



# YMCA

Here for young people  
Here for communities  
Here for you

YMCA EAST SURREY

# Impact Report

2024

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## Senior Leadership Team

Ian Burks | CEO  
Judith Brooks | Head of Children & Young People / Deputy CEO  
Lee Fabry | Head of Housing  
Cath White | Head of Central Services  
Daniel Markan | Head of Finance



**YMCA Sports & Community Centre**  
Redhill, RH1 6JJ



**YMCA Hillbrook House**  
Redhill, RH1 6QT



**YMCA Sovereign Centre**  
Reigate, RH2 8HA



**YMCA Phoenix Centre**  
Tadworth, KT20 5FB



**The Old Pheasantry**  
Tadworth, KT20 7HF



**YMCA Merstham Pre-school**  
Merstham, RH1 3HY



**YMCA Red Oak Family Centre**  
Merstham, RH1 3NH



**YMCA Mole Valley Family Centre**  
Dorking, RH4 2LR



**YMCA Epsom Downs Family Centre**  
Epsom, KT18 5RJ



**YMCA Horley Young People & Family Centre**  
Horley, RH6 7JA

Leatherhead

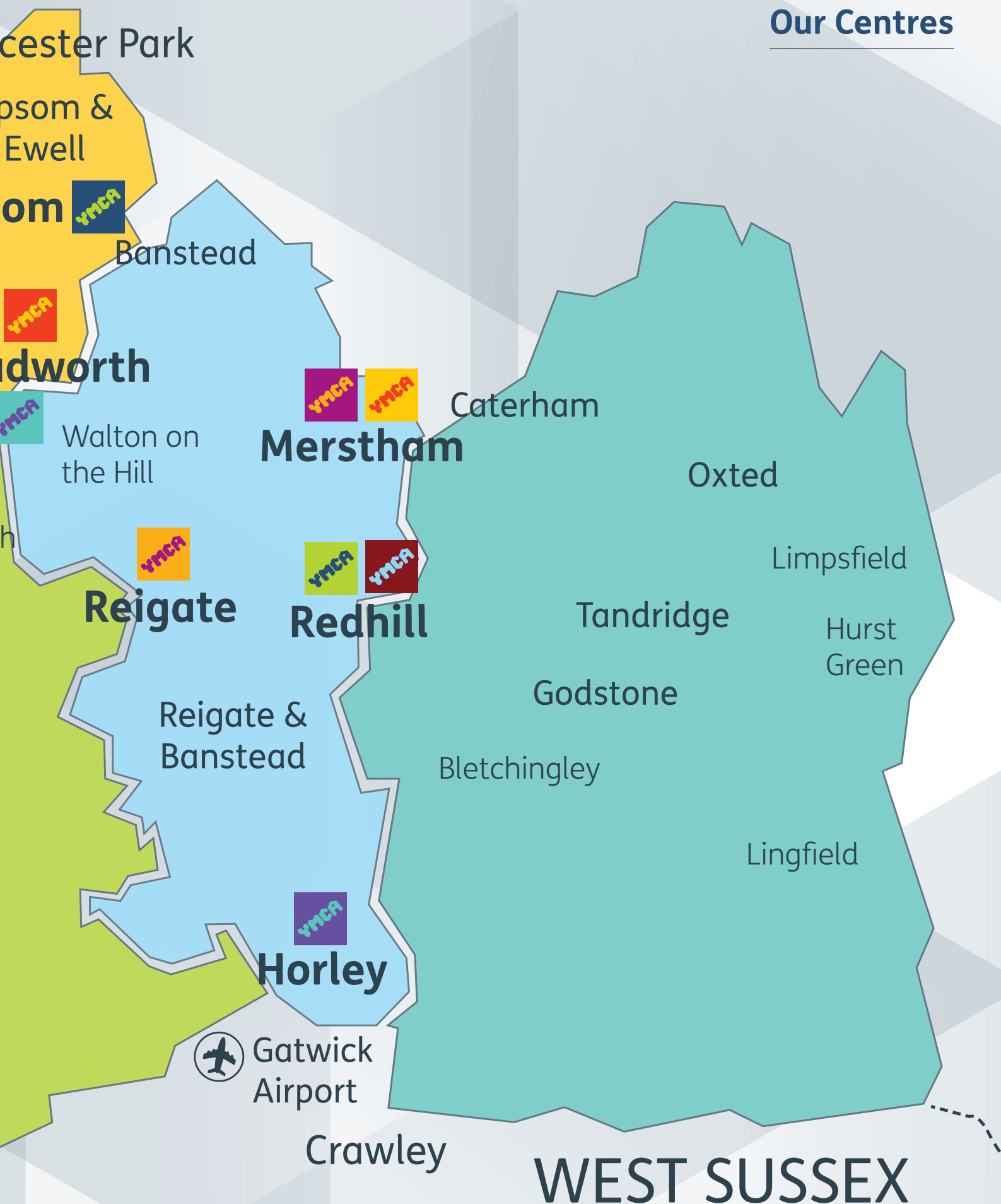
  
Dorking

Mole Valley

**SURREY**

Interviews by Sophie Hamilton





*Ian Burks (far right) with Cllr Sue Sinden, Deputy Mayor of Reigate and Banstead Borough Council and Graham Powell (YMCA Facilities and Environment) at the launch of YMCA East Surrey's new semi-independent housing project in Redhill*

## Chief Executive's report

### Ian Burks

YMCA East Surrey is a vibrant charity that has been actively supporting the local community since 1870. We are part of the oldest and largest youth charity in the world and our collective aim is to enable people to belong, contribute and thrive. We help people to believe in themselves, support them to achieve their goals and inspire them to be the best they can be.

We are now at the mid-point of our five-year strategy and thanks to our excellent senior leadership team and dedicated staff we have made great progress. Key achievements include a new Families First partnership with Surrey County Council to support over 800 families across East Surrey, record levels of participation across our health and wellbeing programme and an extension of short breaks, emotional wellbeing and mental health services to meet the growing needs of young people in our communities.

One of our most urgent priorities is to address the acute housing issues facing young people and in July 2024, thanks to our statutory and charitable partners, (and our intrepid challenge fundraisers) we were able to open a new semi-independent housing scheme in Redhill. This six-bedroomed property will house and support those at risk of homelessness for many years to come. We are now actively looking to partner with Boroughs and Districts across Surrey to develop similar projects that can give hope to young people at risk. The YMCA gained Ofsted registration earlier this year to continue offering vital housing and support for 16 and 17 years olds, who are looked after, or leaving care.

In June we merged with the Land and City Families Trust (LCFT) to secure the future of the Old Pheasantry and enable greater numbers of children and young people to benefit from residential experiences and learn about the great outdoors. This



exciting partnership was only possible thanks to the foresight of LCFT Trustees, who have invested time and energy into making the Old Pheasantry such a success.

It is an exciting time for the YMCA as we develop and grow but we are also aware of the increasing challenges facing many in our communities. The need for the YMCA is at a high point but we are confident that with our excellent team of staff, volunteers and trustees, along with our supportive partners and funders, we can continue to make a positive difference within East Surrey.



The Old Pheasantry





*Paul Byrne at The Old Pheasantry, YMCA East Surrey's new residential centre near Colley Hill*

## Chair's report **Paul Byrne**

While your YMCA continues to grow exponentially, I wish to reflect that the Board this year has spent much time and energy on governance, safeguarding and health and safety policies and practices. I believe it is important for our clients, our members, our funders and indeed, our employees, to understand that the Board takes these matters extremely seriously. Management has assessed YMCA East Surrey against the 'Trusted Charity' benchmark and the Board will continue to monitor progress. Our thanks are due to John Guy, chair of the Governance and Risk Committee, and Heather Loxley, chair of the CYP Advisory Group and Safeguarding champion, who have been at the forefront of this essential work.

Each of our trustees fills a valuable role in the operation of YMCA East Surrey, usually for many years. This year, two long-serving members are retiring. Richard Mantle, a former mayor of Reigate and Banstead, retires after serving on the Board since 2008. His knowledge of local government and his sound business practices have been invaluable and we all wish him and Jill (also a staunch supporter and former mayor) all good fortune. Ian Thomas has been our treasurer and chair of the Finance and Resources Committee for the last nine years. He overhauled our investment policies and provided continual support to our administration. Additionally, he has, and we trust will continue to, participate in many of our Challenges, particularly cycling.

We welcome two new trustees. Mike Gent recently retired as Finance Director of the European Operation of Travellers' Insurance. He is also an experienced junior athletic coach at Reigate Priory AC. Mike has become our treasurer and chair of the Finance and Resources Committee. Jane Pascoe was a trustee at The Old Pheasantry and we are delighted that she will be able to monitor the development of this new project as well as serve on the Children & Young People Advisory Group. She is also a local councillor.

Although I have highlighted trustee members, YMCA East Surrey could not function without its magnificent core of volunteers. We continue to depend on them in a wide variety of ways and I am delighted to have this opportunity to record our heartfelt thanks and appreciation.

# Aliza's story

YMCA East Surrey is passionate about delivering sports and recreational activities to children across East Surrey.

Mike Roberts, YMCA Recreation and Sports Manager, says: "A major element of our wider ethos is to encourage everyone, regardless of age and ability, to enjoy an active and healthy lifestyle. Positive opportunities and experiences at a young age help sow the seeds which lead to an active life."

According to Sport England, more than half of the seven million children between the ages of five and 15 in England are not doing the recommended 60 minutes of exercise daily.

Aliza is 12 years old. She first attended our gymnastics classes at the age of seven and very quickly progressed into the competitive squad once her talent was spotted and recognised.

"I was really nervous at first because I didn't know anyone!" Aliza says. "The coaches were kind, though, and the other children made it fun."

Aliza's mother, Bethany, adds: "Gymnastics has given Aliza friends outside of school and, because age is invisible when children are bonding over a shared interest, they are friends with a mixed age group. They work hard but there's no pressure from the coaches – just the pressure Aliza puts on herself!"

Aliza took first place in her very first competition and went on to win a vast array of medals across the South East region events, recently taking first place at our very own ESA Invitational. She has gone on to become heavily involved within the club as a Young Leader, volunteering her time to inspire future gymnasts.

"I love helping to teach others. It's really rewarding," says Aliza. "I like to stay busy and keep active and want to train to be a qualified gymnastics coach in the future."

"I used to get frustrated with myself if I couldn't do something, but I've learned that I can achieve anything I want if I just push on. Gymnastics has been good for my confidence and I'm proud of where it's taken me."

YMCA East Surrey gymnastics and trampolining courses are run in Reigate and Redhill by East Surrey Acrobatics. Classes are structured and ability-led with an emphasis on developing gymnasts' skills working on flexibility, coordination, strength, fun and enjoyment.

We also offer an extensive YMCA recreational football programme run by a UEFA B licensed coach during term-time & school holidays. In addition, we have three competitive girls football teams who play in the Surrey County Women's & Girls Football League.

Mike Roberts says: "Within the discipline of Acro, a large emphasis is placed on teamwork and communication when working within partnerships - important skills which can be transferred into future careers."

"Aliza has been an integral part of our gymnastics competitive squad over the last five years, representing the YMCA in Acro Gymnastics at both regional and national competitions and coming away with multiple 1st place finishes and placed efforts."

"As a Young Leader, she's showed great enthusiasm in helping younger gymnasts develop and, in turn, has become a great role model for all to aspire to. Our Young Leader programme has allowed Aliza to build up her poise and understanding, enabling her to lead successful warm ups and small group stations within class. We all are extremely proud of her!"





# Y-Kids Out of School Childcare

YMCA East Surrey Y-Kids has had an incredible year, marked by growth and positive outcomes for both children and families. In April 2023, the team established a highly successful in-house breakfast and afterschool club provision at St. Joseph's Catholic Primary School in Redhill.

Following this, we are working alongside Surrey County Council for the government's new wraparound childcare expansion programme. In September 2024, we received funding from Surrey to open a new provision at St Joseph's Primary School in Dorking, as well as increase our existing provision at both the YMCA Sports and Community Centre in Redhill and YMCA Sovereign Centre in Reigate.

In the last year, the wraparound care provided by Y-Kids alone equates to over 53,000 hours and we're working towards continuing our success story by expanding our services further to support more families and children.



Baking and enjoying the fantastic facilities at St John's Dorking Holiday Club



Our childcare team provided

**53,161**

hours of **wraparound care** and

**37,842**

hours of **holiday club** in FY 2023/24



Girls U13 football team finishing the season on a high securing 2<sup>nd</sup> place in their league



## YMCA Pre-schools

Our YMCA Pre-schools are community settings with inclusivity at their hearts. 45% of children at YMCA Sovereign Pre-school and 18% of children at YMCA Merstham Pre-school have an identified or diagnosed additional need or disability. Our settings provide the best possible start for all children and ensure every child is valued equally.

Pre-school staff are skilled and trained to respond to early concerns around development. We are proud to be able to meet a wide range of additional needs from Autism Spectrum Conditions to more physical and complex needs.

One mum says, "YMCA was a godsend for us. The report the pre-school gave us, and all the referrals the team chased up opened all the doors. Thanks to the report, my concerns were taken seriously. Since starting pre-school, he has come out of his shell and learned a lot from neurotypical children. Without YMCA, we wouldn't have known where to start."



“ He has always been treated as an individual and supported and encouraged. As a carer, I have really appreciated this safe space and he's always enjoyed the activities. ”

Out of School Childcare Carer



In FY 2023/24,

**428**

children took part in our **recreational** gymnastics, trampolining and football sessions



# LifeWorks+ sensory sessions for young adults

Our LifeWorks project continues to make a positive impact on the lives of young adults aged 16+ with disabilities, providing them with opportunities to socialise, learn new skills, and most importantly, have fun in a safe and inclusive environment.

Thanks to funding from the Community Foundation for Surrey, in March 2024 we introduced LifeWorks+, a series of sensory-based activities that enable young adults with higher levels of complex needs to engage and learn through sensory play, music, arts, sound and light. We have welcomed students at Clifton Hill School and provided a safe place for participants to explore activities such as sensory drumming using colour and sound, sand play, sensory stories and interaction through light and sound.

Feedback has been overwhelmingly positive, including seeing an improvement to participants' engagement, tolerance of social environments, even quality of sleep following taking part.



## Face2Face parent support



Our Face2Face service provides support to help parent carers of children with disabilities and additional needs to feel connected, informed, and empowered.

We offer an extensive programme of in-person and online sessions, giving parent carers opportunities to meet, exchange information, and connect with professionals to

gain practical advice and vital information. We also run wellbeing sessions, providing much-needed time for self-care. In addition, we offer one-to-one support and advice to achieve identified outcomes and to help parent carers make informed decisions about all aspects of their child's life.

In FY 23/24, 49 parent carers attended Face2Face sessions. One participant reflected on the experience, "I felt empowered by the knowledge, advice, and information I received, and felt supported and validated by the coordinator and the other parents who not only had advice but also shared similar experiences. This is an absolutely essential support for those of us who are quite isolated in challenging circumstances."

*"Yippee is a fantastic playscheme - we wouldn't manage the school holidays without it! The staff all genuinely care and are really dedicated to their work. The activities and trips are amazing. My son loves attending and looks forward to each session."*

Short Breaks parent



Spray bottle painting at Yippee West Sussex

Baking at Yip4Youth Epsom



In FY 2023/24, **351** children and young people with disabilities attended our **Short Breaks** in Surrey and West Sussex, receiving

**28,542** hours of support

Our Short Breaks 2024 summer holiday clubs saw

**1,319** attendances across Surrey and West Sussex



# Albert's story

"It was a gradual realisation for us that life wasn't going to turn out quite the way we had expected," says Albert's father, Simon.

"We became aware Albert wasn't developing at the same rate as other children. The headteacher at his nursery picked up on signs that he was missing key milestones in his development but there was no diagnosis straight away. Instead, at that stage, the medical professionals used the term 'global development delay'."

"Initially, my wife and I both tried working, with the help of a childminder for Albert and his younger brother, but it was too difficult. In the end, I took my work freelance and became a stay at home dad in 2013."

After attending a mainstream Reception class at a local school, Albert secured a place at a specialist provision with one-to-one care.

"At that point, when Albert was around six years old, he was officially given an autism diagnosis. As he got older, we started looking for additional support, outside of school hours. We stayed in touch with an NCT group,

but the comparisons were hard. Nothing about our lives felt normal. We wanted to avoid Albert being isolated by his autism."

In 2015, the family discovered YMCA East Surrey's Yippee provision for children with disabilities and additional needs.

"The relief was enormous," says Simon. "The service came highly recommended to us and so we were confident Albert would be well looked after. He settled in well - although he's mostly non-verbal, he is more than able to let us know if he doesn't want to do something."

Now 14, Albert has made a seamless transition on to Yip4Youth, our fun and friendly youth club for 12 to 17 year olds with disabilities and complex needs.

YMCA East Surrey delivers regular six-hour sessions during weekends and school holidays across Epsom, Reigate and West Sussex, with a new service just opened in Leatherhead, enabling children and young people to spend time with their peers, building friendships and confidence away from home. We provide new experiences through themed activities and trips in the community.

Simon says: "Albert loves doing all the sensory activities that are so difficult to manage at home. The trampoline is another big favourite. And the outings are so important - again, these are so much harder for us to do as a family."

"Importantly, while Albert is safely occupied, we also get the chance to spend time with Albert's brother, Ted. For a neurotypical sibling, it can sometimes feel as if their whole childhood is spent revolving around the one with special needs. The YMCA disability services mean that we have these pockets of time when we can do things other families find easier. We can relax. I can go out for a bike ride or a run. It's massively helpful."

YMCA Disability Leader, Georgia Knight, says: "I first met Albert when I started my career at YMCA around five years ago. It has been such a joy to watch him learn new skills and grow as an individual. He brings so many smiles and laughs to Yip4Youth!"

Simon adds: "I'm impressed with the staff and humbled by their dedication. They're so good with Albert. His day at Yip4Youth is satisfying and fulfilling. When I pick him up, he's settled and tired. They are able to dedicate all their time to being with him, which we just can't do at home, and give him the patience and sensitivity which we run short of when we're tired and stressed."

"Yip4Youth is a lifesaver. We rely on it so much and I don't know what we'd do without it."





# Dom's story

Dom is a full-time wheelchair user, having been born with spina bifida—a condition that occurs when the spine and spinal cord don't form properly.

"At around the age of 11, surrounded by my able bodied friends, I hated standing out from everyone else, but I've come to terms with it now. It's all I've ever known and I am who I am as a result of my experiences," he says. "I'm not just someone with a disability. My personality goes deeper than my physical health."

In 2022, Dom was signposted to YMCA East Surrey's Step Forward by his local Job Centre and he now attends around three sessions a week. Step Forward offers support and social group activities for young people aged 17-24 with mental health and emotional wellbeing needs. Activities are planned in consultation with attendees and can include anything from sport, fitness and creative projects, plus emotional wellbeing support and advice.

"I'd recently lost a close friend to cancer and I was struggling to find employment," he explains. "I needed more of a social outlet. I tried other groups but I didn't quite fit in. The stimulation and interaction I get from the Step Forward sessions is ideal for me."

"The YMCA Wellbeing Coordinators are absolutely amazing. They strike the perfect balance of being in charge but not afraid to have a laugh. The banter is great. It works perfectly for this group. After all, if they're having fun, then we're having fun! It's not even about what we're doing."

"In the winter, I tend to find that my mood dives. Being able to come to Step Forward and keep my mind busy means a lot. Without the sessions, I'd most likely be unhealthy and overweight, spending far too much time on my Xbox."

Step Forward has secured funding from the Mental Health Investment Fund (MHIF) for the next two years, which will ensure the consistency of the service as well as allowing for expansion to other areas within East Surrey.

Dom, 22, has recently chosen to take part in the YMCA Youth Ambassador scheme, aiming to attend national and international events and act as spokespeople for youth voices within the organisation. Youth Ambassadors are passionate about improving the lives of young people and want to use their experience and knowledge to be the voice for effective, meaningful change.

"I'm just an average guy who's had an average upbringing. My problems are practical ones and they aren't exclusive to me. Disability shouldn't be a taboo topic and I don't believe in sugar-coating stuff. Ablism is something which needs to be tackled in the same way as sexism and racism. I particularly want to spread awareness of the challenges of using public transport when you have a physical disability."

Dom now volunteers at the Royal Marsden Hospital in Sutton. He is working towards a Level 3 qualification in Health and Social Care.

"When you have a physical disability, so many avenues of employment are closed to you. I would love to get a job I enjoy. It's not about being rich - if you're wealthy but miserable, who cares?"

"I'd like to work for the YMCA in the future. When you work with young people, you really see the effort and energy you put in pay off."

YMCA Wellbeing Coordinator, Emily Forey, says: "Dom's presence has been a beacon of positivity ever since he first came to Step Forward and he never fails to put a smile on everyone's face. His incredible resilience shines through in everything he does. His caring personality and unwavering passion for educating others on inclusion and diversity has made a profound impact on us all at Step Forward and we are so lucky to have him."

"Dom embodies the spirit of Step Forward, inspiring us all to create a more inclusive and understanding world for everyone."





# Primary School Early Intervention Practitioners

In January 2024, we recruited three Primary School Early Intervention Practitioners. In their first eight months, they saw over 135 children and delivered sessions in 32 primary schools across Reigate and Banstead, Epsom and Ewell, and Tandridge areas. This work is invaluable, providing essential support to children struggling with emotional wellbeing and mental health at an early age and potentially preventing their needs from escalating later in life.

The team's work has included supporting children with anxiety, understanding their emotions, anger, self-esteem and friendship problems.

We work with schools and parents to promote a holistic approach and provide sessions for parents around emerging topics such as understanding anxiety and ways to help their child manage.

Feedback from schools has been very positive. "The children have been provided with a safe place to explore their feelings. We had one pupil whose behaviour was becoming very worrying but after his sessions, we are seeing a significant improvement."



*"We can't thank you enough for the counselling sessions with L. We are over the moon. It has been brilliant, and we see such a big, big difference."*  
Parent of daughter (13)

We delivered **8,195** 1:1 therapeutic support & counselling sessions in FY23/24 and processed **1,416** referrals

In FY23/24, we delivered **764** group emotional wellbeing sessions to **3,077** young people



# Summer residential at The Old Pheasantry

Young people enjoyed a wellbeing residential at our newest centre, The Old Pheasantry in Mogador, as part of our Emotional Wellbeing and Mental Health summer activity programme. The trip featured activities to boost young people's mental wellbeing including bracelet making and crafts alongside more physical activities such as wellbeing walks and even a giant game of hide and seek.



In the evenings, young people enjoyed pizza making and barbeques with board games and a movie night. Young people were at the forefront of all activities, and we saw increases in self-esteem and confidence through positive interactions with staff and peers. The wonderful opportunity to be in such a nature focused environment in the Surrey Hills was outstanding and everyone had a trip to remember. One young person said, "I found it a great getaway from the busyness of life! It let me focus on the present and I've had the most fun I've had in a few years!"





Making pizzas at Horley Youth Club



young people  
attended **YMCA**  
youth clubs in  
FY 2023/24

*“The information provided and the connections made with other services was a massive help. She helped me understand what was happening with our situation.”*

Parent, Mole Valley Family Centre



From April-June  
2024, our new  
**Family Centres**  
supported **184**  
families with targeted support

## Families First

In April 2024, we were awarded Surrey County Council's new Families First contracts for Mole Valley district and Reigate and Banstead borough. This new contract expanded our family work to include four Family Centres in Dorking, Epsom Downs, Horley and Merstham, along with Welcare Family Centre in Redhill.



In Reigate and Banstead, we work in partnership with Welcare and Home-Start East Surrey and will support a minimum of 576 families through one-to-one early help support, and a further 240 families in Mole Valley working with Home-Start.

Our Family Support Workers meet with families to provide targeted support to meet their needs. Areas of work include domestic abuse, finances and housing. Parents and carers are generally the best people to understand their child's needs, and we listen to and respect their values. By working together and including all family members, we aim to empower families to lead happy, full lives and achieve their goals and aspirations.



Youth club group on top of Scafell Pike

## Y Bus is on the road

Our Y Bus is a new mobile youth service bringing activities and support to young people in their local communities.

Launched in April 2024, the Y Bus has a small seating area inside and is fitted with a games console, iPad, TV and free WiFi. With its own generator and kitchen facilities, it provides a focal point for activities,



as well as information, advice and guidance on

issues such as staying safe, peer pressure and mental wellbeing. This fantastic new resource was funded by Safer Streets funding from the Home Office and YMCA Challenge participants.

Stuart Kingsley, Family Services and Youth Work Manager, says, “The Y Bus and our youth outreach work not only helps to prevent antisocial behaviour, but also empowers young people to make positive choices, develop a sense of pride and purpose in their community and build a better future for themselves.”





# Bonnie's story

Bonnie, aged 15, was late to bloom on the autism spectrum, with her difficulties not fully coming to light until almost two years into secondary school.

Her mother, Viki, explains what a difficult time that period was for Bonnie: "Socially and emotionally, Bonnie was facing challenges which the school just couldn't cope with. Up until then, she'd managed to mask many of the traits of autism and so there had been no diagnosis. But she was finding it increasingly more difficult to control her own behaviour and would sometimes blow up in class when it all got too much. There were multiple exclusions. It felt as if she had been labelled a 'bad child.'"

Bonnie found a welcome escape when a school friend introduced her to YMCA East Surrey's Beatz music project. Beatz, a music-making and recording project for young people aged 11-18, offers young people an outlet to express their creative minds by performing or producing music.

"I was bored after school and I play a bit of guitar, so I went to a session," says Bonnie. "It was good to have something to do. I realised I knew some of the other

people there from school and I started splitting my time between the music sessions and the youth club. The staff are easy to talk to and joke around with. And I like being able to meet up with my mates outside of school."

YMCA East Surrey's Youth Clubs are funded by the National Lottery Community Fund and operate in Horley, Merstham, Redhill, Reigate and Tadworth. They are free for young people in school years 6 to 11.

"At youth club, the young people are allowed to be who they are and the calm environment means no explosions from Bonnie," says Viki. "She used to keep school troubles to herself because she didn't want to burden us with more worries, but she found it easier to open up to the youth workers. They were great at helping break down her problems into smaller parts and made sure to keep me in the loop."

"They spotted and recognized traits of autism in Bonnie and kept me grounded during all of our school troubles. Fighting for support is exhausting. The YMCA team provided relief for me while I struggled for the backup Bonnie needed."

When Bonnie was offered a place on a YMCA East Surrey youth excursion to Snowdon, her mother was thrilled.

"There have been times when Bonnie was excluded from school trips either due to her behaviour or a lack of adequate support," says Viki, "but the YMCA youth workers made nothing of it at all. They just said she would be fine and they knew how to get in touch with me if they needed to. And I couldn't believe it was free!"

That first trip didn't run completely smoothly and Bonnie became upset in the minibus on the way to Wales, anxious about leaving her family. However, through talking to youth workers, she managed the first night, went on to successfully climb Snowdon, and was an active member of the group. This summer, she successfully joined our residential to Scafell Pike and, on a third trip, when another young person struggled with homesickness, Bonnie took them under her wing.

"She came back from each trip on a high," says Viki. "Her confidence has grown enormously. It's overspilled into her daily life. She's forging stronger friendships and, because Bonnie will open up to the youth workers if she has issues, problems are nipped in the bud far quicker."

"They never gave up on her. Without their support, she'd be in a far darker place. Instead, she's settled happily into a new school and the youth club is her safe space."





# Michael's story

In 2021, Michael caught Covid-19 for the second time. Having been born with dilated cardiomyopathy - an enlarged heart - he faced serious complications when the virus caused chronic heart failure and left him fighting for his life in hospital.

"I've always been aware of my health, a fitness junkie," says Michael, now 54. "I grew up and worked with the government in the Caribbean, living an outdoor dream life, climbing lush green mountains, hunting and spearing fish. When I moved to the UK and worked as an accountant in London, staying fit became even more important. But then, like Jack and Jill, it all came tumbling down."

In hospital, Michael's heart briefly stopped. His wife and son thought they had lost him, but an eight and a half hour operation at a second hospital to have a left ventricular assist device (LVAD) implanted in his chest saved his life.

"The LVAD is a kind of artificial pump which helps the failing heart and aims to restore normal blood flow," says Michael. "Some patients will go through an induced coma for six to eight weeks, but I got up a day after. I went from 109kg of muscle to just 52kg of skin and bones. I had to be taught to walk again and could only take three steps at a time at first. I didn't see my wife or my son for six months and I lost all my hair. But my belief never faded. A king always rises up."

It was nearly a year before Michael was able to go home. He now wears an external battery pack which connects to the LVAD via a controller and driveline and he is on the list for a heart transplant.

Having completed his phase III Cardiac Rehab with First Community Health Care at East Surrey Hospital, Michael was referred to the YMCA for our in-house phase IV Cardiac Rehab classes. With these behind him, he was able to begin attending the YMCA gym under the Exercise Referral scheme. He has made such great progress that he now attends outside of the specialised Exercise Referral sessions, but he remains under the watchful eye of our qualified instructors.

"I can't just sit still so it's been vital for me," says Michael. "It can be difficult for someone in the same position as I am to enter the front door of a gym, but I haven't been made to feel odd or out of place. I've always felt welcomed here. I have to commend the staff - they are lovely and I'm in very good hands."

"Having a life-limiting illness can often cause depression, fear and anxiety. But I want to encourage people like me to push through those feelings and have a go. When I first started, I couldn't lift 10kg. Now I can lift 60kg. I work out three times a week. It's a journey and I love it. It's like Disneyland for me."

Kate Holah, Targeted Health and Wellbeing Manager for YMCA East Surrey, says: "Michael knows how important it is to keep his fitness up and he is now a

regular and dedicated presence in the YMCA gym. He's made phenomenal progress. It's hard to believe he is the same man when you see videos and pictures of him in hospital. He is keen to raise awareness of his condition and treatment and, through his specialist hospital team, we have arranged to undergo LVAD training here at the YMCA. In every respect, Michael is a true inspiration to our team!"

Michael's feelings of gratitude towards the YMCA have also motivated him to volunteer with young adults with disabilities through our LifeWorks project.

"The YMCA has left an indelible mark on me over the past year and I want to give something back. I've been volunteering for around nine months now and it has given me such a sense of joy. I want to reach out to others and pass on the energy I feel. If I can make someone else smile, I'm happy."

"I can play football, basketball and cricket with my son and that's everything I could have wished for. I live every day. I'm happy with what I have and also with what I don't have. The best is yet to come."





## Youth membership

Being active at an early age can lead to a healthy lifestyle for a lifetime and keeping our younger generation fit and active is important to us at the YMCA. In fact, over 200 of our members are aged between 13-18 with 65% of our young members being under 16.

Our junior members can use our gym facilities at any time which sets us apart from other fitness centres. It is extremely encouraging to see the youngsters grow, not just in confidence, but we often see a whole attitude change. We treat them as adults but we have rules, as well as gym etiquette, that they must follow and this 'discipline' works!

All junior and youth members receive an induction with a personalised programme from one of our qualified fitness instructors. This starts the journey of understanding how to use the gym effectively and builds a rapport with our instructors who work hard to develop our teen members both physically and mentally.



We delivered **1,117** NHS Health Checks in FY 2023/24



“ Having you be so supportive meant the world to me, especially as I managed to throw. Still can't believe it all happened. It seriously couldn't have gone any better! ”

Boccia disability sport participant



Taking in the sights on a YMCA Wellbeing Walk in Lingfield

Playing skittles at a disability multi-sports session



## Moving Together

Research shows that as we get older, we're far more likely to become inactive. Moving Together is a new physical activity and Ageing Well programme, led by YMCA East Surrey and funded by Surrey Heartlands, that provides proactive and preventative support aimed at empowering older residents across East Surrey to lead happier, healthier, and more independent lives. The programme's primary goals are to increase regular physical activity among older adults, while also fostering opportunities for social interaction to reduce loneliness and isolation.

To achieve this, we are leveraging our strong existing partnerships to introduce new outreach activities and building new networks with local service providers. By developing additional opportunities for sessions, we are ensuring that these vital services are accessible to more older adults. Additionally, we are utilising the Neighbourhood networks within East Surrey Place to reach as many older adults as possible to promote the benefits of physical activity.





# Ofsted registration for 16-17 year olds in supported accommodation

Ofsted is now registering supported accommodation for children aged 16 to 17. Their role is to regulate and inspect accommodation to ensure that it meets the needs of young people and is compliant with regulations.

YMCA Hillbrook House's registration with Ofsted has been successful so we can continue to accommodate and support 16 to 17 year olds. The four quality standards that we must comply with and be inspected on are leadership and management, protection, support, and accommodation. These standards emphasise maintaining safe living conditions, effective governance, safeguarding residents, and providing personalised support plans.

With around a third of our residents being between the ages of 16 and 17, we are dedicated to giving young people a chance at a bright future and a fresh beginning. In addition to offering them a place to live, we also offer specialised support aimed at helping our young residents secure places in local education settings.



Paddleboarding at YMCA Fairthorne Manor residential



*"I've made a lot of memories at the YMCA. I enjoy the support from my key worker and find them easy to talk to."*  
18 year old resident

**15,160** hours of support were provided to residents during FY 2023/24, that's an average of **1,263** hours a month

  
**137** homeless young people provided with a **safe home** in FY 2023/24



## Residents reach for the skies!

YMCA housing residents have enjoyed participating in various exciting activities and residential trips. In June, two residents conquered the 978m climb up to the peak of Scafell Pike with the support of our Senior Housing Support Officer.



In July, 12 residents had the opportunity to enjoy a residential trip to YMCA Fairthorne Manor in Southampton, thanks to funding from the Community Foundation for Surrey. The trip included team building exercises and water sports, providing a fun and relaxing break. One of the highlights of the year was Horley resident Ella's

skydiving adventure in August. Fulfilling a lifelong dream, Ella took to the skies and raised money for the YMCA in the process. "I did the skydive so I could tell myself if I can do this, I can do anything. The feeling was so freeing and I want to do it again... but higher next time!"

These activities provide valuable opportunities for personal growth, pushing participants out of their comfort zones and creating lasting memories.

Proud resident completing ESOL course at East Surrey College





# Rafaat's story

A traumatic journey from Sudan brought 17-year-old Rafaat to YMCA Hillbrook House in April 2024.

"I was so afraid at first, although the police and the staff were kind. I didn't really understand what was happening. I was told 'This is your room', but I didn't know if I would be safe," he remembers.

"My experiences had made it hard to trust. Luckily, there were other Sudanese residents and I asked, 'Will no one attack me here?' They told me this place is good."

YMCA Hillbrook House in Redhill offers affordable accommodation and support services for 16-30 year-olds. Residents can stay for up to two years, receiving a personal support plan to help them work towards becoming independent.

Being under the age of 18, Rafaat is an unaccompanied asylum seeking child (UASC). Assessed as needing accommodation by Surrey County Council, he has been given the option to become a 'looked after' child under Section 20 of the Local Authority Care under Children's Act 1989.

"My YMCA Key Worker, Sarah, has helped me so much," says Rafaat. "She took me to see a doctor and made sure I understood what was said. After a couple of weeks, I began to think that I might be OK."

When Rafaat arrived he spoke minimal English. Sarah worked with him to improve his vocabulary, teaching him basics such as colours and animals and moving on to sing Billie Eilish tunes together. Rafaat began attending East Surrey College, quickly flourishing due to his determination to learn. Having started at Level 1 in English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL), he has now been reassessed and will begin the autumn term at Level 4.

"I read everything I can," says Rafaat. "I love to study and I work every day for up to five hours. I understand past, present and future tenses. I just have to work on my grammatical errors."

"I want to be a Environmental Engineer, because I have seen the problems in Sudan where there is not enough fresh water. What is available is very dirty and it makes people ill, so they have to buy water but this isn't easy to do. The water should be treated. I need to study so I can solve this problem."

With free membership to YMCA East Surrey's gym, Rafaat spends up to two hours working on his fitness every day and enjoys running. He has made a network of friends through college, the YMCA, Mosque and Big Leaf Foundation - a charity which works in partnership with YMCA East Surrey providing activities for displaced young people aged 15-25 in Surrey.

"I have been on many trips already and learned new things," says Rafaat. "We did canoeing and archery in Southampton and had a campfire. I've visited London and also worked on a farm for a week, looking after animals. I had a good time. I like to keep busy because it stops me thinking too much."

YMCA Housing Officer, Sarah Bradford says: "Every Surrey County Council UASC referred to YMCA East Surrey comes with their own individual history prior to their arrival. Our aim is to provide them with a stable environment and give them the opportunity to thrive and achieve their goals. Rafaat has made leaps and bounds in every aspect of his life. When he arrived, he was quiet and polite, but I have seen his confidence grow. Now he is more comfortable and will ask for help when he needs it. He's beginning to open up about the traumas he has experienced."

Although Rafaat is still an asylum seeker, YMCA East Surrey has helped him to obtain a solicitor. Documents will soon be sent to the Home Office and Rafaat should then receive an outcome.

He says: "When I arrived, I would often cry because I missed my home. Now, my language is better and my health is better. People are very kind. They listen and they help. I can tell Sarah everything."

"I was in a bad situation before, but now it's like heaven. I am happy. I like it here. I'm not going anywhere."



# Katie's story

From the ages of 16 to 18, Katie was a carer for her mum who struggled with mental health issues.

"Things escalated when my parents split up," she explains. "I felt overwhelmed with worry and would often miss school to make sure my mum was OK. Our relationship was extremely volatile."

In July 2023, following an altercation at the family home which had become physical, Katie was arrested and taken into custody.

"I was told I couldn't carry on living with my mum," she says. "I had a mental breakdown in the police station and was taken as a voluntary patient to a psychiatric hospital, where I stayed for a month."

An unsettled period of sofa surfing at the homes of relatives followed, during which time Katie's mental health continued to decline until a suicide attempt sent her back to hospital.

"It was only at this point I fully realised I was homeless," says Katie. "Moving between members of the family had disguised the fact that I had no single, secure base of my own. I felt hopeless. I had no control over my life and was terrified of the future."

Temporary accommodation was found for her by a social worker. In November 2023, Katie was signposted to YMCA East Surrey's Hillbrook House in Redhill, which offers safe, secure and affordable accommodation and related services for young homeless people.

"At my interview, the housing staff were so lovely I was desperate to move in. When I heard I was being given a place, it felt like the world had been lifted from my shoulders."

"As well as a designated Key Worker, I also had the 1-to-1 support of Nicola Francis, a YMCA Senior Housing Support Officer. She was kind and nurturing, she always seemed to know what to say and was never angry with me or disappointed – all things I'd not had before. I was offered help and support through weekly catch up meetings and a safety plan was put in place to safeguard my mental health."

"After feeling so vulnerable and scared, I clung to my new-found safety and developed agoraphobia, not leaving the building for the first four months. The staff were amazing. They accompanied me on walks, took me food shopping and for short drives, building it up all the time until I could finally go out alone. There is no way I would have been able to do that on my own."

Nicola Francis says: "Katie has come an extremely long way. Collectively, as an organisation – through staff, peer support and referrals, Y-Focus, our gym at Princes Road and our in-house Counselling team – we've made a break through with Katie and offered her an alternative future. She has now started a career in Childcare and was put in the baby room which was what she hoped for. She did her own CV, prepped for

her interview and attended it alone and successfully secured the role. When Katie first came here she couldn't leave the building alone. Now she's getting herself to and from work and will eventually be Level 3 qualified in Childcare. Her progress has been amazing and we wish her all the best."

"I never thought I'd be able to work and I'm so incredibly proud of myself," says Katie. "I was so terrified I almost didn't go to the interview. Nicola's encouragement meant everything and, when the nursery called to offer me the job, the joy I felt was like nothing I've ever experienced before. I couldn't stop smiling for days!"

"I've opened up and come out of my shell. I'm hoping to move into one of the semi-independent YMCA East Surrey properties soon. I feel stable and steady. I've gained the skills to think positively and I have the tools to know how to deal with my mental health."

"I'm really keen to move on to the next part of my life."





# NextStep

Our NextStep team works directly with families and individuals to relieve the threat of homeless by providing comprehensive advice and helping to secure private rented accommodation. Tailored support is also given to minimise problems arising in the tenancy.

In 2023/24, 266 households were referred by Reigate and Banstead Borough Council and Tandridge District Council received bespoke housing and budgeting advice with accommodation being secured or saved for 103.

One tenant said, “If it wasn’t for you, I would be struggling to get a roof over me and my son’s head. From the first point of contact to signing my

tenancy agreement you’ve been attentive and supportive. Please keep up what you are doing and changing people’s lives.”

With the number of referrals rising steadily, the need for properties is growing. If you are a landlord and would like to find out more about how you can help support people out of homelessness, please call 01737 378482.



Scaling Scafell Pike on a YMCA Challenge Event

We provided **24,723** nights of **accommodation** to vulnerable young people in FY 2023/24



**94%** of **residents** helped back into education, employment or training



Summer sports day for Hillbrook House residents



“During my time at YMCA, my overall experience has been positive. I had the opportunity to learn and grow and I received valuable support in my studies and daily living. I am grateful for the experience.”  
18 year old resident

## New semi-independent house in Redhill

In July 2024, we opened a newly refurbished home which will aid the transition from supported accommodation to independent living for six young adults, aged 18-25. The house in Redhill is our fourth semi-independent property, alongside existing housing projects in Horley, Merstham and Redhill.

Funding came from Homes England, LandAid, Garfield Weston Foundation, Netherby Trust and Beatrice Laing Trust, among others. The CP Charitable Trust supported the refurbishment of the kitchen, and Fine and Country Foundation gave a grant towards the furniture. Throughout 2024, YMCA East Surrey Challengers raised money which will cover additional refurbishment costs and furniture.

Lee Fabry, Head of Housing, says, “Six residents have moved in and will benefit from support including help to get into training or employment, free health and fitness activity at the YMCA gym and access to YMCA emotional wellbeing services. We are determined to give more young people the opportunity to build independence and succeed in life.”





# Challenge Events

Thank you to all our Challengers who biked, trekked, ran, slept out or skydived in 2024 to raise money for YMCA East Surrey.

If you want to get fit, have fun and raise funds, check out our challenge events at

[www.ymcaeastsurrey.org.uk](http://www.ymcaeastsurrey.org.uk)



Sleep Easy | 8 March 2024



Y2Y North Downs Challenge | 24 March 2024



Fun Run | 5 May 2024



Scafell Summits Trek | 21-23 June 2024



Amsterdam 500 Cycle Challenge | 11-14 July 2024



Skydive | 17 August 2024



Kim's Walk | 8 September 2024

## YMCA Challenge Events 2025

- SleepEasy | 7 March 2025
- Y2Y North Downs Trek/Run | 23 March 2025
- Fun Run | 4 May 2025
- Let's Go Le Mans Cycle | 5-8 June 2025
- Brecon Beacons Fan Dance Trek | 20-22 June 2025
- Ride The Alps Cycle | 11-15 July 2025
- Skydive | 16 August 2025
- Kim's Walk | 7 September 2025
- Santa Run | 14 December 2025

*Final details and dates subject to change.*



# Stewart's story

Stewart's involvement with our fundraising Challenge events began in 2015.

"I've always been a runner," he says. "I imagined when I retired that I'd have so much more time to train but, unfortunately, a hip replacement operation meant I had to shelve those plans. Having met Ian Burks through Reigate Priory Athletics Club, I decided to take on a YMCA walking challenge instead."

Signing up for our Hadrian's Wall trek, Stewart found the event to be an eye-opening and motivational experience.

"The camaraderie was wonderful and it was humbling to hear the stories of some of the young people taking part who had benefited from YMCA services."

Since then, Stewart has completed the Y2Y North Downs Trek five times, the South Downs Trek twice and climbed the Yorkshire Three Peaks in 2018 – despite his fear of heights.

After the Pandemic meant the cancellation of YMCA East Surrey's YMCA's 150th year celebrations in 2020, he decided to get creative. So, in 2023, Stewart paid his

own tribute, marking his 75<sup>th</sup> birthday by walking 150 miles from Redhill to Somerset and raising over £2,000 through sponsorship.

Earlier this year, he took his fundraising many steps further.

"I decided to walk the Southern Coast to Coast – 280 miles from Weston-super-Mare to Dover on long distance trails – in support of YMCA East Surrey. In all honesty, I almost bit off more than I could chew! It was definitely the hardest one yet. Both the distance and the weather stretched me to breaking point."

"When I completed the 150 mile trek and arrived at the house of my grandchildren, I felt elated. At the end of Southern Coast to Coast, it was more like quiet relief. I had a coffee and something to eat and caught the train home."

Stewart's account may be understated but he raised a further £1,619 through his gritty determination and the generosity of friends and supporters.

He believes there are benefits to both individual fundraising challenges and taking part in an organised group event.

"I have enjoyed planning my own fundraising treks and, when I'm walking and I'm mostly alone, I have time with my thoughts and take pleasure from the countryside around me."

"With organised YMCA events, as part of a group, I benefit from all the support behind the scenes, the back up from those providing food, drink and rest stops, and the motivation and company of fellow challengers. It's a wonderful way to make amazing memories."

Two years ago, Stewart joined the support team to cover a YMCA cycling trip to Bruges, experiencing the flip side of a carefully planned YMCA Challenge event. He offers his services as a marshal at the annual YMCA Fun Run, is a Walk Leader for our Ramblers Wellbeing Walks and makes a point of attending the official AGM each year.

"It means everything to mix with and hear from the people who actually use the services of YMCA East Surrey," he explains. "I am regularly moved by their experiences and impressed by the staff who provide support."

"I feel like I am part of the YMCA family. It's what has inspired me to fundraise in the past and will keep me involved in the future. It's a terrific charity. I love telling the people I meet about the extensive work that it does and I am passionate about making a difference in the lives of those it serves."



# Thanks

It would not be possible for us to help local people through our many life-changing projects shown in this Impact Report without support.

On behalf of everyone who benefits from our services, we would like to say a huge 'Thank You' to all our partners, funders and volunteers.

The 29th May 1961 Charitable Trust  
Active Surrey  
AED Donate  
Alliance for Better Care  
Ashted Youth Club  
Austin and Hope Pilkington  
Bantam Trust  
BBC Children in Need  
Beatrice Laing Trust  
Big Leaf Foundation  
The Big Give  
Blyth Watson Charitable Trust  
The Boshier-Hinton Foundation  
Brewers Decorator Centres  
The Bryan and June Amos Foundation  
Catch 22  
Chailey Heritage School  
Clockwise Marketing  
Clockwork Charitable Trust  
Community Foundation for Surrey  
Connick Tree Care  
C P Charitable Trust  
The David Family Foundation  
East Surrey College  
East Surrey Domestic Abuse Services (ESDAS)  
Eikon  
Federation of Earlswood Schools  
The Fine & Country Foundation  
First Community Health and Care  
Fox Grove School  
Garfield Weston Foundation  
Gatton Park Trust  
Gatwick Airport Community Trust  
Geoff Herrington Foundation  
George Goodsir Charitable Trust  
Happy Hire Redhill  
Hartsfield Manor  
Health Education England  
The Hobson Charity

Home Instead Reigate & Tandridge  
Home-Start East Surrey  
Homes England  
Horley Lions Club  
The Hygiene Bank  
KCS Ltd  
LandAid  
Land and City Families Trust  
The Landmark Trust  
Linden Bridge School  
The LTA  
Manor Green Primary School  
Manor House School  
Mary Frances Trust  
Merstham Community Trust Facility  
Merstham Millennium Trust  
MindWorks Surrey  
Mole Valley District Council  
Morr & Co LLP  
MYTI Club  
National Garden Scheme  
National Lottery Community Fund  
Nationwide Community Grants  
Nescot  
Netherby Trust  
The Office of the Police & Crime Commissioner for Surrey  
OpenView Education  
Oxted United Reformed Church  
Parkinson's UK  
Peter Harrison Foundation  
Polesden Lacey (National Trust)  
Queen Elizabeth II Silver Jubilee School  
Raven Housing Trust  
The Rebecca Cannon Vitality Fund  
Reigate and Banstead Borough Council  
Reigate Rotary Club  
RETHINK Print & Marketing  
Richmond Fellowship

S E Franklin Charitable Trust  
St Faiths Trust  
St Joseph's Catholic Primary School, Dorking  
St Joseph's Catholic Primary School, Redhill  
SES Water  
Skipton Building Society Charitable Foundation  
Sport England  
Steve Talboys Foundation  
Stripey Stork  
Surrey and Borders Partnership NHS Foundation Trust  
Surrey County Council  
Surrey Football Association  
Surrey Heartlands Integrated Care Board  
Surrey Playing Fields  
Surrey Wellbeing Partnership  
Surrey Youth Focus  
Tandridge District Council  
Tandridge Together Community Fund  
Tandridge Wellbeing Prescription  
Tesco Stronger Starts  
Three Guineas Trust  
Turquoise Cleaning Ltd  
Unum  
Versus Arthritis  
Vestey Holdings Limited  
Voluntary Action Reigate and Banstead  
Waitrose (Coulsdon branch)  
Welcare  
West Sussex County Council  
William Wates Memorial Trust  
Woldingham School  
YMCA East Surrey Challenge Fundraisers  
YMCA East Surrey Committee Members, Trustees and Volunteers  
YMCA England & Wales  
Youth Music

## How You Can Help

Find out more at: [www.ymcaeastsurrey.org.uk](http://www.ymcaeastsurrey.org.uk)

**Donate to support our work.**  
Whether you can make a regular or one-off donation, your support helps our projects to continue running.



**Take part in a YMCA Challenge Event.**

Cycling, running, trekking or something less strenuous – there are lots of ways you can help to raise funds for our vital charitable work.



**Volunteer with us.**  
We work with some amazing people and have opportunities for anyone who is interested in helping out.

**A Corporate Partnership with YMCA**  
East Surrey brings benefits to your business and employees, as well as helping the local community.



**Leave a legacy**  
and give the gift of hope with a Charity Gift in your Will.





# Summary of accounts

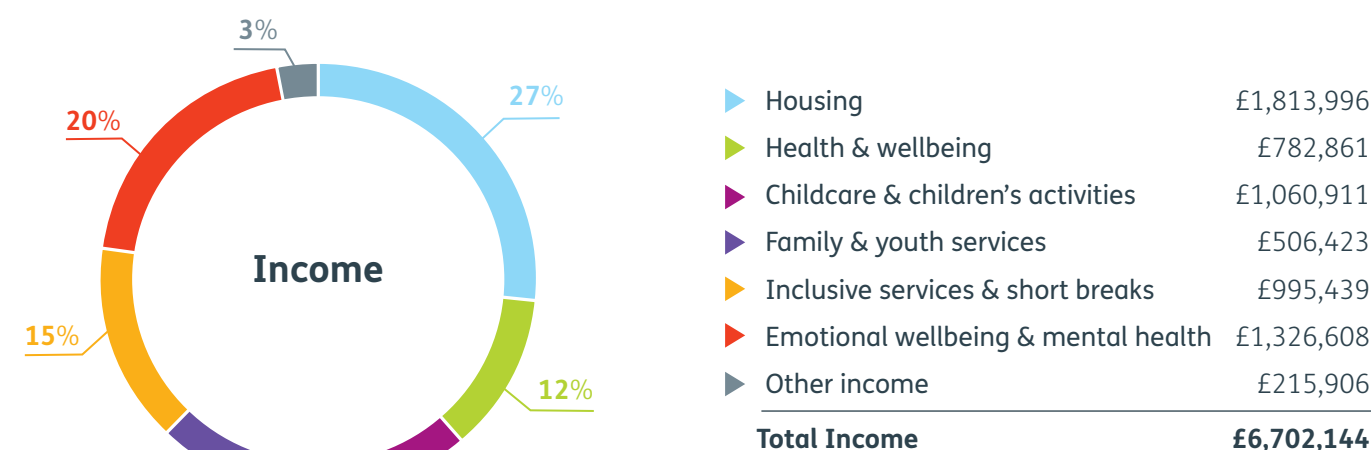
The following is a summary of our financial information for the year ended 31 March 2024. Total income for the year was £6.81 million including interest receivable and gains on investments and total expenditure including interest payable was £6.40 million.

Staffing costs accounted for 66% of the total expenditure.

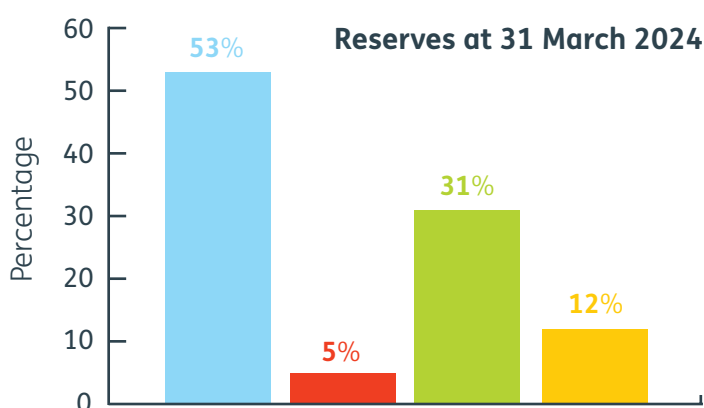
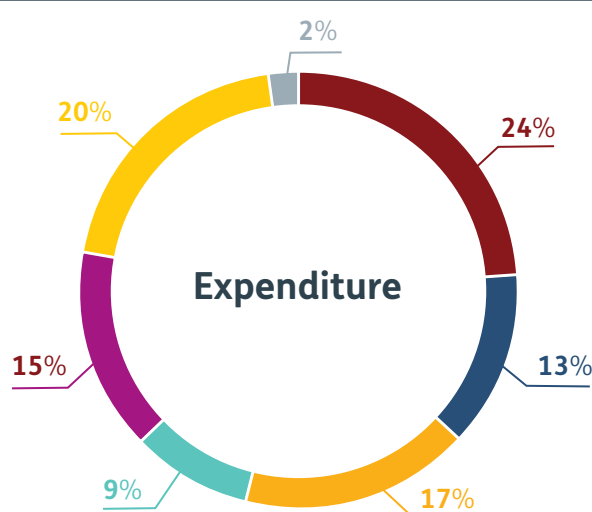
Total reserves at the end of the year were £7.36 million, of which 53% was attributable to the restricted premises funds. Other restricted funds were £0.34 million, designated funds were £0.87 million while unrestricted funds amounted to £2.26 million.

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the Housing Statement of Recommended Practice 2018, the Accounting Direction for Private Registered Providers of Social Housing (issued by the Regulator of Social Housing in 2022), the Housing Regeneration Act 2008, the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) and the requirements of Companies Act 2006. For further information, the full financial statements together with the Trustees' and Auditor's reports should be consulted.

Copies are available from The Charity Commission, Companies House or [www.ymcaeastsurrey.org.uk](http://www.ymcaeastsurrey.org.uk)



▶ Housing	£1,538,929
▶ Health & wellbeing	£797,283
▶ Childcare & children's activities	£1,042,717
▶ Family & youth services	£570,870
▶ Inclusive services & short breaks	£957,311
▶ Emotional wellbeing & mental health	£1,253,916
▶ Other expenditure	£135,104
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>£6,296,130</b>



▶ Restricted premises reserves	£3,903,771
▶ Other restricted reserves	£335,548
▶ Unrestricted reserves	£2,258,084
▶ Designated reserves	£867,212
<b>Total Reserves</b>	<b>£7,364,615</b>



# What we do

YMCA East Surrey is a vibrant charity that has been changing lives in the local community since 1870.

We are part of the wider national and international YMCA Federation which supports the development of young people around the world.

Our services are inclusive for people of all ages and abilities, encouraging everyone to enjoy an active and healthy lifestyle. We help people to believe in themselves, support them to achieve their goals and inspire them to be the best they can be.

- ▶ Children & Young People
- ▶ Health & Wellbeing
- ▶ Housing

**T** 01737 779979

**[www.ymcaeastsurrey.org.uk](http://www.ymcaeastsurrey.org.uk)**



Registered charity no. 1075028



**Here for young people  
Here for communities  
Here for you**



Here for young people  
Here for communities  
Here for you

YMCA enables people to develop their full potential in mind, body and spirit. Inspired by, and faithful to, our Christian values, we create supportive, inclusive and energising communities, where young people can truly belong, contribute and thrive.

## FAMILY & YOUTH WORK

## HEALTH & WELLBEING

## HOUSING

## TRAINING & EDUCATION

## SUPPORT & ADVICE