PRET FOUNDATION AND WEST LONDON MISSION TEAM UP TO FIGHT HOMELESSNESS

Wednesday 13 February, 2019

- The Pret Foundation marks a decade of its Rising Stars programme with the opening of The Pret House at WLM St. Luke's – a first for the food industry in the UK
- Ex-homeless will be provided with a home, employment and advice to help them transition to the private rented market.
- WLM has been serving people affected by homelessness and poverty since 1887 running a wide range of services which empower people to live more fulfilling lives.

The Pret Foundation, which was set up by Pret A Manger's founders in 1995, has announced the opening of a new accommodation project for homeless people, in partnership with WLM.

For over 30 years, Pret has been supporting homeless people by giving away unsold food to homeless shelters across the country, with over 3 million items donated each year. Last year marked the 10-year anniversary of the Rising Stars programme, dedicated to providing career opportunities to the ex-homeless. These initiatives are managed by the Pret Foundation, an internationally registered charity set up with the singular goal to break the cycle of homelessness.

The 'Pret House at WLM St. Luke's' takes this one step further through a unique partnership providing accommodation and access to expert advice to help homeless people transition into the private rented market.

The Pret House at WLM St. Luke's is located in London, where there are consistently the highest levels of rough sleeping in the UK. It will accommodate up to 13 people at a time, who will live there for 6-12 months before moving into a privately rented home. The ambition is to help at least 20 ex-homeless off the streets by the end of the year, through this initiative.

WLM is a charity empowering people affected by homelessness, poverty and trauma to make positive changes in their lives. WLM's values are rooted in an inclusive Christian ethos which has proudly supported all people presenting in need for more than 130 years. The modern organisation runs a range of accommodation and community projects across London.

WLM St Luke's, a service provided by WLM with focus on financial resilience and providing accommodation with support where residents will be paying rent monthly at an affordable rate relative to their wages. They will have their own private room and will receive advice from WLM on how to get a bank account, save for a deposit, as well as develop wider literacy and computer skills. They will also join the Rising Stars programme, working in Pret shops nearby**.**

Clive Schlee, CEO of Pret, commented: "*Ever since Pret opened its first shop in London, helping the homeless has been part of our promise to our customers and the communities in which we operate. We set up the Pret Foundation with the singular purpose of breaking the cycle of homelessness, and to do that, we believe that people need three things: food, employment and shelter.*

"The opening of the Pret House at WLM St Luke's is the next evolution in our efforts to help the ex-homeless live their lives independently. It's been a five-year project in the making, and we're hoping it will have a meaningful impact on our Rising Stars and the wider community."

Roger Clark, WLM's interim CEO, said: "*The values and services of WLM are built on the foundation of continual transformation for those we serve since 1887. We are committed to delivery excellence, as we strive to empower others to lead fulfilling lives. We do this through a commitment to transparency, based on the worth of every person whatever challenge they face.*

Launching Pret House at WLM St Luke's is an exciting new partnership between WLM and the Pret Foundation with our shared vision of ending homelessness. We really believe in the positive difference it will make for individuals and the community."

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