

Croydon children with special needs to receive help and support thanks to Surrey Freemasons

Tuesday 9 September, 2025

Around 400 children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities in and around Croydon, will receive help and support thanks to a grant from Surrey Freemasons to the Legacy Youth Zone charity.

The £41,000 grant will support the ongoing provision of the charity's Beyond Limits Session, which is specifically for those with additional needs. Young people who attend the session have the same opportunities as others, including access to rock climbing, music production, performing arts, and so much more. Around 50-70 will attend each week.

Activities are fun, social and educational, acting as vessels to foster social connections, self-confidence, and practical skills, with Youth Workers providing holistic support tailored to each CYP's needs. Families attending can also benefit from additional support provided by the Inclusion Coordinator including wellbeing support, assistance with navigating diagnoses and securing carers or respite time.

Activities include basketball, roller-skating, woodwork, gardening, cooking, and karaoke, with specialist sensory equipment, accessible toilets, lift and sports wheelchairs available. The climbing wall & boxing gym are offered monthly. A nutritious hot meal is served every session, costing families just £1. Special activities (e.g. competitions, showcases, awards and day trips) enhance engagement, while those aged 14+ can join Legacy's volunteering & leadership programme. 'Young Leaders'. Activities are fun, social and educational, acting as vessels to foster social connections, self-confidence, and practical skills, with Youth Workers providing holistic support tailored to each young person's needs.

Legacy Youth Zone, Croydon, is part of the OnSide network of youth charities across the UK. Legacy works with young people aged 8-19 and up to 25 with additional needs. This grant comes at a crucial time, as youth providers in Croydon and across the UK struggle to maintain their services due to funding cuts.

In addition to the Beyond Limits Sessions on Sundays, the youth workers at Legacy Youth Zone work tirelessly to provide extra support to those with additional needs in order for them to integrate into Junior and Senior universal sessions. The Beyond Limits Session is an amazing way to help young people with additional needs access opportunities they may not have access to elsewhere.

Legacy Youth Zone regularly teams up with other organisations like Stanley Arts, where young people have had the opportunity to create and showcase art projects. For example, Rees, who is a non-verbal member of Legacy Youth Zone, competed in the Stanley Arts Go Kart Festival in summer 2023.

A reported 88 per cent of children and young people reported boosted social skills; 86 per cent said they felt more resilient, 89 per cent experienced increased or stabilised confidence, and 88 per cent have better or sustained happiness and wellbeing.

About 63 per cent beneficiaries are within the three out of 10 most deprived, compared to 34 per cent of children and young people in the borough; 46 per cent are eligible for Free School Meals compared to 29 per cent in the borough.

The grant from Surrey Freemasons comes through the Masonic Charitable Foundation, which is funded by Freemasons, their families and friends, from across England and Wales.

Syreeta, Pastoral and SEND Lead from the Legacy Youth Zone, Croydon, said:

"We're very grateful to Surrey Freemasons for their generous grant which will allow us to reach hundreds of children and young people who will get the chance to both have fun, make friends and develop self-confidence and practical skills."

Nick Burger, Head of Surrey Freemasons, said:

"I'm very pleased we've been able to help the Legacy Youth Zone with their hugely important project helping children and young people with special educational needs. Unfortunately, funding cuts are affecting these kinds of services all over the country, so it's vital that these services in Croydon will still

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