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# SOCIAL BITE'S JOBS FIRST

Charity No. SC045232

# WHO ARE SOCIAL BITE?

Co-founded by Josh Littlejohn MBE in 2012, Social Bite began as a small social business sandwich shop on Rose Street, Edinburgh. Soon after opening, a young homeless man named Pete, who had been selling the Big Issue outside, plucked up the courage to ask for a job and we welcomed him to the team. Seeing what a difference that made, we wanted to do more to help. We began offering jobs and free food to people affected by homelessness.

In 2015, Edinburgh came to a complete standstill when George Clooney visited our café, since followed by the likes of Leonardo Di Caprio, Malala Yousafzai and The Duchess of Cambridge. We expanded into a chain of sandwich shops, a restaurant, and a catering business. A quarter of our 65 employees and 100 volunteers have been affected by homelessness.

Each year, we give out over 140,000 items of free food to those experiencing homelessness and food poverty – and each week we connect 550 vulnerable people with good meals, support, and opportunities. In the last few years, we've organised a number of mass participation campaigns to fund pioneering projects and full-circle solutions that have shifted the cultural dial on homelessness – from training and employment to innovative housing programmes.

Our mission is to bring people together in a collaborative movement to end homelessness. In doing so, we're enabling some of the UK's most vulnerable people to change their lives for the better – swapping a reality of poverty and exclusion for one of compassionate support and inclusion.



# WHY DO WE DO IT ALL?

We believe in creating a society where no one should have to be homeless.

We know that homelessness has countless effects on an individual, as well as communities as a whole. In terms of temporary accommodation, we know that it can often feel unsafe and removes a lot of personal autonomy and privacy, due to usually having strict rules about how it is used. From an employment point of view, the personal toll of temporary accommodation can be so high that it is not viable for a person to work.

Knowing the barriers a person faces in a situation of homelessness, Social Bite focuses on creating trusting relationships and real opportunities, so people can make a positive change.



# HOMELESSNESS AND EMPLOYMENT – WHAT IS IN AN OPPORTUNITY?

Employment can, on the face of it, appear like an opportunity available to everyone. However, any opportunity is wrapped up in several factors existing that may not be initially apparent.

Many of the people we work with have had to overcome very difficult circumstances to simply survive. What is often sacrificed along the way are things such as completing education and gaining qualifications or having identifiable work experience. These things are necessary, in a competitive working environment, to get your foot in the door for many entry-level jobs.

We know that unemployment is disproportionately higher for people who have experienced homelessness or people who are currently homeless, with just 6 in every 100 in a job compared to 70 in every 100 for the general population.

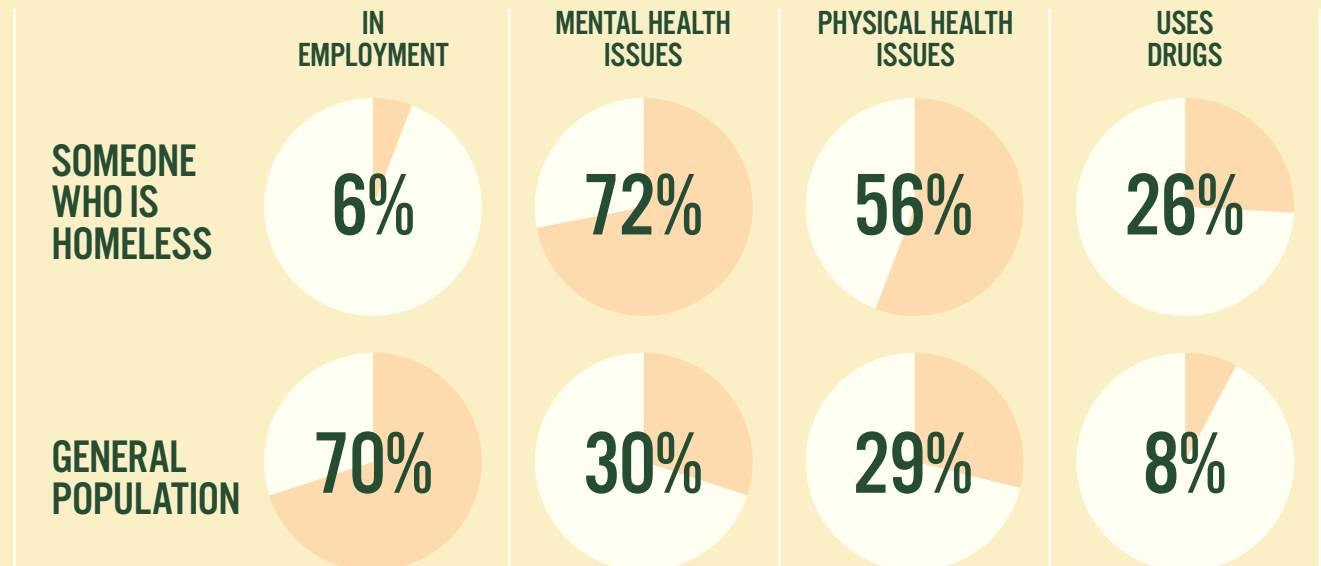
Social Bite’s Jobs First Programme looks to work with employers to provide real job opportunities to those who have experienced homelessness. The crucial part of the programme is the trauma informed support that will be offered to every employee as part of their employment.

There can be simple, pragmatic issues that can seem like insurmountable barriers to someone that is experiencing homelessness. For example, without an address, a person cannot get a bank account, without a bank account a person cannot get a job, but a job can be a crucial way of a person recovering from homelessness. This impossible cycle can become de-motivating and exhausting for anyone going through it.

The impact of trauma that may have led the person to become homeless as well as the consequences of being homeless, already

discussed, can make the working environment a difficult place to navigate. We have found that people often find it harder to trust other staff and their manager and be able to have confidence in their own personal strengths and qualities.

To summarise, there are individual barriers that prevent a person from being able to access the opportunity of employment and the employment market is often not set up in a way that can support a person with an experience of homelessness to sustain employment.



# FOCUS OF TRADITIONAL EMPLOYABILITY SERVICES

Traditional employability services, in general, are not set up specifically for people experiencing homelessness. As highlighted already, there are specifics around unemployment and homelessness that need to be a part of any service aiming to support someone that is or has been homeless, into employment.

Employability services tend to focus on a lot of the tangible issues e.g. lack of qualifications, CV, interview skills and in some cases, there may be elements of confidence or self-esteem sessions. There are often budgets for travel or clothing for interviews. As well as this employability services, usually have good relationships with employers

to create opportunities. This could be described as making a person “job ready” and then removing support once the person is in work.

However, for a person experiencing homelessness, the barriers around confidence and trust may be so great that even engaging with an employability service can be difficult.

Beyond this, our experience has shown that there is a need to continue to support the person once they are in employment to continue address stressors that are affecting a person out with work as well as in the working environment. Without this support there is a greater chance that the employment will not be sustained.



# WHAT IS DIFFERENT ABOUT JOBS FIRST?

Jobs first centres on the idea of trust.

The role of the support worker is to create a supportive relationship with a Jobs First employee to allow that person to begin to understand the challenges and pressures they are facing out with the work context that may not be visible, even to them. By creating opportunities to reflect and having someone on your side that is not there to judge we hope to help people identify these external stressors and support them to work through them. Broadly speaking, this is a trauma informed approach.

The support is also led by the individual. Experience has shown us that leading a person in a certain direction is not conducive to a person's recovery. Importantly we also provide support that is strength or asset based rather than simply focusing on needs.

It can often seem to be the best way forward to begin looking at all the things that are going wrong for a person and try to fix them one by one. Our approach is equally to focus on the resources and skills that a person has and try to nourish these and get a person to the point where they can recognise them in themselves.

Finally, support for Jobs First employees continues throughout an employment contract. All of our lives have ups and downs and for a person that has had difficult and traumatic experiences, these can be greater and a person may not always have the support and tools to deal with stressful situations that are thrown their way in a stable and consistent way. Support is there throughout to help a person to become more resilient and create opportunities for self-reflection throughout their employment journey.



# DOES IT WORK?

Over the past four years, Social Bite has supported 34 people into employment that have had a background of homelessness, through our pioneering Social Bite Academy programme.



One quarter of Social Bite's workforce are people that have experienced homelessness. Of these 34, many have moved onto future employment with other organisations; some have moved onto higher education and university and in a lot of cases we have retained the supported employee as a full-time member of staff within the Social Bite team, including some people that have worked for us for over 5 years.

Having reviewed and developed the programme based on feedback from Academy staff, as well as other team members; this learning has been the foundation for rolling out Job's First across the UK.

**“The highlight of the Academy would be the outlook I now have due to being respected and supported by my fellow staff.”**

Former Academy Staff

**“It has been great experience for me personally being able to learn and develop my own skills and especially management skills when working with a different outlook on staff. Also on a personal level it is great to see people take on the skills we are able to give them and move on to new jobs and new part of their life using those skills.”**

Social Bite Café Manager

# WHAT IMPACT ARE SOCIAL BITE HOPING TO ACHIEVE WITHIN THIS JOBS FIRST PROGRAMME?

Social Bite's primary goal within the Jobs First programme is to support people who have experienced homeless into real job opportunities and to increase the amount of opportunities available to them within the job market.

We are aiming to have supported 60 people who have experienced homelessness into employment over a three-year period with support from our key partners including your employer. It is hoped that each employee who takes part in the programme is kept on by the company or moves on to a new opportunity that is suitable to their needs. As well as having been given first-hand experience in a working environment, the employee will have developed new knowledge and skills, and built on their social skills and self-confidence - which will assist them to re-integrate into society and ultimately transform their lives.





# WHAT DOES YOUR COMPANY NEED TO PROVIDE?

## Principles and Values

- Be committed to supporting people who have experienced homelessness to transform their lives
- Demonstrate a safe and welcoming environment
- Have empathy for the context, causes and effects of homelessness
- The line manager of the Jobs First employee must maintain confidentiality

## Systems and Processes

- Provide a clear contract for the employee and abide by necessary legal frameworks
- Attend quarterly reviewing meetings with Social Bite
- Ensure line manager reporting routes are set out with the support worker
- Line manager to attend regular meetings with the support worker
- Provide adequate training to the employee

## Delivery and intervention

- Provide adequate entry level, paid positions for employees that are meaningful
- Provide a contract in length of 15 months which can be terminated after three months based on the employers' disciplinary procedures
- Provide a suitable job role with suitable amount of hours based on the employee's circumstances
- Job First employee to have time within their working hours to meet with their support worker once a week
- Ability to provide a dedicated line manager for the Jobs First employee
- Line manager of Jobs First employee to be involved in recruitment process
- Record hours worked by the employee and regularly review these in line with benefit requirements
- Line manager to attend weekly appraisals with Jobs First employee and support worker which over time with reduce to fortnightly then monthly

# WHAT SUPPORT WILL YOUR COMPANY RECEIVE?

## Co-recruitment

Social Bite will work with your company collaboratively throughout the length of the supported employment. This will include the recruitment process:

- Social Bite will assist your company with finding suitable candidates from approved partners as well as our own operations and taking care of the CV collection
- Social Bite and your company will work together to shortlist candidates for interviews
- Social Bite and your company will interview candidates together giving our knowledge and expertise
- Social Bite will assist your company to pick a suitable candidate and to give developmental feedback to the unsuccessful candidates
- Social Bite will work with your company to arrange a start date for the employee and setting up the probationary period

## Training

Social Bite will provide training to your employer so that they are equipped with the knowledge and necessary skills to assist the employee throughout their employment journey. The training will include:

- Video content for employees to learn about Social Bite and the Jobs First programme
- A support document for all employees in the company including information about the Jobs First programme and homelessness
- In depth training for line managers of the Jobs First employee to assist them throughout the programme
- On-going training and support from Social Bite as and when required
- A quarterly newsletter sharing learning and key examples of Jobs First working in practice within your company and other partners involved

## Support worker from Social Bite

Each Jobs First employee will have a dedicated support worker from Social Bite who will work with them throughout the jobs first programme as well as supporting your company. The support will include:

- Working with the Jobs First employee on a person centred support plan to allow the employer to focus on work related support
- Meeting with the Jobs First employee once a week to give on-going support
- Facilitating regular appraisals between the line manager, the Jobs First employee and the support worker to discuss the employee's progress
- Provide on-going support to the line manager throughout the programme and assist them with further information they may need or concerns they may have
- Will assist the Jobs First employee and line manager to discuss the ending of the programme and future plans

# WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS FOR YOUR COMPANY?

## **Contributing to positive, long-term change**

Your company would be providing an opportunity for sustained employment to a person that would not ordinarily have that chance and by doing so you would be part of a wider movement of systemic change and working towards reducing homelessness.

## **Access to Social Bite expertise**

Social Bite are a reputable social enterprise known for our pioneering initiatives that break the cycle of homelessness. This has included giving people who have experienced homelessness employment opportunities within our own operations with great success. Your company would have dedicated support from Social Bite sharing our knowledge and expertise.

## **Inclusive workplace**

Increase the inclusivity and diversity of your workplace by engaging in this Jobs First Programme. You will be responsible for giving individuals an opportunity that so often has not been available to them before. By opening your doors to those who have experienced homelessness, you will grow a dynamic team of people from various backgrounds.

## **Improved employee engagement and satisfaction**

Fellow employees feel proud to work for a company that is making a difference. This improves employee wellbeing, and they have a greater sense of satisfaction for the work that they do and the company they work for. Employees will gain motivation and become more engaged and invested in the company.

## **Activate your company values**

By being part of this programme, you will be actively implementing your company's ethics and core values. Customers, clients and new employees will want to work with you over others, appreciating the contributions you're making to help people to transform their lives. Customers are more likely to use companies that are aligned with their own values.

## **Increased brand awareness and recognition**

Social Bite as a brand has experienced significant growth since its early days as a social enterprise sandwich shop. Today, it is recognised both nationally and internationally for our innovative work helping to end homelessness. By being part of our journey, supporting this Jobs First Programme, your brand will gain awareness and recognition for helping us on our mission.

# WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS FOR YOUR COMPANY?

## Contributing to your CSR strategy

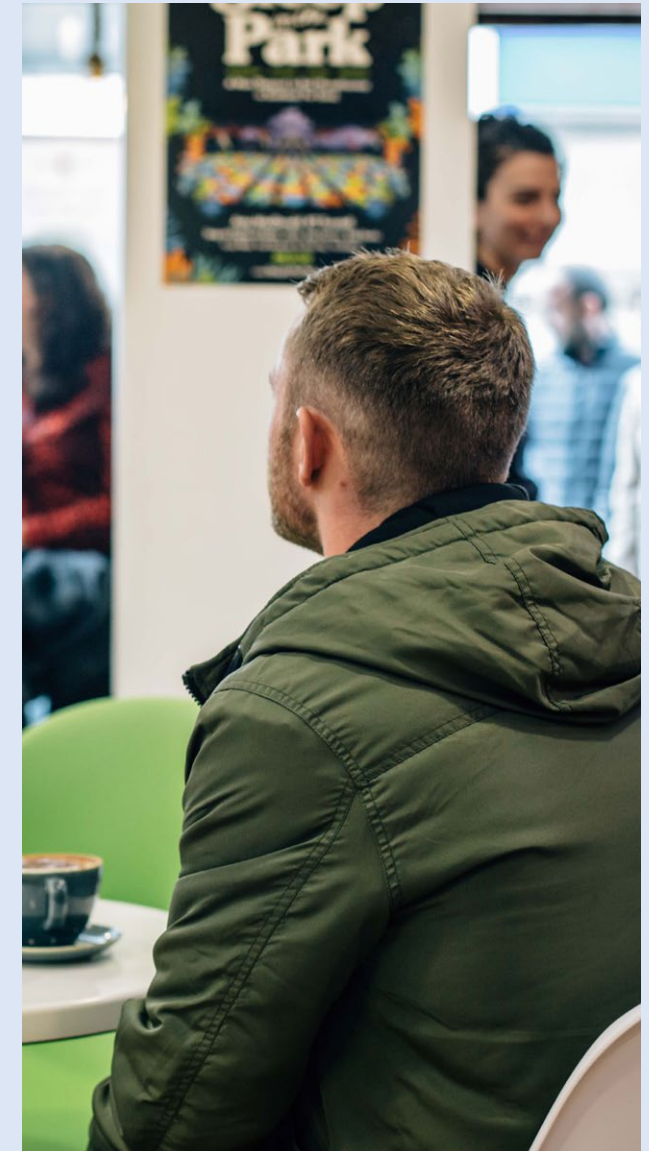
Now, more than ever, companies are holding themselves to account, ensuring they are proactive in making a positive social impact within the communities they operate. Jobs First is an innovative programme with tangible results that will contribute to many CSR strategies put in place by organisations, both big and small.

## Staff development

Increase your staff's awareness of homelessness and the barriers people face when trying to get back into employment. Make your employees part of this journey, empower them to be involved and support the business implementing this programme. You can provide staff will development opportunities to support Jobs First employees and the success of their employment with you.

## Value the employee brings to the team

Crucially, by employing through our Jobs First programme, you will be welcoming to your organisation unique, brilliant team members who have yet to be given the opportunity to re-explore and develop their character strengths in a working environment. So many of our partners who have successfully employed people from Jobs First have been able to feedback on the value this individual now brings to the business.



# JOBS FIRST EMPLOYER TESTIMONIAL

**Cheryl Stewart, Director at Andron said,** “During the first lockdown, we (Andron) wanted to be able to do more to help those who had been hardest hit by the pandemic. We are a big believer in the work that Social Bite do and as a family-run business with over 2100 employees from diverse backgrounds, we believed that we could provide life-changing employment opportunities to those who need it most in our local community.

Our experience of partnering with Social Bite to provide employment opportunities has been a great success so far with our first recruit celebrating a year working with Andron and who is now a valuable and trusted member of the team!

Our clients have loved to hear about the work we are doing in this space and we believe it is helping us to win new business and strengthen current client relationships. We are also proud to be a finalist for a prestigious industry award in the “Social Value” category for our own employability programme- “Inclusive Futures”.



# IF YOU HAVE ANY FURTHER QUESTIONS, PLEASE CONTACT:

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