

## Part A - General Information

### Organisation

Food Behind Bars

### Organisation Type/Structure

Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO)

### Theme/Nature of Project

Food

### Charity Registration Number (if applicable)

1190462

### Project Name (if same as Organisation Name, please leave this blank)

Prison Food Education Programme

### Name of Lead Contact

Lucy Vincent

### Email

[lucy@foodbehindbars.co.uk](mailto:lucy@foodbehindbars.co.uk)

### How did you find out about the Awards?

Recommended by a Friend/Colleague or Other Person

### Website

<https://www.foodbehindbars.co.uk/>

### Social Media Handles (Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, Instagram etc):

Twitter: @foodbehindbars

Instagram: @foodbehindbars

Facebook: FoodBehindBarsCharity

## Part B - Project Proposal

### Project Mission: A snapshot of the project's intention (50 words max)

The project involves designing, building and piloting a Prison Food Education Programme. The programme is to inspire, upskill and educate prison catering teams. It will give them the tools and support required to produce better quality and more nutritious food, improving the health and wellbeing of prisoners across the UK.

### Situation (250 words)

Prison food, on the whole, is poor quality. The average prison meal is repetitive, uninspiring and lacking in key nutrients. Prison catering teams are under-resourced, understaffed and under pressure. They are producing and serving thousands of meals per day in a logistically-challenging environment on a daily budget of £2.70 per head.

As a result, poor quality prison food impacts every aspect of prison life. It can contribute to violence, wellbeing and mental health. In most cases, prisoners don't have the opportunity to learn about food, how to cook or improve their relationship with food. They eat their meals alone in their cell. Ultimately, this affects their life beyond release. We have the highest reoffending rate in Europe - 42% of people end up back inside within a year. Individuals are leaving prison with their health and wellbeing compromised and they are more likely to reoffend and end up back inside.

Better nutrition in prison has been statistically proven to reduce violent offences by 37%. But the majority of prison catering teams do not have the skills to create delicious food within the current budget and guidelines. Only 50% of prison catering managers are qualified caterers and prison kitchen teams are often lacking in morale, support and outside inspiration. We know through 7 years of experience supporting prison caterers that these are the key components to unlocking good food in prison. We have seen that this is possible and we believe we have developed a scalable solution to deliver it.

### Complication (250 words)

Since becoming a charity in 2020, we have delivered a range of projects in men's and women's prisons across the UK. These have involved food education - teaching prisoners how to cook, bake, grow food and eat well - and prison kitchen support - developing recipes, consulting, training. We have taught 150

prisoners how to cook and developed over 100 recipes served on prison menus. We have worked in over 12 prisons so far.

Much of this work has been project-based and driven by us. But we have learnt that for embedded, long-lasting change to happen, it has to come from within the prison itself. The best prison kitchens are led by staff who are passionate about every plate of food. They understand how to utilise the budget and ingredients creatively to produce good quality, homemade food. These prison kitchens are often isolated examples led by inspiring individuals who are paving their own way.

There is no sharing of best practice, connection, support or training for prison catering teams. This is the barrier that is ultimately preventing prison food from improving on the scale that is so desperately required. Better quality prison food can have far-reaching social, economic and health benefits for the whole of society, as well as impacting the entire prison population of almost 90,000 people. But this can't be achieved without empowering and educating the people who are cooking the food everyday.

### **Solution (250 words)**

Our solution is a Prison Food Education Programme that we will deliver to catering teams nationally. It has three components: a digital learning programme, practical in-kitchen training and a community network. The digital programme contains engaging video modules delivered by our Food Educators. Participants will work through a range of subjects - from how to create a positive prison food culture, to how to meet nutritional guidelines and utilise the budget. This will be bolstered by a programme of hands-on, in-kitchen training, tailored to the establishment. Ongoing support, connection and ideas will be provided by a prison food network of catering managers, chefs, nutritionists and thought leaders.

It's a 4-month programme that has been designed based on all of our learning and experience of the past 7 years. It is a scalable solution to poor quality prison food. After our initial test and pilot period, we have developed a sustainable scale strategy that will enable us to reach a quarter of the prison population (37 prisons) in 3 years. We have already gained significant interest in the programme from some of our prison partners, and have secured a pilot prison, HMP Styal - a women's prison in Manchester. We have partnered with the University of Surrey who will help us evaluate the impact of the programme.

Prison food has never gained the same level of attention as food in other institutional settings. But we believe it has far-reaching effects on society and this programme is the key to tackling it at scale.

### **Part C - Wider Support**

#### **How would the Stephen Lloyd Award network of partners' support be beneficial to your project? (250 words max)**

This Prison Food Education Programme is a step in a new direction for us - it is the first time we have explored a digital model and designed something with scale at the forefront. We believe it can achieve a huge impact, but we know we will need the right support to get us there, particularly at this pivotal stage of our growth.

There are a few key areas of support that we think would be especially beneficial at this stage, and the opportunity to receive it through the Stephen Lloyd Award would be transformational for us.

We want to ensure the programme is as targeted, relevant and effective as possible, and therefore we'd welcome support around intervention design specifically. We are also interested in some of the partners' experience in impact measurement, as we need to demonstrate the effectiveness of the programme in order to scale it in the way we believe it is required.

As we enter this new period of the charity's activities, it is imperative that we are developing our strategy, financial model and scale pathways and this is an area we believe the partners could add a huge amount of value to, as the success of the Programme and our future sustainability depends on it. Ultimately, this period of growth would be the ideal time to benefit from the wide range of support the Stephen Lloyd Award partners have to offer.

### **Part D - Financial Justification**

#### **How do you propose to spend the winning funds of £25,000 (50 words max). Please provide a general idea.**

The £25,000 would go towards funding the 12-month build and pilot stage of the project. We have already raised £30,000 and are fundraising for an additional £55,000 to embark on this phase in Summer 2024.

### **Part E - Supporting Information**

**Governing Documents: Where relevant, please upload any recent charity accounts and governing documents as attachments.**

- [CC16a - revisions 190417-2023-2-1.pdf](#)

**Team: We would like to learn a little more about the individual or team invested into the project. What are your individual credentials? Is there a story behind how you or your team all came together to support the project? (75 words max)**

I am an ex-journalist and hospitality worker who began campaigning for an improvement in prison food in 2016, after a report was released about poor quality prison food by HM Inspectorate of Prisons. Since then, I have immersed myself in the subject, travelling to prisons across the globe, working in prison kitchens, speaking publicly about the issue and advocating for systemic change.

**YouTube Video**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Zf6LM9EHLgo>  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cflEtENpMSr8>

**Additional References: You are welcome to provide a list of up to 5 links with any relevant supporting material or visuals, as further reference**

<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/femail/article-13002363/former-fashion-journalist-teaching-prisoners-cooking-inspirational-women.html>  
<https://foodism.co.uk/features/long-reads/prison-food-hospitality-industry/>  
<https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/w3ct38ns>