

# Iceland

## ICELAND FOODS APPOINTS FIRST DIRECTOR OF REHABILITATION

- Paul Cowley MBE will spearhead a drive by the retailer to recruit more ex-offenders to work in Iceland Foods stores and warehouses.
- Already in the role, Paul Cowley has begun conducting interviews with men and women at HMP Styal and HMP Onley for potential roles, with many other prisons eager to be involved.
- In England and Wales, gaining meaningful employment following release from prison can cut rates of re-offending by 50% according to the Ministry of Justice.

**7th September 2022:** In line with its 'doing it right' philosophy, Iceland Foods, has kick-started a drive to support prisoners to secure employment when released, thus challenging soaring rates of re-offending. As the retailers first Director of Rehabilitation, Paul Cowley, will work out of the Iceland Foods Charitable Foundation, recruiting ex-offenders to work in Iceland's stores and warehouses.

Paul as a young man spent time in HMP Risley; he then went on to have a 17 year career in the British Army. On leaving, he became a personal trainer, managing prestigious health clubs in London. He then changed career to become a priest in the Church of England and in 2005 founded the charity Caring for Exoffenders which has helped over 2,000 men and women re-integrate into society and for which he was awarded an MBE in 2016.

With recruitment already underway, Paul has been interviewing men and women at HMP Styal and HMP Onley and plans to continue seeking recruits for roles with Iceland.

The recruitment scheme will be working in tandem with the Prison Employment Lead – a person employed by the government in every prison to develop connections between prisoners and businesses.

**Paul Cowley, Director of Rehabilitation at Iceland Foods said:** "Most people in our prison system are poorly educated and have a bad or non-existent employment record. This is not always their fault and the cumulative effect upon the families, dependents and their mental health can be life threatening. This initiative by Iceland Foods will present a prison leaver not only with the hope of a job, but the hope of a new life. I'm excited to be working with an innovative team who care about the marginalised and have the practical means to tap into the locked-up potential in our prisons."

According to data from the Ministry of Justice, two-thirds of prisoners have not been in employment or training prior to imprisonment and almost three-quarters have no paid employment upon release. Meanwhile, regular paid employment is one of the main factors in reducing reoffending. The cost of reoffending on society is estimated at around £18 billion per year.

**Richard Walker, Managing Director of Iceland Foods said:** "I'm thrilled to welcome Paul on board as Director of Rehabilitation to help us continue our 'doing it right' efforts. Helping give former prisoners meaningful employment is not only helpful to our business but will pass on wider societal benefits that have been proven time and again."

**Ends**

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## **ABOUT ICELAND**

Iceland is recognised as the UK's leader in frozen food and operates nearly 1,000 stores across the country, together with a multi-award-winning online shopping service. It represents 2.5% of the UK grocery market. It prides itself on being a convenient and friendly place to do the family's weekly shop, as well as meet everyone's daily top-up shopping needs for fresh, chilled, frozen food and groceries. For more than 20 years Iceland has also offered a unique, free home delivery service for in-store purchases.

Iceland has won multiple awards for the quality of its food and service. Recent honours including being named Best Online Retailer and Best Frozen Food Retailer at the Retail Industry Awards 2018, Community Retailer of the Year at the Retail Week Awards 2018, Online Retailer of the Year at the IGD Awards 2017, and Online Supermarket of the Year at the Grocer Gold Awards 2017. Iceland's online shopping service was also named the UK's best in the 2016, 2017 and 2018 Which? supermarket surveys. Iceland has ranked as one of the UK's Best Big Companies to Work For in each of the last 12 years and was number one in both 2012 and 2014. Iceland was also named best UK supermarket for customer service in the 2018 and 2019 UK Customer Satisfaction Index.

Since 1970, Iceland has been proudly demonstrating to shoppers just how the Power of Frozen can deliver an extensive choice of high quality, great-tasting food from fine sources around the world at great value prices, while naturally generating low levels of food waste.

Always committed to doing the right thing for customers, communities and the environment, Iceland was a pioneer in removing artificial colours, flavours and nonessential preservatives from its own label food in the 1980s, and in banning genetically modified ingredients in the 1990s. In 2018 it committed to becoming the first major retailer, globally, to eliminate plastic packaging from all of its own label

## **ABOUT ICELAND FOODS CHARITABLE FOUNDATION (IFCF)**

The IFCF has donated well over £30m to good causes in the UK. Since 2010 it has focused principally on fundraising for dementia research, donating £10m to UCL Dementia Research to help fund construction of the London hub of the new UK Dementia Research Institute, more than £5m to Alzheimer's Research UK, and over £1.5m to the Alzheimer's Society and Alzheimer Scotland. Other major donations have included £3 million to Alder Hey Children's Hospital, over £1.5 million to Help For Heroes, and more than £1m to Prostate Cancer UK.