

ESS opens frictionless store at Defence Academy of the United Kingdom

3 years ago



The Defence, Marine & Aerospace sector of ESS, part of Compass Group UK & Ireland, has opened its first fully frictionless store at the Defence Academy of the United Kingdom. The outlet brings the very latest technology being deployed on the high street to the military consumer.

Market @ Churchill will operate under the company's new 'Market @' brand which enables personalisation to individual client premises.

The new store utilises AI-powered computer vision technology which allows customers to purchase items without having to wait in line or stop to scan or pay. Facial recognition or biometrics are not needed, so privacy and security are assured.

Customers tap a contactless card when entering. Once inside, computer vision cameras anonymously track all purchases and add them to a virtual shopping cart. There is no scanning or queuing to pay, and customers just leave with their purchases. A receipt is delivered to their phone moments later.

The store stocks a selection of hot and chilled food to go, Change Please social enterprise coffee and a wide range of drinks and snacks.

Located close to the accommodation, those living on site will have 24/7 access to the facility.

The Defence Academy delivers world-class professional defence and security education to students from the Ministry of Defence, wider government, UK industry and overseas. ESS has provided catering and soft FM services to the establishment for 23 years and recent innovative initiatives include the introduction of an organic garden to grow ingredients and the on-site composting of food waste.

Wg Cdr Gavin Thomas, Station Commander – Defence Academy of the United Kingdom, commented: “Market @ Churchill is a fantastic new facility introduced in collaboration with ESS. The store is open 24/7 and customers can go in, pick what they want and leave without waiting to checkout. This is ideal for our many personnel on academic courses with busy schedules. We’re proud to have access to this cutting-edge technology which isn’t yet available on most high streets or elsewhere within the MOD. In our partnership with ESS, we work together and learn together and, in doing so, add to the richness of the Academy for those working and living here.”

Bob Gray, Managing Director – ESS Defence, Marine & Aerospace, added: “We are delighted to have opened the first frictionless store on our Defence estate at the Defence Academy, providing our customers with access to a specially selected range of food and drinks 24/7. High street technology is moving at pace and it’s essential that we reflect these innovations in the services we provide to military personnel. We are thrilled to be able to match the Academy’s commitment to technology and will continue to seek out new ways of working that enhance the lived experience for our customers.”