

# **TFFC Customer Experience Implementation Group Meeting**

Friday 23 February 2007, Glasgow Science Centre

## **Present**

Fiona Colley, Glasgow Science Centre (Chair)  
Penny George, Scottish Executive (Secretariat)  
Robert Cullen, VisitScotland  
David Duncan, People 1<sup>st</sup>  
Stephen Williamson, Scottish Enterprise  
Marie Blackwood, Harbour Arts Centre  
Kirsten Foubister, Scottish Executive  
Tish Houston, Pride and Passion Dingwall  
Sandi Hellowell, VisitScotland  
Liz Buchanan, Tourist Board Training/VisitScotland  
Jeanette Montgomery, Mar Hall Hotel  
Andrew Macartney, Scottish Executive

## **1. Welcome and Introductions**

Fiona Colley welcomed the group and introductions were made around the table.

## **2. Overview of Tourism Framework for Change**

Kirsten Foubister explained to the group that the Tourism Framework for Change – the national strategy for Scottish tourism which was launched in March 2006 – is a document that was drawn up as a partnership between the tourism industry, the Executive, VisitScotland, as well as various other stakeholders. It is important that the industry leads the way on taking forward the targets and actions that are outlined in the document. To this end, 5 implementation groups, chaired by industry ‘champions’, have been established, each of which will address the targets and actions relating to one of the five themes identified in the strategy. An overarching monitoring group has also been set up, which will oversee the work of the five implementation groups. The Executive’s role will be to offer support to all of these groups.

## **3. Targets from TFFC**

Fiona Colley explained that she had ‘handpicked’ the people that she had invited to join the Customer Experience implementation group, as she wanted to be sure of having people that were genuinely committed to making a difference.

Fiona suggested the group talk through the targets and actions which have been identified for the CE group. Time unfortunately didn’t allow for discussion of each individual action on the list, but some of the key points raised are listed below:

- It was agreed that group members should be helping to promote VisitScotland's QA scheme, for example by spreading the word amongst other tourism businesses about the benefits of the scheme.
- Important not only to support tourism businesses in collecting customer feedback, but to understand its benefits and how it can be used to make improvements.
- Group members agreed to join Pride and Passion as a 'friend' (if they haven't already) and to encourage at least 2 other people or representatives of tourism businesses to join. Kirsten mentioned however that some reconsideration has been given to P&P's key priorities, and that it might be worth talking to Gillian Stirton to establish whether increasing the number of Friends is still a priority or if the group could look at doing something else to support the work of P&P.
- The benefits of 'fam trips' were recognised for training staff – i.e. giving staff of tourism businesses the opportunity to see firsthand some of the local tourist attractions that visitors might go to – this can help to raise enthusiasm and interest, and make staff better placed for advising visitors on what to do.
- There is a general need for training to address the 'softer skills' – dealing with customers, confidence building and using initiative.
- Agreement that the lack of training uptake amongst tourism businesses isn't due to a lack of training provision. There seems to be plenty of training available, but barriers include lack of awareness of what is available; lack of understanding of the benefits that training can offer; and practical difficulties such as expense or time commitments.
- It was agreed therefore that *communication* is key, and that an important role for the group will lie in communicating best practice throughout the wider industry.
- In order to help businesses understand the benefits of staff training, it is important first for them to be able to identify their business needs.
- Various methods were suggested for helping businesses do this, including the HIE/SE business support approach, and VS's QA advisers who visit every tourism business once a year.
- It was also agreed that there is an ongoing need to improve the image of the tourism industry as an employer – Marlyn Howat explained that this is one of the key roles of Springboard, and that they work with school leavers and at school careers fairs to raise the profile of the industry.

In addition to these general points of discussion, David Duncan gave an update on People 1<sup>st</sup>. People 1<sup>st</sup> are currently developing their Training Action Plan for the tourism industry. One of the key elements of this is the Skills Passport, which is an online verified record of achievement for individuals. It will also hold the qualifications skillset that might be required by industry in order for staff to advance in their career. The initial prototype was launched last year in Scotland by the Minister for Tourism, and the full UK Passport will be launched later this year.