

National Skills Strategy for the hospitality, leisure, travel and tourism sector in England



People1st October 2008 Update for the Ministerial Advisory Group for the Tourism Strategy for the 2012 Games and Beyond

Introduction

This paper outlines the progress in taking forward the National Skills Strategy (NSS) for the hospitality, leisure, travel and tourism sector up to October 2008. The majority of the update featured here is on the development of the NSS infrastructure, for example with qualifications reform. Future updates will also look to include what other partners are doing to help take forward the 10-point plan nationally, regionally, and locally.

Background

The NSS in England was launched in March 2007 and aims to raise the performance and productivity of the sector by tackling its skills and labour needs. It revolves around a ten point strategy that was formulated on the back of the largest labour market study in over 20 years. The philosophy is to put in place an education and learning infrastructure that employers have been asking for and then stimulate demand to encourage them to increase the training and development investment in their staff.

Progress to date

1. A Single Communications Channel – www.uksp.co.uk

Following on from its launch in November 2006, much work has been undertaken rolling out the UKSP (formally the UK Skills Passport). As from August 2008, it has become free to register and use. People1st is working with learning providers and other partners to encourage students studying sector programmes, sector Apprentices and Young Apprentices to register on UKSP.

On the site itself, work has continued to make the UKSP site easier to add job vacancies and there is now functionality for those registered on UKSP to apply for jobs on the website itself.

In November 2007, the Good Employers Guide was launched on the UKSP to recognise good employers across the sector. Both the employer and their employees rate the business against good employment practice criteria. To date over 440 employers have signed up

2. Management & Leadership

As part of the qualification reform process People1st has identified a suite of qualifications at levels 2, 3 and 4 that will enable employers to develop their existing and future managers. These include:

- ILM level 3 Certificate in First Line Management
- ILM level 3 Award in First Line Management
- Institute of Hospitality level 2 Business Skills Certificate for Hospitality, Leisure and Tourism
- CMI level 2 Introductory Certificate in Team Leading
- CMI level 2 Certificate in Team Leading
- ILM level 2 Certificate in Team Leading
- EDI level 2 Certificate in Team Leading
- Institute of Hospitality Level 4 Diploma in Management for Hospitality, Leisure and Tourism

3. Qualifications and Funding

Sector Qualifications Strategy

The Sector Qualifications Strategy (SQS) was completed in December 2007 and an Action Plan produced in spring 2008. The SQS presents a description of how future provision for the sector will be shaped. It outlines the blueprint solution for qualifications in the sector:

- A qualification rationalisation programme
- The identification of qualification pathways for each industry
- Development of common principles for new qualifications for the sector
- A formalised procedure for qualification support
- Accreditation of in-house company schemes
- A review of assessment practice
- A review of apprenticeships
- More effective use of the UKSP

Through the SQS, People1st is looking to create a unitised approach to qualifications whereby learning can build incrementally and can be portable through the use of the UKSP. This will be facilitated by the Qualifications and Credit Framework.

The SQS Action Plan outlines an ambitious development programme to ensure that qualifications are developed which meet the need of the sector. The focus has been ensuring that there are clear development pathways and that the qualifications help someone develop their career. It defines the detail of how this will be achieved and which qualifications will be removed, amended or developed for the sector from 2008/9.

People1st is also currently working with two operators and their awarding bodies to break down unnecessary assessment barriers; help them reduce costs and make the qualifications work harder for them. If these models work we can roll them out to other employers.

Train to Gain compact

In May 2008, a Train to Gain Compact was agreed between the Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills (DIUS) and People1st. The compact aims to make Train to Gain much more responsive for the sector by tailoring the service to meet the specific skills needs of employers in the sector and introducing some funding flexibilities, thereby providing a clear stimulus to increase the number of sector employers offering staff recognised qualifications. People1st and the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) are in the process of operationalising the compact with an aim to 'go live' in early 2009.

4. Supporting Small Businesses

A group of micro businesses is being formed to oversee the identification and if necessary the development of provision for micro businesses operating in the sector. The group will also help ensure that the delivery and assessment of training and qualifications are sufficiently flexible to ensure they are relevant to their needs.

5. Customer Service

In 2007, six Sector Skills Councils (SSCs) were commissioned to undertake a piece of research to identify how best to raise customer service skills across the visitor economy in advance of the 2012 Games. This piece of work was funded by the London Development Agency (LDA) and the London LSC and was overseen by a steering group which included the SSCs, LDA, LSC, the Institute of Customer Service (the Standard Setting Body for Customer Service), the Regional Languages Network, and the Department for Culture, Media and Sport. The research has re-emphasised the importance of tackling the content, delivery and assessment of training and qualifications and ensuring that customer service is adequately embedded in the culture of an organisation.

The research was undertaken between October 2007 and March 2008 and was followed by a consultation period on the draft report and recommendations over the summer. Since then, work has taken place to refine the overall recommendations for all sectors involved; these

have now been signed off by the steering group. A summary report is being re-designed for publication over the next couple of weeks. On the back of that, each sector via its SSC has or is preparing a response outlining how it intends to take forward the recommendations for its own sector.

People1st has responded by developing an action plan for how it intends to implement these recommendations for the hospitality, leisure, travel and tourism sector. The action plan highlights the need to develop two sector-specific customer service qualifications, one for front facing staff and one for supervisors and managers. Proposed content has been outlined and existing qualifications are encouraged to meet that specification. The aim is to get the new qualifications developed by April 2009 so that they can be offered through the Train to Gain sector compact¹ (see qualifications and funding) which is publicly funding 4,000 in the first year². Train to Gain brokers will be supported to promote the qualifications within the sector specific offer to employers.

Central to improving customer service is the need for a rigorous training and assessment programme for trainers before they can be accredited to deliver the new qualifications. People1st's action plan outlines the development of a training programme (by December 2008) for trainers who, on successful completion of the programme, will be accredited by the National Skills Academy for Hospitality (from January 2009) and will be promoted on the UKSP (by April 2009).

In addition, the main report highlights a framework that collectively encompasses the best practice identified through the research. It is recommended that this framework is operationalised for hospitality, leisure, travel and tourism by December 2008. Existing courses, either offered by independent training organisations or in-house provision offered by employers are encouraged to map their provision against this standard. Guidance will be produced in the New Year.

It is also recommended that the customer service qualifications and framework are rolled out and promoted as part of the Welcome to Britain initiative and campaign. People1st is working with SWRDA (on behalf of England's RDAs) and VisitBritain to do this.

It is envisaged that the Tourism Accessibility Stakeholder Forum training sub-group will oversee the development of a customer service disability awareness training module.

The full People1st response to the visitor economy research will be circulated following its publication.

6. Chefs

The SQS Action Plan (see qualifications and funding) sets out a clear picture as to how chef qualifications will look by the end of 2010. It outlines the roll out of a set of new qualifications to complement the existing Professional Cookery Diplomas at levels 1, 2 and 3. These include new Patisserie and Confectionary qualifications at levels 2 and 3. New chef qualifications for those working in branded/casual dining operations are also in development. In both cases qualifications are being designed for both full-time provision and workbased delivery.

These will also complement a more robust Apprenticeship for Professional Cookery and a more flexible casual/branded dining Apprenticeship, which are in development

A difficulty faced by colleges has been the impact of a cap on the maximum number of hours of learning allocated per student. The size of the Professional Cookery Diplomas, coupled with the fact that employers wish that students come out of college with both food preparation and cooking and food and drink service skills means that these exceed the maximum hours at

¹ A deal or partnership between Government and industry via SSCs

² People1st believes there is scope for 50,000 of these qualifications to be delivered over the second and third years of the compact

which learning is capped. People1st is working with awarding bodies to accelerate the development of a food and drink service qualification, so that it is ready by September 2009. It is therefore envisaged that together with the Professional Cookery Diploma it will fit under the cap. The LSC believes that transitional funding allocated to colleges will help them absorb this cost within the next year. However, an ongoing problem will be the delivery of the level 3 Diploma in Advanced Professional Cookery, as this exceeds the cap in its own right. Discussions are ongoing between colleges, awarding bodies, People1st and the LSC nationally.

7. Industry Code of Practice

More work is required in this area to develop a code of practice that can help sector employers respond more effectively to initiatives, such as Scores on the Doors.

8. World Class Skills Delivery

National Skills Academy for Hospitality

In May 2008, Government announced that the sector had been successful in its bid to establish a National Skills Academy for Hospitality. Bob Cotton, Chief Executive of the British Hospitality Association (BHA) has been appointed its Chairman and David McHattie, former Chief Operating Officer at People1st, its Chief Executive. Over the summer, Bob and David have been focussed on:

- Establishing a Board (its first meeting is in November 2008, following which the Academy will publish its own launch programme)
- Recruiting a team
- Developing the vision and objectives and getting board members input and sign off
- Developing the marketing and communications strategy
- Meeting key partners - industry and public sector who will assist in the delivery of key programmes of work

You can keep up to date with latest developments by visiting www.hospitalityskillsacademy.co.uk

Quality Training Standard

Since the launch of the Quality Training Standard in May 2008, only three learning providers (Hospitality Training Partnership, Stratford-upon-Avon College and West Suffolk College) have successfully gained a Part B accreditation for the hospitality, leisure, travel and tourism sector. The Part B aims to recognise the best organisations delivering training and development solutions to sector employers.

9. Attracting High Quality People

People1st has produced an Apprenticeship Strategy for the sector that aims to increase the profile and completion rates on sector frameworks. It is focusing on both its content and delivery.

In terms of content, People1st is working with a number of employers and learning providers to develop new Apprenticeships in Management and Leadership, Professional Cookery, Casual/Branded Dining, Gambling and Travel. The aim is to ensure that these apprenticeships are a viable alternative to full-time provision and which develop the skills and knowledge for someone who wants to work in a profession. The focus on delivery aims to tackle the current poor completion rates by supporting the apprentice through the framework and bring employers, providers and the apprentices closer together. Currently, apprentices failing to complete the framework are only known once they have dropped out. People1st is working with learning providers to register every apprentice on the UKSP, thereby enabling them to be tracked and better supported. The first revised Apprenticeship will be ready in spring 2009.

People1st is on schedule in the development of two new 14-19 Diplomas in Hospitality and Travel and Tourism. The Hospitality Diplomas will be ready to be delivered by September

2009 and Travel and Tourism by September 2010. These will provide robust pathways for young people to enter the sector either directly or after progressing into higher education.

In Hospitality, the current focus is on supporting 86 consortia who have successfully bid to offer the Diploma from September 2009. An important part of this is recruiting more employer champions to support providers and raise awareness of the Diploma among the sector. Michael Grey, General Manager of the Hyatt Churchill and Mike Stapleton, Corporate Affairs Director at Compass Group are leading these employers.

10. Broadening the Appeal of the Sector

August 2008 saw the first screening of a TV commercial to promote the sector and to improve the perception of jobs across hospitality, leisure, travel and tourism. A range of brands supported the commercial including McDonalds, Compass Group, Merlin Entertainments, Sodexo, Yo! Sushi, Living Ventures, Baxter Storey and Bombay Bicycle Club.

The commercial was timed to coincide with the announcement of exam results and consequently was targeted at this age group. As part of the campaign a microsite has been launched (www.greatplaces2work.co.uk) which, as well as the commercial itself, includes videos and information on the sector.

Finally, People1st has recently developed a pre-employability package that is aimed at jobseekers and tackles the most critical employability skills outlined by employers. Separate versions have been produced for specific job roles across the sector. It is currently being piloted in Bristol and Gloucester.