

# New Diplomas in the limelight

With the Diploma in Hospitality firmly embedded, the long-awaited Diploma in Travel and Tourism makes its debut in September. **Oksana Higglesden** reports

The past few months have seen a flurry of activity with the official launch of the new Diploma in Travel and Tourism in March, followed by the showcase event for the Diploma in Hospitality in May.

Both events demonstrated the unreserved support for the new 14-19 qualifications from employers and practitioners who have had a significant input into their development. They clearly believe that they will meet the needs for employable young people in the future.

The new Diploma in Travel and Tourism – heralded by senior industry players as a breakthrough in preparing young people for a potential career in travel and tourism – was unveiled by People 1st and GoSkills on the centre stage at the Best of Britain and Ireland (BOBI) exhibition.

Speaking at the launch event, ABTA chair, John McEwan, said that he was delighted by the response from employers to the Diploma. “There has been an unprecedented level of employer engagement and a great deal of resources and effort invested. For the first time, we have seen real evidence of collaboration within the industry with the Diploma bringing together a wider range of industries.”

His thoughts were echoed by Brian Wisdom, chief executive of People 1st, who confirmed that continued employer engagement is critical to the success of the Diploma. He called for businesses to support schools and colleges in their community by providing high quality work experience, masterclasses and other work-related activities to motivate and inspire students as well as offering mentoring, shadowing and professional development opportunities to practitioners. “It is critical for employers to engage students through quality



Michael Gray opened the Hospitality Diploma Showcase event

services, passenger transport, visitor attractions, conferences and events and accommodation services. Students will be able to pick more specialised learning modules such as sustainable tourism development, customer service, business travel, flight operations, transport planning and the cruise market.

Opening the Hospitality Diploma Showcase event, Michael Gray, general manager of The Regency Hyatt - The Churchill confirmed employers' support for the new qualification. “The new Diploma in Hospitality is one of the best things to have happened to the hospitality industry for a long time.” Speaking to over 60 practitioners and others involved in the delivery of the Diploma, Michael urged them to pick up the phone and engage with him and other employers. “The Diploma is what we employers want and we really do support this. We love the industry and want to share our passion with you. We are here to help you educate our future generation and will talk and inspire.”

The event enabled delegates to share their own personal experiences of delivering the Diploma with others and make contact with prospective new partners. “We felt that as we approach the end of the first year of teaching, it was an opportune time to take stock of how the Hospitality Diploma has fared and get all those involved to share their experiences and successes,” said Heather Taylor, Hospitality Diploma manager.

“Since teaching of the new qualification for 14-19 year olds began throughout England in September 2009, the Diploma has gone from strength to strength with more than 150 consortia currently delivering the qualification and a further 60 committed to begin teaching from 2010-2011,” she added.

Speaking as tutors, Jackie Lowe and Jaqui Smith from South Downs College in Hampshire, said that the Hospitality Diploma encouraged their students to think in a different way and become effective teamworkers. They provided tangible and inspiring examples of how their students had put their work-related learning into practice. This included an ‘Apprentice’ style challenge which involved collectively running their own hospitality business with specific roles such as procuring, making and selling food on the school premises assigned to each student.

So as the Diploma in Hospitality edges towards its first year of teaching, it can start the next academic year on a positive footing. ●

**“I WOULD ENCOURAGE EMPLOYERS WHO PROVIDE WORK PLACEMENTS FOR DIPLOMA STUDENTS TO GIVE THEM AN INSPIRING EXPERIENCE”**

placements. I would encourage employers who provide work placements for Diploma students to give them an inspiring experience.”

The new Diploma spans a wide range of sectors covering travel and tourism

SUSANNAH FIELDS