

ESS works with client to enhance the lived experience at MOD Lyneham

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[ESS Defence](#), specialist provider of foodservice and facilities management to military establishments across the UK, has worked with MOD Lyneham and the Defence Infrastructure Organisation (DIO) to redesign and develop the Junior Ranks Bar on site.

Defence establishments provide a 'home from home' living environment and it's important that their catering, retail and leisure facilities mirror those available on the high street, providing social hubs where people can meet and socialise with friends and colleagues.

Previously the bar at Lyneham was underutilised and ESS has worked with the client to deliver an enhanced space that will appeal to the customers on site.

ESS worked with its longstanding design partner, an expert in developing modern foodservice and leisure facilities, to create a contemporary social venue with different zones to meet a variety of requirements. The Chalk Horse, named after the numerous white horses carved into hillsides in the nearby Wiltshire countryside, combines a main bar with a separate café and games room.

Modern décor, furniture and artwork are incorporated to provide an attractive hybrid facility where service personnel will want to spend their leisure time.

The main bar includes booth seating, sofas, high level seating and tables and chairs, providing a versatile space that can be used throughout the day and into the evening. A large screen and additional screens enable customers to watch music or sporting events. A specially selected drinks range is served, including a wide variety of non-alcoholic options to cater for different tastes.

'The Snug' provides a welcoming café environment with comfortable seating. There is an extensive drinks range, including cold drinks, smoothies and Change Please coffee which gives people experiencing homelessness housing, training and support into employment. The food offer includes freshly made sandwiches, paninis, toasties and pizzas, as well as sweet treats. Hot drinks and food from The Snug can be ordered for consumption in the main bar.

The games room houses a pool table, table football, dartboard and television, providing further opportunities for service personnel to relax and enjoy themselves.

The Chalk Horse is open from late morning through to the evening, meaning it can be used in different ways, from socialising with friends and colleagues to working alone or holding informal meetings.

The venue has proven popular with the site population since it opened, with sales increasing by over 55% year on year.

The enabling works were undertaken in collaboration with VIVO Defence Services, which delivers the hard FM contract on the MOD's Built Estate in the region.

Col Tim Gillies MBE, Head of Establishment at MOD Lyneham, commented: "The grand opening of the newly refurbished and rebranded Chalk Horse marks an exciting milestone for MOD Lyneham. This establishment has been transformed into a vibrant social hub, created through collaborative efforts and funding. Its welcoming atmosphere provides a cheerful and friendly space for people to relax and connect with others. This venue has been warmly received by all across the establishment, offering a new destination for socialising and unwinding."

Bob Gray, Managing Director – ESS Defence, Marine & Aerospace, added: "We were delighted to work with our military and DIO partners at MOD Lyneham to transform the Junior Ranks Bar into a modern social space. We listened carefully and the Chalk Horse now provides a great environment and offers to meet a range of customer needs. Most importantly, it offers service personnel an attractive place to meet and socialise to combat the risk of social isolation."