



Annual Report

2009/10





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Who we are

South London YMCA offers a wide range of supported housing services to 500 vulnerable homeless people in the London boroughs of Croydon, Lambeth and Southwark. Our aim is to provide safe, high quality housing and support to help people gain self-confidence and realise their potential.

South London YMCA was formed in 2005 by the merger of Croydon YMCA and the YMCA of Lambeth, Lewisham & Southwark. We have a long history of work in South London – the first YMCA in Croydon was established in 1861.

A lot more than housing

Nearly all the homeless, vulnerable and socially excluded people we work with need support, advice and guidance over and above their basic housing needs.

We meet these needs by offering practical help in areas such as employment, training, and benefits advice. We also take care to ensure the health needs of our customers are

met, helping them deal with drug or alcohol problems for instance, offering advice on diet and healthy living or helping them access mental health services.

The YMCA in England

In England, the national body, YMCA England, supports, represents and develops the work of 135 YMCAs across the country which in turn provide services to over one million people every year. Each YMCA is autonomously managed and works to meet the specific needs in their local community.

The YMCA worldwide

The YMCA works in over 120 countries and has over 160 years' experience of working for social change. It is the oldest voluntary international organisation in the world.

Although it remains a Christian organisation, the YMCA aims to work with all sections of the community irrespective of religious, racial, gender or cultural background.



Chair's statement

This has been a very exciting year for South London YMCA.

Our ambitious plans for the wholesale replacement of outdated hostels with modern vibrant facilities are fast becoming a reality. By early 2011, three high quality new developments will have opened their doors, and plans are well advanced for three further developments, including the stunning new South London Millennium Foyer.

This new high quality housing will allow us to work more effectively with homeless people as we help them rebuild their lives and make the most of their potential.

We have also made great strides in involving our customers in more aspects of our work. This year three customers joined our important Services and Performance Committee, helping put the voice of the customer at the heart of scrutiny and decision making.

We expect our partnership with Croydon Churches Housing Association (CCHA) to bring further benefits in years to come. Over the past 12 months our two organisations have embarked on an innovative resource pooling initiative which should help both become more cost effective.

Our Board has been significantly strengthened by the addition of six highly skilled new members, making us well prepared to face the challenges ahead.

Once again, we are grateful for the support of our funders and partners, including the London Boroughs of Croydon, Lambeth and Southwark, the Primary Care Trusts in Croydon and Lambeth, the CLG, the Homes and Communities Agency, the Tenant Services Authority, the Big Lottery and other charitable trusts, groups and individuals who support our work.

A big thank you must also go to our staff, of whom much is demanded and who often go the extra mile to make a real difference to our customers' lives.

This has been a year of real transformation and, as we describe in this report, the next twelve months will see us press ahead with delivery of our ambitious programme of improvement and renewal.

Clr David Fitze – Chairman

President Lord Peter Bowness

Board members

Clr David Fitze	Chairman
Derek Richards	Treasurer
Gareth Fendick	Chair of Human Resources Committee (joined March 2010)
Trevor Morgan	Chair of Development and Regeneration Committee
Philippa Thomas	Chair of Services and Performance Committee (joined March 2010)
Tony Tucker	Chair of Audit Committee
John Ingman	Chair of Human Resources Committee (resigned March 2010)
Lawrence Stewart	Chair of Audit Committee (resigned March 2010)
Funke Awoderu	
Brian Dillon	(joined June 2010)
Louis Gonsalves	Customer Board Member
Richard Hunt	(joined March 2010)
Hilary Knight	
Andrew Lowe	(joined March 2010)
Bruce Moore	(joined March 2010)

Corporate management team

Jeremy Gray	Chief Executive
Dennis Simmonds	Director of Corporate Services, Company Secretary
Bob Brown	Director of Asset Management
Lee Buss	Assistant Director, Business Improvement
Lisa Morris-Tomkins	Assistant Director, Operations
Amanda Pauling	Assistant Director, Operations

Achievements

Jobs partnership gets results

A ground breaking job pooling partnership, which offers work and training opportunities to service users across nine agencies working with homeless people, has got off to an excellent start. In its first six months of operation, the partnership, initiated by South London YMCA in 2009, resulted in 23 service users being recruited to paid positions and 36 taking up voluntary jobs.

Job vacancies at Broadway, Centrepoint, Depaul UK, Homeless Link, Look Ahead Housing & Care, Providence Row Housing Association, South London YMCA, The Passage and Thames Reach are promoted amongst customers of these organisations. Support staff encourage service users who they think would benefit from a particular employment opportunity, help them apply for the post and continue to support them if their application is successful.

Plans to develop the initiative further include devising cross-organisational traineeships and eventually appointing a co-ordinator to develop and manage the project.

Customer traineeships change lives

South London YMCA also runs its own customer trainee scheme, and in 2010 our first trainee graduated to a permanent job at our multi-purpose centre in Stockwell. When Ade Gaston took up her paid twelve month support worker traineeship, she was recovering from addiction and living in our semi-independent 'move on' accommodation in Croydon.

"What I'm doing now feels like what I should have been doing years ago," she says. "I was unemployed before, so doing the traineeship made me feel like I was worth something and could achieve things with my life."

The traineeship also helped Ade overcome the stigma that can face former homeless people trying to move into work.

"Because of my difficult background and the criminal record I have connected with that, many employers wouldn't have given me a chance if I'd tried to go straight into a job" she says.

South London YMCA benefits from customers coming to work with us because of the unique insight their experience brings to the organisation.

"I understand where the people I'm supporting are coming from because I've been there and done that," Ade explains. "They know I'm talking from experience and not from a text book."



Ade Gaston



Roseann with Heidi

Awards success for Community Host scheme

A South London YMCA initiative which offers 16 and 17 year olds accommodation and support in the homes of individuals and families, was runner up in the prestigious Andy Ludlow Homelessness Awards 2009. The Community Host Scheme has grown quickly since it started in 2008 and now provides vital support to 20 young people in Lambeth and Southwark. Sadly, despite being seen as a cost effective model of good practice, with highly successful outcomes, the project is facing closure in Southwark due to spending cuts.

One young person whose life has been transformed by the scheme is 17 year old Roseann who had been homeless for six months when she moved in with community hosts Heidi and Ed in 2008.

"My life was very lonely before," she says. "I had this huge bag that I was always lugging from place to place with no one to help me and missed most of the last year of school because I had nowhere to live or study. But now I'm here I feel cared for, safe and loved. I'm in my second year of studying art and design at college and want to go to university to do architecture. I feel I have a future now."

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Making the most of our assets

We are forging ahead with ambitious plans to redevelop our accommodation to ensure it is all of a standard that both we and our customers can be proud of. This comprehensive programme of renewal involves building new homes on existing and new sites, demolishing hostels that have outlived their useful life and refurbishing other facilities.

Homes fit for the 21st century

The high quality new homes we are building will help re-house people living in places such as Cornerstone, an outdated and cramped 117 bedroom hostel which we plan to close in early 2011 and then demolish. The new homes will also be offered to some residents of our 120 unit hostel in Lansdowne Road, Croydon, another old style facility which we have now sold and which we plan to close in two years' time on the completion of the new Cornerstone building.



Eva House

Developments close to completion:

Eva House, Croydon: a brand new supported housing scheme for 13 people comprising one and two bedroom self-contained flats, all finished to a very high standard (see pictures). Built on the site of a former hostel for young homeless people, it opens in November 2010.

Emily House, Croydon: another brand new building, this provides self contained flats for nine people. Occupying the site of a previous smaller specialist housing scheme, the development is also due to open in November 2010.

Both Eva House and Emily House will provide long term accommodation for people with mental health needs, and will be provided in partnership with SLaM – the South London and Maudsley NHS Trust.

Palmer House, Croydon: 60 unit high support accommodation for homeless people, including rough sleepers. The scheme comprises self contained studios and flats to be shared by two people. It has been developed on a new site in partnership with Croydon Council's Supporting People team, and is due to open in January 2011. Our partners Thames Reach will run the Croydon outreach and resettlement service from Palmer House.



Eva House - high standard kitchen



South London Millennium Foyer (artist's impression)

Developments in the pipeline:

New Cornerstone, Croydon: due for demolition early in 2011, the existing Cornerstone hostel will make way for a new 70-80 unit supported housing scheme comprising high quality one and two bedroom flats (see picture).

South London Millennium Foyer, Upper Norwood: in 2011 work will begin to build a new Foyer (see picture) next door to the existing one which accommodates 80 young homeless people. Once the new facility is complete, the old building will be demolished and replaced with flats for private sale, the proceeds from which will help pay for the new Foyer.

Sumner Road, Croydon: assessment and first stage housing for 44 young people with a range of accommodation types to suit different needs. It is hoped this development will open by 2012.

All of our pipeline developments are subject to confirmation of funding and planning permission, but we would like to record our thanks to Croydon Council's Supporting People team for their ongoing support for our redevelopment plans.



New Cornerstone (artist's impression)



Services and Performance Committee members Frank Quaynor, Gary McFarlane and Ben Blaikie

Achievements

Customers help monitor performance

The people who use services often know best how well an organisation is living up to its promises and where it can do better. That is why we are striving to involve customers at every level of scrutiny and decision making across our organisation. This year we appointed three additional customers to our important Services and Performance Committee, a new sub-committee of our main board which makes sure we are providing our customers with the highest quality support whilst using our resources as efficiently as possible.

Mutual support to beat addiction

We have been selected as the lead organisation to pilot the Smart recovery programme, an approach to tackling drug, alcohol and other addictions which puts a strong emphasis on those affected helping one another. Customer led support groups meet regularly in our hostels where people can open up to each other about both their successes and setbacks in coping with their problems. In this way participants help their peers increase motivation and confidence as they strive to move towards a healthier lifestyle.

Customer Volunteer David Ford, who has helped set up and run the Smart recovery groups says: "Being involved in these groups has given me back some of the confidence that being homeless can take away from you and it's meant I can make some positive use of the difficult experiences I had living on the street."

Customer volunteers spread the word

Two other residents are helping our customer involvement team get more people who use our services involved in our work. The volunteers are helping design leaflets, posters and a new customer website, to make sure the way we communicate is as relevant and engaging as possible. The volunteers are also gaining invaluable work experience which builds their confidence and skills.

"I was depressed with nothing to do before I was asked if I would like to get involved, firstly as a customer representative and then on this project to improve communication", says Pearse Cooke. "Getting involved has made me feel more capable than I thought I was and reminded me that I do have understanding and empathy with people with the same issues as me."



Customer volunteers David Ford (left) and Pearse Cooke

Upgrade for conference centre

We have refurbished a new function room at our conference venue at King George's House, Stockwell. The sensitive upgrade has retained the original Victorian wall panels and flooring which add period charm to a flexible meeting space flooded with natural light. King George's House Conference Centre – run in partnership with Cater Plus - boasts six competitively priced, well appointed spaces which can accommodate between 12 and 150 people. We also offer a full catering service and give significant discounts to charities and public sector organisations. The conveniently located facility raises funds which support our work with homeless people.



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Stockwell

what we do and where

- **40 Stockwell Road, London SW9 9ES:** our flagship multi-purpose centre comprising: 87 bedsits for single homeless young people, 21 self-contained flats for young adult offenders and young people in training, education or employment, and two 'move on' flats off-site for six young people making the transition to independent living. The site is also home to our Teenage Parents' Service and Community Host Scheme, as well as providing high quality conference facilities for use by community and voluntary organisations.
- **1 Lansdowne Road, Croydon CR9 2BN:** a low to medium support hostel providing 120 bedsits and a catering service for single homeless people of all ages.
- **Cornerstone, 32 Dingwall Road, Croydon CR9 3LQ:** a low to medium support hostel providing 117 single rooms, on a self-catering basis, for vulnerable single homeless people of all ages.
- **Elizabeth House, 97 St James's Road, Croydon CR0 2UU:** a medium to high support self-catering 11 bed hostel for young single homeless people. Support covers emotional and practical issues such as health, cooking, cleaning and employment and training.
- **Crocus House:** a high quality building of five flats offering safe and secure temporary accommodation for vulnerable women and their children (location not given to protect residents).
- **Keystone House, 9 Akabusi Close, Croydon CR0 6YL:** a ten bed hostel providing a therapeutic programme for people with problematic drug and alcohol use. The service provides group work and counselling, with additional move-on accommodation in three separate houses where customers receive ongoing support from the staff team.
- **Knights Millennium Foyer, 8 Sylvan Hill, London SE19 2QF:** provides accommodation for 80 single homeless people aged 16 – 25. The service is currently provided by a separate registered charity, but the foyer will be rebuilt to a high specification on the same site within the coming two to three years and will then be fully integrated into South London YMCA.
- **Croydon Alcohol Counselling Service (CACS), 28 Wellesley Road, Croydon CR0 2AD (service closed in May 2010):** provided specialist counselling for people who were experiencing problematic alcohol use. At any one time this service helped around 50 clients who were in ongoing counselling and had a maximum capacity of 80.

our record in 2009-10

Lettings (including re-lets and new units)	
Lansdowne Road	152
Cornerstone	124
Stockwell	81
Keystone House	45
Elizabeth House	17
Crocus House	6
Teenage Parents' Service	5
Total	430

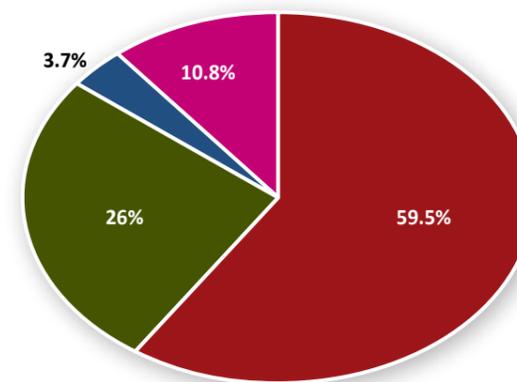
Moving people on: planned moves	
1st quarter	76%
2nd quarter	72%
3rd quarter	72%
4th quarter	70%

Rent	
% rent collected	95.1%

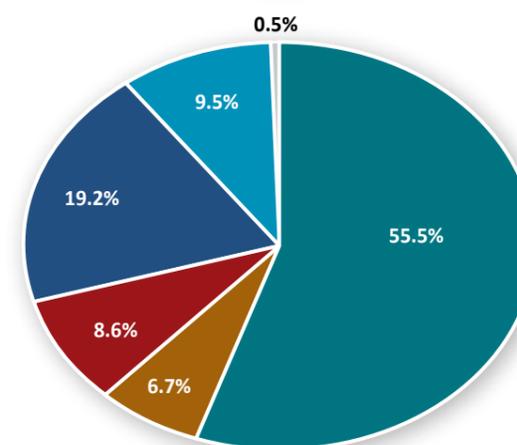
New units coming into management	
Young people's second stage flats (Stockwell)	11
Young adult offenders' flats (Stockwell)	10
Total	21

Repairs	
Number of repairs (includes handyperson service)	2,621
% repairs completed within target time	99.85%

money in and out



Income	£
Rents	3,333,968
Supporting people funding	1,460,479
Other funding & donations	207,672
Interest received	60
Other income	598,810
Total	5,600,989



Expenditure	£
Supported housing services	3,046,764
Maintenance & repairs	369,662
Depreciation	476,084
Central services	1,051,624
Other services	527,317
Interest paid	26,254
Total	5,497,705
Surplus	103,284



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