

## SKILLS ACTION PLAN (DRAFT)

### Vision

To increase the productivity and performance of England's tourism businesses through investing in the skills of the workforce, which will contribute to 5% growth, year on year, in the England tourism market by 2020.

### Objectives

1. To motivate employers to improve performance through investing in the skills of their workforce.
2. To increase awareness of, and access to, the skills solutions and products that are available to employers.
3. To raise skills levels in the sector by:
  - a. Targeting new entrants and equipping them with the appropriate skills.
  - b. Improving customer service skills.
  - c. Delivering qualifications and apprenticeship programmes that reflect industry needs.

### Why are skills important?

If the visitor economy is to grow, investment in the people that work in the industry is crucial. The people that make up the industry's workforce are in fact the product and are the most important tourism asset. They must be supported, developed and equipped with the skills to deliver the best possible experience for visitors. If businesses want to increase their productivity and performance, investment in their people (and therefore their product) is essential. To do this effectively businesses need to be able to easily recruit people with the skills they need, and have access to the right training solutions to develop the skills of their existing staff.

Addressing the skills needs of the sector is important for:

- **Business** - for without a skilled workforce, businesses will not be able to function effectively, maximise their delivery, grow or compete with one another or with international competitors;
- **Local destinations** - as visitors are less likely to return if they have experienced poor quality service. Similarly, without people with the necessary skills, businesses will find it more difficult to perform effectively and therefore increase visitor spend;
- **Government** - the sector employs approximately one in 14 workers across the working population. It is a significant job creator and it is set to grow. The sector can help social mobility as it provides a career structure that enables those who enter the sector in frontline positions to progress into higher skilled and management roles.
- **Sector growth** - by 2017 the sector will require an additional 290,000 managers, 61,000 chefs and 400,000 front facing roles from 2007 levels.

## Challenges and opportunities

- **The sector is one of very few areas of the economy which has continued to recruit during the economic downturn** reflecting the fact that the sector is easy to enter, offers diverse employment opportunities across a wide age range and offers a multitude of flexible working opportunities.
- **Employers report that they recognise the value of training to raise the morale of their staff.** This is linked to staff retention, as employees feel more valued by the company and believe that they have opportunities to progress and develop within the business.
- **Research suggests that labour turnover is annually costing the sector £414m.** In the past 12 months, over half of sector employers in England have recruited staff (57 per cent).
- **Hospitality, leisure, travel and tourism businesses have the highest collective training expenditure of all sectors,** with total annual expenditure amounting to £4,242m. This equates to an average spend of £2,600 per employee. However, much of this expenditure is owing to high labour turnover rather than on-going development.
- **Close to a fifth (17 percent) of hospitality, leisure, travel and tourism employers reported vacancies in 2009,** while five per cent reported having vacancies that were hard to fill.
- **Some 66 per cent of all hard to fill vacancies were as a result of a lack of available candidates with the right skills, qualifications or work experience.** To address this issue, clear development pathways into the sector, especially for higher skilled roles such as managers and chefs, are needed.
- **The lack of structured development in itself creates higher turnover;** this creates a vicious circle.
- **It is widely acknowledged that more people who want to pursue a career, as opposed to a job, need to be attracted to work in the sector.** Yet, clearer progression pathways to ensure staff are receiving appropriate training once they enter the sector are also required.
- **Career progression pathways are weak in certain parts of the sector,** in particular across the hospitality industries, and is a contributing factor to on-going skill shortages for managers, but also for the continual skills gaps for chefs and managers originally identified in 2005.
- **The priority skills shortages that need to be addressed to support the sector's growth are chef skills, customer service skills and managerial skills.** These skills shortages, originally identified in 2005, remain the priority and research confirms that they are likely to intensify in the future.

(Source: People 1<sup>st</sup> State of the Nation Report 2011)

## Considering skills across the Strategic Framework for Tourism

Ensuring that skills needs are effectively addressed is critically important across all aspects of the Strategic Framework. 'Skills' has therefore been identified as a cross-cutting Framework theme, reflecting the importance of ensuring the tourism sector maximises the potential of its people. For

instance, to realise the vision of the 'Welcome' Action Plan, which is to provide a consistently warm and convivial welcome, staff require certain key skills and knowledge.

This Action Plan sets the national framework for addressing skills needs in the tourism sector but recognises that solutions may need to be tailored to local circumstances and requirements. The nature of the skills issues and solutions may differ depending on the geographical area, the business or the individual. People 1<sup>st</sup> research shows that in coastal tourism, recruiting skilled staff for the limited tourism season is more challenging than in urban settings, whereas staff turnover is more acute in larger towns and cities than in rural areas. Similarly, the skills needs of managers in the events industry will not be the same as other parts of the sector. Understanding these differences is important, but many solutions already exist across the sector that can be used and adapted – they need to be easily accessible and communicated effectively to employers and employees.

### **Maximising existing solutions**

Over the past four years, the National Skills Strategy for hospitality, leisure, travel and tourism (published in 2006) has ensured that many of the solutions required by sector employers are in place. People 1<sup>st</sup>, the sector skills council for hospitality, passenger transport and travel and tourism, has been working hard to build on the work to date and to simplify and rationalise the many solutions available to sector employers and employees. This includes building a network of national learning providers and local colleges who have long experience of working with the sector. These providers can deliver national qualifications and apprenticeships, but also bespoke training programmes.

However, the skills sector remains complex and the delivery of skills solutions has been subject to changes in the delivery landscape and Government policy.

This Action Plan aims to simplify and demystify the skills agenda and landscape and includes actions to ensure that employers and tourism professionals are aware of, and can access, solutions nationally and locally. It focuses on the key solutions now available to employers as follows:

#### **[www.uksp.co.uk](http://www.uksp.co.uk)**

This tool was created in 2006 to help employers find the right training and staff. Since then it has been regularly updated to contain up-to-the-minute advice and information. The site enables employers to find specific training, ascertain whether programmes are funded and whether they are available locally. The site also enables employers to find job seekers and identify how other employers are accessing specific training programmes.

#### **Qualification and Career Development Pathways**

Since 2009, over 200 sector-specific qualifications have been removed to make it easier for employers to understand what is available. As a result of this rationalisation, there are clearer development pathways to ensure new entrants can better understand how they can develop the skills to work in specific occupations. The work of industry bodies is also helping to drive up demand for these programmes and promote the sector as a career destination. For example, Springboard UK's Future Chef, the Academy of Culinary Art's Adopt a School programme and Compass Group's Junior Chef Academy.

#### **Apprenticeships**

The sector's apprenticeship strategy was launched by the Tourism Minister, John Penrose, in February 2011. This outlines the sector's commitment and vision for apprenticeships. There are nearly 19,000 apprentices working in the sector and much has been done to increase the robustness

of the content and delivery. New higher apprenticeships for those working in higher skilled or management occupations are due to be released in 2012 and pre-apprenticeships will also be developed.

### **Support and advice for small businesses**

Traditionally, the sector has received support from both Business Link and regional and local agencies. Changes to the regional and local infrastructure across England means that this support will change. VisitEngland has worked to identify sector-specific resources, such as those previously made available by regional bodies, and where possible signpost from VisitEngland's industry website. A new Entrepreneur Boot camp is also being piloted in London to help provide support for those looking to set up a business within the sector.

### **Customer Service Training Programmes**

In 2011, People 1<sup>st</sup> gained the UK rights for the WorldHost customer service programme that was developed by Tourism British Columbia and was successfully used prior to the 2010 Winter Olympic and Paralympic Games in Vancouver. People 1<sup>st</sup> launched a campaign to train an additional 200,000 sector employees in customer service before the 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games. This has received the support from a large number of employers as well as national and local agencies.

WorldHost's Principles of Hosting 2012 course has been awarded the Inspire Mark by LOCOG. This programme gives learners the skills and techniques to understand their role in creating magical experiences and lasting memories for visitors, athletes and spectators by 'making the difference' and going beyond their personal best.

The established Welcome to Excellence suite of courses now includes 'Welcome Host Gold', which is available as a City and Guilds Level 2 qualification. This course has been tailored for a number of destinations such as Kent, Blackpool and Cornwall by including a specific local product knowledge module. The course, which has been awarded formal ITT (Institute of Travel and Tourism) recognition, has also been delivered to over 2,000 staff at Gatwick Airport.

### **Promoting Careers in the Sector**

Springboard UK has over the past 21 years promoted career opportunities within the sector. They do this through a large range of innovative activities and competitions. They are a charitable trust supported by sector employers. Their work complements other bodies which have various initiatives to promote sector careers. The work to streamline qualifications and develop progression routes into the sector helps new entrants understand the opportunities available. [www.uksp.co.uk](http://www.uksp.co.uk) shows the various pathways available and has many video clips from those working in the sector. People 1<sup>st</sup> and Springboard UK have convened a group of employers and partners - the *Hospitality 2020 Group* - to stimulate co-ordinated action to address the short-fall of new entrants required between now and 2020.

**Objective 1: To motivate employers to improve performance through investing in the skills of their workforce**

ACTION	LEAD PARTNERS (Where appropriate)	DELIVERY PARTNERS	OUTCOME OR SUCCESS MEASURE
i. Demonstrate and promote the financial and business benefits of training and other skills interventions.	People 1st	VisitEngland Professional bodies Employers Learning providers DMOs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase in employers offering staff training and other skills solutions.</li> <li>• Employers made aware of available funding for specific qualifications and programmes via <a href="http://www.uksp.co.uk">www.uksp.co.uk</a>.</li> <li>• Case studies produced to show the benefits of training.</li> </ul>

**Objective 2: To increase awareness of, and access to, the skills solutions and products that are available to employers**

ACTION	LEAD PARTNERS (Where appropriate)	DELIVERY PARTNERS	OUTCOME OR SUCCESS MEASURE
i. Promote <a href="http://www.uksp.co.uk">www.uksp.co.uk</a> as the portal for employers to access information, advice, case studies on training and qualifications, where they are delivered across the sector.	People1st	Professional bodies Learning providers Employers DMOs	Increase in employers using <a href="http://www.uksp.co.uk">www.uksp.co.uk</a> .
ii. Identify and recognise the delivery of quality training and qualifications so that employers can easily find suitable provision.	National Skills Academy for Hospitality People 1 <sup>st</sup>	Learning providers Employers	Kitemarking scheme in place that identifies quality training programmes with proven track record.
iii. Pilot Entrepreneur Boot camp to support those looking to set up a business in the sector.	Exemplas	People 1st	New businesses have access to support and guidance before entering the sector, reducing business failure rate by 1%.

### Objective 3a: Targeting new entrants and equipping them with the appropriate skills

ACTION	LEAD PARTNERS (Where appropriate)	DELIVERY PARTNERS	OUTCOME OR SUCCESS MEASURE
i. Industry promotion and endorsement of specific training and qualifications that deliver the skills employers require.	Professional bodies	People 1st	Students and employers are promoting their professionalism through membership of professional bodies and commitment to licence to practice schemes.
ii. Promote and secure support for development pathways into the sector e.g. Springboard UK's Future Chef.	Hospitality 2020 Group, People 1 <sup>st</sup> /Springboard UK	Employers Professional bodies	Increased sustainability and impact of current initiatives.
iii. Develop pre-apprenticeship programmes to prepare individuals effectively for their apprenticeship programmes.	People 1st	Employers Learning providers Awarding Organisations	Increase in people progressing onto sector apprenticeships and then completing their programmes due to sound preparation.
iv. Promote careers and entry pathways through ensuring that individuals have access to engaging and dynamic information, advice and guidance on sector careers.	People 1 <sup>st</sup> Springboard UK	Professional and trade bodies Employers Learning providers	Industry partners signposting <a href="http://www.uksp.co.uk">www.uksp.co.uk</a> from their websites.

### Objective 3b: Improving customer service skills

ACTION	LEAD PARTNERS (Where appropriate)	DELIVERY PARTNERS	OUTCOME OR SUCCESS MEASURE
i. Increase business engagement and take up of quality customer service training programmes, assisting staff to offer a warm and convivial welcome e.g. WorldHost, Welcome to Excellence. (in support of the Welcome Action Plan).	People 1 <sup>st</sup> ; Tourism South East	VisitEngland GoSkills Skillsmart Retail Creative and Cultural Skills SkillsActive	Increase in the take up of quality customer service programmes.  200,000 sector employees to be trained in WorldHost customer service.

		Employers Learning providers Professional and trade bodies DMOs	
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### Objective 3c: Delivering qualifications and apprenticeship programmes that meet industry needs

<b>ACTION</b>	<b>LEAD PARTNERS (Where appropriate)</b>	<b>DELIVERY PARTNERS</b>	<b>OUTCOME OR SUCCESS MEASURE</b>
i. Ensure apprenticeship programmes are robust and reflect sector needs by on-going review of effectiveness and feedback from employers.	People 1st	Employers Learning providers Awarding Organisations	Increase in the number of sector employers offering apprenticeships owing to greater access to relevant apprenticeship frameworks.  Increase in the take-up of apprenticeships across the People 1 <sup>st</sup> sector (i.e. Hospitality, passenger transport and travel and tourism) from 23,000 to 30,000.
ii. Increase completion rates of apprenticeships by identifying and sharing best practice.	People 1st	Association of Learning Providers, DeVere Academy	Percentage of learners completing apprenticeships in hospitality increases from 56 per cent of those who start to 70 per cent by 2014.
iii. Develop the business case for apprenticeship programmes for management and higher skilled roles in the sector.	People 1st	Employers Learning providers Awarding Organisations	Increased number of those in higher skilled and management roles taking up an apprenticeship.

## **Questions for Consultation**

1. Do you support the overall objectives, context and key issues highlighted in the Action Plan which have helped to steer the more detailed actions?
2. Are there any key actions missing from the Action Plan and / or do you have any alternatives to suggest that are realistic and achievable?
3. Do the delivery partners make sense or are there other organisations that could help deliver any of the actions which are not referred to?
4. What role can Local Enterprise Partnerships and Destination Management Organisations play in the delivery of skills solutions?
5. What can you do to support the delivery of this Action Plan? Would you be prepared to lead on any of the actions?
6. Are there any case studies or good examples you can share that relate to and support the actions outlined?
7. Are there any other comments you wish to make in relation to taking this (or these) Action Plans forward?