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FILL YOUR BOOTS Inside high street shop where everything is FREE including clothes, shoes and homeware – here's where to find it

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Published 21:05, 9 Feb 2025

A HIGH street shop where food, clothes and everything else is free has opened to help people out during the cost-of-living crisis

Maya Amangeldiyeva is urging residents to use Maya's Free Shop to stock up on whatever they are short on.

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Maya Amangeldiyeva is urging locals to use her free shop to stock up on a number of items (credit: SWNS)

She has everything including food, shoes and clothes (credit: SWNS)

All the good at Maya's shop are donated (credit: SWNS)

Customers at her shop in Herne Bay, Kent, can nab clothes, handbags, pillows, candles and paintings without spending any cash.

Staff urge the store's visitors to take whatever they like from the donated goods because they "have enough clothes to dress all of Kent."

Anyone can show up, but the shop is hoping to help Herne Bay's most vulnerable as the cost-of-living crisis bites.

The store is based in a former salon in the seaside town and Maya said she "doesn't care where customers come from".

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And it has become so popular that people are reportedly flocking from across the country to shop for free.

On one day staff claim they even received over 100 bags of donations.

It is another project alongside her community café for the low-waged and homeless, that she has run since 2015.

Maya originally created the store after receiving a mass of donations to help families fleeing Ukraine.

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She moved to England from Turkmenistan 15 years ago and now funds the shop entirely through donations and cash from community interest companies.

Using the donated cash the mum-of-three pays the space's rent and energy cost.

Generous owner Maya said: "I don't ask any questions and we don't care about your income – anybody can use our Free shop.

"We receive donations all the time. We have had over 100 bags today. Honestly we have enough clothes to dress all of Kent.

"I don't care – if you need help, I will help you. There are no other shops like this.

Maya has over 150 volunteers helping out between the free store and café.

She said: "It started off with me putting up a clothes rail in our community café for 20 items or so.

"People started bringing so much stuff that we had to open the shop. We don't want anyone to be ashamed of dressing up from a charity shop.

"All money that is donated to the shop goes towards our food bank."

Where to find food banks?

Food banks and soup kitchens provide support for vulnerable Brits who can't afford essentials and food.

The Trussel Trust is one of the largest food bank organisations – see a map to its locations.

In 2021/22, the Trussel Trust supplied 2.2million three-day emergency food parcels – a 14 per cent rise compared to pre-pandemic levels in 2019/20.

If you're struggling with costs to stay fed, food banks aren't your only option.

There are schemes in place by the government and local councils, such as the Household Support scheme which provides support in the form of vouchers, one-off payments and more.

If you're pregnant or responsible for children under four, you could get healthy start vouchers.

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Most local councils also run their own welfare assistance schemes for households on low incomes or who are dealing with a crisis.

Grants can sometimes be worth up to £1,000.

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