

## Special Edition November 09

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Welcome to this special edition of the Skills Newsletter which comes at a very important time for the industry. The Northern Ireland Tourist Board are soon to go out to consultation on their Tourism Strategy which sets out ambitious plans for the future growth of the sector which I am determined will not be hampered by a shortage of skilled people.



For this reason, my Department formed a Future Skills Action Group in late 2008 to identify and address the current and future skills needs of the sector. Using Labour Market Information and feedback from employers, the group established a Skills Action Plan which focuses specifically on the need to increase the number of people with chef skills, build on the management and leadership talents within the industry and improve the customer service skills of front line staff. I officially launched this plan on 5 November.

The Future Skills Action Group, chaired by Stephen Magorrian (Managing Director of Botanic Inns), is made up of employers, representatives from Higher Education and Further Education, the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment, Invest Northern Ireland, People 1st, the Northern Ireland Hotels Federation and the Northern Ireland Tourist Board. Their work and commitment has been invaluable over recent months and I look forward to seeing many of the programmes detailed in the Action Plan coming to fruition.

Whilst the implementation phase of the [Action Plan](#) is being taken forward by a small project team, it is important that all of the sector's stakeholders play their part. You can download a copy of the Plan at [www.delni.gov.uk](http://www.delni.gov.uk). Should you want to find out more please contact Sian McCleave on 028 9044 1778 or email [sian.mccleave@delni.gov.uk](mailto:sian.mccleave@delni.gov.uk).

**SIR REG EMPEY MLA** – Minister for Employment and Learning

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### The Tourism Strategy for Northern Ireland

The [Northern Ireland Tourist Board](#) in partnership with the Department of Enterprise Trade and Investment has established a Strategy Development Steering Group to oversee the development of the new vision for tourism in Northern Ireland. The new Strategy and Plan for Action will provide a clear, inspiring, evidence based vision and strategic framework for the development of Northern Ireland's tourism industry through to the year 2020. The Tourism Strategy for Northern Ireland will be developed by the Steering Group in consultation with the tourism industry. Pre-work was undertaken to review the available research, intelligence and insights and a series of industry workshops were delivered in June 2009. Further to the workshops a discussion document and draft action plan were produced and these were tested through an online research questionnaire with the 16 questions put to 2,000 industry partners. The research covered all strategic elements of product, market and industry development including a specific question around the need to focus on developing a competitive attractive industry as there are gaps in Northern Ireland's experience. 91% of those who participated in the survey agreed or strongly agreed with the statement that if we are to achieve our growth potential by 2020 we must address the gaps in our industry skills. The next stage in the process will involve Minister Foster issuing a draft strategy for full consultation. This strategy will include a detailed 3 year action plan.



### The Future Skills Action Group



*Stephen Magorrian, Managing Director of Botanic Inns Ltd is the current Chair of the [Future Skills Action Group for Hospitality and Tourism](#). "I am delighted with the focus which is being put onto the hospitality business in Northern Ireland. Tourism is growing in the Province and has the potential to provide strong economic growth. Our hospitality industry must be ready to handle this growth and indeed contribute to it. We must continue to*

*develop our service standards and we must attract the right people into the industry and support them through their career development. I have no doubt that this group, made up as it is of all the major influencers will establish interventions to ensure that these aspirations become a reality. There is a lot of work to be done over the coming months, we will need the support of all in the industry, but I'm confident that we will see the benefits."*

### **Regional Career Events 2010**

As part of the Action Plan, the Learning and Skills Development Agency NI are planning a series of regional Career events open to Careers teachers and advisers to increase awareness of work roles and job opportunities in this vibrant and growing industry. The five events will take place between January and April 2010 and will be set in successful Hospitality and Tourism businesses across the Province. All delegates will have the opportunity to:

- hear how strategic developments in Tourism are driving a growing and dynamic industry;
- gain an insight into the world of hospitality and tourism to see firsthand the many opportunities that are open to learners;
- listen to experiences of company employees and gain an understanding of the skills, attributes and qualifications for a career in Hospitality and Tourism; and
- increase knowledge and awareness of career routes, salary bands and job roles.

These events are particularly aimed at Careers Teachers in Post-Primary education, Careers Advisers in Further Education colleges, Careers Advisers from Education and Library Boards, Careers Advisers within the Northern Ireland Careers Service, EGSA and ICG members and Heads of Home Economics. For further information about these events please contact Maggie Robinson at the Learning and Skills Development Agency by telephone on 028 9044 7708 or by email [mrobinson@lsda.org.uk](mailto:mrobinson@lsda.org.uk)

### **Made not Born**

Since the announcement in February 2009 that the Department for Employment and Learning would fund approved Management and Leadership courses at a rate of 100%, large numbers of businesses and organisations in the Hospitality and Tourism sector have availed of training. In particular, the Management and Leadership Development Programme, which comprises a comprehensive range of off-the-shelf training solutions aimed at first line, middle and senior management levels, has been popular amongst organisations in this sector. The team in the Department offers the opportunity to focus on sectoral needs if there are sufficient numbers wishing to undertake a particular course which may suit smaller businesses. For further information about the suite of Management and Leadership courses contact Conor McCartan on 028 9044 1785 or email [conor.mccartan@delni.gov.uk](mailto:conor.mccartan@delni.gov.uk)

### **Junior Chef's Academy scoop Award**

The Junior Chefs' Academy programme introduced in Northern Ireland by People 1st with leading contract caterers Compass Group and supported by the Department for Employment and Learning has been awarded Hospitality Training



Zara Dempsey, Roisin McKee, Amanda Ramsey and Roisin Sloan

Initiative of the Year at the inaugural Licensed Catering News (LCN) Awards in Belfast. The Awards organized by LCN, the trade publication for the hospitality industry since 1940, aim to keep standards at the optimum 'five star' level while recognising and rewarding professionalism and good business practice. The Junior Chefs' Academy programme for 12 to 16

year olds seeks to discover talented young people with a passion for food who with skills training will meet the future needs of the hospitality industry locally. For further information about Junior Chef Academy email [contactus@people1st.co.uk](mailto:contactus@people1st.co.uk)



### Ever considered employing an Apprentice?

One of the actions identified by the Future Skills Action Group looks to encourage employers in the hospitality and tourism sector to use the Apprenticeship scheme to upskill their staff. If you are not familiar with the scheme, it may come as a surprise to know that there are over 10,000 Apprentices in training in Northern Ireland and around 900 of these are in the Hospitality and Tourism sector.



Rafal Cherezniak (pictured left) scooped the Apprentice of the Year award in May 2009 having completed his NVQ Level 3 in Hospitality supervision. He said: "The ApprenticeshipsNI programme was an excellent way of helping me put theory into practice and enabling me to see how theory should be applied in the workplace. I would recommend the Apprenticeship route to anyone as it has helped me to map out a career in an area I enjoy." Further information about

ApprenticeshipsNI can be obtained by calling Freephone **0800 0854 573** or visiting [www.nidirect.gov.uk](http://www.nidirect.gov.uk). or you can visit [Employers section](#) of the Department for Employment and Learning website or you can download the [Employers Guide to ApprenticeshipsNI](#).

### Professional Cookery Diploma Project

The Learning and Skills Development Agency NI are facilitating a Northern Ireland cross college project to develop a standardised approach to the delivery of the Professional Cookery Diploma. The project will facilitate a collaborative approach by all the colleges to address the issues and solutions related to the implementation of the Professional Cookery Diploma and will create a standard delivery across the province accepted and supported by the Hospitality Industry. This is warmly welcomed by the college Heads of Hospitality. The scheme has been piloted by two colleges resulting in positive feedback. Industrial professionals have contributed to their assessment process confirming the standards are those expected in the workplace. For further information email [mrobinson@lsda.org.uk](mailto:mrobinson@lsda.org.uk)



#### Recruitment campaign launched for Tourism Ambassadors



Pictured: Roisin McKee, People 1st; entrepreneur Bill Wolsey; Emma Smyth, Belfast Welcome Centre.

A new tourism and hospitality initiative developed by People 1st and supported by the Department for Employment and Learning and the Northern Ireland Tourist Board through the Skills Action Plan, is set to bring dynamic industry professionals into the classrooms and lecture theatres of schools and colleges and to careers events throughout Northern

Ireland. People 1st is currently recruiting tourism and hospitality industry 'Career Ambassadors' who have a successful track record and are passionate about championing the industry to the next generation of employees/recruits across Northern Ireland. The ambassadorial team will set out to raise awareness of hospitality and tourism as a professional career option and encourage young people to consider it as a career path. One of the first to sign up for the new scheme is high profile entrepreneur Bill Wolsey whose portfolio includes 30 bars, hotels and restaurants including the five star boutique hotel, The Merchant. For more information on how to become a tourism ambassador contact People 1st NI on 028 9044 7736 or [contactus@people1st.co.uk](mailto:contactus@people1st.co.uk)

#### Working with the Northern Ireland Tourist Board

The [Northern Ireland Tourist Board](#) (NITB) is delighted to be a key partner in terms of implementation and delivery of the Hospitality and Tourism Future Skills Action Plan. Louise Kearney, Director of Organisational Development at NITB said, "There is currently huge potential for tourism in

Northern Ireland and we have a responsibility to educate everyone on the possibilities that exist with this dynamic industry and to develop skills across the tourism sector to ensure delivery of a quality visitor experience on the ground. NITB is keen to open the minds of our future generations to the scale of tourism and its huge impact on our local economy."

### **Industry into Education**

Learning and Skills Development Agency Northern Ireland has introduced a new pilot programme 'Industry into Education' for the Hospitality and Tourism sector. It is funded by the Department for Employment and Learning as part of the Skills Action Plan and offers industry specialists the opportunity to work with local regional colleges to support and assure the quality of training for their sector. The purpose of the programme is:

- to bring modern trends and current practice into the classroom and support the teaching and learning of students; to ensure the relevance of curriculum content and assist in advising on delivery methods and teaching strategies;
- to contribute to and advise Heads of Department and Programme Managers in the strategic development of new initiatives and quality reviews; and
- to advise on modern resources/equipment; to support skills competition coaching and mentoring; to support careers education, advice and guidance; and to develop relationships which could lead to sponsorship of staff and student visits and placements, including Lecturers into Industry.

For further information please visit the [website](#) or contact Maggie Robinson on 028 9044 7700 or by emailing [mrobinson@lsda.org.uk](mailto:mrobinson@lsda.org.uk)



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