

PRESS RELEASE

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CHARITY RESTAURANT SCORES 4 ON THE DOOR FOR FOOD HYGIENE

A restaurant staffed by people with mental health problems and learning difficulties has won a top-rating award for food safety.

Abbevilles restaurant and catering business, based in Clapham Park Road, has been awarded four stars in the food safety "Scores on the Doors" scheme run by Lambeth Council.

This new nationwide scheme gives customers the chance to check the rating of a restaurant to see how well it is performing on food safety issues BEFORE they enter the premises.

The 4-star rating is a major achievement for the team at Abbevilles, a professional kitchen run by the charity First Step Trust (FST).

The charity gives people experiencing mental health problems and other disadvantages, an opportunity to experience real work and build up their skills and confidence to help them into employment.

"Food hygiene is Abbevilles' number one priority," said Luigi Wegrzynek, the charity's project manager for the restaurant. "Each year over five million people in the UK suffer from food poisoning or other foodborne illnesses – that's 1 in 10 people. We want our customers to enjoy food that is not only fresh and delicious but food that is safe.

"Abbevilles workforce are all trained in good food hygiene practices. Our four-star rating, following an unannounced inspection, means that Abbevilles has reached a high standard of compliance with food safety legislation."

Dominic Snyder, a chef at Abbevilles, "I am really happy to know that I have been part of the team that has got this award, it makes me feel very proud."

Oona Kelly, kitchen assistant said: "It's great to know that all my hard work, washing and cleaning the kitchen, has helped get this award."

Abbevilles is actually getting ahead of the food safety game by taking part in the "Scores on the Doors" scheme because the scheme is a pilot being trialled by London boroughs and due to be rolled out nationally in 2009.

"I'm thrilled Abbevilles has gained a four-star rating," said Mr Wegrzynek, "Our regular customers know the high standards we work to – we know that because they keep coming back, time and time again – but we want our new customers to feel just as confident.

"This new scheme helps us promote just how seriously we take the issue of food safety. Our award is good news for our customers and good news for Abbevilles.

"Abbevilles would like to thank, not only our customers, but our funders, the South London and Maudsley NHS Foundation Trust, for their ongoing support."

Abbevilles' menu is modern European using fresh quality produce with hot lunches, light bites and sandwiches available. It also has a catering business providing fresh food for a wide range of functions from meetings, conferences and other business-related events to private parties.

Abbevilles restaurant and outside catering

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More information

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Notes for editors

Photos

Picture 1: Dominic proudly displays Scores of the Doors award

Picture 2: The Abbevilles' team in the restaurant kitchen

More about food hygiene ratings

Environmental health departments in local authorities carry out regular inspections of all food premises to ensure the public is protected and that high standards are maintained. This rating ranges from no stars for the worst levels of compliance, through to five stars for the very best standards of food safety management. For more, go to Your London: Food hygiene ratings

http://eforms.yourlondon.gov.uk/pub/servlet/ep.blank?auth=1902&type=sc_home&st=scores

More about First Step Trust

The First Step Trust (FST) is a charity providing real work and employment for people excluded from ordinary working life because of mental health problems and other disadvantages.

FST Abbevilles is a catering business running a restaurant as well as a thriving outside catering service. We work with people with mental health and other disadvantages, giving them an opportunity to experience the pressures and responsibilities of working life and through that build up their skills and confidence. The aim of the FST Abbevilles is to prepare the members of the workforce for part-time or full time employment in a mainstream catering environment.

We run a professional and fast-paced kitchen which is supervised by qualified personnel with a long track record in the foodservice sector. We provide quality fresh food at reasonable prices in a friendly and comfortable environment. Members of the workforce are involved in all aspects of the business including preparing food, stock control and front of house. We pride ourselves in our keen attention to presentation and excellent customer service. The Abbevilles team is hard-working and enthusiastic and attendance is high with some staff volunteering to start as early as 7.30 am!

For more, go to First Step Trust website <http://www.firststeptrust.org.uk>