

## Introduction

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

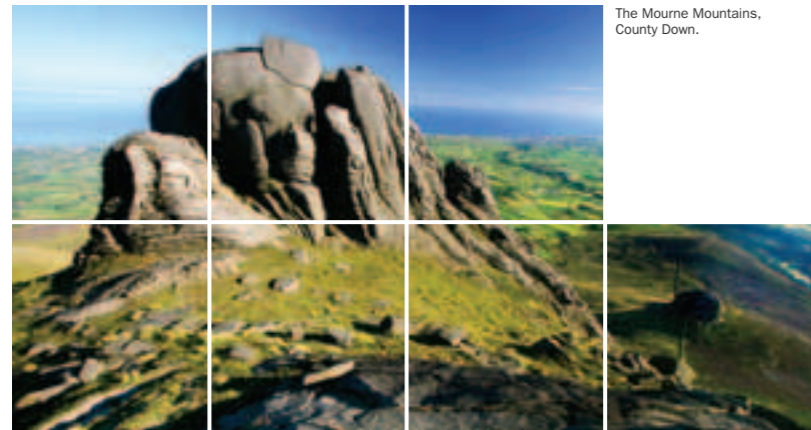
### The Group is made up of representatives from:

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

### The work of the Group covers three main areas:

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

The Group has established a short term, action focused plan which has identified additional actions which will complement the work currently being taken forward aimed at meeting the skills challenges that the sector faces.



The Mourne Mountains, County Down.

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Ciara McGhee and Anthony Murray from Belfast Metropolitan College with Minister for Employment and Learning.

“This Action Plan comes at an important time for the industry and coincides with the work of the Northern Ireland Tourist Board who will shortly be going out to consultation on their Tourism Strategy. The Hospitality and Tourism Skills Action Plan which has been agreed by a group consisting of many of the sector’s key stakeholders and chaired by Botanic Inns’ Managing Director, Stephen Magorrian, aims to address the current and future skills needs of the sector.

As such, the plan focuses on the need to increase the number of people with chef skills, to build on the management and leadership talents within the industry and improve the customer service skills of front line staff.

The Hospitality and Tourism sector has ambitious plans for future growth which I am determined will not be hampered by a shortage of skilled people. The collaborative approach advocated in the Action Plan, where employers, Government, the colleges and universities are all at the table, is the key to its success. I would like to take this opportunity to commend their work, which I fully support.”

Sir Reg Empey,  
Minister for Employment and Learning

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Scenic images courtesy of The Northern Ireland Tourist Board.

## Future Skills Action Plan for Hospitality and Tourism





Andrew Provan, winner of the Northern Ireland Cookery Competition pictured with the Minister and chef and competition organiser, Sean Owens.



Students taking part in the Junior Chefs Academy at South West Regional College.

## Theme 1 Skills provision

The Group will take forward a number of actions which will help to improve the skills of the workforce.

### These will include:

- supporting the rollout of the Professional Cookery Diploma, Level 1 and 2 across at least three colleges. (Already available at Belfast Metropolitan College and South Eastern Regional College);
- piloting a fast track conversion course which will enable suitable applicants to complete the Professional Cookery Diploma at Level 2;
- supporting the extension of the Junior Chefs Academy, thereby offering people (12 -16 year olds) the chance to discover a passion for cooking to attract and develop young talent into the sector;
- continuing to encourage employers in the sector to use the Apprenticeship programme to upskill their staff;
- establishing a Hospitality Educators Programme that aims to develop best practice training and education approaches to support the employability of students in Hospitality and Tourism;
- encouraging more businesses from the Hospitality and Tourism sector to avail of the Department for Employment and Learning's existing Management and Leadership suite of courses to improve the skills of their staff; and
- supporting the development and delivery of sector specific customer services qualifications aimed at those people already in the industry.

## Theme 2 Sector attractiveness

With a view to increasing the number of people entering the sector, the Group will:

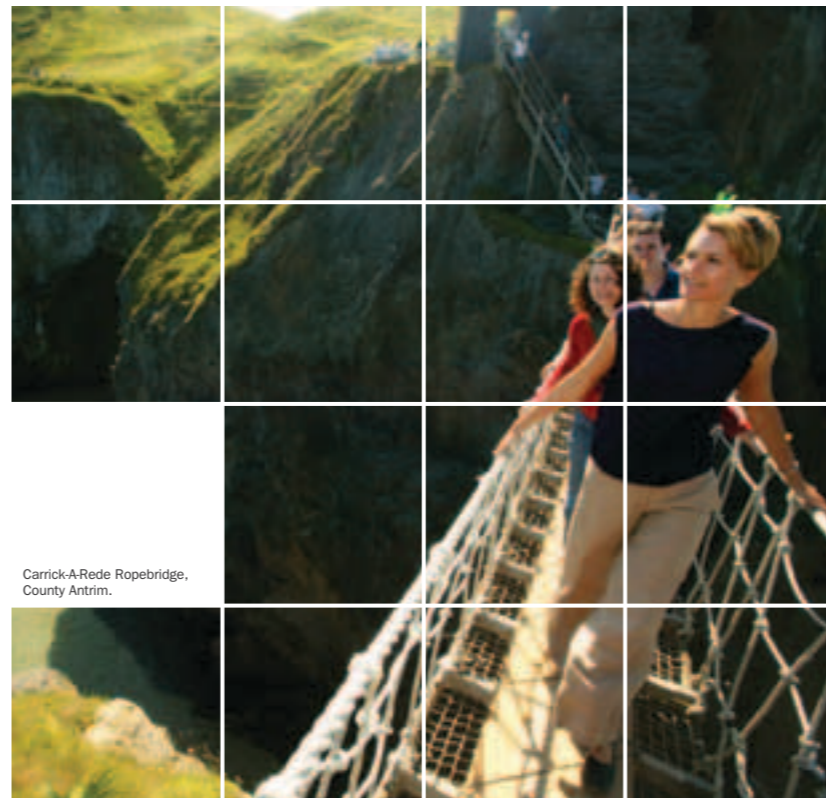
- develop a marketing campaign to highlight the benefits and career opportunities which exist within the sector;
- work with the Northern Ireland Careers Service and encourage utilisation of the UK Skills Passport as a source of information on skills and qualification requirements and opportunities available within the sector;
- support those who provide careers advice and guidance through a series of five regional careers events set in the hospitality and tourism industry;
- develop a Tourism Awareness Programme as an educational resource for teachers to use in schools. This will be linked in with the curriculum and will aim to improve the employment status of the tourism industry; and
- develop an Ambassadors Programme to put in place a network of ambassadors from the industry who will participate in promotional activities and careers events and enhance the appeal of tourism as a provider of good quality employment in Northern Ireland.

## Theme 3 Coordination and communication

The Group agrees that there is a need to better coordinate new and existing work in the skills arena with stakeholders.

### It will:

- promote the UK Skills Passport which is a skills and communication system that will enable employers, employees and new entrants to access information on skills, qualifications and funding support they need;
- work to increase knowledge of the Future Skills Action Group for Hospitality and Tourism Action Plan within the sector and to encourage support from employers;
- work within the existing structure of the Workforce Development Forums to raise the profile of the Hospitality and Tourism sector at regional level; and
- to increase the links between industry and Further Education through a pilot of the Industry into Education programme.



Carrick-A-Rede Ropebridge, County Antrim.

“Our people are a key element of the new Northern Ireland visitor experience. I welcome the Skills Action Plan which will play a crucial role in helping to ensure that our workforce has the skills necessary to help us achieve our ambitious tourism strategy.”

–Howard Hastings, NITB

“Having completed my Apprenticeship at NVQ Level 3 in Hospitality Supervision I have been lucky enough to achieve career success as a Catering Manager with Malone House, Belfast. The ApprenticeshipsNI programme was an excellent way of helping me to put theory into practice and it enabled me to see how theory should be applied within the workplace. My experience has given me the confidence to take on board what I learnt and to bring this to the workplace and share with others. I would recommend the Apprenticeship route to anyone as it has helped me to map out a career path in an area I enjoy.”

–Rafal Cherezniak, Apprentice of the Year 2009

“We welcome the Future Skills Action Plan for Tourism and Hospitality and look forward to working with Department for Employment and Learning and other partners in its implementation. A truly collaborative approach and focused delivery of appropriate interventions to both upskill the workforce and promote the future employment potential of the industry is critical to meeting the current and future skills needs of our industry.”

–Roisin McKee, Northern Ireland Manager, People 1st – the Sector Skills Council for Hospitality, Leisure, Travel & Tourism

“The Action Plan is undoubtedly great news for the Hospitality and Tourism sector. It will attract and develop young talent into the sector which is vital in securing the future needs of the industry. This is an exciting time for the Hospitality and Tourism sector and it is crucial that employers, government and colleges all work together to ensure its success.”

–Stephen Magorrian, Managing Director, Botanic Inns Ltd and Chair of Future Skills Action Group for Hospitality and Tourism



Belfast Castle, County Antrim.