

Legacy Youth Zone Croydon offers young people free meals to support families during cost-of-living crisis

Thursday 28 December, 2023

Legacy Youth Zone Croydon is playing its part to address the cost-of-living crisis by offering free hot meals to young people attending the centre throughout winter.

Young people who attend one of the Youth Zone's weeknight or weekend sessions will receive a free hot meal from its café - with a potential 600 young people set to benefit each week.

Families are under increasing pressure as costs rise, with the Christmas period especially difficult for many. The recent Generation Isolation report by the youth charity OnSide showed that over one in four young people had stopped taking part in activities or hobbies because of the cost of living, while 69% of young people surveyed said they were concerned about the crisis.

By providing free meals to young people, Legacy Youth Zone Croydon hopes that some of these worries can be alleviated.

The initiative has been made possible thanks to funding from Ajaz.org, a charity founded by Ajaz Ahmed MBE which helps children and families facing challenges by supporting charities like OnSide and its Youth Zones. Funding for the initiative has also been provided by ICG, a global alternative asset manager, providing clients with wide-ranging capital solutions and creating value for stakeholders, shareholders and communities and by Mistral.

Legacy Youth Zone Croydon is open 6 days a week, supporting young people to engage with affordable activities such as sport, art, music and cooking as well as providing access to support from its trained team of youth workers.

All Youth Zones offer subsidised £1 hot meals to young people all year round, but the additional support means there'll be free provision through the winter.

Myke Catterall, Chief Operating Officer says "Here in Croydon, we understand how difficult it is for families to get the help that they need. This is heightened in the current cost of living crisis we are faced with. Which is why this offer will benefit so many families that need that extra support this winter!"

Nicola Brentnall, Chief Executive, Ajaz.org, said: "We know that far too many families are struggling through the cost-of-living crisis – with the Winter months an even bigger challenge. Through OnSide's free hot meals, we can help lift some of the load from their shoulders."

Antje Hensel-Roth, Chief People & External Affairs Officer, ICG, said: "With the cost-of-living crisis increasing economic hardship for families, offerings like free meals have become all the more important. We are delighted to be supporting the OnSide Network with their mission of helping families throughout this crisis."

Legacy Youth Zone Croydon is one of 14 across the country, which are all part of the national OnSide Network of Youth Zones.

Ends

Notes to Editors

Press contact: Shakira James, shakira.james@legacyyouthzone.org

About Legacy Youth Zone:

Legacy was founded in 2016 and had been in the works with local youth community members since 2015, in which they came up with the name, branding and facilities. Legacy is a multi-purpose facility

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where young people in Croydon have the opportunity to discover their full potential.

We are a local charity, offering young people aged 8-19 and up to 25 with additional needs the chance to take part in varied activities that suit their needs and passion. We support young people in finding out what they want to pursue in life, we open doors to new experiences and opportunities and most importantly we offer a safe space to hang out and make new friends.

We have three clubs young people can join – JUNIORS (ages 8-12), SENIORS (ages 13-19) and INCLUSION (ages 8-25). Membership is £5 for the year and 50p every time you visit. Our Youth Workers are on hand to inspire young people to lead healthier and more positive lives, raising their aspirations to become happy, caring and responsible citizens with more to offer themselves, their families, the community and employers.

Every member gets to learn, develop and grow with us and harness their skills and talents doing what they enjoy doing the most. With over 20 activities on offer 7 days a week.

The Youth Zone provides a safe environment where young people can come and enjoy themselves and will enable young people to raise their aspirations and confidence to create a happier and healthier generation.

Company Contact:

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Legacy Youth Zone

T. 020 3976 9990

E. shakira.james@legacyyouthzone.org

W. <https://legacyyouthzone.org/>

Additional Contact(s):

myke.catterall@legacyyouthzone.org

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