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Department for  
**Employment  
and Learning**  
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# Future Skills Action Plan for Hospitality and Tourism

5 November 2009



Northern Ireland  
Tourist Board

people1st

## **HOSPITALITY AND TOURISM FUTURE SKILLS ACTION PLAN**

### Background

The Hospitality and Tourism industry has been identified as an area of particular economic significance for Northern Ireland by the Department for Employment and Learning, yet it regularly faces challenges in relation to skills gaps and shortages. As a result, the Department has established a Future Skills Action Group to bring together key stakeholders to help address the many skills issues facing the sector.

The FSAG is made up of representatives from:

- The Department for Employment and Learning;
- The Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment;
- Invest Northern Ireland;
- The Further and Higher Education sectors;
- Employers from the industry;
- People 1<sup>st</sup> (the Sector Skills Council for Hospitality, Leisure, Travel and Tourism);
- The Northern Ireland Hotels Federation; and
- The Northern Ireland Tourist Board.

The work of the Future Skills Action Group will cover three main areas:

- To coordinate existing resources and activities within the sector to meet current and future skills needs;
- To advise, design, develop, test, trial and evaluate new interventions which are able to meet existing and future skills needs within the sector; and
- To act as a 'Champion' for the sector.

## Purpose

The Group is tasked with three broad objectives:

- To seek to increase the economic return from the Hospitality and Tourism sector;
- To promote the importance of the Hospitality and Tourism sector to Northern Ireland and the career opportunities that exist; and
- To coordinate communications and other activities within the sector.

The Group has drawn up a short term, action focused plan to enable it to meet the above objectives. The scope of this plan is to identify additional actions which will complement the work currently being taken forward aimed at meeting the challenges that exist.

Implementation of the plan will be led by a Project Team made up of representatives from the Department for Employment and Learning, People 1<sup>st</sup>, the Northern Ireland Tourist Board, the Learning and Skills Development Agency and the Chair of the Future Skills Action Group.

The Project Team will meet as required, although no less than quarterly and detailed updates will be provided to the Future Skills Action Group on a regular basis.

The partnership approach which has been taken clearly relies not only on the commitment of those involved in the Hospitality and Tourism Future Skills Action Group and the Project Team, but also industry itself. Without active support from the sector, real change cannot be delivered.

## Structure

The plan is structured around three thematic areas:

1. Skills provision;
2. Sector attractiveness; and
3. Coordination and communication.

Under each thematic area, key issues and associated actions are outlined and accompanied by specific targets.

## **Theme 1 – Skills provision**

Current Issue: A need to improve the management and leadership skills of the Hospitality and Tourism sector.

### Actions:

- The Group are committed to the development and delivery of a Hospitality Educators Programme across the Further Education and training provider network in order to improve the skills of those in senior positions in the sector. This will be the responsibility of People 1<sup>st</sup> and should be in place by the end of June 2010. Phase 1 will see 15 people taking part.
- There will be a drive to encourage more businesses from the Hospitality and Tourism sector to use the Department for Employment and Learning's Management and Leadership provision to improve the skills of their staff. The Department will take the lead in this action.

Current Issue: A need to increase the number of chefs coming into the industry

### Actions:

- It is intended to develop and pilot a fast track conversion programme which will enable suitable applicants to complete the Professional Cookery Diploma at Level 2 over six months with an additional three month placement. This will supply suitably qualified chefs into professional kitchens within a shorter timeframe. This work will be taken forward by the Southern Regional College and Belfast Metropolitan College.
- The Junior Chefs' Academy will be extended, thereby offering even more young people the chance to discover a passion for cooking which will increase the likelihood of them considering it as a career. Responsibility

for the Academy falls to People 1<sup>st</sup> and will be funded by the Department for Employment and Learning in 2009/2010.

- Following the success of the Professional Cookery Diploma at Belfast Metropolitan College, the Group will support the rollout of the Professional Cookery Diploma, at Levels 1 and 2, across at least three Further Education colleges in September 2009. They will get a commitment from the other three colleges for future delivery of this course. The Learning and Skills Development Agency (NI) will take the lead responsibility for this.
- The Department for Employment and Learning will continue to encourage employers in the sector to use the Apprenticeship programme to upskill their staff.

Current Issue: A need to increase the number of people in the workforce with customer service qualifications.

Actions:

- The Southern Regional College and Belfast Metropolitan College will develop and run sector specific customer services qualifications aimed at those people already in the industry.
- The Department for Employment and Learning will work with one employer in the sector to ascertain their skills needs and put in place a solution for a minimum of 10 employees. This will be used as a pilot for the Department's envisaged Skills Solutions project which will be available in 2009 subject to receiving the necessary approvals.

## **Theme 2 – Sector Attractiveness**

Current Issue: A need to encourage more people into the sector.

### Actions:

- To work with the Northern Ireland Careers Service and encourage utilisation of the UK Skills Passport as a source of information on skills and qualification requirements and opportunities available within the sector. Responsibility for this will fall to People 1<sup>st</sup>.
- To develop a Tourism Awareness Programme as an educational resource for teachers to use in schools. This will be linked in with the curriculum and will aim to improve the employment status of the tourism industry. People 1<sup>st</sup> will be taking the lead with this.
- To develop an Ambassadors Programme to put in place a network of ambassadors from the industry who will participate in promotional activities and careers events and enhance the appeal of tourism as a provider of good quality employment in Northern Ireland. People 1<sup>st</sup> will be responsible for this.

### **Theme 3 – Coordination and Communication**

Current Issue: A need to coordinate new and existing work with that being taken forward by others and communicate actions to stakeholders.

Actions:

- To utilise the UK Skills Passport to produce a skills and communication system which will enable employers, employees and new entrants to access skills, qualifications and the funding support they need. People 1<sup>st</sup> will take the lead on this.
- To increase knowledge of the Future Skills Action Group for Hospitality and Tourism and its Action Plan within the sector and to encourage support from employers. The Department for Employment and Learning will be responsible for this.
- To work within the existing structure of the Workforce Development Forums to raise the profile of the Hospitality and Tourism sector at regional level. The Northern Ireland Tourist Board is responsible for this.
- To increase the links between industry and Further Education through a pilot of the Industry into Education programme. This will be led by Learning and Skills Development Agency (NI).

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