

# James St opens apprenticeship programme to find next kitchen or front-of-house hero

Restaurant group James Street is on the lookout for eight apprentices with the skills and ambition to become the next head chef or front of house manager.

The Belfast company, which is behind James St, Hadski's and cookery school Waterman House, launched its apprenticeship as part of National Apprenticeship Week and is urging candidates aged 16 to 24 to apply.

Successful applicants will be given on-the-job training, experience and mentoring combined with professional learning to NVQ Level 2 in partnership with Belfast Met.

The programme has been running since 2014 and will kick off in September.

Niall McKenna, the founder of James St, said he hopes to uncover the top chefs or front-of-house staff of tomorrow.

"Now is the busiest time for the hospitality industry which is bouncing back and confident in its future and there is strong demand and many great opportunities for young men and women who want a fast-track career backed with the best training and qualifications available," he said. "For those with ambition, a great attitude, creativity and a good sense of humour, we promise best-in-class mentorship, experience and learning in an exciting and friendly environment that delivers a recipe for personal and professional success."

The potential for successful candidates has been shown through

one of James St's past apprentices, Niall said.

"I'm really proud of the talent we've helped to foster over the years as part of our programme including our own Aaron McNeice – now head chef at Hadskis and up and coming trainer at our vibrant cookery school at Waterman House."

Aaron McNeice urged eager candidates to apply.

"This year's programme promises a real menu of success that mixes top notch real-life training, dedicated mentorship and cutting-edge theory that will help to craft an outstanding career in the industry. With a big love of food and a thriving hospitality environment, I've never looked back.

"I'm delighted to be helping to lead this year's new recruits and excited by what this opportunity will bring for a new generation of local young men and women."

Apprentices will also get the chance to work with top chef Ryan Stringer, who has just returned to Belfast to take the lead as Executive chef at James St.

Previously Executive Chef at the ground-breaking ELY group of wine bars and restaurants in Dublin, the Dungannon native returns to Northern Ireland for the first time in over a decade with exciting plans for the celebrated restaurant.