

Skills Group highlights future career opportunities in the Hospitality sector

Investing in skills will improve competitiveness and create jobs in the sector

PRESS RELEASE (12th November 2015)

The Expert Group on Future Skills Needs today, 12th November, published a new study on the future skills requirements of the Hospitality Sector. The objective of this study is to assess the skills demand needs arising within the Hospitality sector in Ireland - hotels, restaurants, bars, canteens and catering - over the period to 2020. The aim is to ensure that there will be the right supply of skills to help drive domestic hospitality sector business and employment growth. The study assesses skills demand at all NFQ levels, with a particular focus on career progression opportunities for those at lower skilled levels to help fill anticipated job openings.

The Hospitality sector is one of the most important services sectors in the Irish economy. It directly employs 158,000 persons within 16,000 enterprises. This represents 8% of current economy-wide employment. The sector contributes €3 billion gross value added to the economy. It makes a valuable contribution to regional and local economies, and provides flexible employment opportunities that can facilitate greater labour market participation.

Launching the report, the Minister for Skills, Research and Innovation, Damien English T.D said: “While the Hospitality sector has potential for future growth, skill demand shortfalls are likely to continue to emerge in key occupations if action is not taken in the short to medium term. The level of success ultimately achieved in addressing skills requirements will be dependent on industry, education/training and other stakeholders working together on a collaborative basis. The recommendations made in the report of the Expert Group on Future Skills Needs are designed to support the professionalisation of the sector and to contribute toward achieving national employment creation targets under the Government’s ‘*Action Plan for Jobs*’.”

Speaking at the launch, Minister of State for Tourism and Sport, Michael Ring T.D also welcomed the report: “The jobs in the Hospitality sector, which forms a major part of the Tourism industry, encompass a wide range of roles, qualifications and skills and are geographically dispersed. This report is essential in terms of identifying a clear and coherent framework for the development of talent in the Hospitality sector in the years ahead. This will help drive both business and employment growth which is one the key goals of the Government’s *Tourism Policy Statement - People, Place and Policy-Growing Tourism to 2025*”.

Chairperson of the Expert Group on Future Skills Needs (EGFSN), Una Halligan said “The Hospitality sector requires a skilled and professional workforce in order to deliver the highest standards of service. A recovery in the sector is leading to increased demand for employees of varying skill levels. A main challenge for the industry is to provide appropriate upskilling and reskilling for employees and clear career progression pathways for those that wish to make hospitality their career. Hospitality businesses should

actively promote the career opportunities available at different levels to students, parents and jobseekers. There is also a need within businesses for improved hospitality talent attraction and retention practices. The sector offers attractive business opportunities to entrepreneurs”.

The full report, Assessment of Future Skills Requirements in the Hospitality Sector in Ireland 2015-2020, and its recommendations are available on the Expert Group on Future Skills Needs website www.skillsireland.ie

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NOTES FOR EDITORS

The Hospitality sector in Ireland is comprised of hotels, restaurants, bars, pubs, canteens and catering operators. The definition of the hospitality employment used in the study takes into account employment in the accommodation and food services sector and also employment in related sectors for key hospitality-related occupations. The largest concentrations of employment are among waiters/waitresses (27,509 or 17.4% of the total); chefs (23,948 or 15.2%); kitchen/catering assistants (23,255 persons or 14.7%); bar staff (18,719 or 11.8%); and hotel/accommodation managers and proprietors (8,242 or 5.2% of employment). These specific occupations together represent almost two-thirds of hospitality-related employment.

About the EGFSN

The Expert Group on Future Skills Needs (EGFSN) advises the Irish Government on current and future skills needs of the economy and on other labour market issues that impact on Ireland’s enterprise and employment growth. It has a central role in ensuring that labour market needs for skilled workers are anticipated and met. Established in 1997, the EGFSN reports jointly to the Minister for Education and Skills and the Minister for Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation.

The Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation, in conjunction with the Skills and Labour Market Research Unit in SOLAS, provide the EGFSN with research and analysis support.

Summary of recommendations in the EGFSN report

Key Recommendations	
1	Establish a National Oversight and Advisory Group for the Irish Hospitality sector to oversee the skills development and promotion in the sector. This would include the implementation of the recommendations made in this report.
2	Target measures and initiatives to address projected skills shortfalls of chefs and other hospitality occupations in terms of both the quantity and quality of skills required.
3	Improve alignment of education and training provision with the skills demand needs of hospitality enterprises. This includes increasing NFQ level 4/5 provision for kitchen/catering, bar and waiting staff and enhancing progression pathways between NFQ Levels 4+5 to Level 6+. Further professionalise the Hospitality sector through the introduction of national occupational standards.
4	Hospitality establishments to increase investment in management and staff training, appraisal and career progression. This is required to reduce the relatively high rates of turnover and replacement demand among staff in certain hospitality occupations.
5	Promote the Hospitality sector as a professional long-term career choice to school leavers, students and parents. The Leaving Cert Home Economics course could be reviewed in terms of content covered and rebranded to attract more male students. The potential for new short Junior Certificate courses could be examined.
6	Tap into the Irish diaspora and encourage take up of job opportunities by the 'grey' and other demographic segments of the workforce to help close skills gaps and professionalise the sector.
7	Introduce flexible accreditation options and life-long training logs (including skills 'passports') to support greater portability of qualifications and mobility of Hospitality sector skills.
8	Assist unemployed former Hospitality sector workers to return to employment in the sector.
9	Enhance measures for the attraction of qualified chefs from the EU/EEA area while implementing actions to increase domestic supply. Where skills demand shortfalls persist it is possible for industry to make a submission that changes be considered to the existing employment permit criteria for chefs within the new 6 - monthly review process.