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RECRUITMENT

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## ES Jobs

## Serving up a future in hospitality

Sending the unemployed to the pub may seem like a recipe for disaster. However, the hospitality sector is turning to social impact recruitment to train home-grown talent, writes Niki Chesworth

**D**ESPITE low levels of unemployment, one in 10 young people in London are NEETs – not in education, employment or training. That is a huge waste of potential.

At the same time, the hospitality sector, including bars and clubs, food outlets and restaurants, often struggles to find recruits that want more than a short-term stop-gap job.

So it seems a no-brainer to train up the unemployed to fill these roles and develop a workforce that is committed to careers in a sector that relies heavily on migrant workers (three in 10 are from overseas) and those looking to earn a bit of cash part-time.

Bradley Marks, 20, from Angel, struggled to get jobs since leaving school and, although he has worked part-time at the Emirates Stadium since he was 18 (and he still does on match days), has never managed to find a full-time job. The solution? The Hospitality Futures programme, which Marks signed up for after an appointment at the Jobcentre.

After visiting a range of hotels and going back to the Emirates Stadium, he found a placement at Novotel London West in Hammersmith, where he has been working in food and beverage. He says that the programme has really helped his confidence and people skills, and his ambition now is to become a restaurant manager.

Marks was one of 23 young and unemployed Londoners who have just graduated from the seven-week scheme, run by the Springboard Charity and Solidarity Accor, the endowment fund set up by AccorHotels.

With workshops on job hunting and being job-ready as well as qualifications in health and safety at work, food safety and world host customer service training, the programme includes a two-week placement with a guaranteed interview and a chance of employment.

Thomas Dubaere, managing director of AccorHotels UK & Ireland, says: "The majority of the people who graduate work their way up to a more senior role



ANDREW PORTER

**Chance to shine:** Bradley Marks secured a placement at Novotel London West in Hammersmith

Find out more at charity.springboard.uk.net/programmes-activities, princes-trust.org.uk and stepehead.co.uk

in AccorHotels, or in the wider hospitality industry."

Employers across the sector are now offering similar schemes. The Get into Hospitality programme has just been launched by pub retailer Greene King with The Prince's Trust, and will offer 150 of the UK's most disadvantaged 16 to 25-year-olds an opportunity to develop skills in the hospitality sector, achieve accredited hospitality qualifications and be supported into jobs.

Rooney Anand, Greene King's chief executive officer, says: "Many young people find it difficult to get their first job, particularly in disadvantaged areas and we believe pubs can help them get on to the career ladder."

With training including guest service,

alcohol licensing laws and food preparation, the programme will give students a buddy to mentor them and help with CV and interview techniques.

Diageo's Learning for Life programme, which is also delivered in partnership with the Springboard Charity, is similar – it offers a mix of technical and vocational qualifications and a two-week work placement, in this case in a London pub or bar.

Shane Quest, 23, from Hammersmith, was one of the recent graduates of the programme who has previously worked as a cashier. His dyslexia made it difficult for him to show his full potential when filling out job applications, but he was motivated to try his hand at something different, so put

himself forward for the programme with the help of the Jobcentre. He discovered a real talent when it comes to cocktail making while on his placement at the London Cocktail Club. He even developed his own cocktail.

Anne Pierce, MBE, chief executive of Springboard, says that more than 600 graduates have participated in the programme to date, with more than seven in 10 going into sustained employment.

"The course offers great opportunities to young unemployed people by providing them with key employability skills, on-the-job work experience, industry qualifications and ongoing support and mentoring," she says.

**CATERING CHALLENGE**

Restaurants are facing an even greater challenge recruiting – in the past 18 months around 600 curry restaurants have closed, with tough immigration rules making it harder for them to bring in trained chefs from overseas. By training up home-grown talent, employers are filling a skills gap.

Pho, the Vietnamese restaurant group, is running an innovative scheme developed by Step Ahead, the recruitment and training company, that is targeted specifically at the long-term

unemployed who find it difficult to secure work because of a lack of experience and references. Each candidate has their skills deficits identified and is then helped with interview training, confidence building and to learn skills such as customer service. They then get on-the-job experience at Pho, which has 13 restaurants in London, with the aim of getting a full-time job.

Step Ahead chief executive Jackie Bedford says: "The numbers of long-term unemployed in London have remained too high for too long, yet the city is in the midst of a substantial jobs boom and there are a huge number of vacancies. People who have been out of work for a long time can be supported into these empty roles if given the right training and support."

The hospitality sector is also one that offers great opportunities to progress. Stephen Simpson has been with Pho, which was set up by husband and wife team Stephen and Juliette Wall in 2005, for a year.

He says: "I had been a musician for a long time, but work was up and down and I had to sign on. I hated it. I am now working towards an NVQ in customer service and work front-of-house. The scheme not only offered me an opportunity, it is a job I enjoy every day."



**Right mix:** Shane Quest discovered his real talent in cocktail making after joining Diageo's Learning for Life programme

## It's never too late for an internship in the capital's creative industries

DIVERSITY drives creativity. That is why London's dynamic creative industries are tapping into a wider talent pool.

Ogilvy & Mather has just launched a creative internship scheme with a difference – you don't have to be 18,

you could even be a 65-year-old retiree. Called The Pipe, the internship is aimed at anyone who considers themselves a creative person and believes they can bring fresh thinking to the organisation. You will be paid the London Living

Wage for the six-month internship, during which you will tackle briefs across the Ogilvy group.

Earning a place will not be easy. For a start, you need to send in a piece of creative work – an ad, a piece of art, a film, song lyrics or anything else

that shows your creativity. Visit ogilvytube.co.uk to find out more.

Meanwhile, Dentsu Aegis Network's new creative agency fortysix (thisisfortysix.com) is looking for a different type of diversity. Instead of recruiting from a narrow graduate

pool, it is broadening its recruitment intake to any digital native with raw talent. So instead of sending in a CV, simply turn up to its event, Upload Live, this Saturday at the Dentsu Aegis Network offices in Triton Street, NW1.