

YMCA

Here for young people
Here for communities
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YMCA Barnsley

Impact Report

2023



Welcome to our 2023 Impact Report

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and additional content



Showcasing our work to support children, young people and their families in Barnsley

YMCA Youth Work offers young people safe spaces to explore their identity, increase their confidence and understand the impact and consequences of their actions. Using youth work approaches we enable young people to explore and develop their knowledge, understanding and skills, focusing on protective factors, anchoring skills and moving young people towards a safer future. Youth Work focusses on the process not the product. Seeking to develop skills and attitudes rather than remedy problem behaviours, it starts where young people are at and the journey is always bespoke to their needs.

This year we have supported children and young people with the issues and challenges they have identified, including; emotional and mental health, rising cost of living, difficulties engaging with their peers, struggling in school, lack of spaces where they feel safe and not having access to positive role models.



Empowerment of young people and engaging them in the development and delivery of our services is central to our ethos. We support their personal development and provide opportunities for them to shape their communities and our highly successful young volunteering model enables participants to move from accessing provision to supporting and delivering services.

We have continued to build on this with the development of our Youth Board who held their inaugural meeting in May 2023. They are working alongside our Board of Trustees ensuring the views of young people are central to our strategic planning and that young people are fully engaged in the governance and leadership of the Association.

Our Peer Supporters (aged 11-16) and Young Volunteers (aged 16-25) are involved in leading and developing provision, our voice and influence groups, engaging with research and influencing services in local, regional and national forums.

Harri, our YMCA Youth Ambassador represents young people nationally and is helping to shape the support YMCA offers. Alex, a former Young Volunteer and Youth Ambassador is now Vice Chair at YMCA Barnsley and a Trustee for YMCA England and Wales.

“ I found myself at a round table meeting last weekend with a minister who has youth as part of his portfolio. He said to me ‘I understand what you’re saying and I’m going to have to have a difficult conversation with the Treasury’. I never thought I could have an impact like that! Alex Trustee ”

Facts and figures

In 2023 YMCA Barnsley...

Supported **1,311** children and young people through **10** children's & youth work programmes and delivery of **879** sessions



60 young people involved in - voice & influence, consultation and co-production projects

“

Thank you for all of the hard work and support you give to our children week in week out. They really enjoy the activities and several of the children have come out of their shells, especially some of the girls. It is lovely to see them shine. It has been wonderful to see how children who are involved who have SEND, SEMH, medical needs and EHCPs have been accepted as part of the group where they normally struggle in school. Ward Green School

”

“

Our young people absolutely thrive during their sessions, we've noticed for the children with additional needs the change in their confidence and their communication skills with peers.

The Forest Academy

”



18,024 contact hours with children and young people

118 amazing volunteers have offered **3,241** hours of their time, which equates to £43,000 cashable value!

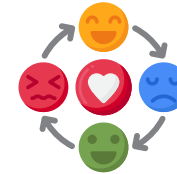
What young people think of our services

Since coming to YMCA Barnsley groups, young people feel they...



...are better at dealing with emotions and feelings, **65%** agree

...cope better when things go wrong, **66%** agree



...are happier, **93%** agree

...are safe at YMCA , **97%** agree



...belong at YMCA, **92%** agree

... are listened to, **95%** agree



Skills that young people have gained or improved since coming to YMCA Barnsley include...



...teamwork, **81%** agree

...communication, **72%** agree

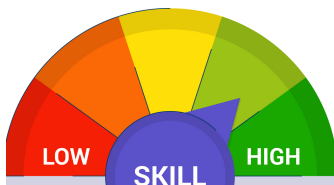


Through coming to YMCA Barnsley, young people have...



...built friendships and relationships, **68%** agree

...had fun and enjoyed themselves, **92%** agree



...learnt new skills, **79%** agree

An exciting year ahead

Our strategic plan for 2024 is focussed on strengthening and developing as a local charity and maintaining our legacy as a key local provider of children's and young people's services in Barnsley. Central to this is successfully continuing to manage and grow a sustainable community resource, that continues to address local need and contributes to improving the lives of young people within our community.

We have worked closely with Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council and our long term partner Chilypep to secure over £2.2m from the Levelling Up Fund to upgrade the YMCA Building and HOME HUB.

The renovations which will begin in 2024, are being co-produced with young people from YMCA and Chilypep, and will modernise our facilities, reduce our environmental impact and operating costs and contribute to our long-term viability.



We are grateful to all who those who have provided support, guidance and funding to enable us to meet our aim of supporting young people so they can truly belong, contribute and thrive.

Support us

Please scan the QR codes to visit our CAF Donate web pages and help us make a difference in our local community. You can also donate via the Charities Aid Foundation to our youth work, general funds and support vulnerable and homeless people.

Youth work / general funds

Supporting the vulnerable & homeless

CAF
Charities Aid Foundation



What young people have told us about their experiences at YMCA Barnsley...



Our projects

Our programmes raise aspirations, build confidence and self-esteem, contribute to emotional resilience, health, positive mental wellbeing, and support positive choice making

The **Unity Project** supports children and young people through delivery of youth work activities in the Central and North Areas of Barnsley that are developed in consultation with participants, schools and wider stakeholders.

In the Central area we deliver 10 sessions each week including afterschool, twilight and evening youth work sessions. In the North area we deliver 4 schools based sessions each week as well as holiday provision, short projects, consultation and engagement activities, Peer Support and Volunteering opportunities across both areas.

The programmes focus on building emotional resilience and developing the skills and tools to maintain positive emotional health, wellbeing, and support, and prepare young people for life's transitions. Activities include group work, themed projects, arts, sports, games, and projects around issues that impact on young people lives, exploring the consequences of the choices young people make, providing opportunities for developing leadership, volunteering, resilience, personal and social skills.

TYI Monday is part of the Targeted Youth Support, SEND Local Offer for LDD Young people and Short Breaks Provision in the Barnsley area. We deliver two age specific youth clubs from age 8-18, providing a range of creative youth club type activities, including crafting, games, cookery and sports and opportunities to participate in activities that build core life skills and confidence, increase young people's self-esteem and overall wellbeing enabling them to make positive life choices and successful transitions.



The young people particularly enjoy preparing and cooking food each week developing their social, independence and life skills and encouraging them to make healthier choices.

The **North Area** school work provides youth work in primary and secondary schools that is focused on improving the children and young people's resilience and confidence in their transitions from Year 6 to Year 7. This process is supported by the YMCA Peer Support Training Programme delivered with Year 7 secondary pupils who have recent experience of transition and can therefore relate to the Year 6 pupils and are able to offer them guidance and support.

The after school clubs, holiday provision and voice and influence programmes provide opportunities for young people to form friendships outside their usual social circle and meet students from different schools.

Little Y's is our activity club for children aged 5-8 years and we deliver a mixed programme of activities including games, arts, & cooking that aim to help build a wide range of key skills such as independence, team work, communication, problem-solving and leadership skills. We provide a safe space for children to socialise and build friendships with others and relationships with trusted youth workers. The children really enjoy having opportunities for free play and games in the sports hall, influence over their own programme of activities and access to their own 'youth club' space with a tuck shop.

We have also delivered a pilot **Family Support Project** with weekly children's activities, monthly family workshops around wellbeing and topics such as energy efficiency, money maximisation, and carbon awareness; and wider support from Citizens Advice Barnsley and other services for families at a time when we know people are struggling with the costs of living.



13-19 programmes, we deliver three projects for this age group focused on the development of social and life skills, and strengthening emotional resilience, in preparation for a happy, healthy and independent adulthood.

North Area Detached; Central Area Detached; and Y Stay In.

These projects are led by young people, with support and encouragement from youth workers. We deliver issued based discussion, arts, games, sports and environmental activities and support young people to ensure they have a real voice within their communities. Our detached sessions are delivered on the streets, in parks and green spaces with young people usually within their neighbourhood. Winter on the streets can be a challenge and we are grateful to Berneslai Homes who let us use their community buildings. This enables us to maintain relationships with young people and deliver needs led project work whilst remaining, warm, dry and safe.

Y Stay In youth club is based at our purpose-built youth facility in the town centre. The youth group make good use all of the resources within our activity space, 'wobble room' and sports hall. The groups of young people we support enjoy arts, crafts, drama, poetry, film and photography as a vehicle for exploring issues relevant to them and their needs. It is an absolute privilege being witness to young people's journeys as they transition through life, broadening their friendship and support networks beyond school and their usual circles.

Green Projects, we have an allotment and two community orchards and provide a wide range of environmental activities that offer children and young people opportunities to connect with the natural environment. The community allotment that is maintained by YMCA Green Group volunteers. Providing a wide range of opportunities for learning about growing, harvesting and cooking fruits and vegetables, horticulture, the environment and healthy eating. New participants and volunteers are always welcome.

We couldn't maintain our allotment and green spaces without the support of our ongoing partners Good Gym, Twiggs, Yorkshire Wildlife Trust, Clover Leaf, Chilypep, Creative Recovery, Stepping Stones, The Princes Trust working with South Yorkshire Fire Service and Employer Supported Volunteering. We are extremely grateful for all their time and support.

Support with the increased costs of living, as part of our work we provide personal care products free to anyone that needs them through: 'Donate and Take' boxes in our building, distribution of personal care and winter warmer packs to young people in our youth work sessions. We use our resources to support those who are homeless and vulnerable through guidance and referral, shower, laundry facilities and work with the Rucksack Project and Barnsley Homelessness Alliance.

In 2023, with funding from BMBC's Household Support Grant and YMCA's Cost of Living Appeal, we were able to scale up significantly and respond to requests to include packs for older people and families in some locations and provide additional support to young people facing challenges around the increased costs of living.



We gave out 433 personal care packs in 2023

Peer Support and Young Volunteering, young people play an active role in designing, developing and leading provision for others as Youth Board Members, Volunteers supporting delivery and as Peer Supporters acting as positive role models, mentoring and supporting other participants.

Co-production, Consultation and Engagement, we support young people to engage with opportunities on a local, regional and national scale. Ensuring they can have their voice heard and influence services and policy development.

Building confidence and self-esteem

Sarah attends our Juniors Youth Club session, which runs weekly in term time. She started attending Juniors because her parents made the decision to take her out of school due to some issues with bullying. However, they understood that it was still vital for her to be able to socialise with other young people.

Providing a safe space

By ensuring that Sarah has a space to talk to staff and socialise with peers, we have seen a huge improvement. Sarah now knows if she is having a bad day that our staff understand, and that we will support her.

Recently, a new young person began attending Juniors and was evidently nervous about meeting people. Sarah did not hesitate in asking this young person to play a game of connect four, maintaining conversation throughout. As a result, this young person almost immediately began engaging with other young people too, showing that Sarah has not only developed in herself, but she is also able to act as a role model and peer support to other young people.

Looking to the future

In the future, there will be even more opportunities for Sarah to assume leadership roles if she wishes to do so, and staff will continue to build her sense of belonging within the group.

“
We started bringing Sarah to Juniors because we made the decision to take her out of school, but we still knew she still needed to interact with other kids, which she can do at Juniors. We know how important it is that she still socialises with other young people. Sarah's Parents
”



Developing emotional resilience

Paul lives with his grandparents and is a quiet, shy young man who often struggles at school. This has led to numerous interventions from school and other services including YMCA to support him to reach his potential. He initially started attending on session with YMCA but now regularly attends a range of projects including our TYI Monday, Unity youth clubs and holiday provision and has built positive relationships with his youth workers who regularly 'check in' on him, making time and space for him to talk and 'offload'.

Building resilience

Since meeting him two years ago the youth workers have helped Paul to build his emotional resilience, confidence and relational skills. Encouraging and supporting him to play different games with others in small groups i.e. pool and table tennis, to practice joining in on conversations as well as building relationships with his fellow peers. Over his time at the Youth clubs, he has made some close friends and they now regularly sit together to play games, his confidence has grown and he has recognised that he feels more able to talk to others and join in with group activities.

Paul has clearly benefited from having access to a welcoming space where he feels safe and valued where he can be with other young people who whom he has shared experiences and where there are opportunities for personal development and building social networks.



“ Paul is a privilege to work with as he’s a lovely caring character with a lot of knowledge and a can-do attitude. YMCA Barnsley Youth Workers ”

Improving interpersonal skills

Sam is ten and has regularly attended one of our After School Clubs (ASC) from September 2023. Sam explained to the youth workers that he decided to come to the ASC because of his friend who attended last year, who told him how much fun they had which prompted Sam to try the ASC.

At the start of the year Sam struggled with his confidence in the group. He would often be loud within the group whilst the rest of the group were working on the activity. Over time the youth workers noticed that Sam would often be disruptive to mask that he did not understand what the task was. The youth workers worked 1:1 with him using a range of learning styles ensuring that he fully understood the activity.

Stepping out of the comfort zone

By attending YMCA after school club, Sam has been provided a safe, supportive yet challenging environment to help develop his social skills and build his confidence.

Looking to the future

Our youth workers will continue to give the support Sam needs in the session. He often questions the good standard of the work he produces weekly so staff continue to encourage his belief in himself as well as monitor his engagement with the other young people in the group.

I like to come to the YMCA after school club because we do lots after different activities and each week, we do something different making it exciting plus I get to stay with my friends. The activities I like was decorating biscuits and this (Christmas stuff) I also liked the games with the parachute because they were fun. Sam



Encouraging participation

Alex is eight years old and regularly attends our 'Little Y' session. He had previously attended our Parent and Toddler group where he was able to get to know Kelly who is a staff member for both groups, so he felt confident and comfortable transitioning into little Y's on his own. His older sibling also attended Little Y and mum sees YMCA as a safe place for her children to come, have fun and meet other children.

Alex was initially very quiet and shy and chose to do his own thing, over time with support from the youth workers, he became more bubbly and confident joining in the activities and doing what the other young people were doing. He is an active member of the group and has developed his confidence and skills and enjoys taking on new responsibilities.

Working with others

Alex is now a confident and happy group member who is clearly very comfortable in the building with staff and other children. He is now able to consistently make positive behavior choices, joins in without additional support and is independent in many of the games and activities.

Alex is looking forward to transitioning to our older youth group, 'Juniors' when he is old enough. As one of the oldest members in 'Little Y' he has been given the opportunity to and is being supported to be a 'Little Y Peer Mentor'.



I like YMCA Barnsley because I like doing all of the different crafts and playing football with my friends from my old school. Alex

Nurturing role models

Jill has been known to our team for three years and we have witnessed her transition from school to college and now into the world of work. Jill left school with few qualifications and reported that she couldn't wait to leave. She progressed to college and on 'checking in' with her frequently it appeared that her college experience was almost mirroring that of her school.

Whilst Jill was still attending college, she would still seek us out in the park and spend at least a few minutes with us as we engaged in activities with younger ones. Jill would often share her experiences of school and reflect on her learning and challenges she faced, she would offer 'advice', once saying to a small group of younger girls 'don't end up like me, I messed about a lot and now I'm on a college course I don't want to do but it's my only option!'

Maintaining relationships

Jill was unaware of her potential influence over some younger girls and that they held her in high regard and looked up to her. She discussed how as an older young woman she felt a certain responsibility towards her younger peers stating on one occasion 'I don't even vape in front of them now'. In recent months, Jill left college and started full time work. Our team keep in touch as she often walks through the park from one job to the next and if she has time, she stops to chat.

Jill has lots to offer, it is a privilege being witness to her journey into adulthood, and it is our considered opinion that Jill, sometime down the road, would make a blooming good youth worker. YMCA Youth Worker



A warm and welcoming environment

At 'Y Stay In' (YSI) Youth Club, established group members are encouraged and supported to take on more responsibility, in particular when welcoming new members. Young people often step up, without realising the value of their acts of friendship. New members can be quiet and a little nervous, one reported that she nearly didn't step out of mum's car on her first visit. She did, and now she has a whole new bunch of friends. Jen is a new member to YSI. She is known to staff as she has also attended one of our detached sessions. Her attendance on the streets was sporadic as she lives in town centre, though her friends are from Dodworth. As nights drew in, as Jen didn't feel confident enough to use public transport to access the detached session, she was encouraged to access YSI which is walking distance from home. Her friends also expressed an interest in YSI and they have all become regular members of YSI and their contribution has had a positive impact on the broader membership.

Adapting the support network for new members

Jen has some social anxieties and often presents a different energy and traits associated with some of challenges she experiences. Whilst Jen continues to 'unfold' the group are supportive and respond to her needs and if she feels uncomfortable, she can take herself away from the group and sit quietly alone for a while until she feels able to reconnect with staff or her peers.

15 h · 🌐

🌟🌟 We're thrilled to share the incredible work [YMCA Barnsley](#) has been doing to empower young people with essential life skills! 🌟

Their dedicated team has been working tirelessly to equip young minds with the knowledge and tools they need to succeed in life. 🍌🍌🍌

👉 YMCA Barnsley do amazing work fostering independence, resilience, and confidence in the next generation. Not only shaping better individuals but also creating a brighter future for our communities.

[#YouthEmpowerment](#) [#PositiveChange](#) [#BrighterFuture](#)



With support from the youth workers the group regularly reflect on how they can adjust, (often on the spot) to ensure YSI remains inclusive and accessible.

Looking to the future

The groups plans include training and development opportunities for both youth workers and the youth group to continue to build on existing knowledge and understanding about neuro diversity.

Inspired by the great outdoors

We were fortunate to receive funding from The Trans Pennine Trail (TPT) – Know Your Neighbourhood fund. To connect young people with their neighbourhood, the outdoors, explore heritage, broaden networks, and promote use of the TPT.

Young people from our detached youth work project in Dodworth planned an extension of a previous newsroom project that included research, rehearsals, art on the trail' workshops and culminated with a weekend 'shoot day' on the trail and production of the 'Gobbledigook News Special Report'

The project enabled them to increase their use of and knowledge about the trail, explore the impact of nature on wellbeing and add to their 'wellbeing toolkits', meet other trail users, building on their confidence and self-esteem and further developing their skills in planning, script writing, filming, performing, problem solving and reviewing.

Ideas for future funding

Young people reported that they had fun, learnt new skills, felt more confident when speaking out in a group and felt more comfortable meeting and talking to other trail users.

The young people are now keen to develop this project further and explore other areas of the trail and the connectivity it provides for people across the country.

“ I was asked to stand up in assembly at school with a microphone and talk to everyone about a school project I had been involved with. I told the teacher I didn't want to do it as I didn't feel confident enough. I think I could do it now. Gobbledigook reporter ”

Potentially a residential activity connecting with other youth groups who may use the trail, exploring shared experiences and to recording Gobbledigook News in another location.



What young people feel they get out of coming to YMCA Barnsley...



Thank you to our supporters and partners

who help us to make a difference to the lives of children & young people



Abbey School Nexus	Cloverleaf Advocacy	Regional Youth Work Unit
AfAB	Coalfield Regeneration Trust	Safe Places
Barnsley Academy	CompassBe	Saint Vincent de Paul Society
Barnsley Carer's Service	Copy Cat Party Company	Sheffield Hallam University
Barnsley College	Cranfield Trust	Sheffield University
Barnsley MBC, Area Councils & Ward Alliances	Creative Recovery	South Yorkshire Community Fund
Barnsley MBC Levelling Up Project	Darton Academy	South Yorkshire Police
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Currie & Brown• Bond Bryan• Hydrock	Dodworth St John the Baptist Church	South Yorkshire Fire Service
BMBC Short Breaks	EJ Communications	Sport England
BMBC Targeted Youth Support	FCS Associates	Summer Lane Primary
BMBC What's Your Move	Forest Academy	Sun Health Care
Barnsley CVS	Garfield Weston Foundation	Terrance Higgins Trust
Barnsley Pickleball	Good Food Barnsley	TESCO Plc
Barnsley Older People Physical Activity Alliance	Good Gym	The National Lottery Community Fund
Barnsley Wates Group	Health Assured	The Princes' Trust
Barneslaj Homes	Hedley Foundation	Trans Pennine Trail
BMBC	Hope House Church, Barnsley	Trinity Academy St. Edwards
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Centre for Youth Impact – YMCA	Imagination Gaming	Upshot
George	Joseph Locke Primary	Ward Green Primary
Williams College	Keresforth Primary	Ward Green Baptist Church
Children <u>In</u> Need	Kexborough Primary	Wellgate Primary
Chilypep	Leeds Beckett University	YMCA England & Wales
Citizens Advice Bureau	Lounge Hopper	Yorkshire Sport
	Northern Rail Community Fund	Yorkshire Wildlife Trust
	Queens Road Academy	Youth Association
	Reach Volunteering	

The real key to our success is the incredible people who make up the YMCA team. We are fortunate to have a fabulous team of passionate, skilled and dedicated trustees, staff and volunteers who have helped the charity evolve and develop services that have a positive impact on our local community. We continue to be amazed by the extraordinary children and young people who choose to spend their time with us and whose commitment, passion and enthusiasm inspire us all.

Contact us

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Let's talk



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.

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