

TRUSTED
STANDARD



YMCA | Here for young people
Here for communities
Here for you

CASE STUDY

YMCA HEART OF ENGLAND

TRUSTED STANDARD LEVEL 1 and MATRIX STANDARD DUAL ACCREDITATION



OVERVIEW

YMCA Heart of England (YHoE) is an independent charity formed in 2020 through the merger of YMCA Birmingham and YMCA Coventry & Warwickshire. Operating across ten sites with over 100 staff, it supports individuals and communities across Birmingham, Coventry, and Warwickshire.

Its mission is to inspire young people to discover their potential and live life in all its fullness.

Core services include:

- **Housing:** Over 350 bedspaces, including supported housing, move-on, and general needs accommodation.
- **Youth & Community:** Weekly youth clubs, leadership programmes, and targeted support (e.g. for young people with Type 1 diabetes).
- **Nursery Provision:** Billy Bears Nursery in Solihull.
- **Support & Advice:** Mental health support, mentoring, counselling, and pastoral chaplaincy.
- **Eden Coffee Shop** provides a welcoming space for the local community to enjoy barista coffee and quality food, while also hosting a variety of groups including book club, walking groups, and stay and play sessions.
- **The Chris Bryant Centre** is a community hub offering high-quality conferencing facilities and office lets, with a variety of local community groups and organisations using the space to deliver services to the local community.



PIONEERING QUALITY THROUGH DUAL ACCREDITATION

YHoE recently achieved both the Trusted Standard (Level 1) and the matrix Standard – a rare dual accreditation in the sector.

- The Trusted Standard validates governance and operational management.
- The matrix Standard is the Department for Education’s benchmark for high-quality information, advice, and guidance (IAG).

These accreditations demonstrate that YHoE combines strong internal systems with high-impact service delivery.

Additional recognition in the last 12 months include:

- Investors in People – Silver
- Gold Exempt Accommodation Standard
- YMCA of the Year



STRENGTHENING ORGANISATIONAL CULTURE & PERFORMANCE

CEO Pauline Tomlinson describes the accreditation process as a way to sharpen internal systems and embed clear accountability.

It's already showing results:

- **Credibility with Commissioners:** Independent assurance strengthens funding bids and evidences value for money.
- **Stronger Organisational Culture:** Staff understand and live the charity's values in day-to-day work.
- **Continuous Improvement:** A 'deep dive' internal audit model identifies risks and drives best practice.

ENHANCING IAG

The matrix assessment highlighted significant progress in Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG) delivery. A formal IAG policy gave staff a stronger structure, which has improved consistency and clarity across services.



Key improvements include:

- **Holistic Support:** Life Coaches use the Outcomes Star to track individual progress across areas like health, tenancy, and confidence.
- **Youth Development:** The Routes to Success programme boosted self-confidence from 22% to 93% among 175 participants.
- **EDI in Practice:** Staff take time to understand residents' cultural backgrounds (e.g. refugees from Eritrea) to deliver more tailored, appropriate support.
- **Meeting Basic Needs:** A resident feedback loop led to the creation of a Sanitary Bank—providing essential toiletries for those arriving with nothing.

STRATEGIC VISION 2025–2030: GROWTH, REACH, AND IMPACT

YHoE's new strategic plan sets a clear direction for service expansion and deeper community engagement:

- **Chris Bryant Centre:** Developed into a premier conference and events venue, while continuing to serve as a busy community hub.
- **Eden Coffee Shop:** Ongoing role as a valued social space and training site for young people.
- **Nursery Provision:** Expanding to meet growing local need.
- **Youth & Community Work:** Extending programmes across Birmingham and Coventry.
- **Housing:** Focus on improving quality and increasing capacity.
- **Service User Voice:** Lived experience is actively listened to and used to shape services and inform decision-making.



CONCLUSION

YMCA Heart of England shows what's possible when an organisation invests fully in quality and accountability. Dual accreditation through the Trusted and matrix Standards has improved systems, strengthened culture, and led to better outcomes. It's a model for values-driven service delivery backed by data, built on trust and led by people who listen.

INTERESTED IN ACCREDITING?

To raise the quality standard of your charity or voluntary organisation, establish trust with stakeholders, and increase your chances of winning funding, chat with a member of our team at Trusted Standard:

[BOOK A CALL](#)

