



Summary of Annual Report 2018-2019



CENTRAL YMCA  
**SNAPSHOT**



## **BELIEF**

We believe that everyone can **flourish** with the right **opportunities** and **support**

## **WHO WE ARE**

We've been changing lives through **education** and **wellbeing** since 1844

## **MISSION**

**Inspire** and **empower** through opportunities to flourish in **mind, body** and **spirit**

## **WHAT WE DO**

We help people to be **happier, healthier** and more **fulfilled**



## **YMCA AT 175 YEARS OLD**

Founded in 1844, Central YMCA has gone on to build central London's largest gym, train more than 120,000 health and fitness professionals and provide thousands of young people with the skills they need to turn their lives around.

# Welcome



**MARK ANDREWS**  
**CHAIR**

As Central YMCA – the founding YMCA – celebrates its 175th birthday this year, we reflect upon and can be proud of all that the global YMCA movement has achieved since that day in 1844.

I would like to take the opportunity to congratulate the leadership team, staff and volunteers of Central YMCA on what has been a quite remarkable year.

Under Rosi Prescott DL's stewardship, they have tackled an ambitious two-year strategic plan for 2018 and 2019; completed the final stages of the merger with YMCA Training and also achieved a remarkable financial turnaround by bringing the Charity back into financial balance after several years of significant deficits. All this whilst demonstrably improving the quality of our services for learners and members across all operations.

In particular, on behalf of the Board I would like to thank Rosi for her unfailing dedication to Central YMCA and the wider global YMCA movement.

The next strategic phase for Central YMCA can be captured as a 'journey to excellence' and reflects our emergence from a period of significant infrastructure and organisational rationalisation to one of consolidation, with an enduring emphasis on quality. Building key relationships to support the long-term sustainability of our established programmes will expand our reach and help us impact even more beneficiaries.

The Board and I warmly welcome Arvinda as our new CEO and look forward to working with her and her team on these exciting developments in the years ahead.



**ROSI PRESCOTT DL**  
**OUTGOING CHIEF EXECUTIVE**

The last two years have been an intensely-focused whirlwind as we strove with every fibre to deliver our two-year strategy and ambitious financial plan.

An unremitting focus on quality and customer care across the board has now borne fruit. The Charity's carefully managed strategy of investment in our infrastructure, alongside deep systems and process reviews, has enabled us to respond faster and more smartly to the inevitable market and societal forces prone to divert us, and to manage costs to balance out any fluctuations in income.

I wish my successor, Arvinda, well for the future and offer up a special thank you to our Board of Trustees for the years of support, and to the wonderful, dedicated staff teams who have helped make the journey over the last 25 years an absolute joy.



**ARVINDA GOHIL OBE**  
**INCOMING CHIEF EXECUTIVE**

I am delighted and privileged to be taking on the leadership role at Central YMCA. In the short time I have been with this illustrious charity with its 175-year history, I have witnessed the most amazing amount of passion, drive and commitment from all I have met. We have enormous opportunity to build on our work and contribute to the wellbeing of our society.

I look forward to working with the Trustees and staff teams so we can build on this legacy and make it relevant for today, helping to address some of the challenges facing people and communities.

Our opportunity to collaborate with others and develop our work through partnerships can only assist in creating greater impact for the people we work with currently and in the future.

# Health and wellbeing

Central YMCA London Club dedicated health and wellbeing programmes serve a diverse community of all ages across Camden, Islington and Westminster. Staff are passionate about fostering an ethos of inclusivity and creating a welcoming space for all across our two central London venues.

## Community programmes

The Club encourages people from all walks of life to improve their health and provides a welcoming space for a broad range of healthy living and community groups. The core catchment area for the Club's numerous and varied activities (run both on-site and in local schools) spans the boroughs of Camden, Islington and Westminster but attracts members from all around London.

Our programmes continue to offer a focus on breaking down barriers to health and wellbeing for groups such as our older adult members, local children and young people at risk or not in education, and members referred to us by local NHS partners.

Each area of the Club's programme is delivered by specialist qualified staff and is supported by over 200 volunteers fulfilling a variety of roles.



POSITIVE HEALTH EXERCISE  
REFERRAL PROGRAMME

**379**  
REFERRALS

**278**  
MEMBERS

**89%**  
OF COMPLETERS WERE EXTREMELY  
LIKELY TO RECOMMEND OUR  
PROGRAMME

**Over 72,209**

USERS OF THE EXTENSIVE GROUP  
EXERCISE PROGRAMME

**2,700**  
SCHOOL SESSIONS DELIVERED BY  
PE AND WELLBEING PROGRAMME  
FOR LOCAL SCHOOLS



**12,726**  
PLAYSCHEME  
SESSION  
VISITS



**529**  
CHILDREN YOUTH  
PROGRAMME  
(CYP) MEMBERS



**2,679**  
CORE MEMBERS  
IN THE CLUB

**Over 700**  
PARTICIPATED  
IN WORKSHOPS  
AT **ONE KX** PER  
MONTH

**149**  
PARTICIPATED IN  
THE LANGUAGE  
AND ARTS  
PROGRAMME

**130**  
YOUTH  
PROGRAMME  
HOURS  
VOLUNTEERED

**1,682**  
TOTAL  
COMMUNITY  
PROGRAMME  
MEMBERS

# What does our Older Adult community say?

Our Older Adults programme offers people over the age of 60 the opportunity to improve their physical and mental health while combating feelings of isolation or loneliness.

We now have over 800 members over the age of 60 – more than double ten years ago. This programme provides an ideal space to improve wellbeing and forge meaningful friendships.

“The programmes make me feel good about myself - I feel younger, fitter and more able.”

YMCA Older Adult Member

**85.7%**

FELT MENTALLY STRONGER/ HEALTHIER AND MORE RESILIENT AS A RESULT OF JOINING THE YMCA CLUB

**80%**

FELT MORE PART OF A COMMUNITY

**97%**

HAD DEVELOPED A BETTER PATTERN OF POSITIVE HEALTH AND EXERCISE BEHAVIOUR

**60%**

FELT LESS ISOLATED OR LONELY

## JAMES'S STORY



**The YMCA has teamed up with London's Birkbeck University and designed a pilot eight week exercise programme 'Mind Body Matters' to help manage student stress.**

James is studying a Masters in 'Corporate Social Responsibility and Sustainability' part-time at Birkbeck University. The 30-year-old mature student has been suffering from anxiety since childhood, but it was when he was recently assaulted by a man on a moped, that his condition worsened:

“That took me to a level of anxiety that I hadn't experienced before and the exams certainly exacerbated the issue. There were other factors like lack of sleep - London is not a place where you can fully study without working alongside it. It's very difficult to commit yourself wholly to studies.

I was panicking that I wouldn't be good enough, especially around exams – I would fluctuate from being incredibly calm to blind panic. I'd wonder how on earth I would get through an exam and pass it.”

“'Mind Body Matters' has been really important in how I've dealt with my anxiety. I would 100% recommend it to any students suffering from anxiety and depression. In the way talking therapies didn't help, it gave me an outlet and an opportunity to put myself into a new environment and experience new things. You are given the agency to do what works best for you. I wouldn't say it's completely gone away, but my anxiety has certainly improved.

You can feel the endorphins and it makes you happier. Ultimately, I feel stronger, fitter and more confident walking along busy streets since joining.

Going to the gym has changed everything.”

# Education and training

Central YMCA's training operation is one of the largest national charity training providers in the country. This operation provides education and opportunities for employment for young people and adults, irrespective of their background and experience. We work closely with local businesses to support our wider communities.



## Post-16 Education and Apprenticeships

YMCA Training offers a broad portfolio of education, training and employment services. Its vocational training activities can be categorised as follows:

- Post-16 Study Programmes in preparation for Apprenticeships and/or employment
- Apprenticeships, Advanced Apprenticeships and Traineeships
- CPD opportunities and accredited courses for employers
- Pre-16 Alternative Education provision for children who have not thrived in a formal education environment

"I certainly wouldn't have been able to do this without my YMCA Tutor. Andrew coordinates all the practical work and coursework that I need to do.

George  
Horticulture Apprentice

**Learner achievement by programme**

## Study Programme

**85%** OF LEARNERS ACHIEVED (71.5% PROGRESSED INTO EMPLOYMENT OR FURTHER TRAINING)

## YMCAfit Participants

**82%** OF ADULT LOAN LEARNERS ACHIEVED (VS 73% NATIONAL AVERAGE)

## Apprenticeships

**71%** OF LEARNERS ACHIEVED (VS 68% NATIONAL AVERAGE)

## DANIEL'S STORY



### 25-year-old Daniel has autism and lives in assisted housing.

His dad, John – who accompanies him on the course - wants to nurture Daniel's love of gardening and help him achieve a qualification at the same time. The learning environment is really important to Daniel:

"I'm pleased I've done this course. I feel safe here. My favourite thing is planting, but I struggle with the prickly weeds!"

Due to the severity of Daniel's autism, John - at first - had reservations about the course, but he needn't have worried:

"Dan is very vulnerable - somebody needs to be with him all the time. At first we weren't sure whether Daniel could do this course because we didn't know how intense it would be, but after the first week, we thought it was brilliant and Rob the tutor has been amazing. It's boosted Dan's confidence.

I know Dan is safe here because he's calm and relaxed. He's definitely comfortable here. He's loved using the leaf blower and wants one for Christmas!

I didn't know you could learn so much in 10 weeks. It's incredible. I would recommend this course to anyone."

**"I want to work in a garden centre because it's full of wonderful things.**

Daniel  
HortAbility Student

## 16-19 Study Programme Bursary Scheme

**68%** OF YMCA LEARNERS WERE SUPPORTED THROUGH THE SCHEME

**13**

STUDENTS LIVING WITH DISABILITY PARTICIPATED IN 2 COURSES DELIVERED BY YMCA FIT

## MICHAEL'S STORY



He ditched the Xbox, ate less take-aways and started going to the gym every day. He lost weight, became strong and confident and discovered his passion for fitness. He enjoyed helping people with their exercises down the gym and toyed with the idea of becoming a Personal Trainer.

His college didn't offer a Personal Training course, but he discovered the YMCA's Fitness Training Academy online, which would fast track his fitness career:

"The whole package appealed to me because I would gain two main qualifications. I liked the practical work and training my peers. I especially liked learning about nutrition."

Michael is expecting his FTA result in December and has been awarded a place at London Metropolitan University where he intends to study a degree in 'Sports Psychology and Criminology' next year.

**Today, 18-year-old Fitness Training Academy graduate, Michael, is passionate about bodybuilding and nutrition, but not so long ago, life was very different. Michael used to be addicted to junk food and gaming, which made him disruptive at school:**

"Gaming was my life. It didn't have a good effect on me. I would play with people online and get angry when I lost, lash out and start again - it was a cycle. I was definitely addicted."

Michael's anger boiled over in school where he was frequently excluded for fighting and got detentions for not doing homework. Eventually he moved schools, but his brother still teased him about his weight. Michael decided to get fit.

## Qualifications

**YMCA Awards is an international awarding organisation, offering professional qualifications and learning resources for those starting or developing their careers, predominantly in the health and fitness sector.**

YMCA Awards certifies over 15,000 qualifications every year across Britain and nine other countries. Our qualifications are currently delivered by 303 education providers.

In 2019, YMCA Awards continued to feel the impact of a difficult and very competitive commercial climate. 21,153 learners (23,852 in 2018) were registered on vocational qualifications across 85 centres (83 in 2018); with 15,088 (18,300 in 2018) certificates issued to learners who had successfully passed their assessment.

The year saw a comprehensive review of all YMCA Awards key products. There was a strategic rationalisation of legacy awards to ensure that all qualifications were representative of a rapidly changing health and wellbeing market. We continue to widen our award-winning digital product portfolio and have launched our first apprenticeship assessment in Leisure Duty Management and Personal Training.



**Over 85**

QUALIFICATIONS CERTIFIED

**Working with 303**

CENTRES TO DELIVER OUR QUALIFICATIONS IN THE UK AND NINE OTHER COUNTRIES



# Finance 2018-19

In 2019 we saw a significant turnaround in performance and the successful achievement of a two-year roadmap to financial sustainability.

Benefits of a wide-ranging restructure which started in 2017 continued to be achieved in 2019, resulting in a £1.6m cost improvement compared to the previous year. Our year on year total income performance was also positive, a modest increase of £39k.

This performance means we can increase our focus on the education and wellbeing opportunities for young people and adults across our different activities.

The pie chart shows the balance of our income sources for August 2018 to July 2019.



**Income received through our charitable activities:**

- 51.3% Funded Education
- 29.8% Qualifications and Training
- 18.9% Club Membership and Programmes



**Expenditure attributable to each income source:**

- 49.2% Funded Education
- 22.8% Qualifications and Training
- 28% Club Membership and Programmes

**Contribution from the operations before support costs allocation**

**£2.6M | 16%**

**Free reserves as a percentage of 6 months operating costs**

**£8.7M | 99%**

**Central support costs as a percentage of income**

**£3.8M | 24%**

**Capital investment as a percentage of contribution**

**£1.1M | 43%**

# Our locations

Central YMCA is a national charity, with a regional focus.

We deliver apprenticeships across England and dedicated learning centres for 16 year olds as an alternative to established institutions. Our centres provide an alternative learning environment.

Each of our 11 centres is different, with a mix of training programmes and activities to meet local needs and employment opportunities.

Wherever you are in the country, if you come along to a YMCA Centre, you'll find it is a safe space – a space to feel welcome and included. Somewhere to learn new skills, get healthier, meet people and make a connection.

## Our centres



3 in the North East



3 in East Anglia



3 in the North West



2 in London



# Our partners

Our work would not be possible without the support of our partners across health, wellbeing and education.

Partners include employers of our apprentices, organisations who deliver our programmes and our donors.

This year, we have collaborated with many like minded organisations and we would like to say a big “thank you” for their ongoing support.



# Central YMCA

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