
MEDIA RELEASE - for immediate release

Date: 29 March 2021

Coming together to provide support to homeless people

YMCA Thames Gateway is pleased to share its merger with YMCA West Kent, enabling the two organisations to combine their strengths, skills, resources and knowledge to better serve the people and communities they work with across London, Kent and Essex.

YMCA West Kent will become one of the branches operating as part of YMCA Thames Gateway, joining Romford, Dartford, Greenwich and Thamesmead. Services delivered by YMCA West Kent will currently be unchanged and all the existing staff members will remain in post.

Chief Executive Officer of YMCA Thames Gateway, Dave Ball, said: "We're really pleased to be able to welcome YMCA West Kent as part of the Thames Gateway family going forward. The past year has been really tough for a number of organisations, and especially charities, so to be able to come together to continue our work across an even wider patch is incredibly positive."

YMCA Thames Gateway came to fruition when YMCA Romford successfully merged with YMCA Dartford back in 2015. As an Association, they offer around 500 young people with a safe place to stay every year, childcare support through nurseries, pre-schools, and after school, holiday and youth clubs, and deliver health and fitness through a gym and fitness classes. The merger with West Kent will see YMCA Thames Gateway add a number of projects to their portfolio of services including an education and training scheme that uses carpentry and joinery to engage young people, and excite them about learning, life after school and their role and potential in the workplace.

Interim Chief Executive of YMCA West Kent, Steve Osborne, said: "Our merger has followed careful consideration of the strategic objectives of both our Associations. By West Kent becoming a branch of YMCA Thames Gateway, we have the potential to grow our work whilst continuing to provide residential support and other services to the communities we have served for the past 30 years."

The merger will be official from Thursday 1 April and it's important to note that service users won't experience any change in the way things operate.

ENDS

Notes to editors:

About the YMCA Thames Gateway

We empower young people and transform the local community through four key areas of work:

- Offering a place to stay – between our hostel and move-on accommodation we give approximately 500 young people a safe, warm place to stay, as well as support to help them stay off the streets for good.
- Giving young people a fresh start - we give young people the support they need to make a fresh start in life, including life skills training, accredited courses, vocational training and work experience, drugs and alcohol counselling, crime prevention and support to lead active and healthy lives.
- Giving support – We provide childcare for over 200 children every day and offer a range of other support to families, including holiday and youth clubs, before and after school activities, support for those at risk of exclusion from school, and family and parenting programmes.
- Helping communities to get active – We currently engage with 10,000 people every year, we support local people to develop into healthy, confident individuals.

For more information about our services go to www.ymcatg.org