Training, Development and Skills in Hospitality, Catering, Leisure and Tourism Sectors

Report for D&G Employability Partnership

February 2014

EKOS Limited, St. George’s Studios, 93-97 St. George’s Road, Glasgow, G3 6JA
Reg SC145099

Telephone: 0141 353 1994
Web: www.ekos-consultants.co.uk
Direct enquiries regarding this report should be submitted to:

John Kelly, Director, EKOS

Email: john.kelly@ekos.co.uk
Tel: 0141 353 1994

As part of our green office policy all EKOS reports are printed double sided on 100% sustainable paper
## Contents

1. Introduction  
2. Study Context  
3. Business Survey Findings  
4. The Customers’ Perspective  
5. Stakeholder Engagement  
6. Conclusions and Recommendations  

Appendix 1
1. Introduction

This report presents the findings of a study examining the training needs of employers in the Hospitality, Catering, Leisure and Tourism (HCLT) sector, which has been commissioned by the Dumfries and Galloway Employability Partnership.

1.1 Background

The tourism sector in its widest sense is one of the key economic sectors in Dumfries and Galloway. As the regional tourism strategy\(^1\) highlights: “tourism is a key driver to the economy of Dumfries and Galloway, with an estimated annual value of £269 million supporting some 8,150 jobs. There is recognition that the tourism sector of the region has the potential to further improve the product and subsequently has the ability to increase the financial contribution to the region’s economy”.

It is recognised that, from an economic development perspective, skills play a crucial role in determining the potential success and impact of the wider sector on the regional economy.

The presence of a strong skills development infrastructure to support the development of a robust skills base will be a crucial success factor in areas such as:

- development of skills required to deliver a high quality service culture;
- product and service innovation and development;
- leadership and management development; and
- providing a pipeline of new entrants to the sector.

The sector is of particular interest to the Employability Partnership in terms of its overall contribution to the regional economy, its identified growth prospects and its potential for job creation.

\(^1\) Dumfries & Galloway Regional Tourism Strategy 2011 - 2016
1.2 Study Objectives

The overarching objective is to complete research to identify the training, development and skills requirements of employers working in HCLT sectors.

In more detail, the research focuses on the following objectives:

- desk based research to review policy context and current relevant research;
- conduct primary research with employers (demand);
- review the current provision of training and skills development (supply side);
- identify resources available to support skills development; and
- provide recommendations for the Employability Partnership to take forward.

1.3 Study Method

The study has been undertaken in four stages as detailed below:

- Stage 1: Inception and Set Up;
- Stage 2: Reviewing the Evidence Base: this comprised desk-based research focusing on:
  - the national and regional strategic and policy environment
  - regional economic, skills and employment conditions
  - the current provision of training and skills development
  - Tripadvisor reviews of accommodation, restaurants and attractions;
- Stage 3: Stakeholder Engagement: this comprised primary research with:
  - strategic stakeholders – face to face and telephone consultations with eight stakeholder organisations including representatives of D&G Employability Partnership, trade bodies and training providers
  - employers in hospitality, catering, leisure and tourism sectors – a total of 40 responses were received using telephone and online methods;
• Stage 4: Reporting and Action Plan, comprising:
  o the draft report
  o a meeting to discuss its findings on 11 December
  o final report/action plan and presentation.

1.4 Report Structure

The report is structured as follows:

• **Chapter 2** provides the context for the study, including an overview of the strategic and policy environment; a baseline of regional economic, skills and employment conditions; an overview of current supply of training and skills development;

• **Chapter 3** provides the findings of a survey of employers;

• **Chapter 4** presents the customers’ perspective;

• **Chapter 5** provides an overview of consultation responses from key members of the D&G employability partnership and training providers; and

• **Chapter 6** presents the study conclusions and recommendations.
2. **Study Context**

2.1 **Introduction**

By way of contextual background, this Chapter briefly presents an overview of the key policies at national and regional levels focusing on tourism sector development and skills issues; the key findings of pertinent labour market/skills studies; a baseline of economic and skills conditions in the region; and a mapping of education and training provision.

2.2 **Policy Review**

2.2.1 **Skills Investment Plan for Scotland’s Tourism Sector**

The key national skills development objectives for tourism are set out in the Tourism SIP which was published in March 2013.

The tourism SIP sets out four priorities that will support growth ambitions set out in the Scottish Tourism Strategy\(^2\), namely:

- Improving **management, leadership** and **enterprise** in the sector;
- Ensuring staff have the skills to deliver a **high quality visitor experience**;
- Raising the **attractiveness** of the sector to new entrants;
- Ensuring appropriate and **high quality training** is available to the sector.

From an employer perspective, there are a number of ways they can support the Plan’s objectives:

- enabling staff to access training, and, specifically, leadership and customer service training;
- recognising that skills are vital to business success and acting accordingly;
- offering shared work experience or apprenticeship schemes with other employers; and

\(^2\) The Scottish Tourism Alliance: Scotland 2020, The Future of Our Industry, In our Hands, June 2012
• getting involved in the design and delivery of training and education.

2.2.2 D&G Tourism Strategy

As the regional tourism strategy³ highlights: “tourism is a key driver to the economy of Dumfries and Galloway, with an estimated annual value of £269 million supporting some 8,150 jobs. There is recognition that the tourism sector of the region has the potential to further improve the product and subsequently has the ability to increase the financial contribution to the region’s economy”.

The strategy has been built around a framework of strategic objectives and targets, including:

• Objective 3: To fulfil the potential of our people: Enhance skills base of tourism workforce, create jobs and change dynamics of employment in the tourism sector, encourage personal investment in the tourism sector.

• Measure 10: Increase in employment in the tourism sector;

• Measure 11: Increase in training / skills.

The strategy is underpinned by an Action and Delivery Plan⁴ which also aims to encourage entry to the sector, ensure training meets needs and provide business support.

2.2.3 Tourism Product Development Strategy⁵

This strategy was developed in response to one of the key early aims of the Action Plan, the development of a Spatial Development Strategy or Plan that would highlight the sectoral product development required to better align the Destination offering with the markets it seeks to attract.

This found that the visitor experience was positive. It has much that is looked for in a “rural break”. However, that perception was only among those that knew about the region – more could be done to raise awareness of what D&G has to offer and to give it more of a distinct identity.

---

3 Dumfries & Galloway Regional Tourism Strategy 2011 - 2016
4 D&G Regional Tourism Strategy Action and Delivery Plan 2011
5 TRC on behalf of Destination D&G, Tourism Product Development Strategy (draft), 2012
The challenges call for investment in development of new facilities in some cases and at more modest levels in others – operational changes and improvements to existing facilities alongside raising quality will help achieve success.

In other instances the requirement is for investment in skills and customer care. In terms of skills needs, a number of possible interventions were sketched out:

- retail staff skills – (Also need to raise awareness and recognition within the sector that they are part of tourism offering);
- training / operator awareness of local culture / history / heritage (product familiarisation);
- identification of perceived industry needs of training versus requirements;
- Mystery Shopping strategy;
- differentiation and identification of training skills needs of those currently employed and those coming into the employment marketplace in future; and
- training assets scope needs to be extended to cover all providers not solely those currently ‘engaged’.

2.2.4 Single Outcome Agreement

SOAs continue to act as core policy documents for Community Planning Partnerships. The overarching Vision for 2013-16 is ‘working together to create an ambitious, prosperous and confident Dumfries and Galloway where people achieve their potential’.

Two priorities in particular act as drivers for action in the area of skills development:

- **P2 – We will prepare our young people for adulthood and employment:** this focusing on helping young people to be effective learners and to have the right skills for work. It also aims to retain young people in the region to be effective contributors to the local economy, art, culture, sport, leisure and society generally.
  - 2.3 We will support all our young people to participate in appropriate employability activity
• P4 – **We will support and stimulate our local economy**: this priority aims for sustainable prosperity by attracting and training successful businesses and quality jobs, and names key sectors including tourism
  
  o P4.2 We will enhance access to employment by maximizing the impact of employability provision.

### 2.3 Labour Market/Skills Studies

Below we summarise two key sector skills studies that have examined skills priorities in recent years to provide a flavour of the key issues.

#### 2.3.1 Sector Skills Assessment for the Hospitality, Leisure, Travel and Tourism Sector in Scotland\(^6\)

The study acknowledges that the hospitality, leisure, travel and tourism sector sits at the heart of the Scottish visitor economy and is a substantial generator of wealth and employment, and makes the following observations:

- despite the recession, the sector is predicted to continue to be one of Scotland’s largest job creators in the future, with employment set to grow in the medium to long term;
- the key drivers within the sector are: the economy; consumer demands; and government policy (particularly legislative and regulative requirements and immigration policy);
- the study identified the main skills priorities for the sector (both currently and in the future) as:
  - management and leadership skills
  - customer service skills
  - chef skills
  - employability skills;

---

\(^6\) People 1\(^{st}\) February 2010
in addition, there is evidence to suggest that the recession has driven demand for: multi-skilling; entrepreneurialism; and marketing and sales skills; and

looking to the future, technological and environmental change is likely to increase demand for: IT skills (particularly in terms of maximising the potential of the internet); and waste management / environmental cost savings.

2.3.2 Tourism and the Visitor Economy Sector

This UK study\(^7\) published by the tourism Sector Skills Council took a broad sectoral view encompassing hospitality and tourism, passenger transport and travel, and retail. For hospitality and tourism, findings and observations include:

- the level of part-time employment in hospitality is 48% compared with 28% in the economy as a whole;
- while the subsector can offer employment to workers seeking flexibility, the people filling these roles tend to be transient and therefore the employer experiences higher turnover and skills gaps;
- the proportion of young people in hospitality at 40% is considerably higher than the workforce as a whole (24%);
- wages are relatively low;
- there tend to be more vacancies, more hard to fill vacancies and less skills shortages but higher skills gaps (due to higher staff turnover) in the subsector;
- high turnover rates in hospitality are undermining the skills of the workforce as staff are not in jobs long enough to become proficient in their roles; and
- as a consequence, investment in training is often directed at initial training rather than channelled towards the broader skills needs of the sector - in the hospitality and tourism sub-sector only around a third of employers (36 percent) provide training based on personal development needs.

---

\(^7\) People 1st, Tourism and the Visitor Economy Sector, Labour Market Review, August 2013
2.4 Economic Baseline

2.4.1 Employment

Employment in the region’s HCLT sector has fluctuated over the last four years, but is broadly in the region of 5,500-6,000 employees. The food and drink sector – licensed restaurants, cafes and take-aways all experienced decline in the period, whereas accommodation fared slightly better. There were also gains in visitor attractions.

Table 2.1: Employment in HCLT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Industry</th>
<th>2009</th>
<th>2010</th>
<th>2011</th>
<th>2012</th>
<th>% Change 2009-12*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>55100 : Hotels and similar accommodation</td>
<td>2,000</td>
<td>1,800</td>
<td>2,100</td>
<td>2,000</td>
<td>-4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55201 : Holiday centres and villages</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>-29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55202 : Youth hostels</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55209 : Other holiday and other short-stay accommodation</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55300 : Camping grounds, recreational vehicle parks etc</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>-11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55900 : Other accommodation</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>56101 : Licensed restaurants</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>56102 : Unlicensed restaurants and cafes</td>
<td>600</td>
<td>600</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>700</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>56103 : Take away food shops and mobile food stands</td>
<td>400</td>
<td>400</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>-25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>56210 : Event catering activities</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>-27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>56290 : Other food service activities</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>125%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>56301 : Licensed clubs</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>-38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>56302 : Public houses and bars</td>
<td>700</td>
<td>700</td>
<td>700</td>
<td>600</td>
<td>-18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>79120 : Tour operator activities</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>-40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>79909 : Other reservation service activities</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>-11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>91020 : Museum activities</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>-29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>91030 : Operation of historical sites and buildings etc</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>83%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>91040 : Botanical; zoological gardens; nature reserves</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>93110 : Operation of sports facilities</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>-10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>93199 : Other sports activities</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>113%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>93210 : Activities of amusement parks and theme parks</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>93290 : Other amusement and recreation activities</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Column Total</td>
<td>5,900</td>
<td>5,500</td>
<td>5,800</td>
<td>5,500</td>
<td>-7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Business Register and Employment Survey (BRES);
Note: Cells marked N/A are non-reportable and all numbers rounded to nearest hundred as per BRES user information guide 
*Percentage change is based on unrounded figures
As Table 2.2 shows, most employment is in small companies of between 10 and 49 employees (55%) with 31% in micro companies. There has been a fairly consistent balance in recent years.

**Table 2.2: Employment by Company Size**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2009</th>
<th>2010</th>
<th>2011</th>
<th>2012</th>
<th>% Change*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>5,900</td>
<td>5,500</td>
<td>5,800</td>
<td>5,800</td>
<td>-7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Micro (0 to 9)</td>
<td>1,600</td>
<td>1,500</td>
<td>1,800</td>
<td>1,500</td>
<td>-6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small (10 to 49)</td>
<td>3,400</td>
<td>3,100</td>
<td>3,300</td>
<td>3,100</td>
<td>-9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium-sized (50 to 249)</td>
<td>800</td>
<td>800</td>
<td>800</td>
<td>800</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Large (250+)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: BRES; Note: all numbers rounded to nearest hundred as per BRES user information guide. *percentage change is based on unrounded figures.

### 2.5 Economic Output (GVA)

Tourism related GVA per employee in the region is slowly catching up on Scotland as a whole (it peaked in 2010 above the Scotland level), indicating a positive trend in economic performance, although this figure reduced in 2011.

**Figure 2.1: Tourism GVA per Employee**

Source: Scottish Government
However, it should be noted that tourism has a much lower GVA per employee than the services sector as whole. There are a number of reasons for this, including:

- the proportion of part-time workers/seasonality;
- low skill levels in the industry and occupational structure;
- low investment by tourism related businesses; and
- low levels of innovation by tourism related businesses.

The challenge for D&G is to find ways to improve productivity, and one way that this can be done is via skills development.

### 2.6 Mapping of Education and Training Supply

Work has already been undertaken at the regional level to map the education and training supply. The illustration below captures the pipeline of provision from school to ongoing in-work support.

This highlights the range of general employability to specific sector skills support.
### Stage 1: Engagement

**Specific**
- Some schools as part of Senior Phase of C4E (YP)
- Skills Development Scotland (SDS) Career & Work Coaching Support (YP)
- D & G College – general recruitment processes and School / College work (YP)

**General**
- Jobcentre Plus
- The Prince’s Trust Youth Business Scotland (YP)
- D & G Council’s 1-1 support
- D & G Council’s Supported Employment Service (YP & Adults with disabilities)
- D & G Council’s CLD Service

### Stage 2: Barrier Removal

**Specific**
- Springboard Stage 2 Provision (YP)

**General**
- D & G College – The Prince’s Trust Programme (YP)
- D & G College Stage 2 provision 16+
- School Based Programmes e.g. YPSS & Crannog (YP)
- D & G Council’s 1-1 support
- SDS Career & Work Coaching Support (YP)
- Rathbone Stage 2 Provision (YP)

### Stage 3: Vocational Activity

**Specific**
- Springboard Stage 3 Provision
- Springboard Prison Programmes
- D & G College Catering Course (Stranraer) FT Worldhost Training (funding dependent)

**General**
- CEIS Stage 3 Provision (18+)
- Lowland Training Stage 3 Provision (YP)
- Rathbone Stage 3 provision (YP)
- Lifeskills Stage 3 Provision (YP)

### Stage 4: Work-Based / Pre-employment Training

**Specific**
- Springboard Stage 4 Provision
- HCLT Modern Apprenticeships

**General**
- Public Sector Work Placement Initiative
- D & G College’s Stage 4 Provision (18+)
- Minerva People’s Stage 4 provision
- Lowland Training’s Stage 4 Provision (18+)
- Intraining Stage 4 Provision (18+)

### Stage 5: Into Work and In-work Support

**Specific**
- SDS’ Employer Recruitment Incentives linked to Commonwealth Games (YP)

**General**
- Employer Recruitment Incentives - SDS/ DWP / YES (YP)
- Scottish Enterprise Leadership Development Programme
- Employer Engagement – Business Liaison Service
- Youth Business Scotland
- Dumfries & Galloway Council Inspiring Entrepreneurs Project (YP)
- NHS Occupational Health/ Fit for Work Services
- SDS – Flexible Training Opportunities
We have also gathered a brief overview of the current provision of training courses.

**Dumfries & Galloway College** has a number of courses for the sector in both its Dumfries and Stranraer campuses, e.g.

- food hygiene intermediate;
- applying marketing principles in travel and tourism;
- hospitality front office procedures;
- SVQ 2 in professional cookery (Stranraer); and
- SVQ 3 in professional cookery (Stranraer).

The College is also planning a commercially sustainable training hotel delivering 4 star service standards in a ‘live’ environment. This is expected to launch during 2014.

**Minerva People Ltd** provides a number of courses for the hospitality industry. Training is flexible and can be delivered at Minerva’s offices, at employers’ offices and outside business hours. Their courses are:

- SVQ 2 in food service;
- SVQ 2 in beverage service;
- SVQ 2 in hospitality services;
- SVQ 2 in front of house reception;
- SVQ 2 in housekeeping;
- SVQ 2 in professional cookery;
- SVQ 3 in hospitality supervision and leadership;
- workshop in WorldHost principles of customer service;
- workshop in elementary food hygiene;
- workshop in emergency first aid in the workplace.
Springboard

Springboard Scotland is part of the national charitable organisation, Springboard UK, dedicated to promoting hospitality, leisure and tourism (HLT) as first choice career to potential recruits and influencers throughout the UK.

For individuals they offer training programmes for the young, unemployed and homeless.

These programmes vary from formal training, to work placements and Springboard work with a variety of partners to deliver them, including Dumfries and Galloway Council.

DG Training offers hospitality training, both on and off-site and provides SQA and Royal Environmental Health Institute of Scotland (REHIS) qualifications. Their courses are:

- SQA Scottish certificate for personal licence holders;
- SQA Scottish certificate for personal licence holders refresher course;
- SQA Scottish certificate for safe sale and service of alcohol
- REHIS introduction to food hygiene;
- REHIS introduction to food hygiene by e-learning;
- REHIS elementary food hygiene;
- REHIS elementary food hygiene by e-learning;
- REHIS intermediate food hygiene by e-learning;
- REHIS introduction to health and safety;
- REHIS elementary health and safety;
- REHIS risk assessment – health and safety.

In short, there seems to be good provision basic technical skills training for the sector, particularly around food and drink. There are few specialist training courses, and there are gaps in provision, e.g. in Dumfries for chef training.
There are also generic business management and administration courses available at Dumfries and Galloway College, but sector-specific provision is not at qualification level.

2.7 Summary

Through the range of national and regional tourism policy documents, a number of re-occurring themes prevail:

- a recognition that the industry has an image problem for new recruits;
- the need for skills development including management and innovation skills to improve productivity of the sector;
- the vital importance of customer service skills in a competitive environment;
- there are specific structural barriers to training and workforce development in tourism.

The economic review highlighted that D&G tourism employment is predominately found in small sized and micro businesses. Employment in the sector is fairly static, however there seems to be some decline in food and drink sub-sectors.

The mapping study displayed the range and pipeline of training opportunities available in the region. It seems that the basics are well covered.

We return to the availability/quality of training provision later in the report.
3. Business Survey Findings

3.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the findings of a telephone and online survey which was undertaken during October and November 2013 with HCLT businesses. A total of 40 responses were received. The findings provide:

- an overview of the businesses surveyed, including recent performance;
- the main skills issues reported by companies;
- experience of employment of target groups (apprentices, school leavers, college/university leavers and long term unemployed);
- recent and current training activity;
- views on availability and quality of training for the sector locally; and
- views on future support for companies and for people seeking to work in the sector.

3.2 Business Characteristics and Performance

The businesses surveyed were located over a wide geographical area throughout Dumfries and Galloway and included respondents in larger towns such as Dumfries and Stranraer, smaller towns including Portpatrick, Gatehouse of Fleet and Newton Stewart and very rural locations. In terms of duration of business, 11 had been in operation for less than three years, 10 for between 4-10 years and 17 for over 10 years. No information on business duration was given in two cases.

Tables 3.1 to 3.3 show the sub-sectors of businesses responding to the survey, as well as their key markets and company ownership.

Of the business surveyed, the majority were active in the accommodation and/or food and drink sub-sectors.
Table 3.1: Sub-Sector of Surveyed Businesses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sub-Sector</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Accommodation</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food &amp; Drink</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visitor Attraction</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leisure &amp; Sports</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N=40
Note: companies were invited to tick all that applied

The majority targeted Scotland and the rest of the UK as their primary markets while a much smaller number had market focus outside of the UK.

Table 3.2: Key markets

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Market</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dumfries and Galloway</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scotland</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rest of UK</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Europe</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rest of World</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N=40
Note: companies were invited to tick all that applied

43 percent were sole traders and 50 percent were either partnerships or limited companies.

Table 3.3: Company Ownership

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ownership Type</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sole Trader</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partner</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limited Company</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PLC</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charity</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N=40
3.2.1 Employment and Sales Performance

Table 3.4 shows the businesses’ sales and employment performance in the last two years.

**Table 3.4: Sales and Employment Performance in Last Two Years**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sales</th>
<th>Employment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grown</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Static</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fallen</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total responses</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N=39

This shows a very mixed response in terms of business performance; slightly more positive than negative, but certainly in terms of employment, the picture is quite static.

In terms of sub-sectoral sales and employment performance, 43 percent of businesses in the food and drink sub-sector had experienced growth in sales over the past two years and 32 percent had seen employment grow. The equivalent figures in accommodation businesses were lower at only 30 percent and 15 percent respectively. In accommodation, 46 percent of respondents had seen static performance in sales and 69 percent had been static in terms of employment. Though the survey number was much smaller (nine businesses), leisure and sports businesses had witnessed the best sales performance with 78 percent registering a growth in sales over the past two years.

Looking forward, 65 percent of accommodation businesses were anticipating a static performance in terms of sales and employment compared to 41 percent in food and drink and 44 percent in leisure and sports. 52 percent of food and drink businesses were anticipating a growth in sales and employment compared to 44 percent in leisure and sports and only 30 percent in accommodation. Of the businesses who cited visitor attraction as a sub-sector (six in total), 50 percent anticipated a fall in sales and employment over the coming year.

A range of reasons were given for these trends in performance.
Many of the very small businesses were family businesses who did not employ other staff and were not anticipating more than the continuation of the current consistent level of business. Factors positively affecting performance included investment in property, a focus on raising quality and the range of the product and a stronger online presence.

The recession or economic downturn was very commonly cited as a factor negatively affecting performance together with poor weather, a decline in tourism in the area and the price of fuel. Legislative issues such as a shortened licensing hours and stricter employment legislation were also mentioned as factors negatively affecting performance.

3.3 Main Skills Issues

Overall, of the 40 companies surveyed, 18 responded that they had not experienced any major skills issues over the past year and seven gave no specific response to this question. The skills issues mentioned by the remaining 15 businesses ranged from difficulty in recruiting staff with particular job specific skills to a general lack of training and willingness to work among applicants. Long term sick leave of skilled staff and the inability for legislative reasons to fill the vacancy was mentioned by one business. These issues will be discussed in more detail below.

In terms of anticipated skills issues in the coming year, many businesses did not identify and expect any specific concerns. Common expectations were the on-going training and development of existing staff to improve standards and quality, the encouragement of staff in small businesses to be able to work in a number of different areas and the development of work experience. One respondent highlighted the issue that the achievement by staff members of a required qualification (eg. the Personal Licence Holder for staff selling alcohol) does not in itself guarantee that individual will also have good customer service skills. Some businesses anticipated difficulties in finding staff with particular job skills.

3.3.1 Recruitment/Retention

Recruitment and retention was not identified as a major problem overall with 64 percent of respondents saying that this was not an issue.
In terms of sub-sector, 65 percent of both accommodation and food and drink businesses stated that they did not have a problem with recruitment and retention whereas the figures for visitor attractions and leisure and sport (based on a much smaller overall number of respondents) were 16 and 44 percent respectively.

It is possible to differentiate between the issues cited by businesses with regard to recruitment as opposed to retention of staff.

In terms of recruitment, two related areas of difficulty were identified by respondents:

- first, it can prove difficult to find and recruit staff with the relevant HCLT skills and experience (this is true of high level skills such as head chef or management positions but also more generally in terms of good customer service skills and experience);

- second, the relatively remote geographical location of the region itself, and of some of the businesses within it, makes it difficult to find and recruit staff from outside the region if no suitable applicants can be found locally.

In terms of retention, many businesses stated that, once suitable staff had been recruited, it was much less of a problem to retain them. The main difficulty associated with the retention of staff is the seasonality of much of the industry and the associated difficult of retaining casual staff. Many businesses did not have sufficient financial resources to employ staff permanently out of season.

### 3.3.2 Basic Employability Skills

Overall, 70 percent of respondents did not identify any issues around basic employability skills. Of the four subsectors, food and drink and visitor attraction businesses had the highest percentage of firms identifying this area as an issue.

The respondents who did cite issues with basic employability skills identified a number of key problems.

- a mismatch between employees’ expectations of the working environment and the reality - young employees were unwilling to get involved in basic manual tasks, were not prepared to work the required unsociable hours, had issues with timekeeping and overall with the expectations of the job; young
employees could also lack common sense or the confidence to take responsibility or initiative in their jobs;

- communication skills were identified as an important area of deficit;

- there is a lack of skills and training to offer genuine, high quality customer service rather than the minimum requirements of the job.

3.3.3 Job Specific Skills

In terms of job specific skills, 75 percent of respondents stated that this was not an area where they had experienced difficulties and, in the accommodation and visitor attraction sub-sectors, this figure was over 80 percent. In food and drink, this percentage fell to 68 percent and in leisure and sports to 55 percent.

The job specific skills issues that were identified were, in some cases, particular to the individual business and, in others, being experienced more widely across the sector. The lack of horticultural experience, for example, was cited as one particular skill set which was lacking in the region. Finding qualified chefs and more senior management staff were identified as more general skills issues and two companies cited a lack of coffee barista skills as a key problem. Communications and IT skills were also mentioned as an issue. A number of respondents cited the costs associated with ensuring that staff had the necessary basic qualifications as an issue because many locally based young applicants came to the industry with no experience or qualifications at all.

3.3.4 Service Delivery

82 percent of the respondents did not have any issues with service delivery and this percentage is reflected across all four sub-sectors. The main issue that was identified was the need to train and develop young staff to deliver a professional, high quality service in their jobs.

The experience of some businesses was that young staff did not always come to the job with the right attitude and were not always good at taking instruction or working in a diligent manner beyond the very basic requirements of the job. In most cases, this was tackled through on the job training and instruction.
3.3.5 Effects on Business

The relatively high percentage of businesses who cited that skills issues were not a major problem is reflected in the fact that many respondents said that this area had either no or only minimal effect on their business. A number of respondents stated that they employed local people known to them, often year after year as seasonally required, and this helped to minimise the emergence of skills related issue. Several respondents also said that, where skills issues had emerged in their business operation, particularly in relation to customer service or communication, they had been able to address it through in house, on the job training.

In terms of more negative effects of skills issues on business, a number of areas were mentioned by respondents:

- the importance of good, high quality customer care was highlighted in a number of cases - where this does not happen, sales are not maximised and it can prevent customers from returning or recommending their experience to others; it is important to find staff who have a good, underlying customer service approach and attitude and then the job specific skills can be added relatively easily to that;

- the provision of on the job training by management to ensure that quality standards meet those required by the business can be time consuming and take senior staff away from other management related tasks (one respondent stated that management end up working “in the business rather than on the business”);

- the difficulty in recruiting senior staff can have a negative effect on business and product development (one respondent said: “the desire to develop and improve the product on offer means that we have to reassess how this is possible and reinvent existing staff rather than bringing in new blood”);

- the cost to businesses of ensuring that all staff have the required basic qualifications can be notable (this is particularly true for small businesses).
3.4 Employment of Target Groups

Table 3.5 shows the employment of four specific employee groups in the four sub-sectors.

**Table 3.5: Employment of Target Groups**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Accommodation</th>
<th>Food and drink</th>
<th>Visitor attraction</th>
<th>Leisure and sport</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>% of total</td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of companies employing one or more from target groups</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apprentices</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School leavers</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College/HE leavers</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Long term unemployed</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the accommodation and food and drink sub-sectors, school leavers were the most commonly employed group, reflecting perhaps the nature of the work offered by these businesses and their seasonal or casual nature. Of the six visitor attraction respondents, all had employed college or university leavers and two-thirds school leavers. Three quarters of leisure and sport businesses had also employed these two target groups. The target group least commonly employed by respondents in all four sub-sectors was the long term unemployed.

The experience of respondents in employing staff from these target groups was mixed. Overall, positive experiences included individuals coming with a good attitude, keen to work and learn and individuals from all four target groups had been kept on by a number of businesses after an initial trial or part time experience. Negative experiences tended to focus on a lack of maturity or poor attitude, an unwillingness to put in the necessary effort to keep up with the demands of the work and the need for high levels of supervision to ensure work was being done properly.

In terms of each target group, the following comments can be drawn out:
- **Apprentices:** The majority of businesses who had taken on apprentices had found it to be a positive experience and many had kept the individuals on permanently at the end of the apprenticeship;

- **School leavers:** The experience with this target group was much more mixed. In addition to the positive and negative experiences outlined above, there was a differing attitude among businesses as to the impact of providing training and input into school leavers. Some businesses stated taking on school leavers represented a relatively high investment of time and cost just to have them move on either to another job or to college. Other respondents, however, considered it important to provide an opportunity for school leavers to see if they were interested in working in this sector through direct work experience. Access was cited by a number of respondents as a problem with school leavers if the business was remote or in another part of the region and the school leavers had no driving licence;

- **College/university leavers:** The experience with college graduates was generally positive although the reality of the working environment was seen as presenting a challenge to this group as well as to school leavers. A number of businesses cited that college graduates came with good qualifications which then needed to be translated into the working world;

- **Long term unemployed.** A number of issues were identified by respondents in relation to taking on long term unemployed including the difficulty of re-integrating them into a structured, working environment, their willingness to do manual tasks and the pay-off between low wages and the benefits that they had been receiving. More positively, a number of respondents said that their experience with long term unemployed had been that individuals were keen to get back into work and were often willing to accept the more unsociable hours.

Finally, one respondent cited that it has proved beneficial for their business to be known as a leading training business working with young people to help set them up for a career in this sector in the region. They stated that: “*This training reputation is beneficial for recruitment and people are starting to look out for opportunities with us because of it*. ”
3.5 Training Activity

Respondents were asked whether they had funded or arranged for training for their staff in the last year. Table 3.6 provides a summary of the responses across the four sub-sectors.

Table 3.6: Funding/provision of training for staff over past year

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Accommodation</th>
<th>Food and drink</th>
<th>Visitor attractions</th>
<th>Leisure and sport</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>No.</strong></td>
<td><strong>%</strong></td>
<td><strong>No.</strong></td>
<td><strong>%</strong></td>
<td><strong>No.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Base</strong></td>
<td>26</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Yes</strong></td>
<td>17</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>No</strong></td>
<td>9</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The lowest percentage of firms arranging for, or funding training for their staff was found in the accommodation sub-sector, but overall, there is a high incidence of training taking place.

A wide variety of types of training were provided both externally and internally to staff in the respondent businesses. These included:

- food hygiene;
- health and safety;
- first aid;
- fire awareness;
- personal licence holder for serving alcohol;
- various SVQs and NVQs;
- business management;
- confidence building, front of house skills;
- sector specific skills eg. gym levels and personal trainer, pool responder, horticultural qualifications;
- in house, on the job training generally targeted at meeting standards of customer service expected by the business, equipment awareness etc.
In terms of training providers, a range of external organisations were mentioned as part of the survey including:

- colleges in the region: Dumfries and Galloway College (including Complete Training Solutions); Barony College; Crichton University campus;
- colleges and training centres outside the region: Carlisle College; Tennent’s Training Academy, Glasgow;
- SE and Business Gateway;
- Minerva Training;
- Abernethy Barcaple Trust;
- local companies; and
- online training and skills development provision.

Reasons given by respondents for not providing training to staff over the past year included the size of business, the type of staff employed and the expense of training.

### 3.6 Views on Training Provision

In general terms, there were two main responses from surveyed businesses about the provision of training in Dumfries and Galloway. First, many of the smaller businesses said they did not undertake much external training and so had no real experience of local training provision. Second, of the companies which undertook more external training, many said that there were only limited training opportunities locally for the sector. Some assessed provision as adequate but very few ranked local training opportunities as good or excellent.

More specifically, a number of comments or issues about the local training provision can be drawn out:

- Many businesses highlighted problems with access to training in terms of geography, cost and time. Geographical access was a problem even within the region but became even more of an issue with more specialised courses (eg. barista, sommelier, horticulture, specific gym courses such as kettle bell) which were not available at all in Dumfries and Galloway;
- The cost of external training was prohibitive in many cases, particularly for smaller businesses, or when associated travel and accommodation costs also had to be paid. For very small businesses, it was difficult for owners/staff to leave the premises for sufficient time to attend an external course. Bringing training on site, therefore, was seen as an important issue for many businesses;

- The lack of chef or commercial catering courses in the region was highlighted by a number of businesses as a key problem. One business commented: "Schools that are unaware of in-house training for catering inform their students that there are no facilities available to further their career choices in hospitality". General hospitality courses provided locally would support the provision of transferable skills to be used locally in the industry;

- The courses provided by Business Gateway were positively assessed by a number of respondents.

3.7 Future Support

Two main issues were cited by respondents with regard to the future support for training in HCLT in Dumfries and Galloway:

- **Funding availability**: The cost of training and the lack of funding to help businesses undertake external courses were highlighted by many respondents. For very small businesses, cost can prevent training happening at all but larger firms too cited the cost of essential qualifications such as Personal Licence Holder as damaging to business;

- **Local availability**: The difficulty of geographical access to training was a second common theme from the survey. Respondents pointed to problems of getting young staff with no driving licence to training as well as the significant additional cost of travel and/or accommodation for any staff undertaking training a long way from the location of the business.
In addition to these overall areas of support need, a number of more specific comments were made:

- It would be beneficial to have a better overview of what training courses were available. This is done to some extent by the Chamber and the Business Gateway but this service could be improved;

- The role for local training providers in keeping businesses up-to-date with key legislative changes relevant to employment and business operation was highlighted as a need;

- Online or distance learning provision could be one area of development which would also help to tackle the geographical access problem and the issue of time spent away from the business site;

- One leisure firm raised the issue of better partnership between the public and private sectors in the provision and use of training. The respondent commented: “It would be very beneficial for private sector organisations to be able to pay or have subsidised opportunities to take part in Council provided local training courses and move away from the ‘them and us’ perception in this sector”. An improved overview of Council provided training and communication between service providers in the two sectors would be necessary for improvements in this area;

- One respondent highlighted the need for training, particularly in the hospitality and food and drink sector, to be available in ‘real world’ settings where trainees gain exposure to the challenges of a real working environment;

- Improved marketing support for the region from Visit Scotland and tourism agencies. One respondent described Dumfries and Galloway as “the forgotten corner” and this has a major impact on the performance and opportunities for businesses in the HCLT sector.

In terms of ways to support long term unemployed and young people getting into work in this sector, a number of comments were made.

- *The importance of work experience.* Work experience or work placements were seen as critical by many respondents. It provides an opportunity for
the person seeking work to showcase what they can do and for the employer to get to know them and see their potential contribution to the business. It also helps the person seeking work to see if employment in this sector is genuinely what they want to do;

- **The need for funding or financial support:** Many respondents talked about the need for subsidised work placements, the potential to pay lower wages for a period while the trainee shadows existing staff or tax breaks/allowances for employment. The fact that wages are low for many jobs in the HCLT sector means that, for the long term unemployed, it may not be worth coming off benefits to work in this industry. Businesses should be encouraged to keep on seasonal staff but this may not be possible without some kind of financial support;

- **Improve basic employability skills:** For young people (while still at school), or long term unemployed trying to re-enter the job market, training in basic employability skills is important. One respondent said: “More emphasis should be put into employability skills including attitude to work, attitude to employers, personal appearance and manner, personal responsibilities and benefits of working including self-esteem, personal and professional advancement, freedom and financial independence.” This could also help to tackle expectations of work and the need to persevere with a job. Mentoring and confidence building, as well as skills for applying for jobs, were also mentioned as important;

- **Provision of subsidised travel passes** to increase labour mobility and the opportunities for young people or low paid workers to access local job opportunities;

- **Promotion of hospitality as a long term career:** A number of respondents felt that the HCLT sector was not seen as a genuine career choice but rather as a place for seasonal jobs while looking for other employment opportunities. Educational workshops highlighting opportunities for those who succeed in this sector as well as careers advice in schools on this were two possible approaches. Ensuring work opportunities or placements for people still at school would introduce this sector as a potential career choice from the start.
4. The Customers’ Perspective

4.1 Introduction

Through desk research we have sought to identify feedback from the customer side on the HCLT offering in Dumfries and Galloway. The following presents findings from a recent audit of tourism accommodation and from a review of customer feedback on the TripAdvisor website.

4.2 Audit of Tourism Accommodation

A section of TRC’s latest audit comprised feedback from 110 intermediaries and local businesses who are potential generators of demand for D&G accommodation. It aimed to establish views of those placing accommodation business in the region of the quality of the offering.

Respondents made a number of comments regarding:

- shortcomings around quality and availability of good food and beverage/restaurant provision;
- tour operators’ perception that existing quality standards of accommodation are too low in a market that is demanding higher standards;
- value for money issues.

Notably no negative comments were made on customer service/staff skills.

The report concluded that there is a need for management/business skills, marketing, packaging and positioning, etc to address the above (and wider issues about the product offering) and bring D&G up to customer expectations.

---

8 Destination Dumfries and Galloway, Audit of Tourism Accommodation Sector, 2011
4.2.1 Tripadvisor Review

As an addition to the desk research which was agreed at the Inception Meeting, EKOS has undertaken a brief review of customer feedback posted on the Tripadvisor website.

Method

In order to ensure the sample was representative, we first selected random entries in the VisitScotland website. For visitor attractions, the Tourism Monitor was used to select a range of the most popular attractions by visitor numbers.

- Accommodation
  - 32 hotels/B&B/self-catering - mix of stars, locations, picked from the Visit Scotland website at random;

- Eating & drinking
  - 20 fine dining/local bars and restaurants/cafes - mix of locations, picked from the Visit Scotland website at random; and

- Visitor attractions
  - 20 visitor attractions (<10,000 visitors pa in visitor attraction monitor).

The service scores and total overall scores together with comments relating to staff of the first five entries were entered into a database.

The feedback was analysed to identify trends and patterns in service scores and overall scores. This allowed us to draw some general findings regarding the customer experience in the Dumfries and Galloway area.

Findings

The overall average scores for Accommodation, Food & Drink, and Visitor Attractions are shown below. Overall, Dumfries and Galloway scores well, particularly in accommodation and food & drink.
Table 4.1: Summary of Tripadvisor Scores (Scored out of 5)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Number of Companies</th>
<th>Service Score Average</th>
<th>Total Establishment Score Average</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Accommodation</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>4.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food &amp; Drink</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>4.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attractions</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>4.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Five reviews and scores were gathered from each establishment.

Accommodation

Small, family run B&B, self-catering and campsite businesses dominated the high service scores in the Accommodation category, as shown in Table 4.2. These were found in a number of towns around the region.

Table 4.2: Top Scoring Accommodation Establishments

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Av. Service Score</th>
<th>Av. Total Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kirkcudbright</td>
<td>B&amp;B</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drummore</td>
<td>B&amp;B</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St Johns Town of Dalry</td>
<td>B&amp;B</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kirkcudbright</td>
<td>B&amp;B</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dalbeattie</td>
<td>Camp/Caravan Site</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newton Stewart</td>
<td>Self Catering</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Trip advisor, average of 5 ratings per establishment

The lowest three scores however, were for Campsite/Caravan Sites, which scored as low as three out of five.

In the category of Accommodation, our research found that the friendly manner of staff was important, particularly the initial welcome. Almost every reviewer commented on the welcoming nature of their hosts, or the lack of. Other elements, like cleanliness, value and sleep quality appeared to be less of a deciding factor in the overall experience (and score) of the customer than the quality of service experienced.

"... the hotel does look like it has faded over the years but the warmth and hospitality of all the employees more than made up for this. From the receptionist to the porter, the Staff can't do enough for you. An absolute pleasure to stay here."
This “saving” factor can also be the reason a customer feels dissatisfied, as shown in many reviews where everything other than service has been up to standard.

“We were welcomed in a delightful and friendly manner...On departure, we were slightly surprised that the (different) check-out receptionist, who, it must be said seemed a little hassled, did not ask anything about our stay nor even broke a smile. Such apparently trivial incidents do leave a lasting impression.”

Another recurring theme in the accommodation database was satisfaction felt when staff did all they could to help.

Many reviewers would use the phrase “they couldn’t do enough for us” or “nothing was too much trouble” to express the lengths the staff had gone to to ensure their enjoyment over the duration of their stay.

“The manager also went out of his way to help us plan the next leg of our journey and even went so far as to print maps and directions for us. “

**Food and Drink**

The top Food and Drink scores are shown in Table 4.3. Again, locally run establishments tend to come out on top. Many are more than just food and drink, offering other attractions such as galleries/bookshops or rooms.

**Table 4.3: Top Scoring Food & Drink (Max 5)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Service Score</th>
<th>Overall</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dalbeattie</td>
<td>Italian Restaurant</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dalbeattie</td>
<td>Cafe (Local Produce)</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mull of Galloway</td>
<td>Cafe</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stranraer</td>
<td>Family Restaurant</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wigtown</td>
<td>Bookshop/Cafe</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Galloway</td>
<td>Cafe</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>4.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newton Stewart</td>
<td>Family run Inn</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>4.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thornhill</td>
<td>Cafe/Gallery</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Trip advisor, average of 5 ratings per establishment

Two pub chains scored the lowest, one in Dumfries (3.2) and one in Stranraer (3.6).

From the samples in the category of Food and Drink, we noticed recurring phrases, themes and expectations in the reviews.
The first of these recurring phrases was ‘polite and helpful’, a minimal expectation from all reviewers. However, if they did not appear polite and helpful it was often complained about in more detail. For example:

“Staff just could not be bothered they never even questioned un-eaten food, only thing they did do was make sure they got the money … would never recommend and will never be back.”

This contrasts with reviews where the consumer believes that their expectation of staff behaviour has been met, even if their expectations of the food have not:

“Things do go wrong sometimes, but it is the way they are handled that matters. This will not put us off coming back.”

Another trait often mentioned was sincere friendliness, with most reviewers commenting on the friendliness or unfriendliness of their server. Many of the customers felt it was important for staff to appear engaged and happy to do their job, with the ones who had had good experiences particularly commenting on the staff’s willingness to talk to them and ensure that all their needs were being met.

“Five stars awarded because they made us very welcome and you felt important.”

Visitor Attractions

Table 4.4 shows the top five scoring of the 20 visitor attractions we reviewed, this time naming the establishment.

Table 4.4: Top Scoring Visitor Attractions Reviewed

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Average Service Score</th>
<th>Average Overall Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Old Bridge House</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creetown Gem Rock Museum</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>4.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laggan Outdoor</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>4.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Robert Burns House</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>4.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Stewartry Museum</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>4.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Trip advisor, average of 5 ratings per establishment

Given that the scoring profile in this category also included a number of low scoring establishments, we have listed these in Table 4.5.
Table 4.5: Lowest Scoring Visitor Attractions Under Review

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Average Service Score</th>
<th>Average Overall Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Galloway Wildlife Conservation Park</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>3.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gretna Gateway</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>3.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tolbooth Art Centre</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>3.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Castle Kennedy Gardens</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>4.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dunskey Gardens</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>3.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Trip advisor, average of 5 ratings per establishment

Some well-known attractions have quite low average scores for service.

The reviews for this category showed that the most desired trait in staff, was that they were helpful and well informed, alongside being engaged and friendly. Often reviewers would comment on the knowledge of the staff members and how that benefitted their own experience of the attraction:

“What a great place. Informative and knowledgeable owners really keen to share details. We will go back when in the area. They really care for the creatures and that was great to see.”

On the negative side, again customer service skills are important, but management issues are noted:

“Receptionist demonstrated poor Scottish hospitality and appeared disinterested so we did not buy anything.”

The custodian was pleasant and welcoming, but did not appear to have much idea about the process; a project in need of leadership and organisation.”
Summary

Dumfries and Galloway scores well in terms of customer satisfaction with service delivery, with a few exceptions – these exceptions will be found in any region.

The research highlighted that small family run establishments tend to score highly, whereas there is more likely to be a service issue with larger chains. This may be expected as owner operators have more of a vested interest in keeping customers satisfied.

The research confirmed that customer service was arguably the most important factor, in direct relation to a customer’s overall satisfaction, across the three categories. Politeness and friendliness – basic decencies – are ‘must haves’. Staff who are knowledgeable and informative are particularly important for visitor attractions.
5. Stakeholder Engagement

5.1 Introduction

This Chapter provides an overview of the outputs from the stakeholder consultations completed as part of the primary research programme. Details of those taking part is provided at Appendix 1.

There was a clear recognition by stakeholders as to the rationale for the research and to the importance of tourism to the Dumfries and Galloway economy. As such there was interest in the research and the potential responses by the Employability Partnership.

However, it is clear that the discussions focused less on traditional employability issues (how to get those far from labour market into employment) and more about skills from a business development perspective.

At a high level, we were given no indication from the training supply side that skills were a major constraint on the sector to operate or grow, albeit there were specific skills issues that were seen as important and which, if addressed, would be of positive benefit to the sector.

There was a range of common issues identified by the consultees and we have focused on highlighting these to provide an overview below. It should be noted they are in no particular order of priority.

It should also be noted that although the focus of discussion was around skills and employability, the comments led into other wider areas within the overarching D&G tourism strategy.

For more general information on tourism skills, see particularly:

- Tourism Skills Investment Plan: Skills Development Scotland;

A summary of the stakeholder views is presented over.
5.2 The HCLT Sector

All consultees identified the nature and makeup of the sector as one of the key issues that impacts upon skills and labour market issues. This defines the reality of the sector and sets the context within which any new intervention can be established:

- the sector comprises many small and individual business spread across an extensive geography;
- there is a high incidence of “lifestyle” businesses, for example, small one person craft businesses or family run B&Bs. There is a gap in particular in locally owned medium sized businesses with ambition to grow;
- this also reflects a perceived lack of ambition across the sector which may not be meeting its true potential;
- the sector comprises a high incidence of part time/seasonal employment with challenging shift patterns;
- the sector is very difficult to engage with, partly through being geographically dispersed and travel issues, and also due to the inability of very small businesses to release staff or management time.

In particular, we gathered no strong sense that the sector was “thriving” but instead is variable across time and different businesses. As such there does not appear to be a strong direction of travel within the sector – is it clearly growing or simply “hanging on”?

However, on a positive note, DWP are seeing more notified vacancies, with local people able to fill the positions.

5.3 Sector Governance

It is recognised that the sector is (relatively) small and diverse which is seen as underscoring the need for clear co-ordination and partnership in any interventions.

There was a minority view that there was a distinct lack of “joined upness” and that this was a key issue that requires to be addressed through any intervention by the Employability Partnership.
Again due to the fragmented nature of the sector it is recognised it can be difficult to obtain meaningful employer engagement and there were examples of attempts to instigate engagement that were unsuccessful, for example, a management training event which had limited participation. This was seen as symptomatic of the challenge to get small businesses from across a wide geographical area to commit time out during the day.

It was considered important that lessons are learned and that these inform any future interventions, for example, when or where or how to hold events or the appropriate delivery channels.

One particular issue which was raised was the level (availability) of support for the sector from public agencies (e.g., Scottish Enterprise/ Business Gateway) where the small/fragmented nature of the sector counted against them.

One of the key challenges for the sector and its leadership is how to induce a sense of ambition and persuade (particularly) small owner/managed businesses to want to grow and as such generate demand for new labour.

There was generally seen to be a clear role for the Employability Partnership to provide leadership and strategic direction in relation to sector skills and employability.

5.4 Future Skills-related Needs

Despite an apparent lack of ambition, there was also a view that D&G had a genuinely competitive offering and that there were opportunities for those who choose to grow:

- at a sub sector level, the following opportunities and skills needs were specifically identified:
  - food tourism, and chefs and related kitchen skills;
  - new and expanding events and event management skills;
  - adventure and sports and leisure and technical skills;
- marketing skills, particularly for small companies, to reflect the fact that the D&G product is competitive but that perhaps awareness and understanding is not so well developed
for example, web based marketing is not a one off and businesses will require skills support to update/ refresh/ develop over time;

- innovation is seen as probably the key sector driver – new products/ processes/ business models:
  - most small businesses do not have the skills to achieve innovation or in many cases even understand what it could offer;
- finally, but not least, the ongoing issue of service skills and the ability to engage with customers continues to be a key driver for the industry (although whether all businesses buy into service excellence is questioned).

The above skills related issues will of course be relevant at a number of levels: entry level, replacement level and workforce development and as such where responsibility will lie will of course vary across the supply side.

5.5 Image of Sector

This issue was raised by all consultees who identified the image and perception of the sector as one of its key constraints in recruiting talent. The image appears to be based on many of the issues highlighted earlier (most of which are in fact true) but the focus appears to be clearly on the “negative” aspects of the sector.

Some of the key points are highlighted below:

- the perception is that the sector offers low paid jobs with poor career prospects (which in many cases is exactly what it is);
- however, it does also offer jobs with career paths and opportunities for advancement;
- it is therefore important to recognise that there are a number of opportunities and there is a need to show that the sector can support a range of ambitions:
  - part time employment (at hours to suit personal circumstances)
  - seasonal employment (opportunity to earn money for holiday etc?)
  - portfolio working (tourism in summer/ retail over Christmas)
  - full time jobs with career path
opportunities to start and own a business
opportunities for training and personal development;

- in one way the sector offers more flexible opportunities than many and it is therefore important not to try and sell the sector for what it is not but instead focus on the reality.

There is therefore a need to review how the sector is portrayed or marketed in schools/colleges/in the wider media and to ensure at the very least that the “facts” are what individuals are basing career or skills decisions around.

We return to this issue later in the Chapter.

### 5.6 Sector/ Education Links

There was a general consensus that education/industry links could be better developed for the sector. Key areas for development were seen to be around:

- provision of information to teachers/career advisors/students/parents that better reflects the reality of the sector including future opportunities;
- the provision of internships/placements either as short term tasters or as part of an ongoing focus:
  - the difficulties in this should not be underestimated, particularly in very small or family owned businesses who are unlikely to participate in any case;
- establishing an approach for the development of a dialogue between the sector and the wider education sector.

It was believed that the sector did not have a strong track record in engaging with education or in expressing their skills requirements. Opportunities to improve links and engagement are seen as a key feature for consideration.

### 5.7 Management Skills

Management and leadership skills were seen by all as a crucial part of the skills mix and one that was generally underdeveloped, in many business, particularly those which are owner managed.
This would include “management” in its widest sense:

- personal skills such as leadership, strategic thinking, innovation; and
- technical skills such as the ability to understand finance, investment, marketing, business planning, HR.

There are examples of previous interventions to support management training in the sector but it is not clear how well these have worked and in any case the issue remains valid.

The issue is of particular focus on small companies, many owner-managed where the proprietor has no formal training or qualifications and does not have time or inclination to learn or resources to pay others.

The issue is not simply the availability of provision but also about the ability to recognise the need in the first place.

5.8 Workforce Development

The consultees’ general view is that many HCLT businesses do not provide any significant training for staff. This is perceived to be based on a number of factors:

- staff are often part time/seasonal, do not stay long with a single employer, and as such the “investment” is not seen to yield dividends for the business;
- it can be difficult to release staff to undertake training in a small business, and there is also the issue of geography and accessibility; or
- businesses are unsure of the value of training and the returns from making an investment.

This is seen as one of the major shortcomings of the sector as a whole rather than of individual businesses and is recognised as one of the areas where market failure is greatest.

One specific point was made in relation to e-marketing. While support was provided to businesses to set up web sites and develop e-marketing approaches there was no follow on support in terms of updating/refreshing/reflecting new opportunities.
This, it was felt, was an obvious shortfall in support provision and one which could be easily remedied.

5.9 Supply Side Provision

There was a strong sense among the stakeholders that the provision of education and training in the region was able to meet the likely needs of the industry and there were no major gaps in provision.

There was also a general view that the training provision also met the required quality and quantity aspects in the region. The further developments at D&G College were also seen as a positive move.

There were some issues raised around the supply side and these include:

- the way in which training is delivered and the need for a more bespoke and flexible approach (see comments above);
- there was a perception that there was some tension between the public and private providers which did not help the image of the sector;
- while it was recognised that there was a range of training provision, it was often generic in nature. For example, while there is provision for MAs in management, does this offer sufficient insights into the specific issues relating to tourism?
- Skills Development Scotland were seen as making good inroads in supporting the sector but it is not clear how deep the agency has managed to get into the sector.

Overall, however, it does tend to suggest that stakeholders perceive the key issues lie with the demand side of the sector.

5.10 Potential Actions

Finally, this Chapter considers the kinds of actions or interventions which stakeholders believe would make a difference in supporting skills development in the sector.
The key point is that demand for skills and labour is a derived demand – derived from the growth and development of the sector.

To a large extent, the key issue is how to stimulate the demand side and encourage and support growth companies/ sub sectors which in turn will generate need for labour and skills.

From a strategic perspective, this should be the focus of any short term interventions.

However, it is also recognised that any interventions that are likely to result from any new initiative will be light touch due to limited resources. It is therefore believed that focus should be on a few areas which can really make a difference at the local level.

Based on the discussions with stakeholders, there are four key areas where further intervention could make a difference to the identified skills issues:

- improving the image of the sector to new entrants;
- improving industry/ education links;
- more support for workforce development;
- relevant management and business skills.

Finally, there is the need to consider the role for the Employability Partnership in any future initiative. The key point is that the Employability Partnership must continue to be joined up with the other relevant organisations which have a remit in the HCLT sector.

Particularly, the Council’s Economic and Business Development Service (and Business Gateway) must be key players along with the appropriate sector organisations. This is not about creating new organisations but about providing better co-ordination of existing activities.
6. Conclusions and Recommendations

6.1 Introduction

The overarching aim of the study was to identify the training, development and skills requirements of HCLT employers in the region. There are some real positives to be taken from the research. Overall the customer feedback from Tripadvisor was positive, and generally people have found a warm welcome and had a pleasant stay or experience. Businesses also generally feel quite positive about the future, and most have experienced few major issues with recruitment and retention.

There is still room for improvement, however, and a need to stimulate the demand side and encourage and support growth companies/sub sectors which in turn will generate need for labour and skills.

Based on the desk-based and primary research, we conclude that Dumfries and Galloway could invest in a number of areas in order to improve the competitiveness of its tourism product.

6.2 Raising the Attractiveness of the Sector

Again, echoing the tourism SIP, stakeholders and businesses argue for more investment to raise the attractiveness of the sector to potential recruits. It was felt that the negative aspects of the sector are highlighted more than the positives and that more can be done to accentuate the positives.

Businesses made three suggestions for how this could be done:

- educational workshops highlighting opportunities for those who succeed in this sector;
- more informed, inspiring careers advice in schools;
- ensuring work opportunities or placements for people still at school.

One entry route into HCLT is via apprenticeships. The barriers of micro and small businesses finding time/resources to support apprenticeships, seasonality of work, and travel issues in the region call for a new approach to supporting young people into the industry.
A number of possible approaches could be tested. To overcome seasonality issues, portfolio structures which incorporate different segments, e.g. combining hospitality in the high season with retail in the tourism off-season, should be explored. Shared/portfolio apprenticeships may also be more appealing to small companies and would also lesson the burden on small companies.

Below we provide examples of two models we are aware of which may provide useful feedback for the feasibility/planning stage and beyond.

People 1st is currently piloting a new approach, funded by Welsh Government and ESF, for tourism apprenticeships in Wales, whereby apprentices are being given a chance to complete their apprenticeship by rotating between three employers over 18 months. They will be supported, mentored and trained in three different brands across different working cultures, thereby extending their knowledge, skills and experience.

We are also aware that Loch Lomond and Trossachs National Park Community Partnership has just been funded for a pilot tourism apprenticeship scheme on the back of their successful LEADER funded innovative trades apprenticeship model (see Appendix 2). The Community Partnership has just launched its new Skills Partnership project (also LEADER funded) looking at skills relating to three new areas (tourism, land management, and local food + drink) and one of the projects they will be progressing is a shared apprentice scheme within the tourism sector (in partnership with tourism skills body). With the business/employer at the centre of the process, the aim is to encourage employment opportunities and looking at skills development that meet the business’ needs plus ways to minimize the excessive costs or administrative burden.

There may be an opportunity to collaborate with this project under the LEADER Action 2 support.

A core element of the apprenticeship needs to be in developing staff to provide a high quality customer experience. This will incorporate basics such as communication skills, as well as technical skills and importantly, knowledge about the region to be able to provide informed advice to visitors that will enhance their overall stay.

**Recommendation: Strategic Partners to consider Shared Apprenticeships for the HCLT sector in the region.**
6.3 Management, leadership and business skills

The overall HCLT business performance picture is fairly static; employment has remained broadly the same at 5,500-6,000 employees over the last four years, and businesses we spoke to had similar of expectations for employment in the next two years. In the business survey, we spoke to a number of businesses expecting more positive growth. It was notable that these businesses had some sound business rationales for this – they are investing in property/facilities, they are raising the quality and range of their product, they are building stronger online presences, etc.

The region needs to build more of these growth-oriented businesses. Improving management, leadership and enterprise skills must be a focus in D&G, just as it also features in the Scottish tourism SIP, and indeed has long been a recognised challenge for the sector in Scotland.

Again, this has to be grounded in the reality that most businesses are small and family owned. There is a need for multi-tasking and a shortage of time/resources to spend on training. Added to this in Dumfries and Galloway are the geographic barriers of travelling to training. This points towards a number of possible approaches:

- online learning modules;
- more localised delivery of workshops and seminars; and
- direct consultancy within the business itself.

There is an opportunity to go beyond generic business/marketing training and provide something that is more bespoke to the region, using the opportunity of group training sessions to encourage collaboration and the development of a joint vision of the D&G tourism USP. It could aim to stimulate innovation and enhance the product on offer in the region. Case studies of successful operators should be shared.

A final point is that this should be a process rather than an event – the industry must continually develop as highlighted in the earlier example of on-line marketing. There are a number of thematic/industry groups which could provide the vehicle for such an initiative, such as the D&G Golf Partnership, Food and Drink Producers and Suppliers Group, Visitor Attraction Forum. These could be invited to participate in pilot activity.
Recommendation: Pilot activity which supports HCLT management, innovation and collaboration is undertaken with business support providers and industry groups.

This should be industry led activity therefore we do not wish to be prescriptive at this stage, however, we make the following suggestions:

- the support could bring together a geographic community or thematic group (e.g. golfing, visitor attractions);
- the collaborative training activities might include management development, mentoring, fact finding visits, skills sharing;
- the group could also focus on collaborative activity which enhances their local area, local marketing, product development and innovation.

Resources should be available to assist industry groups to develop activities and to provide quality business support that meets their needs.

This pilot activity should be evaluated and if effective, can be rolled out across the region.

6.4 More Support for Workforce Development

The survey indicated that most employers do provide/arrange training for their staff. However, further probing indicated that most of this is on-the-job training and only a minority participated in external provision.

The desk and primary research has highlighted a number of areas where stakeholders feel there is a need for more workforce development.

These include:

- Basic employability and customer service skills – particularly highlighted in the business survey in terms of the target groups (e.g. school leavers), communication, attitudes, motivations, work ethics and so on are vitally important in this service industry. The Tripadvisor review highlighted the importance of customer service skills strongly;
- training / operator awareness of local culture / history / heritage (product familiarisation);
• job specific skills, e.g.
  o food tourism, and chefs and related kitchen skills;
  o new and expanding events and event management skills;
  o adventure and sports and leisure and technical skills;
• marketing/e-marketing.

The business survey raised some other issues:

• the geographical barriers to taking up training – as mentioned above this calls for more localised or remote learning opportunities;

• the cost of training staff can be prohibitive. Many called for financial support to help meet their training needs and to cover indirect costs such as travel/accommodation where training can only be accessed further afield;

• the need for better information about training opportunities.

This points to a similar mechanism to that suggested above, forming local/thematic groups to develop a tailored programme of workforce training that overcomes the barriers of geography, cost and awareness of support.

Recommendation: Business support providers and industry groups are supported to develop pilot activity which supports HCLT workforce development.

6.5 Coordination

Finally, there was generally seen to be a clear role for the Employability Partnership to provide leadership and strategic direction in relation to sector skills and employability.

With a diverse and dispersed business base it can be difficult to coalesce views around what the sector needs. There is clearly a need for partnership and ongoing dialogue between training institutions, the HCLT industry and other major stakeholders in the region so that training needs are voiced and heard, and most importantly, acted upon.
Bringing together all the above, we suggest a partnership model which has proved successful across Scotland and which EKOS has worked closely with - the Scottish Government Business Improvement Districts (BIDS) is considered. These deliver a wide variety of projects and services which are specific to their local area. The projects and services are identified by the local businesses through a consultation with them on their main issues and concerns.

Whilst early interest was mainly from towns and cities, now rural, tourism and visitor, food and drink and themed BIDs are in development.

According to a recent national report, all BIDs can be measured in purely financial terms, however, the positive impacts that can be seen within BID areas is far broader and includes:

- a higher level of partnership working;
- better understanding between public sector bodies and local businesses;
- a decrease in duplication of effort;
- increased levels of local capacity;
- improved entrepreneurial activities; and
- increased co-ordination with community groups.

This mechanism could support leadership management, enterprise development, local physical improvements, access to employment and work experience – a wide range of the issues discussed in this study.

**Recommendation:** Dumfries and Galloway Council considers the development of a structure such as the BIDS model to provide a robust, long-term platform for joined up activity to support skills development and the wider tourism economy in Dumfries and Galloway.
Appendix 1

Consultees

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Organisation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>David Welch</td>
<td>DWP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brian Cameron</td>
<td>Skills Development Scotland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Andy Wright</td>
<td>D&amp;G College</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hew Smith</td>
<td>D&amp;G Council Education Department</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stacey Paul</td>
<td>Destination Dumfries and Galloway</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liz Chambers</td>
<td>Association of D&amp;G Accommodation Providers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Janet Weir</td>
<td>D&amp;G College, Head of Faculty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deborah Condie</td>
<td>The Intraining Group</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Company Survey Participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of Company</th>
<th>Location</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Star Hotel</td>
<td>Twynholm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Springfield B &amp; B</td>
<td>Colvend, Dalbeattie</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Mill</td>
<td>Kirkpatrick Fleming</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marthrown of Mabie</td>
<td>Mabie Forest Dumfries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cream o’ Galloway</td>
<td>Gatehouse of Fleet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glenkens Community &amp; Arts Trust</td>
<td>New Galloway</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brookford B&amp;B</td>
<td>Dalry, Castle Douglas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scaurbridge house</td>
<td>penpont</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mark Farms/Pibble Provincial/Galloway Holliday Gogites</td>
<td>Dumfries and Galloway</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glenholme Country House</td>
<td>Kirkcudbright</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Borgue Hotel</td>
<td>Borgue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limetree House Guest House</td>
<td>Moffat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Smithy</td>
<td>New Galloway</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roughfirth House B&amp;B</td>
<td>Kippford</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brodies</td>
<td>Moffat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Millbrae House</td>
<td>Rockcliffe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pizzeria il fiume</td>
<td>Dock Park, Dumfries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eskdale Hotel</td>
<td>Langholm DG130JH</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ReadingLasses Bookshop and Cafe</td>
<td>Wigtown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bay House Restaurant</td>
<td>Stranraer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Easterbrook Hall</td>
<td>Dumfries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barracuda Leisure club, Cairndale Hotel</td>
<td>Dumfries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harbour House Hotel</td>
<td>Portpatrick</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portpatrick Hotel (part of chain of 50 hotels)</td>
<td>Portpatrick</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lighthouse Leisure</td>
<td>Southerness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heathhall Garden Centre</td>
<td>Dumfries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hartfell House</td>
<td>Moffat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Galloway Lodge Preserves</td>
<td>Gatehouse of Fleet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blaven B&amp;B</td>
<td>Kirkcubright</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ferintosh B&amp;B</td>
<td>Dumfries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urr Valley Hotel</td>
<td>Castle Douglas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Queensberry Arms</td>
<td>Annan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North West Café</td>
<td>Dumfries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Willow Tree</td>
<td>Castle Douglas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pleuchies Howf</td>
<td>Dumfries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Galloway activity centre</td>
<td>Castle Douglas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crown Hotel</td>
<td>Newton Stewart</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rickwood house hotel</td>
<td>Portpatrick</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pancake Place</td>
<td>Dumfries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Auldgirth Shop and tearoom</td>
<td>Auldgirth</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix 2: Apprenticeship Case Study

Loch Lomond and Trossachs National Park Community Partnership, Feasibility Study and Pilot Apprenticeship Programme

Overview

LEADER+ provided support for the pilot development of a National Park Apprenticeship Scheme focussing on plumbing, building and electrical trades. A Business Development Officer offered financial support and other assistance to local businesses interested in employing apprentices. Local businesses participating in the Apprenticeship Scheme provided valuable training for the National Park’s young people and aided economic development in the Park.

Rationale

The shortage of tradespeople in the Loch Lomond and Trossachs National Park began to be recognised as early as 2002. The lack of apprenticeships to develop young people’s skills was also recognised. A steering group was formed through the area network meetings to look at the possibility of ‘growing our own’ skilled tradespeople to serve local markets.

Aims and Objectives

The aim of the first phase was to undertake a feasibility study to quantify the shortfall of tradespeople in the National Park area and the demand for apprenticeship places. The second phase aimed to test the concept through a four year pilot apprenticeship project.

Getting Established

In 2004, LEADER+ and West Dunbartonshire and Stirling Councils all agreed to make equal contributions to the £18,000 study. The LEADER+ team fully supported the funding preparation stage and its early funding support was essential to securing the match funding that enabled the project to go ahead.

For the pilot project, in 2006 LEADER+ contributed £23,400 towards the £90,300 cost of employing a development officer, and establishing a discretionary grants scheme for employers and schools event programme to get the apprenticeship scheme up and running.
Implementation

The consultants that completed the feasibility study were able to quantify the extent of the lag experienced by the National Park in the ratio of apprentices to tradespersons relative to the national average. (Whereas the national average is one apprentice to every fifteen tradespersons it is only one to twenty three in the National Park). The evidence base was further developed into a model for a scheme which provided training grants to employers and to apprentices.

A key challenge was to raise interest from businesses to support the scheme. It quickly became clear that there was going to be a difficulty finding companies to take on apprentices. A new strategy was developed to ask larger companies operating in the construction field to support small businesses to take on apprentices. The large company sponsors the smaller business and its apprentice on a one to one basis and, following a few weeks of “taster training” this has been the model applied.

This led to the development of the pilot scheme application for which LEADER+ support was secured to fund the officer to raise industry buy-in to the scheme. With volunteer support, over 200 organisations were approached, and sufficient companies were found who were willing to give a financial contribution of £7,000 over four years, the majority of which is distributed to the participating small businesses and apprentices. A Development Officer was then hired with the first task to recruit small businesses in the National Park to the scheme.

The original four year pilot was extended to 2014 because 2008 was a difficult year in the construction sector; the scheme only attracted 13 businesses. Using the spare sponsor funds and as the economic situation improved in 2009 and 2010, it proved possible to take on board more small businesses using existing and then new funds.

The CP recognised that the support of the LEADER+ team had been invaluable; an ongoing relationship was maintained during the project implementation including attendance at some Steering Group meetings and providing advice. Overall, the LEADER+ team’s commitment to help the project achieve its objectives was appreciated.
Outcomes and Impacts

The early LEADER+ funding enabled the project to get off the ground in an informed manner and with the officer support needed to generate interest in the scheme. This initial model has been sustained through to a full project which has seen the completion of 18 apprenticeships with 16 businesses.

The impact is difficult to quantify. Although some businesses said they would have hired trainees/apprentices anyway, most would not have hired the young people without the support.

The young people clearly benefited from skills development, and fed back that they understood that they were under scrutiny as part of the scheme which helped to motivate and improve their performance. During their scheme they were also offered financial support to cover expenses such as tools and textbooks, but surprisingly few took up their allocation.

With the exception of two participants, all are still with their host companies. One of the apprentices won the gold medal in the national "skillbuild" competition in the roofer/slater category.

The wider National Park population also benefits from having an increased supply of skilled trades available locally. There is an associated economic impact for the area in increasing trade for local businesses.

The Community Partnership has received wider recognition for this innovative scheme, and has made presentations to other rural community and young people’s groups and organisations. Because of this initiative the Partnership has become a member of the Cross Party Group on Skills and now attends quarterly meetings in the Scottish Parliament.

Lessons

The model was predicated on a proactive approach to generating business interest in supporting the scheme. This involved direct approaches to businesses to convince them of the benefits. Without this company participation the scheme could not have continued. Organisations such as the Walker Group, The National Park itself and Rural Stirling Housing Association were early supporters, providing £7,000 at the outset, and topping up this amount once the model had been shown to be effective.

There are no shortages of young people willing to become an apprentice.
The challenges have been greater in terms of building up capacity and confidence among the small rural businesses to take on an apprentice. It is suggested that a dedicated rural business support officer that could bring a regular offering of tailored support would be of value to companies in the National Park.

Further progress

Subsequent to the LEADER+ funded pilot year, the Community Partnership continued to develop the Apprenticeship Scheme whereby National Park-based micro-businesses and trade businesses (plumbers, electricians and builders) are supported to take on a Modern Apprentice or Trainee. The businesses and the trainees are then assisted financially and in other ways (mentoring) over the four years of the apprenticeship. During the course of the apprenticeship the CP maintains contact with the participants and assists with extramural training or employment issues where appropriate.

The success of the current project, which comes to an end in 2014, has spurred the CP on to look at how this model could be extended and applied to other key business and employment sectors within the National Park.

Funding was secured from LEADER (Forth Valley as well as Argyll and the Islands), other public and private sector to carry out a feasibility study which investigated the three key economic sectors in the Park - Tourism, Land Based Work and Local Food Production and identify current training opportunities and needs within those sectors.

As of February 2013 the Community Partnership has secured funding from Forth Valley and Lomond LEADER for the first year, to see the recruitment of a Project Manager who will be working over the coming months to formally establish the ‘Skills Partnership’. This will include bringing training and education providers to the table to sign up to the initiative and work together on its development; devising a programme of courses targeted at employer needs; encouraging development of new courses to fill provision gaps in the programme; and bringing employers together to ensure that the output meets employers’ needs.

There is a huge groundswell of support and enthusiasm around the project which has been underpinned by LEADER ring fencing support for Year 2 which will see the project move into pilot delivery and implementation.