

# Thousands of prisoners trained to become cooks

- over 2,500 prisoners trained for jobs through scheme to date helping to cut crime
- achievement marked with Jubilee tea served by catering trainee prisoners

The number of Clink Kitchens, training prisoners for jobs in hospitality, has quadrupled since September 2021 as part of the government's drive to reduce reoffending and make our streets safer.

The target-smashing result has been celebrated by the Deputy Prime Minister and staff at a Platinum Jubilee-themed afternoon tea hosted by serving prisoners on the cooking scheme.

It was prepared at one of the country's newest Clink Kitchens at HMP Exeter which opened in March. The innovative scheme trains up offenders in catering so they can find work on release and turn their backs on crime for good.

Over 2,500 prisoners have found jobs through The Clink Charity since it launched at HMP Brixton in 2014, with ex-offenders now working at eateries ranging from chip shops to Michelin star restaurants.

Today (31 May 2022), the Deputy Prime Minister announced plans to double the number of Clink kitchens again to 50 by the end of 2023 – meaning thousands more offenders will walk straight into a job on release.

Deputy Prime Minister, Lord Chancellor and Secretary of State, Dominic Raab, said:

Schemes like The Clink are training thousands of prisoners in catering and hospitality – to give them the skills to find work, and turn their back on crime.

I've quadrupled the number of Clink kitchens operating out of our prisons – which is helping offenders stay on the straight and narrow, and keeping our streets safer.

Since September last year, the Deputy Prime Minister has overseen the opening of 20 Clink Kitchens, bringing the total to 26 and exceeding the government's commitment to open 25 more across the prison estate.

The proportion of prison leavers in work six months after release has also increased by 9 percentage points, rising to 23 per cent between April 2021 and March 2022.

The Clink Kitchens scheme trains prisoners towards catering and hospitality qualifications while behind bars, getting on the job experience cooking for

fellow inmates.

The Clink Charity's work has been proven to significantly cut reoffending, ultimately creating safer streets, with participants 32 per cent less likely to go on to commit further crimes compared to those who did not receive training.

This success means for every £1 invested, its work [generates at least £4.80](#) back to the prison service, government and society in reduced reoffending rates.

The Clink Charity's Chief Executive, Yvonne Thomas, said:

The Clink Charity, with the support of our charitable funders and HMPPS, is now providing over 400 training places in prisons, a number that is rising each month as we open in more prison kitchens.

We will continue to help people in prison through training qualified hospitality staff, and through intensive support after their release. We are grateful to our donors, the employers we work with and to the Ministry of Justice for their continued support.

The Prisons White Paper – the Deputy Prime Minister's strategy to reduce reoffending and keep the public safe – puts a laser sharp focus in getting prisoners into work both behind bars and on release.

In March, 20 big-name businesses including Lotus Cars and COOK pledged to head up new Employment Advisory Boards in prisons – acting as a link between jails and employers to make sure offenders use their time in jail to gain the skills they need to get work on release.

Over the next 2 years we will also:

- Hire new education, work and skills specialists to improve education and training in prisons on offer to get more offenders into work on release
- Set up a new work innovation fund to support prisons in working with more employers to and meet the needs of local businesses and the economy and smooth the path from prison to employment
- Overhaul literary education in prisons to improve the reading and writing of all offenders so they are better placed to get a job.

## Notes to editors

- The New Futures Network (NFN) is a specialist part of Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS). It brokers partnerships between prisons and employers in England and Wales. These partnerships help businesses fill skills gaps and prison leavers find employment.
- By the end of 2023, the Clink Charity will be training over 1,000 prisoners each year.

- [The latest statistics](#) from the Ministry of Justice shows that the proportion of persons released from custody who were employed at 6 weeks from their release rose by 6 percentage points to 16 per cent between April 2021 and March 2021. This is an increase of more than half (57 per cent).
- The proportion of persons released from custody who were employed at 6 months from their release rose by 9 percentage points to 23 per cent between April 2021 and March 2022. This is an increase of almost two thirds (66 per cent).

## **Case studies of Clink kitchen graduates**

### **Cody**

During his time in custody at HMP Bristol, The Clink helped Cody negotiate two family court cases and earn his NVQ Level 2 in Professional Cookery with Clink Kitchens. Following his release, Cody regularly sees his children and works as a kitchen porter at Bristol Zoo.

### **Hayden**

19-year-old Hayden enjoyed learning cookery skills on The Clink Kitchens training programme, and The Clink supported him through significant struggles with ADHD. He is now employed as a kitchen porter and regularly sees his young daughter.

### **Dan**

One of the first Clink Kitchens graduates, Dan qualified in NVQ Level 2 Professional Cookery whilst serving his third sentence at HMP Bristol. With the help of Clink Support Workers, he finished his license for the first time in 15 years, moved into an abstinence housing project, and is ready to start work.