



# TRANSFORMING THE LIVES OF YOUNG SOUTH LONDONERS

ANNUAL BROCHURE 2023/2024

# SUPPORT PALACE?



# SUPPORT PALACE FOR LIFE



## TRANSFORMING THE LIVES OF YOUNG SOUTH LONDONERS

Palace for Life Foundation is the official charity of Premier League club Crystal Palace and our aim is to use the power of football and the power of Palace to help transform the lives of young south Londoners.

In the 2022/23 season, we engaged with over 16,000 local young people across our four boroughs – Croydon, Bromley, Sutton and Lambeth in our core focus areas.

In education, we continued to deliver a number of informative programmes in more than 100 schools, engaging nearly 8,000 young minds in the process.

Our Community Engagement programmes saw thousands of participants take part in a variety of free sporting activities – including the continued success of our Asian community initiative, Get Involved.

Elsewhere, we saw an increase in the number of young people who received a qualification thanks to our training and employment courses, as well as a rise in youngsters who participated in group mentoring activities and one-to-one mentoring.

Three talented footballers were recruited to the Crystal Palace Academy as a result of our Player Development Centres, and we took our Soccer Schools to even more new venues in south London.

Our Disability Sport programme continued to succeed, including the DS Eagles and Powerchair Football, with the latter crowned champions of their league last season!

A special appreciation goes out to those who took part in our sixth Marathon March and everyone who participated in our mammoth cycling challenge from Selhurst Park to Villa Park in March – both groups raised an incredible amount to help us continue our work.

Huge gratitude also goes to our Investors, who continue to bring in crucial funds for our cause. We're really looking forward to working together again this season.

To everyone who has engaged with us – whether that's by learning about our work, volunteering for us, making any sized donation, or simply spreading the word among friends and family – we thank you and really appreciate the support.

At Palace for Life, a big thank you goes to our incredible group of coaches and mentors who are out in the community day in, day out achieving remarkable results with the youth in south London.

Of course, our heartfelt gratitude goes to our club, Crystal Palace F.C., whose steadfast support remains central to our achievements.

As we step into a new season, our ambition to support as many young south Londoners as we can is stronger than ever, and you can read about some of the impact we've had, and our aims for the future, in the following pages.





## OUR VISION

A south London community with Crystal Palace F.C. at its heart, where everyone, irrespective of their background, is given the opportunity to lead a healthy, positive and safe life.

## OUR MISSION

To help young south Londoners grow using the power of sport and inspiring them to find a better path in life, for a better life.

## OUR VALUES

### TEAMWORK

We support everyone around us and treat them with respect, working together to achieve great results.

### PRIDE

We are proud to represent Palace and aspire to be the best in everything we do.

### INNOVATION

We are not afraid to try new things. We are creative and inspiring, and are always seeking new ways to progress.



# OUR FOCUS AREAS

We run a wide range of projects aimed at tackling a variety of issues young south Londoners face across Croydon, Bromley, Sutton and Lambeth. In the 2023/2024 season, we are focusing on three key areas:

# COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

# MENTORING

# EMPLOYABILITY



# A BIT ABOUT CROYDON

Whilst we operate across four key areas, our host borough, Croydon, is where the majority of our work is delivered and needed. We aim to reach young people in areas of particular deprivation and offer free activities to instil positive values to help prepare them for a better life.

## CROYDON'S POPULATION & DEMOGRAPHICS



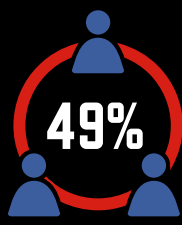
Croydon is the **highest populated borough** in London, home to around **32 people** per football pitch-sized land



**52%** of Croydon's population is **female**



**48%** is **male**



**49%** of Croydon's residents are from **Black Asian, and mixed heritage** ethnicities



**19%** of Croydon's **children** are living in families affected by **income deprivation**

### CRIME IN CROYDON



**1,120**

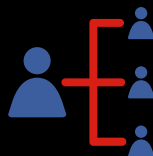
In the rolling 12 months to 31st March 2023, the total number of knife crime incidents in Croydon **DOUBLED** to **1,120** compared to the previous year's total of **543**



In 2022 and 2023, the number of **race hate crimes** averaged **863 per month**, more than the average of the previous year



Croydon is in the top quartile compared to other **London Councils** for having a higher proportion of **16-17-year-olds** not in education, employment or training



Almost a third (**30.5%**) of Croydon's population is aged **0-24**; adding pressure for education provision and other services for children and young adults

## THE IMPACT WE'RE HAVING SO FAR...

A survey for participants of all programmes, July 2023, participants aged 5-21



**91%**

improved confidence



**90%**

feel more positive about the future



**71%**

feel less anxious



**88%**

improved sense of commitment

### TAKING PART IN A PALACE FOR LIFE FOUNDATION ACTIVITY RESULTS IN:

**92%**

of participants feeling happier than they do normally

**81%**

of participants feeling encouraged to make healthier lifestyle choices

Taking part in a Palace for Life Foundation activity makes participants feel more connected and develop a sense of belonging:



**81%** feel like they belong to the local community



**84%** feel proud of the local community



**87%** feel proud of Crystal Palace Football Club



**96%** reported that staff always made them feel welcome



# WHAT WE DO: OUR PROGRAMMES



### COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Working with 8 to 19-year-olds from the most vulnerable and marginalised groups, our Community Engagement programme encourages individuals to participate in free physical activities to help instil a long-term healthy lifestyle. These sessions include our flagship programme Premier League Kicks, the Asian involvement initiative Get Involved and many of our girl's football sessions.



### DISABILITY SPORT

We support people of all ages living with a disability, including the delivery of Down's Syndrome, Powerchair, Vision Impairment and Mental Health football sessions. We help participants improve their motor skills and physical fitness, as well as help build self-esteem and provide opportunities to interact with new friends and the wider community.



### ROUTE TO EMPLOYMENT

Our Employment team support young people furthest from the job market and help them feel ready for the world of work. Our flagship employment programme supports young people towards positive pathways into education, training or employment through workshops, competitions and work experience. Participants learn skills in leadership, teamwork, personal branding and entrepreneurship.



### SOCCER SCHOOLS AND FOOTBALL DEVELOPMENT

We deliver a range of football programmes for young south Londoners aged 5-18, focusing on player development, pathways and fun. These are open to both boys and girls, and can include pathways into the Crystal Palace Academy.



### ADULT HEALTH

Through our adult health hub, we deliver activities to help reduce social isolation, improve mental well-being and increase physical activity. This includes our popular Men and Women's football teams.



### PRIMARY EDUCATION

We work in over 100 schools in south London, delivering the Premier League's Primary Stars programme, Team Mates, Wildcats and After School Clubs, all to help support and engage children and their teachers through physical education, targeted interventions and events for children in primary school years as they transition into secondary.



### TARGETED INTERVENTION

Our expert mentors work with those who are on the verge of entering the justice system through one to one mentoring. Our Breaking the Cycle programme mentors 8-19 year olds at risk of being caught up in crime, our Advantage programme supports young people struggling with their mental health and Divert is aimed at young offenders, helping them to find a more positive future through training and employment.



### NATIONAL CITIZEN SERVICE (NCS)

NCS is a programme open to all teenagers aged 15-17 to discover who they are and what they can achieve. In addition to workshops and a residential stay, young people take on a social action project to benefit their local community.



# A CHANGE IN ATTITUDE: CHRISTIAN'S STORY

## DID YOU KNOW?

**135 pupils engaged in our bespoke Team Mates programme through the year, which supported an improvement in their mental health and wellbeing.**



Christian is a Year 7 student at his south London school and has been participating in the Team Mates programme led by School Intervention Officer Ross.

Team Mates is a 24-week programme delivered in schools and is aimed at children and young people to help improve their confidence and mental health. Some of the topics covered in the sessions are about happiness, resilience, anti-bullying and respect.

In the Team Mates sessions, Christian and his classmates worked with Ross to understand their mental health and confidence in different ways. They used social skills development as an effective tool to build up their protective barrier against poor mental health, as well as worksheets, student-led discussions and group activities, which allow them to reflect on their experiences and create positive coping strategies, all in a safe and comfortable environment.

When Christian first started Team Mates, he was very energetic and full of confidence. However, this confidence was sometimes misdirected which led to him getting into trouble at school. In the first couple of sessions, Christian struggled to listen the whole way through and would get distracted, and at times would distract others.

As the weeks progressed, so did Christian's behaviour and engagement. For instance, Christian is now one of the first to contribute answers in class by wanting to be the first to give his check-in score or telling his group about his weekend. He also began to understand how to respect those around him, including his teachers and peers, and now knows when the best time to share is.

## DID YOU KNOW?

**We delivered to more than 100 schools across our boroughs last season; engaging nearly 8,000 young minds in the process.**



**School Intervention Officer Ross speaks on the change he's seen in Christian over these sessions.**

"Christian came into the workshop with a lot of energy which was good but at times was misdirected which made him get distracted. However, in the last 6 weeks we've seen that energy shift into more positive things in school. These sessions have improved Christian's confidence. He is now one of the first ones now to put his hand up and tell the class how his week has been. Where before he would not share and let his peers answer instead. He's now become a leader in this group and encourages his classmates to share their answers".

The shift in Christian's use of his confidence has developed him into a leader. This new positive attitude and willingness to help others has helped to create a more supportive environment for not only him, but everyone in the programme.

**Christian has also recognised the impact Team Mates sessions with Ross has had on him.**

*"School before was kind of challenging and it was tough. Secondary is a big step up from primary but having Ross is really good so I can have someone to talk to and get stuff out of my mind."*

What I gained from Team Mates is that I've gained more confidence and remember that not everything will be the best at times but you got to shake it off."

Christian's progress has been evident to other staff members at school as well. Mr Clark, who is a learning mentor in the school, has known Christian since he was in Year 6. He commented on his development since attending Team Mates.

"When he transitioned from Year 6 into Year 7, he was very boisterous and energetic, and always wanted someone to talk to. Having Ross come in you can see the changes he's made. He's calmed down a bit, he's learnt how to problem solve well, he's starting to think first before he acts and has become a character that has developed into a leader. Not just myself, but lots of teachers have seen the shift in Christian's attitude in recent weeks."







# FINDING THE RIGHT PATH: TED'S STORY



16-year-old south Londoner Ted was the first young person to come through the Advantage mentoring scheme at Palace for Life and has made significant improvements since starting his journey.

Advantage is a mentoring programme for young people aged 14-21 who have been referred to CAMHS (Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services). It provides impactful mental health support for young people by bringing together professional football club community organisations and the local NHS. Also, it focuses on supporting young people with key interventions and assistance in order to help them re-establish aspirations and a sense of connection.

Ted began his mentoring journey in April 2022, he wasn't in the best headspace and his home life was tumultuous, causing Ted to be in bad moods and have outbursts. Ted was approaching the end of secondary school and felt unsure about his future prospects, so was hesitant to make any goals or plans post-school. Ted initially thought he wanted to go into bricklaying, so had committed himself to a college course in that area, but wasn't sure if that was the path he 100% wanted to take.

His school started noticing the negative emotions he was experiencing and as a result, was referred to the Advantage programme by staff. Over a six-month period, his mentor at Palace for Life helped him to identify areas that he enjoyed, and how best he could try and work through his feelings.

After settling into the Advantage programme with his mentor, Gemma, Ted started to identify his own emotional reactions and started to understand how his emotional responses were having an impact not only on himself but on his wider family situation and relationships.

During his 1-1 mentoring sessions, based in the south London community, online and at Selhurst Park, he began thinking about the steps he'd like to take after school. During this time, Ted opened up and spoke about his interest in cars, and it was this realisation that made him change college courses from construction to mechanics, so he could really pursue his passion – Ted was also gifted with a laptop via Palace for Life's Centre Forward Fund, to assist him with his studies.



## Talking about Ted's progress, his mentor Gemma said:

"During his time on the programme, Ted has engaged excellently, even through adversity, as he had to move away during the school break to support his wellbeing. Throughout the programme, Ted has engaged in sessions, used resources to unpick his thinking and carried out reflective time for himself."

As time went on, it was evident that these mentoring sessions with Gemma had helped Ted massively. In a reflection session during the programme, Ted was asked how he felt about the mentoring so far. He said ***"It's been a great experience, and I have come a long way. I personally think that without my mentor, things would have taken a turn for the worst with my behaviour and attitude."***

Ted has now started on his mechanics college course and is loving it. He said: "I love college so far, I'm making loads of new friends and I'm enjoying working on the cars a lot!" At the end of the 6-month programme, Ted described the mentoring as "life-changing", and wants to continue to be a part of Palace for Life Foundation in the future!

Through our Targeted Intervention department, we work with young people through 1:1 mentoring to offer tailored support for those who need it most. We have a team of experienced mentors who are able to offer young people unique insight into how to better their options and have a positive impact on their future.

## DID YOU KNOW?

**We support over 60 young people per year with poor mental health through the Advantage Programme and the NHS.**



# “I CAN SHOW GIRLS IT’S NOT JUST THE BOYS WHO CAN PLAY, WE CAN PLAY TOO”: CEREN’S STORY



Ceren’s dream is to become a professional footballer. She began her journey at school in South Norwood, where she developed her technical ability, enthusiasm, and passion for the game.

Through participating consistently at school, she was offered the opportunity to play at Palace for Life’s annual Play on the Pitch event, which gave her the chance to battle it out against other schools on Selhurst’s hallowed turf.

Since playing at her after-school club and at Selhurst Park, Ceren not only found a passion for playing the game itself but also found herself taking on a leadership role, assisting her coaches to encourage girls to play more football, as she believes it’s crucial in the development of the women’s game. She voiced:

***‘If being a pro footballer doesn’t work for me, I want to get into coaching so I can show girls it’s not just the boys who can play, we can play too.’***

After catching football fever at school, Ceren started to attend community Premier League Kicks sessions on Mondays but warned her coaches that her temper can rise when in a football setting as she doesn’t like losing; something a lot of footballers – whatever level they are – can likely relate to.

**DID YOU KNOW?**

**After taking part in a Palace for Life Foundation activity, over 4 in 5 girls gain positive memories and experiences (84%) and report feeling happier than they normally do (82%)**



**Kirsty, Ceren’s football coach at school said:**

‘The teachers and I have been encouraging her to get involved externally to help develop her further, so it’s great to hear she now attends Palace for Life community sessions. She encourages the girls to do well and never gives up, she has great self-belief but does often get frustrated when she misses her shots. All in all, Ceren is a hard-working participant and has a great personality. She has great leadership skills.’

After a few sessions with her Kicks coach, Ceren noticed that she’d seen a change in her attitude – she began to always play with a smile on her face, made sure her voice was heard, whilst being extremely encouraging to her teammates. Ceren said:

‘I definitely feel the biggest difference I’ve seen in myself is a change of attitude, I would always get angry when playing the game but now I care much more about how the team is doing and I’ve learned I shouldn’t only rely on myself.’

**Ceren’s coach added:**

‘I’ve only known Ceren for a couple of months, but from what I’ve observed from her is perseverance, determination and consistency. She comes to every session ready to play and is always encouraging to her teammates, and is welcoming and always tries her best. I can most definitely see Ceren going down the coaching pathway and I know she will be amazing at it.’

Ceren is now starting to make this dream a reality, having recently completed her ‘Kick Off To Coaching’ course and gaining her FA level 1 football coaching qualification.







## PALACE FOR ALL

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## SOUTH LONDON

is a diverse place, full of many different people from a range of backgrounds and beliefs. At Palace for Life we have four Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) leads to promote their areas throughout the season.

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## WE WORK CLOSELY

with Crystal Palace F.C. on the Premier League Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Standard, identifying areas for development and sharing achievements.

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## OUR DIVERSE WORKFORCE

and participant base reflect our community, and we're always working hard to bridge gaps for underrepresented groups.

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# PALACE FOR LIFE





# HIGHLIGHTS



## FROM SOUTH LONDON TO PAKISTAN

In December, a group of young volunteers from our Asian community initiative, Get Involved, organised a football tournament and fundraiser at the Crystal Palace Academy, raising over £2,000 for the Shahid Afridi Foundation to support families affected by the devastating floods that hit Pakistan in June 2022. The volunteers and players were joined by Sky News presenter and Palace for Life Patron and Saima Mohsin who has passionately supported the initiative.



## RESPONDING TO THE COST OF LIVING CRISIS

In response to rising food and energy costs, Palace for Life, Crystal Palace and its principal partner cinch, invited local residents aged over 65 to Selhurst Park once a week to enjoy a free hot meal and drink and a chat with staff, allowing locals to switch off their heating for a few hours and enjoy a warm, friendly atmosphere during December through to February.



## INSPIRING THE NEXT GENERATION

Palace U18s Laurie Shala, Kalani Barton, Junior Dixon and James Leonard helped deliver a PE lesson at Oasis Ryelands Primary School in Croydon in November. As role models to so many, the young Eagles helped to inspire the students with a quick-fire Q&A at the end of the session.



## TYRICK AND ELISE GET PODCASTING

Tyrick Mitchell and Elise Hughes got stuck into a podcasting masterclass in March with students from our employability programme. They surprised the students halfway through the session and ended up being interviewed by the young people at the end!



## REPRESENTING SOUTH LONDON

In October, a group of lucky participants from our Premier League programmes mixed with the likes of Michael Olise, Odsonne Édouard and Jean-Philippe Mateta at the French Residence in Kensington Palace Gardens. The special event hosted by the Ambassador of France brought together sports-minded communities in a celebration of UK and French ties to promote the positivity of sport for young people.



## CHRISTMAS FOODBANK DRIVE

In December 2022, we teamed up with City Harvest to launch our Christmas Foodbank Drive. Palace fans donated a whopping 550 items which were collected and distributed to local food banks via City Harvest. Palace fans also raised nearly £800 for our Holidays, Activities & Food programme which provides free food and physical activities for children who are on free school meals during the school holidays.



## PLAYERS GET INVOLVED IN OUR SOCCER SCHOOLS

Throughout the season, we saw plenty of surprise visits to our Soccer Schools, with men's first team players Eberechi Eze and Michael Olise showing off their skills and chatting with our participants, as well as Women's first team players, Chloe Arthur, Annabel Johnson and Aimee Everett who came along to one of our girls only sessions!



## HUNDREDS PLAY ON THE PITCH AT SELHURST PARK

Over 600 participants walked down the tunnel to have their chance to play like a pro on Selhurst Park's turf in June at our annual Play on the Pitch and Cut It Out events. Both tournaments gave participants the chance to be introduced to the wider work of Palace for Life, and celebrate what we have all already achieved together.



# FUNDRAISING: PALACE FANS ARE TRANSFORMING THE LIVES OF YOUNG SOUTH LONDONERS



## MARATHON MARCH

Over 150 walkers took on the 26.2-mile walk across our home in south London, raising over £76,000, helping us to continue our work in the community. Marchers were greeted by Palace royalty – the DS Eagles and Chairman Steve Parish – who helped hand out medals at the end!



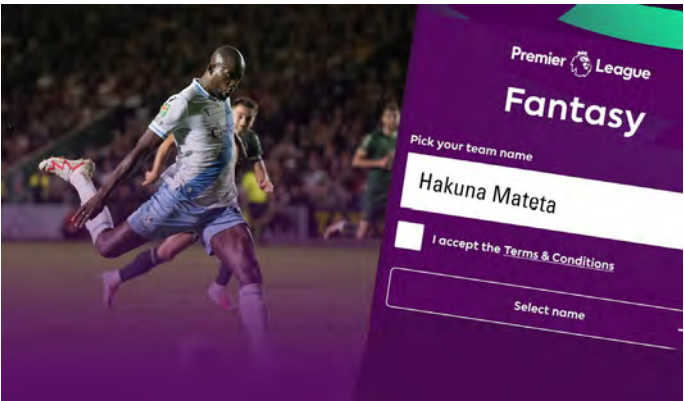
## BIKE TO VILLA

33 Palace fans took on the ultimate away day in March, cycling 140 miles from Selhurst Park to Villa Park over two days, raising £43,000 between them in the process.



## PALACE FOR LIFE TAKEOVER

October's home win against Southampton saw a Palace for Life takeover at Selhurst Park. We took over the fan-zone pre-match, players wore special Palace for Life t-shirts, our Marathon Marchers went pitchside and some very special Palace for Life celebrity fans stepped on the pitch for a chat at half-time.



## PALACE FANS PLAY FANTASY PREMIER LEAGUE

We introduced our first-ever FPL mini-league at the beginning of the 2023/24 season, bringing together budding managers to compete for the top prize of a signed Palace shirt, amongst other prizes throughout the season (including best team name!) by paying a £10 entry fee.



## PALACE AID

June saw our first ever charity match, Palace Aid, kick-off at Selhurst Park. Doc Brown's XI and AJ's XI went head to head to compete for the inaugural Palace Aid trophy in a 6-2 thriller in favour of Doc's side, all to raise crucial funds for young south Londoners.



The likes of former Palace heroes Andrew Johnson, Wayne Routledge, Andy Gray, and Gary Borrowdale were all in action in SE25, along with Academy products Arron Fray, Sagi Burton, Brendan Kiernan, and Sam Togwell.

Also on the line-ups were comedian Chloe Petts, Goal! actor Alessandro Nivola, Olympian Danny Talbot, Hollywood actor Jim Piddock, singer-songwriter Nadia Rose as well as Palace for Life participants



## INVESTORS CLUB

Our Investors Club went from strength to strength last season, with two excellent events which are open to Palace fans who have donated at least £1,000 to Palace for Life. November saw The Athletic's Dom Fifield and Palace Under 18s Manager Rob Quinn in conversation. In March, comedian and Palace for Life Patron Kevin Day and football-finance expert Kieran Maguire performed a live version of the incredibly popular Price of Football podcast at a special venue in the city of London. We're looking forward to putting on more special events for our Investors in the coming season.



## PALACE FOR LIFE RAFFLE

Throughout the season, we raffled off some money-can't-buy Palace prizes, including signed warm up tops, boots, gloves and shirts – all worn by the Palace stars.



# PHILANTHROPIC GIVING



We are running projects that are already working and showing great results. They are scalable, and we know we are only scratching the surface. There are thousands more young people who we can help. But, we need more financial support to do this.

The Palace for Life Investors Club is an incredible community that provides a crucial foundation of philanthropic support for our work. Our Investors are a vibrant and engaged community of supporters with immense love and passion for Palace, south London, or both!

By becoming an Investor you can make a tangible difference to the lives of young people in south London, using the power of Palace.

If you are interested in finding out more about the Investors Club, or giving a larger, philanthropic gift, get in touch with our fundraising team at [fundraising@palaceforlife.org](mailto:fundraising@palaceforlife.org)

# THANK YOU

## Patrons

- Ben Bailey Smith
- Mark Bright
- Stephen Browett
- Eddie Izzard
- Andrew Johnson
- Saima Mohsin
- Steve Reed MP
- Susanna Reid
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