

# JUST YW

YWCA England & Wales Annual Review 2009-2010

**Kayleigh** helps girls break the binge drinking habit

**Sherelle** beats the bullies and gets an education



# welcome

**YWCA works with the most disadvantaged girls and women in England and Wales to help them overcome prejudice and take charge of their own lives. We run services to support them and campaign with them to combat the discrimination they face.**

Over the past year, we have helped **8,429** girls and women change their lives.

In 2009 and 2010, we helped **428** women cope with drug or alcohol abuse. **250** came to us to deal with domestic violence or crime. We helped **929** improve their parenting skills and cope with pregnancy. We helped **1,207** gain new skills, go on to further education or find work and **396** cope with money, debt and homelessness.



My name is Kealy. I'm 21 and have two children. Before I came to YWCA, I was living in a hostel. I was pregnant, lost and surviving on very little. My midwife referred me to YWCA and from that moment my life took a spectacular turn for the better.

I've learned how to manage my money, get new life skills, taken part in accredited courses and met other young mums. YWCA's given me so many opportunities I wouldn't have otherwise had. Meeting Gordon Brown has been the biggest highlight of my life so far because I got to share my opinions with the then Prime Minister.

YWCA has given me the confidence I needed. It's safe being around other women as we can talk about things we might not talk about around men. Being a part of YWCA has made me want to help other young women. YWCA really needs as much support and funding as possible to keep such an essential charity going. Helping girls and women change their lives is what they do best.

Thank you for supporting YWCA.

*Kealy*



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**We work with girls and women to create campaigns and peer education programmes to tackle subjects like, for example, binge drinking and its devastating effects.**

Kayleigh, 23, helped us develop our peer education programme designed to get girls to think about why they drink and to understand the risks and consequences of drinking too much. She says:

“ We’re not telling girls not to drink; we ask them to think about the dangers of binge drinking and to do things to keep safe. My attitude towards drinking has changed since starting this project; I realise now that when I was younger I was a binge drinker. By taking part in this I have the satisfaction of knowing that I’ve made a difference in some way. ”

Kayleigh spoke at the 2009 Labour party conference and the Conservative Women’s Organisation’s annual general meeting.



We held conferences in London and Cardiff to bring together people who feel strongly about binge drinking and want to find answers to this

increasingly common problem. The information we presented at the conferences is available in our report, *Young women and alcohol*, which combines research and a literature review. **Download** it from our website.

[www.ywca.org.uk/resources](http://www.ywca.org.uk/resources)

### **from our research we found girls:**

- need things to do and places to go as an alternative to drinking. YWCA offers activities and courses in a safe, women-only environment
- drink when things go wrong. We give support to those who do not have people they can confide in
- need more effective messages about the dangers of alcohol. We campaign for warning messages on alcohol products to be stronger and convey the reality of the risks to their health.

# breaking the habit

**For girls and women in the most disadvantaged communities, alcohol abuse, bad diets and poor sexual health are huge problems**

Young women from deprived areas are among those most at risk of excessive drinking. They have fewer opportunities and little to look forward to. Lorna knows just how easy it is to get hold of alcohol:

“ I first tried alcohol when I was 12. I often see teenagers behind shops drinking because there isn't really much to do in rural Wales. Since I started coming to YWCA, I've found out about the things that can happen when you drink and it's put me off. ”

**Lorna, 15**

## the facts

- women in the UK have the highest rate of alcohol consumption in Europe
- drinking can lead girls to take risks with their health: a third of 15- to 19-year-old girls regretted having sex that happened when they had been drinking
- alcohol-related hospital admissions of under 16s are increasing, and are doing so faster for girls than boys.

# let's talk about sex

**Girls tell us that the information they receive at school about sex and relationships is too little, too late and too biological**

They need reliable, relevant information about sex, relationships and safe sex. That's why we offer **practical support** such as **inviting nurses to speak at young women's groups, distributing condoms and offering pregnancy and chlamydia testing.**

We campaign for young people's fundamental right to information, advice and guidance about sex and relationships.

YWCA leads the **Women's Health and Equality Consortium**, one of the Department of Health's strategic partners. We fight poverty, discrimination and social exclusion so women can get the health services they so badly need.

**Teenage pregnancy is complex and often linked to poverty, low self-esteem and poor results at school. We help young mums like Naomi, pictured left, become peer educators so other young people can talk about sex freely and openly:**

“ The girls I speak to are relieved to be able to talk about the pressure to be sexually active. The younger we teach girls about this stuff the better. My own sex education was terrible; my knowledge came from what my friends told me, which was mostly wrong. Images of celebrities prancing around in their g-strings don't make it easy, girls need positive role models. ”

**Naomi, 21**

### the facts of life

- the UK has the highest rate of teenage pregnancy in Europe
- 40% of young people aged 11 to 18 think that their sex and relationships education was either poor or very poor
- most teenage parents live in poverty.

We campaigned for the **Equality Act** to protect pregnant schoolgirls and teenage mums from discrimination, harassment and victimisation. Young mums told us about their experiences, including being advised to leave school, not having access to a full curriculum and being stopped from sitting exams because they were pregnant. They are now legally entitled to the same education as anyone else.

**We have been working with local primary care trusts to develop services that give young people the information, advice and guidance they need.**



“ YWCA, and the young people who took part in surveying Northampton's sexual health services, have helped shape the development of the teenage pregnancy strategy for 2010 and beyond. ”

**Jane Waite**, teenage pregnancy co-ordinator for Northamptonshire

**Most women offenders serve short sentences and get no supervision when they are released, so are in danger of re-offending. Our programmes smash this cycle with information, advice and guidance in a women-only environment to those who need it most; women like Tina, pictured right, who walked out of New Hall prison with few friends and no prospects. When she came to YWCA, her alcohol addiction put her at risk of falling back into her old life of crime. Tina says:**

“ I’d be back in prison if it wasn’t for YWCA. They help me with bills, how to fill forms out and give me advice on things like my drink problem. They’ve helped me get back on my feet. Now I’m hoping to get a full-time job and buy a house. ”

**Girls in the poorest communities often have little to do and less to look forward to. They need positive role models and activities**

Girls tell us that having nothing to do and nowhere to go leads them into offending behaviour.

We run courses and provide activities that give girls the self-esteem they need. Self-esteem was in short supply for Danielle, 17, pictured centre, when she had to deal with domestic violence at home and bullying at school. With YWCA’s help, she has gone from being shy and withdrawn to taking part in activities like our football group. She says:

“ There’s not much to do around here. There’s a youth club but the gangs hang out there and it’s not safe. YWCA has given me loads of confidence and keeps me off the streets. The football group is a great way to get fit and have fun. Without it I’d probably just be sitting around not really doing anything. ”

# smashing the cycle

**Women trapped in a cycle of crime are vulnerable to violence, abuse and exploitation**

Offending often stems from poverty, dropping out of school, mental health problems, substance misuse, violence, abuse, family breakdown and social exclusion. We work with offenders to help them regain self-esteem and develop skills that lead to education and employment.

## the facts

- women commit less serious offences than men
- children and young people who serve a custodial sentence are more likely to re-offend than those who are directed into community-based sentences
- 71% of women offenders have no qualifications compared to 15% of the general population.

**95% of women we work with do not re-offend, compared to the national average of 45%**

“YWCA is at the forefront of improved interventions for women offenders, helping women to be seen for their potential, rather than for the labels people give them.”

**Trevor Williams**, Regional Offender Manager for the East of England  
National Offender Management Service

# miss independent

**Girls need better careers advice and more training opportunities. We offer accredited courses, advice and training to those who are hardest to reach**

Bullying can leave deep scars and wreak havoc on girls like Sherelle. After she was persecuted at school, Sherelle stopped talking. With the help of YWCA youth workers, she has overcome this and is working her way towards a fascinating future.

“It took a while but YWCA helped me get my confidence back. Over the years I’ve done loads of courses at YWCA and now I’m helping to run them. One of them, Miss Independent, helps young women gain the skills they need to move from school to college. I’m at college and I plan to go to university to study forensic science.”

**Sherelle, 18**

We help young women like Sherelle get their opinions heard by those who shape policy. She spoke to the panel on Fair Access to the Professions about the barriers young women from disadvantaged communities face getting into professional careers.

**An already chaotic life can become even tougher for girls who drop out of school; many have no hope for the future. Seventeen-year-old Nemone knows this only too well:**

👩🏻 A lot of things have gone wrong in my life; I dropped out of school when I was 15 and found it difficult to cope. I got pregnant but had a miscarriage. YWCA is definitely making a difference in my life: I'm doing an entry to employment course, have a CV and I want to find work. 🙏🏻



### **45% of all unemployed people in Wales are under 25**

We work with the Welsh Assembly Government, local employers and other organisations to get young women into work.

Jobs traditionally done by women are often poorly paid and undervalued. This is very true of apprenticeships where there is a 21% gender pay gap and the lowest-paying sectors, including hairdressing, childcare, health and social care, are mostly occupied by girls. Our work with the Low Pay Commission has contributed to the introduction of an **Apprentice Minimum Wage**.

We campaign to challenge gender stereotypes, improve the national minimum wage and influence policies for those who are not in employment, education or training.

Our careers days and accredited programmes encourage girls to consider a career beyond what is traditionally thought of as 'women's work'

When money's tight it's often girls from the poorest communities who suffer. Many live on a crippling low income and face debt and long-term poverty. We run courses that allow them to take control of their finances. Chanel, 18, left, says:

👩🏻 No one's talked to me about managing my money before. YWCA's course has given me a clear understanding of how to handle money, especially benefits, loans and credit cards. 🙏🏻



# how we've done

From April 2009 to March 2010 we spent £5.7 million working directly with 8,429 girls and women in our centres and in their schools and communities. We spent a further £0.4m on our research and campaigning work, including giving women the opportunity to meet politicians, including the then-Prime Minister Gordon Brown, and other policy makers face-to-face.

During the year we received £3.6m as grants or contracts from local, national and European government or charitable trusts, to directly support our work. We received another £1.1m as donations from supporters, legacies and investment income. We spent £0.8m to support this fundraising activity.

As planned, we financed the balance of our work by using £2.3m of our investment funds. Most of these funds arose when we sold buildings that were previously used as hostels. These funds are almost fully spent, so in future years most of our expenditure will need to be paid for from new donations, grants and contracts.

We also have our endowment funds, which were valued at £19m on 31 March 2010. These are vital to our financial strength, as we expect them to produce income to support our work each year, now and in the future. They are held for the long term in a portfolio of mixed assets. During the year the underlying value of these investments rose by £6.0m, as markets recovered after the financial crisis of 2008 to 2009.

financial reports and accounts are available on request



“ I'd like to tell people that YWCA does change people's lives and makes a big difference. It's a safe place to go and we learn so much about who we are, how to cope and how the world works. ”

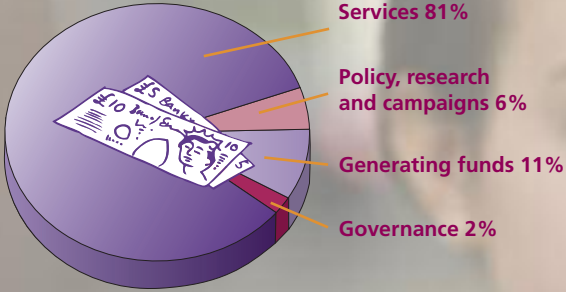
**Charlotte, 16, South Wales**



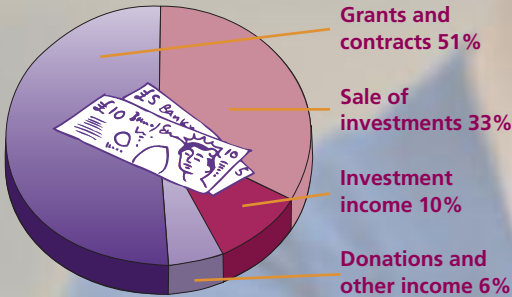
“ I support YWCA because I want to help girls and women move away from a life of social exclusion. YWCA makes that difference, so I know my money is well spent. ”

**Diane Perry, YWCA supporter**

## How we spent our money



## Where our money came from



## at the heart of things

Girls and women are at the heart of YWCA. Over the past year, **751** have helped us campaign, raise our profile, develop the themes for our work and recruit staff. We give those who struggle to make themselves heard the skills and confidence to speak directly to MPs and ministers, give media interviews, hold events and run group sessions.

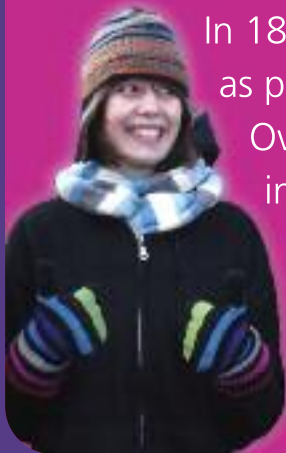
To help women who access our services become even more involved with YWCA, we developed our own social networking site, **our voice**, a safe online community where girls can make new friends and talk about what really matters to them.



**Thanks** to all the young women who feature in this annual review

# the times they are a-changin'<sup>5</sup>

In 1855 YWCA was founded by Christian women as part of a national charitable welfare movement. Over the years we've evolved to reflect changes in society and the needs of women. And now it's time to change again; this time our operating name. In late 2010 we will relaunch ourselves with a new name. We'll let you know more later in the year.



## this is the annual review of

YWCA England & Wales, a company limited by guarantee and a registered charity. The board of trustees acts as directors of the company.

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Stafford and Stafford

# thank you to all our funders.

## Your support makes it all possible! Here's just a sample of those who helped us – and what they funded

Bristol city council – increasing aspirations project; Wolverhampton learning partnership – Young People@the Centre project; William A Cadbury Charitable Trust – informal education work in Wolverhampton; Learning Skills Council, VC Train – our worklessness project in Doncaster and Wise Up in London West; All Saints School in Kirkby – our A20 project; The Henry Smith Charity – personal development in Northampton; and The Paul Hamlyn Foundation – our MySpace programme in schools in St Helens.

Big Lottery Fund (BLF)'s Awards for All – a health DVD for young mums in Bristol; the Department of Health – national Women's Health and Equality; Black Country Connexions – Positive Activities for Young People in Wolverhampton; The Quartet Community Foundation – Childcare and Counselling in Bristol; Doncaster Metropolitan Borough Council – preventative mental health project; Well London and the local PCT – Grow, Cook, Eat courses in Dagenham. The City Bridge Trust – responsible attitudes to relationships and sexual health in London East; and The Wates Foundation supported our Responsible Citizens programme.

The Ministry of Justice – One Stop Shop in London East and Wolverhampton and with Foundation Housing – Together Women Project in Doncaster; The Home Office

Community Fund – Girls and Gangs in Kirkby; Kent People's Trust – anger management; Black Country Connexions – Positive Activities for Young People in Wolverhampton.

Pollock Memorial Missionary Trust – financial inclusion project in Doncaster; Russet Homes – tenancy training; Tonbridge and Malling Voluntary Grant Aid – debt support.

BLF National Young People's fund – A Voice for Young Women; BLF's Local Young People's fund – Peer Mentoring and Befriending in Wolverhampton; v. – Young Women Can Achieve volunteering; The Co-operative Foundation – Truth About Youth in Cardiff; the Welsh Assembly Government – International Women's Day event and the production of a DVD on women in politics in Cwmafan; the Childwick Trust – WILD project in Doncaster; Doncaster PCT supported their gypsy and traveller project.

We're also grateful for the support of Department for Children, Schools and Families and the Department for Communities and Local Government's Empowerment fund. Finally, thank you to individual who donors gave a total of £380,000.



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