Putting young people first in Croydon

Friday 12 December, 2025

- Legacy Youth Zone introduced a Youth Engagement Officer at the start of the year with the hopes of giving young people more of a voice in the running of the charity.
- This has led to a successful Youth Voice Group who meet weekly and look at areas they would like to make a change to in the Youth Zone.
- The Youth Voice Group have since helped plan Community Days and other events.

Legacy Youth Zone is part of a network of youth zones in the UK. Each youth zone is designed to provide a safe space for young people and to give them access to opportunities they might not be able to access elsewhere.

Legacy Youth Zone in Croydon has released its latest Youth Voice Update for 2025, outlining a period of continued development in youth leadership, co-production, and organisational influence. From July to October, young people contributed to key decisions, event planning, programme ideas, and strategic discussions with senior leaders and trustees.

Since launching in July, the Youth Voice group has now delivered 13 weekly sessions, held every Wednesday from 6–7pm. Seventeen young people have signed up to the group, with a regular core of four to eight attending each week. Sessions this term focused on confidence, teamwork, communication, and creative problem-solving.

Alongside this, Ellie, the Youth Engagement Lead, introduced a new Junior Council, launched 3 weeks ago (beginning of November). The council meets every Tuesday from 4 - 5 pm in the Tranquillity Room. Across its first three sessions, it has seen eight consistent members each week. Sessions combine games, collaborative activities, and structured steering questions to understand what younger members want to influence, improve or introduce within the Youth Zone. Here's what some of the young people had to say about it:

- "The Youth Voice gives me a special place to communicate with the Legacy staff and the mainstream students. It gives me ideas on how to make Legacy better in different ways, whether it's organising outings or giving the building upgrades. Spaces like this make me feel completely safe and without judging or feeling restricted. And Ellie, I have to say you are so good at creating a nice, welcoming environment for anyone who feels hurt, trapped, or unsafe. And I would love to thank Tristan and Larissa for making Legacy a better place," - Camron, Senior Member at Legacy Youth Zone.

- "Youth voice has given me a place to be vocal and make decisions for things I didn't think I had a say in. It's also been a supportive and open space to bounce ideas off the group without fear of judgment. Ellie is also good at creating a nice and welcoming environment that everyone can feel safe in, as well as Umi and Margarita. It also makes me feel like my opinion is valid. It's actually nice to sit, talk and plan ideas because when most people my age come together, it's to talk about things that may not give positive results". - Ruthie

Youth Voice members co-planned and delivered Legacy's Birthday & Community Day, shaping themes, food choices, and activity ideas. Several members volunteered on the day, supporting set-up from 10:30am and contributing through to the evening. Members also supported the planning of the Open Mic event on 27th September, building on an idea initiated by volunteer Colin and Youth Voice member Arian.
In addition, staff members Margarita and Uma have begun developing the new Legacy Magazine, collaborating with Youth Voice to spotlight young people's achievements, interests, and commentary.

Representing Croydon Beyond the Building

This term, several Youth Voice members participated in the VRU Changemakers Summit (Safe Life Mission) at The Organ Factory, contributing their perspectives on youth violence, housing, knife crime, social media, political issues, and wider community concerns. Their participation represented Legacy on a broader civic platform.

Youth Voice at Governance Level

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Youth Voice representatives presented an update to Legacy's Board of Trustees earlier this term. As a result, a new Youth Voice Action Point will now appear in every board meeting, ensuring young people's feedback directly informs organisational decisions.

Looking Ahead

Legacy Youth Zone will continue strengthening the Youth Voice cohort, expanding creative and skills-based opportunities, and preparing for major youth-led contributions to the URW redevelopment consultation and future governance engagement.

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