



Here for young people  
Here for communities  
Here for you

# YMCA Barnsley

# Impact Report 2024





# Welcome to our 2024 impact report

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

YMCA youth work provides children and young people with safe environments, and non-judgmental youth-friendly spaces and a range of enjoyable youth work opportunities to explore their identities, increase their confidence, and their understanding of the consequences of their actions. Through youth work approaches, we empower them to develop their knowledge, skills, and understanding, emphasising protective factors, anchoring skills, and guiding them towards a safer future.

We have continued supporting children and young people with the challenges they face, such as emotional and mental health issues, the increasing cost of living, difficulties in peer engagement, struggles in school, navigating social media and online environments, a lack of safe spaces, accessing post-16 pathways, and the absence of positive role models.

At the core of our mission is the empowerment of young people and their active involvement in the development and delivery of services. We focus on fostering their personal growth and providing opportunities for them to make a difference in their communities through our Youth Board, volunteering and broader voice influence and co-production projects. Ensuring that the viewpoints of young people are woven into our strategic planning, enabling them to be fully engaged in the governance and leadership of the Association and influencing services at local, regional, and national levels.



**“YMCA has enabled less confident children to develop their independence and self esteem. Children who don't like to attend sports clubs for example, feel this is a safe club where they can fit in and enjoy it, without feeling self-conscious. Key life skills have been developed which will help prepare our older children for secondary school and beyond.”**

**Keresforth Primary School**

## Welcome continued...

We have continued to provide affordable, quality room rental facilities and the venue for H.O.M.E., Barnsley's emotional health and wellbeing hub for young people, and we use our resources to assist those who are homeless and vulnerable.

We have worked closely with our voluntary and statutory partners to create a more connected youth work sector in Barnsley that is young people centred, enabling children and young people to have access to a wide range of aspirational and developmental opportunities that support their personal and social development.

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to everyone who has provided support, guidance, and funding, enabling us to achieve our goal of empowering young people to belong, contribute, and thrive.

Our accomplishments would not have been possible without the passion, dedication, and commitment of our staff, volunteers, and Board of Trustees. Their enthusiasm, hard work, and unwavering support are fundamental to our success.

“The work done by the YMCA at Horizon has been great. The practitioners' engagement with the students has been fabulous, with a noticeable effort to connect with a wide range of individuals. The variety of themes they introduce, are both fun and meaningful, help maintain the students' interest while also promoting valuable discussions. Additionally, addressing important themes such as personal development, mental well-being, and social responsibility was impactful and thought-provoking, helping to enrich the overall experience for the students. **Horizon Community College**”





## In 2024 YMCA Barnsley...

Supported **892** children and young people through **10** children's and youth work programmes and delivery of **866** sessions.

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

**18,292** contact hours with children and young people.

**87** amazing volunteers have offered **2,774** hours of their time, which equates to **£38,000** cash value.





# What young people think of our services...

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

Are better at talking in a group **82%** agree

Are better at dealing with emotions **80%** agree

Are better achieving goals **79%** agree

Are coping better when things go wrong **78%** agree



Are better at building friendships and relationships **81%** agree

Are better at making positive choices **80%** agree

Are feeling happier **80%** agree

More in control of their lives **80%** agree



## Skills young people have developed or improved since accessing YMCA Youth Work...

Team work **74%** agree

Communication **73%** agree

Problem solving **56%** agree

Motivation **50%** agree

Confidence **72%** agree

Building friendships **66%** agree

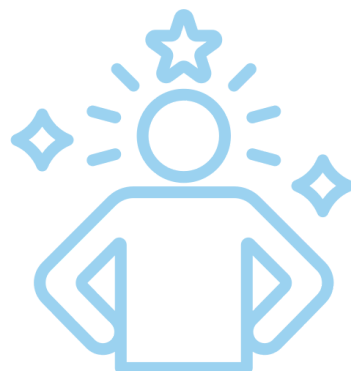


“

The YMCA Youth Work program has increased access to safe spaces and youth work opportunities for our students. These spaces have become environments where students feel comfortable exploring their identities and developing personal, social, and life skills. The program has helped students develop knowledge and tools to prepare them for life's transitions.

”

**Queens Road Primary**





## Young People's views about YMCA Youth Work...

I feel the people at YMCA listen to me **95%** agree

It is easy to talk to people at YMCA **83%** agree

I am treated well by people at YMCA **95%** agree

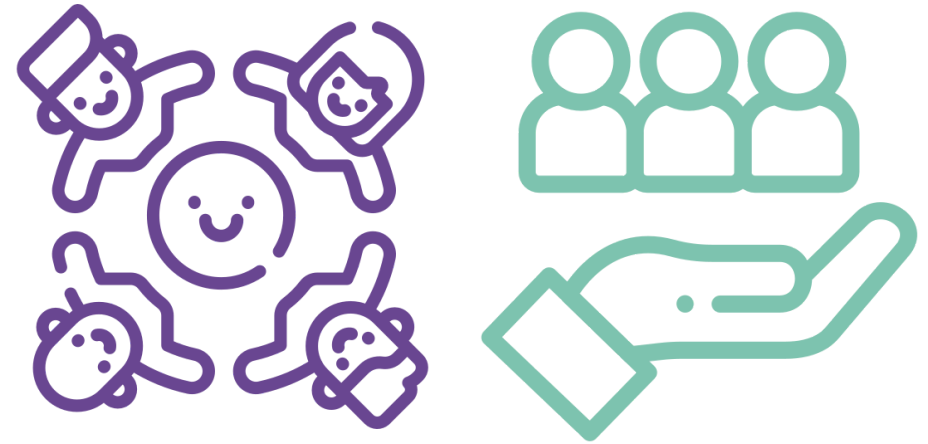
My views are taken seriously at YMCA **90%** agree

I feel the people at YMCA know how to help and support me **87%** agree

I feel better or happy when I attend YMCA **90%** agree

I am inspired or more willing to do things at YMCA **89%** agree

I feel that I am safe at YMCA **95%** agree



I feel that I am a part of something and I belong at YMCA **90%** agree

I feel that I am safe at YMCA **95%** agree

At YMCA I feel like I matter **90%** agree

I would encourage friends to go to YMCA **91%** agree

Overall my experience at YMCA is good **97%** agree



## Through coming to YMCA Youth Work young people have...

Learned new skills **69%** agree

Tried new things **73%** agree

Overcome challenges **58%** agree

Made new friends **65%** agree

Improved their personal and social skills  
**62%** agree

Learned how to deal with my feelings and  
emotions **54%** agree

Had fun and enjoyed themselves **86%**  
agree

Volunteered to do something for others  
**52%** agree

“—  
Our children are always so eager to attend YMCA and clearly have great relationships with the staff that run the club. It is clear that the staff work hard to build relationships with the children and get to know them well. Before leaving at the end of the year, lots of children were keen to move on to the YMCA projects that are run in local secondary schools so that they could continue. Joseph Locke Primary —”





## The coming year

The highly awaited renovations of our building began in September 2024, following extensive co-production workshops with young people from YMCA and Chilypep. These improvements aim to modernise our facilities, lessen our environmental footprint and operating expenses, and promote long-term sustainability. We eagerly anticipate their completion in early summer, allowing us to warmly welcome everyone back into our hub for young people and their communities.



**We look forward to the future with excitement as we continue to make a positive impact on the lives of children, young people, and their families in Barnsley.**

## 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 and supporting the vulnerable & homeless.**



# 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** delivers youth work activities across Central and North Barnsley, shaped by young people, schools, and stakeholders. Central Barnsley offers 10 weekly sessions (afterschool, twilight, and evening), while North area provides 4 school-based sessions plus holiday provision, projects, and volunteering opportunities. Programmes focus on emotional resilience, positive wellbeing and life skills. Activities include group work, themed projects, arts, sports, games, and issue-based projects, exploring consequences of choices and developing leadership, volunteering, resilience, personal and social skills.

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**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 an activity club for 5-8 year olds, offering games, arts, and cooking to develop key skills like independence, teamwork, and communication. It's a safe space for socializing, building friendships, and connecting with trusted youth workers. Kids enjoy free play in the sports hall, influencing activities, and a dedicated "youth club" space with a tuck shop.

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We have delivered a pilot **Family Support Project** with weekly children's activities, monthly family workshops around wellbeing and topics such as energy efficiency, money maximization, 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.** Youth-led projects, supported by youth workers, offer issue-based discussions, arts, games, sports, and environmental activities, empowering young people's voices in their communities. Detached sessions operate in neighborhoods' streets, parks, and green spaces. We are grateful for Berneslai Homes' support, their community buildings provide warm, dry, and safe spaces during winter, enabling continued engagement and needs-led project work whilst remaining, warm, dry and safe.

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**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.

**Youth Voice** We believe young people should have a voice in decisions that impact their lives. At YMCA Barnsley, we ensure they are listened to, valued, and empowered to influence meaningful action. We enable young people to actively engage in forums for representation and collaboration on local, regional, national, and international levels.

Our model builds emotional resilience and well-being enabling participants to progress from accessing services to supporting and delivering them for others. Developing confident young leaders, youth workers and Board members.

#### **Opportunities at YMCA Barnsley include:**

- Peer Support (ages 11–19): Positive role models supporting participation.
- Youth Volunteering (age 16+): Supporting project delivery.
- Voice, Influence, and Co-production (ages 11–19): Meaningful participation in strategic decision-making processes.
- Youth Board (ages 14+): Engaged in governance and leadership.
- Social action and campaigning: Addressing issues that impact young people.
- Through these initiatives, YMCA Barnsley inspires young people to realise their potential and participate fully in their communities.

We distribute **'Personal Care Packs'** to **all** our participants these contain sanitary, personal hygiene and dental care products as well as additional items identified by young people. Ie Gloves/first aid items/washing up liquid/laundry detergent/basic stationary/anxiety and wellbeing resources.

We have distributed these each term and more frequently to those who we know need additional support. The packs are funded by BMBC'S Household Support Grant which in turn is part of Central Government's H.A.F. funding.



**We gave out 486 personal care packs in 2024**



# What young people get out of coming to YMCA Barnsley...

“

When I was revising for exams, this place meant I could concentrate, I love my brothers and sisters, but they are noisy at home!

Young person aged 16

”



“

I am involved with more things than I have ever been involved with, if it weren't for YMCA working round here I would be staying in the house all the time.

Young person aged 14

”



“

I like that I can make friends of different ages and from different schools.

Young person aged 14

”



## Boosting confidence

Ten-year-old Alex has attended our SEND youth club for a year, seeking social opportunities and respite for his family. Alex thrives on routine and struggles with change and loud noises. Initially quiet and hesitant, he preferred solitary activities and disliked sports, particularly football, due to negative experiences at school.

### Exploring new opportunities

Through our sessions, Alex has been supported to explore new activities, boosting his confidence and self-awareness. He's discovered a love for sports, including football, and now actively engages with staff and peers, initiating conversations and leading games. Group activities like arts, crafts, and games have helped him manage different situations and cope with change and noise.

Within a safe and encouraging environment, Alex's confidence has grown significantly. He's more adaptable and resilient when plans change. We'll continue nurturing our relationship with Alex, encouraging him to embrace new challenges and further develop his social skills.

“  
*Since joining the YMCA, Alex's confidence and social skills have improved immensely. He has made new friends and built relationships with adults. Thank you to the YMCA team. Alex's mum*  
”



“  
*It's fun here at the YMCA. You can make up your own games and play with new friends. I also like the sports hall and can't wait for it to be finished. Alex*  
”



## Learning new skills

Nine-year-old Alfie has blossomed at our Little Y's session, transitioning from a shy newcomer to a confident role model. Initially quiet, Alfie joined to build his confidence and social skills, encouraged by his mother and familiar faces already attending.

Our sessions focus on fostering independence and social skills through various games and crafts. We encourage child-led play, sports, and group activities, promoting communication, teamwork, and problem-solving. Alfie now leads games, inspiring younger members and peers alike. He's learned to navigate team selections with staff support, making new friends and developing his communication skills.

## Supporting families

Alfie and his family actively participate in our Family Support Project workshops. These free activities have allowed them to bond and learn together. His mother has gained valuable cooking skills, including using a slow cooker to reduce costs, and built a support network with other parents.

Witnessing Alfie's positive engagement and achievements has been rewarding for his mother. She's become a strong advocate for the project. Our youth workers have also provided additional support, supplying the family with a slow cooker and connecting them with Citizens Advice.



“ I learned to let my child do more when helping me cook. I also learned how to use a slow cooker, which I never had before. It's so nice to have one to prepare tea for when we get home, and it saves money. Alfie is able to be social with his peers, and we have had family time together. Alfie's mum ”

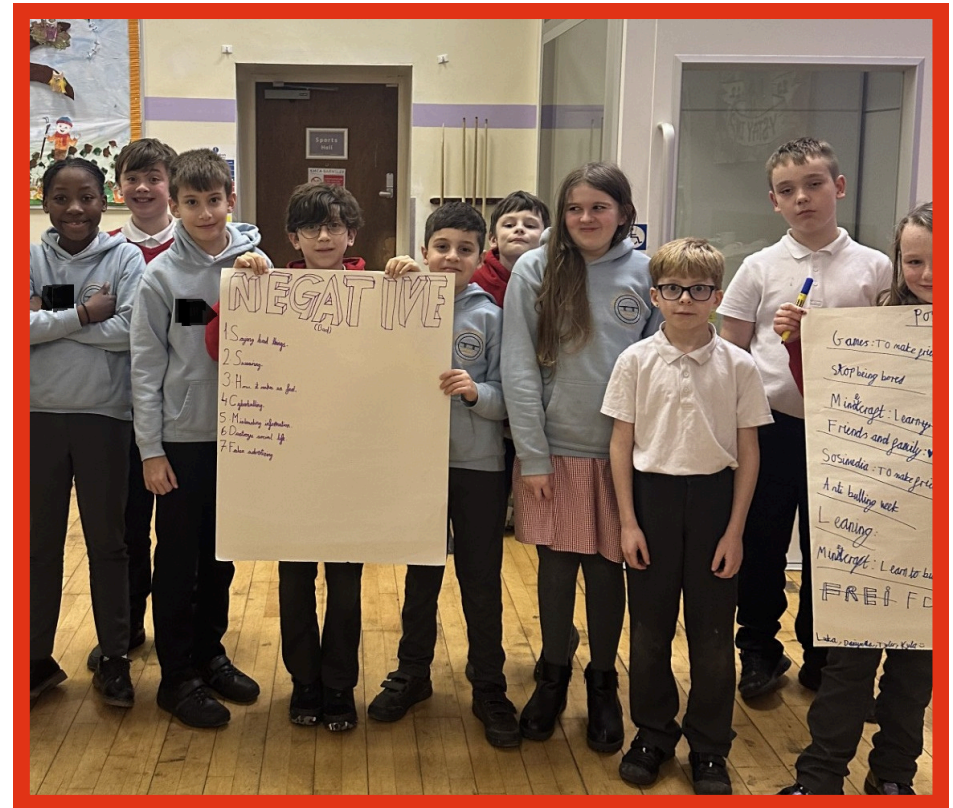
# Adapting to individual needs

Mark, part of a core group of young people, faced certain challenges and struggles, particularly in school. He thrived in outdoor activities, where his energy wasn't restricted. Staff provided individual support, explaining things patiently. Mark openly discussed his diagnosis, often explaining his behavior. The group planned activities focusing on teamwork, identity, and community, using a local venue for indoor sessions. However, Mark struggled indoors, preferring the freedom of outdoor spaces. Despite efforts to accommodate him, his indoor attendance became sporadic.

Often in inclement weather certain activities were better carried out indoors and we are very fortunate to have access to Berneslai Homes facilities for such occasions. Mark would often speak about not being totally at ease as the environment was very different to being outdoors where he could be as busy and noisy as he wanted.

## The importance of environment

Staff maintained contact with Mark and his family, seeking ways to re-engage him. Outdoor meetings resumed, with Mark actively participating and discussing his school issues. He was reassured of the YMCA Barnsley youth workers' support and welcomed back to the group. Regular outdoor meetings followed, with Mark and friends contributing to activity planning.



Marks experience reminds us that not all activities suit all young people, and whilst he has decided to take himself away from his original core group of friends, he will engage and participate, and come up with some fabulous ideas, he just needs the space to feel safe and comfortable to be himself. Indoors doesn't always quite do it for Mark.



# From hesitation to belonging

Lottie first connected with our team in late summer 2022 at a detached street-based session. Her friend, Jess, had introduced her, explaining Lottie's need for reassurance and support, particularly when trying new things. Jess also shared that Lottie has Tourette's Syndrome, which can become more pronounced when she's stressed. Staff prepared to create a welcoming environment.

Lottie's attendance was sporadic due to travel challenges, but she clearly felt safe with the group. Initially non-verbal and hesitant, she gradually began participating, engaging in activities, and building relationships. Staff learned to recognise her traits and adjust activities to accommodate her needs, including "time outs" for breaks when needed.

Lottie soon began to speak to other members of the group and build relationships, through the detached session she was creating her own shared history with them which meant they had things in common. She was increasing her network of support whether she was aware or not.

## Developing trusted relationships

Lottie expressed interest in our "Y Stay In" youth club. Despite initial challenges, including short visits, Lottie persevered. Within six weeks, she was attending full sessions and is now often the first to arrive and last to leave. She has developed trusted relationships with specific staff members and isn't afraid to ask questions or express her needs.



Lottie has shown remarkable progress, even challenging herself with sensory experiences. For example, she recently explored clay, despite initial discomfort.

She now attends both "Y Stay In" and the detached sessions regularly. Lottie's willingness to share her experiences helps our team learn and better support her. She is building resilience and confidently communicates her needs, making her a valued member of our programmes.

# Making positive choices

Twelve-year-old Sophie, a quiet and timid student at Horizon Community College's ASC, initially struggled to socialize beyond her small friendship circle. Living with her parents and two siblings, she presented as reserved and hesitant to engage in teamwork or group discussions.

Youth workers recognized Sophie's need for support and implemented a gentle, strategic approach. They rotated the composition of small groups, providing her with opportunities to interact with different peers. This gradual process fostered a sense of comfort and encouraged her to participate.



Over several weeks, Sophie's confidence visibly grew. She transitioned from hesitant observer to active participant, readily joining various groups and even leading icebreaker games. This transformation exemplifies her significant progress with the YMCA.

## Growing confidence

Sophie's burgeoning confidence extended beyond regular sessions. She joined the YMCA Residential Steering Group, a collaborative effort involving young people from different schools and youth clubs. Her contributions to the project's planning were remarkable. She consistently volunteered to lead fundraising events, demonstrating initiative and leadership.

Furthermore, Sophie actively encouraged other young people to join the Steering Group, demonstrating a newfound ability to connect with others. She confidently interacted with unfamiliar members of the public, showcasing her enhanced social skills. This journey highlights the profound impact of the YMCA's support in empowering Sophie to overcome her shyness and embrace her potential.

“

I come to the YMCA because I like making new friends and YMCA staff make me feel safe and welcome. There is no need to be scared to join if you are new. It is a safe place I can assure you will be welcomed kindly. Sophie

”



# Thank you to our supporters and partners

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.

Abbey School Nexus  
AfAB  
Barnsley Academy  
Barnsley Carer's Service  
Barnsley College  
Barnsley MBC, Area Councils & Ward Alliances  
Barnsley MBC Levelling Up Project

- Currie & Brown
- Bond Bryan
- Hydrock

BMBC Short Breaks  
BMBC Targeted Youth Support  
BMBC What's Your Move  
Barnsley CVS  
Barnsley Pickleball  
Barnsley Older People Physical Activity Alliance  
Barnsley Wates Group  
Berneslai Homes  
BMBC  
Brearley & Co. Accountants  
Bury & Walker's Solicitors  
Centre for Youth Impact – YMCA George  
Williams College  
Children In Need  
Chilypep  
Citizens Advice Bureau  
Cloverleaf Advocacy  
Coalfield Regeneration Trust

CompassBe  
Copy Cat Party Company  
Cranfield Trust  
Creative Recovery  
Darton Academy  
Dodworth St John the Baptist Church  
EJ Communications  
FCS Associates  
Forest Academy  
Garfield Weston Foundation  
Good Food Barnsley  
Good Gym  
Health Assured  
Hedley Foundation  
Hope House Church, Barnsley  
Horizon Community College  
Huddersfield University  
Imagination Gaming  
Joseph Locke Primary  
Keresforth Primary  
Kexborough Primary  
Leeds Beckett University  
Lounge Hopper  
Northern Rail Community Fund  
Queens Road Academy  
Reach Volunteering  
Regional Youth Work Unit  
Safe Places  
Saint Vincent de Paul Society  
Sheffield Hallam University

Sheffield University  
South Yorkshire Community Fund  
South Yorkshire Police  
South Yorkshire Fire Service  
Sport England  
Summer Lane Primary  
Sun Health Care  
Terrance Higgins Trust  
TESCO Plc  
The National Lottery Community Fund  
The Princes' Trust  
Trans Pennine Trail  
Trinity Academy St. Edwards  
Trust-IT  
Twiggs  
Upshot  
Ward Green Primary  
Ward Green Baptist Church  
Wellgate Primary  
YMCA England & Wales Yorkshire Sport  
Yorkshire Wildlife Trust  
Youth Association

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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.

Registered charity No. 250 190 / Charitable company No. 97905

*Impact report produced by EJ Communications*

# YMCA BARNSELEY SPORTS HALL & ROOM HIRE



# YMCA



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