

19/20



Impact review





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Foreword

Welcome. In this, our impact review for 2019/20, we draw to a close the 2017-2020 business plan. In a year which has brought such difficult challenges to so many, it is heartening to reflect back on a period of success. As the following pages will attest, in the 12 months covered by this report, YHA achieved its best year yet – both in terms of income and impact. As we mark our 90th anniversary, we can take pride in this accomplishment and take heart that we entered this period of unprecedented challenge in the very best position to thrive.

Our last business plan focussed not just on financial sustainability, but on finding pride and purpose in every hostel, in strengthening our strategic partnerships, in measuring and communicating our impact, and in broadening our reach.

While we can characterise this last strategic period as one of growth, certainly, it has also been one of adaptation. Where there were improvements to make, we changed our practice to increase our impact. For example, by focusing on funding breaks for young people with challenging lives through partnerships, we have made a more meaningful difference to more young people. By developing new work experience initiatives, we have engaged more young volunteers than ever before in opportunities that build tangible life and work skills.

In April 2020, we launched our new strategy: *Adventure. For the first time and a lifetime.* Inspired by our history, it draws on 90 years' experience in overcoming adversity and managing change. And there has been no greater challenge in the charity's history than COVID-19. Undoubtedly, the pandemic is the most severe crisis we have ever experienced. Yet it has reaffirmed completely the value of our contribution. This last six months has thrown into sharp relief the vital importance of access to the outdoors, to nature, to culture and heritage – for all.

Though much remains uncertain about the future, our commitment to our new vision, mission and strategic priorities will see us strive towards even greater impact in the years to come.

Building on the success demonstrated here, as we emerge from the ravages of COVID-19, we look forward to making a unique and tangible difference to society. To reconnecting people and places. To improving health and wellbeing. To nurturing growth and development. To enriching and changing lives. To providing access to adventure, for the first time and a lifetime.

Thank you for your continued support.



James Blake
Chief Executive

Commentary

Understanding and being transparent about the impact we make really matters. It matters to our supporters. It builds trust. And it matters to our beneficiaries. By illuminating what is working well and for whom, we can see what we should do more of. But we can also see where we could make more of a difference by doing things differently.

The 2017-20 business plan launched with a clear commitment to measuring and communicating our impact. This, our final review of that period, builds on the comprehensive 2018/19 report – yet with a greater focus on the innovative programmes and partnerships through which we have targeted our efforts to reach under-represented and under-served groups. It demonstrates the breadth and depth of YHA's impact at 90.

We know that there are things we have done well in this period. We met and exceeded targets for guest satisfaction and net promoter score – clear indicators of the quality of our universal offer of inclusive adventures, in extraordinary buildings, in amazing places. We honour our commitment to serving all, but especially young people. Approximately 40% of our total guests last year were under 26 years of age. In this period, we rolled out our new Children's Survey. It has given us fresh insight, providing compelling evidence of our impact on young people's health, wellbeing, life skills, education and personal development.

Over the course of this strategic period we have engaged new partners. We have increased our reach and the diversity of our beneficiaries. We have become more methodical in our approach to targeting assistance – more than doubling the number of young people with challenging lives supported with Breaks Programme funding since 2018/19.

We know that there are things we need to do better. To understand, for example, the role of hostels as community assets; COVID-19 has brought to the fore new ways we can serve locally as well as nationally. You'll be able to read more on this in our COVID stories report – a review of our response in the first six months of the pandemic.

We also have work to do to build longer term engagement with more of our beneficiaries. We have a loyal and supportive membership base. How, now, can we bring more people into our movement from a wider range of backgrounds? And move one-off bookers to return for repeated experiences.

Finally, we know we need to increase our data. The scale of our impact comes, in the main, from users who pay to access our services. Beyond our customer satisfaction work, how can we understand the impact of YHA stays – the impact on families, on the lone traveller, on our members. We have made strides in understanding our diversity and have taken action to reach more widely but there is more to do. With richer insight we can refine our offer and ensure YHA really is for all.

This impact review offers a snapshot of what we do and how we do it. For the fullest picture it should be read alongside our annual accounts. We are proud to close down the 2017-2020 business plan having achieved so much for so many. And look forward to delivering our new, ambitious strategy.



Anita Kerwin-Nye
Director of Strategy and
Engagement

The year in numbers

1,049,522

total guests in 2019/20

80%

year average guest satisfaction score
(number one in the Hostelling International world ranking)

73.4%

net promoter score
(% of those who would recommend us)

137,617

members

2,290

active volunteers

contributed

c. 123,000

volunteering hours

415,488

young people engaged in opportunities with YHA

408,027

stayed overnight

5,913

young people used our facilities in the daytime

1,040

young people volunteered (10% increase on last year)

508

young people worked and trained with YHA

322

young people attended YHA Summer Camps

c. 150,000

young people accessed a residential learning experience through their school or youth group

4,875

young people and families with challenging lives received a supported stay through the YHA Breaks Programme

including

28

young people from alternative provision

229

children participating in a pilot transition residential to support their move from primary to secondary school

380

families

879

young carers and looked after children

over 3,000

school children from areas of high deprivation



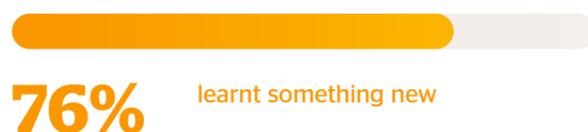
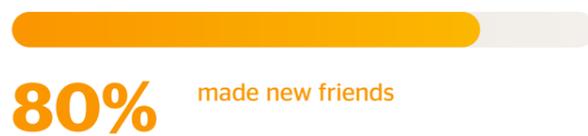
The physical and social benefits of YHA Summer Camps

Four hostels – YHA Ironbridge Coalbrookdale, YHA Edale, YHA Ravenstor and YHA St Briavels Castle – hosted camps for children of service personnel.

Prior to 2019, only those whose parents served in the RAF took part in YHA Summer Camps. Participation was widened in recognition of the shared challenges faced by young people from all service families. Service life often means frequent moves to different parts of the UK or even out of the country. The impact on the children of those involved can affect school performance, especially for those with special educational needs.

YHA Summer Camps have a strong outdoor activity focus and encourage children to be as physically active as possible with a range of activities including canoeing, abseiling, archery, quad biking, caving, gorge walking, rock climbing, horse riding, cycling, orienteering, swimming and high ropes.

The 2019 camps were held between July and August in England. In total there were 322 participants between the ages of 8 and 16. The camps continue to deliver many positive outcomes for the young people. They were able to have fun, explore and embrace new experiences.



The value of transition residentials

In 2019, we worked with Moulsecomb Primary School and Brighton Aldridge Community Academy (BACA) to provide a two-day, one-night residential at YHA South Downs.

Sixty-five pupils joined us for the trip. The aim was to help improve the transition from primary school to secondary school. Year 6 students and their teachers came from Moulsecomb Primary School, which is a mixed gender, mainstream, state funded junior school in Brighton, East Sussex. The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is well above the national average, as are the levels of deprivation. Most pupils are white British, but the school also has a range of pupils from ethnic backgrounds. The proportion of pupils with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) is well above that seen in other schools nationally. BACA brought their Year 7 transitions buddies and staff. The BACA students led all the activities and they enjoyed walking, outdoor team activities, shelter building, ball games and a treasure hunt.

For some students, transition experiences can be negative and have lasting implications on their academic performance. Adolescence is a period when social acceptance is deemed very important. This is intensified during primary to secondary transition when new social groups are formed.

The residential enabled Year 6 students to forge new friendships, some of which have been sustained since starting Year 7 at BACA.

The connections young people make with new people while on residentials are a consistent feature of YHA breaks.

The results of surveys of similar aged young people staying with YHA over the past 12 months show that 74% of them made new friends.

“ You meet loads of new people, different characters, then you look for people who are like you and connect with them. ”

Elly, Year 6

The teachers felt the time away as a group at YHA South Downs helped ease the anxieties of the students. The reassurance offered by Year 7 BACA students to the Year 6s was invaluable as many had worried about fitting in.

Giving young people with learning challenges the opportunity to meet their new teachers and peers, as well as form new friendships, ahead of their arrival at secondary school, makes a huge difference.



Pilot programmes for alternative provision

YHA's focus on developing young people and its strategic priorities relating to social inclusion, promoting greater physical activity, mental wellness, life skills and employability led to the development of an initiative to provide residential experiences for young people in alternative provision (AP). A pilot was agreed with ASPIRE, an organisation that provides 'outstanding' alternative educational provision and support to secondary age students in Buckinghamshire.

Those more likely to be in AP include children in care, children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), and children in poverty. Some ethnicities are disproportionately represented in AP, including Black Caribbean, Irish Traveller heritage and Gypsy Roma heritage pupils. Evidence suggests that excluded children have poorer life trajectories in the long term, compared to those who are not.

YHA funded a three-day stay for ASPIRE students and teachers. Twelve young people and five teachers attended the residential at YHA Ironbridge Coalbrookdale in July 2019. The aim was to help young people at ASPIRE widen their horizons through travel and exploration, whilst gaining from improvements in resilience, life-skills, experiential learning, and exposure to nature.

The pupils took part in a range of activities including zip wire, abseiling, riding Segways, bush craft, hiking, Jacob's ladder and orienteering. In their down time, they spent time as a group chatting, watching TV programmes and eating together.

The group leader saw positive behaviour changes in the students, with many becoming more polite and engaging positively with their peers and teachers. This helped to improve student/teacher relationships. The girls showed greater increases in self-confidence.



“ ...the trip was actually the best days of my life. A trip to never forget. ”

Student

“ This was our very first residential. It was fantastic... a success. We built trust between us and worked as a team, both students and teachers. ”

Student

“ It changed people, they became nicer, kinder, saying please and thank you. ”

Student

Despite lasting only two days, the connections made have endured and many remain friends. They all felt so confident that they volunteered to help support the younger ones who may go on a residential next time.





Building resilience through experience

In February 2020, four teachers and three students who are based at the ASPIRE Aylesbury Vale Blueprint pupil referral sites spent one night at YHA Holmbury St Mary on a creative art residential. The students were Year 10/11 and had only been students at ASPIRE for eight weeks. They have a keen interest in creativity and are studying art as part of their GCSE curriculum. The three female students were excluded from mainstream schooling and at risk of not completing their education.

The residential gave the students the opportunity to learn outside of the classroom, experience new challenges, develop life skills, and build resilience.

The group took part in a range of self-led activities such as walking (day and night walks), tree identification whilst blind folded, land art, art design experiments, hide and seek in the dark, and group discussions.

“ I was pleasantly surprised that they were more willing to take part in activities and stick to them. I was pleased to see that they built some resilience during this trip. ”

Teacher



“ It was lovely being on the hill or just out in the garden playing games by the torch light. ”

Student

One of the core aims of the residential was to develop and experiment with nature based plants and leaves in creating art. This creative work included making land art using twigs and leaves.



Alex's dragonfly made of twigs and leaves

“ One thing that definitely stood out for me was the team work and supporting of each other. ”

Teacher

According to the teachers, YHA supported residentials for AP students successfully improve behaviour and engagement with learning. There is an increase in physical activity and connection to nature. The school are positive about accessing more residentials in the future.

This year we have worked with young people from alternative provision to help shape our residential programme – as well as leading on their own experience the group are now helping us deliver for other AP teams. Similarly we are working with some of the most under-funded schools in Brighton – with teachers, families and children – to develop a model for access to green spaces and the South Downs National Park (which, despite being able to see it, most had never visited as they felt it ‘not for them’).



Impact Review 2019/20



Active adventures for young carers and children at risk of homelessness

Manchester Communication Academy received funding from Brewdog – a drinks company that gives 10% of its annual profits to charity – and Trafford Housing Association to support residential for two groups of students.

The school is in inner city Manchester. The young people in these two groups were all from deprived socio-economic backgrounds. One group were young carers and the other group was made up of young people on the verge of homelessness. They both stayed in the Peak District, at YHA Edale. The first in October 2019 and the second in early February 2020. A total of 23 young people benefited from the YHA residential.

During a group discussion, the young people from Manchester Communication Academy felt that, compared to young people without caring responsibilities, they had limited opportunities to engage with a wider social life or pursue personal interests outside the home.

In addition, they reported feeling isolated, with little or no relief from the pressures at home, and no chance to enjoy a 'normal' teenage life. They also felt they had missed out on taking part in physical activity and on what young people their ages were doing in their free time.

The young people felt that the residential experiences had positively impacted on aspects of their physical and mental health wellbeing.



Desiree, 12; Kirsan, 12; and Kensey, 14 all felt that their time away from their caring responsibilities had been hugely beneficial to them.

“ I think the trip was fantastic and all the activities were tiring and fun. I met new people and had a great time. ”

Kensy

Their happiness and cheerful demeanour as they took part in the residential was noted by the school's behaviour team leader.

He commented on how well behaved the young people were on the trip, something which was strikingly different from their usual boisterous behaviour when in school.

“ They were completely different people, smiling, enjoying themselves, no arguments. It was brilliant. ”

Behaviour team leader

The teachers also noted that some of the older ones displayed a great sense of responsibility, supporting the younger children who were in the group.

Another significant impact was their learning about the environment. This was influenced by the nature walks they took part in and the location of the hostel, which is in the Peak District National Park.

The outcomes of the two groups underline the fact that the young people who get the least opportunities to access travel exploration and discovery, benefit hugely from residential.

The six teachers who accompanied both groups recognised the transformational nature of the experience for the young carers and those at risk of homelessness, leading them to look at securing more YHA residential for other young people in the future.



Children's survey results 2019/20

In 2018/19 we piloted a quantitative survey for young people to complete at the start and end of their residential stay.

In 2019/20 we doubled the sample size taking the total number of young people surveyed to 3,000, capturing data on their wellbeing, physical activity, skills and development during their visit. This gives us invaluable insight into the effectiveness and outcomes of YHA residential.

As a result of a group/school residential

	Ages 7 - 11	Ages 11 - 16
tried a new sport or activities	56%	46%
got on better with their classmates	86%	75%
improved relationships with their teachers	80%	77%
learnt more about the environment	88%	72%
improved their self-confidence	88%	69%

Feedback from teachers, leaders and parents

“ Life's too short not to say nice things. I wanted to thank you all for looking after us so well when we came to stay [for our Alex Rider experience]. I won't hesitate to use YHA for future residential.

The children have gained so much from their time with you. On the bus home they were saying how kind you all were, that they felt safe and happy, that you were funny and friendly, that they've just had the best time.

You created a lovely, safe place for children to take risks. Thank you too for including me. Now that I'm a slightly older teacher, I often find instructors assume I don't want to play, but it meant the world to me to be able to bond with the children and have a shared experience with the archery - thank you. ”

Teacher

“ We have just returned from a four-night stay at YHA Ironbridge Coalport. We took a group of eight young people with autism.

I felt compelled to say what a wonderful time we had and how amazing your staff team were. Our young students were able to function with a high level of independence, which is not always the case.

Nothing was too much trouble and we felt very welcome throughout our stay.

Many thanks once again. All of our staff want to return to holiday there themselves with their own friends and family now! ”

Group leader

“ I would like to say a big thank you for all that YHA has come to mean to me and my children over the years. My children have had more than a lot of children have had thrown at them for their young years - from a parent with cancer to a parent walking out, not to mention the 'stuff' in-between. But your cabins/fields/hostels have always been like an oasis. ”

Parent



Making work experience more accessible

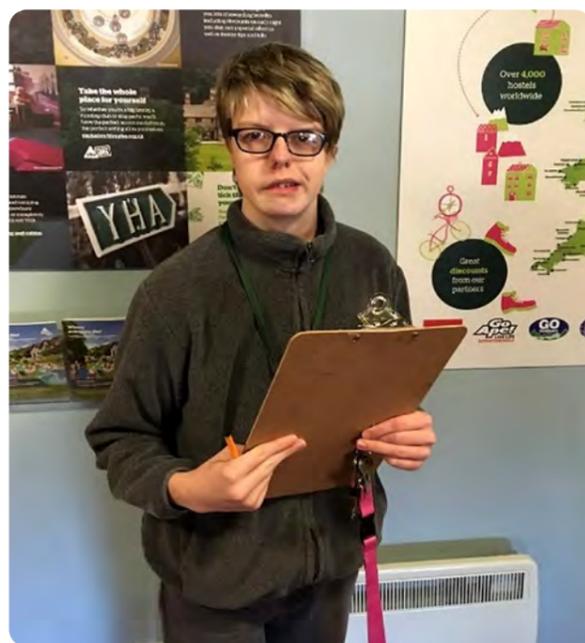
YHA Sherwood Forest, working in partnership with MENCAP, offered Callum, a student at a Nottinghamshire school for young people with learning challenges, a three-month work experience placement. Callum uses British Sign Language as his main means of communication and a mixture of speech, signs, and gestures. This was his first work experience and he worked with us at the hostel one day a week, there was also a support worker on site if he needed additional assistance.

Callum gained practical experiences in hostel activities. As well as bed making, cleaning, safety checks and an overview of food preparation, he also worked on reception. At the end of his placement, Callum felt that he was quite physically active in the hostel, and he enjoyed completing the various tasks.

“ I really enjoyed the experience and would like to work here. I have learnt about working in a team and about diversity. My confidence has definitely improved. ”

Callum

Throughout his work experience, Callum proved himself to be an independent worker and the hostel manager was confident that with the right support, Callum will find employment in the future, after he completes his compulsory education. He was a great asset to the team. YHA is now working to offer up to 10 similar placements at the same hostel over the next 12 months. Mencap will be the key referral partner.



“ Callum has made significant progress and now better understands the world of work. ”

Callum's support worker



Empowering young people with special educational needs and disabilities

The Tower Project is a community based voluntary sector organisation and award-winning leading service provider for children and adults with a learning disability, sensory disability, autism, physical disability or health-related issue.

YHA teamed up with the Tower Project to offer four young people who live in areas of deprivation in and around London, access to the world of work, to help them develop employability and life skills. All of them were still in school, aged between 16 and 19 and have special educational needs.

During their time at YHA London Oxford Street, they were given initial training and ongoing support by the hostel staff. Duties included housekeeping and conducting safety checks.

Additional supervision was also provided by a job coach from Tower Project London.

The structure of the daily work was fairly flexible, with the young people encouraged to work as a team. Starting at 10am they would sometimes eat breakfast at the hostel and were also learning to travel to and from work on their own.

Terry, Tower Project's job coach, placed great value in the opportunities YHA was providing the group. Her role is primarily to support the students during their placement.

She felt that being a youth focused charity meant the staff were very supportive. She particularly liked the length of the work placements as it allowed the young people to really settle into the work.

She pointed out six areas of positive change

1. Taking initiative
2. Understanding the housekeeping list
3. Improvements in communication skills
4. Working at pace
5. Improved self confidence
6. Independence, especially around travel

Minash and Ifan, both 17, shared their experiences of working at the hostel. Ifan in particular wanted to learn more about cashing up and had been given an opportunity on one occasion to do so. He was quick to point to the need for paying attention to detail. "You can't get it wrong" he said. "It has helped me understand the real work world."

Minash talked about enjoying cleaning the showers. Minash was already considering taking a part-time role at the hostel. This was partly influenced by a former student who had done his work experience at YHA through the Tower Project London, who had since secured a part-time contract.



Gardening club initiative for the long-term unemployed

We're working in partnership with the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) and Job Centres on the Work and Health Programme – an initiative aimed at supporting the long-term unemployed. Key aspects of this involve helping those recovering from mental health challenges to get ready for employment.



Working in partnership with the Newhaven Job Centre, YHA organised a gardening club at YHA South Downs. The hostel enjoys substantial grounds and green spaces. Up to 10 participants have benefited from the club. The project started in late spring 2019.

Participants are referred through the Job Centre or associated partners such as Aspirations, a charity which supports people with mental health challenges.

Those who take part range between the ages of 20 and mid-50s and attend the gardening club once a week.

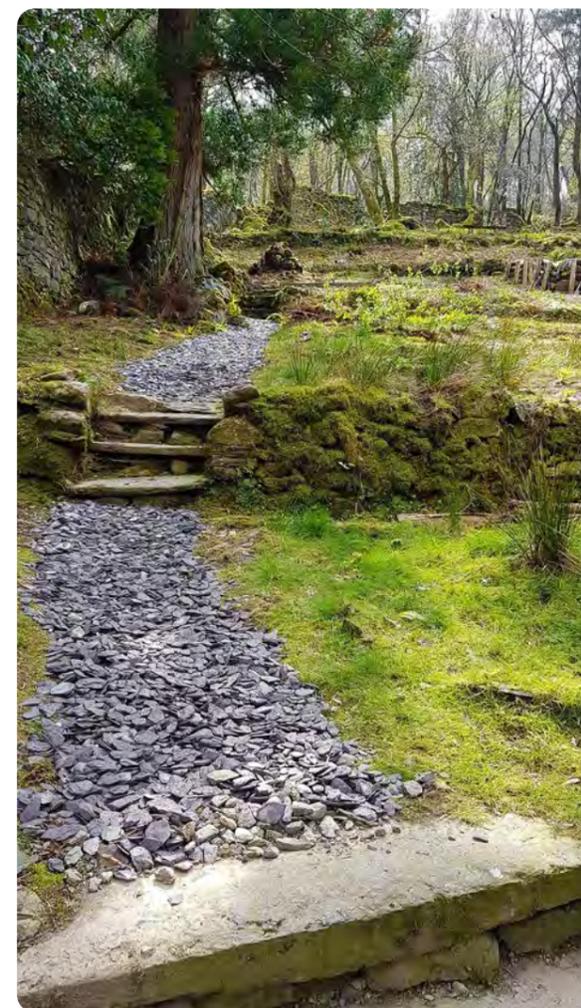
Working the green spaces in and around the hostel, jobs include clearing overgrown vegetation, installing flower beds and maintaining activity areas used by school groups. Lunch is provided by YHA.

The benefits of the gardening project have impacted positively on the volunteers physical and mental wellbeing. They spend time with people who have shared experiences of dealing with mental health but also get to meet staff and members of the public. This has helped to reduce isolation as they made connections with each other. They value the time they spend working together.

Partly because of the positive outcomes being achieved through the gardening project, two referrals for work placements were made by the Job Centre to the hostel – one participant attended an interview for a part-time role after three months of volunteering. The other started working in the hostel cafe.



Department for Work & Pensions



“ I was isolated, staying in my room and I didn't talk to people. The club is a lot more than just doing jobs, it's about the environment. Coming out and being in nature and being with a group of people is really positive. Every time I come and then go away, I feel like I have achieved something and, when you have a mental health problem, it does make a difference. ”

Chris

COVID-19

The coronavirus outbreak and ensuing crisis has brought sorrow and great hardship to many in our community and beyond. Two million households faced lockdown without a garden. Over a quarter of a million young people have missed out on a residential with us this year. The vulnerable have become more isolated and more and more are struggling financially.

Despite the huge challenges since spring, we have adapted to deliver safe adventures and deliver on our commitment to broadening our base of beneficiaries. The following case studies reference our efforts during the crisis. Strictly speaking, some of these experiences fall outside the formal review period. However, they are included as useful evidence of our direction of travel and proactivity in ensuring the “all” in our charitable object truly means all.

You will be able to read all about our response to the crisis in a separate, more detailed COVID-19 impact review to follow this one.



Autism-friendly family getaways

Jenny Lunnon’s first experience of YHA was hostel-to-hostel walking along the Welsh Borders as a Girl Scout in the 1980s.

This inspired a love of travel and nature. Today, Jenny and her family are YHA ambassadors. Having found YHA particularly suited to the needs of her son who has autism, Jenny, her husband and two children are regular guests.

Here’s Jenny’s write up of a recent stay.

“We visited YHA Ilam Hall, at the southern tip of the Peak District National Park: a grand nineteenth century Gothic Revival house surrounded by 84 acres of National Trust parkland.

As we travelled up from the Midlands, it was great just to see hills again. We wandered around the grounds on the evening we arrived and couldn’t quite believe how beautiful the setting of YHA Ilam Hall is. A backdrop of high peaks, rolling pasture grazed by sheep, magnificent ancient oak and copper beech trees, a picturesque bridge, a hidden staircase, stone grottoes, a Paradise Walk along the sparkling River Manifold. The swallows – some nesting in the hostel entrance hall – swooped, catching the evening flies, bats fluttered round the church tower, and rabbits dashed into the long grass.

The children enjoyed Poohsticks, hide and seek, and running endlessly in circles around the rose bed in the Italian garden.

We were spoilt for choice for places to have a picnic: from benches along the terrace under the arches of the loggia to the socially-distanced tables and chairs in the garden of the on-site National Trust tea room.

The most obvious place to visit first was Dovedale, with its limestone cliffs and famous stepping stones, only a mile and a half’s easy walk from the hostel. We watched the dippers feeding in the stream below the marjoram and harebell-covered slopes. After Ilam Rock we headed off along a randomly chosen public footpath and had one of those unplanned experiences that are often the thing one remembers most from a holiday: an encounter with a friendly, curious group of alpacas and a spotty goat.

Our car mostly stayed in the car park during this trip as there was more than enough to do in the hostel grounds and the countryside around. The most ambitious and rewarding walk was the seven-mile-long ‘Manifold Tops’, a circular route around the hills above the River Manifold. We wondered if it would be too much for an eleven-year-old and an eight-year-old, but they rose to the occasion. It rained intermittently: at one point we had to climb on to a parapet to cross the flooded Weags Bridge, but in compensation the cloudscapes were spectacular. We saw peregrine falcons hovering above Castern Wood Nature Reserve, and what I first thought were giant tapirs but turned out on closer inspection to be black and white Belted Galloway cows.

Our daughter was so sad to leave YHA Ilam Hall that on the morning of our departure we had to go round saying ‘goodbye’ to all her favourite places and vowing to return. After a long period of enforced monotony, every day of our trip brought new sights and adventures. We were all so glad to be out in the world again.”



“ For some autistic children going on holiday is stressful because they are happier with familiar places and routines. While this is not true of our son, who likes new experiences, there is a familiarity about hostels that he seems to find reassuring. He enjoys finding them on the YHA map, and the fact that they form a network. He knows there will be bunk beds, triangles, even the same typefaces on the notices. ”

Jenny



A lifetime of YHA adventures

Marilyn Kelly is a YHA life member. As a single parent, YHA provided Marilyn affordable holidays, a safe haven and the opportunity to make friends when she most needed it. Now, after making many happy memories with us, Marilyn still enjoys her visits to YHA.

“A friend suggested YHA as a holiday for me and my children because, as a single parent, it was all I could afford at the time. We ended up going to YHA hostels throughout the children’s lives from our home in The Wirral. We went to the ones in Yorkshire, the Lake District and Derbyshire, they were always in lovely surroundings and we really appreciated the countryside and all it had to offer. We’re grateful for YHA. We always felt safe. I was on my own with the children and that was really important to me. As a single parent, if you’re vulnerable, like I was – I’d gone through some very bad stuff – you’re protective, and very safety and security conscious.

The staff are so friendly, helpful and welcoming. So, as well as being in lovely places and giving you a boost to your general mental health and wellbeing, for me, I felt confident there. Until then we hadn’t had holidays, we hadn’t been anywhere or done anything because of the relationship we were in so it was a big thing for me to get in a car and drive the kids on my own to a place I didn’t know, particularly as a single parent. But it gave me confidence which is why we kept doing it. You begin to stand tall instead of cowering in a corner.

There were like-minded people there, I met my friend Marcelle around 2005. We were at YHA Hartington Hall and both self-catering as we were on a tight budget. We were in the self-catering kitchen at the same time and I was looking for a pan, so I asked Marcelle where they were. It was the first time there for both of us. We had our meals separately and met up afterwards to explore the grounds. We have similar aged children, who got on so well and it just grew from there. We booked holidays together. We even had a few New Years at YHA. A memorable one was at YHA Ilam Hall. It was magical. Just as it struck midnight the snow started to fall and all the guests went outside, it was so special that we all still talk about it now.

The children have great memories of their holidays, they are healthy, positive ones of staying safe, enjoying friendships, enjoying time together. We went on holidays to YHAs right up until our children went off to university. They’re in their 20s now and when we remember our holidays, they say all we ever did is walk! My kids both live in Scotland and love the outdoors, they hike and do marathons and they love it. I think YHA gave all of us a love of the outdoors and showed us how you can enjoy yourself on a very tight budget.

Marcelle and I went to YHA Bath in 2019 and had a lovely time, a very different kind of holiday compared to when the children were younger. As it was a city site we could amble in and out of shops, stop for a coffee and go and visit country houses.

We hope, when we get through all these lock downs, to visit YHA again.”



Increasing representation and diversity in the great outdoors

Rhiane Fatinikun started Black Girls Hike to provide a space for Black women to enjoy the outdoors, break down stereotypes and reinforce the message that the outdoors is for everyone. A message that speaks to our core and founding purpose. In September 2020, YHA supported the group with a navigation skills weekend at YHA Ilam Hall.

Founder Rhiane says, “I started Black Girls Hike, which is based in Greater Manchester, because I wanted to take up hiking and create a space where I felt comfortable to explore and also find people who I could share experiences with. There’s not much diversity in the outdoors so I wanted to address the lack of representation and put it on people’s radars that this is something we can do.

We held our first skills weekend at YHA Ilam Hall where our members completed the Hill Skills course. They learnt how to map read, use a compass, and safely plan and lead walks. We really enjoyed our stay. The grounds were absolutely beautiful. Everything was brilliant, they did the social distancing really well, the only problem is there was no WIFI! But they do tell you that before you go. These events give our group members a general sense of wellbeing and are good for mental health. They give everyone a lot of confidence as well as gaining new skills and meeting new people. We’ve also stayed at YHA Windermere, just one or two of us. YHA Exclusive Hire really works for us as a group – in normal circumstances, we can get as many people as possible together and have the whole place to ourselves.

Going to YHAs is something I’d like to do more of. It’d be great to have a monthly weekender somewhere in the countryside. We will always use YHA because it’s so convenient and they’re everywhere. We find YHAs that do activity weekends especially useful as it makes it so much easier for us to have those activities on site.

YHA have been really supportive of us as a group.”





Exclusive Hire, inclusive adventures

OutdoorLads is an outdoor pursuits group for gay, bisexual and trans men across the United Kingdom. It started in 2006 with a camping event. A group of 24 went camping for the weekend at Langdale and had a great time, and from that OutdoorLads was created. A couple of years later it became a charity with the aim of improving the mental and physical health of gay, bi and trans men. OutdoorLads have 2,000 active members and hold hostel events, day walks, cycling events, climbing days and water sports events. They regularly stay with us, in both city and rural properties.

Liam Russell, OutdoorLads Programme Manager says, “YHAs are in great locations. They’re clean, and have all the kit and facilities you need (like drying rooms and well-equipped kitchens). YHA staff are always friendly, the prices are flexible, and there is the opportunity of Exclusive Hire. That is particularly important to us as a group because people joining us may not be ‘out’ and visible in the gay community. With YHA Exclusive Hire they get comfort knowing that everyone that stays there is with OutdoorLads; it’s a safe space.



With the large variety of properties, we can stay anywhere from YHA Wells-next-the-Sea to YHA Newcastle Central, which is where we managed to go just before lockdown. Not everyone always wants to be up a mountain, which means our city centre breaks are also really popular. We’re not all outdoorsy, but we do like to stay connected.

Our last YHA visit was on 6th March, to YHA Wasdale Hall, where 19 members had a great weekend together at one of our favourite venues in Cumbria. We usually book YHA Langdale at Christmas, another favourite – we call it the Big North Christmas. There’s a large dining hall which takes 106 people. We always manage to fill it to capacity and the event is sold out by September – it’s so popular. This Christmas, because of COVID-19, we will be ensuring that none of our members need to be alone on Christmas Day so we’ll have an online Christmas meal where people can cook their lunch and then sit down with OutdoorLads to eat dinner and enjoy Christmas together.

Being a part of OutdoorLads gives people a new aspect to their social lives, they try new things and visit parts of the country they’ve never been to before. A lot of people get fitter once they’ve joined and will go on to do walking outside of the group. We like that everyone is welcome at our hostel events with YHA. Whilst there, people have formed life-long friendships, met partners and integrated into a gay scene with like-minded people.”

Accounts

YHA is a charity working to social enterprise principles. Earned revenue i.e. income we receive from the groups, families and individuals who stay with us together with our commercial trading income, covers the costs of delivering the “all” in our charitable object – operating and maintaining our network of youth hostel and the lion’s share of our overhead including governance, membership and fundraising costs.

This means that 100% of the income we receive from membership fees and donations, grants and legacies is invested in improving facilities at our youth hostels and into programmes helping those who might otherwise not be able access our charitable activities. Whether that is providing free or supported breaks for children and families from lower socio-economic groups, activities to improve the physical health and wellbeing of children and families with challenging lives, or into volunteering, work experience and training to equip young people with the skills they need for life and work.

Income

(£000s)



Total
£55,873

Charitable object

To help all, especially young people of limited means, to a greater knowledge, love and care of the countryside, and appreciation of the cultural values of towns and cities, particularly by providing youth hostels or other accommodation for them in their travels, and thus to promote their health, recreation and education.

Expenditure

(£000s)



Total
£57,156

* The full cost of delivering our charitable object through the running of our network, including hostel running costs, expenditure related to capital investments e.g. depreciation and property maintenance, loan interest, and all marketing and support services

** Includes expenditure related to provision of supported breaks for children and families, costs related to delivery of charitable programmes and partnerships, and costs related to delivery of volunteering and work experience placements for young people.

Adventure. For the first time and a lifetime.



Our Vision

Everyone has access to the benefits of adventure, for the first time and a lifetime.

By 2030, every child is able to stay away from home, to travel, experience adventure and access outdoors, nature, culture and heritage. YHA will work with others to end the inequality that means some children have never been to a beach, visited a museum or rolled down a hill.



Our Mission

To enrich the lives of all, especially young people, by providing hostel stays and experiences that improve physical health, mental wellbeing and life skills.

Our impact priorities

1. Our top priority is to ensure that all means all
2. We will increase access to stays away from home and improve connections to nature, outdoors, heritage and culture
3. We will improve physical and mental wellbeing
4. We will develop life skills and employability
5. We will contribute to social cohesion

Our enabling priorities

6. Maintain a viable network of quality hostels
7. Deliver against a framework of industry-standard benchmarks
8. Support growth by continuing to generate an annual cash surplus
9. In how we use our assets and through our work with partners we will help to improve the environment.
10. Build support for the hostelling cause

We aim for every stay and visit to YHA to have a positive impact. To connect people to each other, to nature and to heritage. Whether it is funded through our Breaks work or paid for by individuals or part of a school visit, we know time at a YHA supports personal adventures.

When you choose to buy from YHA, not only do you access all the benefits that our places and spaces offer but also in buying from a charity – from YHA as a social enterprise – you are contributing to all of YHA’s charitable work. So whether you are buying your affordable staycation on the Cornish cliffs or popping into New Forest for a coffee, hiring our meeting rooms for a day or a castle for a week, you are helping ensure that we can reach more people, particularly more young people with challenging lives.



How you can help

For more information about how you could support our work with children and families please go to yha.org.uk/how-can-i-support



Thank you to all partners listed in our case studies, and to these supporters

CB & HH Taylor 1984 Trust

Trafford Housing Trust

Deaf Access Cymru

The National Forest Company

Ecclesiastical Insurance

The Alchemy Foundation

Frognal Trust

The Joseph Strong Frazer Trust

Hostelling International Sustainability Fund

The Bower Trust

Mace Foundation

Waitrose & Partners Plan Plastic grant fund

Next Retail Ltd

Washware Essentials

Oakdale Trust

Thank you

P F Charitable Trust

With thanks to all who donated, made regular gifts and fundraised for YHA. We remain ever grateful to friends, members, and life members who have remembered us in their will.

Sport England Workforce Diversity Fund



Where will your next adventure take you?

To book a YHA stay, visit yha.org.uk or call our contact centre on **0800 0191 700**

To enquire about a group stay or residential, visit groups.yha.org.uk or call our special reservations team on **0800 0195 465**

We are YHA.

We transform young lives forever through travel and real adventure.

Because where you go changes who you become.

stay | join | give | volunteer yha.org.uk