



YMCA

| Here for young people
Here for communities
Here for you

IMPACT REPORT 2025

YMCA BLACK COUNTRY GROUP

Contents

Year at a Glance	4
Joint Message from Chair of Trustees and Chief Executive	6
Our Strategic Plan 2025 - 2030	8
Early Years	10
Health & Wellbeing	12
Housing	14
Training & Education	16
Support & Advice	18
Christian Mission	20
Funding & Donations	22
People & Culture	24
Financial Overview	26

Our
purpose

Everyone
should have
a fair chance
to discover
who they are
and what
they can
become.

OUR YEAR AT A GLANCE

Stats taken from
Oct 2024 - Oct 2025

5,880

individuals supported to belong, contribute and thrive through YMCA services across the Black Country



24

YMCA locations offering services to the community

570

individuals have called YMCA home

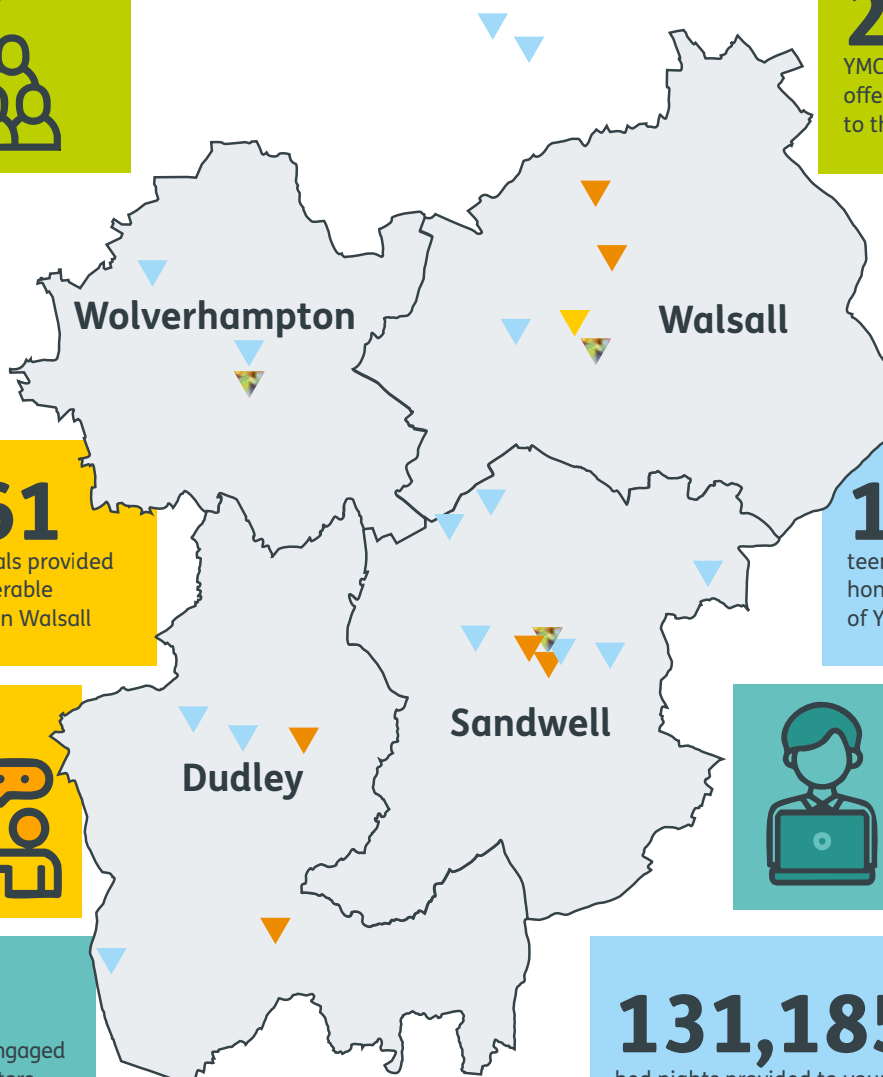


27

regular, dedicated volunteers who help us deliver our work

523

children developing in body, mind & spirit across our nurseries

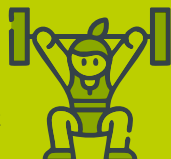


200,500

hours of funded early years education provided to parents and families in need

737

people prioritising their health and wellbeing at YGym West Bromwich



261

hot meals provided to vulnerable people in Walsall

114

teenagers offered a safe home in the spare rooms of YMCA Host families

120

interactions with families to tackle complex social problems in Wren's Nest

9

families were able to flee a domestic abuse situation

57

individuals supported through conversations with chaplaincy



1,222

young people moved from receiving benefits into work or training

12

early years apprentices offered full-time employment

124

pre-school children graduated nursery and are ready for school



322

young people engaged with YMCA mentors to overcome barriers to employment

131,185

bed nights provided to young people who would otherwise be homeless



50

requests for prayer from service users and YMCA staff*

*between Jun 25 - Oct 25



Message from Chair & CEO

JOINT MESSAGE FROM OUR CHAIR OF TRUSTEES & CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

As we reflect on another remarkable year at YMCA Black Country Group, we are filled with gratitude for the privilege of serving our communities and the young people who remain at the heart of everything we do. Every story in this report is a testament to what happens when people believe in one another.

This year has been one of transition and growth. The launch of our new five-year strategy, SHAPE of Communities 2025–2030, marks an exciting chapter as we respond to the evolving needs across the Black Country. Developed through consultation with staff, trustees, partners and the young people we serve, the strategy reinforces

our commitment to creating communities that are Safe, Healthy, Aspirational, Protected & Sustainable, and Engaged.

Despite the economic challenges faced by charities and families alike, YMCA continues to grow in purpose and impact. Our merger with Living Springs, expansion of Y-Living homes, and the launch of new youth and wellbeing projects show that we are not standing still – we are moving forward with faith and determination.

The merger with Living Springs has been a particular highlight, enabling us to extend support to vulnerable families and walk alongside young parents through life's critical transitions. This reflects our belief that everyone deserves a safe home and the compassionate support needed to thrive.

We are deeply grateful to our dedicated staff, volunteers, trustees and partners whose commitment to YMCA's values of trust, compassion, hope and inspiration is evident in all they do. From our Early Years Apprenticeship Academy nurturing future educators to the Youth Hub supporting over 1,000 young people into work, their impact is transforming lives daily.

None of this would be possible without God's guidance and provision, the generosity of our partners and the trust placed in us by the communities we serve. As we look ahead, we remain steadfast in our Christian mission to ensure every young person has the chance to discover who they are and what they can become.



Phil Walker
Chair of Trustees



Steve Bavington
Chief Executive Officer



THE SHAPE OF COMMUNITIES 2025 - 2030

YMCA's 'SHAPE of Communities' strategic guide has been developed through extensive consultation with staff, trustees, partners and most importantly, the young people and communities we serve. It reflects the core priorities identified by our stakeholders and focuses our efforts on five key objectives: creating

communities that are **Safe, Healthy, Aspirational, Protected & Sustainable, and Engaged.**

Our previous strategy, 'Connected Communities 2020-2025', marked a significant period of growth for YMCA Black Country Group. During this time, we responded to increasing demand for safe, secure, and affordable housing,

early years education, and youth work. Building on this strong foundation, our new strategy acknowledges the evolving needs of our service users, including housing insecurity, mental health challenges, and limited access to personal and professional development opportunities.

In the face of reduced funding for youth services and a rapidly shifting political landscape, 'SHAPE of Communities' positions YMCA as a steadfast pillar of community support in the Black Country. Guided by our Christian ethos, we remain committed to helping young people belong, contribute, and thrive.

To ensure we deliver on our strategic objectives, we have established SHAPE Champion working groups, comprising staff from across the organisation.

Each group focuses on one of the five SHAPE areas and supports the delivery of our goals. Champions meet regularly to monitor progress against key performance indicators and deliverables identified during the consultation phase, ensuring we stay focused and proactive in our approach. Working in close collaboration with YMCA Senior Leaders, SHAPE Champions play a vital role in bridging strategy and delivery.

We extend our sincere thanks to everyone who contributed their insights and feedback during the development of this strategy. Your input has been invaluable in shaping a future where YMCA Black Country Group continues to make a meaningful and measurable impact.

Our Strategic Plan



To read our strategy in full, scan the QR code or visit Policies & Publications on our website.





HIGH QUALITY EDUCATION FOR FAMILIES IN NEED

Through our network of eight day nurseries across the Black Country, YMCA is proud to have supported 523 children in the early stages of life, helping them to belong, contribute and thrive. Remarkably, 94% of these places are funded through government support, highlighting the vital role our nurseries play in making high-quality early years education accessible to families who need it most.

Each of our nurseries provide nurturing environments where children are seen, heard and valued. We deliver a bespoke curriculum that considers the child as a whole, weaves our Christian values throughout, and focuses on six key areas of development to ensure every child receives a well-rounded start. This approach supports not only academic readiness but also emotional resilience, social skills and physical wellbeing.

With dedicated teams at the heart of each nursery, we continue to invest in children's futures, laying strong foundations for lifelong learning and success.

DEVELOPING THE NEXT GENERATION OF EARLY YEARS PROFESSIONALS

Our Early Years Apprenticeship Academy continues to build momentum, now entering its third year of growing talent from within. Created in response to the national recruitment crisis in early years, our Academy has allowed us to develop passionate, skilled practitioners who share YMCA's values and commitment to supporting our children to thrive.

Following a rigorous selection process, 10 new apprentices started their journey across YMCA's nurseries in September. Apprentices gain hands-on

experience, recognised qualifications and mentoring that helps them grow in confidence and skill.

The approach has delivered tangible results: 12 apprentices from last year's cohort have now secured permanent roles within YMCA nurseries, progressing to Level 2 or 3 qualifications and contributing directly to the quality of early years provision across the region.

Early
Years

YMCA Carters Green Nursery is a great place to work, I live close by so it is a quick and easy commute for me. I have built good bonds and friendships with the children and I feel like I belong in my team. Our curriculum inspires me to ensure the children in my care are thriving.

I've made huge progress since starting my apprenticeship in September 2024. I have completed my training through the Apprenticeship Academy, gaining my qualifications within the setting. I have been able to implement our curriculum and support my team in setting up the environment to ensure we are meeting the children's needs. I feel like I am more confident within my role and I also have great relationships with the parents as well as the children.

I feel that I have learnt that you can be happy and enjoy work - it doesn't have to be a chore! Although there have been challenges because of staff shortages, the good definitely outweighs the bad and there is always a reason for me to be here.

Shania, YMCA Apprentice, Sept '24



PROVIDING YOUNG PEOPLE WITH A SAFE SPACE TO 'BE'

In the new September term, we launched our pilot Youth Café, funded by the West Brom Building Society Foundation.

The project is designed to give secondary school children a place to spend time, chat to others, and access the support of a dedicated youth worker should they need it.

Based in our YMCA West Bromwich site, the café is in the heart of the community and has the potential to improve the lives of

young people, giving them somewhere safe to go outside of the home and school.

The first week we welcomed 20 children from local schools to the café, with attendance in more recent weeks peaking at 52 young people. They enjoy crafts, board games and other activities, whilst making new friends.

The youth café is an exciting step in our new strategic direction, our hope being that we are able to replicate this model across the Black Country. We're excited to see how the project develops and grows.

CULTURAL KITCHEN FOR HOME EDUCATORS

A new initiative for YMCA, our Home Education sessions at City Gateway in Wolverhampton offer a unique and inclusive space for families who choose to educate their children outside of mainstream schooling. Designed to build peer support for parents and meaningful social interaction for children, these sessions are rooted in community and shared learning experiences.

Currently centred around cooking and baking, each session is themed to explore different cultures and cuisines. From making pasta from scratch to preparing dishes from around the world, children not only learn practical cooking skills but gain an understanding of budgeting and nutrition whilst celebrating cultural diversity and religious festivals, encouraging curiosity and respect among participants.

With 12–16 children attending regularly, the sessions provide a safe and engaging environment where children can connect with new friends and develop life skills. As an extension of our wider Y's Youth offer, which includes HAF funded holiday activities and after-school clubs in Wolverhampton, the Home Education programme reflects our commitment to supporting families in creative and accessible ways.

DEVELOPING BODY, MIND & SPIRIT

Our community gym in West Bromwich remains a stable part of our Health & Wellbeing delivery, offering a safe and supportive environment designed to promote wellbeing in mind, body and spirit whilst offering a combination of 18 weekly classes and fitness facilities to 737 members, 7 days a week.

YGym is more than just a gym. It is a community-focused fitness space that prioritises people over profit. Our client-base is a loyal one, with many members having attended for over 20 years. Whilst their priority is their health, many members have developed close friendships with others whilst attending classes, holding each other accountable or checking in on friends if someone misses a session.

All YGym members have access to our chaplaincy services and on-site chapel located next to the gym to develop in body, mind and spirit.

Health & Wellbeing



SUPPORTING YOUNG FAMILIES

In April 2025, YMCA merged with Living Springs, a local Christian charity that provides safe housing to single parents or families fleeing unsafe situations.

YMCA residents who are expecting a baby now have the option to remain in a YMCA setting, providing continuity of care and allowing them to stay within a

system they trust and a team they know. This reduces the stress and disruption that often accompanies significant life changes.

Since April 2025, YMCA Living Springs has supported 9 families including 15 children who were fleeing domestic abuse or found themselves homeless due to pregnancy or overcrowding in their current home.

By welcoming Living Springs into YMCA, we are creating more opportunities for families to thrive within a secure and nurturing environment, ensuring they receive the stability and support they deserve.

On the day I arrived and saw the sign 'shalom' on my door. I cried as it really was shalom, a place of peace for me. We have loved it here – a safe place for my children and I to live, play, find support and develop friendships.

Chelsea, Living Springs Resident

DIXON'S DEVELOPMENT PROVIDES AFFORDABLE HOUSING FOR YOUNG PROFESSIONALS

Our Y-Living model of housing offers safe, affordable housing for young professionals with a landlord they can trust. We currently have 147 flats across the Black Country with further developments in the pipeline.

Our latest Y-Living development will provide an additional 30 flats which are slightly larger than previous developments, enabling us to offer housing to young couples as well as single individuals.

With today's financial climate, single young people are not a priority when it comes to housing. It is not easy to bid for council

properties and private tenancies for single room flats are not financially viable. Through Y-Living, we are able to provide a solution for this need whilst building a community of like-minded individuals.

For young people who have been living with us in supported housing, this exciting new addition to our Y-Living portfolio provides a clear transitional pathway from supported to independent living, safe in the mindset that they will always have the compassion of the YMCA team to fall back on should their circumstances change or they are unsure on how to handle their new tenancy.

Chloe is a fantastic example of the impact housing solutions like Y-Living can have. When she arrived at Y-Living City Gateway she was medicated for anxiety and was unsure on her future. After 2 years, she's medication-free, has received a promotion, and now feels more positive about her future and prospects.

Housing



Scan to read
Chloe's full story



BRIDGING THE DIGITAL DIVIDE IN WALSALL

YMCA's Digital Divide project, funded by the West Midlands Combined Authority, is designed to support anyone in Walsall who needs help building their digital skills and confidence.

This year our work has centred on delivering workshops and 1-2-1 support through our key partnerships with Walsall Council, the Digital Skills Hub and local Job Centres.

We have run a number of "Introduction to IT" workshops in collaboration with the Digital Skills Hub, alongside our targeted programmes for Walsall and Willenhall Job Centres, which are designed to support claimants in moving their claims online.

We have further expanded our reach by running public sessions on contemporary topics like "Introduction to AI" and delivering a Canva workshop at the Walsall Maker Fest to support start-ups or small business owners, highlighting a clear trend where demand is shifting from foundational digital literacy towards more modern, in-demand tools.

YOUTH HUB THRIVES IN ITS THIRD YEAR

Launched in 2023, the Sandwell Youth Hub at YMCA has become a lifeline for young people facing barriers to employment. In year three the Youth Hub has worked with 2,038 individuals, surpassing its targets each year and proving the power of tailored, youth-focused support. With 322 young people benefiting from mentoring, workshops, CV writing and interview skills, the hub offers more than just guidance, it builds confidence, skills, and aspirations.

60% of young people working with YMCA, have secured work placements or employment through our partner organisations which is a testament to the hub's effectiveness.

By bridging the gap between potential and opportunity, the Sandwell Youth Hub is helping young people move forward with purpose and resilience.

Training & Education

I'd been looking for work for almost a year. No matter how many applications I entered they never seemed to go anywhere. I was referred to the YMCA Youth Hub, where I was introduced to the Birmingham Opera Company.

I enjoy acting and found the sessions really interesting and after attending several workshops I started chatting to the lady who ran the session about getting into acting. She suggested it would be good to get into the industry and asked whether I had any experience with stage work, which I did from my time in Youth Theatre. With that she put me in touch with the Stage Manager at the Wolverhampton Grand Theatre and I have been working there as a Stage Hand ever since.

Coming to YMCA has allowed me to get into things that I didn't think I'd be able to do without breaking the bank or having to move away from home. I've made a lot of new friends with similar interests. If it wasn't for the community at YMCA, I wouldn't have been able to find a job that I enjoy so much.

Nico, Youth Hub Client



Scan to hear
Nico's full story



SUPPORTING THE MOST VULNERABLE IN WALSTALL

The Glebe Centre continues to provide support to those in Walsall who are struggling with issues such as homelessness, substance misuse and poverty.

The centre offers shower and toilet facilities, as well as the opportunity to enjoy hot drinks throughout the day. Our staff team deliver 261 cook & eat sessions each year, which invite service users to cook a

meal together, spending their time positively, meeting new people and learning new skills.

Our Chaplaincy team make weekly visits to build trust and positive relationships with our service users. These consistent opportunities for confidential conversations allow service users to reflect on their personal journeys, learn from their mistakes, and make good choices in the future.

MAKING CONNECTIONS & IMPACTING LIVES

Now in its third year, the Making Connections project tackles loneliness, social isolation and empowers over 30 Walsall residents each year to take responsibility for their own health and wellbeing through pairing them with a Social Connector.

Many individuals have families who live far away and are unable to visit or care for older family members as much as they would like to. YMCA's Social Connector has built strong relationships with each person,

visiting regularly and discovering their interests to find activities locally that users will enjoy, such as gardening clubs or something as simple as a regular coffee morning.

The impact of this service is clear to see. Small acts of kindness and care have made these individuals feel valued, supported and prioritised, whilst their families are able to breathe a sigh of relief in the knowledge that their loved ones aren't forgotten or isolated.

Support & Advice

Before Rue became involved, my mom had been struggling with isolation and the effects of alcohol addiction. She had received some support in the past, but it hadn't quite met her needs. That all changed when Rue stepped in.

From her very first visit, Rue took the time to truly understand and respond to what mattered most. She worked closely with Mom's GP to arrange blister packs for her medication, making sure she could take it safely and on-time. Rue's weekly visits became something Mom looked forward to; a friendly face, a reassuring presence and someone who always went the extra mile.

When Mom was later diagnosed with throat cancer, Rue was there every step of the way, accompanying her to hospital appointments, checking in with phone calls and providing emotional support not just to Mom, but to our family as well.

Sadly, Mom passed away suddenly, but Rue's care and compassion didn't stop there. She continued to support us through our loss and even attended the funeral - a gesture that meant the world to us.

Without Rue, my mom could easily have been forgotten about and left isolated and vulnerable. Rue made sure that didn't happen.

Claire, Making Connection Client's Daughter



OUR CHRISTIAN MISSION LOCALLY AND INTERNATIONALLY

Our Christian Mission team has continued to build on last year's successes, strengthening connections both within the Black Country and across the wider YMCA movement in England and Wales.

Locally, the team played an active role in the Together Festival, leading youth activities and engaging local Christians to volunteer as chaplains within YMCA settings.

YMCA Black Country Group also continues to be instrumental in shaping and delivering the Unify conferences in the UK and Europe. Unify brings YMCA staff together to explore their faith and consider how Christianity can remain relevant and meaningful to the young people and communities we serve. This year saw our largest Black Country delegation yet, with 16 staff attending the UK Unify event.

EQUIPPING CHAPLAINS

One of our proudest achievements this year has been the creation of a six-week YMCA Chaplaincy Essential Training (YCET) course for volunteer chaplains. The programme is designed to equip everyday people with the confidence and skills to offer life-changing Christian spiritual and pastoral care across a range of YMCA settings.

Working collaboratively with other YMCAs nationwide, we developed a suite of videos and practical tools to support volunteers and promote a consistent approach to chaplaincy. This marks the first time such training has been available within the movement, a significant milestone for the ongoing growth of our Christian mission.

CARING FOR THE SPIRIT OF OUR COMMUNITY

Our Talk It Out service has continued to grow, creating meaningful opportunities for staff, residents, and members to explore faith and encounter Jesus. Between June and September 2025, our team held 57 conversations, with half leading to

prayer on themes such as mental health, past trauma, family relationships, and employment.

In May, we hosted our first Staff Conference, which invited colleagues to share how YMCA could better support their wellbeing in body, mind, and spirit. One key message from the event was a desire for our chaplains to have a stronger presence, particularly in smaller or more remote settings. In response, our team are releasing resource to enable every site to receive a bi-weekly visit from a chaplain, offering time and space for staff and service users to talk through whatever is happening in their lives.

To further support connection, we introduced a confidential prayer request tool that allows staff and service users to scan a QR code to privately ask for prayer or 'light' a digital candle for others. In its first month 17 requests were received, demonstrating both the value of this new resource and the vital role our chaplaincy plays in caring for our YMCA community.



THREE PEAKS CHALLENGE

A determined team of nine supporters and staff successfully completed the formidable National 3 Peaks Challenge this year, raising a remarkable £7,643.

The funds raised will go towards delivering more safe spaces for young people across the Black Country to belong, contribute and thrive, at a time when many local authority-funded youth services have seen significant cuts.

SLEEP EASY

For the 15th year running, YMCA held our annual Sleep Easy event, raising awareness and money of youth homelessness.

Another successful evening, 63 participants spent the night in Merry Hill car park to get a brief glimpse of what many of our young people have experienced.

Our willing volunteers were able to raise £6,148 to support the Moving Forward Fund, giving our residents that final helping hand as they leave YMCA, to buy essential items for their new home and set them up for success.

PARTNERING FOR A BRIGHTER FUTURE

As highlighted earlier in this report, we were fortunate to receive a £15,000 donation from the West Bromwich Building Society (WBBS) Foundation to fund our Youth Café in West Bromwich. Since then, the partnership has continued to thrive, with WBBS staff volunteering and offering valuable marketing support.

Together, we are also developing a financial education programme for both young people attending the Youth Café and residents living within YMCA accommodation. Many of the young people we support have limited financial literacy and come from households where debt and payment plans are commonplace. With the expertise

of WBBS, we're helping them build positive money habits, gain confidence, and save for the future.

It's vital that local organisations and businesses engage with and invest in youth work, just as WBBS have. Supporting young people at this crucial stage not only helps them to thrive personally, but also strengthens our local economy and community in the long term. WBBS have recognised this, and the success of their investment shows how meaningful corporate partnerships can create lasting change.

Funding & Donations





LISTENING, LEARNING & LEADING TOGETHER: STAFF CONFERENCE 2025

In May 2025, YMCA Black Country Group held our first Staff Conference, bringing colleagues from across the region together for a day of connection, reflection and shared purpose with the aim to strengthen belonging, collaboration and staff voice across every part of the organisation.

The conference gave staff the opportunity to openly discuss

what matters most in their roles and explore how we can continue to support one another in body, mind and spirit. Conversations from the day are already shaping action, with feedback having been reviewed by our Chief Officers and informing future wellbeing and engagement plans.

A key outcome was the introduction of SHAPE Champions – teams of colleagues who will help bring our new SHAPE of Communities Strategy to life, ensuring staff ideas and experiences directly influence how we deliver our mission.

As an employer, creating space for discussion shows how much we value the thoughts and opinions of our people. We understand that our people are our greatest asset and that when we listen and act together, we continue to grow as a community where everyone can belong, contribute and thrive and ultimately, serve our communities in the best ways possible.

COMMITTING TO DIVERSITY & INCLUSION

YMCA Black Country Group has once again been recognised as a leader in diversity and inclusion, following successful recertification of the ISO 30415: Human Resource Management – Diversity and Inclusion standard.

Valid for another three years, this recognition demonstrates that our organisation continues to meet rigorous international benchmarks for promoting equality, creating inclusive workplaces and ensuring a sense of belonging for staff, residents and service users.

The assessment included detailed reviews of our policies, leadership, and staff engagement. We were commended as “a well-led organisation where values are role-modelled from the top and deeply

embedded in
everyday practice.

Maintaining this standard reinforces our reputation as a values-driven, people-focused employer where every individual feels respected and supported. It reflects the positive culture in our teams and the confidence staff have in living out our values authentically in their daily roles.

We hope that this milestone strengthens our ability to attract and retain talented people who share our mission, ensuring we remain a trusted organisation where equality, inclusion and belonging sit at the heart of everything.



*Hear directly from our
staff, why they love being
a part of YMCA*

**People &
Culture**



FINANCIAL OVERVIEW 2024-25

YMCA Black Country Group continues to grow in both reach and impact, strengthening our ability to serve communities across the region.

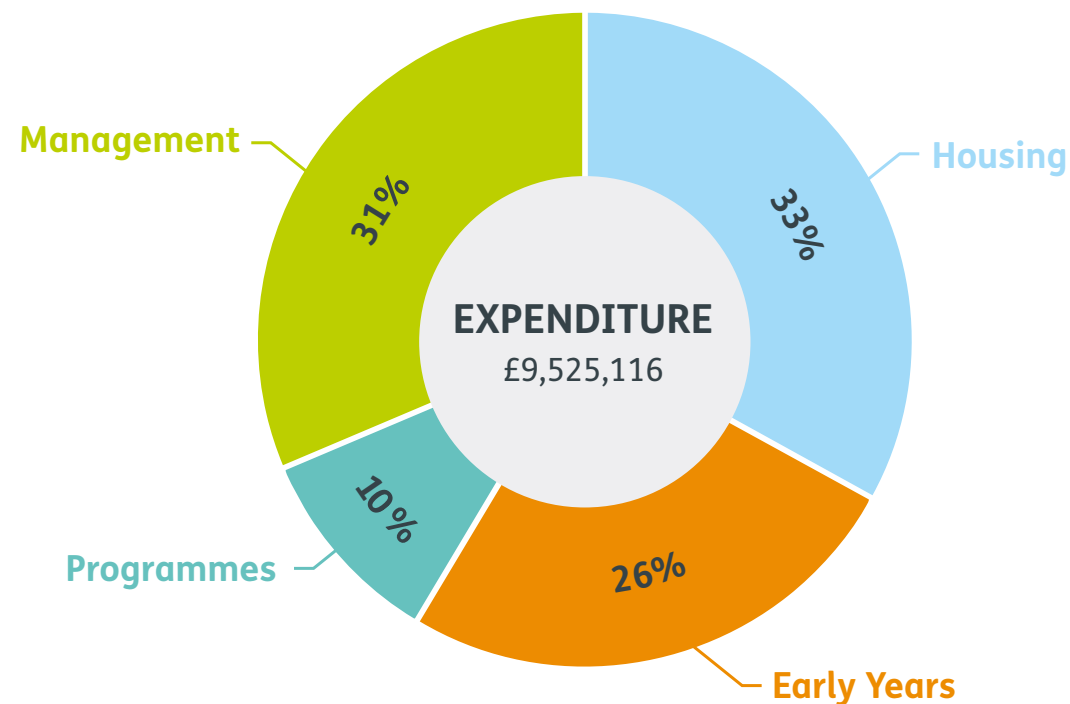
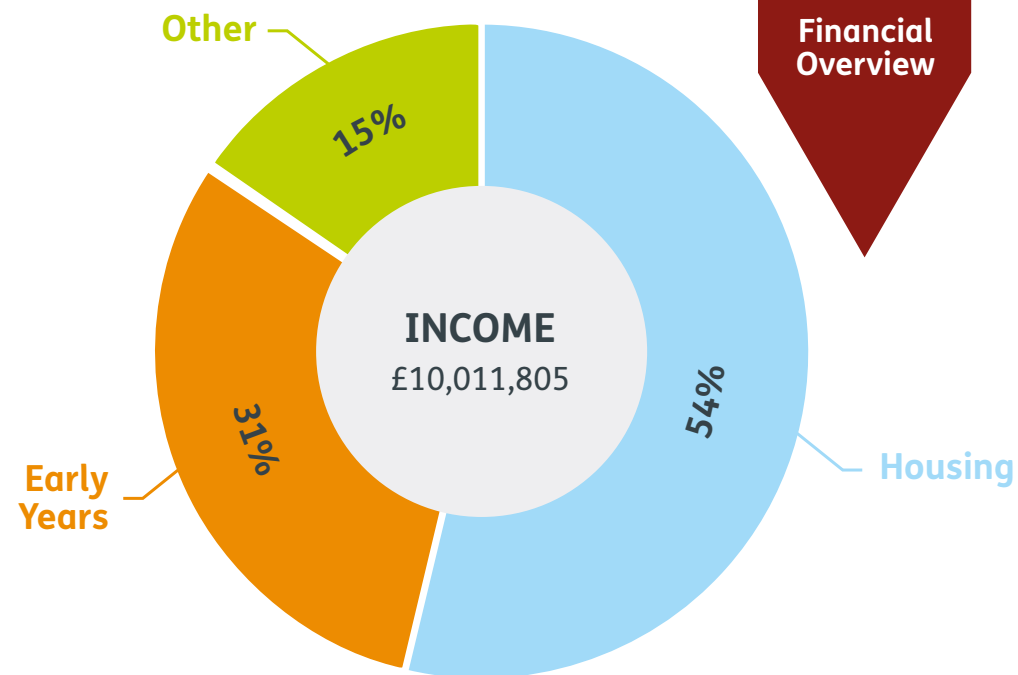
This year consolidated turnover rose by 21% to £10,011,805, reflecting growth across our housing, early years, and community programme activities. We achieved a surplus of £494,639, ensuring we remain financially resilient and mission-focused.

Our income demonstrates the diversity of our work:

- Housing accounted for 54% of income.
- Early years contributed 31%, through our eight settings.
- The remaining 15% came from community programmes and grant-funded activities.

Whilst inflation continues to present challenges, our prudent financial management and clear sense of purpose have enabled us to maintain stability and continue delivering life-changing support to those most in need.

Financial Overview



Supporting young people in the Black Country to belong, contribute & thrive.

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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