



Press Release

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**COELIAC UK TO HOST FIRST GLUTEN-FREE NETWORKING EVENT
FOR CATERERS, RETAILERS, FOOD SERVICE AND MANUFACTURERS**

Coeliac UK, the national charity for people with coeliac disease is hosting its first gluten-free networking event for food industry professionals from catering, food service, retail and manufacturing industries who wish to benefit from the growing gluten-free market.

Coeliac UK is the expert body on the gluten-free diet, providing independent and evidence based information and support to those with the condition and the sectors that cater for them since 1968.

The daylong event is being held on Tuesday 14 June at the British Motor Museum, itself the first conference venue to gain gluten-free accreditation from Coeliac UK for its catering, and will allow delegates to not only hear from industry specialists during an afternoon of interactive workshops, but also gain valuable insights from those organisations who already provide gluten-free.

Speakers include the Food Standards Agency, Mintel, Horizons, RSSL, British Motor Museum, Pizza Express, Hard Rock Café, Marks & Spencer, Unilever, Bells of Lazonby and Nestlé. In addition, experts from Coeliac UK will provide updates for the industry and details on the gluten-free consultation services and accreditation schemes provided by the charity, which has a unique insight into the needs of those following a gluten-free diet.

One in 100 people in the UK has coeliac disease, an autoimmune disease caused by a reaction to gluten which is a protein found in wheat, barley and rye. It is estimated that the catering industry is missing out on £100 million a year from people with coeliac disease and requiring a gluten-free diet and those they eat out with. According to Mintel, the UK Free From market is currently valued at £365million and forecast to grow by 50% by 2019 and the gluten-free market is worth an estimated £210million.

Sarah Sleet, chief executive of Coeliac UK who is chairing the morning panel discussion said: "The aim of the event is to allow manufacturers, retailers and the catering sector to gain essential insight from those companies that have already embraced a gluten-free offering and also facilitate opportunities for them to work together to help improve consumer experiences."

“With half a million people in the UK still to be diagnosed with coeliac disease and many people choosing a gluten-free lifestyle, the demand for new products across the retail sector and catering establishments where people can enjoy a wide range of gluten-free menu options will only increase and we hope that this event will encourage debate and valuable information for all sectors.”

Places are limited, to see the agenda and to book online go to:

<https://www.coeliac.org.uk/forms/staying-ahead-of-the-game/>

Delegate day rate is £99 + VAT and includes all refreshments, parking and entry into the museum.

Notes to editor

- Coeliac disease is a serious illness where the body's immune system reacts to gluten found in food, making the body attack itself.
- 1 in 100 people in the UK has coeliac disease.
- Average time to diagnosis is 13 years.
- 1 in 4 people diagnosed with coeliac disease had previously been diagnosed with IBS.
- 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.
- Coeliac UK has a Helpline on 0333 332 2033 and further information can be found at www.coeliac.org.uk