



Annual Report

2012



Contents:

Who we are	1
Chair's statement, board and corporate management team	2
We have realised our vision	3 – 4
The transformation that really matters	5 – 6
Helping individuals flourish	7 – 8
What we do and where	9
Our record in 2011-12	10
Money in and out	10

Front cover picture: Peace Lubangakwot, Alexandra House resident

Who we are

South London YMCA offers a wide range of supported housing services to 459 vulnerable, homeless people in the London boroughs of Croydon and Lambeth. 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; supporting them

to recover from drug or alcohol addictions for instance, and 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

The people we work with and communities we serve are facing an increasingly tough environment.

A quarter of all Londoners aged 16 – 24 are unemployed, rising to 27 per cent amongst young men. In addition, rising prices, soaring private sector rents and cuts in benefits are hitting many hard, and leaving younger people especially vulnerable.

Add to that family breakdown, drug and alcohol misuse and mental health problems - issues that impact on many of our customers - and the need for high quality accommodation and caring support from well trained staff is greater than ever.

We are proud to have risen to this challenge. This year we have opened two new developments, bringing to five the number of new buildings we have opened in south London communities since 2010. This year's report shows how new buildings and improved support means better outcomes for customers.

So 2012 has seen a transformation come to reality for us. Major regeneration projects Ingram Court, and the award winning Alexandra House, both opened this year, replacing outdated accommodation that was no longer fit for purpose. They give us, along with Eva House, Emily House and Palmer House, the capacity to provide top quality housing and support to help individuals turn their lives around.

But we are not resting on our laurels. Plans to redevelop the Knights Millennium Foyer on our site at Sylvan Hill are progressing well too, and we hope work will begin on this project in the near future.

None of this of course would be possible without the hard work of our staff and Board members, and the support of our partners and funders. I would like to say a special thank you to Derek Richards and Trevor Morgan, who this year stepped down from the Board after many years of service.

There is little doubt that the external environment is going to remain challenging for some years to come. But thanks to our bold redevelopment programme and investment in top quality staff, we are in a strong position to provide our customers with the high quality housing, support and encouragement they both need and deserve.

CLlr David Fitze – Chairman

**President
Lord Peter Bowness**

Board members

CLlr David Fitze	Chairman
Derek Richards	(Resigned September 2012)
Tony Tucker	Chair of Audit Committee
Trevor Morgan	(Resigned September 2012)
Philippa Thomas	Chair of Services and Performance Committee
Funke Awoderu	(Resigned September 2012)
Gareth Fendick	(Resigned May 2012)
Louis Gonsalves	(Resigned September 2011)
Richard Hunt	(Resigned September 2012)
Bruce Moore	(Resigned October 2012)
Hilary Knight	
Andrew Lowe	
Allan Hudson	
Sue Daniels	
Sharon Lewis	
Visakha Sri Chandrasekera	
David Ford	

Corporate management team

Jeremy Gray	Chief Executive
Dennis Simmonds	Director of Corporate Services, Company Secretary
Bob Brown	Director of Development
Lee Buss	Director of Housing and Support
Irmani Darlington	Director of New Business and Social Enterprise



We have realised OUR VISION

This year has been a turning point for SLYMCA.

We have delivered, on time and on budget, an ambitious and complex development plan, started more than five years ago. This life-changing programme has involved building five brand new facilities and closing down two unsuitable and out-dated hostels.

In place of the tired facilities in the old Landsdowne Road and Cornerstone buildings, we have built brand new, modern, inspiring and comfortable homes which we and our customers can be proud of.

In 2012 alone we opened two state-of-the-art facilities which together provide 124 high quality bed spaces for homeless people in south London.

Award winning transformation

Alexandra House, which opened in July 2012, is a bold regeneration project which provides spacious individual and shared self-contained flats for 80 homeless men and women of all ages.

Built on the central Croydon site of the recently demolished Cornerstone hostel, this eye-catching development won in the prestigious Construction News Awards 'Best Project Under £10m' category this year. Judges were impressed by the outstanding quality of the design and an innovative modular building method; ready-to-live-in 'pods', complete with kitchens and bathrooms, were constructed off site, saving vital time in the project.

Alexandra House also includes 30 bed spaces reserved for our innovative new 'step-down' service, for people who no longer need support and are ready to move on.



Intelligent design

Ingram Court, in West Croydon, which opened in September 2012, is a housing and support service carefully designed to help young homeless people get back on their feet and make the transition to independent living.

Built around a relaxing landscaped courtyard, Ingram Court provides 10 assessment beds, where young people with problems ranging from family breakdown and alcohol or substance misuse, to mental health issues or offending behaviour, begin their journey to independent accommodation. There are 34 additional bed spaces in shared flats where customers are supported to develop the practical and social skills they need to re-build their lives.

Last pieces of the jigsaw

The successful completion of Alexandra House and Ingram Court mark the final stages in a process of transformation and renewal

which has seen us open three other brand new facilities in Croydon since 2010, and also redevelop and refurbish our site at Stockwell.

Eva House and Emily House, which opened in late 2010 and early 2011 respectively, provide between them top quality shared and self-contained supported accommodation for 22 people with a wide range of needs.

Palmer House, which opened in June 2011, offers short-term temporary accommodation and specialist support for up to 60 single homeless men and women, including rough sleepers, many of whom have complex and sometimes challenging needs.

In Stockwell, we built a brand new Teenage Parents' Service, as well as up-grading our conference centre which helps generate income to fund our work. We also undertook the wholesale refurbishment of the Georgian Houses we own on this site and adapted them to accommodate our Young Adult Offenders' service, and our Second Stage Move On service.

The transformation that really matters

The place you live can reinforce or challenge negative beliefs you have about yourself.

The troubled backgrounds of many of our customers frequently give them the clear message that they are of little worth, are entitled to little and can expect little in the future. A big part of our job is to challenge these beliefs, and help our customers begin to have faith in themselves, take control of their lives, and build a better future.

Conversations with our customers show that top-quality tailormade accommodation, combined with quality support from kind and caring staff, plays a vital part in this process of re-building self-worth.

Here, four of our customers share some of the painful experiences that contributed to them becoming homeless, and reflect on the difference moving into one of our new developments has made to their lives.

Gareth, 20, Ingram Court:

"I ended up breaking into an empty house and squatting after I got sacked from my job doing door to door fundraising. I'd fallen out with my mum and dad, so had nowhere else to go.

"Squatting was hell. I'd gone from living in a nice house, having money and friends, to being on my own and knowing no-one. Someone had stripped all the copper wiring out of the house,

which was falling apart anyway, and there was no gas, electricity or water, no cooker and no bath or shower.

"I'd shoplift because I didn't have money for food and I couldn't claim benefits because I didn't have a permanent address. I was ashamed to tell people I was squatting and got very depressed and felt suicidal a lot of the time. I was in such a hole; there was no hope.

"But by chance I started chatting to this bloke at a bus stop who told me about a charity that could help me; South London YMCA.

"In the two months I've been here, I've started to feel much better and healthier.

I've put on weight and I'm in a relationship with a girl I met – it's great having someone to care about and someone to care about you. I'm planning to start a plumbing course or something like that to get into the building trade."

Peace, 49, Alexandra House:

"I'm from Uganda but had to leave my country 25 years ago because of the war in the northern part. Our family was destroyed; we lost everything and had no way to live.

"I came to the UK alone as a refugee, and was quickly sent to live in East London where I got a job in a factory that made popcorn.

"I became homeless because I was renting a room in a shared house where there were at least 15 people sharing a single bathroom and toilet. There were four people or more to a room. It was horrible. I couldn't stand it anymore and moved out in August last year.

"To begin with I stayed with my cousin, but she had her own problems, and I used to spend all day and evening in the park, so as not to be a nuisance, even when it was dark. As a woman you feel very vulnerable when you're homeless.

"Having nowhere to live also made me feel up and down all the time. I wasn't settled. I was stranded with my things and had to keep moving. I could never relax. It was the worst time of my life.



“I moved to SLYMCA’s Lansdowne Hostel last year, but SLYMCA Alexandra House is far better. I’ve got a self-contained room which is twice the size of the other one. It has a kitchen, and the bathroom is much nicer. I can cook the kind of food I like now, whereas in the old place we had to eat the food that was given to us.

“I like the open plan office at Alexandra House too – we can see our key workers and the people who are helping us and giving us support.

“And I have a desk and plenty of space in my room to study: next month I’m starting an NVQ in Business Administration.

“My key worker helped me apply for the course. There is a lot of support here – the manager speaks to us individually and cares about what is going on for us. Whenever you have a problem you can go to the manager and he will make sure it’s dealt with.”

Jade, 21, Ingram Court:

“I came to South London YMCA because I had to get out of the relationship I was in. I was living in a one bed flat with my boyfriend who used to hit me. I’d been with him for five years but didn’t feel safe. He didn’t like me talking to other people and would get jealous really easy. If he had a friend round, he would make me hide in my room and I even had to hide if he had a girl round. At first I hated it, but then it became a habit, and if someone knocked on the door, I’d go straight to my room. My confidence was affected really badly and I went into myself.



“I’ve only been here a few weeks, but I’m starting to meet new people and have made some friends. When I first came here I wouldn’t talk to anyone and was still completely in myself, but I’m slowly starting to get back to my normal self, and I feel much happier.

“It’s friendly and the staff are nice. My key worker has helped me settle in and sort out my benefits – I couldn’t have done that without her.

“I’m doing a hairdressing course, and I go to Thames College. I’m just finishing level two but I want to go to level four and do a business module along with the hairdressing. It’s about another four years’ study altogether.”

Leroy, 50, Alexandra House:

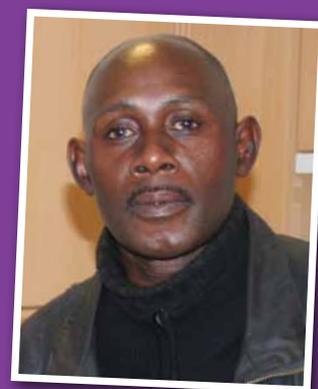
“I was living in a house with people who were heavily into drink and drugs. There were eight or nine of us in this one house, with different people knocking on the door all the time and constant comings and goings. It was hard not to get sucked into that world.

“I was getting into trouble a lot and my life was going nowhere. I was unemployed, but even if I’d had a job, you couldn’t sleep in that place, and you didn’t feel that your things were safe.

“I ended up going in and out of prison for short periods, until a year or so ago I moved into SLYMCA’s Lansdowne Hostel. It was better than anywhere else I’d been, but it was still a bit chaotic and noisy sometimes, and it was starting to get to me.

“SLYMCA’s Alexandra House is quiet. It’s so quiet, it’s unbelievable. Being here has made me cool down a bit. I’ve got tranquillity and peace, and can be away from people I don’t want to be around. “Also, I didn’t have a kitchen in Lansdowne, and the room there was less than half as big as this one. Here I can have something to eat when I want, and have a cup of tea when I feel like it. This is much better.

“I’ve got my own things here – my TV, digibox, my own iron and ironing board, plates and microwave, pots, pans. **It feels more like my own home.** The security is good here too, so I know my stuff is safe.”



Helping individuals flourish

Our vision is about a lot more than building new homes. It is about helping our customers gain the confidence and skills they need to rebuild their lives. And that means creating opportunities for them to try new things, get back into the world of work, and extend their horizons.

Volunteering changes lives

Programmes such as our innovative customer volunteer scheme – where customers take on responsible roles within our organisation – play a crucial part in helping the people we work with develop and flourish.

Taking up a work placement in our office, or planting and tending a garden can, for some, be the first time they have felt needed or valued. It can also be the first step towards finding the courage to move back into the world of paid work.

Trying something new

Then there are social activities many of us would take for granted, such as a trip to a sporting event or involvement in a charity fun run. For some of our residents, these can be very new and sometimes challenging experiences.

Here we describe some of these work and social opportunities, which can be as important as a decent home in helping our customers achieve their goals.

A job worth doing

Kirsty recently volunteered at our Croydon head office, where she staffed reception, answering the phone and dealing with visitors.

“Being a volunteer has really boosted my confidence because I’m being given responsibility and things to do that I’m trusted with,” she says.

This is something it would have been hard to imagine Kirsty doing only a few months ago.

When she first arrived at Keystone House, our specialist substance misuse service, she had been sleeping rough in Croydon and, as she says, “drinking myself to death.” She initially found it hard to trust people and struggled to join in the group sessions aimed at helping people overcome their addictions.

But eventually Kirsty came out of herself, and she has now progressed to our Keystone second stage service at Elizabeth House, for residents who need less support.

“Having this job on reception gives me something to get up for and means I don’t have too much time on my hands,” she says.

In addition, Kirsty has recently begun training to become a Volunteer Practitioner at a Westminster Drugs Project service.



Paralympics inspiration

We arranged for our customers to spend a day at the Paralympics in September. 14 customers representing each of SLYMCA's services received a day pass which gave them access to top sports including wheelchair rugby, tennis and seven-a-side football.



Gardening with a purpose

Villiam, from Slovakia, found himself unemployed and homeless after the Croydon cafe he had worked in for 11 years shut down.

"I slept rough for four months in Croydon town centre and then was in a bed and breakfast before SLYMCA offered me a place," he says.

A good proportion of Villiam's time is spent poring over the jobs pages of his local papers, and two mornings each week he attends an English language class.

But in the meantime he has chosen to join SLYMCA's Customer Volunteer scheme.

"Work makes me happy, not working makes me sick," he says. "If I have no job then I am angry and restless."

Villiam's voluntary work includes looking after the Alexandra House garden.

"I like working outside and enjoy keeping the garden looking really nice," he adds.

A race worth running

Janet and Alice, Palmer House customers, raised £170 for Cancer Research UK when they completed the five kilometre 'Race for Life' run in July.

Palmer House customers receive a high level of support to help them deal with complex practical and personal issues.

Customer Auditors

Our Customer Volunteer scheme includes Customer Auditors who scrutinise SLYMCA services from the perspective of people who actually use them. This is an important and responsible role; Customer Auditors interview other customers to find out what they think of the service they are getting, and review and give feedback on our policies to help improve them.

Janet, who recently moved from our high needs support service at Palmer House to the Alexandra House 'step-down' service, for people who need less support, has made significant progress since becoming a Customer Auditor.

"When I started I needed a staff member to be with me when I did the interviews," she says. "But I feel more confident now, so I can do them on my own."



what we do and where

- **40 Stockwell Road, London SW9 9ES**
Our multi-purpose centre in Lambeth comprising: 87 bedsits for single homeless young people, plus 21 move on flats for young people in training, education or employment. The site is also home to our seven bed Teenage Parents' Service and our high quality conference facilities for use by community and voluntary organisations. The Community Host Scheme is also run from the Stockwell site.
- **Eva House, 31-33 St James's Road, Croydon CR0 2DS**
A supported housing scheme for 13 people with long term mental health issues comprising studios and two bedroom shared flats.
- **Emily House, 86 St Saviour's Road, Croydon CR0 2XB**
A supported housing scheme for nine people with long term mental health issues comprising studios and two bedroom shared flats.
- **Palmer House, 105 Lansdowne Road, Croydon CR0 2FL**
High support accommodation for 60 homeless people, including rough sleepers, comprising self-contained studios and shared flats.
- **Alexandra House, 32 Dingwall Road, Croydon CR9 3LQ**
A medium support hostel for single homeless people of all ages, providing 80 bed spaces, 50 of which are supported and 30 of which are non-supported for customers ready to live independently. Accommodation is provided in a mixture of studio and two bed flats.
- **Crocus House**
A high quality building of five flats which offers safe and secure accommodation for vulnerable women.
- **Keystone House, 9 Akabusi Close, Croydon CR0 6YL**
An abstinence-based ten bed hostel providing a therapeutic programme for people with problematic drug and alcohol use. The service provides group work and counselling.
- **Elizabeth House, 97 St James's Road, Croydon CR0 2UU**
The move-on accommodation for customers who have completed the programme at Keystone House. Customers receive support from the staff team and there are 13 bed spaces with shared kitchens and bathrooms.
- **Ingram Court, 57-61 Sumner Road, Croydon CR0 3LN**
Ingram Court offers supported accommodation to 44 young people aged 16 – 21 with a variety of support needs. The service is the first assessment centre for young people in Croydon, providing 10 bed spaces in the assessment centre, which are all en-suite with shared kitchen facilities. The remaining 34 bed spaces are comprised of cluster flats for two or three people.
- **Knights Millennium Foyer, 8 Sylvan Hill, London SE19 2QF**
Provides accommodation for 80 single homeless people aged 16 – 25. 50 customers receive support and 30 bed spaces are for customers in 'step down' and their only support is around move on. 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 in due course be fully integrated into South London YMCA.
- **Croydon Second Stage properties SE19/CR2**
Four general needs properties comprising 15 units of move on accommodation.

our record in 2011-12

Lettings (including re-lets and new units)

Crocus House	6
Elizabeth House	10
Eva House	1
Emily House	6
Keystone House	32
Keystone 2nd Stage	11
KMF	101
King George's House	83
Lansdowne	121
Lambeth Second Stage & Young Offenders	12
Teenage Parents' Service	6
Community Host Service	30
Palmer House	114
Total lettings	533

Moving people on: planned moves per quarter

1st quarter	85.8%
2nd quarter	71.4%
3rd quarter	65.3%
4th quarter	76.6%

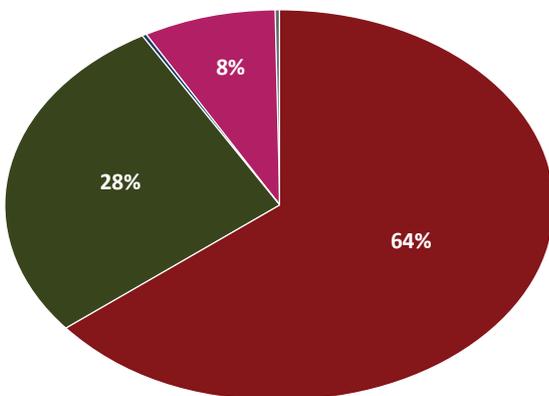
Repairs

Number of repairs	2298
% completed in target time	89.4%

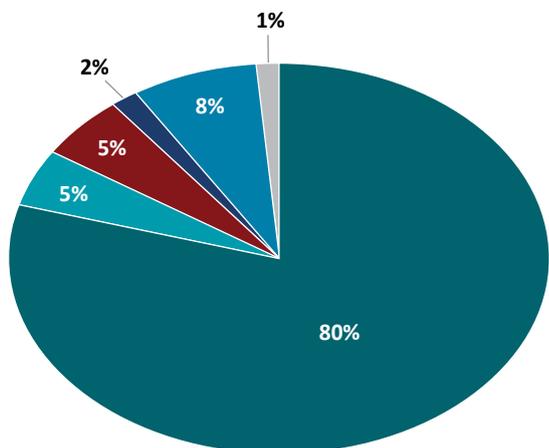
New units coming into management 2011-12

Palmer House	60
--------------	----

money in and out



Income	£
Rents	4,581,291
Supporting people funding	1,961,856
Other funding & donations	11,470
Other income	*556,004
Interest received	8,572
Total	7,119,193



Expenditure	£
Supported housing services	5,458,219
Maintenance & repairs	326,386
Depreciation	359,340
Governance	110,126
Other services	*519,375
Interest paid	78,001
Total	6,851,447

Surplus **267,746**

* Includes Conferencing



Registered Office:
King George's House
40 Stockwell Road
London SW9 9ES

Head Office:
Marco Polo House
3-5 Lansdowne Road
Croydon CR9 1LL

Contact:
T: 020 7101 9960
E: enquiries@slymca.org.uk
www.slymca.org.uk

To make a donation:
Please follow the link
via our website.
Thank you for your support