



**YMCA HEART OF ENGLAND**

**PEOPLE & CULTURE STRATEGY**

**2025 - 2030**



Here for young people  
Here for communities  
Here for you

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

**This includes the staff,  
volunteers and  
stakeholders who work  
for and alongside YMCA  
Heart of England.**

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# Welcome Message

Our People & Culture Strategy establishes how we as an organisation want to develop and deliver an organisational environment and employment framework that truly reflects our values, gives the highest priority to the way we engage with the people across our organisation and determines a culture of the highest standards and unified working.

Equity, diversity and inclusion are central to our People Strategy, reflecting our belief that our people are our most essential and influential resource. Our People Strategy is pivotal to everything we do relating to people, both operationally and strategically, ensuring that our approach is inclusive, fair and empowering at every level. We believe a diverse and truly inclusive workplace unlocks innovation, reflects the communities we serve, and strengthens our impact.

In our People & Culture Strategy, we identify four goals that will focus on our growth and development, strengthen our staff skills and capabilities and motivate our current and future staff to achieve their fullest potential, while underlining us as a modern, innovative employer of choice in our local communities.



**Pauline Tomlinson**

*YMCA Heart of England CEO*



## BELIEVE

Our faith means that we **believe** in people's potential and have confidence for a positive future.



## EXCELLENCE

We seek **excellence** and deliver quality services by setting high standards and going the extra mile.



## INTEGRITY

Our ethos supports us to challenge ourselves and others to do the right thing at all times.



## COMPASSION

We serve others with **compassion** & kindness in order to transform lives and communities.



## INSPIRE

We **inspire** people to be the best they can be through their experience and interaction with us.

Following a series of workshops and discussions that have involved a wide range of stakeholders, including Trustees, Staff, Volunteers and Service Users, we have launched our YMCA Heart of England Strategic Plan 2025 – 2030.

This five-year strategy establishes the future direction of YMCA Heart of England.

A future that is genuinely about customer service and is committed to ensuring that young people get the best possible deal and have access to the highest quality services.

Our five-year strategic plan has considered the challenges facing us as a society and sets out how YMCA Heart of England will play its role in effectively responding to them.

This is not a plan which seeks to focus on empire building or to dominate the markets within which we operate.

We aim to be an organisation that is of a scale where services can be offered cost-effectively, with a primary drive to impact the lives of the young people and the communities we serve.

We are delighted that, as part of our consultations on our strategy, we have endorsed clear values rooted in our commitment to inclusion, fairness and respect for all those we work with and serve, with behaviour expectations clearly stated.

We want to be transparent in our approach so that our progress can be clearly measured - not only in achieving our strategic objectives, but also in how effectively we follow through on what we've committed to...

Our Culture!



Our Culture.

**How we do  
what we say  
we will do.**

We have given extensive thought as to what kind of organisation we want to be, and our four goals are unapologetically ambitious.

Our People & Culture Strategy sets out the goals and priorities that we have identified and will enable us to achieve an organisational environment and employment framework that reflects our values, prioritises how we engage with stakeholders both internally and externally, and creates a culture

of the highest standards and unified working.

Our aim is to establish ourselves as the employer of choice in our sector and specific geographical areas. We will achieve this by ensuring our people, regardless of role, level, background, identity, or lived experience within the organisation, are well supported. We will grow and develop our staff throughout their work life with the YMCA Heart of England, ensuring they have the skills and abilities to deliver as high-performing teams and individuals.



## Our Goals

- Become the employer of choice in our sector and in their geographical areas.
- Ensure all our people are well supported.
- Grow and develop all our people.
- Deliver as high-performing teams and individuals.

Our People & Culture Strategy also aims to serve our communities, becoming the Employer of Choice in the communities where we work.

We will strive to become the go-to employer for those living in the geographical area.

As we develop our unique employer value proposition, we will focus on the experience of working for YMCA Heart of England. That focus will encompass the whole journey, from the community member who is looking for work and applying for one of our roles, to the employee who is part of the team, as well as those who have completed their journey with us and either retired or moved on to future endeavours.

Our employer value proposition will be developed to ensure we are fostering a strong organisational culture, offering competitive pay and benefits, modern and innovative ways of working, and developing our colleagues both professionally and personally.

This includes creating a supportive, inclusive environment where everyone feels valued, heard and empowered to thrive.

We will also develop our Employer Brand through specific, targeted communications to our current colleagues, the wider communities in which we operate, and across the charity sector.

## Employer Value Proposition

- **Strong Organisational Culture**
- **Competitive Pay & Benefits**
- **Innovative Ways of Working**
- **Professional Development**
- **Personal Development**





**Dorota**

*YMCA Heart of England,  
Housekeeper*

## Staff Testimony

### **Why are you still with us and what do you enjoy about your role?**

I have been working at YMCA Heart of England for 8 years. This job has become an important part of my life - not just a workplace, but a community I feel proud to be part of.

What keeps me here is the sense of being valued and supported. From the beginning, I have felt respected and appreciated for the work I do.

One of the things I value most is that I can always count on the support of my colleagues.

There's a real team spirit and that makes coming to work every day feel rewarding and positive.

YMCA Heart of England is a place where I feel comfortable, appreciated, and proud to be part of the team.

We recognise that our people are our most fundamental and valuable resource.

Without our people, the YMCA Heart of England could not operate and certainly could not support our communities in the way we desire.

## Well-Being

We are resolute in our belief that the well-being of our people cannot just be lip service.

Our Well-Being initiatives will be valuable, impactful and sustained. We aim to ensure that all our people have easy access to the support and resources needed. We will actively research and embrace new well-being initiatives, with a focus on prevention rather than reaction, in recognition of the fact that different groups may experience different barriers to well-being and support.

## Work Practice

We will continue to develop modern, hybrid working practices that support our people in a positive and practical way, while continuing to meet the needs of the organisation.

Encouraging a culture of reasonable flexibility and enhancing our people's experience through the use of innovative advances in technology.

## Human Resources Department

Our HR Department will refine and simplify our HR processes, making the department more accessible and visible to all our people.

## Engagement

All our initiatives will involve our people and consider the feedback received through staff surveys and focus groups.

## Chaplaincy Service

Looking after our people is a top priority, and one of the best ways we do that is through our Chaplaincy Service. It is more than just a listening ear—it is a safe, supportive space where staff can talk things through, find comfort, and feel genuinely cared for. We believe this service makes a real difference in helping our team stay well, both mentally and emotionally.

## Well Supported Staff.

- *Well-Being Initiatives*
- *Communications*
- *Innovative Work Methods*



**Paul**

*YMCA Heart of England,  
Night Concierge*

## Staff Testimony

**Why are you still with us and what do you enjoy about your role?**

I joined YMCA in 2005 and have worked in several roles, including Acting Manager and Team Leader.

The support and encouragement of the team to do the Team Leader role changed my way of thinking and inspired me to support others.

I returned to YMCA to work a night-time role, to suit the needs of my family and the support I received to do so made me want to stay, as I wasn't just a number to them – I felt valued within the YMCA and their beliefs.

I have been inspired and empowered by the people I have met over the years, and I am sure that, continuing to work together, we will thrive as the leading service provider in our sector.

As an organisation, the YMCA Heart of England is committed to the professional development and career progression of the people who work with us.

Our commitment to the growth and development of colleagues will encompass targeted training for those in leadership and line management positions, ensuring that they have the skills and confidence to develop and inspire their teams and to recognise potential future leaders.

## Learning

We will ensure that they have access to the great learning experiences that not only facilitate them to achieve their full potential but also encourage them to.

We will strive to remove any barriers to learning and development by committing both time and finances to explore and provide real opportunities both internally and in conjunction with external providers.

## Support

We will remain open minded and support both inward and outward movement for the benefit of progression.

We will identify and remove barriers to advancement, foster inclusive team cultures and champion the development of talent from underrepresented groups.

## Future Talent

We will undertake to identify and nurture talented individuals through effective talent management and succession planning. We will develop individuals by including personalised Annual Learning Plans as part of our Performance Review processes.

## Growth & Development

- *Great Learning Experiences*
- *Open Minded Support*
- *Talent Management*
- *Succession Planning*
- *Personal Learning Plans*



**Shantel**

*YMCA Heart of England,  
Management Accountant*

## Staff Testimony

**Why are you still with us and what do you enjoy about your role?**

I joined YMCA initially on a temporary contract, and the staff were so friendly and welcoming.

When I was asked to take the job permanently, I did not hesitate.

YMCA was the first company to allow me to progress within finance.

I had over 15 years of experience in all areas of accounting when I joined the YMCA, and the finance director at the time recognised the skill set that I had and supported me in climbing the ladder.

As an employer, that is something that has always stood out to me and why I have stayed loyal for over 7 years.

Our strategy will result in delivering outstanding provision of our services to the community, driven by high performing individuals throughout the organisation.

## Training

Our commitment to providing structured and current training and mentoring programs that will consider both the needs of the organisation and the development of the individual, will be continuous and progressive.

## Empowerment

We are committed to empowering our people through the development of their skills and knowledge, alongside meaningful experience of best practice and innovation in the workplace.

We are determined that our focus is on the empowerment of people, rather than simply providing them with training. The consequence of which will increase their ability to impactfully use their skills and knowledge.

## High Performing Culture

High performance is not just about outcomes. We aim to create a working environment where people are confident enough, resourced enough and trusted enough to thrive.

Our commitment to equity, diversity and inclusion ensures that everyone has a fair opportunity to contribute, grow, and be recognised for their impact.

## High Performing

- *High Performing Individuals*
- *Skills & Knowledge*
- *Best Practice*
- *Training & Mentoring*
- *Empowerment*



**Ariana**

*YMCA Heart of England,  
Interim PA to CEO and  
Governance Coordinator*

## Staff Testimony

### **Why are you still with us and what do you enjoy about your role?**

I've found where I'm meant to be. From the very first day, I was welcomed not just with smiles, but with a true sense of belonging.

There's something incredibly special about the culture here - it's about respect, kindness, and a genuine desire to see each other succeed and grow.

I come into work feeling excited, motivated and inspired by the people around me. It's refreshing to not only enjoy the work I do, but to know that it's valued and that I'm surrounded by a team that truly lifts one another up.

It's easy to say "I love my job" when you are part of something that feels so positive and purposeful.

I know I'm still new, but I already have such a strong sense that this is just the beginning of something truly special.

One factor alone cannot determine the success of our People & Culture Strategy.

Our success will be measured by a number of indicators.

The people who are living and breathing our strategy every day will determine the outcomes.

## STAFF RETENTION INDICATORS

- Reduced staff turnover, tracked against UK average figures and projected budgets.
- Short-term & Long-term staffing targets met with reduced use of agency placements.
- Positive feedback in exit interviews
- Returning staff of all backgrounds, identities and life experiences.

## EMPLOYER OF CHOICE INDICATORS

- Becoming a “Living Wage” employer
- Positive feedback in the staff survey
- Staff reporting a sense of belonging and psychological safety.
- Diverse representation across all levels of the organisation.
- Community recognition.
- Staff incentive schemes.

## PEOPLE DEVELOPMENT INDICATORS

- An established culture of high-performance expectations.
- Key performance management measures met.
- Increased completion of key training.
- Continuously improving 1-2-1's and appraisals.

## EMPLOYEE RELATIONS INDICATORS

- A trustworthy workplace, with approachable colleagues and managers and culturally aware.
- Recognition of employees as individuals.
- Reduced grievance cases.
- Reduced disciplinary cases.

## STAFF WELL-BEING INDICATORS

- Compassionate management.
- Reduced sickness absence days.
- Positive feedback in staff survey disaggregated to monitor and respond to EDI-related disparities.
- Motivated employees.



# Summary: Culture & Behaviours

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Our People and Culture Strategy is so much more than key indicators and measuring our success against these; it's about **how** we do what we set out to achieve.

For our strategy to work, we must embody the behaviours that reflect our values, which flow from our Christian Ethos and will enable us to deliver the strategy's aims.

This includes a deep commitment to equity, diversity and inclusion, ensuring all stakeholders, regardless of background or identity, feel valued, respected and empowered to thrive within an environment that is both inclusive and just.

We speak about "How we do what we say we will do".

We do it through our culture, committed to inclusivity, living the behaviours & values we believe in.



## HIGH PERFORMING

- Excellence in Service
- Setting High Standards
- Going the Extra Mile



## Behaviour Standards Wheel

## GROWTH & DEVELOPMENT

- Believing in Staff's Potential
- Engaging in L & D Opportunities
- Challenging Ourselves
- Great Learning Opportunities



## EMPLOYER OF CHOICE

- Fair Pay & Reward
- Positive, Motivating Leadership
- Inspiring our Staff through Experience and Interaction

## WELL SUPPORTED STAFF

- Compassionate Management
- Respectful of Colleagues
- Embracing Well-Being Initiatives



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