

PRESS RELEASE March 2008

NEW PARTNERSHIP FOR BUSINESS VISITS AND EVENTS ADDS NEW MEMBER

Conference Centres of Excellence becomes the first new additional member of the Business Visits and Events Partnership, formerly the Business Tourism Partnership. This brings the total number of organisations and government agencies supporting the Partnership to twenty two.

Conference Centres of Excellence (CCE) is a nationwide group of 36 independent venues, mainly residential, which provide high quality, dedicated facilities and services for business meetings, conferences and events.

Members of Conference Centres of Excellence are required to maintain the highest professional standards in terms of meetings and event support facilities, accommodation and customer care. Before acceptance into membership, applicants undergo rigorous assessment by a team of industry professionals to ensure they meet the consortium's stringent criteria. The process of accreditation requires a venue to be focused on the needs of the customer and to adopt best practice in the way it operates.

In joining the Partnership the Consortium has expressed its intention to play a more active role in representing its members' interests in policy making and implementation within the business visits and events sector.

"We believe that our consortium is ideally placed to represent the specialist conference centre sector and that the combined experience of our members, which have clients across all key sectors, will be an asset to the vital work of the Partnership," said Kay England, Chair of Conference Centres for Excellence: "The business tourism sector must have the strongest possible voice in order to achieve the attention and resource it merits."

Welcoming Conference Centres of Excellence as the first new member of the Business Visits and Events Partnership, Michael Hirst, Chairman of the Business Tourism Partnership said, "The broadening of the Partnership's remit to include all aspects of the fast growing Events sector within the UK will enable the Partnership to admit many other representative organisations into membership. It must be good for the industry to have an umbrella body that covers the widest possible interests of the sector and facilitates the industry's ability to speak with one voice and spread best practice."

He added, "We will be in discussions with other representative bodies from the cultural, sporting and festival event sectors to see how best to work together to ensure the fast growing Events sector secures the recognition it deserves and policies that will help it fulfil its potential."

Members

Association of British Professional Conference Organisers
Association for Conferences and Events
Association for Events Management Education
British Association of Conference Destinations
British Hospitality Association
Conference Centres of Excellence
Department for Culture, Media & Sport
Events Industry Alliance
Events Industry Forum

Eventia
Hotel Booking Agents Association
International Congress & Convention Association
Meetings Industry Association
Meetings Professionals International
National Outdoors Events Association
Northern Ireland Tourist Board
UK Trade & Investment
VenueMasters

VisitBritain
Visit London
VisitScotland
Visit Wales

The Partnership will continue to provide a forum for Members to agree key issues and to act as a central focus for lobbying and ensuring that policymakers and key influencers are better informed of the benefits of the sector.

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Note to editors:

- The objective of the Business **Visits and Events Partnership** is to lead the way in supporting a competitive, high quality and more profitable business visits and events sector in Britain. The Partnership seeks to provide a cohesive industry voice and will work with VisitBritain and other government departments and agencies to influence and develop policies and practices favourable to the growth of tourism and trade from business visits and events.
- The **Business Visits and Events Partnership** has the support of twenty two member organisations including the leading trade organisations and government agencies with an interest in conferences and meetings, exhibitions and trade fairs, outdoor events, business event, incentive travel, corporate hospitality and individual business travel.
- Business tourism is worth **over £22 billion** in terms of its wider economic impact through associated delegate expenditure on travel, entertainment, shopping, pre and post conference tours etc.) In addition the value of business transacted at trade events is estimated to generate in excess of **£100 billion** a year.
- The 2006 IPS figures for inbound business visits and spend indicated a record over **9 million visitors spending £4.75 billion**. This is an increase of 10% and 17% respectively on 2005, at a growth rate that exceeds overall tourism growth
- Over the past ten years there has been a **53% growth** in all business trips exceeding the overall tourism growth rate. **Over 9 million visits** are made to the UK each year for business purposes **contributing £4.753 billion** to the British economy.
- The sector generates 28% of all overseas visitors and 30% of inbound tourism earnings.

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Business Visits & Events Partnership

LEADING THE WAY FOR BRITAIN'S EVENTS

- Business tourism activities create high quality, year round employment opportunities accounting for some **530,000 jobs** directly and indirectly.
- **Around 80 million people attend 1.5 million** conferences and meeting annually.
- **Business visitors spend on average £527 per visit** – nearly twice the daily rate of that spent by the leisure traveller.
- **450 major Events take place in the UK annually contributing more than £1 billion**
- For further information on Business Visits and Events, please refer to the website:
www.businessvisitsandeventspartnership.com
- For further information on Conference Centres of Excellence, please refer to the website
www.cceonline.co.uk

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