

Former pro basketball player who has been homeless takes Buy 1 Give 1 ramen back to the cities that shaped him

Jefe Okoro played professional basketball in London, Leicester and Manchester. Starting from Stockport, he is now onboarding pubs in cities across England for ramen nights where every bowl sold pays for a hot meal for someone experiencing homelessness.

A former professional basketball player who has experienced homelessness himself is taking his Buy 1 Give 1 ramen nights back to the cities that shaped him.

Jerelle Okoro, known as Jefe, played professionally for the Leicester Riders, as well as teams in London and Manchester. Today he runs Jefes Ramen, a Community Interest Company that started in Stockport, Greater Manchester. At its Buy 1 Give 1 pop-up nights, every bowl sold funds a matching meal for someone experiencing homelessness, one for one, delivered through local charities and shelters. The pub keeps every penny at the bar.

“Basketball took me to London, Leicester and Manchester. Those cities gave me a lot, and I’ve also seen the side of them most people walk past, because I’ve lived it. Now I want to go back and make sure nobody there goes without a hot meal.”

“There are around 382,000 people struggling with homelessness in England right now. That gives me 382,000 reasons to make this work,” Jefe said.

That figure gave the campaign its name, 382k Reasons, and its goal: to feed 382,000 people.

The push comes as winter approaches and rough sleeping hits a record high. Government figures show 4,793 people sleeping rough in England on a single night in autumn 2025, the fourth annual rise in a row. In Leicester, one of the cities where Jefe played, rough sleeping went from 8 people in 2021 to 51 in 2025. In Liverpool it rose 59% in a year, and in Newcastle it more than doubled.

Pubs are struggling too. A July 2026 survey from UKHospitality and other trade bodies found 23% of hospitality businesses were operating at a loss. Jefes Ramen brings the food, kit, team and customers to pubs on their quietest nights. Across six nights at the Swan With Two Necks in Stockport, it added more than £2,000 to drink sales and lifted off-day footfall by around 40%. The last night pre-sold about 50 bowls.

“I don’t want to build something that relies on continually asking people to donate,” Jefe said. “You buy the bowl you hopefully wanted anyway. That helps a pub fill a quiet night and means somebody sleeping rough gets a hot meal too. There is no medal for who is drowning deepest.”

Stockport is where it started. Jefe is now onboarding pubs in cities across England, including London and Leicester, as well as Liverpool, Leeds, Birmingham, Sheffield, Newcastle, Bristol, Nottingham, Brighton and Hove, Hull, Bradford, Coventry, Southampton and Plymouth.

To get there, a Crowdfunder with an £8,000 target for a mobile kitchen closes on 27 October.

“If somebody gave me £8,000 just to buy meals, eventually that money would run out and I’d be asking again,” Jefe said. “Don’t fund the meal. Fund the kitchen.”

“I can’t ignore what I saw and experienced. Every town has a pub with a quiet night and people with nowhere to sleep. This can work anywhere.”

The next night is Friday 30 October at the Swan With Two Necks, Stockport.

ENDS



Notes to editors

- **Interviews and photos:** Jefe is available for interview about his basketball career, his experience of homelessness (which he has publicly consented to discussing) and the Buy 1 Give 1 model. High-resolution photos of Jefe and the ramen (above) are available on request.
- **Crowdfunder:** 382k Reasons, £8,000 target for a mobile kitchen, closes 27 October 2026: 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. Rough sleeping: MHCLG, *Rough sleeping snapshot in England: autumn 2025* (published 26 February 2026). City figures: Leicester Mercury (23 August 2026), Liverpool Echo (2 July 2026), Chronicle Live (15 September 2026). Hospitality: UKHospitality and other trade bodies, survey of July 2026.
- **About Jefes Ramen CIC:** A Stockport Community Interest Company founded by Jerelle "Jefe" Okoro. It runs Buy 1 Give 1 ramen nights in pubs, where every bowl sold funds a matching meal for someone experiencing homelessness, delivered through local charities and shelters. Jefe previously played professional basketball for the Leicester Riders, as well as teams in London and Manchester, and for four years has run Jefes Barbers, funding £5 haircuts during the cost-of-living crisis and free cuts for people experiencing homelessness.
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