

## Eating out in Gloucestershire to set national standard

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Thanks to a £90,000 investment by The Learning and Skills Council in Gloucestershire, pubs, restaurants and hotels across the county are set to become the best managed in the country.

And according to top Gloucestershire chef, Robert Rees, who's pioneering this new training programme for chefs and senior management in the county's catering industry, it's good news for customers too.

"A well-managed restaurant means properly sourced produce, better prepared food and a more enjoyable experience for customers," he said. "Gloucestershire is well recognised for the high quality provision of many of its pubs, hotels and restaurants all set in a truly beautiful county. But other areas of the country are catching us up; to maintain our pre-eminence we need to invest in high quality leadership and management training for senior members of our industry so that they can pass on this knowledge to their staff and raise standards even higher. The Learning and Skills Council recognised this and I am delighted that they have committed such a significant sum to help us achieve this aim."

The objective of this two-year project is to deliver a legacy of economic growth across the county, in tourism and leisure, one of its most important industry sectors.

Rob added: "Equipping the county's chefs and senior management with management knowledge and skills will result in an improved quality of provision in the county across all Gloucestershire's small, medium and large catering establishments."

The pilot training course, being developed by Gloucestershire Hospitality Education and Tourism (HEAT), and led by Rob, is due to start in Spring 2006. There are 30 places available and more than half are already booked, but HEAT is keen to hear from chefs and employers within the industry who want to be involved right from the start.

"The course will cover a wide range of subjects and include a head chef's forum, where delegates will have the opportunity to network and swap best practice," said Rob. "We will also be running workshops with local food producers alongside a range of leadership and management modules to be delivered by a recognised local training provider and uniquely adapted for the food industry."

New modules likely to be introduced to the programme are likely to include:

How to set up cost-effect bakery facilities in house to provide fresh bread every day; how to source new suppliers or link up with other establishments to increase efficiency; how to set up, stock and use a kitchen garden.

“During this first pilot we will be listening to what our delegates want and aim to set up courses to fulfil their specific requirements,” added Rob.

Sam Fisher, project manager at HEAT, said: “This is a unique opportunity for chefs, their employers and training providers to get what they want from a dedicated training programme which is totally distinct to Gloucestershire’s needs. As a county, we are setting an example to the rest of the country.”

To kick start discussion between chefs and senior management within the industry, an internet blog has been launched: [www.chefexcellence.blogspot.com](http://www.chefexcellence.blogspot.com)

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