

Acorn winners 2017: Doug Sanham

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Head chef, the Beacon, Tunbridge Wells, Kent (I'll Be Mother group)

Nominated by Pete Cornwell, founder, I'll Be Mother group

Proudest moment "It was being made head chef of the Beacon, only recently."

Greatest inspiration "It has come from the experience of doing this job, and the passion I've gained from working with people who want to constantly push themselves. It's a tough gig and we push each other on."

Ambition "I would like to continue to gain experience in my role as head chef, as well as communicate that the subject of mental health is something that is not to be feared."

Doug Sanham is a determinedly ambitious chef with a strong work ethic and inquisitive mind. A sous chef by the age of 25, he was recently made head chef of the Beacon, part of the I'll Be Mother group of restaurants in Kent.

Sanham manages a team of 10 and is responsible for a food turnover of £800,000. He consistently achieves a GP in excess of 75%.

Having grown up in Canterbury, Sanham first worked at the Duke of Cumberland in Barham before moving to the Lingfield Park Marriott. He worked at both the Felbridge in East Grinstead and the Abode Canterbury prior to joining the Chapel Down vineyard in Tenterden, where he first worked for the I'll Be Mother group in its Swan restaurant there. He spent a period at the Loddon Swan in Norfolk before returning to I'll Be Mother at the beautifully positioned Beacon in Tunbridge Wells.

Sanham was a 2017 Acorn Scholarship finalist, finishing in the top four, and has continued to push on with his scholarship presentation, exploring opportunities to introduce legislation to support sufferers of mental health in the workplace. He finds time to work on this initiative with Andrew Clarke of Brunswick House in London and mental health charity Time to Change. He hopes to form a working party of industry players so that mental health champions are one day as common at work as first aiders and fire marshals.

