

ESS delivers Brand New Dining Concept for the Army

2 years ago



The Defence, Marine and Aerospace sector of ESS, part of Compass Group UK & Ireland, has collaborated with the Army, site clients and the Defence Infrastructure Organisation (DIO) to transform the 'Trax Diner' at Allenby Barracks and the 'Heroes Diner' at Kendrew Barracks. The facilities enhance the lived experience of service personnel by:

- Providing an innovative range of dining options over and above the traditional three meals a day
- Opening for an additional 50+ hours weekly to provide the flexibility needed by today's soldier
- Delivering contemporary restaurant environments that encourage people to get together and socialise over food.

The projects are part of the Army EATS trial which is introducing a more flexible approach to catering at six Army sites with a view to delivering a dining and social experience that is relevant, nutritious and supportive of modern lifestyles.

ESS has used extensive knowledge and consumer insight from its Defence contracts and the wider Compass business, coupled with current high street trends, to develop a diverse food offer that incorporates:

- Nutritionally balanced meals providing great value for money
- Creative and exciting global food concepts
- Cook to order options prepared theatre style
- Hot and cold deli items to eat in or grab and go
- Lighter, healthier choices

- A selection of desserts.

The chefs are using fresh ingredients to prepare dishes that are colourful, appetising and full of flavour. Healthy plant-forward meals are integrated across the menu to cater for a range of tastes and support MOD and Compass' Net Zero targets.

Hot and cold food is available from the diners throughout the day. Digital technology is further increasing customer choice through the introduction of two new brands, Fresh Burger Co. and Pizza Si, for click and collect via the ESS App.

The food court layouts have been designed to support customer flow. Individual serving stations reduce queueing times and extensive digital screen media makes it easy to identify the options available. The seating areas incorporate standard, high level and soft seating, providing light, bright social spaces that encourage service personnel to meet and relax with their colleagues.

WO1 (SSM) C Sinclair, Army HQ Regional Command, commented: "The opening of Kendrew – Heroes Diner was a key milestone for the Army EATS project as it's the last trial site to go live. ESS has done a fantastic job in bringing the high street food court feel to both Bovington and Kendrew Barracks and meeting the intent of the Army EATS project. We are now able to learn from six trial sites, which will help shape the future Defence dining offer and enable the transition to a new service focused on the customer experience."

Lieutenant Colonel Rich McClure, Regional Lead for Central Region, Army Regional Command: "Heroes Diner at Kendrew forms part of the Army's wider vision to modernise the catering services offered to our soldiers. The Army has invested over £6M in revolutionising six sites across the built estate. These Exploring the Appetite of Today's Soldiers (EATS) trial sites will help inform the catering services within the future Soft FM contract. In central region, £1.6M has transformed a disused space in Kendrew Barracks into a modern, welcoming, and sociable dining space. Heroes Diner is a product of the hard work and effort from our Industry Partners and has delivered a tangible benefit to our soldiers."

Bob Gray, Managing Director – ESS Defence, added: "We're proud to be supporting the Army in its vision to deliver a modern catering service that effectively supports its people. We've taken what works best across our business and the wider industry and used it to develop a completely new concept for Allenby Barracks and Kendrew Barracks; one that provides our customers with much greater flexibility around what they can eat in the mess and when they choose to eat it. The environments have been designed as social spaces that can be used by service personnel throughout the day, supporting wellbeing. We're excited to continue working with the Army EATS team and will obtain feedback throughout the trial to help shape the future of foodservice provision for our Armed Forces."