



Youth Focus West Midlands

Annual Report 2022/23 June 2023

Charity Registration Number 1148687

Company Registration Number 8114745

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Introduction

Chair's Report

It is a great pleasure to contribute to my second report as Chair of Youth Focus West Midlands (YFWM) in such positive circumstances. Our organisation is probably in the healthiest position it has ever been in, and this should be welcomed and celebrated.

Challenges come with success, and the coming year will require us to continue to review and carefully manage our priorities, capacity, development needs and finances as we respond to growth in demand.

The environment for the youth sector is still very challenging and the wider issues for the national economy will continue to distract national and local government from prioritising policies and spending for youth work. In this context, it is even more important that advocacy and infrastructure support for organisations, practitioners and young people is visible and effective.

YFWM is an important bridge between national government, important agencies and training institutions and the regional and local youth sector. We are often the “glue” that bonds national initiatives to action on the ground in our region. We are building local capacity to recruit and train a new workforce of youth workers, helping to ensure young people get their voices heard, raising the profile of youth work by improving the evidencing of its

impact on young people's lives and playing a key role in strengthening the development and national influence of the network of youth work units in other regions.

My thanks go to everyone who has contributed to a successful year, especially to Ruth Rickman-Williams, whose commitment and creativity is the foundation of our growth and success and to our associates who support the work. Also, to all the members of the Board who are invaluable in bringing a diverse range of experience and skills to the organisation.

During the year we said goodbye to Rachel Edwards as a Board member and I want to record my thanks for her excellent contribution to our development, particularly in progressing the work on evidence and impact.

I look forward to an exciting year ahead.

Paul Finnemore

Chair

Youth Focus West Midlands

Annual Overview

Chief Executive Officer's Report

Post Covid we have now got a hybrid model of delivery established. This has worked well for us as a regional body. Online delivery has meant we have been able engage a wide range of people in conversations and collaboration, across of range of strategic and delivery areas of the work. Face to face delivery has been a lot less and has been used where significant discussion and development time is needed.

It is good to see that Youth work is still clearly on the agenda and is being recognised more and more for the role it has to play in the lives of young people, which is good news, although we still have a long way to go.

We still await the review of the statutory guidance, which we have been waiting for, for over 2 years now. This is still promised and expected by the end of the summer term. We hope this will help further strengthen the role of youth work in the wider agenda for young people.

One of the significant challenges for the youth work sector is workforce. With the loss of a significant number of nationally qualified and experienced staff, and the loss of a number of qualifying courses at level 6 we are seeing increasing pressures in both recruitment and support for developing a workforce at levels 2 and 3. This shouldn't be underestimated. Despite these challenges we have seen the youth work sector across the region continue to rise to the challenges and deliver some amazing opportunities and programmes to a wide range of young people across the region. This should be recognised and celebrated.

The organisation continues to work closely with its regional colleagues through the national network of RYWU's and have good links and working relationships at a national level with a range of key organisations

YFWM has had a very positive year and has seen further growth and expansion. The Board are now actively engaged in reviewing the position of the organisation to ensure both investment in growth and development,

alongside sustainability of the organisation. I am extremely grateful to them for their continued support.

As we look ahead YFWM will continue to consolidate its position as a key provider of infrastructure support for youth work across the West Midlands, and to look forward to working with partners (old and new)

Strategic Leads Network

- The network has continued to meet online, providing an opportunity for members keep up to date on national and local developments.

The network covers 11 of the 14 local authority areas – Birmingham, Coventry, Dudley, Shropshire, (Telford) Staffordshire, (Stoke) Warwickshire, Solihull, Worcestershire and Sandwell. The network sees leads from both voluntary and local authority sector services coming together to help support, inform and develop youth work across the region. This has proved particularly useful with regards to local delivery and strategic planning

- Intelligence gathering by local authority area

This year we have begun to gather information from the network areas. The first phase of this is now complete and work has begun on bringing this together. Capacity within the organization is a challenge and we are now looking to see how this can be increased

- Workshop for WM funders network

YFWM was invited to run a workshop for the WM funders network. This was a great opportunity for a sector wide conversation and although numbers weren't large it proved to be a very useful workshop. Thanks to Positive Youth Foundation and Young People from Birmingham Youth City Board for working with us and providing some great first hand experiences of the challenges and opportunities

- Links to national bodies

YFWM continues to work closely with the other RYWU's through the national network. This provides the opportunity for engagement and influence at a national level particularly with DCMS, LGA, NYA, UK Youth, YPF Trust, National funders collective. RYWU's are now being recognised as providers of key infrastructure support for youth work at a regional level

Quality, Impact and Outcomes

YFWM has continued to work closely with the Centre for Youth Impact, Now George Williams College, on a range of projects and programmes over the last 12 months

- Impact Network

The network runs quarterly meetings face to face providing an opportunity for workers and managers to come together to explore and share the work they are doing on quality, outcomes and impact. This has been supported by input from George Williams staff

- Impact project – data standard

The impact project brought together 6 organisations from across the region to look at the challenges of producing collective data. This proved to be quite a challenge not least of all being the use of different data platforms and different ways of counting. As a result of this we are hoping to look at the development of a very simple 1st stage of data capture that could be widely adopted across the region. This work aligns with work going on nationally and we hope to bring these 2 strands of work together

- Healthy data ecosystems –

This project is still in its very early stages of recruitment to the project. The project will support organisations in using some of the tools and measures produced by George Williams to look at both Quality and SEL outcomes. There are 3 regions involved in the project. The project has the support of regional researchers who will both support the organisations involved but also help provide the learning across the 3 regions

- Aspiration for investment in the development of a regional intelligence hub

YFWM has the aspiration to develop increased capacity in this area of work, including the LA information gathering work that has been going on. We would like to see the development of a regional intelligence hub that can bring together a number of strands of work, data and intelligence as a resource for the sector in the region

Youth Voice

- YFWM has continued to run a Strategic Youth Voice Group for the region involving BYC, WMOPCC, WMVRU, WMCS, WMCA and representatives from the strategic leads network. The aim of this group is to provide a strategic steer for where youth voice in the region should head, and to better align different streams of youth voice work. This work has been slowed down by the change in key personnel and gaps in staffing across some of these key organisations
- YFWM has also secured the continued contract for delivery the Midlands UKYP programme, supporting local authorities signed up to the UKYP programme across both East and West Midlands. We have held a couple of conventions bringing young people together from across the region.
- We continue working with BYC on a series of regional events, led by young people to include information sharing and training and collaborative working between young people and workers.

Training / Workforce Development

YFWM has continued to run an Approved Training Centre, with ABC Awards, to support youth work training across the region. The Training Centre has successfully delivered:

- Level 2 Award training in Herefordshire and Birmingham
- Level 2 Award training in Wolverhampton and Walsall (via an associate trainer)
- Level 3 Certificate top-up training in Wolverhampton and Walsall (via an associate trainer)

The established regional training network – funded in part by the NYA/DCMS bursary scheme, now in its 4th cycle (BR4) - continues to deliver further approved qualifications at both Level 2 and 3, ensuring good reach across the region. As the lead partner, YFWM takes responsibility for co-ordinating this delivery, contracting with delivery partners & ensuring full geographical coverage. During the 3rd bursary cycle (BR3 2022/23) 110 learners undertook accredited courses: 97 at Level 2 and 13 at Level 3. This represents a substantial up-skilling of the regional workforce.

Through this bursaries programme we have developed a capacity building model - with BAYC, who now have a member of staff qualified as an assessor - and also with a YFWM Associate. They have both since started their IQA training. Plans are also underway to deliver a similar capacity building model with Worcestershire.

YFWM has successfully recruited to a freelance Business Support post to help with bursary delivery and other Training Centre functions. This has freed CEO capacity for higher-level tasks and allowed for innovation: worksheets for Level 2 courses are now completed & assessed on-line thanks to a Google Classroom implementation. This allows for a quicker turnaround on assessment of completed work and enhances communication between learners and assessors outside of the face-to-face sessions.

Ruth Rickman-Williams

Chief Executive Officer

Youth Focus West Midlands
Income/expenditure 2022/2023 as at 30.6.2023

Opening Balance 1.7.22 **£142,255.29**

Income

SEG	£301.60
Youth Voice	£10,000.00
Bursaries	£80,414.71
George Williams	£13,530.00
IQA	£35.00
PHF	£5,000.00
A4A	£10,000.00
Subscriptions	£3,875.00
Consultation	£1,050.00
Young Solutions	£5,000.00
Interest	£194.71

Total **£129,401.02**

Expenditure

SEG	£1,751.60
Youth Voice	£5,751.21
Bursaries	£52,657.00
Staff	£29,972.57
Business Support	£3,922.50
IQA	£594.00
Insurance	£366.97
Bank Charges	£65.20
Zoom	£172.80
ICO	£40.00

Total **£95,293.85**

Income over expenditure **£34,107.17**

Closing balance 30.6.2023 **£176,362.46**

Restricted Funds

Bursaries	£27,312.00
A4A	£9,220.00
Young Solutions	£5,000.00
Salaries	£10,000.00

Sub-total £51,532.00

Available Balance **£124,830.46**

For the year ending 30.6.23, the company was entitled to exemption from audit under section 477 of the Companies Act 2006 relating to small companies.

The members have not required the company to obtain an audit of its accounts for the year in question in accordance with section 476.

The directors acknowledge their responsibilities for complying with the requirements of the Act with respect to accounting records and the preparation of accounts.

These accounts have been prepared in accordance with the provisions applicable to companies subject to the small companies' regime.