

**Sector Skills Agreement for the hospitality, leisure,
travel and tourism sector in Northern Ireland**

Stage five

**Securing agreement from employers and
partners to take forward the Sector Skills
Agreement**

September 2008

Acknowledgements

People1st would like to thank the employers and key partners who have given up their time to contribute and support the Sector Skills Agreement for the hospitality, leisure, travel and tourism sector in Northern Ireland and Project Spinnaker.

Introduction

This document reports on the progress to put in place and take forward a Sector Skills Agreement for the hospitality, leisure, travel and tourism sector.

The document marks the culmination of stage five of the Sector Skills Agreement for the hospitality, leisure, travel and tourism sector in Northern Ireland. The Agreement aims to ensure the sector has the skills it requires now and in the future by putting in place effective learning solutions that meet the specific needs of the sector.

The document supports the National Skills Strategy Action Plan (see annex A) that sets out the specific actions and targets that have been agreed to meet the skills and employment needs of the sector. It provides a background as to how the SSA was developed and the specific actions agreed between People1st and employers and key partners,

The Sector Skills Agreement is underpinned by the largest skills and labour market research undertaken across the sector over the past 20 years. In the course of the research People1st has spoken to over 400 employers in Northern Ireland through telephone consultations, working groups and one-to-one interviews. Research has also been conducted with learning providers, students and partners.

Separate stage five reports have been produced for Scotland, Wales and England. All regional and national reports from stages one to three are available free to download at www.people1st.co.uk/research

The current National Skills Strategy Action Plan and supporting documents are available to download at www.people1st.co.uk

How the document is presented

The document is presented in two sections:

Section one provides an overview of how People1st undertook stages one, two and three

Section two outlines the findings from stage one to identify the current and future skills and employment needs

Section three outlines the findings from stage two to identify and assess the effectiveness of the sector's education and learning supply

Section four presents the summary of the assessment undertaken in stage three as to whether the sector's education and learning supply meets the needs of the sector

Section five describes how stages four and five were taken forward and introduces Project Spinnaker and its employer steering group.

Section six outlines how Project Spinnaker has been taken forward and monitored.

Annexes

- A Spinnaker Report –Executive Summary
- B People1st Business Plan for Northern Ireland 2008/09

1. Undertaking stages one, two and three of the Sector Skills Agreement

Introduction

This short section outlines how People1st has approached securing agreement with key partners and employers. It specifically outlines the process to produce a National Skills Strategy for the sector.

Stage one

Stage one was undertaken as a stand alone project, away from the wider Sector Skills Agreement. It was conducted between 1 April and 14 October 2005 and included the following elements:

- Desk research
- Analysis of economic forecasts
- Recruitment and retention survey
- Development of future scenarios
- Industry working groups
- Geographic working groups

Each of the key stages are explained in turn below, with discussion centring on particular technical aspects at each stage.

Desk research

A thorough analysis of desk research was conducted by the People1st research team to identify and analyse existing data and research findings. The desk research process concentrated on the following areas:

Analysis of existing surveys

Data for the sector, industries and core occupations was extracted from the following surveys:

- Labour Force Survey (UK wide household survey)
- Annual Business Inquiry (Establishment level survey)
- Northern Ireland Skills Monitoring Survey
- Skills for Business Evaluation Survey (UK)

Identification of industry-specific research

Across the UK approximately 30 industry bodies and trade associations were contacted to ensure all industry specific research conducted was taken into account. While most organisations did not conduct skills-related research, contextual information and trends research was obtained from some organisations. Some of the key reports analysed were:

- Restaurant Industry Gold Standard Report (British Hospitality Association)
- Industry Trends and Statistics (British Hospitality Association)
- Food Service Management Report (British Hospitality Association)
- Market Report (The Publican)
- Travel Statistics and Trends (ABTA)

Identification of geographic-specific research

A wide range of sectoral research has been undertaken at the regional and sub-regional level by organisations such as devolved nation governments; tourism partnerships; colleges; universities and local economic development organisations.

An extensive review of this information was undertaken. The key messages coming out of local and national research have been taken into account when compiling this report.

Literature review of the events industry

Due to the lack of comprehensive and consistent information that exists on the events industry (which is partly due to the fact that it lacks a SIC code and partly due to the difficulties in defining the industry) People1st commissioned the Association of Events Management Education (AEME) to undertake a comprehensive literature review of existing research. This focussed on definitions of the industry, size and structure and skill needs.

The findings from this review have fed into this sectoral report and will form the basis of a specific events industry report which will be published in due course.

Identification of sector research undertaken by higher education

People1st were conscious that a large number of sector related research projects had been undertaken by higher education institutes, the results of which were not always easy to access. Therefore the Council for Hospitality Management Education (CHME) were commissioned to identify and review higher education research that had been conducted over the last five years. This provided information on a number of industry and geographically specific studies and a greater insight into certain issues such as recruitment practices, management practices and lifestyle businesses. This information has been used in section 5.1 of the report.

Analysis of competitive strategies adopted by businesses in the sector

One area in which People1st had not previously undertaken extensive research was the competitive strategies adopted by businesses operating in the sector. CHME were again commissioned to undertake an analysis of industry reports (such as Mintel) as well as any higher education research to establish the sector's comparative competitive position. The research was undertaken at an industry level and included information on entry and exits, suppliers, buyers and substitutes. This information has been used to inform section four of the report.

Analysis of economic forecasts

A decision was made early on in scoping of the project not to commission specific economic forecasts for the sector. Rather it was felt that it would be more beneficial to undertake an analysis of existing forecasts to better understand what already exists.

Consequently, tendering took place, and a contract was awarded to StepAhead Research to: identify sector-specific forecasts; understand the assumptions behind the existing forecasts and make recommendations as to a way forward.

The research was conducted using a combination of desk research and interviews with both sector organisations and government agencies across the UK.

Importantly, the work focussed on both a UK, and on national and regional dimensions, to better understand the approaches that were being adopted.

Recruitment and retention survey

The production of the Market Assessment in 2003, and the scoping of this project identified that a major gap in knowledge was that of labour retention across the sector and its link with recruitment and business performance. People1st went out to tender and commissioned ORC International to undertake the fieldwork and analysis.

The questionnaire was produced by ORC International and People1st, and was based in part on a recruitment and retention survey produced by the CIPD. This would allow broader comparisons to be made with other sectors of the economy.

The telephone survey was conducted in August 2005. 47 interviews were successfully completed in Northern Ireland.

The survey findings have been used in section 5.1 of this report and will be presented together with qualitative findings from the industry and geographic working groups in a separate report to be published in due course.

Development of future scenarios

Scenario development was undertaken to better understand the likely characteristics of the sector in the future and how the skill requirements of the workforce may differ as a result.

Scenarios were developed at futurefocus@dti, which is a purpose built suite set up by the Department for Trade and Industry (DTI) to help industry and government understand and better prepare for the future.

Three groups of employers from across the 14 industries making up the hospitality, leisure, travel and tourism sector were invited to attend sessions at the DTI in London to develop future scenarios for the sector. The groups were asked to consider what society and the sector might look like in the future. Visual images were presented to help them think of the variety of different alternatives. After small group discussions, brainstorming software was used to consider factors likely to affect the sector in the future and the subsequent threats and opportunities. Employers struggled to look ten years in the future, as they felt it was too similar to today's world. To overcome this problem 2025 was chosen as a year on which to focus, 30 years hence, and they then worked the timeline back.

People1st and futurefocus@dti analysed the findings and three possible futures scenarios were developed: 'Me World', 'Silver service' and '24/7'1. These scenarios were then presented to six groups of employers from the following industries:

- Travel
- Gambling
- Hotels
- Pubs, bars and nightclubs
- Restaurants
- Contract and public sector catering

These industries were chosen because of their relative size across the sector, as well as their specific differences compared to the wider sector.

¹ Outlined at annex C in the stage one report

Employers from these industries were shown the three scenarios and were asked to consider would be most plausible, what they were currently planning for and what scenario would have the biggest impact on skill needs. They were also asked to consider new occupations or tasks that would be required to meet the needs of the sector in 2025. Finally, they worked in groups to consider the impact of some of the possible developments and considered ways to prepare for them.

Employer engagement was very high for this stage of the process. We aimed to maximize the mix of employers attending the events to provide better discussion and ensure the various sub-areas of the sector were represented. In total 60 employers took part in the process.

The outcomes of the scenario development will be presented in a final report. The films of each scenario will also be made available on the People1st website, and a virtual panel of employers is currently being established to bi-annually consider and discuss which scenario the sector is developing towards and the implications.

Industry working groups

To gain a better understanding of the main issues facing employers in specific industries, six industry working groups were established. Given the size and diversity of the sector it was important that industry-specific issues were not ignored. The following industries were concentrated on:

- Travel
- Gambling
- Hotels
- Pubs, bars and nightclubs
- Restaurants
- Contract and public sector catering

These industries were chosen because of their relative size across the sector, as well as their specific differences compared to the wider sector.

The working groups were held at the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) in August and focussed on specific skills and labour market issues. These sessions were facilitated and recorded by the People1st research team. The questions were produced using the findings from the desk research. Consequently, questions aimed to fill gaps as well as confirm key trends.

The questions focussed on:

- Factors influencing company's performance
- Business competitiveness
- Expectations of staff
- Measuring the performance of staff
- Skills required by the workforce
- Changing skill requirements
- Focus on specific skill requirements (guided by desk research findings)
- Education and training provision

In all 40 employers took part in the process. The findings of the group will be used to illustrate the quantitative findings from this study, as well as serve as a base to undertake further case study work to highlight best practice across a number of areas.

Geographic working groups

It was felt to be important to undertake working groups at a regional level in England and across the devolved nations. This aimed to highlight any geographic differences, but also maximize employer engagement with the process, particularly with the small and micro business operators.

In Northern Ireland, using additional funding from the Department for Employment and Learning we were able to undertake four regional groups, as well as a special chef session in Belfast.

In addition, online surveys following the broad themes of the working groups were set up for employers in each of the devolved nations. These aimed to provide additional opportunities for employers to contribute to the process.

The findings from all these sessions will be combined with the findings from the desk research and the recruitment and retention survey to produce separate reports for each of the devolved nations and each English region.

Stage two

Stage two was undertaken between January and June 2006 and aimed to understand how training is undertaken across the sector and the extent to which employers are accessing the learning supply. Provision was looked at in the round, as well as specifically focusing on how provision was affecting the skill issues identified during stage one.

Given the complex nature of the sector's learning supply the following research methods were used:

- Literature review
 - Analysis of publicly funded learning
 - Employer telephone survey
 - Owner operator telephone survey
 - National employer working groups
 - Regional employer working groups
-
- One-to-one large employer interviews
 - One-to-one small employer interviews
 - English learning provider working groups
 - Regional working groups for learning providers
 - College lecturer online survey
 - Student questionnaires
 - Student working groups

While the nature of some of these research methods necessitated a UK approach, we have as far as possible tried to provide detailed analysis by each nation to take into account the differing policy and educational differences across the four home nations.

The remainder of this annex provides an overview of each method.

Literature review

An in-depth literature review was undertaken. Using the stakeholder maps produced for the SSA process, each stakeholder was contacted to identify any existing supply side research. The majority of contacts did not have any existing research that was specific to the sector, and much of the local supply side data had been derived from employer skill surveys.

A lot of the literature relevant for the sector had focused on a particular aspect of provision, such as Apprenticeships, career perceptions etc. or instead had focused on a particular geographic area. A full list of existing literature used in this report used can be found in the bibliography.

Inspection reports

A significant part of the literature review focused on gathering and analysing inspection reports and subject reviews. These have enabled us to better understand the quality of the provision as well as good and bad practice. It has also provided a map of provision based on inspection grades.

International best practice

We have also tried to assess international best practice to assess whether sector provision abroad can help us improve the way the sector trains its staff and prepares new entrants in the UK.

Analysis of publicly funded learning provision

In Northern Ireland, data on the uptake of 'general' qualifications (such as GCSEs, A-Levels and GNVQs) was also obtained from the Joint Council for Qualifications.

Data on FE provision was obtain from DEL. The majority of this data was not available for specific qualifications but was classified by broad categories. Unfortunately this meant that it was not possible to analyse the data for specific occupations or industries.

In order to obtain more detailed data, People1st contacted all colleges and training providers known to offer hospitality, leisure, travel and tourism provision and asked them to complete a proforma. This included the take up of specific qualifications, drop outs, delivery mode and destinations. A total of 11 colleges and 4 training providers completed the proformas. This information has been used as a guide as to the volume of provision for specific occupations.

Higher Education

Data on the number of higher education courses available in sector-related subjects and the number of institutions (across the UK) offering these courses was obtained from UCAS. Data was also obtained from UCAS on the number of people applying and being accepted onto Higher Education courses.

Data on the destination of Higher Education leavers was obtained from the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA). This information was available at a broad level and included data on the industry into which leaver entered and whether or not their qualification was needed for their job.

Employer telephone survey

A large scale telephone survey was undertaken with 270 employers in Northern Ireland. This was contracted out to BMG research who put together the sample and undertook the telephone interviews.

The sample was based on the size of the sector and the results weighted to reflect industries, geographic location and size of units.

The survey sought to identify how employers were tackling training, perceptions and barriers to training and the extent they were responding to the skill needs identified in stage one.

Owner operator telephone survey

A separate telephone survey with 31 owner operators in Northern Ireland was conducted at the same time as the large scale employer survey (see above). The aim was to better understand the specific needs of operators who do not employ any staff, their experiences of the sector before setting up their business, the support they have received and the impact this has had on their business.

UK employer working groups

Six national employer working groups were held with employers to understand the specific nature of training and development across a number of the larger industries. These included:

- Travel services
- Gambling
- Hotels
- Restaurants
- Pubs
- Contract food service providers

These groups were supported by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) and aimed to identify best practice and understand what aspects of training and development worked well and not so well.

In all 44 employers attended the sessions, mainly from the larger chains

Employer working groups

Two employer working groups took place in Northern Ireland. These were mainly attended by smaller, independent operators across the sector and they looked at training and development from a small and middle sized operation's perspective as well as try and assess the effectiveness of provision.

One-to-one large employer interviews

National and regional working groups for learning providers

Two learning provider working groups were held in Northern Ireland. The groups were attended by further education colleges, workbased providers and commercial training providers. Their aim was to listen to their experiences, understanding what was working and not working and identify ways in provision can be improved.

College lecturer online survey

Two online consultations were undertaken in April and May 2006 with colleges of further education across the UK. The first focused on hospitality and catering provision and the second on travel and tourism.

The surveys focused on the recruitment of students, employer engagement, destinations of students on completion of their course, the job readiness of students and experiences of employer engagement.

Stage three

Stage three was undertaken between July to September 2006 and was taken forward in two phases:

- Desk Research
- Scenario development and issues gathering

Desk research

Stages one and two of the process generated a rich amount of data and analysis. As part of stage three a number of key skills and employment questions were posed such as 'where are we getting our workforce from?', 'are we getting sufficient employers?' etc. The analysis from stages one and two were then tabulated against these questions and a picture emerged as to whether the demands of the sector were being met.

Scenario development and issues gathering

People1st in conjunction with futurefocus@dti undertook three working groups that involved key partners, employer representatives and senior staff at People1st to look at the difference between the needs of industry and the learning supply. A series of key priorities were identified together with possible solutions.

2. Key findings from stage one – identifying the skills and employment needs of the sector

Introduction

This section presents the headline findings from stage one of the SSA, which aimed to outline the current and future skills and employment needs of sector employers. It outlines the size and scope of the sector, factors determining sector competitiveness, industry and occupational skill gaps and shortages as well as future employment projections and future skill needs.

Size and scope of the sector

The hospitality, leisure, travel and tourism sector covers 14 industries: hotels, restaurants, pubs, bars and nightclubs, contract food service providers, hospitality services, membership clubs, events, gambling, travel services, tourist services, visitor attractions, hostels, holiday centres and self catering accommodation.

Establishments

There are approximately 4,900 individual hospitality, leisure, travel and tourism establishments in Northern Ireland of which the majority are pubs, bars and nightclubs and an additional third are restaurants.

Employment

It is a large and growing sector currently employing 46,700 people. Across the sector there are large industry variations. The hospitality services industry is the largest industry in terms of employment employing approximately 11,800 people, followed closely by restaurants.

Workforce characteristics

In terms of core occupations (those that deliver the specific product or service of the sector) the sector is dominated by kitchen and catering assistants, bar staff, chefs and cooks, waiting staff and managers. Over the last three years there has been a significant growth in the number of restaurant and catering managers.

The sector employs a young workforce. Overall, 25 percent of staff are the under age of 25. Casual employment and temporary employment (often owing to seasonality) is common with nine percent of the sector's workforce employed on a temporary or casual basis.

The recruitment of international workers is widespread especially for lower skilled back and front of house roles. 16 percent of the sector's workforce are from overseas. Ethnic minorities make up just six percent of the sector workforce.

Drivers of Business Competitiveness

Measuring the competitiveness of the sector is notoriously difficult, as the nature of the sector's product is often intangible and highly subjective.

The sector can be significantly affected by a multitude of external factors such as fuel costs, the weather, new flight routes into and out of the UK and the ongoing political situation. From a tourism perspective, the sector operates in a global environment competing with other international destinations.

Productivity

Sector labour productivity across the UK lags behind that of similar developed economies, such as France and the United States, with France being almost twice as productive as the UK. When compared to other economic sectors in the UK, the hospitality, leisure, travel and tourism sector is the least productive. In Northern Ireland the sector's Gross Value Added in 2003 was £681m, up by £141m since 1999.

Drivers of competitiveness

In understanding competitiveness it is useful to focus on four drivers: investment, innovation, competition and enterprise. In terms of investment there has been considerable capital expenditure in the hospitality, leisure, travel and tourism sector suggesting significant investment by employers. Investment in the sector typically involves building new facilities and the modernisation and refurbishment of current facilities to meet customer expectations of change and quality. Innovation across the sector is less clear. Employers are likely to have made small changes, which usually involve the provision of a 'unique customer experience' to improve customer perception and develop a niche. Employers also tend to equate innovation with technology, with many employers in the sector now using the internet for marketing and/or booking purposes. International comparisons on innovation have indicated that within the hotel industry French operators have focused on finding ways of helping the customer help themselves e.g. buffets, while in the UK operators have tended to employ additional staff to support the customer. This may go some way to explain why the UK is behind in terms of productivity per head, although the tighter labour market in the UK has got to be a significant factor in explaining the lower productivity.

Current Labour and Skill Demands

Vacancies

The 2005 Northern Ireland Monitoring Survey reports that hard-to-fill vacancies appear to have fallen from 13 percent in 2002 to seven percent in 2005. However, this goes against anecdotal evidence from employers who report that with the increased volume of tourism recruiting staff has become more of a challenge.

19 percent of hard-to-fill vacancies are skills related, much lower than across all sectors at 34 percent. Chefs and managers are likely to have a higher percentage of skill shortages.

Staff turnover

Labour turnover for the whole sector currently stands at 37 percent, this is the equivalent of losing 18,052 people a year and based on an average recruitment and initial training cost of £1,500 is costing the sector £27m.

Across the UK, 70 percent of recruitment is to replace existing staff, which reinforces the vicious circle of recruitment and retention. The challenge for the sector is that only 14 percent of employers felt that labour turnover was too high. This failure to retain staff is resulting in staff being inadequately skilled to undertake their job role.

Skills gaps

Sector employers are more likely to report skills gaps than is the case across the economy as a whole. Employers are most concerned with the level of chef skills, customer handling and communication skills. In addition, to a lesser extent they are reporting skill gaps for management and leadership.

The lack of technically skilled chefs is frequently mentioned by employers as a barrier to filling vacancies and to effective business performance. Fine dining establishments could be said to be suffering the most but the move away from pre-prepared (microwave/boil in the bag) foods and towards freshly prepared ingredients and cooking from scratch, driven by consumers, has resulted in more mainstream restaurant and pub kitchens aiming to provide such food for customers. In addition, the diversity of the restaurant industry has resulted in new skill needs such as knowledge of different international cuisines and an awareness of new and emerging cuisines. Both these trends are arguably further increasing the demand for appropriately skilled and qualified chefs.

Customer service skills are viewed as essential by employers but are considered to be lacking in staff. This is particularly concerning as employers often indicate that effective customer service is a key contributor to the competitiveness of a business. Employers consider customer service to be a combination of behaviours including welcoming and helpfulness and a genuine interest in the consumer coupled with perceptual skills such as spotting potential problems and conflict management.

The prevalence of effective managers is essential for the future performance of the sector, however, the lack of managers with a full profile of management skills is identified by employers as a significant problem. Poor management skills are generally a result of a lack of appropriate training and experience.

Particular problems originate when staff are being promoted because they are good at their job, do not necessarily demonstrate any management capabilities, and are offered little support or training to expand their management capabilities.

There was also recognition that small and micro businesses may be suffering owing to the lack of 'small business' management capabilities of the owner/operators.
'Lifestyle' businesses often enter the sector with a lack of experience and do not always buy in to the concept of skills and training.

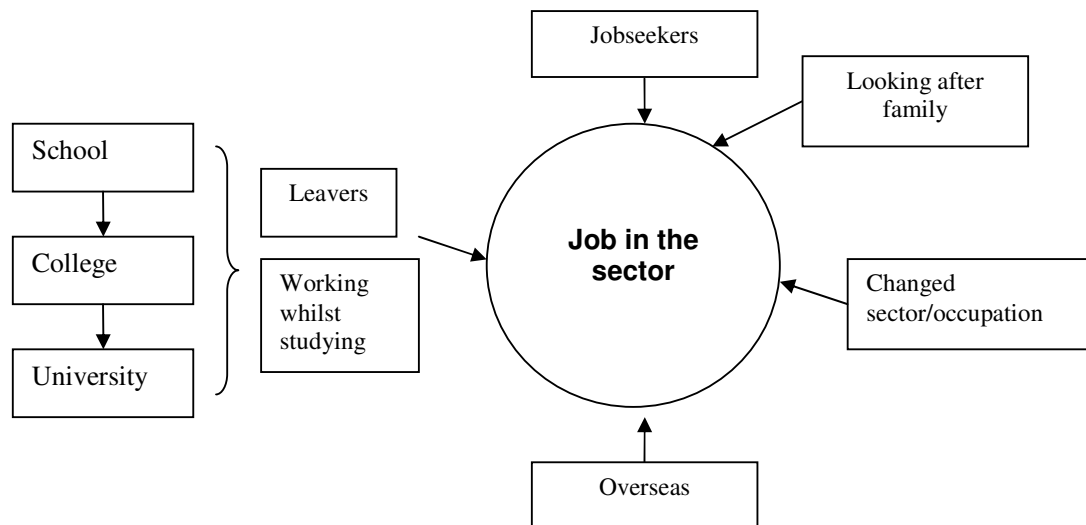
3. Key findings from stage two – identifying the sector’s education and learning supply

Introduction

This section presents the headline findings from stage two of the SSA, which aimed to describe the extent of the sector’s education and learning supply and assess its effective. This section outlines the various entry routes into the sector and describes how employers are undertaking training and development needs.

Assessing the effectiveness of entry routes into the sector

As the diagram below illustrates the sector attracts new entrants from a number of different routes:



Recruiting from full-time education

Schools: There is sector provision in schools, but take up is relatively low. In 2005, there were 123 on the GCSE in Hospitality and 171 undertaking the GCSE in Leisure and Tourism. This compared to 5,219 doing the GCSE in Home Economics.

Further education: In 2003/04, there were 904 candidates on NVQ programmes in further education. However, most of the provision was at level 1, lower than much of the level 2 need in the sector. In the same period there were 665 enrolments onto travel programmes, most of whom were undertaking the Advanced GNVQ.

Demographics: Over a quarter of the sector is under 25. A large proportion of these are full-time students working part-time or casually in front of house positions, such as waiting staff and bar staff. Across the UK as many as half of bar staff and three quarters of waiting staff were in full-time education a year ago. For many operations these types of occupations can be trained relatively quickly on-the-job, consequently employers are questioning why it is

taking two years for students to develop these skills on a full-time course. Similarly, in travel, employers and students believe that it is more useful to go straight into the industry and be trained in the workplace.

Attitudes towards young people: Some employers have particular negative views about the calibre of young people and their readiness to work. There are also concerns about their literacy and numeracy, an issue shared by further education colleges who are having to invest significant time to tackle these deficiencies in already limited contact hours. Employers and colleges are both concerned about the difficulty of getting into schools in order to provide impartial career advice if that school has a sixth form college.

Work placement: Work placement are a key tool to provide young people at schools, colleges and universities with an opportunity to gain an understanding of the sector and improve their skills and knowledge. The evidence has reinforced how important this process is, but only a quarter of employers are providing a placement and just over half of these are structured. This means that the sector is missing out on opportunities to attract new entrants and in some cases squandering others by providing a negative experience.

Higher education: In the academic year 2003/04, there were 561 students on hospitality and catering programmes at the University of Ulster. In all there are 23 different skill programmes, but this appears much larger than it is given that degrees are combined with a particular language. The lack of reliable data means we are unable to identify how many of these students enter the sector on completion of their studies. However, UK figures suggest that just 12 percent of travel graduates are entering the travel industry and 33 percent of them entering the sector overall. For registrations to increase institutions are reflecting the needs of students and not employers. Consequently, the supply of learning in higher education is not reflecting the needs of the sector.

Half of employers had recruited graduates and just under half of these thought they were fit for purpose. A broader debate has begun as to the extent to which sector-specific programmes in higher education should be meeting the needs of the sector. This is particularly the case regarding travel and tourism programmes.

Student attitudes: Students on hospitality and catering courses are broadly positive about both their course and the sector, although they were less positive about its long hours. Role models were important to them (usually celebrity chefs) and many had family who are working or had worked in the sector.

On the other hand a lot of travel and tourism students we spoke to had joined their course because they wanted to travel and consequently felt that they had been oversold their course. This highlights a wider problem with full-time travel and tourism programmes in further education. Travel employers are concerned that the curriculum is too broad and not providing the detailed technical skills required. It does appear that lecturers are not contradicting this as across the UK 44 percent of them do not think they have sufficient up-to-date knowledge of the sector.

Perception of the sector

The perception of young people regarding the sector is improving' particularly in relation to managers and chefs. Chef careers have been bolstered by high profile celebrity chefs, such as Paul Rankin, Gordon Ramsay and Jamie Oliver. However, employers, college lecturers and students were all critical about the advice given by careers advisors. Many felt their perspectives were outdated and prejudiced against the sector.

The negative career perceptions may in turn explain the difficulty colleges are having filling sector-specific further education programmes. In hospitality and catering only a quarter of lecturers indicate that they have managed to fill places with suitable candidates. In travel and tourism the figures are worse, as across the UK only 17 percent have managed to fill places on courses with suitable candidates. That so many colleges are having to recruit students that they do not think are appropriate is diminishing both the calibre of students entering the sector and the reputation of the college network.

Retention of students on these full-time programmes is much better than for work-based programmes. Retention rates on Apprenticeship programmes are very low, but inconsistent. Figures from 2003 show an average completion rate of just 15 percent.

Jobseekers and those on incapacity benefit

Many employers advertise vacancies in job centres, but the process is relatively passive, with few employers following up initial advertisements. At the same time there is increasing frustration with people 'playing the system' by turning up for an interview solely to claim benefit.

International workers

The recruitment of international workers is helping to alleviate the vacancy problems for many employers. 16 percent of the sector's workforce is made up of international workers. However, whilst nearly 90,000 workers from the new EU Accession States have entered the sector across the UK, only one percent of them are working in Northern Ireland. This compares to 20 percent of the workforce in the Republic of Ireland being made up of EU Accession State workers.

Workforce Development

Importance of human resource functions

25 percent of sector units have a human resource (HR) function. This is important, as all the indications are that if a unit has a HR function it is more likely to be offering systematic training to their staff.

Extent of training

66 percent of employers are offering staff an induction and 57 percent training. Broadly speaking, the larger sector employers tend to offer intensive induction and initial training with subsequent follow up training being more informal, on-the-job coaching.

Ongoing training also tends to be reactive in response to external stimuli like mystery guest visits or new legislation. While relevant to employers, there is little transfer value given that it doesn't lead to any formal qualifications. The fact that nearly all employers are providing a

similar content means there are potential opportunities to get a basic induction system in place across the whole sector, thereby introducing a minimum standard and reducing duplication of training in areas such as statutory training.

A small percentage of employers are undertaking external training. If external training is likely to be undertaken it is likely to be management training.

The majority of training is in customer service for supervisors. Given the high percentage of employers highlighting skills gaps for managers and customer service this is encouraging. Employers are more likely to train on the back of staff appraisals and if it is likely to change the perceptions of customers. Proving the links between training and business improvement is crucial if it is to get the backing of senior and unit managers. However, many human resource and training teams lament the lack of systematic tools in which to assess its impact.

Management training

Management training provided tends to cover a broad content, with an increasing emphasis on people management skills. While management training is more likely to be delivered by external providers compared to other areas of training, the vast majority still tends to be on-the-job coaching.

Given the importance of management training, this lack of core knowledge and skills development is hampering the sector.

Chefs

The majority of chef training is likely to be food safety. While employers are reporting a high percentage of chefs with skill gaps, little culinary development is leading to a formal qualification. The majority of training is on-the-job coaching. There are few short courses available, but whether employers would use these qualifications if they were to be made available is unknown.

Customer service

Customer service training is most likely to be offered by employers. However, with the exception of Welcome Host (a qualifications developed by the tourist boards) there are no sector-specific customer service programmes that lead to a formal qualification. However, the take up of Welcome Host is still relatively low, with only five percent of employers using the qualification and certain industries not being aware of its existence. Of particular concern is that it is mainly hotels and tourist services taking up the qualifications – largely because they have the most contact with the tourist boards.

The specific needs of owner operators

Before opening their business two thirds of owner operators in the sector across the UK surveyed by People1st had no experience of the sector. 83 percent had sought no advice but those that had had looked for information on finance and business planning. The majority felt it had had a positive impact. Only 13 percent have considered getting any support.

4. Key findings from stage three – assessing the mismatch between demand and supply

Introduction

This section presents the headline assessment undertaken as part of the stage three process to assess the mismatch between the skills and employment needs of employers and the sector's education and learning supply.

Poor careers advice

The sector suffers severe recruitment problems with a significant number of employers reporting hard-to-fill vacancies. Evidence suggests that careers advice can be inconsistent in terms of its accuracy in promoting careers opportunities across the sector. In particular students have described scenarios whereby they have been persuaded to choose an alternative career. The career opportunities across the sector should be accurately promoted in order to alleviate the recruitment problems facing the sector.

Part of the problem is the lack of a central careers site where accurate information can be obtained across the whole of the sector. The lack of clearly identifiable careers pathways is also an important contributing factor.

Lack of identifiable career pathways

The sector's size and diversity is both an asset and a potential source of confusion. With a workforce of 46,700 across 14 different industries it is not always clear what opportunities are available to both potential entrants and the existing workforce. This lack of clear progression can adversely affect the retention of the sector with staff leaving to pursue opportunities elsewhere. It can also be detrimental to potential entrants considering a career in the sector.

Currently, there is no single source of careers pathways that show the opportunities across the whole of the sector and importantly highlight the skills required and the potential qualifications and training programmes that are relevant for that job role.

Limited focus on all potential labour pools

Given the high percentage of hard-to-fill vacancies and the large percentage of employers who are concerned about the job readiness of young people it is surprising to realise that over a quarter of the workforce are under 24. Furthermore it is estimated that a half of bar staff and two thirds of waiting staff are full-time students.

The traditional recruitment problems facing the sector have been offset in mainly urban areas (particularly Belfast) by recruiting international workers – in particular those from the new EU Accession States. Over the past two years nearly 90,000 have entered the sector from the EU Accession States, but only one percent are working across the sector in Northern Ireland.

Both labour pools do not provide a sustainable source of labour. Partially, this is owing to insufficient numbers coming from both labour pools, but also that employers often treat them as a replaceable, short-term fix,

Short-term focus on labour

In itself the emphasis on recruiting students and international workers is not a problem. However, as it currently stands the emphasis on both labour pools is failing to tackle the ongoing and historic recruitment problems faced by the sector. This is partly reflected in the sector ignoring other labour pools such as returners or those on benefit but also reflects the fact that the sector is making little effort to retain these people.

Two thirds of waiting staff and half of bar staff are full-time students, yet few of these will consider a career in the sector and few employers will have taken advantage of this captive labour market to offset the recruitment problems for higher skills occupations. Similarly, as much effort needs to be invested in developing international workers as the indigenous workforce. Evidence suggests that employers are in fact undertaking the same or more training with them, it is felt by some employers that the mentality is not to encourage these people in more senior or higher skilled roles.

Suitability of qualifications for entry into the workforce

Skill shortages are increasingly acute for higher skilled workers, such as chefs and managers. However, employers do not recognise the relevance of the current entry routes. While there are buoyant numbers on food preparation and cooking NVQs at level 2, employers are critical at the lack of consistency in skill levels of those leaving further education colleges, even though they hold the same qualification. At the same time employers are concerned that the NVQ does not provide the breadth and depth of knowledge required to enter the sector. Similarly, in management, employers are promoting from within their own organisation, ignoring the number of graduates studying sector-specific programmes. Employers are split about the calibre of graduates, but it is concerning that only 33 percent of travel and tourism graduates across the UK enter the sector.

Given the lack of numbers coming through these entry routes, it is important that the qualifications are recognised by employers and importantly provide the skills and knowledge required by the sector.

Management and leadership

The sector reports a difficulty recruiting skilled managers. The response has been to promote staff earlier, but the subsequent training is often informal and is not effectively tackling the skill gaps. The lack of management professionalism across the sector further hampers the high standards of management skills required by the sector. In addition, the lack of recognised management qualifications further hampers managers attaining at least a level 3 qualification.

Customer service

Customers are getting more demanding in the high standards of customer service they expect and employers are increasingly recognising this. Employers are likely to be offering training to provide customer service skills. However, the lack of a recognised spine of qualifications has meant that standards are inconsistent across the sector and that those qualifications that are having limited impact are providing skills at lower levels than those required.

Chefs

Employers are finding it particularly difficult to recruit chefs with the right breadth and depth of skills and knowledge that are required. Numbers coming through colleges are less than required and employers do not believe that the NVQ, which is most commonly used, provides the consistent delivery of these skills. At the same time it appears that employers are not encouraging those entering the sector to stay and may have too high expectations.

Suitability of qualifications and programmes for workforce development

There is some concern about the robustness of training in tackling the low skills of the sector. Training is mainly carried out on the job in the form of shadowing. Given the extent to which skill gaps are prevalent among managers it is a concern that poor skills are being passed down within the sector. Employers are unlikely to be providing training leading to formal qualifications. Overall, it is estimated that approximately two percent of training leads to a formal qualification. Funding and the cost of training is a factor, but at the same time employers complain about the relevance of qualifications. Some employers are indicated that they are only offering formal qualifications because of the funding being provided.

Weak investment in training and development

Contrary to the perception of the sector, employers are spending a significant amount of money on training. However, as the findings of stage two show in areas such as customer service the preponderance of skill shortages and gaps are similar regardless of the amount of training being provided. Part of the problem is the way in which training is being carried out. In too many places employers are relying on informal training. Informal training, such as job shadowing is vitally important, but not to the detriment of structured training.

As has been highlighted the amount of training leading to formal qualifications is extremely low. However, of concern is the fact that larger employers are receiving more funding to train than smaller employers. It is a concern given that smaller employers are much less likely to invest in staff training and if they do are less likely to invest as much as larger businesses. Micro businesses (of which there are a high percentage in the sector) find the cost of training and the cost of removing staff out of their job setting relatively more expensive yet receive less funding.

Stage one findings showed that the sector suffers hard-to-fill vacancies, skills shortages and gaps across all sizes of business, yet the extent of training does depend on the size of business.

Lack of focus on retention

A major factor in many of the skills and labour issues faced by the sector is the high instances of labour turnover across the sector. The sector has long recognised its recruitment problems; however, much of its emphasis in combating this has been through overcoming the negative perception of the sector rather than tackling the poor experiences of the workforce.

Poor management and leadership are obviously a factor, as is the poor rewards and recognition found in some businesses. Given the cost of labour turnover to the sector in terms of financial loss and skill gaps it is an area that receives little attention from the sector from public funded initiatives. However, there is growing evidence that this is beginning to change.

Limited impact on funding

The findings from People1st's Smarter Spending Review estimate that £23m is spent on skills and training for the hospitality, leisure, travel and tourism sector in Northern Ireland. However, 88 percent of employers do not know where to access funding and only six percent have directly or indirectly accessed funding. Given the amount spent across the sector it is important that employers are aware of the opportunities and that it is spent on areas that meet the needs of the sector.

5. Undertaking stages four and five of the Sector Skills Agreement

Introduction

This section outlines how stages four and five of the SSA were taken forward. It introduces Project Spinnaker and its employer steering group.

Taking forward the SSA through Project Spinnaker

In the beginning of the SSA process People1st took the decision that in order to effectively engage employers the agenda would have to be driven by a group of high profile employers and include wide consultation with employers throughout Northern Ireland.

With funding from the Department of Employment and Learning (DEL) People1st worked with key sector employers to take forward Project Spinnaker which aimed to put in place a Skills Strategy for the hospitality, leisure, travel and tourism sector in Northern Ireland. This in turn would deliver the Sector Skills Agreement for the Sector.

To ensure that the final agreed proposals were genuinely industry driven a project steering committee made up of key senior industry representatives was appointed to oversee the assignment, monitor progress and offer appropriate guidance throughout to agreement of a final action plan.

The Steering committee was chaired by Howard Hastings and comprised the following members:

Name & Position	Business
Howard Hastings Managing Director	Hastings Hotels
Michael McQuillan Managing Director	The Streat Café Company
Stephen Magorrian Managing Director	Botanic Inns
Adrian McLaughlin President General Manager	NI Hotels Federation Merchant Hotel
Doreen McKenzie Chair Director	NI Branch of ABTA (Association of British Travel Agents) Knock Travel

The project built on the findings from the research generated from stages one and two of the SSA and working groups were held with employers across the four regions to gather their views as to how the Strategy could work.

The range of employers and partners engaged in the focus group & one to one validation work is scoped out below. This included representation from individuals who had already participated in earlier consultation work as well new representation.

A series of one to one in depth interviews with key trade associations, professional bodies and stakeholder organisations were held.

A series of focus groups included:

Group 1: HR Managers

Group 2: Greater Belfast region

Employers to include (larger employers, SME's & micros)

Group 3: Armagh & Down region

Employers to include (larger employers, SME's & micros)

Group 4: Western region

Employers to include (larger employers, SMEs & micros)

Group 5: Causeway Coast & Glens

Employers to include (larger employers, SMEs & micros)

Group 6: Employees: Young industry managers

A final presentation of the proposed solutions was presented to the Tourism Strategy Forum on 21 November 2006 which comprised key tourism employer and stakeholder interests. This grouping included representation from: DETI, NITB, DEL, Tourism Ireland, NI Tourist Industry Confederation, Federation of Retail Licensed Trade, NI Hotel Federation, Farm & Country Holidays Association, NI Youth Hostel Association and the Regional Tourism Partnerships. From that meeting DEL and DETI committed to respond to the proposals set out in the Strategy

Bi-lateral meetings with partners

A series of bi-lateral meetings took place on the back of the meeting to seek agreement from partners on which actions they felt could be taken forward. These meetings took place between November 2006 and March 2007. Discussion took place with the following partners. The areas for discussion are outlined under each partner.

a) DEL HE Policy Branch

Actions sought/discussed:

- Support for Lecturers into Industry in Higher Education
- Review of HE Provision benchmarked against world class management colleges
- Recruitment methodology
- Foundation Degrees approved by sector

b) DEL FE Policy Branch

Actions sought/discussed:

- Funding for industry approved courses
- Prioritise funding to address skills priorities –i.e. chef VRQ etc
- Funding for programme delivery less than 10hours
- Industry approval mechanism for course providers

c) DEL Careers Service

Actions sought/discussed:

- Endorsement of UK Skills passport as the single source of careers information for the sector and promotion of through advisers.
- Work with People 1st to provide DEL careers advisors with sectoral knowledge through CPD events.

d) DEL Training Programmes Branch

Actions sought:

- Establish quality assured work placement providers to support robust work based learning opportunities across the sector.
- Provide resources to support a pilot to test an enhanced apprenticeship programme for chefs.

e) Welfare to Work Division

JobCentres

Actions sought/discussed:

- Employability programmes for sector to contain key skills identified by sector.
- Well informed placement services and support for individuals entering the sector together with appropriate skills development using UK skills passport as a mechanism

f) INVEST NI

Actions sought/discussed:

- Targeted support for businesses in the Hospitality, Leisure, Travel & Tourism sector as articulated in Spinnaker document.

g) QCA & CCEA

Actions sought/discussed:

Initial meeting to explore potential for collaborative action

h) LSDA NI

Actions sought/discussed:

- Work with People 1st to ensure the Lecturers into Industry Programme for FE is tailored to priority skills needs identified through the SSA.
- Work with People 1st in subject development days & other relevant CPD events for FE & work-based providers to share best practice and update on industry trends and changes.
- Work with People 1st to ensure that support materials for essential skills delivery are contextualised within the curriculum offering for the sector.

i) Education & Training Inspectorate

Actions sought/discussed:

- Support for Professional Associates scheme which will engage industry experts to participate on periodic inspections of sector provision with inspectorate.

j) Department of Education

Actions sought/discussed:

- Support for teachers into industry scheme for schools

k) NITB

Actions sought/discussed

- Endorsement of QA system to be linked to skills using skills passport as the mechanism
- Integrate strategies of NITB & the Skills Strategy

l) Trade Unions –Unison

Actions sought/discussed

- Promote & encourage uptake of skills passports through membership (which would include catering staff in schools and hospitals.)

6. Progress since the completion of the Sector Skills Agreement

Introduction

This section outlines progress in taking forward Project Spinnaker and in turn the SSA. Progress is highlighted across the ten point plan.

Monitoring and implementation

A group of employers, led by Howard Hastings, Managing Director of Hastings Hotels, continue to meet every six months to review progress and steer Project Spinnaker going forward.

In many cases, partners in the SSA process have been unable to sign up to delivering on the actions outlined by employers through Project Spinnaker. Whilst this is disappointing, sector employers are still focused on trying to achieve the aims of Project Spinnaker. The following points highlight the progress that has been made since its presentation to the Tourism Strategy Forum in November 2006. Progress is presented across the Spinnaker's ten point plan:

Strategic Priority 1: A Single Communications Channel

Creating a single resource for skills information – www.uksp.co.uk

- 70K funding secured from DEL to trial & promote UKSP & its use to support Continuous professional Development across the sector.
- Launch event with Ministerial endorsement delivered in Jan 08 & subsequent PR profiling which to date has included:
 - 2 regional employer events delivered in conjunction with Causeway Coast & Glens Tourism & Derry Visitor & Convention Bureau
 - 5 radio interviews
 - 21 regional press placements including Belfast Telegraph feature
- Programme of regional College Events planned for Sept 08 to introduce UKSP to students of HLTT courses & to coincide with new student inductions
- Revised programme of employer engagement activity for the autumn being planned
- Work continues to enhance the UKSP website with addition of the Good Provider guide, Good Qualifications Guide and Funding Tool

Strategic priority 2: Improving Retention

To encourage the industry to diversify its workforce through improved recruitment and retention practices.

- Engaged with the Investors in People unit at DEL to participate in the regional employer events held for UKSP to promote uptake of IIP within our sector.
- Worked with a private training provider and cross sector partners from retail & leisure to develop a funding proposal for submission to DEL to support delivery of an Employer of Choice Programme aimed at helping employers implement Best Practice recruitment & retention practices. Submitted 30 June & outcome of funding decision awaited.
- Secured financial support from DEL for joint sponsorship of People Development Award as part of NI Tourism Awards organised by NITB & Training Initiative Award as part of Janus Awards for professionalism organised by Institute of Hospitality

Strategic priority 3: Management & Leadership

Sector specific and continuous development

- Sector wide consultations held with industry and NI learning providers on the Sector Qualifications Strategy focusing on qualification requirements in the area of M&L. The aim of the Sector Qualifications Strategy is to ensure that the industry has a framework of accredited learning which ensures that employers can access skilled staff to meet the needs of their business. The Strategy & NI action plan is now in place.
- Initial discussions held with leading provider of graduate management recruitment to explore potential for the delivery of a sector focused graduate recruitment and development programme.

Strategic priority 4: Customer Service

Gold Standard customer service campaign- getting the “experience” right

- Sector wide consultations held with industry and NI learning providers on the Sector Qualifications Strategy focusing on qualification requirements in the area of Customer service. The aim of the Sector Qualifications Strategy is to ensure that the industry has a framework of accredited learning which ensures that employers can access skilled staff to meet the needs of their business. The Strategy & NI action plan is now in place.
- Meetings with NITB are being progressed to share the outcomes of the Gold Standard Customer Service research work and agree a joint strategy to take forward and promote new Customer Care Training.
- Input to NITB Visitor Servicing Conference in February 2008 with update on Training for Tourism
- Invited to join NITB Tourism Brand Advisory Group to provide recommendations to the brand steering group and Directors of NITB on this project

Strategic priority 5: Attracting High Quality Entrants

Developing high calibre entry routes

- Consultation with industry on the apprenticeship strategy and development of new apprenticeship pathways.
- Represented sector views on apprenticeships with submission and oral evidence session to the NI DEL Assembly Committee as part of its scrutiny of The Department's Training for Success Programme. As a follow on from our representation the Committee have written to us asking for further information and noting that they wish to keep tourism and hospitality training within its forward work programme.
- Worked with Belfast City Council to support ESF funding bid for a Hospitality & Retail pre-employment programme which will recruit & train 200 people over the next 3 years.

Strategic priority 6: Broadening the Appeal of the Sector

- Partnered with CCEA as part of its Employability Fest with a Junior Apprentice event held in Dungannon. The event targeting 14-19 year olds in the Dungannon and Cookstown areas profiled employability skills and the sector. Due to the success of the event it is anticipated that activity with a wider geographical coverage will take place next year.

- Partnered with CCEA to secure employer participation in the pilot Industry into Schools initiative being taken forward as part of the Employability agenda.
- In conjunction with a Belfast Consortium of key partners funding was secured for a service sector Jobsfair event held in Belfast on 07 Feb to profile growing opportunities presented in the tourism & retail sectors. As part of the associated media activity a radio interview on BBC Ulster was secured along with a series of 3 sector profiles covering individual industry success stories which ran in a Careers feature by the Irish News in the 3 weeks running up to the event.
- Working with DEL Careers Service and other organisations involved in providing careers advice to utilise UKSP as the source of information on skills and qualification requirements and opportunities available within the sector.

Strategic priority 7: Industry Code of Practice

Raising basic standards in commercial kitchens

- Work to develop an approved kitchen practitioners programme is being taken forward nationally and NI will be consulted as part of this development.

Strategic priority 8: Chefs

Universal industry standards of professional training established

- Sector wide consultations held with industry and NI learning providers on the Sector Qualifications Strategy focusing on qualification requirements in the area of chef skills. The aim of the Sector Qualifications Strategy is to ensure that the industry has a framework of accredited learning which ensures that employers can access skilled staff to meet the needs of their business. The Strategy & NI action plan is now in place.
- Working with LSDA NI through subject development days for the provider network to support the roll out of the new chef diplomas
- Worked with Compass UK and key local partners including NI Chefs & Cooks Association to develop a funding proposal for submission to DEL for the introduction of a Junior Chef Academy to Northern Ireland. Bid submitted 30 June 08 & outcome of funding decision awaited.

Strategic priority 9: World Class Education

Building and recognising responsive provision

- Supported the Education & Training Inspectorate's call to appoint Industry Associate Inspectors for Hospitality to support inspection work in the sector. Two associates have now taken up appointment: Sean Owens & Denis Broderick
- Representation on NI Learning & Skills Development Agency (LSDA) Advisory Committee secured to help influence the development and implementation of key policies on education and training provision.
- Work continues with LSDA to support the Lecturers into Industry initiative for the sector
- Worked with LSDA NI to develop funding proposal for submission to DEL for delivery of a Hospitality Educators Programme across the FE and Training Provider network to address practical and developmental needs of those in senior positions in hospitality and tourism education and training. Bid submitted 30 June 2008 & outcome of funding decision awaited.
- Represented the sector with presentation input at the NI Education & Training Inspectorate Conference event "Improving Work-based training in Hospitality & Tourism" targeting providers. Catherine Bell, Deputy Permanent Secretary DEL

- committed at the event that DEL would take forward an action group to look at short term needs of sector and interventions required to improve training supply.
- Made representations on sector skills issues at each of the 5 regional Workforce Development Forums to better inform and influence their work & priorities. These included: South Eastern WDF, North West WDF, Southern regional WDF, Belfast WDF, Northern regional WDF

Strategic priority 10: Supporting Small Businesses

Sector specific signposting of the best available support

- Sector wide consultations held with industry and NI learning providers on the Sector Qualifications Strategy focusing on qualification requirements for micro businesses.
- Meetings held with Failte Ireland officials to identify areas of mutual interest and collaboration to support needs of SMEs in sector. Areas of priority focus have been agreed with plans to progress formation of an All Ireland Skills forum.
- Meeting held with Intertrade Ireland officials to explore potential funding opportunities to provide SME support for sector focused Skillsnets in NI. Funding identified and further meeting to be held to progress.
- UKSP employer engagement events have included information and advice on available funding through inclusion of Business support agencies and their staff.
- A response on behalf of the sector was submitted to the SEUPB consultation on its future funding through the new Interreg & PEACE programmes. Agreement has been reached that future funding applications will be aligned to identified sector skill priorities.

Influencing the work of People1st

In its role as Sector Skills Council for the sector People1st is determined to follow through the wishes of employers in taking forward key aspects of the strategy outlined in Project Spinnaker. Annex B, outlines the People1st Business Plan for Northern Ireland for 2008/09.

Annexes

- A Spinnaker Report – Executive Summary
- B People1st Business Plan for Northern Ireland 2008/09

Annex A: Spinnaker Report – Executive Summary

COMMUNICATION SOLUTIONS						
Target	Description	Government Policy	Industry Code of Practice	Effective Communication	Public Funding	Quality Assurance
By September 2007, establish the UK Skills Passport to help employers help train and develop their staff	The UK Skills Passport provides the single, transparent communication channel to make sense of available qualifications	Only fund those qualifications employers deem meet their needs and are contained on the UK Skills Passport (DEL)	Employers to offer staff the Skills Passport (Trade bodies and employers)	Establish UK Skills Passport (People1st) Promote the UK Skills Passport (People1st)	Funding for priority qualifications highlighted by the sector should only be made available to those employers offering the Skills Passport (DEL)	Take into account that employers are offering their staff the Skills Passport in the quality accreditation (NITB)
By May 2007 establish a mechanism for approving course providers to deliver a list of approved providers	Develop an industry approval mechanism for providers to ensure quality delivery	Only fund accredited providers (DEL)	Employers to provide feedback on providers via an online ratings site	Through UK Skills passport, provide a feedback mechanism (People 1st)	Funding only provided to employers using accredited providers (DEL)	
By Sept 2007 extend the lecturers into industry programme to increase tutors knowledge of industry	Continue the successful Lecturers into industry programme beyond FE tutors, to include HE and schools	Increase funding to HE to increase those coming into industry Extend the FE means business to HE and Schools (DEL)	All employers offering passport to offer places for tutors	Through UK Skills passport show participating providers (People 1st)		

UPSKILLING THE WORKFORCE						
Target	Description	Government Policy	Industry Code of Practice	Effective Communication	Public Funding	Quality Assurance
By September 2009, all new chefs leaving further education will have completed the new Professional Chef Diploma at either levels 1, 2 or 3	The new Professional Chef Diplomas will deliver a robust entry route for chefs coming into the sector and will provide an effective means to reduce skill shortages	Only fund those qualifications employers deem meet their needs and are contained on The UK Skills Passport (DEL)	Employers to provide a two year support programme for new chefs completing a full-time chef programme that guarantees minimum hours, no split-shifts and ongoing training (Trade bodies and employers) Employers to provide guest lecturers, placements and guarantee jobs. (Trade bodies and employers)	Through the UK Skills Passport show how the new chef programmes helps progression (People1st) Through the UK Skills Passport show those colleges offering the new chef Diplomas (People1st)	Ensure the new chef programmes at level 2 and 3 for full-time delivery receive appropriate funding (DEL) Prioritise funding to increase the take-up of the new chef programmes at level 2 and 3 for work based learners at all ages (DEL)	Take into account that employers are offering their staff support after completing the qualification in the quality accreditation (NITB)

UPSKILLING THE WORKFORCE						
Target	Description	Government Policy	Industry Code of Practice	Effective Communication	Public Funding	Quality Assurance
By September 2008, establish the Approved Kitchen Practitioner programme for all food handlers	This target aims to raise the skill levels of new entrants and existing chefs	<p>Promote those employers offering the Approved Kitchen Practitioner Programme through existing promotional and communication channels (Food Standards Agency and Local Authorities)</p> <p>Emphasise accreditation of employers already providing training in order to promote portability and save employers costs (Food Standards Agency and Local Authorities)</p>	Employers put their food handlers through the Approved Kitchen Practitioner Programme (Trade bodies and employers)	<p>Through the UK Skills Passport promote those business putting their food handlers through the Approved Kitchen Practitioner Programme (People1st)</p> <p>Through the UK Skills Passport show providers delivering the Approved Kitchen Practitioner Programme (People1st)</p>	Prioritise funding to increase the take-up of the Approved Kitchen Practitioner Programme for work based learners at all ages (DEL)	Take into account that employers are putting their food handlers through the Approved Kitchen Practitioner Programme in the quality accreditation (NITB)

UPSILLING THE WORKFORCE						
Target	Description	Government Policy	Industry Code of Practice	Effective Communication	Public Funding	Quality Assurance
By January 2008, put in place a suite of customer service qualifications at level 2 and 3 that meet the needs of the sector.	The development of employer-led customer service qualifications at level 2 and 3 aim to tackle both skills shortages and gaps in customer service reported by employers	All sector businesses under government contract need to demonstrate that they are offering their front facing employers one of the new suite of qualifications	Employers to offer their front-facing employees one of the new suite of qualifications (Trade bodies and employers) Employers to ask for the one of the new suite of qualifications in job applications (Trade bodies and employers)	Through the UK Skills Passport promote those business offering their front facing employers one of the new suite of qualifications (People1st) Through the UK Skills Passport show providers delivering one of the new suite of qualifications (People1st)	Prioritise funding to increase the take-up of the new suite of qualifications for full-time and work based learners at all ages (DEL)	Take into account that employers are offering their front facing employers one of the new suite of qualifications in the quality accreditation (NITB)
Review of HE provision against world class management colleges by September 2008	A complete review of all management course content in line with world class provision e.g. Cornell, Lausanne	All HE provision and Foundation provision to be reviewed to ensure it is offering fit for purpose qualifications to meet the industry needs	Provide parameters for industry standards (People 1st) Industry to provide input on fit for purpose when consulted (Trade bodies and employers)	Through communications forum inform the industry bodies and employers how the review is progressing (People 1st)	Prioritise funding to complete the review (DEL)	

UPSKILLING THE WORKFORCE						
Target	Description	Government Policy	Industry Code of Practice	Effective Communication	Public Funding	Quality Assurance
By September 2008, have in place a suite of short courses developed to meet the industry needs	<p>Develop a suite of courses to meet business needs both on topics and length of the courses.</p> <p>Ensure the content is modular and can build to a recognized qualification.</p>	Colleges to be able to provide funded programmes at less than 10 hours in duration, no minimum time imposed on funded college courses as long as they meet the industry requirements criteria. (DEL)	Employers to work with colleges to agree what funded courses would be beneficial (Trade bodies and employers)	Promote the providers providing short courses through the skills passport (People 1st)	Prioritise funding to develop these courses and to encourage the take up (DEL)	

ATTRACTING BETTER CALIBRE CANDIDATES						
Target	Description	Government Policy	Industry Code of Practice	Effective Communication	Public Funding	Quality Assurance
By January 2009, introduce the new Undergraduate Management 'Apprentice' across the sector	The Undergraduate Management 'Apprentice' provides opportunities to develop management skills in a fun environment that aims to reduce the number of skill shortages for managers reported by employers	Promotion of the 'Apprentice' in Colleges and Universities (DEL)	Industry to sign up to a code of practice to provide students with good treatment and support students onto the 'Apprentice' (Trade bodies and employers) Employers to guarantee jobs to successful 'Apprentices' (Trade bodies and employers)	Through the UK Skills Strategy promote those business offering the 'Apprentice' (People1st) Through the UK Skills Passport show where the 'Apprentice' is being offered (People1st)	Provide resources to help the programme be established in order to support undergraduates develop employability skills (HE/FE and DEL)	
By September 2007 have recruitment methodology in place for colleges and universities	Industry to work with education to agree the pre screening and recruitment methodology used to recruit candidates onto courses, ensuring we improve the level of candidate being accepted	All colleges and universities need to work with the industry approved methodology (DEL)	Employers to work with education to put approved standards in place (Trade Bodies and employers)	Careers section in Skills Passport will promote and demonstrate the course admittance process for candidates (People 1st)	Provide resources to assist in developing the methodology and ensure sufficient resources in place to put it into practice (DEL)	

ATTRACTING BETTER CALIBRE CANDIDATES						
Target	Description	Government Policy	Industry Code of Practice	Effective Communication	Public Funding	Quality Assurance
Introduction of an inspirational “gold standard” Apprenticeship Programme to increase the number of apprentices signing up and improving the quality of apprenticeship programme for all parties.	<p>Development and introduction of apprenticeship programme that meets the needs of the industry, focusing on managers/leaders and chefs.</p> <p>The programme will offer clear progression to candidates and a support structure for employers</p> <p>All candidates will enter into a contract with employers and education</p>	Providers will agree to guiding principles and minimum standards (DEL)	<p>Industry will support the programme and agree to a contract with the employee and education.</p> <p>Industry will agree to guiding principles and standards.</p> <p>Permanent job offer will be made to those who successfully complete the programme</p> <p>(Trade Bodies and employers)</p>	<p>An approved provider and employer register, which promotes best practice employers to be provided through Skills Passport. (People 1st)</p> <p>Support and online guidance to be published and provided through skills passport. (People 1st)</p> <p>Promote the programme through Newsletters and websites (Trade bodies, employers and people 1st)</p>	Prioritise funding to develop the programme with industry and to increase the take-up of the programme at all ages (DEL)	
Put in place an industry promotions team by April 2007	Implement a team of staff to promote the industry at all levels throughout Northern Ireland, with the remit to improve the image, increase real awareness in the industry and make the industry a genuine career choice.	Careers advisors to support the activity of the promotions team. (DEL)	Industry to support initiatives run by the promotions team. (Trade Bodies and employers)	Activity and plans to be promoted and published through online newsletter and on Skills Passport (People 1st)	Funding for the promotions team as set out in the business plan (DEL)	Annual recognition of those who support and promote the industry as a career choice (People 1st)

ATTRACTING BETTER CALIBRE CANDIDATES						
Target	Description	Government Policy	Industry Code of Practice	Effective Communication	Public Funding	Quality Assurance
Introduce Skills competitions across NI by Sept 2008	Develop and implement a series of skills competitions to complement and develop those already in place.		Enhance the competitions at craft level through Industry Associations (Trade Bodies and Employers)	Promote competitions through Skills Passport and Communication Forums (People 1 st)		
Implement a cost effective “head start” scheme with a key focus on employability	Develop a programme for entry-level employees that is fit for purpose and immediately allows the employer to recognise the qualification received. This would include but not limited to Health and Safety, Food Hygiene, COOSH, Manual Handling, basic customer service	All employability schemes will be defined with industry (DEL)	Industry to agree the parameters of the scheme and commit to employing candidates who have successfully passed the scheme elements	Promote and track success of the candidates through Skills Passport	Prioritise funding towards the key skills as indicated by the industry, which will lead to a passport as part of the qualification	

RAISING OUR STANDARDS						
Target	Description	Government Policy	Industry Code of Practice	Effective Communication	Public Funding	Quality Assurance
By August 2007 have a suite of best practice case studies	Identify, develop and deliver a programme of best practice case studies to learn from other industries and countries	Promote the availability of information through Invest NI (Invest NI)	Identify with Invest NI the topics where the industry require case study seminars and information (Trade bodies and employers)	Promotion through Skills Passport and Industry trade publications. (Trade bodies, DEL and people 1st)		
Introduction of a programme of industry skill and trend master classes by July 2007	Identify and develop a programme of skill and trend master classes with trade suppliers, NI Education providers, overseas colleges and industry leaders. Links to the National Skills Academy	Promote the provision of master classes by colleges and universities (DEL)	Industry provide access to development classes to all staff and use the programme as part of the employees development programme (Trade bodies and employers)	Promotion through Skills Passport and Industry trade publications. (Trade bodies, DEL and people 1st)		

RAISING OUR STANDARDS						
Target	Description	Government Policy	Industry Code of Practice	Effective Communication	Public Funding	Quality Assurance
By September 2007, have in place a programme to assist businesses in setting minimum standards	Develop a support programme for businesses to improve their levels of customer service, with audit provisions built in	Business to have minimum standards in place within 6 months of receiving assistance (Invest NI)	Employers to agree what the minimum standards to improve customer service in NI should be (Trade bodies and employers)	Promote the availability of this service through the Skills Passport (People 1st)	Funding to assist business in setting up minimum standards. Prioritise funding to increase the take up and also programme only available to those supporting skills passport (Invest NI and DEL)	Take into account those with the scheme in place while conducting quality audits (NITB)
Introduction of an All Ireland Skills Forum by May 2007				Through Skills passport and communication forums update the industry on the outputs from the All Ireland Forum (People 1 st)		

SMALL BUSINESS CLUB						
Target	Description	Government Policy	Industry Code of Practice	Effective Communication	Public Funding	Quality Assurance
By January 2008, launch the Sector Small Business Club for small and micro operators	The Sector Small Business Club for small and micro operators provides sustained support for small and micro operators to receive the right support with minimum fuss and disturbance. This will help raise the skills levels and profitability of small and micro operators.	<p>Provide tax breaks and preferential loans for small and micro businesses that are members of the Sector Small Business Club</p> <p>Only implement support initiatives through the Sector Small Business Club</p>	<p>Small and micro businesses to become members of the Sector Small Business Club (Trade bodies and employers)</p>	<p>Through the UK Skills Passport promote those business offering their front facing employers one of the new suite of qualifications (People1st)</p> <p>Through the UK Skills Passport show the available training tools available to Small Business Club members (People1st)</p>	<p>Prioritise funding to increase the take-up of short business courses (Invest NI)</p> <p>Prioritise funding of short business courses to those employers who can demonstrate membership of the Sector Small Business Club (Invest NI)</p>	<p>Take into account that employers are members of the Sector Small Business Club in the quality accreditation (NITB)</p>

UPSKILLING THE WORKFORCE						
Target	Description	Government Policy	Industry Code of Practice	Effective Communication	Public Funding	Quality Assurance
By September 2009, all new chefs leaving further education will have completed the new Professional Chef Diploma at either levels 1, 2 or 3	The new Professional Chef Diplomas will deliver a robust entry route for chefs coming into the sector and will provide an effective means to reduce skill shortages	Only fund those qualifications employers deem meet their needs and are contained on The UK Skills Passport (DEL)	Employers to provide a two year support programme for new chefs completing a full-time chef programme that guarantees minimum hours, no split-shifts and ongoing training (Trade bodies and employers) Employers to provide guest lecturers, placements and guarantee jobs. (Trade bodies and employers)	Through the UK Skills Passport show how the new chef programmes helps progression (People1st) Through the UK Skills Passport show those colleges offering the new chef Diplomas (People1st)	Ensure the new chef programmes at level 2 and 3 for full-time delivery receive appropriate funding (DEL) Prioritise funding to increase the take-up of the new chef programmes at level 2 and 3 for work based learners at all ages (DEL)	Take into account that employers are offering their staff support after completing the qualification in the quality accreditation (NITB)

UPSKILLING THE WORKFORCE						
Target	Description	Government Policy	Industry Code of Practice	Effective Communication	Public Funding	Quality Assurance
By September 2008, establish the Approved Kitchen Practitioner programme for all food handlers	This target aims to raise the skill levels of new entrants and existing chefs	<p>Promote those employers offering the Approved Kitchen Practitioner Programme through existing promotional and communication channels (Food Standards Agency and Local Authorities)</p> <p>Emphasise accreditation of employers already providing training in order to promote portability and save employers costs (Food Standards Agency and Local Authorities)</p>	Employers put their food handlers through the Approved Kitchen Practitioner Programme (Trade bodies and employers)	<p>Through the UK Skills Passport promote those business putting their food handlers through the Approved Kitchen Practitioner Programme (People1st)</p> <p>Through the UK Skills Passport show providers delivering the Approved Kitchen Practitioner Programme (People1st)</p>	Prioritise funding to increase the take-up of the Approved Kitchen Practitioner Programme for work based learners at all ages (DEL)	Take into account that employers are putting their food handlers through the Approved Kitchen Practitioner Programme in the quality accreditation (NITB)

UPS KILLING THE WORKFORCE						
Target	Description	Government Policy	Industry Code of Practice	Effective Communication	Public Funding	Quality Assurance
By January 2008, put in place a suite of customer service qualifications at level 2 and 3 that meet the needs of the sector.	The development of employer-led customer service qualifications at level 2 and 3 aim to tackle both skills shortages and gaps in customer service reported by employers	All sector businesses under government contract need to demonstrate that they are offering their front facing employers one of the new suite of qualifications	Employers to offer their front-facing employees one of the new suite of qualifications (Trade bodies and employers) Employers to ask for the one of the new suite of qualifications in job applications (Trade bodies and employers)	Through the UK Skills Passport promote those business offering their front facing employers one of the new suite of qualifications (People1st) Through the UK Skills Passport show providers delivering one of the new suite of qualifications (People1st)	Prioritise funding to increase the take-up of the new suite of qualifications for full-time and work based learners at all ages (DEL)	Take into account that employers are offering their front facing employers one of the new suite of qualifications in the quality accreditation (NITB)
Review of HE provision against world class management colleges by September 2008	A complete review of all management course content in line with world class provision e.g. Cornell, Lausanne	All HE provision and Foundation provision to be reviewed to ensure it is offering fit for purpose qualifications to meet the industry needs	Provide parameters for industry standards (People 1st) Industry to provide input on fit for purpose when consulted (Trade bodies and employers)	Through communications forum inform the industry bodies and employers how the review is progressing (People 1st)	Prioritise funding to complete the review (DEL)	

UPSKILLING THE WORKFORCE						
Target	Description	Government Policy	Industry Code of Practice	Effective Communication	Public Funding	Quality Assurance
By September 2008, have in place a suite of short courses developed to meet the industry needs	<p>Develop a suite of courses to meet business needs both on topics and length of the courses.</p> <p>Ensure the content is modular and can build to a recognized qualification.</p>	Colleges to be able to provide funded programmes at less than 10 hours in duration, no minimum time imposed on funded college courses as long as they meet the industry requirements criteria. (DEL)	Employers to work with colleges to agree what funded courses would be beneficial (Trade bodies and employers)	Promote the providers providing short courses through the skills passport (People 1st)	Prioritise funding to develop these courses and to encourage the take up (DEL)	



Annex B

PEOPLE 1ST ACTION PLAN FOR NORTHERN IRELAND 2008/09

Our Vision for the Sector

The Hospitality, Leisure, Travel and Tourism Industries deliver world class customer experience and productivity through their skilled people.

Our Mission

To support the Hospitality, leisure, Travel and Tourism Sector in developing the right numbers of people with the right skills and qualifications at the right time.

Strategic Objectives:

The four strategic objectives designed to deliver our Strategic Intent are:

1. Reforming qualifications

Ensuring that there are world class core qualifications in management and leadership, customer service and craft skills. This will enable the public funding of programmes that industry value.

2. Stimulating world class skills delivery

Signposting excellent training providers and provision through the Good Provider Guide and creating a new benchmark. This will increase the effectiveness and impact of skills delivery and help to stimulate industry demand and investment in skills from employers.

3. Attracting and developing high quality people

Building transparent career routes from school through to the work place.

4. Delivering a skills communication system

Enabling employers, employees, and new entrants to access the skills, qualifications and funding support they need. We will match skilled workers with good employers through the Good Employer Guide to grow the self esteem and loyalty of the workforce.

Strategic Objective 1: Reforming Qualifications

Objective

Ensuring that there are world class core qualifications in management and leadership, customer service and craft skills. This will enable the public funding of programmes that industry value.

Target

- Gold Standard customer service training developed
- Step change in management and supervisory qualifications
- Better trained chefs through new industry standard qualifications
- The right qualifications attracting the right funding
- Registered kitchen professionals

Activity	Measurable outputs	Timescale
NOS Reviews in Hospitality Supervision, Events, Travel & Tourism & Food processing & cooking	Target businesses and engagement plan. A suite of revised NOS in place	July 2009
Development of the qualification/learning programmes outlined in the SQS and put in place suitable delivery mechanisms	Agreement in place with funding bodies as to which qualifications need to be prioritised	March 2009
Revise Assessment Strategy	Consultation completed	March 2009
Review the apprenticeship frameworks taking into consideration requirements for pre-apprenticeships & adult apprenticeships	Pre apprenticeship framework & Guidance on adult apprenticeships developed. Technical certificates developed for gambling & hospitality supervision	September 2008 April 2009 August 2009

Strategic Objective 2: Stimulating world class skills delivery

Objective

Signposting excellent training providers and provision through the Good Provider Guide and creating a new benchmark. This will increase the effectiveness and impact of skills delivery and help to stimulate industry demand and investment in skills from employers.

Target

Ensuring quality delivery, training and quality assurance measures are in place

Activity	Measurable outputs	Timescale
UK Good Provider Guide to include NI network of training providers	Guide fully launched	October 2008
Identifying Best Practice in the Quality of Assessment	Best practice report developed	March 2009
Assessing the use of Realistic Working Environments (RWE's)	Report produced	March 2009
Identify Best Practice in Apprenticeship delivery	Best practice guidelines developed	March 2009
Support the review of the NI Skills Strategy scheduled for 08/09 and develop a response on behalf of employers	Co-ordinate industry discussion and submit written response to final consultation	Ongoing through 08/09
Continue to work with LSDA NI to support the Lecturers into Industry initiative for the sector & the plans to extend this to the private training provider network	Placements tailored to focus on key skill priority areas	Ongoing
Work with ETI, DEL, LSDA and other key partners to take forward key actions arising from the ETI Conference event: Improving Work-Based Training in Hospitality & Tourism"	Documented and agreed activity	Plan by December 2008 and ongoing thereafter
Investigate the potential to introduce a Hospitality Educators Programme across the FE and training provider network to address the practical and developmental needs of those in senior positions in hospitality & tourism education & training	Proposal developed with key partners	To commence October 2008 subject to funding being secured
Investigate the potential to introduce an Employer of Choice Programme aimed at helping employers implement Best Practice recruitment & retention practices.	Proposal developed with key partners	To commence October 2008 subject to funding being secured



Work with LSDA through subject development days for the provider network to support the roll out of the three Professional Cookery Diplomas	Strategy to support the implementation of the Diplomas	Ongoing through 08/09
Investigate the cost of labour turnover in the travel industry and the role that promoting training the use of training and qualifications can play in reducing labour turnover.	A report on the benefits of using training in the travel industry and the development of 1 NI Case study.	October 2008
Investigate the cost of labour turnover in the hotel industry and the role that promoting training the use of training and qualifications can play in reducing labour turnover.	A report on the benefits of using training in the hotel industry.	March 2009

Strategic Objective 3: Attracting and developing high quality people

Objective

Building transparent career routes from school through to the work place. Ensuring opportunities available across the sector are clearly understood to a range of potential entrants by ensuring that those involved in providing careers advice are using the UKSP.

Target

- Ensuring that there are robust pathways encouraging people to acquire the skills industry needs
- Attracting diverse labour pools

Activity	Measurable outputs	Timescale
Investigate the potential to introduce a Junior Chef Academy model for Northern Ireland in conjunction with key partners	Proposal developed with key partners	Commence October 08 subject to funding being secured
Work with DEL Careers Advisors and other organisations involved in providing careers advice to utilise the UKSP as the source of information on skills and qualification requirements and opportunities available within the sector.	MOU in place	Ongoing
Support Belfast City Council in taking forward the HARTE project which will deliver pre-employment training for the hospitality sector across the city	Employability training programme defined by sector	Commence Sept 2008 & ongoing
Work with key partners in NI to explore how pilot activity taking place Nationally with the Licence to Work employability project can inform the New Steps to Work Programme	Action plan agreed	April 2009
Partner with CCEA and other key partners to deliver a sector focused event as part of its Employability Fest building on the success of the event this year.	Activity agreed	April 2009



Strategic Objective 4: Delivering a skills communication system

Objective

Enabling employers, employees, and new entrants to access the skills, qualifications and funding support they need. We will match skilled workers with good employers through the Good Employer Guide to grow the self esteem and loyalty of the workforce.

Target

- UK Skills Passport (UKSP) –a central resource for skills information
- Enabling more small businesses to access public funded support

Activity	Measurable outputs	Timescale
Continue to take forward the promotion and trial of UKSP as a means to support CPD activities across the sector	Trial activity delivered as per contract	Trial activity complete by March 09 (subject to extension being agreed by DEL)
Formation of an All Ireland Tourism Skills Forum to promote cross border collaboration at a strategic level on current and future skills, quality & productivity issues impacting the hospitality & tourism sector.	Group established with chair appointed and terms of reference agreed	Initial meeting of forum by end of November 2008 with 2 mtgs per year thereafter
Development and regular updating of NI specific content on the People 1 st & UKSP sites	Development of NI specific content/pages	December 08 then ongoing refreshment
Identify and secure suitable high profile engagement opportunities for People 1 st participation- eg sponsorship opportunities through NI Tourism Awards & Janus Awards	High profile presence with clear branding and marketing collateral at relevant events	Target 2 events by May 09
Engage with relevant media to increase coverage of sector skills issues and the profile of People 1st	High quality press coverage, editorial and articles in key NI press and business publications	Minimum of 4 articles published per year
Actively engage with the Assembly Committees, MLA's, political parties, government departments and other key stakeholders to influence skills policy and relevant strategies in support of the sector's SSA	Stakeholder engagement plan	August 08 & ongoing refreshment
Develop & enhance existing & new channels of communication to provide information to the demand and supply side on a regular basis.	Communications & engagement plan	August 08 & ongoing refreshment
Conduct future skills needs research for sector	Skills Needs report	March 2009