

¹East of England Tourism, Leisure and Heritage Skills Audit Key Issues and Recommendations for Action

Original Objectives

1/ To identify and map the skills and employment needs of the tourism, leisure and heritage sector, building on existing research as appropriate.

2/ To map public and private sector learning and skills providers, programmes, networks and opportunities that already exist.

3/ To connect demand with supply through use of the previously developed Skills Matrix model to identify gaps and overlaps in training provision.

4/ To make recommendations to the project management group as to practical solutions to:

- Address skill needs and gaps/overlaps;
- Change attitudes among employers, employees and training providers;
- Influence funding agencies to address the identified problems in a coordinated and focused way;
- Develop appropriate mechanisms and frameworks to ensure delivery of an appropriate action plan to support skills development in the sectors.
- Develop appropriate links between local/regional and national skills activity.

Outline Key Issues

Key issues emerging from the research have been identified and recommendations for action developed under the five following themes:

- A Building effective partnerships;
- B Improving recruitment and retention;
- C Enhancing further and higher education;
- D Boosting workforce development opportunities
- E Developing business management and leadership skills

Key Issues for the Tourism, Leisure and Heritage Sector (adapted from Chapter 9)

A Building effective partnerships

1. Suggestion to form a regional sector skills alliance, consisting of People 1st, SkillsActive, Lifelong Learning UK, the emerging Creative and Cultural Sector Skills Council, employers, Jobcentre Plus, Business Link and regional organisations such as EEDA. Such a group could agree and take forward a detailed action plan.
2. A network of full or part-time human resource/skill development coordinators is required for the region, perhaps one for each county.

¹ Commissioned to Career Concepts by East of England Development Agency (EEDA) and partners

3. There is scope for more extensive partnership arrangements between employers, a particular geographical location and/or industry sector and more centralised mechanisms for the provision of information on skill development opportunities.
4. Business development signposting and advice should be provided by relevant tourism, leisure and heritage specialists.
5. Potential for using the 'Smarter Spending' model adapted in other regions for the sector should be investigated.

B Improving recruitment and retention

1. Image of the sector is thought to be at the root of recruitment difficulties. Career paths for new entrants are not particularly well understood. Colleges are active in promoting careers in the sector, although there is thought to be scope for more work with employers.
2. East of England is less dynamic than other regions in relation to careers and recruitment activity and guidance in this sector. Connexions are working in this regard, Springboard UK Ltd are working in other regions and are keen to engage with the East of England.
3. A need to solve recruitment difficulties (not least in the hospitality sector), but it is difficult to attract people to the region due to high housing costs.
4. Non traditional labour forces (such as disabled people and the unemployed) might be used more effectively (along with recruitment of overseas workers) to help overcome skills shortages.
5. High labour turnover and poor retention rates amongst employers.

C Enhancing further and higher education

1. Scope for rationalising and streamlining the range of qualifications for the sector as the current range of qualifications is too large.
2. There are no foundation degrees for the cultural heritage sector, but there is scope for the development of such programmes. There is no higher education provision for the library and archive sub-sector.
3. A need for employers to work more closely with universities to ensure that education and training programmes are aligned with the needs of employers.
4. Centres of Vocational Excellence have a role to play in ensuring that high quality further education provision is provided by *all* colleges and departments in the region.
5. Balance of provision does not match industry needs. For example there is an over-supply of travel and tourism and sports programmes and an under-supply of hospitality and cultural heritage programmes.
6. Some undergraduates experience poor work experience placements. Some smaller businesses could work well in this regard, but they are not picked up by the colleges.

D Boosting workforce development opportunities

1. Training culture amongst employers in the sector is often too weak.
2. Skills gaps are reported through all sectors and in all geographical locations. (For example, communication skills; customer service; sales and marketing and specialist IT skills.

3. Many employers are unwilling to pay full-cost fees for training. There is a strong demand for flexible short course and bite-size training provision.
4. Important role of the LSCs in ensuring that funding is channelled in to the sector in the future – not traditionally been a priority.
5. No career development opportunities in the cultural heritage sector.
6. Action required to meet demand for *specialist* IT training.
7. Funding of training courses for the vital volunteer workforce is a priority going forward.

E Developing business management and leadership skills

1. Concern about business management skills in those running small businesses and an unwillingness amongst managers to see development of these skills to be an investment.
2. Owners/managers often lack the skills to recruit effectively, identify training needs and develop effective HR opportunities. Funding for the dissemination of materials on providing in-house training should be seen as a priority.
3. A need to encourage take up of continuing professional development for managers.

Recommendations for Action (adapted from Chapter 10 – responsibilities column omitted)

Objective	Action
A To improve coordination of skill development and associated activities in the region.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a Sector Skills Alliance • Establish network of human resource/skills coordinators • Develop arrangements for provision of information on workforce development opportunities.
B To enhance the image of the sector as an employer to young people at school and college	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Undertake project work designed to enhance the image of the sector • Ensure that stakeholding organisations work closely with Connexions • Support the establishment of a programme of image enhancing activities
Ensure that all employers are aware of labour market trends	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Publicise national and regional labour market trends to employers
Encourage more employers to recruit and train staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Publicise the benefits of effective skills development and encourage participation in IIP
Increase recruitment from non-traditional sources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage employers to consider non-traditional sources and provide training for international recruits
Increase diversity in the cultural heritage workforce	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage organisations to support initiatives being undertaken by

	EEMPLAC
Improve understanding of labour turnover	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Undertake research to obtain a clearer picture of labour turnover in the People 1st and SkillsActive sectors.
To spread best practice among employers in relation to retention	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Undertake project work to publicise best practice in the retention of employees
Increase % of people working in seasonal posts for more than one season.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore opportunities for pooling resources within an employer network to provide year-round job opportunities.
C To reduce confusion over the content and relevance of different qualifications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that the revised (national) framework is communicated and explained to employers
Increase opportunities for skill development in the cultural heritage sector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop and deliver cultural heritage foundation degrees at appropriate HEEs in the region
Overcome skills shortages for professional library and archive employees.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offer library and information studies programmes at a higher education establishment in the region.
Improve relevance of further and higher education provision to industry needs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthen university and industry links and encourage greater employer input in the planning and delivery of programmes.
Enhance the relevance of education provision to the needs of employers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Give priority to development of communication and interpersonal skills • Refine travel and tourism programmes • Ensure that pace of learning on relevant programmes is attuned to all
Improve quality of further education provision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Undertake work to enhance the quality of delivery, led by the region's COVEs. • Provide high-quality practical food preparation and service training.
Meet employer needs for skilled staff and to overcome skill shortages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plan an appropriate balance of training provision based on employer needs • Review employer needs in the sports and leisure subsector and review provision
Increase supply of trained chefs and other food prep staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seek to increase demand for food prep training programmes

Boost the number of short and bite-size training programmes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that organisations already doing so are able to continue to provide offering these courses.
Increase regional opportunities for continuing professional development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regional universities to explore opportunities.
Improve the operation of work experience placements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage smaller businesses to become involved – possibly through an accreditation scheme (piloted in the SW)
D Boost employer engagement in learning and skill development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communicate the specific benefits of investment in learning and skills development
Reduce the level of skill gaps across the tourism, leisure and heritage sector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assist employers to deliver effective in-house training provision. • Ensure that successful short courses are maintained • Increase supply of marketing and IT related programmes to meet identified needs.
Ensure that the sector is given a high priority by LSCs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage dialogue between the sector and the LSC to ensure that issues are appreciated.
Enhance career development opportunities to the cultural heritage sector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase staff mobility between cultural heritage organisations to provide career development opportunities.
Develop the skills of volunteers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Undertake a pilot trainer training programme • Encourage local authorities to boost funding for volunteer training • Develop a more strategic approach to volunteer training in the region, including accessing funding.
E Improve quality of business management skills in small and micro businesses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Undertake project work to boost demand • Publicise benefits • Promote availability of online skill development programmes
Improve quality of human resource management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop and implement a strategy to assist employers to improve human resource management policies
Improve delivery of training by employers for their employees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify and publicise the range of training materials suitable for use in-house by employers
Increase participation in	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage sector participation in

continuing professional development activities	professional development opportunities <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Explore opportunities for increased opportunity in the sector.
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The full report will be published online in Autumn 2005.