

THE MANNY CUSSINS FAMILY PROJECT

Ensuring a Supportive Future for Leeds' Youth at The Zone

In the 1970s, visionary philanthropist Manny Cussins identified a critical need within the Leeds Jewish community: who was looking out for the vulnerable children at risk of being removed from their homes and our community? His answer - The Manny Cussins House - a children's home from home dedicated to giving those young lives a chance to thrive within their own community.

Manny's bold vision birthed two homes, Manny Cussins House and Diana House, that became lifelines for Jewish children and teens, offering them safety, stability, a sense of belonging and all the comforts of family living including day trips and holiday experiences.



Manny Cussins



Manny Cussins House

These homes, run by Elaine and Martin Scholnick, provided a nurturing environment for babies, children, and young adults, allowing them to flourish in ways they may not have otherwise been able to.

The 2004 amendments to The Children Act reshaped social care in the UK. As a result, many children's homes, including Manny Cussins House had to close. This reflected a move away from institutional care, in favour of supporting children within their families.

It was crucial that this was not the end of Manny's legacy, and the vision continued through the Manny Cussins Family Project (MCFP) at Leeds Jewish Welfare Board (LJWB), where welfare services continue to this day.

The Manny Cussins Foundation, a charitable trust set up by Manny's family, also ensured that Manny's legacy remains steadfast through its ongoing partnership with The Zone, that supports young people and their families and where, coincidentally, Simon Harris and Naomi Goldman, who worked in Manny Cussins House back in the late 90's, remain dedicated to the wellbeing of young people via their work in The Zone and community.

History Meets the Future: The Zone Continues the Legacy

Over the last decade, The Manny Cussins Foundation has been instrumental in funding The Zone to create a resilient youth support network. Today, that partnership is stronger than ever. The MCFP is now transitioning fully to The Zone, creating a dynamic synergy that ensures comprehensive, community-based support for young people across Leeds, Yorkshire and beyond.

For the last 20 years, The Zone has been a centre of social action, a beacon of hope for children, teenagers, and young adults, offering them a safe space, expert guidance, and a sense of community during some of their most challenging moments. In a world that has become increasingly complex and difficult for young people to navigate, marked by social pressures, mental health challenges, and uncertainty about the future, these services are more crucial than ever.

This transition is not just a continuation of Manny Cussins' vision; it's an evolution, during which there will be an opportunity to expand services to reach even more young people, specifically those with disabilities and complex additional needs.

New projects will include a buddying initiative for example, that will connect mentors and young people who are living in social isolation, lonely, or might be child carers, to give them the chance to enjoy experiences such as going out for a game of bowling, the cinema, the seaside or a holiday trip.



There will also be more respite options for families to bring their children to The Zone who require one to one supervision. Whilst their parents have some much needed time to re-energise, their children will be engaged and supported socially, as well as have access to other Zone related opportunities.

A key development in this journey is the strengthened collaboration between The Zone, the Leeds Jewish Representative Council (LJRC) and LJWB. Together, these organisations are ensuring that every person, especially those who feel marginalised or isolated, has a place where they feel valued, supported, and included.

A Lasting Impact: Building the Community of Tomorrow

The legacy of Manny Cussins is built on the firm belief that young people deserve the best opportunities for growth and development. This is why The Zone is committed to expanding its services under the Manny Cussins Family Project to offer more inclusive and empowering opportunities. From single parents and isolated families to those with additional needs, this initiative will continue to provide support where it's needed most.



The Manny Cussins Family Project will continue to serve as a vital resource for Leeds' young people, giving them the hope, the space, and the support they need to grow, thrive, and contribute to the vibrant future of our community.



Quotes

"From Manny Cussin's earliest vision, The Manny Cussins Foundation remains steadfast in its commitment to supporting the youth of our community, ensuring that young people continue to have a place to turn to in times of need. This project continues to honour Manny Cussins' memory and legacy by providing a safe, secure, and inclusive environment for future generations."

The Manny Cussins Foundation

"Manny Cussins was deeply committed to ensuring young people always have a vibrant presence in an inclusive community. He would have been immensely proud to see his legacy continue through this project. Manny always believed in investing in the next generation, and this initiative perfectly aligns with his vision of a community where everyone, regardless of age, plays a crucial role."

Nicholas Cussins - Manny Cussins Foundation

"We are honoured to be continuing Manny Cussins' legacy and to see this essential project become part of The Zone's wider efforts to support young people throughout their journey from child to young adult. This transition marks a new chapter in our commitment to creating a welcoming and empowering space for the next generation."

Paul Shafar - Chair, The Zone

Raina Sheaf - CEO, The Zone

LJWB is proud to continue the legacy of Manny Cussins by our work supporting children and families in our community. We are delighted to work alongside The Zone and LJRC in developing our services to meet their needs and are grateful that the community continues to benefit from the ongoing generosity of the Trust in this vital work.

Leeds Jewish Welfare Board

"The partnership between the LJRC and The Zone, made possible by the generous support of the Manny Cussins Foundation, is so exciting. Together, we're enhancing family life, expanding support, and delivering impactful programmes to strengthen our community."

Susie Gordon - COO, LJRC

"The Zone is a vital hub for young people to build friendships and create memories that strengthen both their futures and our Community. It is a safe, welcoming space where they can come together to have fun and connect away from societal pressures."

Laurence Saffer - President, LJRC

"Manny Cussins House was a sanctuary for children and young people. It was a privilege to work in a place that provided safety, warmth, love and an opportunity for young people to grow and thrive. The unwavering dedication of Elaine and Martin to the children was truly inspiring. It is a profound honour to carry forward Manny's vision and passion for what will always be his Community."

Naomi Goldman - LJRC & Simon Harris - The Zone