



# YMCA

YMCA BLACK COUNTRY GROUP

# We are YMCA

## FAMILY WORK

We believe every family should have the support they need to develop and lead more fulfilling lives.



"It's good to finally find a setting that not only cares, but has helped my child grow"

Gosia, YMCA Parent

## HEALTH & WELLBEING

We believe everyone should enjoy the benefits of good health and wellbeing.



"Excellent classes, great instructors. Enjoy every bit of it! It's boosted my desire to exercise regularly, eat healthily and be more positive. Highly recommended"

Joanna,  
YGym Member

## TRAINING, EDUCATION, LEARNING & SKILLS

We believe every young person should be able to fulfil their potential.



"I really appreciate my mentor supporting me straight out of prison into an Excavation 360 digger course. This made me more employable, I got a job and it's really going well. I'm busy and moving on"

Mark, YMCA  
Mentee

"Before coming to the YMCA I was living in a derelict factory. Now I have my own place here and I'm safe. I see each day as an opportunity to better myself."

Raj, YMCA Resident



## ACCOMMODATION

We believe every young person should have a safe place to stay.

## SUPPORT & ADVICE

We believe every young person should have someone they can trust.



"My YMCA counsellor helped me see that I don't have to manage everything on my own and it was OK to talk to my mum about how I felt."

Dominique, YMCA Client

## WHO WE ARE

YMCA is the largest and oldest charity working with young people (and their communities) in the world.

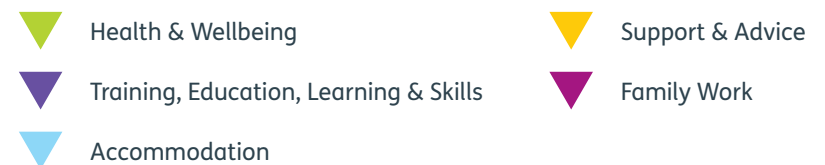
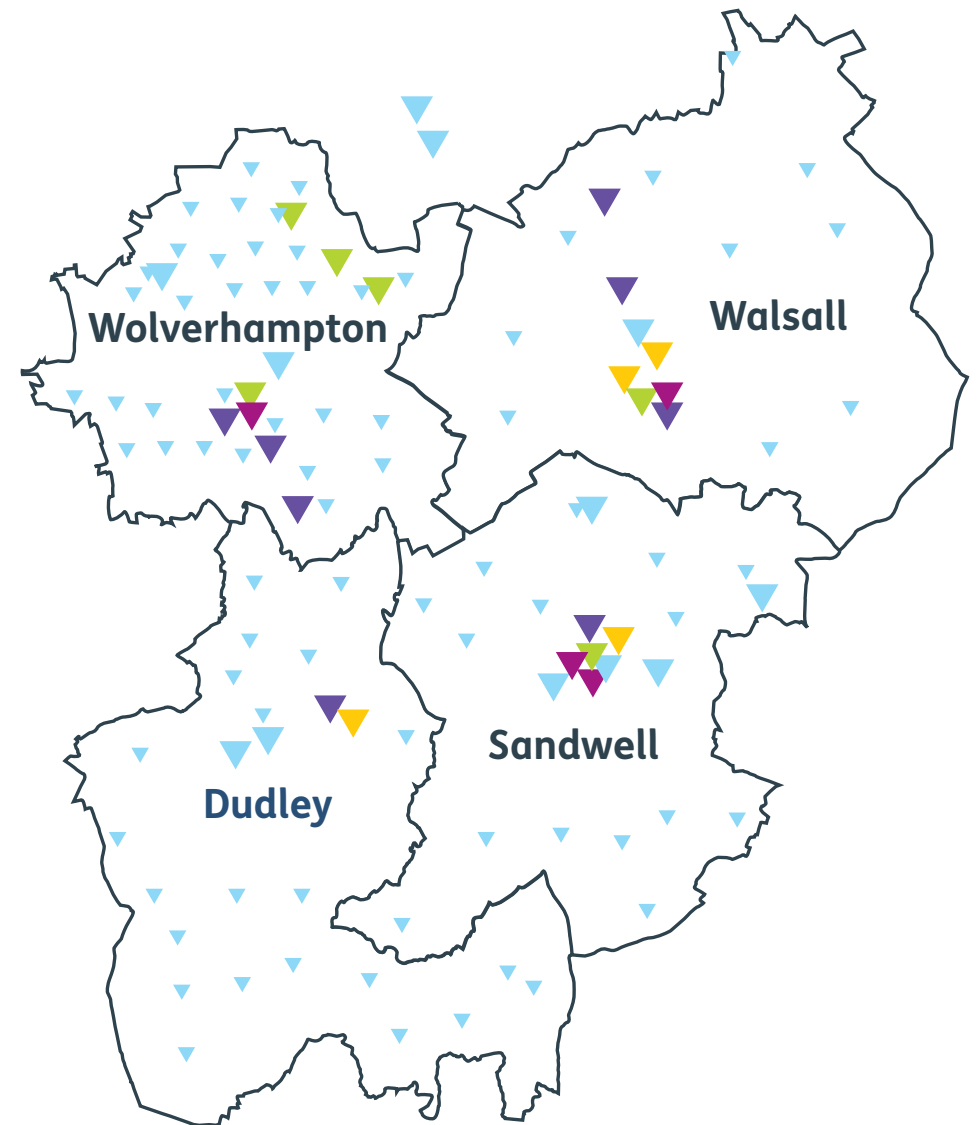
YMCA Black Country Group (BCG) works independently as a local charity, and as part of the wider YMCA Federation in England & Wales.

## WHAT WE DO

Across the Black Country and border areas there are thousands of young people who need our help. We do this by providing a broad range of services around five key areas; accommodation, family work, health & wellbeing, training & education, and support & advice.

We don't just think 'youth' we also think 'community' and our work extends to include people of all ages, faiths, cultures and backgrounds.

Our Christian foundation and ethos guides our vision... transforming communities, so that all young people can truly Belong, Contribute and Thrive; enabling people to develop to their full potential, in Mind, Body and Spirit.





# FAMILY WORK

Good early years education is the cornerstone of social mobility – and we are committed to investment in this area through an expanding network of children & family centres. We know that children with strong foundations will start school in a position to truly Belong, Contribute and Thrive.

YMCA BCG centres offer much more than just nursery provision. Our centres work in partnership with Health Visitors and Community Practitioners to support the youngest and most vulnerable children.

We provide parents with the skills and confidence to offer their children the best start in life – through training, mentoring or accessing services in the wider context.

We facilitate group work for our children enabling them and their parents to participate together, and use these opportunities to help reach a wider, and sometimes isolated parenting peer group.

We offer free spaces to those who need them most – liaising with Social Services on a termly basis to offer our support.

We connect with each local community to better support parents and provide signposting to services such as health & wellbeing, spiritual & pastoral support and skills & learning opportunities.



## EARLY YEARS PLAY, EDUCATION & SUPPORT, TO 876 CHILDREN

Stay and Play sessions have been introduced at our Nursery settings to encourage children and families to play and learn together. They help improve attachments, strengthen bonds, increase confidence and support child development. Parents benefit from these sessions immensely, as they often feel too daunted to attend external groups.

Due to the success of the sessions, parents are more confident, feel less intimidated by instigating play, and attachments have improved. Parents report that they enjoy replicating the activities at home.

# ACCOMMODATION

With over 327 units we provide a range of accommodation options across the Black Country and South Staffordshire Border areas.

Our Young Professional/Worker Housing offer is aimed at 18-35 year olds who are transitioning towards independent living. They might be living alone for the first time, returning from University, working, or in full-time education. Our Young Professional/Worker Housing ensures that young people have good quality accommodation that is affordable and accessible, with a landlord they can trust. We 'connect' our residents to the communities in which they live and to the broader services delivered by the YMCA BCG.

In our Supported Housing schemes, our primary aim is to provide a place of safety and stability where individuals can truly Belong, Contribute and Thrive. We facilitate this through support packages enabling our residents to acquire the skills they need to live independently and move on in a positive and planned way.

Our YMCA Open Door service is a unique response to youth homelessness. Focussing on 16-25 year olds, we provide supported accommodation in the homes of trained and approved Host Families. As the largest provider of Supported Lodgings nationally, we connect young people with communities who care, and where they can be equipped with the skills to live independently and thrive as they move on.

Our aspiration is to increase this accommodation reach, growing sustainably and connecting communities with the full range of YMCA BCG programmes.



## A RANGE OF HOUSING OPTIONS ACCOMMODATING 778 PEOPLE

April was living in a car when she first came to YMCA BCG after the relationship with her parents broke down. Once settled into YMCA BCG accommodation she began volunteering at the Small Street Centre doing cleaning work and training with another YMCA BCG programme, Talent Match.

After 2 years living at YMCA BCG, April was offered her own flat in Willenhall. The YMCA BCG Moving Forward Fund helped provide her with a new carpet. She applied for the job of Domestic Worker at YMCA BCG's Green Lane project (where she had lived previously) and was by far the best candidate. Having previously been COSHH trained through YMCA BCG, she was ready to start straight away. She's now a real asset to the staff team!



# HEALTH & WELLBEING

Our Health & Wellbeing services deliver a variety of programmes supporting physical and mental health, as well as providing upskilling and volunteering opportunities.

These services include YGym, counselling, healthy lifestyles, weight management, family and youth support.

Our Health & Wellbeing services continually grow and evolve to meet the needs created by a unique set of challenges across the Black Country.

We deliver valuable, high quality services in partnership with key stakeholders, employers, individuals and their families to reduce health inequalities across the Black Country and surrounding areas; ensuring young people, adults, families and communities can truly Belong, Contribute and Thrive.

We are committed to increasing local community access to sport, fitness and wellbeing programmes, including a dedicated youth offer, and sustaining our existing community outreach provision while further developing Community Branches in towns across the Black Country.

## HEALTH & WELLBEING PROGRAMMES USED BY 7,350 LOCAL RESIDENTS

Anthony is bi-polar, mildly schizophrenic and has an autism spectrum disorder, all of which were acting as barrier to his progress.

The YMCA BCG Health & Wellbeing Team arranged for him to see a counsellor and, through this support, Anthony realised his mental health issues didn't have to control him or be the barrier to him achieving his aspirations.

As Anthony said "There's always someone who can understand and help you and it's an obstacle but it's not a brick wall. You can get past it, it doesn't have to stop you and I'm proof of that."



# TRAINING, EDUCATION, LEARNING & SKILLS

YMCA BCG's Training, Education, Learning & Skills work offers tailored support in helping individuals reach their potential, whether through further education, training or employment.

We work with unemployed people aged 18+ and the service we provide is free, confidential and impartial.

We focus on the needs of the individual, working at their pace to co-design short, medium and long term goals; achieved by mentoring them to identify their personal wellbeing, learning and employment aspirations. Our aim is to ensure those we support are able to truly Belong, Contribute and Thrive.

These services are integrated into our Community Branch offer, or delivered as Community Outreach projects, often working in partnership with statutory and voluntary sector partners.

## SOCIAL ENTERPRISE

Alongside this we operate many social enterprises which meet our Charitable Objectives and provide services to local communities; including coffee shop, nurseries, YGym, charity shop and supported housing. Each provides opportunities for staff and volunteers to develop new skills and to personally develop.

## 592 YOUNG PEOPLE AND COMMUNITY MEMBERS ACCESSING EDUCATION, TRAINING & EMPLOYMENT

Phillip has been unemployed for over 5 years and has found it difficult to find a job that will fit in with his family commitments. He initially struggled to engage with his YMCA BCG mentor due to a lack of confidence and motivation, combined with financial problems and family demands.

Through support from the Building Better Opportunities Project, including accompanying him to various settings, Phillip has been able to progress. He's completed two training courses, is undertaking further education at the local Adult Education College and is exploring self-employment so that he can work around his family commitments.



# SUPPORT & ADVICE

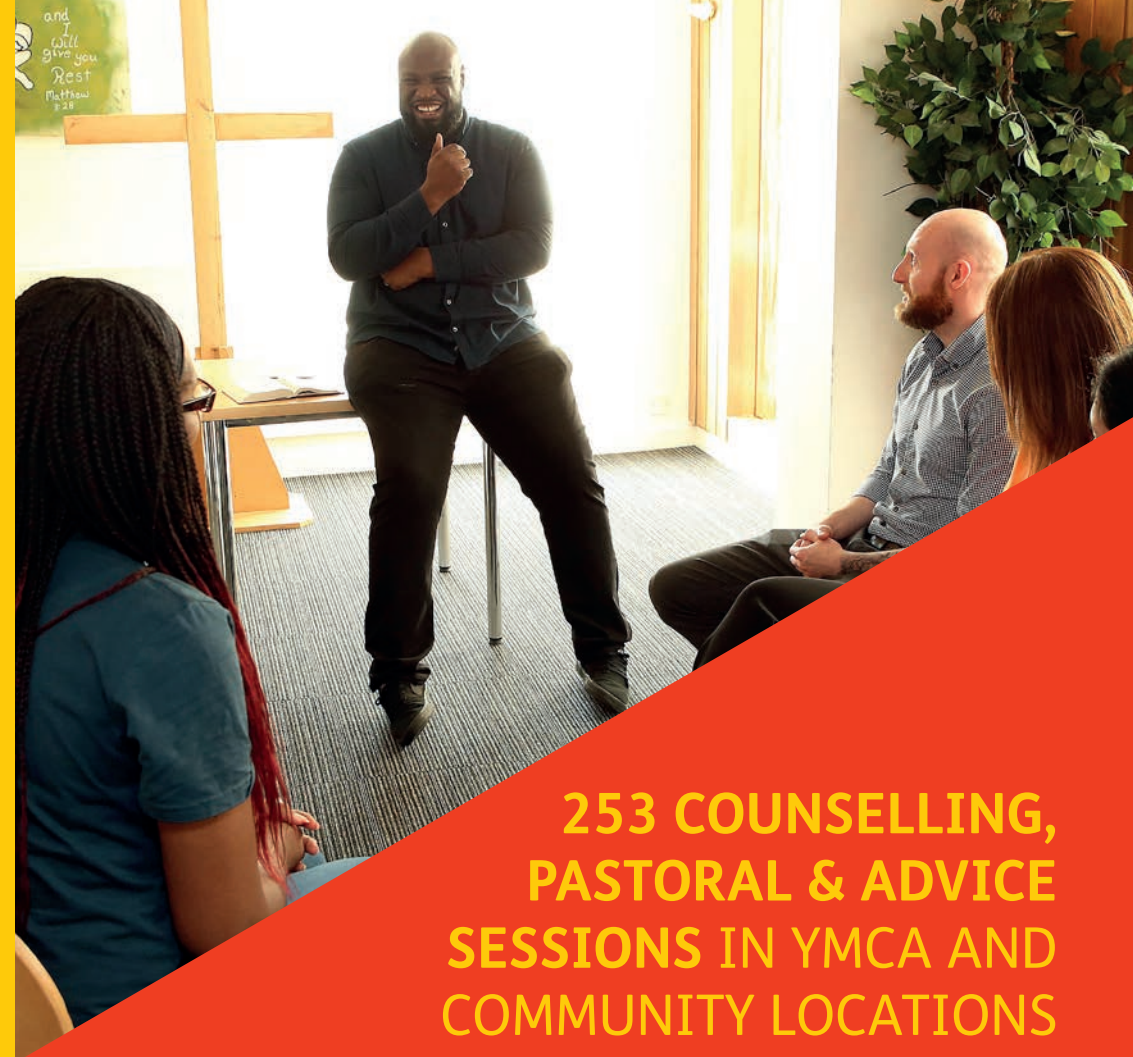
Support & Advice is a cross-cutting theme across each of the other YMCA BCG key service areas, and is made available dependent upon need. Sometimes intensive mentoring or counselling is required; whilst for others, group-work sessions or simple signposting provides the route to personal development.

On occasion, the YMCA BCG is asked to step-in to plug a gap or to support a struggling or failing service, and provide continuity of service delivery. In this way the support and advice work of First Base Walsall, the Glebe Centre, Comex and Walsall's Night Shelter has all been sustained in recent years.

## YMCA CHAPLAINCY

Our Chaplaincy service supports staff and service users to think through life's big questions. Often the daily pressures arising from relationships, money, personal and other expectations can seem suffocating; or life becomes so hectic that little time is spent considering spiritual health.

Working alongside Churches and Chaplaincy agencies, YMCA BCG Chaplaincy provides a non-judgemental space to discuss, explore, pray and generally unpack life's journey from a supportive Christian perspective.



## 253 COUNSELLING, PASTORAL & ADVICE SESSIONS IN YMCA AND COMMUNITY LOCATIONS

In September we started delivering the Happiness Lab course at Rugeley. Many of the residents struggle with mental health issues such as depression and anxiety. With encouragement from staff, over 20 residents engaged with the course across an 8-week period.

The course explored how different things can affect our happiness, from sleep, to forgiveness and from gratefulness to spiritual practices such as prayer and meditation.

Residents engaged with each other on a deeper level, allowing them to explore their mental health in relation to positive lifestyle practices. This has proved a great way to make friends, and talk about personal beliefs and faith perspectives.



# OUR COMMUNITY BRANCHES

Community Branches provide a sustainable YMCA presence in towns across the Black Country. Each comprises a social enterprise (usually childcare or housing related) which forms its 'economic engine', from which our wider charitable services can be delivered.

Community Branches have a reception and central meeting hub, delivered across at least 3 key service areas and can operate on single or multiple sites.

## West Bromwich Central: Community Branch

Spread across Sandwell's principle town of West Bromwich, this Community Branch has a central meeting hub located at the iconic YMCA Western Gateway centre which opened its doors in 2016.

### YMCA Western Gateway

Community Gym & Sports Hall  
Offices for Social Businesses  
Starter Business Units  
Learning - Meeting Spaces  
Prayer Room / Chapel  
Coffee Shop  
Supported Housing (96 units)

### 235 Hamstead Road Housing

Housing for 35 young professionals / workers

### Carters Green Nursery

Childcare & Family Support (119 places)

### Greets Green Nursery

Childcare & Family Support (60 places)

### High St & Phoenix Street Housing

Supported Housing for 35 young adults

## Walsall Central: Community Branch

A dispersed Community Branch with a central meeting hub located at The Small Street Centre, a short walk from Walsall Town Centre.

### Small Street Centre

Nursery (43 places)  
Offices for Social Businesses  
Learning / Meeting Spaces  
Prayer Room (Chapel)

### Green Lane Housing

Supported Housing for 21 young people

### Night Shelter

Street Homeless Emergency Shelter  
(Oct – March)

### Glebe Centre

Day centre for adults vulnerable to homelessness and substance misuse

## Wolverhampton Central: Community Branch

Operating across the City. The Temple Street Centre provides the central meeting hub and also the Group administrative hub.

### Temple Street Centre

City Tots Nursery (57 places)  
Offices for Social Projects  
Learning / Meeting Spaces  
Prayer Room (Chapel)

### Cannock Road Housing

Supported Housing for 21 young people

### Adult Learning Programmes

Delivered from City locations



YMCA Western Gateway, West Bromwich





# OUR COMMUNITY OUTREACH

Community Outreach programmes widen the scope and impact of our work beyond areas served by our Community Branches.

They can be single service projects operating in towns where we aspire to have a Community Branch, or projects that deliver at individual or multiple community locations to meet specifically identified needs.

## Black Country- Wide

### **Counselling & Mental Health Workshops**

A service provided to young people organisations, schools and colleges

### **YMCA Open Door**

Night Stop and Supported Lodgings services for young people, provided by a network of over 60 trained host families & individuals

## Dudley

### **Wolverhampton Street Housing**

Housing for 12 young professionals / workers

### **Highland Road Housing**

Supported Housing for 11 young people

## Pendeford

### **Catisfield Crescent Housing**

Supported Housing for 10 young people

## Rugeley

### **Church Street Housing**

Supported Housing for 26 young people

## Walsall-Wide

### **Community Health & Well-Being Advice**

Improving health inequalities by sign-posting community members to local health & well-being lifestyle services

## Wednesbury

### **Wednesbury Road Housing**

Housing for 14 young professionals / workers

## Wednesfield

### **YMCA Charity Shop**

Social Enterprise fundraiser and volunteering opportunity for the local community

## Wolverhampton- Wide

### **Youth Work**

Programmes which build resilience in young people aged 10-16, through a wide variety of sport / arts / well-being group activities

### **Mentoring, Advice & Guidance**

A range of programmes for young adults with long term unemployment or ex-offending history, supporting them into volunteering, training and employment opportunities



# CHRISTIAN FOUNDATION

The Christian faith basis of YMCA was established by Sir George Williams and set out in the Paris Basis as the foundation of the Worldwide Movement.

We continue to be inspired by and faithful to our Christian foundation and work alongside churches and community partners to provide an inclusive Christian expression throughout our charitable service areas for people of all faiths and none.

## YMCA GLOBAL

We are part of a Worldwide Movement that helps more than 58 million people in 119 countries.

Across England and Wales, we operate as a federation of 116 local and independent YMCAs.

YMCA Black Country Group pro-actively supports the work of YMCA globally, in partnership with YMCA England & Wales, YMCA Europe and World YMCA.

## OUR VALUES

Our Values describe the way we behave. They aim to be Christ-centred, inclusive for all, and aspirational. We develop excellent staff and hold the Investors in People standard.





# GET INVOLVED

## VOLUNTEER

Share your skills, or learn new ones by volunteering in a YMCA BCG project near you.

In the last few months, volunteers have helped with:

- Cooking sessions
- Our Charity Shop
- Social work and counselling sessions
- Homeless drop-in and Night-shelter
- Coffee Shop
- Our Christmas Carol & Nativity Services
- Making 'Welcome Packs'
- Trusteeship

## PRAY

Sign up to the Chaplaincy prayer points, and pray for the work of YMCA BCG, personally or with your church group.

## FUNDRAISE

Raise money for YMCA BCG by taking part in a sponsored event, or getting together with friends or colleagues at work to raise funds.

Recently people have :

- Slept in cardboard boxes for sponsorship
- Contributed to the 'Moving Forward Fund'
- Helped refurbish the Glebe Centre
- Made a 'one-off' or regular donation

## LEGACY

Include a legacy gift to YMCA BCG in your Will. We've been serving local people in the Black Country for over 130 years. Your gift will help us to impact future generations.

Visit [ymcabc.org.uk/getting-involved](https://ymcabc.org.uk/getting-involved) or email [info@ymcabc.org.uk](mailto:info@ymcabc.org.uk)





## YMCA BLACK COUNTRY GROUP

[ymcabc.org.uk](http://ymcabc.org.uk)

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Please note, our case studies have been anonymised and photographs may not relate to the person featured.

# YMCA

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.

SUPPORT & ADVICE

ACCOMMODATION

FAMILY WORK

HEALTH & WELLBEING

TRAINING & EDUCATION