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Top chef takes fine dining to the streets for the homeless

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TOP chef Dave Coulson took a night off from cooking for paying customers to feed the homeless.

The MasterChef: The Professionals finalist cooked a meal for 100 homeless people alongside volunteers in Newcastle city centre.

Dave, whose Jesmond restaurant *Peace and Loaf* has now been open for 13 months, helped out volunteers at the People's Kitchen, in Newcastle city centre on Monday night.

Dave, from Wingate, County Durham, said the sudden drop in temperatures over the last week made him realise how hard winter must be for homeless people.

He said: "It's freezing cold outside and I think homeless people need help more than ever at this time of year."

"I think chefs have a hard time at Christmas, but at least we have a bed and lots of food!"

"I think because I'm a chef, maybe the idea of people being hungry gets to me."

"It was just something I wanted to do."

Dave, who now lives round the corner from his Jesmond restaurant with his two cats, Bergerac and Tuxedo, said people must do more to help homeless people over the Christmas period.

He said: "I think people could always do more to help."

"I know what it's like to work long hours, but if you can fit it in, then the homeless in Newcastle do need help."

"I am honoured to be doing this and welcome the opportunity to help the charity and the people they support in any way I can."

"I hope that my experience will be of benefit to them all over Christmas and in the future."

Dave, along with volunteers from the charity, which feeds around 100 people a night in their Bath Lane centre, cooked up a feast to serve out on the streets of Newcastle.

Dave said: "Tonight I'm making a vegetable soup and some spicy chicken casserole."

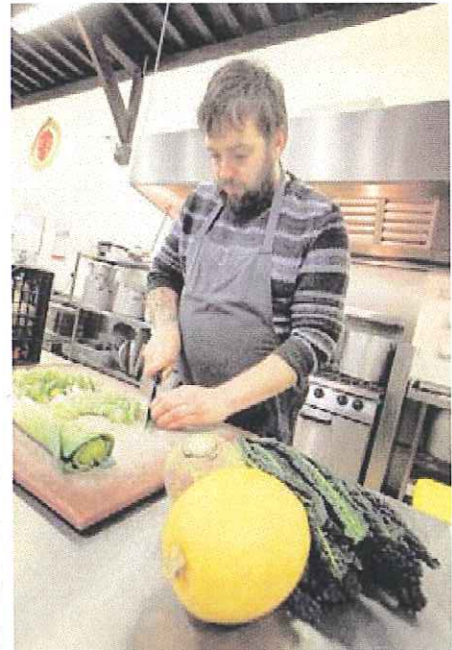
"I brought some bits with me, and I'll just be using whatever they've got here too."

"These dishes are all very filling and warming, so we're going to cook it up and then cart it all over to Old Trafalgar Street and serve it all from a van."

Dave, who has been working tirelessly since appearing on Masterchef in 2010, has ambitions to open a burger restaurant, a bakery and a butchers across the region.

He said: "I think it can all be done in the North East. I just want to keep going and keep opening new places."

"I was a chef for 15 years before I had my own place, so it's great to have my own restaurant now."



■ Chef Dave Coulson of *Peace and Loaf*



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■ Dave Coulson prepares food for the night with People's Kitchen team leader George Rennison