

YMCA MILTON KEYNES

Growing Together

Strategic Plan
2021-24



YMCA

We are delighted to present **Growing Together**, our new three-year strategic plan.

This strategic plan was produced at a time of great transition for YMCA Milton Keynes.

In 2021 we entered our 40th year, having recently demolished all our old buildings and moved into a fabulous and brand-new campus facility.

We have a new staff team, with 28 of our 35 employees having been with the organisation for less than three years, and we have introduced new services and ways of working to achieve better outcomes for the young people with whom we work.

YMCA Milton Keynes offers far more than just a home; we help young people change their lives and face the future with confidence. It's an approach that sets YMCA Milton Keynes apart.

Historically, we have helped 10,000 young people through our housing services, and we now have the means to help many more in our state-of-the-art facilities.

Our campus allows us to provide a university-type experience to young people who would not otherwise go on to higher education, our housing pathway will allow us to lift 75 young people a year out of homelessness, our employment team will allow us to support 75 young people into employment, and our on-site social enterprises will ensure that the campus is a vibrant and inspiring location as well as providing opportunities for the community in Milton Keynes to support our work.



Simon Green
Chief Executive



Julia Upton MBE DL
Chair

Introduction

We have been providing housing and support to young people in Milton Keynes for 40 years.

We are the only provider of supported housing dedicated to people aged 18-35 in Milton Keynes, and are acutely aware of the challenges that young people face today. More importantly, we know what they can achieve with the right help and guidance. This drives our commitment to ensuring that all young people in Milton Keynes have a safe place to stay, where they will be given the support and tools needed to thrive.

In this strategy, we share with you how we will achieve our vision and aspiration, and highlight the need for the involvement of the wider community to address the urgent demand for more affordable housing and employment opportunities for young people.

Our strategy is underpinned by our values and a committed staff team and trustees, who will collectively bring it to fruition. Our culture is one of collaboration and inclusion, which extends beyond the boundaries of our campus on North Sixth Street. We've built a strong network with partners and organisations in Milton Keynes to further our services. As our strategy title 'Growing Together' suggests, we look forward to building on this and working closely with all stakeholders who are invested in helping us achieve our vision as we evolve in the coming years.

Thank you for taking the time to read our strategy and please do visit our campus to see our work in action. You can also visit mkymca.com for the latest news and to read about the residents we support. We have ambitious plans for the next three years and beyond but, with the foundations we've built, we know that each step we take will provide further opportunity for our young people to belong, contribute and thrive.

The Future

The coming period will see us working hard to ensure that our campus becomes both the hugely successful community for young people, and the community facility for the public at large, that we know it can be.

We will do this against the backdrop of COVID-19 and all the challenges that this presents for us. We will continue to develop our staff team and services, and our Board of Trustees to ensure that we have the skillsets needed to continue our success.

We are operating in a growing city that is maturing and facing developing social issues – including a chronic housing problem for young people. If we are to effectively meet the needs of young people, then we must explore these social issues and work with partners to identify gaps in provision that YMCA can fill or where we can add value.

We will pay attention to the exciting and ambitious plans for the city's future related to the Oxford-Cambridgeshire Arc and the MK Futures 2050 Strategy, as well as the regeneration agenda for large parts of Milton Keynes.

These are areas to which an ambitious and high-quality service provider can add real value and we plan to ensure that we are positioned to provide leadership and influence decision making effectively, so that the needs of young people are taken account of in these initiatives.

We will work to ensure that the community across Milton Keynes better understands the fabulous and much needed work that we do, and that we provide opportunities for people and organisations to support us, and the young people we serve.

We are a local YMCA and although we are proud to be part of the national and international federation, we are financially independent and we raise all our own funds.

Through our development phase we created for the first time a successful fundraising function raising more than £1.6m towards our facilities and services. We will continue to build and grow our fundraising function so that we can continue to support young people in an ambitious and exciting way through the challenging times ahead.

This plan states our values and sets out our vision for the next three years and beyond.

It is based on the principle that we will be an exemplar and do what we already do – supporting our young people, building community links, creating successful social enterprises – to a greater and higher standard than before. We are also going to build more housing, increase fundraising and diversify our activity into exciting and rewarding new areas.



Our Values

VISION

Our vision is that every young person in Milton Keynes has the means and confidence to belong, contribute and thrive.

MISSION

Our mission is to provide young people in Milton Keynes with a safe place they can stay, people they can trust, and support to fulfil their potential.

VALUES

The way we act at YMCA Milton Keynes is characterised by five strong and distinctive values that flow from our Christian ethos.



WE WELCOME

We offer people the space they need to feel secure, respected, heard and valued. We are inclusive, generous and understanding and believe that every person is of equal value.



WE SERVE OTHERS

We are committed to the wellbeing of the communities we serve and believe in the positive benefit of participation locally and in the wider world.



WE INSPIRE

We strive to inspire each person we meet to realise their full potential. We welcome people of all faiths and none.



WE SPEAK OUT

We stand up for young people, speak out on issues that affect their lives, and help them to find confidence in their own voice.



WE SEEK OUT

We actively look for opportunities and partnerships to make a transformative impact on young lives in the communities where we work. We are ambitious, collaborative and innovative.

Our Goals

Our six strategic goals are:

- 1 To nurture a **culture driven by our values**
- 2 To make our campus **the best supported housing environment it can be** – an inspiring home for young people in Milton Keynes
- 3 To **expand our accommodation offer** to create better housing options and choice for young people
- 4 To **develop our social enterprises** so that we generate funds to support our work and create career opportunities for young people
- 5 To pursue opportunities to support young people in **areas other than housing**
- 6 To **improve and increase our community engagement** so that everyone in Milton Keynes knows we are here, what we do, and how they can support us

THE FOLLOWING PAGES OUTLINE HOW WE WILL ACHIEVE OUR STRATEGIC GOALS

Goal 1

To create a culture where our values underpin all that we do and how we do it

The success of the charity starts with our staff. Our outputs are influenced by the way we behave and speak to each other – and in turn the people we serve. Enlivened by the surrounds of our new campus, we will develop a culture in which our values are exemplified through the way we work.



To do this we will:

1. Engage residents as equals in our decision making
2. Ensure an overwhelmingly friendly and welcoming atmosphere
3. Prioritise and promote the health and wellbeing of our staff
4. Establish an internal communications plan that facilitates engagement and collaboration
5. Introduce an appraisal system that gives staff the opportunity to learn through feedback, develop their skills and achieve personal development goals
6. Use our communication channels to showcase YMCA Milton Keynes as an employer that places people at the heart of everything

Goal 2

Develop the campus as an inspiring home and community that transforms lives for young people

In the period 2021 – 2024 we will continue our efforts to be the best supported housing provider that we can be, providing excellent affordable accommodation, and a community that supports positive change.

To achieve this, we will create a Psychologically Informed Environment by:

1. Developing an in-depth staff training programme
2. Creating a framework for our work that considers young people's emotional needs and takes an 'asset' rather than a 'deficit' approach to working with young people
3. Developing our trauma support services
4. Creating an exemplar employment support programme
5. Developing a fun and exciting activities programme

Goal 3

Provide additional and affordable high-quality homes for young people in communities across the Borough

The shortage of affordable housing options for young people in Milton Keynes challenges our ability to move graduates on from our campus once they have secured permanent employment and developed their independent living skills.

To overcome this problem and to allow us to continue to support young people as a caring landlord we will explore and pursue:

1. Opportunities to develop new build accommodation
2. Opportunities to purchase properties 'off-the-shelf'
3. Options to lease properties from other landlords/owners
4. Potential partnerships and referrals to other housing providers



Goal 4

Develop our Social Enterprises

Our campus has been designed to attract the public (especially the business community) in Milton Keynes to support our work financially as customers of our on-site social enterprises.

The enterprises are also designed to create meaningful employment opportunities for our residents. The success of these enterprises is therefore critical to our plans.

During the period 2021 – 24 we must make a success of:

1. Our café, HomeGround
2. Our meeting and conference facilities
3. Our retail units/social enterprise hub
4. Our partnership with Acorn Nursery

We will also explore the opportunities of developing new enterprise activities away from our main site.



Goal 5

Expand our work with young people beyond housing

There are many issues affecting young people in Milton Keynes other than housing.

Mental health issues are high profile, challenges around employment in a depressed economy, and many other existing and emerging issues affect young people's health and wellbeing.

In the period 2021 – 24 we will seek to address some of these issues by:

1. Engaging with young people to understand and respond to issues that are current and of concern to them
2. Engaging with statutory organisations in areas such as health and criminal justice to better understand issues and gaps in service provision
3. Engaging with partner organisations, community groups, parish councils and the public on issues affecting their areas
4. Learning from successful services in other areas of the country



Goal 6

Engage the community in Milton Keynes in recognising and supporting our work

To maximise our success, we need all sections of the community in Milton Keynes and the surrounding areas to understand the issues that young people are facing, the vital work that we do to address these issues, and how they can support this work.



To this end we will:

1. Improve our communications and marketing activity to better highlight our work and the needs of young people
2. Take a leadership role in relevant networks and partnership groups
3. Build on our fundraising success and develop new fund development models that will allow us to strengthen services and continue to innovate
4. Pursue statutory funding to ensure the ongoing success of our Housing Support, Mental Health, Wellbeing, and Employment services
5. Build relationships with employers and strong partnerships with Milton Keynes College, Job Centre Plus, and other agencies who can support our employment programme

All of our goals will be supported by robust financial management, continued fundraising success, strong governance, and a high-quality business support function.

Our progress and achievement of our strategic goals will be continuously reviewed throughout the three-year period.



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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