



FOODSERVICE
SOLUTIONS



IMPACT REPORT 2025





**Opening doors.
Creating opportunities.
Changing lives.**

Three years ago, we launched the McCain Streets Ahead Programme, powered by KERB, to tackle a major challenge in the hospitality industry – helping aspiring food entrepreneurs, especially those facing barriers, gain the skills and support they needed to succeed.

The impact has been incredible. With **185+ participants, £530K+ invested**, and **32 new businesses launched**, we've seen firsthand how mentorship and opportunity can transform lives.

And we're just getting started. As the UK focuses on getting more people into work, **Streets Ahead is stepping up – committing to another three years** of championing accessibility, skills development, and entrepreneurship in hospitality.

RICHARD JONES

**Vice President Commercial,
McCain Foods GB**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Since its launch, the programme has:

Accepted
185
participants

Invested
£241k
into new
startups

Supported
40+
charity
referrals

By offering hands-on training, mentorship, and direct financial support, we help individuals – **refugees, prison leavers, unemployed youth, and those who have experienced homelessness** – build sustainable careers in hospitality.

Yet, there's more work to be done. We call on policymakers to **provide greater support for independent food businesses, increase funding flexibility for hospitality training, and prioritise skills development in post-16 education strategies.**



A CALL TO ACTION POLICY SUPPORT FOR HOSPITALITY & ENTREPRENEURSHIP

To ensure long-term impact, we urge the Government to:

1.

Recognise **independent food businesses** in the **Assessment for Future Skills** and strengthen support for **entrepreneurs from less-advantaged backgrounds**.

2.

Make **levy-funded training** more flexible for the food, drink, and hospitality sectors, supporting initiatives like the **Hospitality Skills Passport**.

3.

Include **hospitality upskilling** as part of the **Comprehensive Strategy for Post-16 Education**.



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THE JOURNEY

POWERED BY
KERB

At McCain, we're committed to helping the next generation of entrepreneurs flourish.

Streets Ahead is more than a training programme – it's a movement for change. By providing disadvantaged individuals with skills, mentorship, and funding, we're not just filling job vacancies but creating opportunities for self-employment and business ownership.

With expert coaching and food development sessions provided by KERB, we give participants hands-on experience and industry insights. We also invest up to £10,000 in kick-start funding, helping aspiring entrepreneurs turn their passion into a career. Even those not selected for investment continue to receive ongoing support, networking opportunities, and job placement assistance.

SHAPING THE FUTURE OF HOSPITALITY

The UK's hospitality sector faces challenges, but initiatives like Streets Ahead prove that **inclusive entrepreneurship and skills development** can drive positive change. As we look ahead, we remain committed to breaking down barriers and unlocking potential – one business at a time.



STUDY

LEARN VIA THE
KERB
ONLINE CLASSROOM

JOIN

SIGN UP ON
OUR WEBSITE



GROW

WITH THE
EXPERTS' HELP AT

KERB

DURING 1-2-1
COACHING

EXPERIENCE

ATTEND AN IMMERSION DAY



TASTE

SHOW OFF YOUR
FLAVOURS AT A FOOD
DEVELOPMENT SESSION

SUBMIT!

SEND IN YOUR PITCH
DECKS EXPLAINING YOUR
BUSINESS CONCEPT



DECISION

IT'S THE PANEL DAY! COOK
AND SHARE YOUR BUSINESS
IDEA FOR THE CHANCE TO
RECEIVE INVESTMENT

TRADE...

START SHARING YOUR
FOOD IN UK MARKETS!

THE HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY NEEDS OUR SUPPORT

SKILLS GAP & RECRUITMENT CHALLENGES

The UK hospitality sector faces ongoing staffing shortages, particularly for skilled roles like chefs and front-of-house staff. **In 2023, 80% of businesses struggled to recruit**,¹ highlighting the urgent need to strengthen domestic talent pipelines. COVID-19 further exposed workforce vulnerabilities, making structured training and career development essential.

Streets Ahead bridges this gap by equipping individuals with the skills, mentorship, and opportunities to thrive – helping not just to fill jobs but to create businesses and revitalise the industry.



PANDEMIC AFTERSHOCKS

By 2023, hospitality job vacancies were **50% higher than pre-pandemic levels**,² leaving approximately 178,000 positions unfilled as of 2024.¹ Hospitality also holds the highest vacancy rate per 100 jobs of any UK industry.³

PERCEPTION OF HOSPITALITY CAREERS

Although hospitality is vital to the UK economy and culture, talent retention remains a challenge. Only **35% of workers** view hospitality as a viable long-term career,⁴ often citing low pay and job insecurity as significant concerns.

However, **45% of the public** want better career development, and **33% support structured training**.¹⁰ Streets Ahead provides hands-on experience, mentorship, and a clear pathway into sustainable employment, addressing both perception and accessibility barriers.



BARRIERS TO ENTERING THE HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY

SKILLS & TRAINING GAPS

Skills gaps remain a major barrier for individuals wanting to enter hospitality.

In 2024, 69% of UK hospitality businesses reported struggling to recruit staff, with the greatest shortages in technical roles like chefs and general managers.¹¹

Without structured training and career progression, many aspiring workers struggle to enter the industry. **37.2% of hospitality workers say they need more training and mentorship to advance.**¹⁰



"STREETS AHEAD HAS GRANTED OVER £130,000 TO TERN'S COMMUNITY OF FOOD TRADERS FROM REFUGEE BACKGROUNDS. IT HAS GIVEN THEM THE MONEY TO START TRADING, BUT EVEN MORE IMPORTANTLY THE CONFIDENCE THAT PEOPLE BELIEVE IN WHAT THEY CAN BRING TO THE UK STREET FOOD SECTOR."

Charlie Fraser,
Co-founder of TERN



CHALLENGES FACED BY MARGINALISED GROUPS

Youth unemployment remains high at **12.6%,² and 62% of hospitality workers¹⁰** say better access to funding would help them start a business. Financial barriers, combined with a lack of training opportunities, limit entry for many underrepresented individuals.

BUILDING A STRONGER FUTURE FOR HOSPITALITY

TRAINING & DEVELOPMENT

Accessible, on-the-job training creates clear career pathways from entry-level roles to leadership. Through KERB's coaches, Streets Ahead provides structured training, mentorship, and development to empower workers and future entrepreneurs.



INCLUSIVE HIRING & ENTREPRENEURSHIP

By partnering with community groups and offering second-chance employment programmes, businesses can connect with diverse, motivated candidates. Streets Ahead also addresses key barriers – funding, training, and mentorship – to help aspiring entrepreneurs launch their ventures.

PROMOTING HOSPITALITY AS A VIABLE CAREER

Campaigns that showcase successful hospitality professionals can shift public perception, emphasising career growth, teamwork, and business opportunities. By championing skills development and entrepreneurship, Streets Ahead strengthens both the workforce and the economy.



WHY STREET FOOD?

The UK street food scene is thriving and shows no signs of slowing down.

The number of street food vendors has surged significantly, rising from 2,000 in 2018 to 7,000 in 2023,⁸ underscoring the rapid growth of this trend. Now more than ever, it's the perfect time to explore bold flavours and engage with a diverse and welcoming market.



Research indicates that half of UK consumers purchase food from street vendors at least once a week.⁹



Additionally, over 64% are prepared to pay more for street food compared to typical lunch options due to its perceived higher value.⁹

This trend is especially appealing to Gen-Z, known for their adventurous palates:



32%

of Gen-Z express excitement about sampling new foods and flavours.⁸

50%

want to incorporate more **unique dishes and diverse cuisines** into their diets.⁸

83%

people under 40 make up 83% of the street food market.⁸

"WITH LOW BARRIERS TO ENTRY AND HIGH FLEXIBILITY, STREET FOOD ALLOWS ENTREPRENEURS TO TEST IDEAS AND COME FACE TO FACE WITH THEIR CUSTOMERS. ACCESS TO KERB'S COACHING AND TRADING OPPORTUNITIES GIVES THEM THE BEST POSSIBLE CHANCE OF GROWING THEIR BUSINESS, AND BECOMING TOMORROW'S RESTAURATEURS."

Simon Mitchell, CEO at KERB

#STREETFOOD

The hashtag #streetfood has amassed over **15.8 million** posts on Instagram.⁸

IMPACT STATS



1

newly accredited course

40+

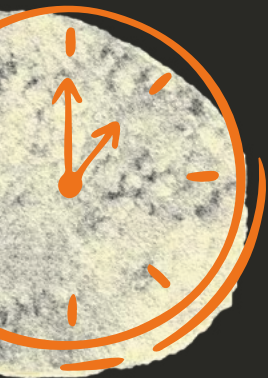
charity referral partners

32

new start-ups invested into

185

individuals given access to the KERB Classroom course



ALMOST
2000

hours of KERB coaching

26

laptops in 3 prisons



103

prison leavers introduced to the programme



£530,000+ invested by McCain into the programme

PLUS AN ADDITIONAL

£241,000 invested directly into new business concepts



WHAT'S NEXT?

McCain and KERB are proud to announce the renewal of the Streets Ahead Programme for another three years.

This commitment reflects our dedication to improving opportunities for individuals from underrepresented backgrounds in the hospitality industry.

As we enter this new phase, our focus will be on refining and expanding the programme to better serve participants. Key areas for improvement include enhanced mentorship, training opportunities, and funding, ensuring we provide more tailored support at every stage of the journey.

By removing barriers to entry and providing hands-on experience, we aim to empower participants to build successful careers and businesses.

"THE MCCAIN STREETS AHEAD PROGRAMME IS A BRILLIANT EXAMPLE OF HOW HOSPITALITY INVESTS IN AND SUPPORTS THE NEXT GENERATION OF TALENT TO BREAK DOWN BARRIERS AND SUCCEED IN THEIR CAREERS, TO THE BENEFIT OF OUR ECONOMY, CULTURE AND COMMUNITIES."

Kate Nicholls,
Chief Executive of UK Hospitality



SPOTLIGHT ON PARTICIPANTS

NAME: **HIND**

BUSINESS NAME: **UTOPIA**

When Hind arrived in England from Syria, she faced many challenges, including the difficulty of finding authentic Middle Eastern cuisine that reminded her of home. This longing for the flavours she cherished sparked a dream – one that would become UTOPIA.

In 2022, Hind joined the Streets Ahead Programme, **pouring her passion and talent into creating something truly special**. Her dedication culminated in an extraordinary moment at the Panel Day, where she captivated the judges with her traditional Sujuk wraps. We were so impressed by her exceptional culinary skills and vision that we awarded her a £10,000 kick-start investment.



Since then, Hind's journey has been nothing short of remarkable. She secured a coveted KERB membership and now brings her delicious creations to life at multiple KERB lunch markets across London. Beyond this, she's grown her business to include pop-ups and private catering events, spreading the vibrant tastes of the Middle East to an ever-growing audience.

NAME: **LEVI**

BUSINESS NAME: **LEVIBES**

Levi's journey is one of resilience and determination. After overcoming significant personal challenges, including a period of homelessness, **Levi found support through Only A Pavement Away and reignited his passion for cooking** through the Streets Ahead Programme.



As a chef and proud father of two, Levi's dream is to launch LeVibes – a Lebanese street food business that will not only serve incredible food but also **create a vibrant space to celebrate Arabic culture** and educate customers about its rich heritage.

"IF IT WASN'T FOR THIS OPPORTUNITY, I DON'T THINK I WOULD HAVE BEEN CONFIDENT TO GO AT IT ALONE."

Levi, Streets Ahead Graduate,
July 2024

At our third Panel Day back in 2024, we were inspired by Levi's vision and story, awarding him an £8,000 investment to help kick-start LeVibes.

Levi is taking the time to lay the foundation for his business, ensuring he's ready to build a legacy for his children and show that it's always possible to rise above adversity.





NAME: ELI

BUSINESS NAME: EL'S TACOS

Eli, born in Wales and raised in Liverpool, has always been passionate about food and dreamt of running her own business. In 2023, recommended by the Prince's Trust, she joined the Streets Ahead Programme with a clear goal: **to one day serve her unique creations at the renowned Baltic Market in Liverpool.**

With a vision to reinvent tacos as both delicious and environmentally friendly, Eli set out to create guilt-free dishes using high-quality Welsh meat sourced from trusted farmers.

Her commitment to sustainability is at the heart of her business, and her mission is simple, yet powerful:

"To create beautiful, delicious tacos without the guilt of impacting the planet in a harmful way."

With her talent, determination, and vision, she's well on her way to making a meaningful mark in the world of sustainable dining.

Recognising her passion and potential, we awarded Eli a £6,000 investment to kick-start her journey.

She's now refurbishing her food truck and preparing to pitch at prime sites in Liverpool, bringing her dream closer to reality.



NAME: AKBAR & SANOBAR
BUSINESS NAME: SAMARKAND PALAV

Originally from Uzbekistan, Akbar and Sanobar came to the UK seeking safety and a fresh start. With a love for cooking and a dream of sharing their culture through food, they set out to build something of their own.

In 2022, they joined the Streets Ahead Programme, referred by TERN, with a clear goal: **to bring their national dish, Osh Palav, to London's vibrant street food scene.** Over a year of mentoring and hands-on training, they refined their recipe and gained the skills needed to launch a food business from the ground up.



**"WITHOUT STREETS AHEAD,
WE WOULD NOT BE DOING
THIS TODAY. IT GAVE US
BELIEF AND KINDNESS."**

Akbar, Streets Ahead Graduate,
June 2023



By June 2023, they pitched their concept at panel day, serving their beloved Palav – spiced lamb, rice and traditional Uzbek bread – to a judging panel made up of McCain and KERB representatives. **Inspired by their passion and commitment, McCain invested £10,000 into their venture.**

Now trading at three KERB Lunch markets across London, Samarkand Palav is building a loyal following. With every dish, Akbar and Sanobar are sharing a taste of home – and building a future full of flavour and purpose.



THANK YOU

At McCain, we believe in nurturing talent and creating opportunities for all. The success of the Streets Ahead Programme would not be possible without the dedication of our incredible partners – KERB, charities, community organisations, and industry collaborators – who help us address the hospitality industry's skills gap and recruitment challenges.

Thanks to their support, we've been able to provide training, mentorship, and financial assistance to 32 participants, helping them launch ventures or transition into careers in hospitality. Together, we've opened doors for individuals overcoming barriers, helping them rebuild their lives and contribute to a stronger, more diverse workforce.

We are deeply grateful for the role our partners play in this success, and we look forward to continuing this impactful journey together.

"STREETS AHEAD WOULDN'T BE CHANGING LIVES WITHOUT THE INCREDIBLE IMPACT PARTNERS THAT CONNECT US TO THE RAW TALENT. FROM TERN TO SWITCHBACK, THE CONNECTION AT ST MARTIN'S AND MANY MORE — THESE PARTNERS ARE ON THE FRONTLINE, HELPING US BREAK BARRIERS AND BUILD BUSINESSES FROM THE KERB UP."

Lisa Donohue, Head of Coaching at KERB



APPENDIX

APPENDIX A: CHARITY PARTNERS

The McCain Streets Ahead Programme has accepted referrals from 40+ UK charities and community organisations to ensure participants receive the comprehensive support they need. These organisations provide critical resources, mentorship, and employment pathways for individuals from underrepresented backgrounds.

List of Charity Referrals:

- 180 Kitchen
- Migrateful
- Food Behind Bars
- TERN
- The Prince's Trust / King's Trust
- Hillingdon Women's Centre
- Only a Pavement Away
- St Christopher Fellowship
- The Connection
- Love London Working
- Switch Back
- Volition
- Depaul UK
- National Youth Agency
- Humanity First
- Islamic Aid
- Trailblazers
- Stand Out
- Women's Aid
- Alzheimer's Association
- British Red Cross
- The Royal British Legion
- British Heart Foundation
- Together UK
- Working Chance
- St Giles Trust
- Thames Reach
- 2-3 Degrees
- No Going Back
- Shoreditch Trust
- The Right Course
- Fedcap
- Better Lives
- Catch 22
- Finding Rhythms
- Latin American Disabled People's Project
- Beating Time
- Campden Charities
- The Passage
- Beyond Food Foundations
- Preston United Youth Development Programme
- Social Enterprise UK
- Apples of Nations
- The Clink
- Lewisham Wellbeing Hub Together UK
- Luminary Bakery
- Social Enterprise

These organisations offer a wide range of services, from skills training and mentorship to connecting participants with job opportunities.

APPENDIX B: FACTS AND FIGURES

Impact Overview

- Total number of participants given access to classroom: 185
- Total number of participants to have logged into classroom: 97
- Total hours of KERB coaching provided: 1912 hours
- New start-ups invested into: 32
- Total investment in participants: £241,000

Demographics Breakdown:

- Refugees: 39 participants (17 to make it to panel day)
- Youth Unemployment: 18 participants (6 to make it to panel day)
- Prison Leavers (Through the Gate): 103 participants (8 to make it to panel day)
- Homelessness: 17 participants (1 to make it to panel day)
- Other: 8 participants (0 to make it to panel day)

Locations of which participants are from/have received investment:

- Liverpool 3
- Manchester 1
- Leicester 1
- Peterborough 1
- London 25
- Plymouth 1

APPENDIX C: TESTIMONIALS

Several individuals have shared their experiences with the Streets Ahead Programme. Here are some highlights:

Participant Spotlight: Hind (Utopia) *"The support I received from Streets Ahead helped me turn my passion into a thriving business. Utopia is now a place where I share my culture and bring people together through food."*

Participant Feedback: Gavin (Clever's Kitchen) *"I've engaged with the Streets Ahead Programme and it got me through hard times."*

APPENDIX D: FINANCIAL BREAKDOWN

Total Investment in Streets Ahead Programme by McCain:

- Investment in new start-ups: £241,000
- Investment in mentorship and training: £530,330.33

The financial breakdown reflects McCain's commitment to fostering entrepreneurship and inclusivity within the hospitality industry.

"WE'RE DELIGHTED TO PARTNER WITH INCREDIBLE PROGRAMMES LIKE STREETS AHEAD TO SUPPORT INDIVIDUALS FACING BARRIERS TO EMPLOYMENT. IT'S A PERFECT EXAMPLE OF ORGANISATIONS WORKING TOGETHER TO SUPPORT PEOPLE TO REBUILD THEIR LIVES AND TURN DREAMS INTO REALITY!"

Greg Mangham, Founder & CEO
of Only A Pavement Away

APPENDIX E: STREET FOOD TRENDS AND MARKET INSIGHTS

The UK street food sector is growing rapidly.

Recent reports indicate:

- The number of street food vendors in the UK has increased from 2,000 in 2018 to 7,000 in 2023.
- 50% of UK consumers purchase food from street vendors at least once a week.
- 64% of consumers are willing to pay more for street food due to its perceived higher value.

Gen Z Preferences:

- 32% of Gen-Z are excited to sample new foods and flavours.
- 50% of this demographic wants to incorporate more unique dishes into their diets.
- The hashtag #streetfood has amassed over 15.8 million posts on Instagram, highlighting the growing interest in street food.

APPENDIX F: PARTICIPANT SPOTLIGHTS

A few key success stories that showcase the impact of the Streets Ahead Programme.

1. Hind (Utopia)

- **Business name:** Utopia
- **Investment awarded:** £10,000
- **Story:** Hind, a Syrian refugee, found success through the Streets Ahead Programme, eventually launching her own street food business that celebrates Middle Eastern cuisine.

2. Eli (El's Tacos)

- **Business name:** El's Tacos
- **Investment awarded:** £6,000
- **Story:** Eli, a Welsh entrepreneur, created an environmentally sustainable taco business, focusing on Welsh meats and eco-friendly practices.

3. Levi (LeVibes)

- **Business name:** LeVibes
- **Investment awarded:** £8,000
- **Story:** Levi, a former prisoner and homeless individual, uses his passion for Lebanese cuisine to create LeVibes, a street food venture that celebrates Arabic culture.

4. Akbar & Sanobar (Samarkand Palav)

- **Business name:** Samarkand Palav
- **Investment awarded:** £10,000
- **Story:** Sanobar and Akbar, a refugee couple from Uzbekistan, launched Samarkand Palav to share Osh Palav – a beloved national dish – bringing the flavours of home to London's street food scene.

APPENDIX G: MCCAIN'S COMMITMENT AND INDUSTRY INVOLVEMENT

McCain continues to be a strong advocate for inclusivity in the hospitality industry. Our commitment includes:

- **Supporting Workforce Development:** Through initiatives like Streets Ahead, McCain is helping build a more diverse and resilient workforce in hospitality.
- **Championing Skills Development:** Our focus is on equipping individuals with the skills needed to thrive in hospitality careers, helping to bridge the skills gap in the UK.

APPENDIX G: BUSINESSES LAUNCHED

- | | |
|------------------------------|------------------------------|
| 1. Utopia | 17. Corn & Crunch |
| 2. Bisan Bites | 18. Moment |
| 3. Samarkand Palav | 19. Somali Grill |
| 4. Ayal | 20. Chipsey Hustle |
| 5. Sojok | 21. Kettle Whips |
| 6. Kemi's Kitchen | 22. Cleaver's Kitchen |
| 7. Abo Saleem | 23. Boemo |
| 8. Oside BBQ | 24. Yardish |
| 9. Yogi's Sri Lankan Kitchen | 25. LeVibes |
| 10. Special Delicacies | 26. Farayyah |
| 11. El's Tacos | 27. Giant Potato |
| 12. Deshi | 28. Makerouns Street Kitchen |
| 13. Foodie Explorer | 29. Refreshmeant |
| 14. Jasmin's Kitchen | 30. Jerk N Fusion |
| 15. Omama's Kitchen | 31. JamaiKorean |
| 16. 7 Wonders of Falafel | 32. Hajirahs Handi |

APPENDIX I: ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This report would not have been possible without the contributions of:

- **Programme participants** – Their resilience, determination, and success stories continue to inspire and drive the Streets Ahead Programme forward.
- **UK charities and community programmes** – Their tireless work in supporting individuals facing significant barriers, from homelessness to the criminal justice system, ensures that opportunities reach those who need them most.
- **KERB mentors and coaches** – The heart of the programme, KERB's dedicated mentors and coaches provide hands-on guidance, industry expertise, and invaluable support to every participant. From practical training in street food entrepreneurship to personal mentorship and business coaching, their commitment ensures that each individual gains the skills, confidence, and network needed to thrive in hospitality. Their passion and experience shape the success of the programme and empower participants to turn their ambitions into reality.

APPENDIX J: KERB

The McCain Streets Ahead Programme is powered by KERB, the not-for-profit social enterprise arm of the pioneering London-based hospitality group. Streets Ahead takes KERB's impact further—reaching individuals at the very earliest stage of their entrepreneurial journey, when guidance and support can make the biggest difference.





OUR SUCCESSFUL ENTREPRENEURS BACKED BY MCCAIN



SOURCES:

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