

**News release**

17th February 2015

**Labour Leader Holds Q&A at The Showroom**

**The Showroom Conference Centre in Lincoln welcomed Labour leader Ed Miliband earlier today for a Q&A session with voters ahead of the General Election in May.**

Mr Miliband, who also played pool with some of the children taking part in half-term activities at The Showroom, took questions from an audience of invited guests in an attempt to win their support.

The Showroom is a myplace facility run by Lincolnshire YMCA. As well as a conference venue, it also houses an activity centre which is where the charity does a lot of its youth engagement work.

“I was particularly pleased that the Labour Party chose to hold today’s question and answer session at The Showroom as it put the spotlight not only on Lincoln, but also on our fantastic facility,” explained Malcolm Barham, Chief Executive of Lincolnshire YMCA.

“Many people don’t realise that it’s run by the charity and that the money generated by the conference centre helps to fund the important work we do with vulnerable children and young people.

“I also enjoyed meeting Mr Miliband and hearing what he had to say, especially on housing benefits for young people and the ‘16-hour rule’ which limits the amount of time Job Seeker’s Allowance claimants can train every week and still get benefits to 16 hours.”

At the end of his visit Malcolm presented the Labour Party leader with the YMCA Manifesto which highlights to political parties and candidates the priority areas for the charity and forms the basis of the policy work it undertakes with the Government and MPs.

During his visit Mr Miliband played pool with some of the children in the activity centre and was amazed by the work the charity does.

“I’m incredibly impressed by what I’ve seen here today and by Malcolm’s leadership,” said Mr Miliband. “He obviously cares deeply about young people. Myplace is a major Government programme which was introduced during the last Labour Government and shows what can be achieved when working in partnership with third, private and public sector organisations.

“I would like to thank the Lincolnshire YMCA for having us here; I am aware there’s a certain circus which surrounds these visits and I’m really grateful to The Showroom staff for accommodating us.”

**Ends**

**Notes of Editors:**

* Lincoln YMCA was founded in 1869 and became Lincolnshire YMCA in 2005 when it merged with the Stamford branch.
* Lincolnshire YMCA is based on St Rumbold’s Street in Lincoln.
* Lincolnshire YMCA merged with Nomad Trust in 2013 to help people secure and sustain tenancies in the city as well as providing ongoing support once housed.
* Lincolnshire YMCA is one of the biggest providers of supported accommodation in Lincoln, and the only provider of night shelter in the county.
* In 2014 Lincolnshire YMCA provided 374 people with accommodation and is currently housing 109 residents aged from 18 to 66.
* For more information about Lincolnshire YMCA, please visit <http://www.lincsymca.co.uk>, or the [Lincolnshire YMCA Facebook page](https://www.facebook.com/lincsymca) or follow their twitter account [@LincsYMCA](https://twitter.com/LincsYMCA).

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