

YMCA HEART OF ENGLAND

**CHANGING
LIVES**

**IMPACTING
COMMUNITIES...**

**Strategic Plan
2025 - 2030**

YMCA | Here for young people
Here for communities
Here for you



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We're proud to share the YMCA Heart of England Strategic Plan for 2025–2030.

This plan sets a clear direction for the next five years, focused on growing stronger, reaching further and **delivering greater impact** for the people and communities we serve.

This strategy was developed following a series of workshops and discussions that involved staff, trustees, service users, communities, volunteers and partners.

It reflects our shared commitment to high-quality services, genuine customer care and creating better opportunities **for all those we serve.**

Our **plan** is more than words in a booklet; it is what we have committed to doing to the best of our ability, and we acknowledge God's guidance in all that we do.

We recognise the difficult context we're working in; rising living costs, limited housing supply, pressure on services and deepening social challenges. But we also see opportunity through innovation, collaboration and faith-led purpose to respond with **impact** and **lead positive change.**

Our **strategy** is a commitment to action. It sets out how we'll respond to today's challenges while building a future where everyone has a fair chance to **belong, contribute, and thrive.**



Dawn Ward
Chair of Trustees



Pauline Tomlinson
CEO

Our History

Understanding our future starts with recognising our past and acknowledging our local, national and global connections.

We're proud to be part of the YMCA movement, one of the largest and most enduring Christian charities in the world, shaped by faith and guided by Christian values while remaining inclusive and welcoming to people of all faiths and none.

In April 2020, YMCA Heart of England was formed through the merger of YMCA Birmingham and YMCA Coventry & Warwickshire. This brought together two strong organisations, expanding our reach and impact across Birmingham, Coventry and Warwickshire.

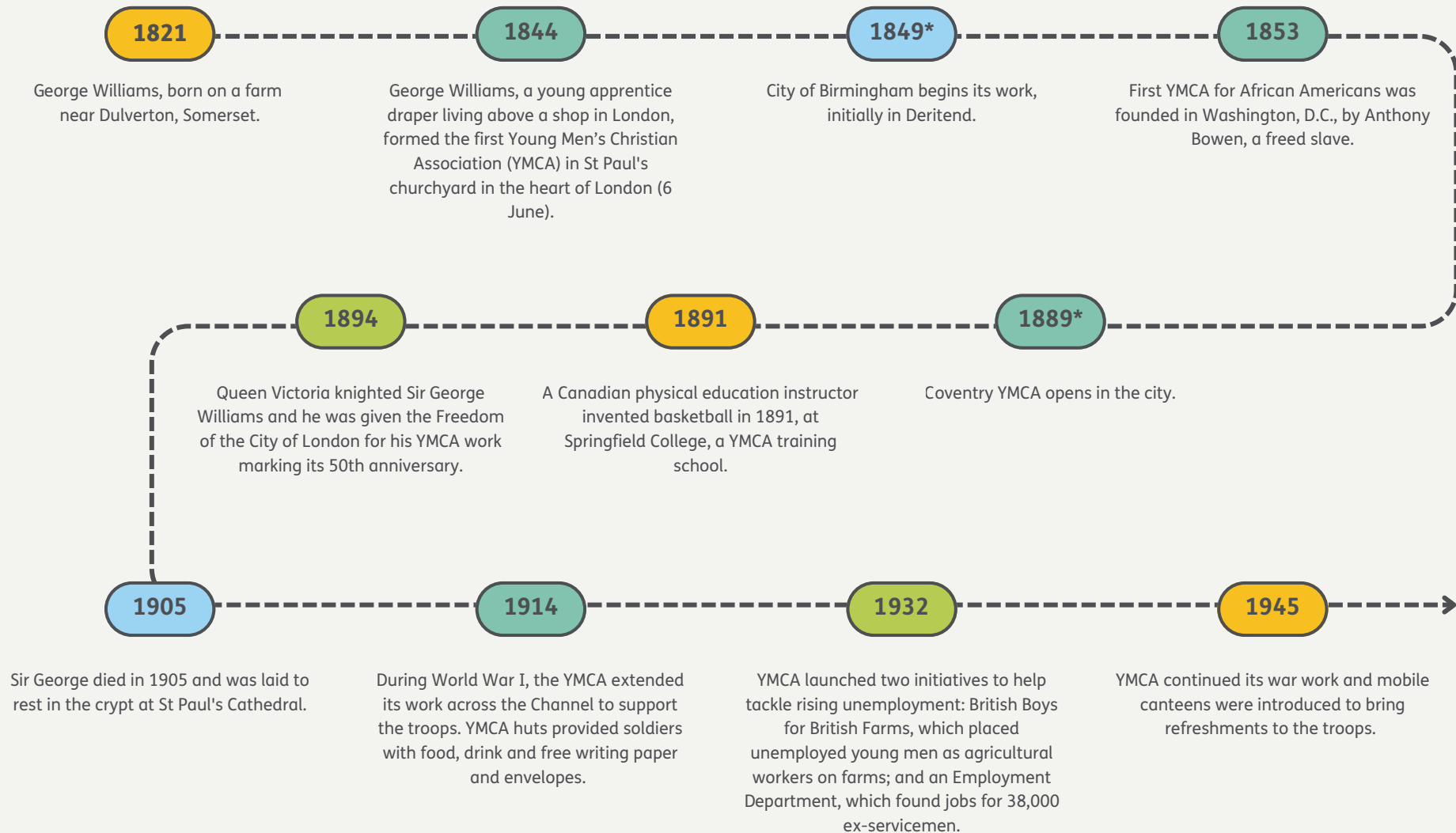
The YMCA movement began over 180 years ago. While much has changed, the core mission of supporting people to belong, contribute and thrive remains. Today, YMCA operates in over 120 countries, reaching around 59 million people every year.

YMCA Heart of England is proud to play its part in this global movement, rooted in local communities and driven by shared values.



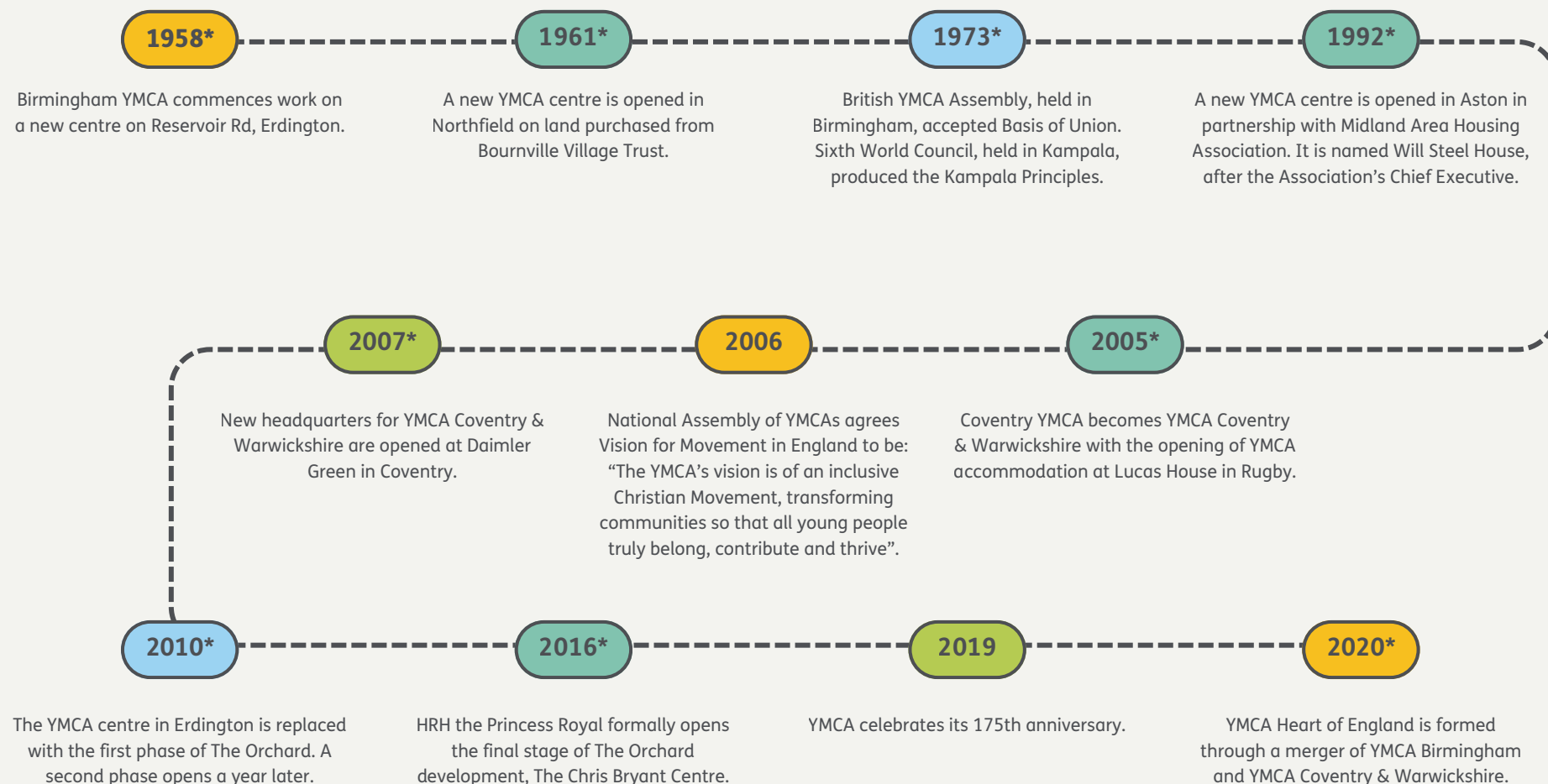
Our History

03



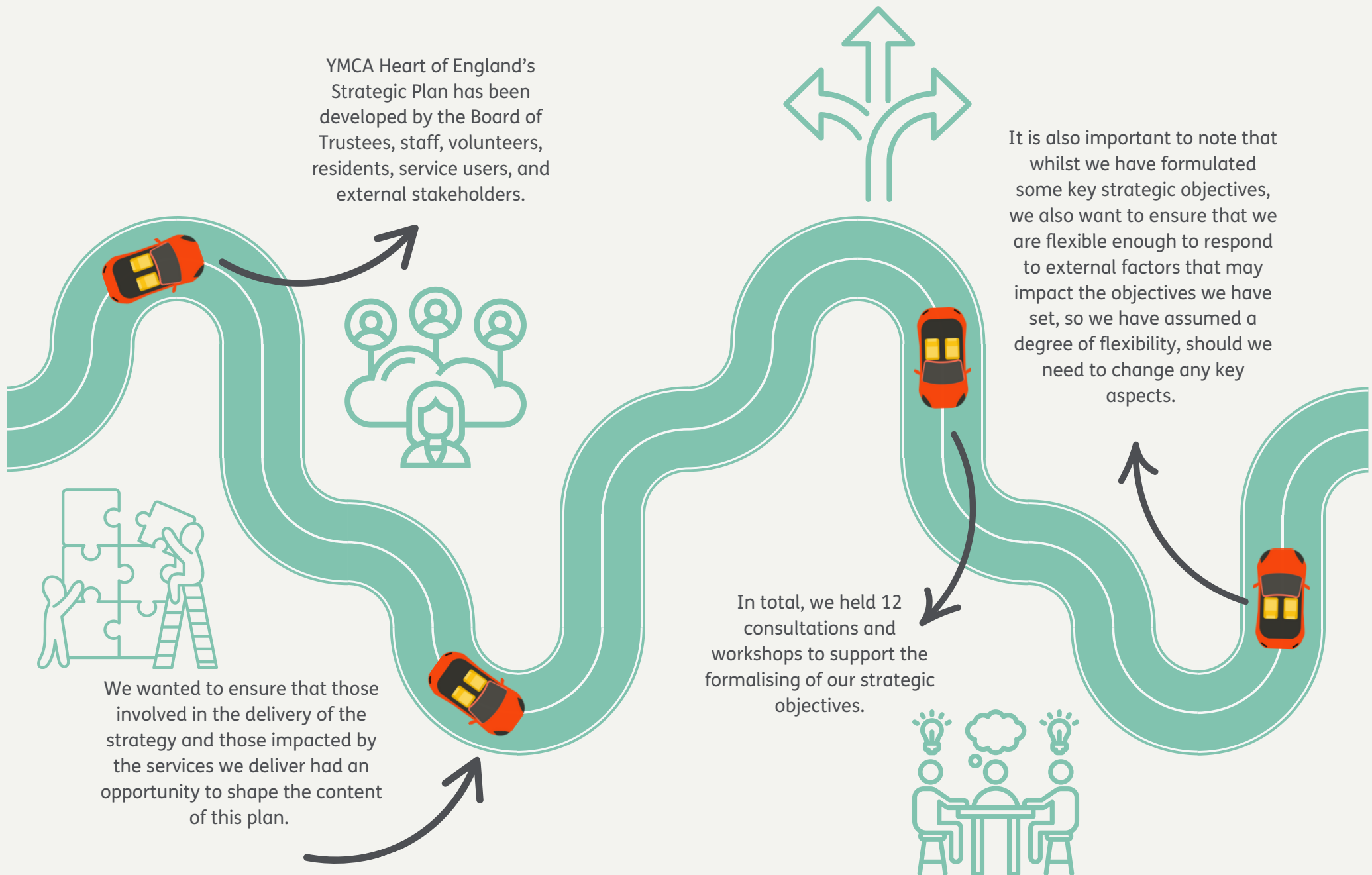
Our History

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The Journey

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Underlying Principles

This strategy is built on our underlying principles shaped by our Christian ethos. As an inclusive Christian charity, we welcome people of all faiths and none.

We are open about our foundations and express our values through how we work and how we serve others.

As part of the world's largest youth movement, we're renewing our focus on young people — helping them live life in all its fullness through early intervention and prevention, not just crisis support.

While youth remains at our core, we have long supported people of all ages and aim to be visible, accessible, and active in every community we serve.

To sustain and grow our work, we are prioritising financial resilience. In the short term, this means maintaining a strong housing operation as our financial base.

At the same time we are seeking to expand our nurseries and increasing our focus on grants, fundraising and donations to reduce long-term reliance on housing.

Our strategy is guided by these principles:

- Our Christian ethos and values remain fundamental to who we are and we will look to make that real in the life and work of the association. We live these out in all areas of our work, while being inclusive and welcoming to all.
- Although youth-focused, we support people of all ages across our communities.
- We focus on early intervention and prevention — working with individuals and families before problems escalate.
- We're diversifying our income to stay adaptable and continue delivering on our mission: ensuring the people we serve can live life in all its fullness.
- As we grow, we're committed to delivering high-quality, cost-effective services that make a real impact.

Everything we do reflects our ethos, our values, and our commitment to serving diverse communities focused on delivering positive outcomes with purpose and integrity.



Mission, Vision, Values & Behaviours

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Vision Statement

YMCA Heart of England's vision is to be a credible, sustainable Christian charity with a strong public profile and clear impact. Through our programmes, services and spaces, we aim to prevent exclusion and help young people belong, contribute and thrive in society.

While youth remains at our core, we will continue to serve all those in need. This vision defines what YMCA Heart of England wishes to become over the lifetime of this strategic plan. It is aspirational but rooted in the reality of where we are now and the possibilities we see before us. Whether we are moving towards or away from this vision, it provides the compass point against which we measure our direction of travel.

Mission Statement

Our mission is to inspire young people to discover their potential so they can live life in all its fullness. It defines what YMCA Heart of England does and the purpose that it serves and will guide our decision-making and direction over the next five years. What we do might change over the lifetime of the plan, but why we do it will remain an anchor.

Values & Behaviours

The way we act at YMCA Heart of England is characterised by five strong and distinctive values:

Believe
Excellence
Integrity
Compassion
Inspire

Our values underpin everything we do. They reflect the beliefs that drive our actions and shape how we behave. What we do - and how we do it - will show what we truly stand for. We've set out these values clearly and are committed to living by them. We welcome being held accountable to them.



Mission, Vision, Values & Behaviours

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The Framework and Pillars of Delivery

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Our strategic plan responds to local and regional needs while aligning with the YMCA Federation strategy. It also reflects our commitment to the global YMCA mission.

Our framework for delivery is captured under **FOUR** key pillars:

↓ LEADERSHIP & INFLUENCE

Leading change that brings about a more just, inclusive and equitable future.

↓ EXCELLENCE & IMPACT

Delivering high-quality programmes that change lives, reflect our values, and drive continuous learning across our organisation.

↓ GROWTH & REACH

Extending YMCA service models in more places and to more people where there is unmet need ; creating local community based hubs across our geographical communities.

↓ AWARENESS & SUPPORT

Building strong awareness and understanding of YMCA's work to drive urgency on key issues and foster empathy across our communities.



LEADERSHIP & INFLUENCE

In the next 5 years we commit to:

1) Empowering Our People to Deliver the Strategic Plan

- Define and embed a culture where all staff feel heard and valued.
- Increase opportunities for involvement across regions and invest in developing talent to strengthen our organisation and future leadership.
- Promote shared responsibility for equality of opportunity while building skilled, motivated, and creative individuals/teams to deliver our strategic plan with purpose and impact.

2) Creating Better Places for Young People to Live and Thrive

- Deliver an annual programme of property investment to improve quality and safety.
- Capture and use feedback to shape services and respond to community priorities.

3) Strengthening Connections Across Services and Communities

- Invest time in partnerships and stakeholder relationships.
- Share stories, promote achievements and host events across all locations.
- Build strong, inclusive connections across diverse groups.

4) Staying True to Our Founding Principles

- Being intentional about recognising where we started from by acknowledging the Christian Foundation upon which we were built in the services that we deliver and the work that we do.
- We will honour our heritage.
- Ensuring our organisation, staff, services, and partnerships reflect the communities we serve in terms of gender, ethnic diversity, and disability.



EXCELLENCE & IMPACT

In the next 5 years we commit to:

5) Investing in Developing Our People

- All staff will have annual personal development plans with opportunities to further access accreditation and qualifications.
- SMART KPIs will be set for every colleague, with support for wellbeing and spiritual care.
- We'll enhance employee benefits with a strong focus on health, well-being, and work-related support.

6) Prioritising Social Value in All We Do

- Use both qualitative and quantitative tools to capture social value.
- Invest in systems that show progress and the “distance travelled” by those we support.
- Deliver joint ventures with partners that reflect shared impact.

7) Advancing Digital Opportunities

- Reduce manual and paper-based systems, investing in digital tools that improve efficiency.
- Appoint a digital lead and engage expert support to guide progress.
- Strengthen data protection by reducing GDPR risk through smarter systems.

8) Reducing Our Organisational Footprint

- We'll make smarter, greener choices in how we operate across all sites.
- Invest in eco-friendly technologies, supplies and maintenance solutions.
- Track and report our carbon footprint and expand recycling efforts across all regions.



GROWTH & REACH

In the next 5 years we commit to:

9) Expanding Access to Affordable Homes

We will respond to local housing needs by growing our housing portfolio.

- Deliver 75 additional affordable homes each year, reaching 375 by 2030.
- Develop a strong pipeline of opportunities with partners to secure high-quality, regulatory-compliant housing.

10) Increasing Childcare and Out-of-School Provision

Expand to four nurseries by 2030 with expert-led growth planning.

- Build financially sustainable nursery provision that generates surplus for reinvestment.
- Launch affordable pre- and post-school programmes through our community and youth services, with a clear focus on income generation and impact.

11) Widen the Provision of Youth Programmes That We Offer

We'll design programmes that meet local needs and link effectively across our services.

- Launch trusted youth services in Birmingham and Coventry with key partners to extend our reach and raise awareness of YMCA Heart of England's impact.
- Increase youth engagement by defining target groups and shaping programmes around their needs and priorities.
- Ensure all programmes are inclusive and accessible, reflecting our commitment to supporting the whole person: mind, body, and spirit.
- Train youth ambassadors to represent young voices across programmes and at events locally, nationally, and internationally.

12) Strengthening Community Impact

We'll create consistent, high-impact local programmes shaped by real need.

- Deliver tailored community initiatives across all locations and the region we serve, using a replicable but flexible model.
- Make services accessible to all, linking with internal pathways into employment, training, volunteering and enterprise.
- Structure delivery to maximise regional reach through community hubs and targeted local models.



AWARENESS & SUPPORT

In the next 5 years we commit to:

13) Improve Visibility and Understanding of YMCA

- Strengthen our social media presence with clear messaging on who we are and what we deliver.
- Run four high-impact events annually to boost awareness.
- Collaborate with YMCA Federation to amplify our work and influence decision-makers.
- Share and adopt best practices with YMCAs regionally, nationally, and internationally.

14) Build Recognition and Trust

- Advance our communications strategy for staff, volunteers, and external stakeholders.
- Share results transparently and invite ongoing feedback from all stakeholders.
- Use feedback to improve services and communicate the changes made.
- Create platforms to elevate the residents' voice so they can shape decision-making.

15) Grow Partnerships and Funding Opportunities

- Proactively seek partnerships that strengthen our services.
- Align with partners who share our values and commitment to social value.
- Launch campaigns and events aimed at increasing donations by 5% annually.

16) Maximise Income Generation to Increase our Capacity and Flexibility for Growth

- Maintain a clear financial plan to manage risk and protect our future.
- Develop a 5-year value-for-money strategy with measurable commitments.
- Diversify income through rentals, trust funding, bids, and grants.
- Secure core contracts and maintain a pipeline of timely funding applications.



Our People and Our Culture

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At YMCA Heart of England, our people are central to delivering this strategic plan. The culture we create defines who we are as an organisation and shapes the environment we work in.

The culture we set will determine the kind of organisation and environment we want our people to work within. We want every person to feel valued, supported, and motivated. That means having the right people in the right roles, building skills, and creating space for people to grow and thrive. Our People and Culture Strategy outlines how we'll do this. It defines how we work, how we lead, and how we support each other, day to day and over the long term.

This strategy reflects our organisational values and sets out clear expectations for the kind of culture we want to live by. It commits us to being a high-performing, supportive employer that prioritises personal and professional growth. We aim to be seen as an employer of choice, attracting and developing talented staff and volunteers who want to make a difference.

We recognise that external pressures, whether personal, political or economic, can impact how people work and feel. To support this, we offer confidential counselling and internal chaplaincy support to all staff and volunteers. Alongside this, we provide tools and resources that help people take care of their own well-being, both at work and in their personal lives.

Our strategy is responsive to the wider environment we operate in. It reflects the investment we make in our people - financially, practically and culturally. And it holds us accountable to live our values through the way we treat each other and the decisions we make every day.



WHAT YOU TOLD US:

Some of the key things you told us that need to change and the struggles you are facing:



Housing and Supply

"If young people and vulnerable adults had access to affordable housing, there would be lower levels of poor mental health and unemployment and less strain on the welfare system".



Homelessness

"As a member of the housing team in the YMCA I see how awful the housing crisis is in my area and how difficult it is to move people on".



Youth Services

"Youth services has seen so many cuts and changes. We are at a point now where we are relying on donations just to survive".



Criminal Exploitation

"Fast money lifestyle is glamorous. Perpetrators are targeting the most vulnerable members of society. The victims often end up being the ones criminalised".

*Our Strategic Plan Objectives seek to address these points and so much more.
We hear you, we see you, and we will deliver to push change for positive outcomes...*

CHANGING LIVES AND IMPACTING COMMUNITIES... FOR THE BETTER.



Conclusions

Our ethos and culture will shape how we work within our teams and with our partners and guide how we deliver every part of this 5-year plan.

Young people, residents, volunteers, stakeholders, and the communities we serve will stay at the heart of what we do. We'll involve them in shaping our direction by regularly reviewing progress with their input.

We will meet all regulatory requirements and maintain safe, supportive environments where young people, children, and communities can thrive.

We'll track progress through both measurable outcomes and real-life stories to show the full impact of our work. Our commitment is simple: to be the best at what we do for our staff, volunteers, the people we support, and everyone connected to YMCA Heart of England.

We will do our best to be the best at what we do, and this is our commitment to our staff, service users, and stakeholders.

If you have any further questions or comments on our strategic plan, please get in touch with us at info@ymcaheartofengland.org.uk



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