



**YMCA WIRRAL**

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**Resilience and  
opportunity  
in a time of  
uncertainty!**

**2020  
Meeting the  
challenges of  
the pandemic**



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YMCA Wirral's biggest achievement over recent years has been our ability to rise to unprecedented challenges, flex our resources and mobilise to support the communities of Wirral when and where it is most needed. At a senior management level, a huge amount of time has been taken up, interpreting and implementing all the government guidance, trying to balance continuity of service with managing our staff's personal anxieties in relation to COVID-19.

Looking back over the twelve months, I am extremely proud of what the YMCA Wirral team has been able to achieve for the people we support and the wider communities of Wirral.

**Nigel Hughes**  
**Chief Executive YMCA Wirral**



Maintaining business as usual during COVID-19 has not been without its challenges. But, as a charity, rooted in the communities of Wirral, it has brought out the best in our staff, volunteers, residents and reinforced our commitment to our work.

Many of the people we support do not have someone they can rely on in their lives or a secure place to call home. They often lack a routine or structure as they try and find their way in life.

All our work is developed and delivered with these people in mind. The first lockdown created rapid change across our areas of work.

The resilience we have sought to build within our staff team is part of the YMCA Wirral mindset – a firm conviction to believe in ourselves and our ability to adapt and deliver head on, whatever the situation.

Compared to many others, we are still a small charity, but by working on our growth and developing our own self-belief as a team, we have created additional organisational resilience.

During COVID-19, our support housing skills came into their own and at a critical point where Local Authority and housing association options were totally exhausted.





If the pandemic did one thing it has shone a spotlight on a significant group of vulnerable people who, with the right support and access to decent affordable accommodation, are able to get their lives back on track.

**Jackie Miles**  
Deputy CEO

**Our focus was the wellbeing of 100 homeless people placed in our support and the workforce who would be their COVID-19 rock.**

The crisis meant Supported Housing needed a fresh approach. With YMCA Wirral's drive, commitment, ambition and significant achievements over the last decade, we not only stepped up to the mark and delivered for our key stakeholders, we are also now well placed to be a significant resource in the post-pandemic, meeting the local and national governments needs for help and local focused support.



**We saw the warning signs and decided to take action preparing ourselves early.**

During January 2020 we identified what PPE was going to be needed for staff working on the front lines and purchased it quickly, we developed robust risk plans and trained and briefed staff and residents in readiness for the coming storm.

Becoming COVID-19 secure was critical so that staff could still take referrals and move people into our accommodation.

Anticipating the disproportionate impact of the COVID-19 restrictions on the people living in supported accommodation, we spent significant time and energy using a lens of Psychologically Informed Environments to enhance the physical spaces where our residents live. Upgrading TVs, creating additional safe spaces,

re-decorating and refurbishing communal areas into even more homely, inviting, and comforting areas where people would inevitably now spend more time.

We focused on support staff spending more quality time with people, creating socially distanced activities encouraging them out of their rooms to ensure no-one felt any more socially isolated because of the restrictions.

An enhanced set of activities also engendered a feeling of togetherness, with themed days, pizza nights and helping residents away from boredom and potential isolation. Great food became a staple offer, further enhancing their emotional wellbeing.



Telephone and 'virtual' became the new way of working.

However, these are not options for everyone. Our work requires regular face to face support, and practical help.

In response to this we worked closely with our Local Authority – Wirral Borough Council, to develop a Rough Sleeper Initiative providing rapid responses to those in the greatest need who were living on the streets.

Over the summer as restrictions eased, our teams adapted again. In resuming much of our 'pre-lockdown' provision we responded to the increased demand for services as problems and issues, hidden in lockdown, soon emerged.

However, the onset of autumn gave us the greatest challenges.

In November 2020 Merseyside had the highest infection rates in the country.

We had some staff self-isolating at the same time and saw the first positive cases in our workforces families, however mercifully our staff team remained Covid free themselves.





‘The dedication, resilience and professionalism displayed by our staff has been inspiring.’

**Peter Cookson**  
**Head of Supported Housing Services**



The wellbeing of everyone YMCA Wirral comes into contact with has been central to our response and to our achievements and successes throughout the pandemic, even more so through the second and third lockdowns.

Mitigating the wider impact of the restrictions on people has been key. We are careful to consider each individual and their own unique set of circumstances, and continuously assess the impact of the restrictions on their wellbeing together with their physical mental health.

These are some of the many achievements your local YMCA has accomplished during 2020

**Our Emergency Night Triage Beds** provided **2,218 bed night spaces** to a total of **386 individuals**:



66

female



301

male



**Controlled Drinking Environment**



778

female



1,546

male



901 meals served

12 referrals to CRI:

Wirral Ways to Recovery

6 completed a detoxification or rehabilitation

72 supported appointment attendance: doctors, hospital and other appointments

**121 hostel clients moved in:**



34

female



87

male



25 last address prison

36 presenting alcohol issues

46 presenting substance issues

114 only 7 clients returned back to prison (these may have been pending cases)

**121 hostel clients moved on:**



24

female



97

male



54 accommodated

7 back to family

7 detoxification/rehabilitation

**Our hostel nurse completed:**

84 wound assessment/care

45 vaccines (Influenza,

Hepatitis A/B and BBV testing

38 routine bloods (including LFTs)

25 new GP registrations

24 sexual health interventions

47 harm reduction interventions/

injecting assessments

45 prescription/medication support

18 Hepatitis C referrals/support

Needle exchange set up in YMCA clinic room



**Our Rough Sleep Initiative engaged 114 individuals:**



46

female



68

male



28 placed into supported housing

8 placed into own private tenancies

3 connected back to their local connections

2 placed into sheltered accommodation

45 placed into own accommodation via Housing

Options and RSI support

41 used YMCA triage/nightshelter when rehoused

20 referrals to CPN/Mental Health Team

17 referrals to CGL/WWTR

6 housing flat referrals made and accepted

3 placed into women's refuges

3 went to detox/rehabilitation

1 returned to Secro

84 street link referrals

34 rough sleeper engaged and were

reaccommodated



INVESTORS  
IN PEOPLE | Gold

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Chartered Institute of  
Environmental Health



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**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