# CVs SCRAPPED IN MULTI-MILLION POUND UK-FIRST SCHEME TO TACKLE HOSPITALITY AND LEISURE INDUSTRY'S STAFFING CRISIS

- **New recruitment service launched to help businesses reeling from Covid**
- **Ground-breaking 'Westminster Works' to help plug thousands of unfilled vacancies and create confidence in job-seekers**
- **London Mayor hails service a 'lifeline' for business and a 'milestone' for workers' rights**
- **CVs scrapped for on-the-job trials and accelerated training opportunities**



HUNDREDS of would-be hospitality and leisure workers along with world-famous brands are attending the launch of a multi-million pound drive to tackle the recruitment crisis in the industry this morning (10 October 2022).

Launching at the Thistle Marble Arch in Westminster at 9.30am, it is hoped that the Westminster Works scheme will breathe life into the area's world-class hospitality and leisure industry by tackling record staffing shortages and filling a minimum of 2,200 jobs.

The scheme will pioneer a new rapid recruitment approach, where CVs are scrapped in favour of on the job trials and accelerated training, with the intention of the initiative becoming a blueprint for hospitality hubs across the UK.

The initiative, backed by Mayor of London and created in partnership by Step Ahead, New West End Company, Knightsbridge Partnership, Step Ahead Recruitment Agency and AttisTowns and funded by Westminster City Council, is the first of its kind in the UK.

Devised and developed by more than 100 hospitality and leisure industry-leaders in the area, 'Westminster Works' will aim to fill a minimum of 2,200 vacancies at hotels, restaurants, bars, cafes, clubs, casinos and other eligible venues across Westminster by March 2024.

The scheme will in tandem secure better job conditions and prospects for thousands of sector workers under its *Westminster Works Good Employer Pledge*. The initiative launches as the number of job vacancies in the UK's hospitality and leisure sectors has risen by almost 100,000 since before the onset of the pandemic in early 2020[1].

**Mayor of London, Sadiq Khan said**: "This timely scheme will help employers overcome staff shortages, find thousands of job opportunities, while at the same time setting the high standard for workers rights. It's good for business, good for workers, and good for Westminster."




Westminster, which includes the entertainment and leisure mecca of the West End, is home to 3,700 restaurants, bars and cafes and a further 4,000 leisure businesses supporting 120,000 jobs in the city.

Free and open to all hospitality and leisure businesses in Westminster, all participating employers will be asked to sign a Westminster Works pledge that makes clear commitments to prospective employees straddling three pillars:**Respect, Reward, Progression**[2]**.**

Among the commitments, employers will be required to guarantee that they will pay at least the London Living Wage. There will also be a pledge to listening and responding to employees' issues; championing diversity and inclusion; adapting working practices when specifically needed; offering more flexible hours and a better work-life balance; paying a salary that reflects job importance; and providing additional benefits and support for career progression.

In addition to actively promoting vacancies for all "Westminster Works" businesses in Westminster and beyond at no cost, the service will focus on attracting those not currently in the employment pool, such as early retirees, parents, carers, people with learning difficulties and ex-offenders. The scheme will also offer training and support to businesses to ensure the effective implementation of the Westminster Works pledge for each business that signs up.

Jobseekers can register with the scheme using the newly launched website – **www.westminster.works.**

This £1m business support programme has been awarded by the City Council as part of their Additional Restrictions Grant allocation, distributed by the Department for Business Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) as part of the Covid-19 emergency response to support businesses. The programme's training element will be funded by £2m from the Mayor's Adult Education Budget and the Apprenticeship Levy, and will be delivered in partnership with Westminster Kingsway College and Westminster Adult Education Service.

**Geoff Barraclough, Cabinet Member for Planning and Economic Development at Westminster City Council, said:**

"*This will be a win-win for both businesses and workers, and we hope that Westminster Works becomes a model for similar schemes across the entire country to help the hospitality and leisure industry get back on its feet. Every business should sign up now.*"

**Kate Nichols, CEO of UKHospitality, added:**

"*The number of job vacancies in the hospitality sector has reached record highs and this scheme could not come soon enough for those dedicated and hard-working businesses that have been poleaxed by Covid, both during the restrictions caused by the pandemic and the after-effects as they try to recover.*

"*Workers will be afforded better working and employment conditions under this scheme, which is increasingly important in the current cost of living crisis.*"

**Paul Barnes, Programme Director for AttisTowns: added:**

"*It is a challenging landscape for hospitality and leisure businesses at the moment. Along with our partners at Step Ahead, we will be providing businesses with solutions for their staffing shortages and opening up a world of opportunities for workers and new entrants looking for a fulfilling and rewarding career with committed employers.*"

**Ends**




**NOTES TO EDITOR**

A full suite of images including portrait and landscape can be found at :https://we.tl/t-Zw4Vgs0ewI

Those pictured at Gordon's Wine bar are:

Image 11: Foad Sattar, 29, from White City

Image 4: Foad Sattar, 29 from White City and Alfred Piper, 26, from Whitechapel

Image 2: Heidi Easton, 30, Peckham

Photography credits : Chris Radcliffe for Bethan Davies Media and Westminster Works

For more information about Westminster Works: https://www.westminster.works

For more information about AttisTowns: https://www.attistowns.com

For interview or further imagery please contact bethan@bethandaviesmedia.com

[1]The scheme comes as the number of job vacancies in the UK's hospitality and leisure sectors has risen by almost 100,000 since before the onset of the pandemic in early 2020 according to ONS data. Across the country, there were 178,300 empty roles in the accommodation and foodservice sectors between November 2021 and January 2022.