



# Rehabilitation

*The difference between life transformation and reoffending*

ONE OF my commitments as High Sheriff of Greater London is to tackle crime in the Greater London area by helping to develop solutions to reduce reoffending rates across the capital's many and diverse boroughs.

For a long time I have believed that education is critical, particularly for those who have ended up in prison because their antisocial behaviour warranted punishment. What value can punishment have if the offender is not engaged in rehabilitation? We shouldn't take for granted the power that education plays in inspiring a sense of personal purpose and accountability. For offenders who find themselves in prison through poor judgment and displaced morals, rehabilitation can be the difference between total life transformation and reoffending.

Over the past six months I have focused my attention on the humanitarian aspects of the penal system, promoting and supporting the charities, individuals and statutory bodies which work tirelessly with current prisoners and ex-offenders to offer them a future on the right side of the law. As one of the co-founders of The Clink Charity, an award-winning scheme which rehabilitates prisoners through hospitality skills and training, I have seen first-hand the important work that

organisations such as this do to reduce crime and re-offending rates.

The Clink Charity was formed to help offenders break the cycle of crime by giving them self-belief, workplace skills and qualifications. The charity began with The Clink Restaurant at HMP High Down opening in 2009 as the first public restaurant in the UK within a prison. The concept was devised by Chef Alberto Crisci MBE, with the aim of providing prisoners with the opportunity to train and work in a similar environment to that of a 4-5 star hotel or commercial restaurant, in preparation for employment beyond the prison walls.

As well as working a full week, prisoners train towards gaining nationally recognised City & Guilds NVQ qualifications in catering, front-of-house service and cleaning, before returning to their cells in the evening. When released, each Clink graduate is mentored by a dedicated support worker who helps them to find employment and adjust to life on the outside, and visits them weekly in their place of work for six to twelve months to ensure they stay on track.

The charity has continued to go from strength to strength with the opening of charity's second restaurant, The Clink Cymru at HMP Cardiff in



September 2012 and the third restaurant at HMP Brixton in February 2014. A total of 10 Clink training projects are planned across the prison estate by 2017, with each initiative providing training opportunities for up to 50 graduates each year.

The Clink Charity operates using a five-step programme – recruitment, training, auditing, employment and mentoring. This model is key to ensuring that the reoffending rates of graduates are lower than the national average. In the UK, 46.9 per cent of adults reoffend within the first year of release. If they leave prison with no job or accommodation secured, this increases to 74 per cent. This shows a clear link between unemployment and increased rates of reoffending. To date, The Clink Charity has reduced the reoffending rate of prisoners training in the restaurant to 12.5 per cent following one full year of release.

I am now working closely with the board and chief executive of The Clink Charity and Her Majesty's Prison Service on the next Clink project, a training restaurant at HMP Styal, a women's prison in Cheshire, set to open in spring 2015. Not only is this a clear sign of the charity's substantial growth as it moves into prisons in the north of England but it also demonstrates its desire to rehabilitate female offenders even though they are considered a minority compared with male offenders.

I am delighted that High Sheriffs from Surrey and Hertfordshire, as well as most of the recent past High Sheriffs of Greater London, have visited The Clink and seen its work first-hand.

♦♦ **Kevin McGrath**  
High Sheriff of Greater London 2014-15

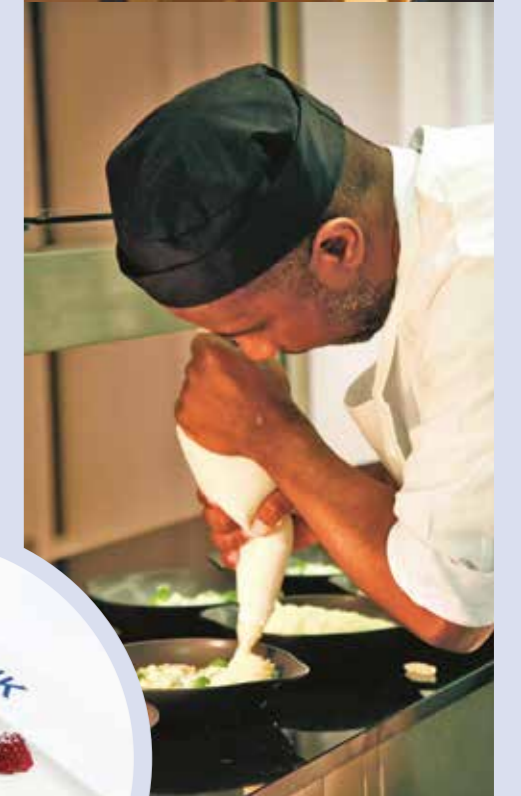
**i** To find out more, please visit  
[www.theclinkcharity.org](http://www.theclinkcharity.org)

**Above: The High Sheriff and Kate McGrath with the Founder and CEO of the William Wilberforce Trust and Chaplain to the High Sheriff, the Revd Paul Cowley and his wife Amanda (left)**

**The Clink Restaurant, HMP Brixton**



*I recently visited The Clink Restaurant with a group of historians. I endorse everything Kevin McGrath says and recommend the lunch, ambience and friendliness of the staff there. It is an excellent initiative which needs public support. Ed.*



**Right: The High Sheriff speaking at lunch at The Clink Restaurant, HMP Brixton with the Rt Rev Bishop James Langstaff (Anglican Bishop to Prisons to his right), Maajid Nawaz (Co-Founder and Chairman of The Quilliam Foundation, opposite the Bishop) and David Crossweller (Wherever The Need Charity, foreground). The lunch was also attended by His Grace the Archbishop of Southwark, the Rt Rev Peter Smith, and the Rt Rev Bishop Richard Moth, the Catholic Liaison Bishop to Prisons.**

