

Better value, delivered.



# Annual Report

*Celebrating*

**YPO** 50

2024



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# Chairman's statement

## On behalf of the YPO Management Committee, I'm delighted to introduce the **YPO Annual Report and Performance Summary** for the 2024 financial year.

In extending this welcome, I am standing in for our departing chairman Mike Barnes, who has decided to retire as a councillor in Calderdale, where he has served as a member for six years. I would like to pay a warm tribute to Mike for his work for the people of Halifax and here at YPO.

Mike's service and values are exemplified at YPO, which continues to provide the best possible value in challenging times for councils and the wider public sector. In 2024, the organisation celebrated 50 years, during which time it has never wavered from this mission.

Government figures show that one in every three pounds of public money, around £300 billion a year, is spent on public procurement. Of this, councils in England spend about £85 billion, and with finances tighter than ever before, YPO plays a crucial role in helping them ensure their budgets are well managed and that best value is achieved across revenue and capital expenditure.

During 2024, we were all gearing up for the Procurement Act, which ushers in a new era of transparency and flexibility in public buying. After some delays, the Act passed into law in February 2025. The new regulations aim to deliver quicker, simpler processes that make it easier to compete for small and medium-sized enterprises, as well as voluntary, community, faith, and social enterprise organisations.

YPO led the way with webinars, blogs, help and information, as thousands of local government officers got up to speed on what the historic legislation means for them.

Our organisation's growing team of professionals continues to guide its public sector customers through the changes that have taken place in the procurement landscape. YPO now offers more than 100 framework solutions for buying goods and services, while its familiar vans continue to keep schools stocked with everything that teachers and pupils require.

All of this cannot be achieved without a lot of hard work and dedication. My fellow founding member representatives and I would like to thank the staff at YPO for their achievements during this year of celebration.

Here's to many more years of supporting our schools, councils and communities!

**Councillor Phil Cole,**  
*Vice Chair*  
YPO Management Committee



# Managing Director's statement

Over the past year, we've reflected on **50 years of achievement** while looking ahead to a future shaped by major change in the procurement landscape.

**We proudly celebrated five decades of pioneering public buying, all while navigating the historic reform introduced by the Procurement Act 2023.**

Despite ongoing challenges in the education and local government sectors, we delivered another strong commercial performance in 2024, reinforcing our market-leading position. But we know there's no room for complacency—competition is fierce, and the digital age demands constant innovation.

To futureproof YPO, we're broadening our product and service offering and anticipating emerging trends. In 2024, we launched plans for a new engagement team to promote our full portfolio under the One YPO banner—championing value for money, public benefit, and integrity across the public sector.

We continue to put people at the heart of everything we do, using digital tools to enhance

customer service and support our suppliers. Sustainability remains a core focus as we work toward our goal of achieving operational net zero by 2038.

As a 100% publicly owned organisation, we're proud to return significant dividends to our members and associates, helping fund vital front-line services. Our 50th anniversary was a time to celebrate and build on our legacy, with themes of sustainability, digital transformation, collaboration, and our people explored further in this report.

We also raised over £100,000 for the NSPCC through sales of YPO-branded products. Our commitment to social value continues through support for SMEs and partnerships with the Brownlee Foundation and Twinkl Community Collection, promoting children's health and learning.

As we reflect on this milestone year, I thank our staff, members, suppliers, and customers. The YPO board and I are proud of our achievements and excited for what lies ahead.

**Simon Hill,**  
*Managing Director*



# Our member authorities

Including our 13 member authorities, YPO is the largest formally constituted public sector buying organisation in the UK with 83 member organisations.

## Our members



## Our associate members



# Celebrating *50 years* of public value

In 2024, YPO celebrated the golden milestone of 50 years since our 13 founder members joined forces to combine their buying power, beginning a quest that over the following five decades would transform public procurement.

Our journey since 1974 has been incredible. We've evolved from sourcing affordable school supplies to providing pioneering frameworks for the emergency services and introducing public sector apprenticeships, all while staying true to our mission to provide the best possible value to the public sector.

Fittingly, our members, suppliers, partners, customers, and team were all able to join us in looking back on 50 years of remarkable achievement while also looking forward to many more years of success.

During the year, we celebrated giving back a total of £164 million to the public sector through member dividend payments since we were formed. These payments help local authorities deliver valuable frontline services in their communities. In addition to the billions, we

estimate we have saved the sector through our buying power.

Our supplier conference marked 50 years of impactful, innovative partnerships, while exploring new opportunities to work together and grow.

Our suppliers also joined us as we launched competitions such as The Big Lottertree, which offered primary and secondary schools a chance to win a class trip to Go Ape, and a £23,000 furniture giveaway to schools.

We showed our appreciation to teachers by giving 50 hampers worth more than £50 to nominated teachers for the good they do in their schools.

April brought a flurry of activity, including unveiling a commemorative plaque and burying a time capsule at our Wakefield HQ. A van in YPO50 livery took members of our procurement team on a nationwide tour to offer procurement advice at 50 local authority or public sector establishments.

Another major landmark came as we celebrated passing £100,000 in donations to our official

charity partner, the NSPCC. The money is raised through a percentage of sales of YPO-branded products and boosted by volunteering and further fundraising by our fantastic colleagues, such as senior transport driver Neil Roberts, whose London Marathon run raised more than £2,100 for the charity.

In 2024, we launched a partnership with the Brownlee Foundation, Team GB triathletes Alistair and Jonny Brownlee's initiative to inspire children to lead a healthy lifestyle. We supplied 12,000 YPO-branded kit bags for pupils who participated in free events—the first step in a partnership that expanded further in 2025.

The curtain was brought down on a year of celebration when colleagues, customers and suppliers joined for Our Day in December, the perfect end to a memorable 12 months.



Our charity partnership has raised a total of over **£100,000** for the NSPCC

**NSPCC**  
Let's keep children safe.

By buying selected YPO products you're supporting the fantastic work of the NSPCC.

The graphic features a young boy in a blue school uniform pointing upwards, set against a yellow background with a green curved shape on the left.

# Celebrating *50 years* of public value (continued)

April brought a flurry of activity, including the unveiling of a commemorative plaque and the burial of a time capsule at our Wakefield warehouse and HQ. A van in YPO50 livery took members of our procurement team on a nationwide tour to offer procurement advice at 50 local authority or public sector establishments.

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We teamed up with the NSPCC and Henkel for a school “Craftathon” and in line with our values supported a host of other good causes. In 2024, we launched a partnership with the Brownlee Foundation, Team GB triathletes Alistair and Jonny Brownlee’s initiative to inspire children to lead a healthy lifestyle. We supplied 12,000 YPO branded kit bags for pupils who took part in free events – the first step in a partnership that has expanded further in 2025.

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**yipo**

## Switch to YPO and save

**Your high quality, low-cost alternative to leading brands.**

- Art supplies
- Curriculum
- PSHE
- Sports
- Stationery
- Exercise books
- Early years resources
- ...and so much more!

By buying YPO branded products you're helping to support the **NSPCC**

Also see our first all-staff event, the Big Day. The event signifies major investment in employee well-being.

[yipo.co.uk/switch](http://yipo.co.uk/switch)



**yipo 50**

**50th ANNIVERSARY**

**WELCOME**

**celebration**

**ACHIEVEMENTS**

**Our Day 2024**

**NOT JUST another SUPPLIER**

**RECORD Profits**

**Help the Public Sector**

**grow Digital Transformation**

**PP OUR People RR**

**social VALUE Brand**

**RESULTS**

**9/10 would buy again**

**customer SERVICE**

**SALES are UP**

**competitive prices**

**+ £0.4m**

**Growing Market LEADS**

**£164,000,000 PAID BACK**

**WE SHOULD BE VERY PROUD**



# Sustainability

As we celebrated our 50th, we also focused on the future and the positive difference we can make by concentrating on four themes: **sustainability, our people, digital transformation and collaboration.**

We have focused on the environment for many years and have been accredited to ISO14001, an internationally agreed-upon standard that sets out the requirements for an environmental management system, since 2012.

Three years ago, we set out our climate change strategy to play our part in limiting the effects of global warming. The key targets are to halve our operational emissions by 2030 on our way to operational net-zero emissions by 2038, and to support our supply chain to achieve net-zero emissions by 2050.

We are also committed to improving the sustainability of products from our YPO brand, while maintaining their accessibility and quality.

For example, the market-leading YPO glue stick is 100% recyclable and made of at least

80% recycled plastic, with more than 95% naturally sourced ingredients.

By removing the plastic packaging from our bestselling YPO sticky notes and instead using recycled cardboard, we've avoided using more than 560kg of plastic a year.

Since 2022, we have reduced the number of printed pages in our catalogues by 64%, cutting the number we produce as our customers move online.

Every part of the organisation is working hard to contribute to our sustainability efforts, from the canteen, where single-use items and plastic are being phased out, to our procurement teams, who source locally and from suppliers who are also trying to reduce their carbon footprint.



# Our people

The second focus in YPO's anniversary year was on **our people** and how their successes contribute to the success of our business and add value for our customers.

We aim to be an employer of choice that attracts and retains the right people for our roles. Our people matter and have access to wellbeing initiatives. They are engaged and cared for. They have the right benefits and are supported to be the best that they can be.

We have over 25 trained mental health first aiders and were crowned Employer of the Year at the prestigious InsideOut Awards, which celebrate excellence in workplace wellbeing and mental health.

This reflects efforts made throughout the organisation to create and maintain a culture and environment that is attractive to candidates and where current employees can thrive and develop their skills.

Holistic staff wellbeing, encompassing physical, mental, financial, and social aspects, is prioritised as we cultivate a culture of inclusion and belonging. In 2024, 36 wellbeing workshops and events were delivered to YPO employees.

YPO's pioneering success with apprenticeships highlights our organisation's people-first approach.

2024 saw even more success for our apprenticeship framework, which has helped 2,560 people throughout the UK on their career path since its launch in 2018.

Closer to home, YPO has taken on 114 apprentices since 2012, with eight in ten of them going on to secure permanent work at YPO.

Holly Ambler, a business administration apprentice in our trading team, was recently announced as the business, enterprise and professional apprentice of the year at the Heart of Yorkshire Education Group Apprentice Awards.

She said, "If it wasn't for the amazing teams I've worked in and YPO as a whole for supporting me through the process, I wouldn't have been able to achieve it!"



*"If it wasn't for the amazing teams I've worked in and YPO as a whole for supporting me through the process, I wouldn't have been able to achieve it!"*



# Digital transformation

Another key focus during 2024 was a programme of **digital transformation** that touches every area of YPO, as our organisation prepared to lead the way for the next 50 years.

This futureproofing helps us grow and brings benefits that all feel, including customers, suppliers, colleagues, members and partners.

Improvements to our website have improved customer experience. They range from introducing a self-serve “My Account” area with a new-look invoice details section, to allowing guests to make purchases without creating a full account.

Customers welcomed our improved intercom chatbot feature, which since 2023 has been helping to answer their queries and is constantly evolving through machine learning and artificial intelligence.

For suppliers, a portal launched in June 2024 gathers a comprehensive data set, providing richer analysis and improved data quality. An

automated matching facility reduces the need for manual matching of data, which leads to fewer inaccuracies.

Moving to a 30-day returns policy has improved our supplier relationship by limiting the period in which they can expect returns, while our new invoice matching system has brought about a significant reduction in the time to process and pay invoices.

Digital transformation helps those who work at YPO help our stakeholders. For example, replacing manual processes frees up time that can be spent to better help customers. Colleagues benefited from a wide-ranging programme that included the introduction of a new eLearning platform in April 2024 and the launch of the People Portal, which simplifies HR requests, in June.

Work continues apace in 2025, with 16 projects highlighted on our digital roadmap.



# Collaboration

**Collaboration** is at the core of everything we do and was another focus of our 2024 celebrations.

The YPO we know today exists because our 13-member authorities joined forces to transform public procurement in 1974. That spirit of working together for the common good is in our DNA.

It extends from our joint buying power, which delivers the best value to the public sector, to long-running business relationships that share and spread best practices, and to the good causes that we support.

YPO's Managing Recruitment framework supports four member authorities that recognised they could save time and resources by adopting a collaborative approach to recruiting temporary workers. The partnership between Kirklees, Wakefield, Calderdale, and Barnsley Councils has lasted a remarkable 15 years and counting. It continues to fulfil its aims while delivering crucial social value initiatives.

Our partnership with South Yorkshire Fire & Rescue reached the 20-year milestone in 2024.

The service first sought YPO's expertise and support when it wanted to buy specialised firefighter PPE in 2004, at a time when the national framework available offered limited options.

Working together, YPO developed an improved framework to address the needs of South Yorkshire Fire & Rescue. That framework has been in place ever since and we now support the firefighters across multiple categories - they have used 42 of our frameworks during the past decade.

YPO's partnership with Twinkl Community Collection helps hard-pressed schools by donating the resources they need most as their budgets are squeezed. In 2024, £20,000 of YPO backing helped hundreds of schools by providing resources ranging from packs of colouring pencils to outdoor den-making kits.



# The future of procurement

Procurement has never been more prominent. With the Public Sector Procurement Act 2023, we must continue to drive efficiencies and deliver value amid the increasing financial pressures our public sector customers face. **Our goal remains clear: to be a leader in public sector procurement.**

In March, we welcomed Andrea Smith, Executive Director – Procurement, whose leadership is pivotal in shaping and executing our procurement strategies. Andrea brings a wealth of experience and a forward-thinking approach, focusing on innovation, stakeholder collaboration, and sustainable growth. Her work already delivers value to our organisation, customers, and members.

Andrea engaged with our people, customers, members, and suppliers to understand their needs. Through these conversations, she identified further opportunities to strengthen our service offering. Specifically, there was an apparent demand for enhanced support to help

customers and suppliers deliver effective, value-for-money procurement services.

Three priority areas emerged:

1. Training and content for procurement and contracting staff.
2. Short- to medium-term bespoke procurement services.
3. Advanced customer engagement with a holistic view of our offerings.

To address these needs, in July, we invested significantly in a new public sector customer engagement team, comprising a training academy, a bespoke procurement solutions team, and a customer engagement team. These teams are designed to improve our service offering and support our commercial growth ambitions, aligned with our strategic plans through 2030.

In November, Paul Barry joined as Head of Public Sector Customer Engagement, bringing over 19 years of experience. Paul is focused on strengthening customer relationships and enhancing delivery efficiency.



*We invested significantly in a new public sector customer engagement team, comprising a training academy, a bespoke procurement solutions team, and a customer engagement team.*

# We are social value

At YPO, social value is at the core of who we are. We exist to serve our communities, and for us, value extends beyond financial outcomes. **Our purpose is to champion a broad spectrum of value, including economic, social, and environmental, while positively impacting the UK, including the communities we serve and the wider public sector.**

In 2024, we continued to strengthen our commitment to responsible business practices through various initiatives.

## Environmental sustainability

We completed a full validation and cleansing of our carbon footprint data, laying the foundation for more accurate environmental reporting. Our “You Care, We Care” initiative expanded our eco-friendly product range, and we achieved a 64% reduction in printed catalogue pages between 2022 and 2024, significantly reducing paper consumption.

## Social value and community engagement

We launched a dedicated social value web page and introduced a volunteering policy to support staff involvement in community initiatives. We contributed £108,395 in stock and in-kind donations to partners and voluntary, community and social enterprises. Our procurement process was enhanced to enable collaborative social value reporting with suppliers, 70% of whom are SMEs. Our partnership with Go4Growth supported over 100 suppliers through social value training.

## People and wellbeing

We delivered 36 wellbeing workshops and increased the number of trained Mental Health First Aiders. In October 2024, we signed the Mindful Employer Charter and launched mental health training for managers. As part of our health initiatives, 124 staff received flu vaccinations or vouchers, and over 40 health checks were delivered in partnership with Wakefield Council. We also employed 10 apprentices, generating a calculated social impact of £50,315 over their two-year course.



# Looking ahead: Strengthening our future, together

**As we enter the final year of our five-year strategy in 2025, we remain committed to evolving with the public sector's needs.**

Internally, we're aligning our teams and services under one unified YPO. This includes an in-depth brand review to ensure we are positioned to serve all areas of the public sector—streamlined, accessible, and trusted.

We will launch our strategic authority campaign, which is focused on building deeper relationships with chief executives and procurement heads across the UK. We will support our strategic authority partners with their long-term procurement strategies, enabling us to work together to deliver better value, efficiency, and outcomes for our communities.

We're also strengthening our national partnerships with the NSPCC, the Brownlee Foundation, and Twinkl. These collaborations, enhanced by support from celebrity influencers,

will help us measure and grow our social value contribution across the UK, particularly in areas that matter most: education, child safety, and wellbeing.

In response to the Public Procurement Act 2023 going live, we will help customers adapt to new requirements, offering practical guidance and tools to stay compliant while continuing to deliver substantial value.

As we look ahead to 2025, we focus on contributing to commercial growth through three core areas: expanding bespoke procurement services, launching our new commercial management solution, and growing our training academy offer. We'll also drive increased framework rebate generation and boost product sales across the wider public sector.





NSPCC

# Our board of directors



**Simon Hill**  
*Managing Director*

Simon joined YPO in July 2011 from former regional development agency Yorkshire Forward, where he was executive director.

Previously, Simon was managing director of electronics automotive manufacturer Kostal UK Ltd. With experience across procurement, sales, and general management, he also has 10 years public sector and 20 years commercial experience.

Simon is also Chairman of BESA, the British Educational Suppliers Association and company secretary of YPO Procurement Holdings Limited.



**Richard Taylor**  
*Executive Director*

Richard joined YPO in December 2024, from his consultancy role at Duca Del Cosma, Richard was Commercial Director and part owner of Stromberg Golf which he sold to private equity in 2019 (American Golf).

He has 25 plus years' experience working in commercial roles within the private sector, working for brands such as Hotpoint, Microsoft and Mark Two and has delivered growth in both B2B and B2C channels.

He has a range of experience in ecommerce and has been instrumental in setting up and developing Brands.



**Julie Hawley**  
*Executive Director*

Julie joined YPO in May 2021 as finance director from her previous role as managing director of Office Friendly, a buying group specialising in office products.

She previously worked for Kingfield Heath Wholesale and has over 30 years' experience in the office products industry and joined the board of Boss federation in 2022. Julie was awarded Professional of the Year in 2018 and European Professional of The Year in 2019. Julie leads the organisation's finance, business change and HR functions.

## Our board of directors (continued)



**Jacquie Lightfoot**

*Executive Director*

Jacquie joined YPO in July 2021 and is responsible for leading the organisation's warehouse, logistics and IT teams. She joined from Arla foods where she held the position of head of logistics and warehousing for the UK.

Jacquie's career has been dedicated to logistics. She's worked for several blue-chip organisations including Carlsberg, Hallmark Cards, DHL, and Whitbread. Jacquie has experience of managing both insourced and outsourced operations and a strong background in leading large teams and instigating business change.



**Andrea Smith**

*Executive Director*

Andrea joined YPO in 2024, from her role as ICS Procurement Director at Sheffield Teaching Hospitals NHS and South Yorkshire ICS. Previously, Andrea was head of procurement at Doncaster and Bassetlaw Teaching Hospitals NHS and University Hospitals of Leicester NHS.

As a proficient commercial leader with 25 plus years experience, Andrea has spearheaded strategic and operational improvements in commercial and procurement realms, spanning public and private sectors. A CIPS Fellow and engaged in regional and national procurement circles, Andrea's dedication shines as an HCSA Council member, nurturing future Healthcare leaders.



**Helen Lisle**

*Non-Executive Director*

Helen Lisle has had a career spanning over 35 years holding senior executive and non-executive roles in Local Government, the NHS and the Charitable sector. Helen is currently the managing director of CPP LLP, a wholly owned NHS organisation delivering procurement services at a national level to the NHS. She is also very active outside of her executive role sitting as a Public Governor of Northumbria Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust and until recently a board member and trustee of the City of Newcastle Gymnastics Association. As a dedicated commercial professional, Helen has also held senior voluntary positions in Health Care Supply Association (HCSA) and the Chartered Institute of Procurement and Supply (CIPS). She is a Fellow of both the CIPS and the Chartered Management Institute.

# Performance summary

## Total Spend under Management

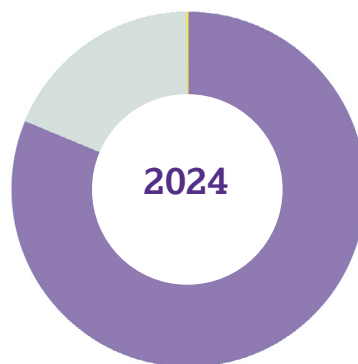
£1.942bn

## Account activated in 2023

|                          |        |
|--------------------------|--------|
| Joint committee accounts | 2928   |
| Limited company accounts | 10,984 |

## Turnover by category (£000s)

|                       |   | 2023            | 2024            |
|-----------------------|---|-----------------|-----------------|
| Stores                | ● | £92,430         | £92,219         |
| Direct Supply         | ● | £21,454         | £21,801         |
| Food                  | ● | £4,091          | £4              |
| <b>Total Turnover</b> |   | <b>£117,975</b> | <b>£114,024</b> |



## Income and expenditure account (£000s)

| Income and expenditure account                     | 2023            | 2024            |
|----------------------------------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| Invoiced turnover                                  | £117,975        | £114,024        |
| Cost of sales                                      | (£78,521)       | (£73,161)       |
| <b>Gross margin</b>                                | <b>£39,454</b>  | <b>£40,863</b>  |
| <b>Rebate &amp; Other Income</b>                   | <b>£10,445</b>  | <b>£11,692</b>  |
| <b>Overheads</b>                                   | <b>(42,066)</b> | <b>(43,506)</b> |
| <b>Net profit / (loss) on trading operations</b>   | <b>£7,833</b>   | <b>£9,049</b>   |
| <b>Exceptional Costs</b>                           | <b>(£1,506)</b> | <b>(£1,788)</b> |
| <b>Net profit / (loss) after Exceptional Costs</b> | <b>£6,327</b>   | <b>£7,261</b>   |

This table is an extract from the YPO Audited Statement of Accounts. To view the full document visit [www.ypo.co.uk](http://www.ypo.co.uk)

# Performance summary (continued)

## Energy consumption

| Annual usage comparisons | 2022      | 2023      | 2024      | 23/24 Difference | 2024 Comparison to 2019 baseline |
|--------------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|------------------|----------------------------------|
| Electricity (kWh)        | 1,553,649 | 1,381,611 | 1,236,855 | -10.48%          | -19.19%                          |
| Gas (kWh)                | 2,631,030 | 2,026,878 | 1,561,467 | -22.96%          | -43.05%                          |
| Water (m3)               | 2,548     | 3,260     | 3,409     | 4.57%            | 16.19%                           |
| Diesel (litres)          | 252,485   | 155,366   | 154,483   | -0.57%           | -39.87%                          |
| C02 Emissions (tonnes)   | 1,462     | 1,070     | 953       | -10.93%          | -39.91%                          |

**Note:** The closure of our food warehouse has seen a large reduction in gas as we were no longer heating the building when it was in use and also the impact on deliveries/diesel usage

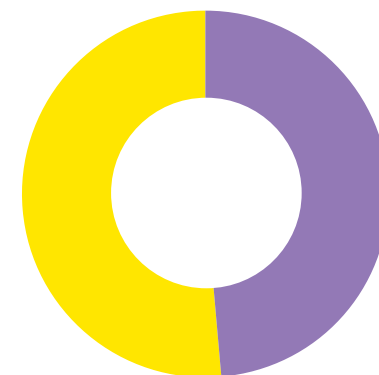
## Employees by age

|                         |   | Total      | ● Male     | ● Female   |
|-------------------------|---|------------|------------|------------|
| <30                     | ● | 121        | 65         | 56         |
| 31 to 40                | ● | 115        | 56         | 59         |
| 41 to 50                | ● | 123        | 59         | 64         |
| 51 to 60                | ● | 157        | 81         | 76         |
| 61+                     | ● | 47         | 34         | 13         |
| <b>Total head count</b> |   | <b>563</b> | <b>295</b> | <b>268</b> |

## Gender pay gap

Mean hourly rate for men ● £16.56

Mean hourly rate for women ● £18.16



You can take a look at our **gender pay gap report** for 2023 on the social value section of our website.



**[ypo.co.uk](http://ypo.co.uk)**

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