



## **UK's first gluten-free accreditation scheme for catering gains support of major household names**

Harrods department store, the Royal Shakespeare Company and La Tasca are the latest organisations in the UK to gain full gluten-free (GF) accreditation from Coeliac UK, the national Charity for people with coeliac disease.

They follow hot on the heels of other high street names such as PizzaExpress and Domino's, who have taken on the accreditation in the last few months since it was launched last year.

For the first time Harrods will be offering gluten-free afternoon tea in their Georgian Restaurant and plan to roll out further gluten-free offerings throughout the store. Following in-house training by Coeliac UK, the Royal Shakespeare Company in Stratford-upon-Avon now offer visitors an extensive range of gluten-free dishes including sandwiches, hot food and soups. La Tasca have introduced a new gluten-free menu including gluten-free desserts and a gluten-free bread to accompany tapas and all batter used throughout the restaurants will now be gluten-free.

Pizza Hut and ASK Italian have also gained Coeliac UK's no gluten-containing ingredients (NGCI) accreditation.

Coeliac UK is widely recognised as the expert body on the gluten-free diet and has been working alongside the catering industry for many years to encourage food service outlets to meet the needs of the growing number of people requiring a gluten-free meal. The accreditation scheme is one of a range of services offered by the Charity to highlight excellence in gluten-free catering as part of their continuing commitment to improving access to gluten-free food out of the home.

1 in 100 people in the UK have coeliac disease, an autoimmune disease caused by intolerance to gluten which is found in wheat, barley and rye. Damage to the lining of the gut occurs when gluten is eaten. There is no cure or medication for the condition and the only treatment is a strict gluten-free diet for life.

Research by the Charity identified a UK market worth at least £100 million from people with coeliac disease and the friends and family they eat with.

The decision on where to eat is made on the individual with the condition, catering for their diet will secure a loyal customer base who want to eat out but don't currently feel safe to do so. The Charity's accreditation scheme addresses this lack of consumer confidence and has already had a positive impact on businesses. The accreditation scheme is the first of its kind in the UK and is open to all organisations with a food service operation from hospitals, prisons, schools and universities to restaurants, cafes, pubs and hotels. Since its launch a year ago, more than 1800 establishments have been awarded accreditation from Coeliac UK and the 60,000 Members represented by the Charity have proved a lucrative customer base.

Alongside the accreditation scheme, Coeliac UK offers online and face-to-face training to help those in kitchen and front of house roles understand how they can deliver safe gluten-free dishes as well as consultancy to advise on all aspects of gluten-free provision. High profile attendees include the Berkeley Hotel, London, University of Leicester and the Royal Shakespeare Company.

Sarah Sleet, Chief Executive of Coeliac UK said: "We're delighted that our services are opening the door to the gluten-free consumer and at the same time addressing the top concern of people with coeliac disease – finding safe food outside of their home."

For details about Coeliac UK's accreditation scheme and list of organisations currently accredited please see: [www.coeliac.org.uk/accreditation](http://www.coeliac.org.uk/accreditation) and for more information about Coeliac UK's services for the catering industry please see: [www.coeliac.org.uk/cateringservices](http://www.coeliac.org.uk/cateringservices)

Further information on the three organisations who have gained accreditation can be found at: @HarrodsFood, [www.rsc-rooftop-restaurant.co.uk](http://www.rsc-rooftop-restaurant.co.uk) and [www.latasca.com](http://www.latasca.com)

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#### **Note to editors**

- Coeliac UK's GF (gluten-free) accreditation is granted to venues confident that their gluten-free offerings contain 20ppm or less gluten and successfully pass an external audit.
- Other caterers, who remain committed to providing for people with coeliac disease and can demonstrate their knowledge and experience in this field but do not wish to make claims over gluten levels can opt for Coeliac UK's NGCI (no gluten-containing ingredients) accreditation.
- These two packages both include accredited symbols for use on literature, menus, website and window stickers helping to communicate their efforts to gluten-free consumers.
- Coeliac disease is a serious illness where the body's immune system reacts to gluten found in food, making the body attack itself.
- A wide range of case studies of men, women and children are available on request from Coeliac UK.
- Members of Coeliac UK receive an annual Food and Drink Directory, which lists over 10,000 foods people with coeliac disease, can eat.
- Gluten is a protein found in wheat (including spelt), rye and barley. Some people are also sensitive to oats. Obvious sources of gluten include breads, pastas, flours, cereals, cakes and biscuits. It is often used as an ingredient in many favourite foods such as fish fingers, sausages, gravies, sauces and soy sauce.