



GREENE KING
BURY ST EDMUNDS



BREWING AMBITIONS:

THE ROLE OF PUBS IN BREAKING DOWN
BARRIERS TO OPPORTUNITY

OCTOBER 2024

FOREWORD

FROM NICK MACKENZIE, CEO

It is no secret that pubs are special. Not simply places to buy food and drink, they are embedded in the very fabric of British life; the centre of communities up and down the country, fostered over many centuries. They are places of companionship, where friends and families can come together to celebrate, where memories are built and shared.

They have also been the first job for hundreds of thousands of people over the years. Today, pubs provide over one million jobs across the UK, but it is still less well-known that pubs offer more than just a great start: they offer opportunities to build successful, long-term careers. From starting behind the bar or in the kitchen, to growing into running pubs and senior leadership roles, every day I see the pub sector's ability to provide the skills and opportunities needed for people to thrive.

Ours is an industry that backs individuals from all walks of life, from all parts of the UK, offering the skills and development opportunities for individuals to flourish whether they stay and build a career with us, or take elsewhere the learnings they have got from pubs.

That is why I am so proud to be launching this report, which not only details just what Greene King is already doing to help people fulfil their potential, but also how we can work alongside government and partners to further improve the skills opportunities available in their local communities.

I welcome the Prime Minister's new administration placing economic growth at the heart of its agenda, and there can be no bigger contributor to this ambition than helping people step higher in their careers.

The potential in this area is huge. Greene King has supported over 17,850 apprenticeships since 2011, with hundreds more ongoing at the moment. Moreover, I am incredibly proud of our work to provide training opportunities within prisons and employment opportunities for prison leavers, as well as our ongoing commitment to provide supported internships for young people with special educational needs.



Nick Mackenzie, CEO Greene King

But there is still more that the pubs and hospitality sector can do to provide the skills, training and career opportunities that communities in every part of the country need to grow.

We cannot maximise this opportunity by working alone. Only by industry and government working together can progress be made. We need changes to regulation that will remove barriers to accessing skills; we need the Government to prioritise and promote opportunities in the hospitality sector; we need improvements to funding availability and flexibility; and we desperately need the right operating environment to allow us to continue to invest in helping people realise their potential.

We hope that through this report, we can kick start a conversation to achieve this and help pubs raise the bar on skills and opportunities even higher.

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INTRODUCTION

Greene King is the UK's leading pub company and brewer. We have been brewing beer in Bury St Edmunds and selling it in our pubs since 1799. Over the past two centuries, we have grown to become a cornerstone of the UK's hospitality industry, operating approximately 2,600 pubs, restaurants, and hotels across England, Wales, and Scotland.

Today, we employ nearly 40,000 people, making us one of the largest employers in the sector and a significant contributor to local economies. We are committed to serving local communities and creating environments for our customers and colleagues where everyone can thrive and enjoy themselves.

£150M invested in our pubs nationwide last year

While we are proud of preserving the heritage of our business, we are also investing heavily in the future of British pubs and brewing. Last year, we invested £150 million in our pubs nationwide. In April, we announced a £40 million commitment to build a state-of-the-art brewery in our heartland of Bury St Edmunds, which will future proof our brewing operations. This will allow us to modernise and improve the efficiency of our brewing; ensuring that we can adapt to customers' changing tastes while improving our environmental performance, and safeguarding Greene King beer for generations to come.

£40M commitment to build a state-of-the-art brewery in Bury St Edmunds

Pubs play a unique role in British communities, providing a space for people from all backgrounds to come together to socialise and celebrate. In cities, towns and villages across the country where people live and work, we welcome thousands through our doors every day to gather, meet loved ones and share in each other's company. Pubs provide the backdrop to many of life's major moments, playing host to weddings, funerals, birthday parties, religious celebrations and so much more, while also providing skills and training opportunities for those who work there at all stages of life.

The special place the pub holds in our national consciousness is shown in our research, which found that four in five Brits think pubs are important for local communities and **58% live less than a mile from their local**. In addition, two thirds of people believe pubs support the local economy, as evidenced by the fact that a third of the population (34%) have worked in a pub at some point in their life.

Below: Women's walking football at Boldmere St. Michael's FC, who received a Proud to Pitch In grant.



These diverse experiences that pubs offer provide a vital grounding in working as part of a team, communicating with customers and understanding a business, which people carry throughout their careers, whether they stay in hospitality or move into other sectors.

Through our Greene King for Good programme, we work to be the pride of British hospitality, known for having a sustainable and high profile social and environmental purpose at our heart, for being an inclusive employer respected by stakeholders for putting customers, communities, colleagues and climate at the heart of what we do.

As part of this programme, our pubs also run a wide range of community initiatives from charity fundraising to grassroots sport. We have partnered with Macmillan Cancer Support since 2012 to raise funds for those providing emotional, medical and practical support to people living with cancer in the UK. We have combined long-running schemes like our Tub2Pub campaign and Macmillan Coffee Mornings with local fundraising events and pub quizzes to make us Macmillan's number one employee-led fundraising corporate partner, having raised £20 million through the efforts of team members in our pubs, breweries, depots and offices.

£20M raised for Macmillan through the efforts of team members in our pubs, breweries, depots and offices

£885k in grants across 316 local projects, provided by our Proud to Pitch In programme

Greene King pubs also play an important role as community hubs. This is never more evident than in our Closer Communities programme, which aims to tackle loneliness and reduce isolation by bringing people together in our pubs. This year, we partnered with Eden Project Communities to host 350 Big Lunch events in June, building connections among communities. Additionally, our Proud to Pitch In programme takes us beyond the four walls of our pubs by using proceeds from Greene King IPA sales to provide funding for local sports clubs and projects. Since its launch in 2021, *Proud to Pitch In* has provided over £885,000 in grants across 316 local projects, enabling 60,000 people to continue playing the sports they love and highlighting the pub's value to its community.

We take the same pride and care in looking after our teams too. We are committed to investing in and supporting our employees nationwide, with our base rate of pay always above the minimum wage for the relevant age band. We also provide industry-leading support for employees, such as our maternity leave policy, which entitles salaried employees to 26 weeks of full pay, and hourly paid team members to 13 weeks of full pay and 13 weeks' half-pay before moving to the statutory maternity rate. This includes wraparound support for women from the moment they announce their pregnancy to their return to work and an eight-week flexible return to work to ease their transition back into the company.

Alongside this, we are dedicated to promoting a diverse workforce, which provides employment opportunities to everyone, regardless of their background. We have pledged to have women make up 50% of our senior management roles by 2030; created four award-winning Employee-Led Inclusion Groups with a focus on different minority groups; and introduced a Reverse Mentoring programme that has seen our senior leaders partner with colleagues from across our diverse community groups to see and hear their views and experiences.

Our work on skills and training our team members is fundamental to these efforts and to demonstrate this in this report, we will set out the value of skills and training opportunities to team members, Greene King and the UK economy.



Greene King are recruiting in a way that changes lives and can be good for business too. Releasing Potential is the perfect name: many people who leave prison have the potential to become great colleagues. They can be hard working, reliable and committed to doing a great job. We know what a difference an opportunity makes to people and their families too. It helps people pay the rent, repair relationships and build self-esteem. At the MoJ we're committed to being great partners for business so that, together, we can make this difference to more and more people. We're proud of what has been achieved with Greene King already and excited about the future. – Lord Timpson, Minister for Prisons, Probation and Reducing Reoffending

WE ARE INVESTING IN COMMUNITIES ACROSS THE UK



PENRITH

To celebrate the first anniversary of our *Proud to Pitch In* programme, Penrith Pumas Wheelchair Rugby Club won a one-off £10,000 grant to expand their existing facilities and equipment

NORTH-WEST ENGLAND

Investing £23m in a new food and drink depot in Middleton to serve our pubs in the region

WALES

Operate 30 pubs in Wales, employing more than 200 people



LONDON

London's largest pub operator with more than 280 pubs in the capital

SCOTLAND

Operate 244 pubs employing c2,700 across Scotland through Belhaven, our world-renowned Scottish heritage brand



DUNBAR

Invested £9m in the last two years upgrading our Belhaven Brewery, Scotland's oldest working brewery

BURTON UPON TRENT

Operate a support centre in Burton, the brewing capital of England



BURY ST EDMUNDS

Operate a support centre in Bury St Edmunds, our home since 1799, and are investing £40m in a new state-of-the-art brewery to future-proof our brewing operations



CHAMPIONING HOSPITALITY AS A CAREER OPTION – SUPPORTING APPRENTICESHIPS

The hospitality sector plays a pivotal role in the UK's economy, not only as a significant contributor to the country's economic growth but also as a major provider of employment opportunities.

The sector has demonstrated its resilience and growth in recent years, having faced multiple challenges in the form of the Covid-19 pandemic, rising energy and commodity costs and the cost-of-living crisis.

Despite these challenges, it directly contributes £93 billion of Gross Value Added (GVA) to the economy annually, rising to £214 billion overall when taking into account indirect GVA, and employs 3.5 million people, making it the third-largest employer in the nation. Significantly, this growth is not just confined to one region; hospitality is a top five employer in every region of the UK, accounting for up to 12% of every regional workforce.



With the number of economically inactive increasing, the Government should look to hospitality as a sector that has a track record of helping people of varied ages, backgrounds and skillsets into employment.
– Kate Nicholls, Chief Executive of UKHospitality

Pubs are a major contributor to this, supporting one million jobs and providing vital hubs at the heart of local communities across the country. In fact, our research has shown that 34% of people have worked at a pub at some point in their lives, while 82% of the population believe that they are important to local communities.

Not only is the hospitality industry a vital employer, but it is also instrumental in providing skills and apprenticeship opportunities. It serves as a gateway into the world of work, with a wide variety of roles ranging from front-of-house and culinary positions to office-based roles in marketing and operations.

The sector's unique mix of communication, teamwork, and customer service skills and its dynamic and fast-paced nature, make it an ideal sector for providing valuable experiences and fulfilling careers.

£93BN

hospitality sector contributes £93bn of Gross Value Added (GVA) to the economy annually

3.5M

people employed by the hospitality sector

12%

hospitality is a top five employer in every region of the UK, accounting for up to 12% of every regional workforce

ONE MILLION

jobs supported by pubs

34%

of people have worked at a pub at some point in their lives, while 82% of the population believe that they are important to local communities

Working in a pub equips employees with skills that go far beyond serving drinks. It teaches them how to engage with a diverse range of people and think quickly on their feet in what can be a pressured environment. The experience helps them develop problem-solving and social skills that prove valuable both professionally and personally.

Lianne Bakdur
Brewer, Greene King Westgate Brewery
Bury St Edmunds



Yet, despite these benefits and the popularity of pubs in the UK, there remains a perception that careers in hospitality are not long-term or desirable. Our research has shown that many young people, in particular, view these jobs as temporary, with three in five expressing concerns over the lack of career progression. This perception is partly due to a lack of focus on hospitality careers in schools and career advice, which tends to prioritise academic routes like STEM degrees. As a result, fewer young people associate hospitality with opportunities like apprenticeships, contributing to a talent shortage in the industry.

As the UK's leading pub retailer and brewer, we are proud of Greene King's position at the forefront of challenging this perception and championing social mobility, employment and apprenticeships in the hospitality sector. We employ almost 40,000 people at our c. 2,600 pubs, restaurants and hotels across the UK, ensuring that people can find jobs in the communities where they live.

GREENE KING'S RECORD ON SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

- Supported **17,850 apprenticeships** since 2011
- Set a target in 2022 to support **5,000 new apprenticeships by 2025**
- Now offer **over 35 different apprenticeship programmes (Level 2-7)**
- Expanded our **Apprentice Chef Academy** which has significantly improved engagement and retention of our Level 2 and 3 chef apprentices
- 90%** of Greene King apprentices said they felt **more confident in their role** thanks to their apprenticeship training
- 25%** of our apprentices on programme are from the Government's list of **deprived areas**
- 97%** of all people starting a Greene King apprenticeship in 2024 **have continued on their programme** with only 3% choosing not to continue.

SOME OF OUR ACHIEVEMENTS



- Inside the top 50 of the Government's 2024 Top 100 apprenticeship employers
- Best Apprenticeship Strategy Award at *Springboard Awards for Excellence 2024*
- Best Pub Employer (501+ employees) at *Publican Awards 2023*
- Recruitment Programme winner at *UK Social Mobility Awards 2023*
- Supportive Employer Award at *Better Society Awards 2022*
- Top 100 Apprenticeship Employer (Rate My Apprenticeship)
- Platinum Partner status with *Ministry of Justice and New Futures Network*
- Pilot employer on prison leaver apprenticeship programme
- Strategic Partner of *Only a Pavement Away*
- Strategic Partner of *Landmark Specialist College*

GREENE KING'S SCALE AND IMPACT

2,600



GREENE KING OPERATES
2,600 PUBS, RESTAURANTS AND
HOTELS ACROSS THE UK

40,000

PEOPLE EMPLOYED
BY GREENE KING



97%

OF OUR PUBS HAVE
SUPPORTED AN APPRENTICE



41 MONTHS

OUR AVERAGE APPRENTICE
STAYS WITH THE COMPANY
FOR 41 MONTHS

THE PUB INDUSTRY'S SCALE AND IMPACT

34%

OF PEOPLE HAVE
WORKED IN A PUB



61%

OF THOSE WHO HAVE
WORKED IN A PUB HAVE
DONE SO IN
THEIR LOCAL AREA



1,000,000

JOB SUPPORTED BY THE PUBS
INDUSTRY ACROSS THE UK



£17.4 BN

GENERATED IN TAX ACROSS
THE PUBS INDUSTRY

CHAMPIONING HOSPITALITY AS A CAREER OPTION – SUPPORTING APPRENTICESHIPS (CONTINUED)



NAME: Hannah Bailey

AGE: 29

PLACE OF WORK: Hare & Hounds in Hyde

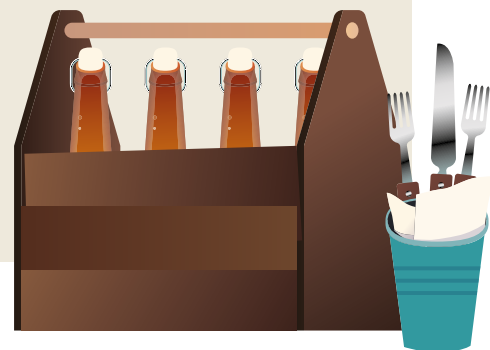
JOB ROLE: Assistant manager

LEARNING EXPERIENCE: Currently undertaking a Hospitality Manager Level 4 apprenticeship

Hannah was working in a primary school and joined the hospitality industry as temporary Christmas cover nine years ago. She has since worked her way up from a team member to an assistant manager, completing three apprenticeships and undertaking her fourth to take the next step into a general manager role.

She says completing the apprenticeships has provided an extra mechanism to push herself, learn new skills and knowledge and take her career to the next level. She has enjoyed meeting new people at different levels along the way and been surprised at the number of options and different paths available to build a career.

She believes apprenticeships are hugely beneficial and there is always a level suitable for everyone, depending on what that person is looking to achieve.



NAME: Paul Ayeni

AGE: 25

PLACE OF WORK: Abbot House, Bury St Edmunds

JOB ROLE: HR data analyst

LEARNING EXPERIENCE: Currently undertaking a Data Analyst Level 4 apprenticeship

Paul joined Greene King after graduating from university, attracted by the career development opportunities through its apprenticeship programmes.

At the time, Greene King was beginning a transformation project linked to how digital platforms could be used in a pub setting to improve experiences for customers and teams. This, combined with the apprenticeship, gave him valuable insight into both the pre- and post-transformation phases of a company's digital evolution.

While there have been some challenges with a change in the course provider, Paul has felt fully supported throughout his apprenticeship from both his line manager and a learning development coach for one-on-one sessions to explore certain topics in more depth.

He added that by connecting with other apprentices on the same course who work at Greene King they have shared their learnings and made the apprenticeship journey feel less isolating.

For Paul, one of the biggest positives of the Level 4 Data Analyst apprenticeship is gaining new skills – for example in business intelligence tools like Microsoft Power BI – that he now uses to create reports for the business.

With about half of the course complete, he is feeling optimistic and expects to finish in early 2025. Having learned so much, he'd like to continue working in the field of data, drawing insights from it in his future career.



We are committed to providing job opportunities to everyone, regardless of their background. Since launching our apprenticeship scheme in 2011, we have become one of the leading providers of apprenticeships in the hospitality sector, having supported more than 17,850 apprenticeships, with more than 97% of our pubs having supported apprentices. We pride ourselves on the long-term prospects we offer our apprentices, with those who complete their apprenticeships staying with the company for an average of 41 months. Additionally, 87% of our apprentices feel that we provide strong opportunities for career progression.

Part of this is down to us offering apprenticeships to learners at all stages of their career from Level 2 to Level 7, meaning people can progress from entry level right up to a leadership role. We are concerned by the Government's decision to remove Level 7 apprenticeships from the scope of the Growth and Skills Levy, which may limit our ability to support our accounting or legal apprentices in receiving their final qualifications. These apprenticeships provide vital alternatives to university study for those that complete them, allowing them to secure the qualifications they require while working and earning, as well as allowing businesses to upskill existing members of their workforce. We urge the Government to reconsider this change to prevent apprentices having their ambition curbed by funding limitations.

Encouragingly, recent polling shows that the value of apprenticeships is now being more widely recognised by young people. 83% say that they now view apprenticeships as a viable alternative to university, with 62% believing they are a better option, yet more work is needed to translate these perceptions into actionable change that drives more apprenticeship sign-ups.

83%

say that they now view apprenticeships as a viable alternative to university

17,850

apprenticeships supported at Greene King

87%

of our apprentices feel that we provide strong opportunities for career progression



NAME: Liberty Chrystall

AGE: 21

PLACE OF WORK: The Railway in Meols

JOB ROLE: General manager

LEARNING EXPERIENCE: Currently undertaking a Hospitality Manager Level 4 apprenticeship

Liberty was planning to go to university after school but instead decided to work and learn at the same time through apprenticeships with Greene King. She enjoys the fast-paced pub environment and likes the fact that no two working days are the same.

Undertaking an apprenticeship appealed to Liberty as it was a chance to further her education, while continuing to earn an income at the same time.

She has been eager to progress and was named Learner of the Month after completing her Level 3 apprenticeship. She signed up for her Level 4 apprenticeship as soon as she could.

Liberty says that the fast progression is keeping her interested and she has achieved more than she thought possible by the age of 21.

Since starting her team leader apprenticeship at the end of 2022, she moved to an assistant manager role then became a general manager in July 2024. She is considering future roles such as a business development manager or a career in marketing.

CHAMPIONING HOSPITALITY AS A CAREER OPTION – SUPPORTING APPRENTICESHIPS (CONTINUED)



NAME: Lianne Bakdur

AGE: 35

PLACE OF WORK: Greene King
Westgate Brewery,
Bury St Edmunds

JOB ROLE: Brewer

LEARNING EXPERIENCE: Recently
completed a Level 4 brewing
apprenticeship

Lianne had been working in the finance team at Greene King for almost 13 years when the brewing apprenticeship was advertised. It appealed to her as it meant she could pursue a new career without giving up her income to earn a qualification, which was important as she has a young family.

She says she knew very little about brewing at the time, so it has been a massive learning curve. For her, the great thing about an apprenticeship was learning and training on the job.

Lianne is delighted she has completed the course and has very proud parents and children, adding: "It's pretty cool to say I'm a brewer when people ask what I do!"

She praises the all-round support to help her meet the course requirements she had from Greene King, her fellow apprentices on the course and the University of Nottingham professors and tutors at the apprenticeship provider HIT Training, as well as the wider brewing industry.

Lianne believes her apprenticeship has opened more opportunities up for her and she is exploring further career options within brewing, such as laboratory or quality control roles.



NAME: Max Wright

AGE: 25

PLACE OF WORK: Mill House
in Burton upon Trent

JOB ROLE: Kitchen team
member

LEARNING EXPERIENCE: Undertaking
a Level 2 Production Chef
apprenticeship as part of the
Chef Academy

Max first joined Greene King in 2019 where he worked front of house in his local pub. However, he says he had always liked the atmosphere in the pub kitchen, so when he relocated two years ago he took the chance to apply for the apprentice chef role at the Mill House.

Max says he likes being in the kitchen prepping and making food and the chef masterclasses have been a real boost to his apprenticeship.

He adds the apprenticeship support has been invaluable in helping him meet targets and complete his work in good time and to a good standard.

Now, having learned so much through the Level 2 apprenticeship, he has his sights set on being a kitchen team leader and maybe also a Level 3 apprenticeship.

Max sums it up by saying that completing an apprenticeship has given him the chance to become skilled at something while also earning money and opening up job opportunities.



While we are pleased with the Government's commitment to introducing the Growth and Skills Levy and its recognition of the need for flexibility in the apprenticeship system, these changes need to come swiftly. The introduction of Skills England will also accelerate these aims, but further reforms must address the unique challenges of each industry, providing greater flexibility in utilising Levy funds and aligning government departments to ensure it is truly employer-led. This approach will encourage further

investment in apprenticeships, and we look forward to collaborating with the Government and Skills England to shape policies that drive employment and growth in both the hospitality sector and the wider economy.

That is why, at Greene King, we are calling for further action from the Government to champion hospitality careers and unlock the potential of apprentices with the following policy reforms:

OUR ASKS OF GOVERNMENT

REFORM APPRENTICESHIPS AND SKILLS TRAINING TO BREAK DOWN BARRIERS AND DRIVE ECONOMIC GROWTH

Working in partnership with businesses

- **Businesses should be closely involved in the Skills England work to assess skills needs and decision-making on what training should be covered by the reformed Levy.** This would make the system more employer-led and deliver better outcomes for businesses, apprentices and those considering this pathway.
- **Ensure Skills England works closely with devolved governments** to align funding models across the UK's nations, minimising additional costs for businesses that have to navigate a number of systems with differing structures to operate apprenticeships in England, Scotland and Wales.

Improving funding availability and flexibility

- **Introduce greater financial support and incentives for employers to hire apprentices across all age groups.** Employers who want to invest in social mobility programmes, such as apprenticeships, often find a number of hidden costs as those taking part will often require additional support, particularly if they have left school without any qualifications or have been unemployed over a longer period. This makes it challenging for some employers and so increasing incentives would encourage more employers to recruit apprentices across all age groups.
- **Raise awareness among small businesses on how they can access unspent levy funds** from larger businesses. By improving awareness of the funding and simplifying the process, more small businesses can invest in apprenticeship schemes and increase their uptake across the country, as well as reducing unspent funds from larger businesses.

Broadening access

- **Remove unnecessary learning or qualification barriers from apprenticeship courses**, mindful that many people are put off accessing apprenticeships because of traditional educational achievement requirements that are a prerequisite on many programmes. These include the need for an apprentice to deliver English and Maths qualifications within 12 months with little consideration of whether these skills are required for the role or if the employee has more applicable experience from previous roles.
- **Promote apprenticeships at all levels** to reflect the training available to apprentices throughout their career progression. Ensure equal promotion and support for apprenticeships at all levels, including Level 2 and 3. These apprenticeships are critical for industries like hospitality and retail and should be accessible to people at different stages of their careers.
- **Reverse the decision to cut government funding for Level 7 apprenticeships** to enable employers to continue supporting employees to secure these qualifications. Removing funding for Level 7 apprenticeships comes at a time when both employers and employees are under financial pressure, and taking Level 7 apprenticeships out of scope of the Levy will limit the number of people able to qualify in specialisms such as law and accountancy, while removing the employers' ability to upskill team members to the top of their careers.



IMPROVING EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES FOR PRISON LEAVERS – RELEASING POTENTIAL

We launched our *Releasing Potential* programme in 2019 in order to support prison leavers in securing employment and rebuilding their lives.

Through our partnerships with organisations such as the New Futures Network, Scottish Prison Service, Only A Pavement Away, NOVUS, and Recruitment Junction, the programme offers training and job opportunities to individuals preparing for release, ensuring they have employment lined up. This initiative not only strengthens the hospitality workforce but also offers people a second chance and opportunity to reintegrate into society.

Currently, more than 25% of offenders that serve a prison sentence reoffend following their release. However, Only a Pavement Away suggests that being in employment makes prison leavers up to 87% less likely to reoffend, showing the societal and individual benefits of offering jobs and training to those leaving prison. At a time when prisons are facing unprecedented strain, the importance of such initiatives is more important than ever to provide security to those leaving custody that will reduce the need for prison space.

Through our *Releasing Potential* programme, we have worked with over 65 UK prisons, providing participants with training in various hospitality roles, allowing them to attain accredited qualifications and apprenticeships. Since its launch, *Releasing Potential* has helped over 260 prison leavers gain employment, with a commitment to hiring 400 individuals leaving custody by the end of 2025.

Our support doesn't stop at employment opportunities, as our partnership with charities means that the programme can provide wraparound services, such as housing and mental health assistance, ensuring smooth reintegration into society and giving them the best chance of sustaining employment.



Greene King has been such an important ally and advocate of the work we've been doing, right from the start. Far from just offering financial support, the Greene King team has helped across the whole operation of the charity, coming on board as one of earliest employer partners and providing strategic input to help us grow to where we are today – Greg Mangham, CEO of Only a Pavement Away



NAME: Matthew

AGE: 34

JOB ROLE: Kitchen porter

LEARNING EXPERIENCE: Releasing Potential

Matthew heard that Greene King offered employment opportunities for prison leavers through its *Releasing Potential* programme from the staff and other prisoners who were on the training academy at HMP Grampian.

He was interested in learning more and contacted a Greene King pub when he was released to see what roles there were available for him. He started work upon his release, where he said everyone made him feel really welcome.

The pub offers dining options from breakfast to dinner throughout the day.

Matthew says it feels good having a job and it has changed his life. He feels better about himself mentally and financially thanks to this job. He wants to stay with Greene King, as he knows there is support for him, if needed, and wants to build his career further by learning the food production line – which would be a great step forward.

Matthew
Kitchen porter

IMPROVING EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES FOR PRISON LEAVERS – RELEASING POTENTIAL (CONTINUED)



NAME: James (not real name)

AGE: 43

JOB ROLE: Kitchen team member

LEARNING EXPERIENCE: Releasing Potential and apprenticeship

Having completed a bakery course in prison, there was the chance for James to take part in the prison apprenticeship pilot.

It was hard work at first as he had not been in education for 20 years, and lives with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD).

This initially made it very difficult to stick with completing modules on a computer. He says he is not sure he would have completed it without the support from his tutor Keith from Lifetime Training. According to James, Keith was patient, listened and explained things in a way that worked for him.

James says he now has more faith in himself, is more confident and perseveres in tackling new things that come along. Getting settled into work has been good and his family can see him getting his life back.

James is proud of what he has achieved and is thinking about how he could progress to a kitchen manager role in the future.



Our partnership with Greene King continues to go from strength to strength and we now work with them in 27 of our prison education departments. Thanks to their support, 137 Novus learners have already moved into employment with Greene King (including those supported under Release on Temporary Licence), one learner has completed a Greene King apprenticeship and there's a pipeline of learners ready to start further apprenticeships.

Linking education and employment is a vital part of supporting learners in sustainable employment, and following the Greene King Academy at HMP Thameside, we now have plans in place to work together to create industry-standard hospitality and catering digital resources. – Peter Cox, CEO of Novus

We have also introduced training for our general managers and BDMs to educate them on unconscious bias against prison leavers and advise them on how to support individuals taking part in the scheme.

Since 2022, we have opened two training kitchens in prisons at HMP Thameside and HMP Grampian, offering hands-on experience in food preparation and kitchen hygiene. These kitchens, led by professional chefs, replicate a real Greene King pub kitchen and environment and aim to equip participants with the skills needed for employment post-release.

To take part in the scheme, prisoners must take a suitability test, which identifies those who could benefit most from the training academy. This involves a number of precautionary checks, policies and processes to ensure that those that we employ are committed to completing the programme and able to work safely in our pubs following their release.

Following the success of our initial prison training kitchens, we are currently working with the New Futures Network, Perth and Kinross Council and Scottish Prison Service. to launch two further prison kitchens in HMP Onley and HMP Perth. We began working on them this year and they will be opening soon, enabling us to train more prisoners to prepare them for their release.



Many people in prison have never been given the chance to realise their own potential, to enhance their skills, let alone secure employment once released, but Greene King is committing to supporting individuals in our care do all these things. The Scottish Prison Services' partnership with Greene King began in 2023 when the first training academy opened in HMP Grampian with a second in HMP Perth set to open soon.

In this time, staff have seen participants grow in confidence, gain valuable knowledge and skills, and thrive in the opportunity that has been afforded to them. This programme is making a real difference to people's lives and in turn, benefitting the communities they are returning to. We are delighted with the progress that has been made so far and look forward to continuing our work with Greene King, hopefully in more prisons across the country. – Teresa Medhurst, Chief Executive of the Scottish Prison Service

We also became one of the first employers in the UK to take part in a pilot programme offering apprenticeships to prisoners in open prisons in October 2022. Earlier this year, our first apprentice through the programme, who started their apprenticeship whilst in custody, has become a full-time kitchen team member for Greene King. We are currently working with a number of other candidates across open prisons who are planning on starting an apprenticeship before their release date, so that they have the employment skills they need when they reintegrate into society.

However, as a business, we currently have to work with individual prisons on setting up release programmes or building prison kitchens, which increases the administration time and costs and hinders our ability to hire prison leavers. We have seen that there is a need for more standardised recruitment processes for prison leavers across the UK and are advocating for this to be introduced to help streamline hiring and improve outcomes for candidates.

I've been involved in the programme with Greene King for a number of years and really believe it makes a difference to people's lives. I've seen firsthand some incredible examples of individuals not only learning themselves but then going on to mentor others. It has been great to offer some of these people opportunities to work in my pub when they leave prison.

– John Tracey, General Manager



IMPROVING EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES FOR PRISON LEAVERS – RELEASING POTENTIAL (CONTINUED)



NAME: Terry

AGE: 38

JOB ROLE: Kitchen team leader

LEARNING EXPERIENCE: Releasing Potential

While Terry was in custody, he was very uncertain as to what the future may hold.

He heard about Greene King and opportunities for prison leavers from a member of the kitchen team and decided he needed to commit to something in relation to work, the fact he enjoys cooking helped!

Upon release, he joined the pub. He was very apprehensive as the longest job he had held down prior to this was three months. He has been at the pub for five years now.

He has learnt he can lead and inspire a team, deliver brand standards and food safety regulations, and work under pressure while maintaining a positive attitude. Being promoted to kitchen team leader made him proud and he is enjoying a stable environment with opportunities to develop when he is ready.

He says you need to be ready to change your life and commit to this programme. It's a great job but it's tough sometimes and takes a lot of self-discipline to be successful.



Greene King is a fantastic partner for HM Prison and Probation Service, providing opportunities to men and women leaving prison. These opportunities change people's lives – and the lives of all those around them. They are fundamental to our strategy to reducing reoffending.

We've been delighted to work with Greene King on new ventures this year, including a new Greene King training academy that will train people in the skills they need to become great employees after release from custody. I'm excited to see our partnership go from strength to strength in the future. – Duncan O'Leary, CEO, New Futures Network, HM Prison and Probation Service



While we have welcomed policy changes that allow prison leavers on temporary release to join apprenticeship programmes, a more formalised and stable recruitment process will help many more prison leavers gain long-term careers in hospitality, address workforce shortages and reduce reoffending rates.

Therefore, to release potential of prison leavers across Britain and reduce reoffending rates, Greene King is calling for the Government to:

OUR ASKS OF GOVERNMENT

ENCOURAGE EMPLOYMENT OF PRISON LEAVERS TO IMPROVE REHABILITATION AND TACKLE THE PRISONS CRISIS

Enhancing probation services

- Improve the consistency of probation services to prisoners, ensuring all prison leavers receive necessary documentation and support for reintegration, including access to bank accounts, travel, and accommodation, which will help them get into employment more quickly.
- Provide additional resources to the probation service to improve the focus and quality of employability sessions, ensuring prison leavers are better prepared for the workforce and supported in finding stable employment.
- Review the employability support process for remand prisoners, as they currently lack consistent access to these services. A more structured approach is needed to ensure all remand prisoners have access to employment schemes, which would help upskill a significant proportion of the prison population.

Working across government

- Address the disconnect between HMRC and DWP by establishing a data-sharing agreement to ensure prison leavers receive official documentation, including their National Insurance number, alongside their Birth Certificate provided by Prison Employment Leads, helping them have the documents they need to secure employment.

- Establish an inter-departmental working group with the private sector to identify priority sectors, like hospitality, where prison leavers can help plug gaps in the workforce, with the Probation Service prioritising helping leavers into these industries.
- Introduce a more standardised recruitment process across the UK's prisons, particularly in partnership with devolved governments. Currently, the lack of such processes means each prison has different, highly complex requirements, slowing down and complicating the recruitment and employment process and requiring significant investment from employers, which is holding back prison leavers from job opportunities.

Collaborating with the third sector

- Provide government investment to support the work of third sector organisations in providing vital services training prisoners. There are currently gaps in support that privately-funded organisations, like Only A Pavement Away, are going above and beyond to fill. Increasing Probation Service funding would allow it to work in a more balanced partnership with groups like Only A Pavement Away to support candidates and help reduce re-offending, helping the Government to save money in the long run.



EXPANDING EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES – SUPPORTED INTERNSHIPS

Despite the sector offering a wide range of fulfilling careers and training pathways, there is a prevailing perception of hospitality roles as short-term jobs that lack the opportunity for progression.

As a result, the sector continues to face high vacancies, with almost 100,000 roles unfilled across the country. Greene King is advocating for increased funding from the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) to address this misperception and support job coaches and mentors to promote hospitality careers.

These roles are essential for providing the guidance and support to identify and support candidates from different backgrounds, ensuring that participants have the tools they need to understand the industry and thrive. With greater investment in programmes such as Sector-Based Work Academies, employers will be better equipped to accommodate and support individuals, helping to provide opportunities to previously untapped resource pools and boost the number of people pursuing fulfilling careers within the industry.



NAME: Dan North

AGE: 19

PLACE OF WORK: Sunrise House,
Burton upon Trent

JOB ROLE: Food development
assistant

LEARNING EXPERIENCE: Supported
Internship

Dan's supported internship with Greene King's food development team was part of his two-year course in hospitality and catering with Landmarks College.

Thanks to his successful placement, Dan was subsequently offered a contract to work with the food development team and joined Greene King in September 2024.

He has really enjoyed it and says he has felt supported, valued and welcomed as part of the team.

Dan's internship included food photography, food preparation, making sauces, kitchen cleaning, recording data such as loss in

weight from raw meat to cooked meat. It also helped him to improve his overall confidence and communication skills so he can now travel to work independently.

For anyone contemplating an internship, he says "Go for it. It is a great way to learn new skills, build confidence and have real-life work experience".

Dan's supported internship within the Food Development Team provided him with the opportunity to gain valuable work experience in a structured and supportive environment. It helped build his confidence by allowing him to develop practical skills while receiving personalised guidance from a job coach.

Through hands-on experience, he got to understand the workplace and gain independence in completing tasks. This training not only enhanced his employability but also resulted in a job offer at the end of the internship, helping him to transition smoothly into meaningful employment.

Without this opportunity, Dan wouldn't have gained the skills, knowledge and confidence that he needed to enter the workplace. We are very proud of what Dan has achieved and would encourage any young person with the opportunity to participate in a supported internship to do so.

– Paula North, Dan's mum

Maddie Sefton
Front of house team member,
Poppy Field Farm in Northampton

EXPANDING EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES – SUPPORTED INTERNSHIPS (CONTINUED)



In June 2021, Greene King started its partnership with Landmarks Specialist College to create valuable opportunities for young people with learning difficulties to develop essential skills in hospitality and catering.

Both Landmarks and Greene King share a vision of improving social mobility by equipping learners with the practical skills and confidence needed to secure meaningful employment. This collaboration has been highly successful, with a number of learners completing their internship and securing permanent employment in a number of hospitality roles. Recently, the partnership has expanded, with Landmarks now supporting other SEN providers on behalf of Greene King to expand its provision and further enhance opportunities for social mobility and inclusion in the hospitality industry. – Larry Brocklesby, Principal at Landmarks Specialist College

In particular, more should be done to promote hospitality careers to young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) or an education, health and care plan (EHCP), who can often experience difficulties in gaining employment when they leave full-time education.

Government statistics show that people with a SEND statement are 24% less likely to be in employment 15 years after completing key stage 4.

Providing supported internships for learners with an education, health and care plan offers a crucial opportunity to help them to bridge this gap and build the skills they need to secure meaningful long-term employment. These internships provide real-world experience in the workplace, helping participants gain valuable skills and confidence to achieve their long-term career goals. Of those that completed supported internships, 84% secured employment after their course.

Since launching our first supported internships in 2021, Greene King has supported 100 young people through our programme. Our overall retention of these interns is high at 71%.

While the hospitality industry and its wide range of roles is well-positioned to offer career paths for people with SEND, to truly expand and unlock the potential of supported internships, broader efforts are needed to ensure more SEND young people can access them.



We're delighted to work with Greene King. Partnering with the leading pub company and brewer, enables us to provide opportunities for people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities to gain real work experience through Mencap's Supported Internship programme.

Since 2022, 45 young people have access to work experience in Greene King pubs, with 71% of them progressing into paid work, either directly with Greene King, or using transferable skills developed through their work experience to secure employment elsewhere, with Mencap's support. It's a hugely valuable partnership and one we're immensely proud of. Long may it continue. – Jon Sparkes OBE, Chief Executive of Royal Mencap Society



NAME: Maddie Sefton

AGE: 21

PLACE OF WORK: Poppy Field Farm in Northampton

JOB ROLE: Front of house team member

LEARNING EXPERIENCE: Supported Internship

For Maddie, her supported internship with Greene King through Mencap has proved the ideal pathway to develop her career as she says she finds the best way to learn is through hands-on experience.

What she has really enjoyed is the interaction with customers and the rest of the pub team.

In the past two years, she says she has been learning through watching others and her own experiences, which has been better for her than being told how to do things in a classroom setting.

Maddie says she could not be happier and has overcome some things which she had struggled with, such as prioritising tasks, especially when it is busy.

She has discovered she can work as part of a team, as well as learning how to communicate with people, help with customer complaints and support fellow team members. The work experience has been key to helping her build her confidence and she is comfortable in the work environment. She has her sights set on completing an apprenticeship next.

She also shared her story on Greene King's Pint of Perspective podcast to educate and inspire others.

One of the key barriers is awareness. Despite our overwhelmingly positive experience, many businesses are simply unaware of these programmes. Greene King is calling on the Government to launch a national awareness campaign to address this gap. By promoting the value of supported internships, more businesses can be encouraged

to participate, opening a wealth of opportunities for individuals with SEND and helping to meet the demand for skilled workers in sectors like hospitality.

That is why to expand more employment opportunities for all, Greene King is calling for Government to:

OUR ASKS OF GOVERNMENT

SUPPORT SOCIAL MOBILITY PROGRAMMES TO EXPAND OPPORTUNITIES FOR PEOPLE FROM ALL BACKGROUNDS

Increasing awareness in the private sector

- **Work with different industry bodies to launch a promotion and awareness campaign on supported internships.** Greene King's experience has been overwhelmingly positive and the Government should work with industry bodies, such as UKHospitality, to raise awareness for the private sector, helping more learners with an education, health and care plan into work.

Supporting the third sector

- **Increase DWP funding for job coaches and mentors to support sectors like hospitality** by investing in programmes such as Sector-Based Work Academies. While third-party organisations help identify and support candidates from different backgrounds, more targeted investment from the DWP is needed to promote sector-specific employment opportunities.

Working across government

- **Improve alignment between departments to reduce the bureaucratic barriers holding back businesses accessing skills training support.** This will not only speed up the system but help deliver a better quality of service, which has fallen in recent years due to a lack of funding increases.



CONCLUSION

During Greene King's 200 years, we have worked hard to provide hubs at the heart of communities in which everyone feels welcome to come together, work and learn from one another. As this report shows, that mission is as central to our operations today as it was when we were founded in 1799.

With an established place in the hearts and minds of the British people, we believe that pubs can be a driver of both social mobility and economic growth across the country. Following the difficulties of the Covid-19 pandemic and high inflation in recent years, we look forward to working with the new Government to create a regulatory environment that encourages investment.

Reforms to skills, training and employment regulations will be central to these efforts, enabling the hospitality industry to fulfil its potential as a supplier of jobs and careers and rejuvenate communities in every part of the UK. In order to achieve this, we are calling on policymakers to introduce the following reforms:

OUR ASKS OF GOVERNMENT

1. REFORM APPRENTICESHIPS AND SKILLS TRAINING TO BREAK DOWN BARRIERS AND DRIVE ECONOMIC GROWTH

Working in partnership with businesses

- **Businesses should be closely involved in the Skills England work to assess skills needs and decision-making on what training should be covered by the reformed Levy.** This would make the system more employer-led and deliver better outcomes for businesses and apprenticeships.
- **Ensure Skills England works closely with devolved governments** to align funding models, minimising additional costs for businesses that have to navigate a number of systems with differing structures to operate apprenticeships in England, Scotland and Wales.

Improving funding availability and flexibility

- **Introduce greater financial support and incentives for employers to hire apprentices across all age groups.** Employers who want to invest in social mobility programmes, such as apprenticeships, often find a number of hidden costs as those taking part will often require additional support, particularly if they have left school without any qualifications or have been unemployed over a longer period. This makes it challenging for some employers and so increasing incentives would encourage more employers to recruit apprentices across all age groups.
- **Raise awareness among small businesses on how they can access unspent levy funds from larger businesses.** By improving awareness of the funding, more small businesses can invest in apprenticeship schemes and increase their uptake across the country, as well as reducing unspent funds from larger businesses.

Broadening access

- **Remove unnecessary learning or qualification barriers from apprenticeship courses,** mindful that many people are put off accessing apprenticeships because of traditional educational achievement requirements that are a prerequisite on many programmes. These include the need for an apprentice to achieve English and Maths qualifications within 12 months with little consideration of whether these skills are required for the role or if the employee has more applicable experience from previous roles.
- **Promote apprenticeships at all levels** to reflect the training available to apprentices throughout their career progression. Ensure equal promotion and support for apprenticeships at all levels, including Level 2 and 3. These apprenticeships are critical for industries like hospitality and retail and should be accessible to people at different stages of their careers.
- **Reverse the decision to cut government funding for Level 7 apprenticeships** to enable employers to continue supporting employees to secure these qualifications. Removing funding for Level 7 apprenticeships comes at a time when both employers and employees are under financial pressure, and taking Level 7 apprenticeships out of scope of the Levy will limit the number of people able to qualify in specialisms such as law and accountancy, while removing the employers' ability to upskill team members to the top of their careers.

2. ENCOURAGE EMPLOYMENT OF PRISON LEAVERS TO IMPROVE REHABILITATION AND TACKLE THE PRISONS CRISIS

Enhancing probation services

- **Improve the consistency of probation services to prisoners, ensuring all prison leavers receive necessary documentation and support for reintegration,** including access to bank accounts, travel, and accommodation, which will help them get into employment more quickly.
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Working across government

- **Address the disconnect between HMRC and DWP by establishing a data-sharing agreement to ensure prison leavers receive official documentation,** including their National Insurance number, alongside their Birth Certificate provided by Prison Employment Leads, helping them have the documents they need to secure employment.

- **Establish an inter-departmental working group with the private sector to identify priority sectors,** like hospitality, where prison leavers can help plug gaps in the workforce, with the Probation Service prioritising helping leavers into these industries.
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3. SUPPORT SOCIAL MOBILITY PROGRAMMES TO EXPAND OPPORTUNITIES FOR PEOPLE FROM ALL BACKGROUNDS

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- **Work with different industry bodies to launch a promotion and awareness campaign on supported internships.** Greene King's experience working with interns has been overwhelmingly positive and the Government should work with industry bodies, such as UKHospitality, to raise awareness of their existence for the private sector, helping more learners with an education, health and care plan into work.

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