



**Capital Arches Group**  
**Claude Abi-Gerges**  
**Your Local McDonald's Franchisee**







Capital Arches Group Ltd, a franchise of 29 McDonald's restaurants in the West End, City of London, East and South East London, is owned and operated by Claude Abi-Gerges.

Claude joined McDonald's in 1995 and after a rewarding 18-year career, which culminated with him becoming a Director of Franchising for McDonald's UK, Claude became a franchisee in 2013. He began operating one restaurant and rapidly grew it to four restaurants within Cambridgeshire.

In July 2016, Claude started a new venture in London and since the formation of the Capital Arches Group (CAG) he has been a keen and engaged part of the local community, fully committed to running a responsible business and being as good a neighbour as we can be.

As a proud Londoner, Claude has created a great hospitality culture centered around his restaurants playing host to the millions of visitors to the Capital whilst also contributing back for the benefit of the local community and the wellbeing of his employees. Claude has built his business on five pillars, including 'Being a Good Neighbour'.

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Our Mission Statement is *'to run a McDonald's market that is the benchmark of the McDonald's system and fit for the world's famous West End and City of London'*

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# SUPPORTING THE LOCAL COMMUNITY

As part of this commitment, Claude ensures his organisation plays an active role in the communities where it trades and contributes back to various charities and local causes, supporting local employment projects and being an engaged member in local community groups and Business Improvement Districts (BIDs).

The team works with a number of charities, offering support and regularly holding fundraising events, many of these are for the local Ronald McDonald Evelina House at Guys and St. Thomas' Hospital. The house provides a home away from home for families with sick children in hospital. Since the formation of the Capital Arches Group, Claude and his team have raised approx. £300,000 for the charity and inspired his restaurants to raise funds to cover the full running costs of 2 bedrooms at the Evelina House for the last two years.



Claude and his team also support a number of other charities including the Sir Simon Milton Foundation and St Mungo's. In 2017 Claude's team worked with St Mungo's to develop their HomelessWise programme whilst also working alongside local Councils to alleviate homelessness in Central London.



On the subject of homelessness, Claude is keen to support the Westminster City Council's newly-launched TAP London initiative and has offered to install giving points across his restaurants.





The Capital Arches Group team works closely with the West End Community Trust (WECT), a community organisation which works towards reducing isolation amongst elderly local residents. Claude is a Trustee with WECT and staff at his Cambridge Circus and Leicester Square restaurants volunteer for the trust and hold smartphone sessions to support local and elderly residents staying in touch with families & friends to reduce their isolation.

The team also frequently donates food for the trust's community events including their regular community suppers and the annual summer BBQ.



**West End Comm. Trust @wect10 · 13h**  
 What a spread ! Thanks @CAG\_McDonalds those Big Tasties lived up to their name !!  
 #soho

1 1 1

**Capital Arches Group McDonald's... · 1h**  
 You are very welcome! It's great to hear everyone enjoyed their sandwiches and salads 🍔 🥗 😊

Capital Arches Group is proud to have been involved with the Young Westminster Foundation (YWF) right from the outset as one of the very first founding partners of the foundation. Claude donated £10,000 to the YWF very first grants pot which supported 13 organisations and projects, benefiting over 1,000 young people across Westminster, and continues to be a strong partner of the foundation.



Claude's team regularly take active part in the YWF's activities and projects including sitting on the grants panel, supporting their social action campaign and taking part in the Apprenticeship event aimed at young people in Westminster. They also supported the YWF in visits to local projects such as the Avenues Youth Project and the walkaround the Queen's Park area with the local Councillor.

Outside Westminster, Capital Arches Group are also proud to partner with similar organisations and are currently in the process of establishing a similar relationship with the Young Camden Foundation.







# Westminster City Council Armistice Centenary Commemorations

In 2018 Claude proudly supported the Westminster Armistice commemorations by sponsoring the Piccadilly Lights commemorative screening.

Dear Claude,

Following a poignant weekend of commemorations for those who gave their lives in the First World War, I wanted to thank you for helping to make our Westminster tribute on Friday both possible and so special.

At 6pm on Friday 9th November, Sgt Chris Clark from the Band of the Welsh Guards played a bugle call across Piccadilly Circus as soldiers filled the screens and the sound of marching boots echoed across the West End.

People stopped in their tracks to take a moment to remember those who gave their lives and joined us in a two minute silence following the Last Post. The opportunity to commemorate those who gave so much was only possible due to your help and support. It was truly a team effort from across Westminster's businesses, BIDs and the Armed Forces.

I hope you feel proud to have played such an important role in honouring the memories of those who gave their lives 100 years ago.

A video of the film will be available shortly and you will receive a link to the footage.

On behalf of Westminster City Council thank you once again for making this possible.

Cllr Rachael Robathan  
Armed Forces Champion  
Westminster City Council





As part of CAG's commitment to support their local community, staff at all of Claude's restaurants carry out daily litter patrol to help keep the local area looking its best, ensuring not only their own branded litter but all litter is collected.

# LOOKING AFTER THE ENVIRONMENT



Claude's restaurants were the first McDonald's in the UK to introduce paper straws and also led the way with an initiative encouraging people to recycle any coffee cups at his restaurants.

Claude and his team planted over 6,500 bulbs in Hyde Park supporting the inaugural Marble Arch Great British Spring Clean.



As part of refurbishment works, Claude is installing in all his restaurants LED lighting, inverter power drives on kitchen extracts as well as lower energy use equipment in the kitchens. This is in addition to installing an electronic system to switch on/off air conditioning, signage lighting and motion sensor lights at the back of house.



Claude has also installed, in a number of his restaurants, air pump operated toilets which offer 80% savings on water usage.





*"Being smarter with our waste is not only good for the environment but it's good for business too! We also convert our used cooking oil into bio-diesel to power our fleet."*

Claude Abi-Gerges (Managing Director, Capital Arches Group Ltd. McDonald's franchisee)

### ISSUE



Too many deliveries and collections for the stores



Return vans were not at capacity



Limited local options for recycling

### ACTION



Introduced reverse logistics to improve efficiency for deliveries



Reduced the number of waste suppliers from 3 to 1 by having ownership

### RESULTS

**450,000**

tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> saved annually in London stores

**£4 million**

saved in landfill costs by reverting waste streams

**60%**

reduction of van use

**100%**

bio-diesel fleet has reduced NO<sub>x</sub> and PM<sub>10</sub>

### also

- ⌚ Minimised staff time on deliveries
- 🚚 More efficient deliveries resulted in improved storage
- ♻️ 3 new waste streams introduced: cups, uniforms and cooking grease
- 💰 Saved money on fuel by using oil waste collected from store to fuel fleet

# CLEAN AIR VILLAGES PROJECT

## CAPITAL ARCHES GROUP CASE STUDY



**CROSS RIVER**  
PARTNERSHIP

Claude and CAG have recently participated in a case study as part of the Clean Air Villages project, which aims to reduce pollution and congestion in hot spots in Central London through a focus on business deliveries and servicing.

The case study highlights CAG and McDonald's industry-leading return logistics and recycling schemes, as well as the company's initiative to recycle used cooking oil into biodiesel to power their delivery trucks.

The Clean Air Villages project is carried out by the Cross River Partnership, in collaboration with five London boroughs: Hammersmith & Fulham, Islington, Kensington & Chelsea, Lambeth and Lewisham.



# Our Food

## MEALS UNDER 400KCAL or 600KCAL

Our customers have the option to order meal bundles across the breakfast and main menu that contains under 400 kcals or under 600 kcals.

Additionally, some 90% of our standard menu now contains less than 500 kcals.



## 100% British & Irish Beef



We're proud to work with over 16,000 British and Irish farmers who supply the beef on our UK menu. Butchers prepare cuts of beef that come from the forequarter and flank, which are minced, shaped into our famous patties and then frozen. From farm to restaurant, nothing else is added – it's just 100% beef.



Only 100% chicken breast meat is used across our entire chicken range, and our Chicken McNuggets now contain 52% less salt than in 2003.



Every egg we cook at breakfast is free-range.



Every freshly-ground McCafé® coffee uses 100% responsibly-sourced Arabica beans grown on Rainforest Alliance Certified™ farms.

We only use sustainably-sourced fish.



We only use organic semi-skimmed milk from UK dairy farms.



- The average Happy Meal now contains 19% less salt than in 2006.
- Fries can be swapped for fruit bags, carrot or cucumber sticks.
- 72% of the Happy Meal menus are classified as not high in fat, salt or sugar according to the Government's nutrient profile model.



# An Active Member of the Local Community

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As part of their commitment to the local community, Capital Arches Group is a member of various BIDs including:

- Heart of London Business Alliance (HoLBA)
- New West End Company
- The Northbank BID
- Marble Arch BID
- Camden Town Unlimited
- Midtown BID
- The Fitzrovia Partnership



NEW  
WEST END  
COMPANY



CAMDEN  
TOWN  
UNLIMITED



Claude sits on the Board of Directors for HoLBA, the Northbank and Camden Town Unlimited BIDs, as well as sitting on the Board of the Safer Business Network. Claude is a member of the Renewal Steering Group at the New West End Company, the Oxford Street Steering Group and the Oxford Street Occupier Steering Group.

Members of his local operations team are regularly engaged with various community safety activities, such as the HoLBA Pub Watch, the Leicester Square Coffee with a Cop, the monthly NWECC intelligence meetings and the Fitzrovia Partnership Business Watch Community Safety Zone (Steering Group).

Members of the CAG Senior Management Team take an active role in the HoLBA Late Night & Evening Steering Group, the Strand & Whitehall and the Holborn & Covent Garden Police Ward Panels, the Northbank Safety & Security Steering Group, as well as his Safety, Security and Licensing Consultant, Lloyd Evans, Chairing the Northbank's Night Time Economy Group. Every eligible restaurant within CAG is a member the Safer Business Network, (Safer West End and Safer Southwark).

CAG is also a member of London First. In partnership with the Safer West End, Westminster and Camden Councils and the Metropolitan Police; CAG founded the Cambridge Circus Business Forum in 2018.





# Best Bar None



Capital Arches Group were early adopters of the Best Bar None initiative for late night operators within Westminster, they were one of the first businesses and the first McDonald's restaurants in the UK to join the scheme.

In March 2019 two of Claude's restaurants, Leicester Square and Shaftesbury Avenue, received Best Bar None Gold Accreditation for outstanding night time operations in Westminster.





# Local Partnerships | Supporting the Soho Angels

Claude and his team work closely with Westminster City Council and Westminster Police on a business-led mutual assistance partnership. They continue to offer their Strand restaurant to be used by the Police as a hub during Pride, as well as providing food and a resting place for volunteers and those in need of help on the day.

More recently, the team supported the trial of the End the Night Right Soho Angels initiative by offering volunteers the use of staff facilities as well as food and drink. One of Claude's Area Supervisors, Dimitri Hamard, also took part in the 'End The Night Right' scheme as a volunteer.



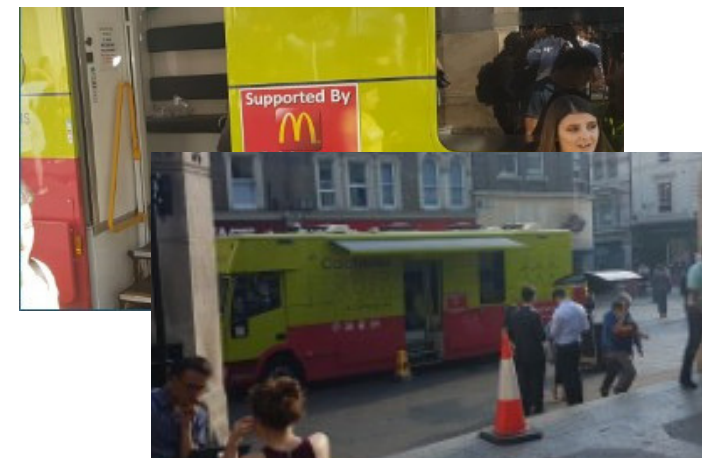
City of Westminster



Claude's organisation has also signed up to the **Mayor's Women's Night Safety Charter**, supporting Amy Lamé London's Night Czar's efforts to promote women's night safety in the Capital.



Claude's desire for a safe and successful night time economy goes beyond the borders of Westminster. He is also a supporter and a sponsor of the SOS Bus scheme in the City of London, where his restaurant at Liverpool Street Station also provides volunteers with food and drinks as well as the use of the restaurant's staff facilities.



Since the formation of CAG, Claude has continued to invest millions of pounds in developing his workforce and in upgrading his restaurants, having opened brand-new restaurants in Leicester Square, near St Paul's Cathedral and more recently in London Bridge Station.

At the same time, significant investment has gone into the look and feel of the restaurants. Claude has so far refurbished 18 restaurants, adding a number of new customer facilities such as self-service kiosks, free wi-fi and table service, and an extensive choice of food and drinks including Barista coffee.

Claude's investment strategy also created many new local employment opportunities and grew his workforce from 1,100 to just under 1,900 employees.

# EXPANSION AND EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES





# Recruit London Partnership



Heart of London BID @HOLBID · 17m

Hosting a workshop with Capital Arches & Recruit London for the local unemployed. Find out more about Recruit London [bit.ly/2p0Ue1Y](https://bit.ly/2p0Ue1Y)



As a supporter of providing opportunities for local residents, Claude and his team have actively supported Westminster's Recruit London programme for the past 2 ½ years. In 2018 CAG employed local Westminster residents through this scheme, including some long-term unemployed and people with disabilities, as well as providing flexible working patterns for parents.

The team also frequently supported Recruit London by holding regular workshops, during which candidates were invited to go on a behind-the-scenes restaurant tour, introducing them to the workplace environment, as well as offering them assistance to apply for available vacancies.



November 2016

Family Friendly Employment

## Case Study: The Capital Arches Group

The Capital Arches Group is owned and operated by Claude Abi-Gerges, a McDonald's franchisee. In total, Claude has 19 restaurants across central London including his newest in Leicester Square, Westminster. He employs 1,350 staff within the business with 5 in his Head Office in Holborn as well as a team of 4 Business Consultants.

Claude takes a family friendly approach towards recruitment for a number of reasons, Operations Support Manager Carolina explained "it helps us to recruit and improve staff retention. McDonald's is a family friendly restaurant and we want our staff to reflect our customers."

The key way that the Capital Arches Group support parents and those with caring responsibilities is through flexibility in their working patterns. At interview stage, candidates are asked to state their preferred working hours and are then put forward for a vacancy in a restaurant with a suitable role for them. For example, a restaurant in the City of London is busiest Monday-Friday lunchtimes, so those who want to work weekdays 10am - 2pm could potentially access shifts there. Shifts are available around the clock 24 hours a day, seven days a week so staff can select what works best for them. Whilst hours are currently flexible, they are being reviewed to investigate whether staff would prefer moving to fixed number of hours instead. Consistency in working patterns is currently available for staff that prefer to work the same shifts and hours each week, enabling them to balance work with their personal commitments.

Recently, one restaurant was closed for eight weeks for refurbishment. During this time, staff were relocated to other restaurants across the group, with the same number of hours and shift patterns offered.

Claude's organisation has many examples where families and friends work in the same restaurant and this is encouraged. Further, a referral incentive scheme has recently been introduced where staff receive a bonus once a family member or friend they have

recommended has been employed and successfully passed their probationary period. In fact, across McDonald's, an approach is supported to allow family and friends to cover each other's shifts when needed. This works for the business, as it ensures shifts are covered and staff are offered flexibility according to their needs.

Claude also supports the progression of staff - there is regular promotion within the business and there are many examples of staff starting as Crew Members and over time progressing through the various ranks to become Assistant or Branch Managers, running multi-million pound branches. All staff receive yearly performance reviews with performance-related pay rises awarded as well as pay increases as they develop and progress through the ranks.

Regular social activities are arranged for staff at restaurant level - such as bowling, dinners and paintball activities - as well as regular group wide events including sports days, football tournaments, Super Team competition and Christmas party, and work is already underway for next year's summer fun day for staff.

Claude believes this approach is good for his people and good for his business, with a highly diverse satisfied workforce - from students to working parents, to mothers returning to work after maternity leave - choosing his employment ahead of others and benefiting from the flexible working hours on offer.

For more information, visit [www.people.mcdonalds.co.uk](http://www.people.mcdonalds.co.uk)

# Family Friendly Employment Toolkit



## City of Westminster



Capital Arches Group featured as the case study on the Westminster City Council's Employment Toolkit, prepared by the Cross-River Partnership.

The case study focused on the company's family friendly employment practices, flexible working patterns and career progression, highlighting the opportunities to progress from crew members to senior positions within CAG.

Furthermore, it also highlighted a number of other benefits enjoyed by CAG's employees including the ability to swap shifts, flexible working hours, and guaranteed hours contracts.

PREPARED BY



ON BEHALF OF



City of Westminster



# SUPPORTING A SAFER WEST END AND A SUCCESSFUL NIGHT TIME ECONOMY

Claude and his organisation fully understand the responsibility and risks that come with operating a business in Central London and in landmark locations. They take the security and safety of their employees and the public very seriously, and as such they engage local stakeholders and provide CAG employees with the necessary skills to ensure the safety of all staff and customers.

All CAG managers and key employees are fully trained in counter-terrorism, delivered through the Act & React session in partnership with the Metropolitan Police ACT Training Team. Counter-terrorism training and advice is also given to every CAG employee as part of their initial induction session and prior to starting their first shift at the restaurants.



In addition, CAG employees are trained on conflict resolution, delivered as a full day course at Claude's Head Office, and all of CAG's 400 managers are first aid qualified.

407

Employee have received First Aid training in Claude's organisation.

373

CAG employees were trained on Conflict Resolution.

227

Employees went through Counter Terrorism Training: 175 attended Griffin/Argus 52 attended ACT & REACT

34

Managers completed the HomelessWise training

# APPRENTICESHIP OPPORTUNITIES

## Supporting Employment for Young People

As part of Claude's investment in his team's development, his organisation offers a range of apprenticeship opportunities and Claude himself is a member of the McDonald's Apprenticeship Governing Body.

Currently two junior managers are completing a Level 3 Hospitality Supervisor Apprenticeship and three senior managers are undertaking a Level 6 BA Hons Degree Apprenticeship with the Manchester Metropolitan University. In addition to covering all their full university fees and expenses, Claude's apprentices earn a full salary for their role.

Two of Claude's senior supervisors are also completing an apprenticeship programme, working towards a Level 5 CIPD HR qualification and a Level 5 Foundation Business Degree.



Alongside offering apprenticeship opportunities, CAG encourages young people to take up training and work by offering apprentices a full wage, and not just an apprentice pay rate.

At the same time, CAG pays young workers well above the National Minimum Wage (NMW). Employees aged 16-17 starting hourly rate is 72% above the NMW, whilst the starting hourly rate for those aged 18-20 is 30% above the NMW.

## Promotions and Career Opportunities

CAG invests not only in offering apprenticeships, but also in training their existing workforce, with crew welfare and development opportunities at the heart of the business. So far, CAG has promoted 316 junior managers, 57 senior Assistant and Restaurant Managers, and 4 senior Consultants. Furthermore, Claude is investing in upskilling his workforce by funding all of the formal qualification for his in-house catering engineers to become qualified electricians.



As a result of Claude's commitment to people development and to offering job opportunities, and the positive impact on the local community, we were delighted to receive the **Westminster Lion Accreditation** in 2018.



Recognised by  
**Westminster City Council**  
as a responsible business  
delivering a **City for All**

Claude also went on to win the inaugural **Westminster Opportunities Award** in the same year, awarded by Cllr David Harvey and The Rt Worshipful The Lord Mayor of Westminster, Cllr Lindsey Hall.



*"Capital Arches Group's ethos of recruiting locally reflects our commitment to make sure everyone, from all our communities, has access to the opportunities they need to build a successful and fulfilling life in Westminster." Cllr David Harvey*



# WESTMINSTER LION AND THE OPPORTUNITIES AWARD

**THESE EXAMPLES DEMONSTRATE CLAUDE'S COMMITMENT TO THE AREAS IN WHICH HE TRADES, PROVIDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR THOSE IN THE LOCAL COMMUNITY, BEING A RESPECTFUL AND PROACTIVE NEIGHBOUR, AND USING HIS POSITION TO CONTRIBUTE POSITIVELY IN CENTRAL LONDON IN GENERAL AND THE CITY OF WESTMINSTER IN PARTICULAR.**

**THE ABILITY TO OPERATE LONGER HOURS IN LEICESTER SQUARE WILL NO DOUBT BENEFIT ALL THE INITIATIVES SUPPORTED BY CLAUDE AND HIS TEAM, WHO WILL CONTINUE TO OPERATE A RESPONSIBLE BUSINESS AND TO SUPPORT THEIR NEIGHBOURING RESIDENTS, BUSINESSES, CHARITIES AND PUBLIC SERVICES TO POSITIVELY CONTRIBUTE TO THE LANDSCAPE OF THE WEST END AND ITS NIGHT TIME ECONOMY.**

**IN ADDITION TO CREATING MORE EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES, THE ABILITY TO TRADE 2 EXTRA HOURS WILL ALSO OFFER THE PUBLIC A SAFE AND WELCOMING PLACE IN THE HEART OF LONDON AND CLAUDE WILL ALSO OFFER THE LEICESTER SQUARE RESTAURANT AS A HUB FOR THE EXTENSION OF THE END THE NIGHT RIGHT INITIATIVE.**

