

# PRESS RELEASE

## Everton chef wins mentor award

25 July 2018

**The executive chef at Everton Football Club has been awarded for bringing young people into the hospitality industry.**

Gareth Billington, who works for Sodexo Sports & Leisure, won the Best School Chef Mentor award at the Hospitality and Catering Expo, held at Celtic Manor.

Gareth heads up a 40-strong Sodexo team of chefs providing match day and non-match day event catering at Everton, in addition to supporting Sodexo's major events portfolio at RHS Chelsea Flower Show, Royal Ascot and The Open.

Gareth is focused on addressing gender balance among chefs, bringing young female chefs into the industry. Of all the young people mentored by Gareth, 80 per cent have been women and as a result there are currently 14 female chefs working at Everton.

For 10 years, Gareth has been an ambassador for the Springboard charity, mentoring three winners of FutureChef – a national competition to find the best chef in the UK aged 12 to 16.

Before going on to win FutureChef, Kerry Johanssen (2010), Ann Carmichael (2014) and Bethan Disley-Jones (2016) all did work experience at Goodison Park while being mentored by Gareth.

Gareth arranges open evenings for local young people, students, parents and teachers, which include demonstrations and information on how to get into the industry whether through apprenticeships or catering college courses.

**Chris Bray CEO for Sodexo sports and leisure, UK and Ireland said of Gareth:** *“Over the years Gareth has taken the time to help a number of young chefs develop their careers and is particularly skilled at spotting potential both within his own team and those he supports from local schools and colleges.*

*“He is a great asset to Sodexo and the hospitality industry as a whole and we are extremely proud of his achievements.”*

**Ends**