

## News Release

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### **Annual chef's competition proves there is such a thing as healthcare gastronomy**

St Andrew's Healthcare top chefs came together last week for its fourth annual Chef's Showcase competition, proving once again that hospital gastronomy is not a fallacy.

Judged by 2015 Chef of the Year, Russell Bateman, and National Association of Care Caterers Chairperson, Neel Radia, the showcase was a dazzling display of talent from the charity's experienced catering team.

Charity Head of Restaurants and Catering, Gareth Waters, said it was a well-kept secret that St Andrew's Healthcare had a skilled team of former restaurant chefs and commis chefs among its ranks.

"Care sector hospitality has traditionally had a bad reputation, but it's a trend we are keen to replace with high expectations of quality food – both in taste and nutrition," Mr Waters said.

"It's very much about offering the best standard of food that we can for our patients, who should be free to focus on their mental health recovery.

"If food is nutritional and appealing, that's one thing we can tick off their list. In a way, it's us doing our part for them."

Mr Waters said contrary to common belief, the healthcare was becoming a desirable sector for highly qualified and passionate chefs who enjoy the more standard working hours and improved work-life balance of a care facility.

"Working in healthcare and catering can be every bit as rewarding as working in a five star hotel or restaurant," Mr Waters said.

"While the food for the Chef's Showcase is presented in a somewhat more refined way, the quality of food is the same standard that our chefs present to patients each day."

Jonathon Acock, Commis Chef and winner of both Russell Bateman's 'Highly Commended Award' and 'Best Cold Dessert', said he had spent nine months refining his recipes and technical skills to prepare for the Showcase.

"I was probably the quietest chef in the charity when I first started here, after previously catering for conferences for more than nine years.

"In that time I've had the opportunity to work in every kitchen and been mentored by an extremely talented chef called Russell Gowen, who is a previous winner of the Showcase and really encouraged me to compete.

"Russel showed me his skills and knowledge of catering and I now have a drive, passion and confidence. St Andrew's is about developing young people and he really did that for me.

“To be singled out for the highly commended award is a real honour. My word of advice to anyone in hospitality is don't let your nerves hold you back because with hard work, you can achieve anything.”

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