

# He had to close his Manchester barbershop. Now he's taking a Buy 1 Give 1 ramen pop-up to seven cities, using pubs' idle kitchens

**Jefes Ramen CIC fills pub kitchens on quiet midweek nights. The pub pays no fee and keeps 100% of bar takings, and every bowl sold funds a hot meal for someone experiencing homelessness. Founder Jerelle "Jefe" Okoro is in talks with pubs and charities in seven cities, and his £8,000 Crowdfunder closes on 27 October.**

A founder who had to close his Manchester barbershop is now in talks to take his Buy 1 Give 1 ramen pop-up to seven cities. At his first host pub in Stockport, six nights added more than £2,000 to drink sales and lifted off-day footfall by around 40%. His most recent night pre-sold about 50 bowls.

Jerelle Okoro, known as Jefe, runs Jefes Ramen as a Community Interest Company (CIC). For every bowl sold (from £12.50), a matching hot meal goes to someone experiencing homelessness through local charities and shelters. His Crowdfunder, 382k Reasons, closes on 27 October.

## Key facts

- **The model:** A Stockport CIC running Buy 1 Give 1 ramen pop-ups in pub kitchens on quiet nights. Every bowl sold funds a matching hot meal for someone experiencing homelessness, delivered through local charities and shelters.
- **For pubs:** No fee. The pub keeps 100% of bar takings.
- **Results so far:** At the Swan With Two Necks, Stockport, six nights added £2,000+ to drink sales and lifted off-day footfall by about 40%. The last night pre-sold about 50 bowls. Bowls from £12.50.
- **Growth:** In talks with pubs and charities, and onboarding venues, in seven cities. Not yet live in all seven.
- **Funding:** Crowdfunder "382k Reasons", £8,000 target for a mobile kitchen, closes 27 October 2026.
- **Founder:** Jerelle "Jefe" Okoro. Former pro basketball player (Leicester Riders, plus teams in London and Manchester). Founded Jefes Barbers in 2022. Has experienced homelessness himself.
- **Interviews and images:** Jefe is available for interview. Photos are below, and high-resolution versions are available on request (07403 220661).

"If this works, I would have gone from losing everything to helping vulnerable people all over the country."

## From barbershop to ramen

Jefe founded Jefes Barbers in Manchester's Northern Quarter in 2022. It became known for £5 haircuts during the cost-of-living crisis. He had to close it, and rebuilt the business in Stockport, where Jefes Barbers still trades at 142D Shaw Heath.

"Closing the Northern Quarter shop hurt. I'm not going to pretend it didn't. But starting again in Stockport taught me what a small business can and can't carry. Rent, overheads, being tied to one building. With the ramen I wanted something that doesn't need any of that."

## A model built on what pubs already have

Jefes Ramen has no premises of its own. It uses what many pubs have spare, an idle kitchen and quiet midweek nights, and brings the food, team and customers. That matters when a July 2026 survey by UKHospitality and other trade bodies found 23% of hospitality businesses were operating at a loss.

"After I lost my shop I read a book called The Go-Giver. It changes your view of how business needs to operate. Businesses can exist that add value to everyone involved. So I've tried building one."

“I don’t want to build something that relies on continually asking people to donate. You buy a bowl you wanted anyway, the pub fills a quiet night, and somebody who’s sleeping rough gets a hot meal.”

### A social enterprise, not a charity appeal

Jefe, who has experienced homelessness himself, chose the CIC structure so the giving is built into every sale rather than added on afterwards.

“I’ve been on the other side of this. I can’t ignore what I saw and experienced. A CIC means the meals aren’t a marketing line. They’re the reason the business exists.”

### Seven cities in the pipeline

Jefe is in talks with pubs and charities, and onboarding venues, in Stockport and Manchester, Salford, Birmingham, Bristol, Newcastle, Sheffield and London (Ealing). The pop-up isn’t live in all seven yet. Each city would pair a local pub with local homelessness charities. The Crowdfunder takes its name from Shelter’s estimate that around 382,000 people are homeless in England, and the long-term aim is to feed 382,000 people.

“Every city has a pub with a quiet night and a kitchen doing nothing, and every city has people with nowhere to sleep. That’s the opportunity. I just need the kit to get there.”

### ENDS



### Notes to editors

- **Available for interview:** Jefe is based in Stockport and is available for print, radio, TV and podcast interviews. Topics: closing his barbershop and rebuilding, the Buy 1 Give 1 model for pubs, scaling to seven cities, basketball, and his experience of homelessness (which he has publicly consented to discussing). Call 07403 220661.
- **Images:** The two photos above (Jefe outside the Swan With Two Necks; a Jefes Ramen bowl) are available in high resolution on request. Press page: [jefesramen.org/press](https://jefesramen.org/press)
- **Crowdfunder:** 382k Reasons, £8,000 target, closes 27 October 2026: [crowdfunder.co.uk/p/jefesramen](https://crowdfunder.co.uk/p/jefesramen)
- **Next night:** Friday 30 October 2026, Swan With Two Necks, 36 Prince’s Street, Stockport SK1 1RY. Tickets: [Eventbrite](https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/jefes-ramen-tickets-755555555555). Media wishing to attend, please contact Jefe.
- **Sources:** 382,000 homeless in England: Shelter, *Homelessness in England 2025* (December 2025), which estimates 382,618 people. Hospitality: UKHospitality and other trade bodies, survey of July 2026.
- **About Jefes Ramen CIC:** A Stockport Community Interest Company running Buy 1 Give 1 ramen pop-ups in pub kitchens, founded by Jerelle “Jefe” Okoro, a former professional basketball player (Leicester Riders, plus teams in London and Manchester). In 2022 Jefe founded Jefes Barbers in Manchester’s Northern Quarter, known for £5 haircuts during the cost-of-living crisis and free cuts for people experiencing homelessness. After closing it he rebuilt in Stockport, where it still trades at 142D Shaw Heath.
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