



The Mayor of London joins Fred Sirieix to open a prisoner-run restaurant at HMP Wormwood Scrubs

- **The Mayor has invested £108,000 to transform the prison staff canteen into a high street style training restaurant**
- **This funding is part of the Mayor's investment in breaking the cycle of reoffending by supporting prisoners as they transition to life after release**

The Mayor of London, Sadiq Khan, joined Fred Sirieix, the maître d' best known for Channel 4's *First Dates*, at HMP Wormwood Scrubs today [Friday 1st October] to officially open the doors to the new state-of-the-art 'Escape' restaurant.

Prisoners will now be able to spend time cooking and learning the art of service in the new industry standard restaurant, which will include a coffee shop and a restaurant providing full table service.

Working in the restaurant, called 'Escape', the prisoners will gain industry-recognised qualifications and practical work experience, helping them to secure employment on release from prison.

The transformation of the prison restaurant has been funded by £108,000 from the Mayor of London's Skills for Londoners Capital Fund, which provides funding to create facilities and buy equipment that will support Londoners from all backgrounds to develop the skills they need to find employment. This fund aims to support more than 60,000 Londoners including 5,000 apprentices.

The 'Escape' restaurant is now open and serving prison staff and contractors and is the second opening from The Right Course – a charity programme founded by Fred Sirieix – which seeks to transform staff restaurants in prisons so they replicate high street businesses, with the charity supporting prisoners working in the restaurants to secure jobs in the hospitality sector after release from prison. Training for prisoners working in the restaurant will be delivered by Novus, the UK's biggest prison education provider.

The investment from City Hall is part of the Mayor's approach to tackling crime and reducing rates of reoffending. Research consistently shows that gaining employment is one of the most powerful factors in diverting people from crime, and offenders released without a home or a job are significantly more likely to reoffend. [1] This new restaurant will play a vital role in providing prisoners with the experience, skills and qualifications they need to secure employment, and to successfully transition to life after prison release.

In March this year the Mayor and the Ministry of Justice launched a new £3 million specialist support hub for 18-25 year olds, to reduce reoffending, as part of an innovative new approach to ensure vulnerable young adults, many of whom had troubled upbringings and poor education, receive the enhanced support they need to avoid a life of crime.

The Mayor of London, Sadiq Khan, said:

“I’m delighted to be here today for the opening of the ‘Escape’ restaurant – this is a brilliant initiative that gives prisoners practical work experience and highly regarded qualifications, which will help them to get back on track after leaving prison.

“It is vital we do everything we can to prevent reoffending and give those who have been through the criminal justice system the support they need to turn their lives around.

“By supporting offenders to rebuild their lives through access to training and employment, we can break the cycle of reoffending, reduce crime, and ensure that all Londoners have access to the opportunities our city offers.”

Fred Sirieix, Founder and Trustee, The Right Course

“The Right Course’s aim is to reduce both re-offending and the staff shortage in hospitality. Our learners can help plug this gap, if they are given the chance. Our learners play their part by using their sentencing to reskill but we need to give them the right support and opportunities so that they can make the right steps upon release. Right now is the perfect time to start a career in the hospitality industry”

Simon, Sheehan, CEO, The Right Course

“The Escape Restaurant is a collaboration of many partners who have used their expertise to transform the canteen into an authentic high-street restaurant where customers are pleased to frequent, and learners are inspired and proud to work. Without the dedication of our partners, NOVUS and Only a Pavement Away, as well as the generosity of our contacts in the hospitality sector: Bunzl, Design LSM, LightSpeed, Paragon as well as Pastaio, The Hawksmoor and Hilton, we would not have been able to amplify the support of the Mayor’s Fund into an inspiring learning environment that offers real opportunities to turn lives around.”

The Right Course programme is delivered by Novus tutors as part of their education provision at the prison.

Peter Cox, Managing Director of Novus said: “We know that having the right skills and opportunities to progress into employment on release plays a key role in rehabilitation and resettlement and we are committed to supporting our learners to build a positive future. The Right Course programme provides our learners with the chance to gain the skills and real-life experience they need to succeed.”

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Notes to Editors

For further information, photographs and interview requests please contact:

Simon Sheehan

+44 7974 229 183, simon.sheehan@therightcourse.org.uk

About The Right Course

The Right Course aims to provide industry-relevant training and qualifications in hospitality to learners in prison that leads to employment in the sector. We work with our partners to ensure that all learners receive industry-standard work experience in authentic settings, quality-assured training, additional training from voluntary industry experts and employment opportunities on release. Learners work towards front or back of house level 2 qualifications.

The Right Course was first established by Fred Sirieix and the DM Thomas Foundation for Young People in 2017, working with NOVUS to deliver training in HMP/YOI Isis. In July 2020 it was registered as a charity, aiming to change lives through training and employment.

Our Key Aims:

- To identify and deliver refurbishment needs, Standard Operational Procedures, and delivery pathways needed to open highstreet-standard food outlets within prisons.
- To equip learners with skills and knowledge required to work in the Hospitality and Catering industry.
- To provide learners with an industry standard work experience.
- To support learners to secure employment in the Hospitality industry on release.

www.therightcourse.org.uk

@RightCourse_UK

About NOVUS

- Novus delivers education, training and employment opportunities to 60,000 adults and young people in 49 sites across the UK.
- Over 30 years' experience in offender learning.
- Work with a wide variety of partner organisations, to raise the aspirations of offenders to increase employability and reduce the reoffending rate.
- Part of LTE Group, the first integrated education and skills group of its kind in the UK and the largest social enterprise in the country dedicated to learning, training and employment.
- NOVUS provides learners with career routeways, aspirations for a positive future following release, the learning and skills required to start their journey, and the opportunities they need to launch their new career.

Since the start of the Prison Education Framework (PEF) contract in April 2019, [Novus](#) has, to date, supported 1,273 men and women into employment, including self-employment, education and training on release: www.novus.ac.uk

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Mayor of London

The Mayor of London has allocated £5.1m in the last round of funding as part of the wider £114m Skills for Londoners Capital Fund. The £5.1m funding is allocated towards providing funding to create facilities and buy equipment that will support Londoners from all backgrounds to develop the skills they need to find employment.

References

[1] Ministry of Justice: Analysis of the impact of employment on re-offending following release from custody, using Propensity Score Matching -

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/217412/impact-employment-reoffending.pdf