

BM launches café with Luminary Bakery to empower London's most disadvantaged women

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BM Caterers has launched a new café and bakery in partnership with law firm **Hogan Lovells** and social enterprise **Luminary Bakery** to empower women who have experienced homelessness, domestic abuse, violence, or sexual exploitation.

The café, at 49 Farringdon Street, overseen by BM's experienced managers as well as five newly recruited hospitality professionals, all of whom will support Luminary's programme, helping to enhance future employability with BM's in-house barista skills training.

Open to the public, the café serves BM's Fairtrade range of Perkee coffee, sourced from the Soppexcca cooperative in Nicaragua, which supports local community education, infrastructure and sustainability initiatives. Meanwhile, food on offer includes a range of Luminary cakes and cookies, alongside BM's signature muffins, toasties, granola, croissants, focaccia sandwiches and seasonal salads.

Dishes also include The Supernova sandwich, with 'Brett Graham' English Iberico pork sausage in a muffin with egg, brown sauce and Cheddar; and a shredded Cumbrian chicken focaccia with sesame chilli crunch, mayonnaise, pickled vegetables and shredded iceberg.

Other menu items include roasted beetroot salad with rhubarb, feta, sesame and caraway sprinkle; and mozzarella and avocado salad with crushed olives, sourdough croutes, rocket and truffle honey.

The venue will also house a training academy, which will host a monthly coffee skills day for up to six of the women at Luminary's Charity. As part of this, they will receive BM's in-house Perkee foundation

intermediate barista qualification, as well as develop their milk and grinder knowledge and brewing techniques.

Luminary empowers women who have faced gender-based violence and disadvantage, providing training, employment and community support. Using baking as a practical, creative, and therapeutic tool, Luminary takes women on a journey toward employability and entrepreneurship.

Over the last decade, its award-winning programme has helped over 200 women rebuild their lives, equipping them with transferable skills that open doors to the professional world. The impact extends beyond the women themselves – creating a trickle-down effect that benefits their families, children, and communities, breaking cycles of disadvantage and inspiring future generations.

From hands-on baking courses, to work experience in existing Luminary Bakery cafés in Camden and Stoke Newington, as well as paid employment within the bakery, Luminary is designed to holistically support women towards independence, including through an employability support programme which offers training, mentoring and trauma-informed guidance.

BM's partnership with Luminary Bakery, launched in 2024, has already created new opportunities for women in hospitality. By offering work placements and selling Luminary's pastries at client sites, BM has helped the bakery expand its team and increase its social impact.

Hogan Lovells is supporting the venture by offering the space rent free at its Atlantic House London office, along with providing some infrastructural support with the ongoing management of the facility.

BM MD Angus Brydon, said: "As a progressive and responsible business, it is hugely important for us to work with partners whose values are aligned to ours to deliver products and services that have a positive impact on the communities in which we operate. The mission behind Nova is to offer some of London's most vulnerable women with the opportunity to build their confidence and skills in order to create a sustainable and successful future for themselves."

"This café is more than just a place to grab a coffee; it's a space of transformation," said Leila Siassi, managing director of Luminary Bakery. "Through this partnership, we are creating real opportunities for women to rebuild their confidence and gain skills that will help them thrive in the workplace. Every purchase made here is an investment in a woman's future."

Yasmin Waljee, international pro bono partner at Hogan Lovells, said: "Nova represents our commitment to social responsibility and community empowerment. By collaborating with Luminary Bakery and Perkee Coffee, we are not only providing high-quality products but also creating opportunities for women who have faced significant challenges.

"It aligns with our belief in social enterprise as a means of driving sustainable and meaningful change and the work of our impact economy practice, HL BaSE, to support social entrepreneurs. We are pleased to support Luminary Bakery in its life-changing training programmes that help women build brighter futures."

David Crew, global operations director at Hogan Lovells, added: "Nova is a fantastic example of collaboration in action. By working closely with our contract caterers, BM Caterers, we have been able to utilise our vacant shop front and their catering expertise to create a social enterprise that delivers real impact. Through this initiative, we are proud to support women who have experienced social

disadvantage, providing them with valuable skills and opportunities for the future.”