

Budding chefs show off for the Secretary of State for Scotland



Young aspiring chefs took the chance to show off their sizzling stovetop skills to the Secretary of State for Scotland, demonstrating how they're whisking their way to employment.

Alistair Carmichael MP visited the kitchens at Edinburgh College to meet students on The Prince's Trust's Get into Cooking course, a project that gives young unemployed people the chance to change their lives and get on the path to a career in cooking. The course is from The Prince's Trust's Get into Programme, which develops young people's skills in a specific sector and supports them into jobs. Many of the young people face barriers to getting into work or education, including lack of confidence, motivation and qualifications, as well as personal problems.

The Secretary of State talked to the nine students on the five-week course, which gives them a solid grasp of the cooking skills and knowledge they need to get into employment or further study opportunities. The students were busy preparing the celebration lunch for the course finale taking place the following day. The lunch was being held at the Apprentice restaurant at the college's Granton Campus, where they were to be joined by family and friends to mark the successful completion of the programme.

Get into Cooking provides students with practical cooking skills including knife skills, cooking theory and work experience in the college canteen and training restaurant under trained chefs. They also receive training in safe work

practices and receive qualifications in hygiene and serving alcohol.

Students have the opportunity to go on a week-long work placement at a top Edinburgh restaurant or hotel, getting hands-on experience in a demanding professional kitchen. Participating businesses include Prestonfield House; Grasslands Restaurant (Edinburgh Zoo); The Golf Tavern; Charwood; Hanging Bat; Red Squirrel; Amicus Apple and Whiski Rooms. Many of these employers have already offered job opportunities to the participants and are arranging interviews.

Mr Carmichael said: "I really valued the chance to visit Edinburgh College and meet students who are benefiting from The Princes Trust's Get into programme. My first job was in the catering industry and I believe that many of the students I met who are taking their first steps into the catering trade will find a career that is tremendously rewarding.

"The number of young people who are unemployed in Scotland is falling and the efforts the UK Government is taking to create jobs and opportunities for young people is being aided by the great work of charities like The Prince's Trust.

"Three in four young people supported by The Prince's Trust move into work, education or training. This is outstanding and in no small part thanks their good working relationships with places like Edinburgh College, local businesses in Edinburgh as well as established national and global companies."

Carol Fyfe, head of the Tourism and Hospitality Academy at Edinburgh College, said: "We were delighted to host the Secretary of State and to show him the progress the students have made. The Prince's Trust programme is a brilliant way to boost their confidence, give them an insight into what could be a really fulfilling career, and equip them with skills they can take into the workplace or a new course. The students

should be very proud of what they've achieved in such a short time and I'm sure this will be the start of a really positive journey for them."

Seventeen-year-old Get into Cooking student Callum Grant said: "This course taught me a lot about knife skills, which I needed to know. It's got me a job, which I've been looking for for ages. It's taught me how to work in a real kitchen as I've only ever had experience in a small one before. It's also taught me the importance of working as part of a team, working to deadlines and working to the pressures of the kitchen.

"I'm looking forward to starting my job, gaining more experience in the kitchen, and I'm going to be working weekends where it will be busy so I'll definitely get lots of experience."

Allan Watt, director of The Prince's Trust, Scotland continued: "The Prince's Trust is delighted to help young people 'Get into Cooking' with a fantastic package of training and work experience. Thanks to our work with Edinburgh College we have been able to give even more young people the chance to reach their full potential.

"Our Get into programme brings together employers and The Prince's Trust to offer courses in everything from home building to security. We would love to hear from any young person who wants to find out what opportunities we can offer to help them get a job, an education or start their own business."

As part of his visit to the college, Mr Carmichael also toured the campus facilities, including the newly opened eco-friendly Hair and Beauty Academy, and met some of Edinburgh College Students' Association's sabbatical officers to discuss the work they do to support students.