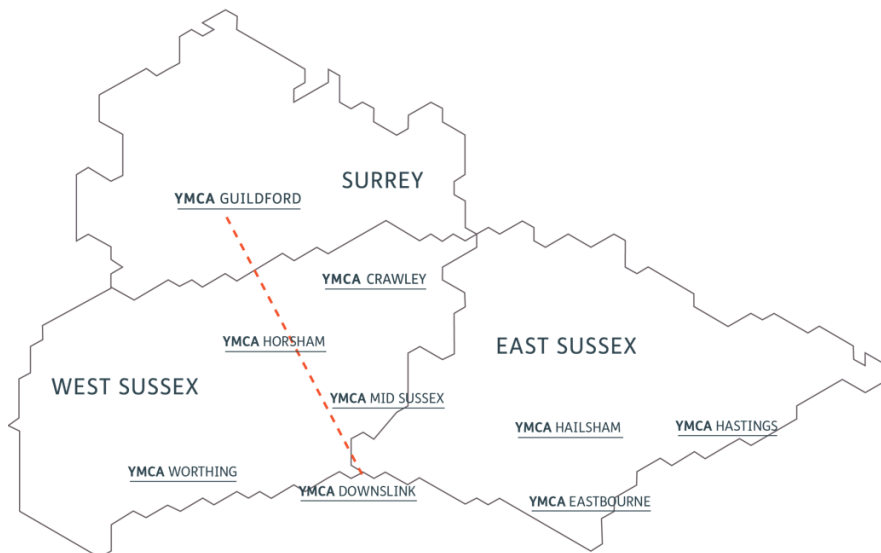
YMCA DOWNSLINK GROUP

Our Impact 2019

Helping young people to belong, contribute and thrive

Transforming Young Lives

**Our projects and where
we work**



**YMCA
ACCOMMODATION**



YMCA YAC
Advice and support for young
people aged 13-25



**YMCA MORE
THAN A ROOM**
Housing, support and groupwork, enabling
young people to live independently and
achieve their work and learning goals



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



YMCA DIALOGUE
Counselling and therapeutic support for
children, young people and families



YMCA WiSE PROJECT
Supporting children and young people
to stay safe in their relationships



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



**YMCA SOCIAL
ENTERPRISE SERVICES**
Grounds maintenance, landscape gardening,
painting & decorating and handyman



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



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



YMCA RIGHT HERE
Young people promoting health and wellbeing
through education, campaigning and influencing

Partnership Projects



YMCA DownsLink Group: Our 2019 Impact

YMCA DownsLink Group is one of the biggest providers of youth services across Sussex and Guildford. It consists of nine local YMCAs delivering a wide range of contracted services and YMCA programmes, that support young people to belong, contribute & thrive in their local community:

10,000 children and young people were supported by YMCA DownsLink Group in 2019

1,400 vulnerable young people were provided with safe accommodation

3,500 young people and families accessed our counselling and therapy services

1,700 children and young people were given advice on a range of issues by YMCA YAC

62% of young people living with us received education, employment or training

72% of our young people moved on positively to independence from our accommodation

400 young people every week enjoyed a freshly cooked meal through our unique chaplaincy project

"I was homeless and alone"

"Hi, my name is Poppy, and I am 18 years old. I last saw my mum when I was 14 and I've never met my dad. I didn't really have anybody there for me when I was growing up. I've had to fend for myself and it's always been me on my own. I spent years moving around children's homes, foster care, and supported accommodation. Because I was angry, I got kicked out of everywhere and I had nowhere left to go. I was homeless and alone."

Meet Poppy...

**Poppy* lives in
YMCA DownsLink
Group supported
accommodation.
We are using her
story throughout,
to demonstrate our
impact.**



*Name has been changed to protect the identity of the young person, and we have used a model.



“I was so ill.”

“Because I was homeless, I moved in with my boyfriend and things got even worse. I got addicted to heroin because my ex-boyfriend is a drug dealer and he gave me the drugs. My boyfriend and I began fighting and it came to a point where he was just hitting me when he wanted.

I used to sell myself for money. Drugs are what kept me going. There was a stage when I wasn't eating anything apart from a few bites of a sandwich every three days. I was so ill.

Then somehow I managed to get a place in supported accommodation.”

Youth Homelessness

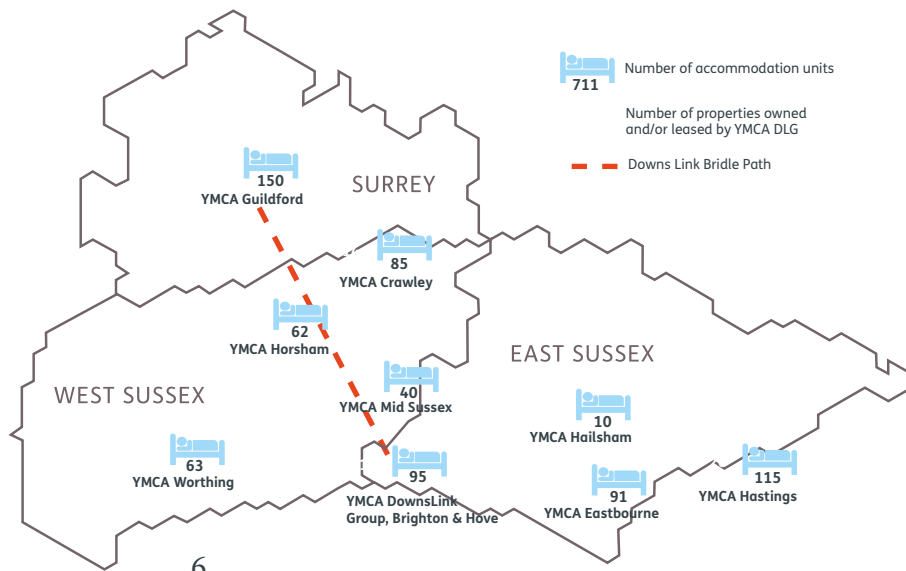
Safe place to stay

Homelessness is a huge issue in our communities and 1 in 5 homeless people across the UK are aged 16-24. At YMCA DownsLink Group, we believe that every young person should have a safe place to stay. Young people today face many complex issues and without a safe place to stay, these issues can be exacerbated to crisis point.

- This year we accommodated **1,400** vulnerable young people across Sussex and Surrey.
- **28%** of the young people in YMCA DownsLink accommodation are care leavers, children in need, looked after children or have a protection plan.
- **68%** of the young people in our accommodation have mental health difficulties and 25% have a mental health diagnosis.
- **24** of our residents in our supported housing projects were unaccompanied asylum seekers.
- Our Youth Advice Centre in Brighton offered advice to **742** young people who were facing housing difficulties.

Family Mediation

In some instances, homelessness can be exacerbated by family breakdown. In 2018/19, **61** families took part in family mediation run by YMCA DownsLink Group. This resulted in **48** of these families staying together and consequently, **48** young people not having to face homelessness.





'and I was like "yeah, I like this woman", I like her a lot.'

"You get a key worker when you move in but I've got really bad trust issues. I don't really trust a lot of people in my life. I trusted my mum and she let me down. So it was hard for me to talk to my key worker but we had a few sessions together and I was like 'yeah, I like this woman, I like her a lot'.

My key worker said that I needed help with all my stuff and she booked an appointment with Gemma (YMCA WiSE Project Worker). At first I wasn't too sure about Gemma but she was really honest and open about why she wanted to help me. Just knowing that she was there made me feel safer. She became a person that I could rely on."

Mental Health Support for Young People

Recent statistics show that 1 in 8, 5 to 19 year olds, have at least one mental health issue. There are many pressures on young people which create emotional wellbeing and mental health difficulties. This is putting huge pressure on existing services.

At YMCA DownsLink Group we offer children and young people across Sussex and Surrey, specialist mental health support, through YMCA Dialogue our therapeutic service and YMCA YAC our youth information advice counselling and support model. This includes wellbeing advice at our drop-in centres, regular counselling sessions in schools, online support and support in the community. We help young people learn how to cope with life's challenges, whatever their background or circumstances.

YMCA Youth Advice Centres (YAC)

These centres offer support and advice to any child or young person aged 13-25, on a wide range of issues.

This year YMCA YAC saw and advised over **1,700** children and young people on a wide range of issues including housing advice, family mediation, sexual health, mental health, relationships, substances, employment, training and education.


YMCA Dialogue

We provided **3,500** children, young people and families with counselling and therapy this year. We also delivered mental health courses to over 300 professionals and 375 parents and carers.



558

Young people were supported with advice on mental health and wellbeing issues



*"I probably wouldn't be alive
now if it wasn't for her"*

"Gemma (YMCA WiSE Project Worker) has had such an impact on my life. She helped me to recognise and understand what my ex-boyfriend was doing. It woke me up. He always made out that I was a bad person, but I was the victim. Gemma helped me to understand that. I probably wouldn't be alive now if it wasn't for her.

There are things I'm trying to change about myself. I'm trying not to shut people out so quickly. Before if I had a problem, I wouldn't tell anyone. I now realise it's better to talk to someone about my problems instead of bottling them up."

Youth Work

In a year when knife crime has never been far from the national headlines and public funding for youth work has reached an all-time low, we are pleased to report that YMCA DownsLink Group is continuing to invest in youth work and other programmes that keep young people safe.

YMCA Safe Space

YMCA Safe Space is open on Friday and Saturday nights in the centre of Brighton. It offers a support and first aid service to people affected by alcohol or substances or who have been injured or emotionally distressed. This year we supported **668** people through YMCA Safe Space, which resulted in a reduction of **139** paramedic call outs and avoided **195** ambulance trips to A&E (saving the NHS approximately £517,000, based on 2011 NICE figures). In addition, we also prevented over 80 police call-outs during the year.

YMCA WiSE

WiSE stands for ‘What is Sexual Exploitation?’ and is a service that offers direct support to victims of criminal and sexual exploitation. YMCA WiSE also delivers awareness campaigns, research, and offers training, guidance and advice to other professionals, for example to Social Workers and Police.

This year YMCA WiSE:

- Supported **109** young people through 1-1 casework
- Advised **176** professionals in a consultative capacity

YMCA Right Here

Right Here is our youth influencing and engagement project. **20** youth ambassadors developed digital projects, media activity and lead campaigns, such as ‘Sex More than an Act’, which reached **40,000** young people.





"My bad days are over. But other people's aren't"

"Now I'm back in college getting my qualifications. I'm still living in shared accommodation and I'm doing really well. I still keep in regular contact with Gemma and I'm starting to have positive relationships in my life. Now I hang out with people who don't take drugs."

I'd like to work in a care home looking after young people who have had difficulties. I'd like to give something back because I know how hard it is. I've been there and I'm so glad my bad days are over. But other people's aren't"

YMCA Offers More Than a Room

Our aim is to ensure that all young people have a positive future. To this aim, we offer young people far more than just a room. We also offer access to training & employment, wellbeing and personal safety support. We give practical help ensuring young people have the life skills necessary to progress into independent living.

Young people also want a place they can call their home. So we provide social opportunities and promote points of contact with their wider community. We have over **200** committed volunteers who support these social and community engagement opportunities for the young people who live with us. Volunteer numbers, in fact, account for **25%** of our total people resources.

Sharing a meal

400 young people each week enjoy a freshly cooked meal through our unique chaplaincy project. YMCA DownsLink Group has **38** volunteer chaplains from different faith backgrounds who not only prepare and cook a meal with the young people but are also there to listen to them impartially.

Training and employment

We know that young people who are at risk of homelessness are most likely to have the poorest employment prospects. Our specialist skills advisers and trained coaches are there to encourage young people.

- This year **62%** of young people living in the YMCA received education, employment or training

YMCA Positive Placements

In 2018-19 our volunteer mentors worked with **75** young people across Sussex and Surrey to give them one on one support which helped young people to improve their confidence, build life skills and help them move on to education, training or employment. 30 of these young people are now in full-time work, part time work or are self employed.

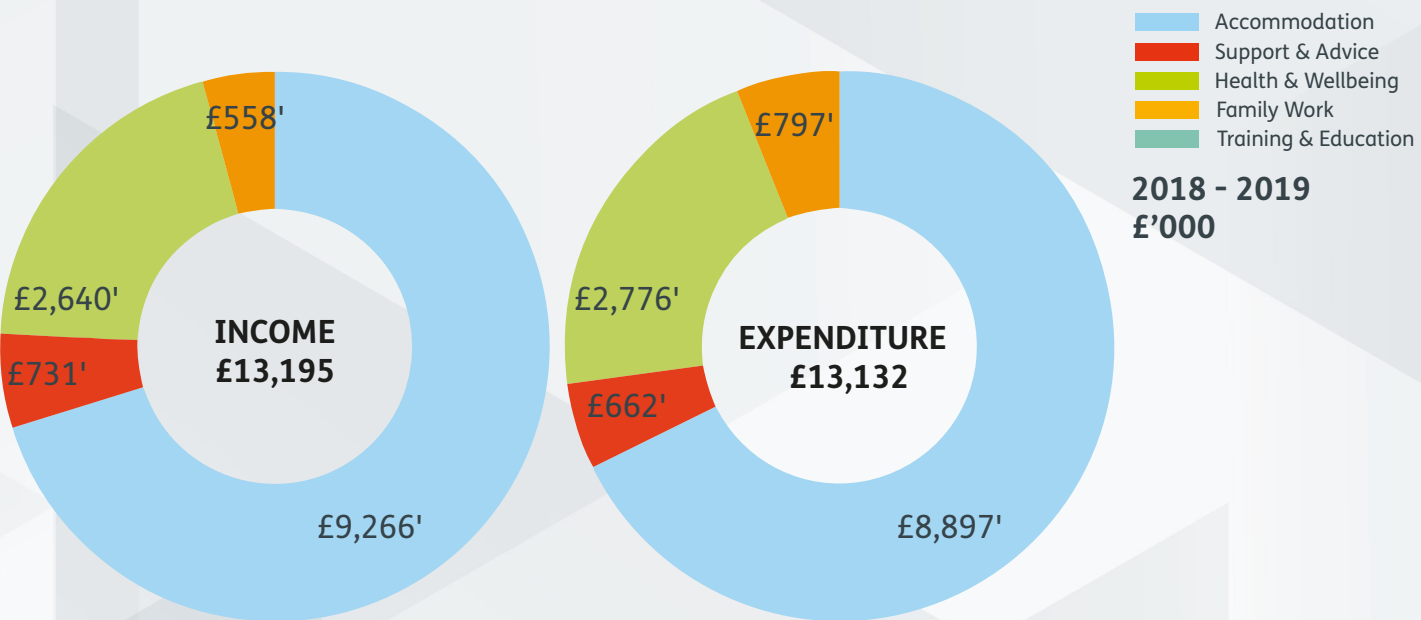


72%
Of our young people positively moved on to independence from our accommodation this year

Finance

YMCA DownsLink Group is pleased that its 2018-19 accounts demonstrated a small surplus in a difficult operating environment. The development of our services in East Sussex, with two new supported housing schemes, saw our income grow again this year, but we recorded a smaller surplus due to important investment and long term financial provision for the maintenance of our property assets.

We also increased investment in our staffing to support the delivery of our services and the future development of our YMCA. Thank you to all our partner organisations, who in difficult financial times, continue to invest in our YMCA and to our supporters who are so generous in their financial support of our YMCA.



The summary financial information contains data from the management accounts of YMCA DownsLink Group for the year ended 31 March 2019.

The full financial statements have been audited by Haysmacintyre LLP and received an unqualified opinion. For further information, the full audited financial statements containing the Report of the Directors and the Auditors' reports should be consulted.

Our mission is to transform even more young lives in 2020.

- **New housing projects**

In 2020 we will be bringing on line new housing projects; Through YMCA Hastings we will be developing a new Foyer to accommodate over 40 young people and give them access to a wide range of YMCA programmes to support them towards independent living.

We also aim to develop our first modular build in Brighton providing over 30 young people with their own move on flats.

We are excited to be working with the Diocese of Chichester and Brighton & Hove City Council to develop St Patrick's Church as a night shelter and single homeless hostel for 44 people.

- **Youth support programmes**

We are committed to further developing our early intervention youth work programmes. In 2020 we will be extending the reach of such programmes, for example, the Reboot partnership that we launched this year with Sussex Police and other third sector youth providers. We will also be extending the reach of our Youth Advice Centres (YAC) in Eastbourne & Crawley.

- **Launching an online service**

E-wellbeing is our online therapeutic service. This digital platform provides an open gateway for young people (from the age of 4 to 25) to seek information and advice on issues affecting their mental health as well giving them a referral pathway to access more comprehensive and clinical support from our team of counsellors. It will be open to young people in Brighton & Hove and West Sussex. Our aim is to enable 7,000 young people to access this support next year.



Support young people in your community

There are many ways of getting involved and supporting the work of the YMCA DownLink Group in your community.

Volunteer

If you want to meet some great new people, learn new skills, enjoy new experiences and make a real difference in the lives of vulnerable young people in your community, why not find out about volunteering with us?

Our 244 volunteers gave 43,272 hours of support this year to our YMCA, which equates to a massive £255,000 financial contribution to local communities.

Become a Youth Ambassador

Our youth-led health and wellbeing project, YMCA Right Here gives young people a voice on issues that matter to them. If you're 16-25 come and join our youth movement for change; together we can make a significant difference in young peoples' lives and in your communities.

Take part in a challenge event

We have different charity events that you and/or your company could take part in from marathons to sleepout events. They offer some great opportunities to have fun, meet new people and do something which will make a real difference to young people in our communities.

Have your say: support one of our campaigns

Sign up to one of our social media channels and join in the conversation. What do you think about the issues affecting children and young peoples' lives today? How do you think we should support children and young people in communities?

Sign up for our e-newsletter

Find out more about the issues children and young people are facing in your community by registering to receive our regular e-newsletter updates. Hear our views, have an opportunity to get involved and hear some of the success stories from young people we've been privileged to get to know and support.

'Sponsor a Room'

Would your company, group or any organisation you are part of, want to join together and 'Sponsor a Room' for a whole year?

£7,300 will enable us to give a homeless young person a room for a whole year.

For more information:

Email: communications@ymcadlg.org



Support that makes a real difference

Could you support every month?

£10/month covers the cost of emergency items such as toiletries and warm clothing for a young person experiencing homelessness

£16/month enables us to buy a 'move' on pack containing household essentials for a young person who is moving on to live independently for the first time

£25/month will help to pay for counselling for a young person who is struggling

One off donations

£20

will pay for a warm bed for the night for a young person experiencing homelessness.

£28

would enable us to provide a hot, nutritious dinner and breakfast as well.

£40

will pay for a counselling session for a young person who has been sexually exploited.

£46


would pay for a young person in crisis to have 24 hours of support including a warm bed, a hot meal and one to one key work.

To donate visit: www.ymcadlg.org/get-involved/donate/



Thank you

A huge thank you from the 10,000 young people who have accessed our services this year. The work we do to help local young people, children and families to build a better future, would not be possible without your support.

A group of five diverse young people are laughing and talking in a school hallway. From left to right: a young woman with long brown hair, a young man with short black hair wearing a plaid shirt over a white t-shirt, a young man with short brown hair wearing a dark blue hoodie over a grey striped t-shirt, a young woman with long dark curly hair wearing a pink t-shirt, and a young man with short brown hair wearing a white t-shirt. They are all smiling and looking at each other. The background shows a school hallway with red walls and large windows.

***Helping young people to belong,
contribute and thrive***

Our Partners

YMCA DOWNSLINK GROUP



Our supporters

Guildford Methodist Church
 Guildford URC
 Holy Trinity & St Mary's, Guildford
 New Life Baptist Church
 St John's, Womersh
 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
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 South East Coast Ambulance Service
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 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

Keep in Touch



Twitter



Facebook



Instagram



YouTube



LinkedIn

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