

## Newsletter

August 2019

Issue 1

### An Introduction from CEO Nigel Hughes

Welcome to the Wirral YMCA Newsletter, a new and exciting format for us to share and communicate all of the latest news and achievements from this wonderful organisation. This year is the 175th anniversary of the very first YMCA opening and in just a month's time, YMCA Wirral celebrates its 145th anniversary.

Be sure to subscribe to our newsletter to find out about our upcoming celebration event in September. We will be revisiting the remarkable history of the YMCA Wirral, as well as sharing exclusive pictures, in future editions.

Our newsletters will be bursting with the latest updates from Wirral YMCA. Upcoming versions will include

- Personal stories from our inspiring staff
- Information on initiatives we are managing/ collaborating with
- Job and volunteering opportunities
- Our wide range of commercial facilities
- Lots of pictures capturing all of the above

The last few months have been both extremely hectic and productive for all of us at the YMCA. We have hosted work placements from the University of Chester, won the Customer Service Excellence Hallmark, started work on a brand new initiative to tackle homelessness in the borough and our very own garden was judged by the Royal Horticultural Society for the Northwest in Bloom awards.

We have met with some extraordinary guests from the North West and overseas recently, so be sure to read on for more information and please check out our social media links in the contact page.

Thank you for taking the time to find out more about YMCA Wirral!

*Nigel Hughes*

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## YMCA Wirral Garden Nominated for RHS Award

In July, we were visited by the Royal Horticultural Society (RHS) in honour of the Northwest Britain in Bloom Awards.

Our hardworking staff and volunteers deserve huge credit for all of their tireless work on maintaining our garden and the planted flower baskets that look so beautiful! (located on Borough road, Birkenhead)

The garden was judged based on horticulture excellence, environmental responsibility and community participation. You can find more about the award by visiting North West in Bloom website here: <https://www.northwestinbloom.com/>

Our expert judge for the awards, Alan Hulme, had this to say about our garden, "This garden has changed a lot since I last saw it, clearly there has been a lot of hard work to make it look so beautiful. The YMCA should be proud of its garden."

We take great pride in our peaceful garden paradise, located just at the back of the YMCA building on Whetstone Lane. The garden can be a place for staff and residents alike, to escape from the stresses of day to day life and relax in a secluded and beautiful environment. We hope this kind of facility and all of the work our team puts into cleaning and improving local areas in Birkenhead, allows the public to take pride in their community.



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## Our Chester University Student Placements

In May this year, we welcomed 5 students from the University of Chester for their work placements. The students had a substantial impact in our organisation by helping staff with the running of daily tasks, promoting our organisation through social media and interacting with our clients. We were so happy to welcome these enthusiastic group of students to the YMCA family and we hope the experience helps your future careers!

Our partnership with Chester University continues to grow and benefit all parties involved. Here is George, Amelia, Charlotte, Ella and Jordan on client days out to the Liverpool Dutch farm and our narrow boat in Church Minshull.



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### The New Assertive Outreach Project

**Have you heard about our brand new initiative – ASSERTIVE OUTREACH, which is taking a proactive approach towards the borough’s homelessness crisis.**

We launched the programme with 3 outreach workers, who began patrolling the streets 7 nights a week from 10pm-6am, from August 5th 2019.

The scheme is designed to deliver real help and support directly reducing the amount of people sleeping rough. The initiative is commissioned as an outreach service that brings the team into direct contact with rough sleepers. Outreach workers will provide practical housing related support, to help service users to access mainstream homeless accommodation services and/or secure permanent accommodation.

Our newly recruited team is pictured in the top right corner, Alya Hassan Heather Hawthorn, Jason Stanfield and deputy director Jacqueline Miles. The team are incredibly passionate about getting hands on with their exciting new roles, which could create a safer environment for the wider community and break down barriers that prevent people accessing services that can help them.

Assertive Outreach is funded by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) and YMCA Wirral are proud to implement this innovative service.

Thank you to Wirral council for writing the bid and commissioning YMCA Wirral this project.

Make sure you follow our social media pages and visit our website for more updates: <https://ymcawirral.org.uk/>



### Our Newly Awarded Customer Service Excellence Hallmark

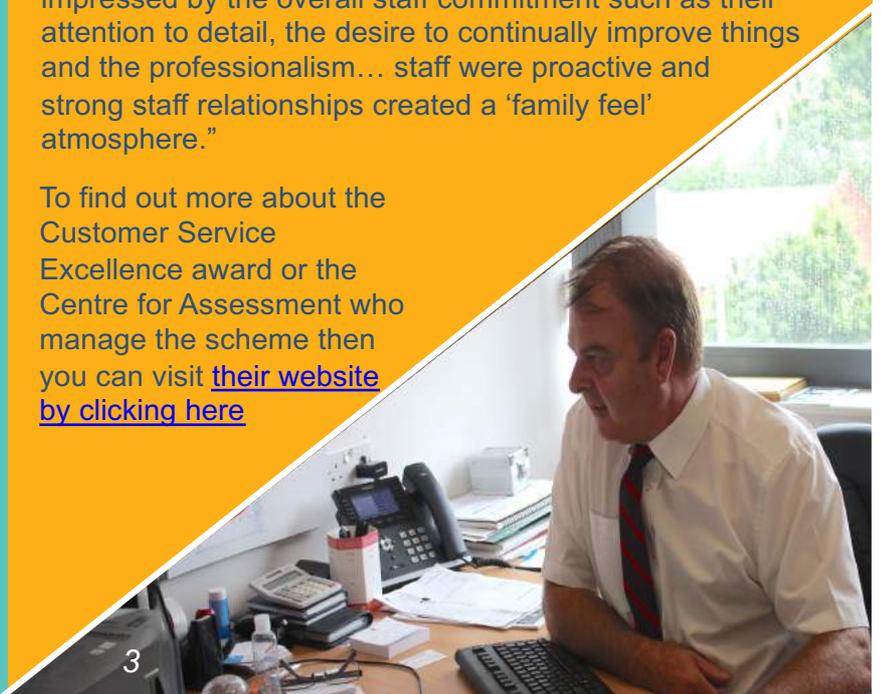
YMCA Wirral was recently awarded the Customer Service Excellence (CSE) hallmark in recognition of the housing, educational, training and social services we provide.

The national and highly sort after achievement, is awarded to organisations that display a high level of customer focused commitment, best practice and continually drive customer-focused change.

YMCA Wirral CEO, Nigel Hughes, said, “I would like to congratulate all of the staff and volunteers here, for their outstanding contribution and hard work that have achieved this award. This third party assessment reaffirms our core values of care, dedication and inclusivity that we have strived to maintain since YMCA Wirral was founded, 145 years ago.”

The assessment report said, “The assessor was very impressed by the overall staff commitment such as their attention to detail, the desire to continually improve things and the professionalism... staff were proactive and strong staff relationships created a ‘family feel’ atmosphere.”

To find out more about the Customer Service Excellence award or the Centre for Assessment who manage the scheme then you can visit [their website](#) [by clicking here](#)



# YMCA WIRRAL

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## Introducing Our New Text Messaging Service

In partnership with OON Media, we have now introduced our very own 'Text Communication Service', so it is that bit easier for you to contact and donate to YMCA Wirral.

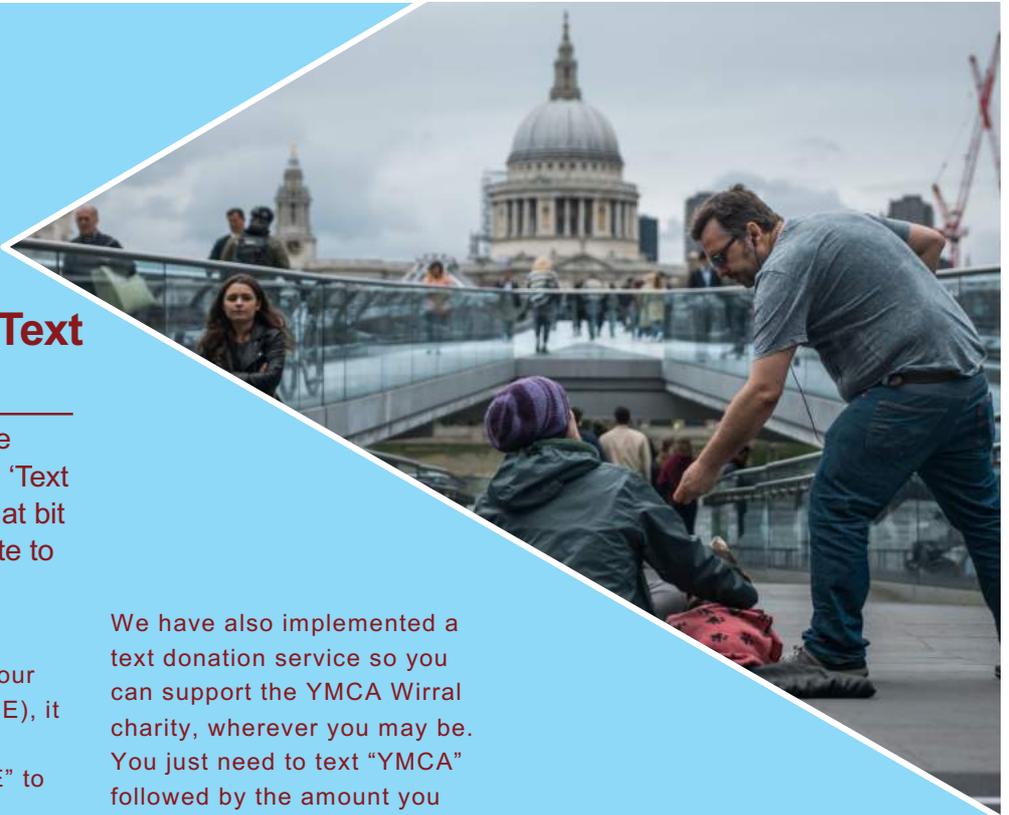
The fully automated communication channel has initially launched within our Controlled Drinking Environment (CDE), it allows for potential service users to contact YMCA Wirral by texting "CDE" to 07860041445.

Our service immediately responds to the sender, stating they will shortly be contacted.

Within seconds the Controlled Drinking Environment, is forwarded the sender's message by email and text and a member of staff will personally answer any queries.

We have also implemented a text donation service so you can support the YMCA Wirral charity, wherever you may be. You just need to text "YMCA" followed by the amount you wish to donate to 70450. You can donate up to £20 per text ("YMCA 6" will donate £6). Deputy Chief Executive at the YMCA Wirral, Jacqueline Miles, said, "I think this service will be mutually beneficial for the YMCA and the surrounding communities in the Wirral."

"With OON Media's support, this new technology will help us build new relationships through instant communication and ultimately, it will allow us to support those that need our help."- Jacqueline Miles.



### TO MAKE A DONATION TEXT 'YMCA' TO 70450

This costs £3 plus a std rate msg. Alternatively, you can opt to give any whole amount up to £20.  
For example 'YMCA 1' will donate £1

**THANK YOU FOR YOUR HELP**



A BIG THANK YOU FOR SUPPORTING OUR WORK HERE AT YMCA WIRRAL! YOU'VE DONATED £3. ❤️ 🙌



# YMCA

YMCA Wirral

**FIND OUT MORE**

**DONATE**

**GET INVOLVED**

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## Andy Topping: My Journey of Recovery 2017-2019

Before I found the YMCA, I was homeless and begging on the streets of Liverpool. For 26 years, I relied upon alcohol and methadone to be my support and comfort in life. I was not washing, eating and I would not go to any planned meetings, all I was concerned about was feeding my addiction.

In January 2017, I moved into the YMCA Wirral, the passion and empathy that the YMCA staff had for all the residents was completely new to me and I struggled to cope with it all at first.

In July 2017, I realised I had hit rock bottom and decided I wanted to change. I decided to stop contacting my family until I had fully recovered, in the hope it would give me an extra focus to work harder. Although I was scared of the challenge of beating my addiction, I was determined to find Andy Topping again.

The YMCA helped me reach out to Wirral Ways To Recovery and I started attending support groups sessions on a weekly basis to prove to everyone I wanted to change. I quickly received news I would start residential rehab at Phoenix House on 3rd August.

I went through a 7 day detox, which was like hell for me and it made me physically ill. I remember waking up choking with tubes down my throat and machines attached to me. The YMCA staff visited me every Saturday and their kind words and encouragement really helped me stay motivated throughout my journey.

When I came out of rehab at the end of 2017, I turned to the YMCA for guidance again in how to fill my time in my addiction free new life. The YMCA welcomed me back as a volunteer and I started to learn new skills such as how to live independently.



**YMCA**

After 12 months of volunteering, my confidence started to grow which was largely down to the support of the YMCA. I will always be eternally grateful for that. In December 2018, I successfully applied for a trainee hostel worker role and I am now a valued member of the support team that helps vulnerable adults that reside within the YMCA. I am now in regular contact with my family and my children. In July, I was thrilled to welcome the birth of my first grandchild.

I love my work. That feeling of helping to give people the chance of getting their lie back beats any addiction.

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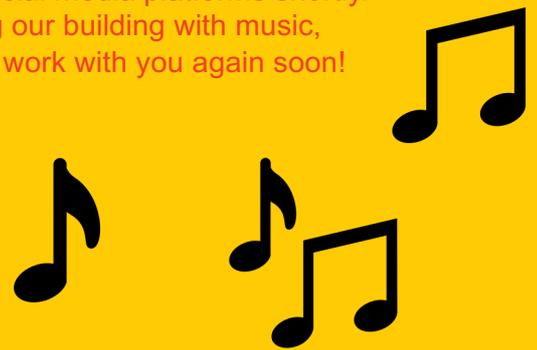
## Ray's Musical Journey



Good luck to our Controlled Drinking Environment client, Ray, who has started work on his Level 3 in Music Performance. For the last 2 months, Crisis have been supporting our Controlled Drinking Environment clients through music and performance development.



Anthony Reily, one of the Crisis staff teaching our CDE, said, "It has been a fantastic experience working with the CDE and the engagement and progression is better than I could have hoped for". The full recording of Ray's performance will be released across our social media platforms shortly. Thank you for warming our building with music, Crisis, and we hope to work with you again soon!



## YMCA Boating Facilities

YMCA Wirral boasts a narrowboat based in Church Minshull and a cruiser based in the Norfolk Broads available for hire!

Our boats offer the ideal opportunity for team building, a corporate day out or a relaxing holiday set at your own pace in a unique environment.

We also offer a course on the basic skills of canal-boating, which is simple and easy to learn from our experienced boating expert CEO Nigel Hughes. The cost of the one day course, which includes refreshments, is £100.00 and the two-day course, for those seeking more practice, is £175.00 (both plus VAT). The course includes boat handling, personal safety, how to use locks and more!

For more information contact Nigel on 0151 650 1015



## YMCA Conference Facilities

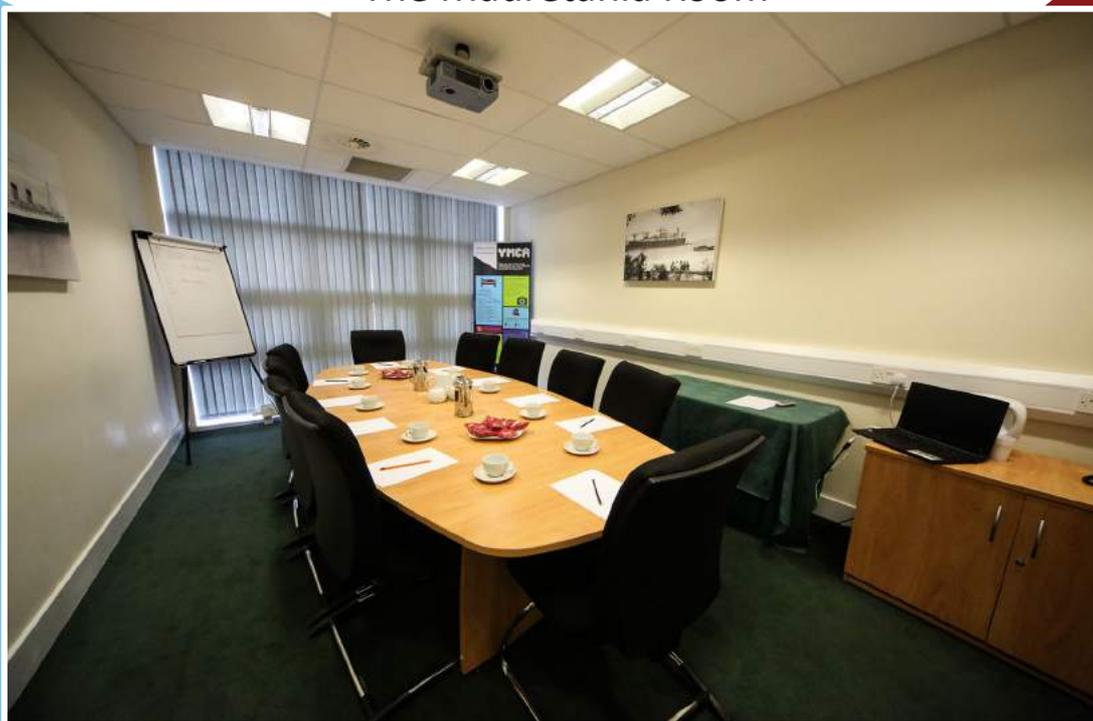
Check out our videos that show you more of our boating and conference facilities on our [Facebook page](#)

If you need a conference venue, why not utilise our state of the art meeting suites located within our HQ, on 56 Whetstone Lane Birkenhead. We offer the Baden Powell suite (seats up to 50 people, theatre style) and the Mauretania room (seats 12, boardroom style).

Our highly competitive packages can be tailored to your specific requirements. We arrange catering and beverages and all rooms are fully accessible.

Both meeting rooms have modern media facilities, air conditioning and two tone lighting. Call us on 0151 650 1015 for more information or email us at [reception@birkenheadymca.co.uk](mailto:reception@birkenheadymca.co.uk)

### The Mauretania Room



### The Baden Powell Suite





## A Special Thank You to...

the hardworking students from the NCS Catch 22 programme, who spent weeks of their free time collecting for our residents. The NCS - National Citizen Service is a nationwide scheme run by Catch22, who have worked with nearly 29,000 kids since 2010.

The Wirral NCS kindly donated the money they collected along with goodie bags filled with sanitary products, toiletries, sweets, positive quotes and personal notes.

If you would like to find out more about the NCS programme then visit [their website by clicking here.](#)

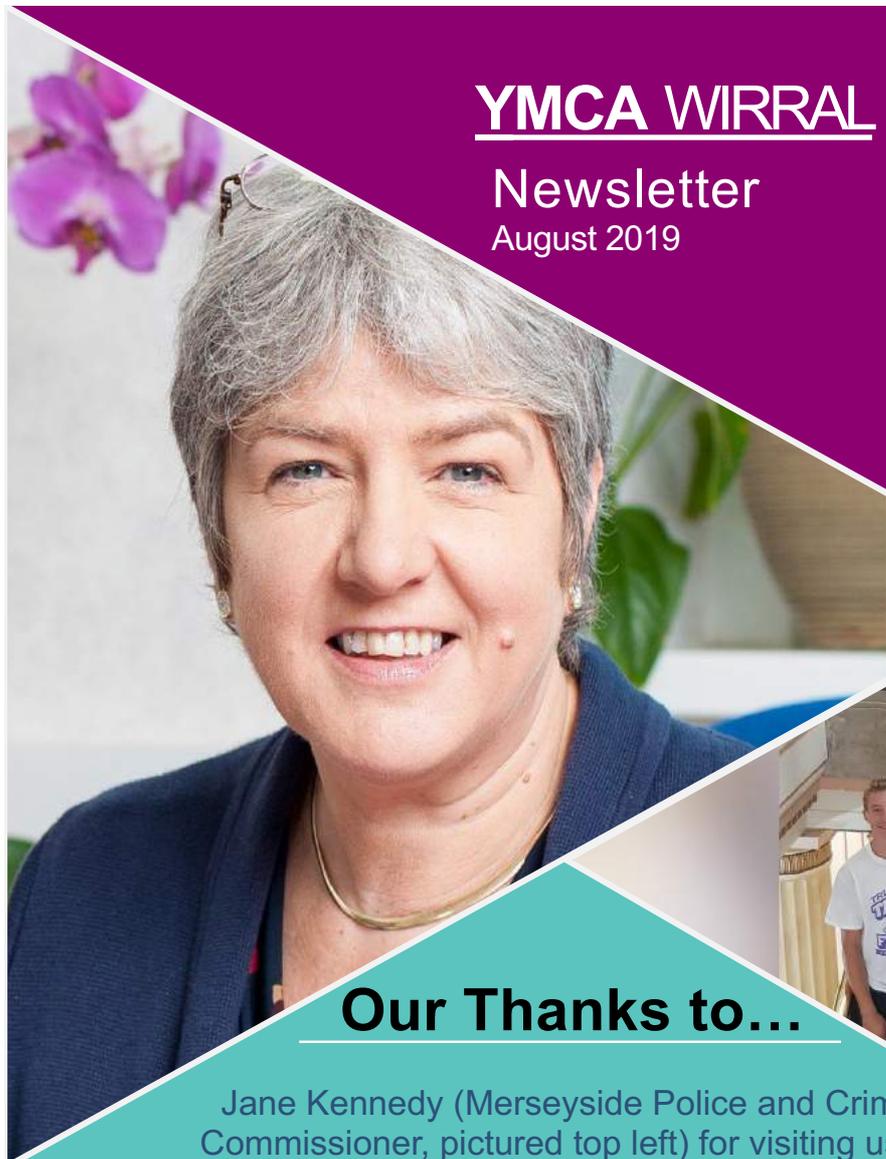
These students supported the YMCA because they saw the reality of homelessness when shopping. We gave the groups an insight into what we do to help prevent homelessness and substance abuse. Over the 6 week programme, they ran bake sales, completed sponsored activities and asked shops for donations for their goodie bags for residents. On behalf of YMCA Wirral, a big thank you to all of the group for their amazing work over the 6 weeks.



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### Our Thanks to...

Jane Kennedy (Merseyside Police and Crime Commissioner, pictured top left) for visiting us in June. Ms Kennedy has always been hugely supportive of the YMCA and we were honoured to welcome her again. Keep an eye out for our upcoming video on our social media pages when we talk to her about the work of YMCA Wirral.

In June, we also had the pleasure of hosting YMCA students from Minnesota, in celebration of the YMCA 175th anniversary. The Mayor came along to personally welcome them and he also raised the stars and stripes above Birkenhead town hall. The following day we took the Minnesota team to visit the Black Pearl in New Brighton. It was such a privilege to share the celebrations with such a dynamic and remarkable YMCA team.



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Newsletter created for YMCA Wirral  
by OON Media

Edited by Jordan Taylor



## Contact and further information

For content submission or other enquiries contact reception at [reception@birkenheadymca.co.uk](mailto:reception@birkenheadymca.co.uk)

### Coming in the next issue:

We will have all the news and pictures from our 145<sup>th</sup> anniversary event. We will also be revealing more details about our night shelter service, run by our incredibly hardworking team. We provided 4,869 bed spaces in 2018, a growing figure, which highlights the rise in homelessness.

Our Night Shelter provided 4,869 bed spaces to a total of 377 individuals:

- 3 males used it over 100 times
- 6 males used it between 70-99 times
- 9 males and 1 female used it between 50-69 times
- 12 males and 2 females used it between 40-49 times
- 36 males and 8 females used it between 20-39 times
- 48 males and 12 females used it between 10-19 times
- 113 males and 27 females used it between 2-9 times
- 82 males and 18 females used it once



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