

Hospitality Recruitment Crisis

I am writing to ask you to support a letter writing campaign in relation to the significant staffing crisis that businesses and the industry in Cumbria are currently facing, which has never been so serious.

Cumbria Tourism has joined partners at the Lake District Hoteliers Association to launch a national letter writing effort with the objective of raising this urgent issue quickly up the government agenda. We are asking other Destination Management Organisations and LDHA is contacting other hotel associations to join this mass effort.

By each of us contacting our MPs on this issue we want to ensure our voices are heard and that we can collectively illustrate the urgent need for change.

According to our research, the scale of the staff recruitment challenge you are facing has doubled within a month, with 68% of businesses now saying recruitment is a significant problem.

We know how incredibly proactive you have been and the steps you are taking to mitigate the challenge, but this problem is exacerbated by a wide range of factors including: changes to post Brexit immigration policy, we are all recruiting at once; the impact of Covid on employee choices; a super-aging population and infrastructure challenges such as a lack of affordable housing and transport connectivity.

As the county's official Destination Management Organisation, Cumbria Tourism has long been campaigning vigorously for hospitality workers to be afforded the same recognition as agricultural labourers, whose designation as skilled removes multiple barriers from the new 'Australian-style' points-based system. But so far this has not been forthcoming.

What is Cumbria Tourism Doing Now?

Lobbying - we have shared our latest evidence with MPs, Government, national industry lobbying bodies and the media to help raise this issue at the highest levels.



Marketing - we have launched an in and out of county recruitment campaign #theperfectplacetowork and continue to offer free vacancy advertising on our jobs section at www.visitlakedistrict.com/jobs.

Business Support - free to advertise, it is one of the most viewed pages on CTs website. A series of webinars to support business have been arranged and we are also a Kickstart Gateway – which enables Government-funded work

placements for under 25s.

Partnership working – we are working with partners to support a countywide coordinated approach to create short, medium and longer-term solutions.

How you can help - Write to your MP

The more of us write the greater the impact. Below is some wording that might be helpful.

- Cumbria's visitor economy, in a normal year, is worth £3.1bn, supporting 65,000 jobs. It is integral to the county, its communities and way of life.

- We recognise the change in immigration legislation now limits the available workforce as recruiting EU workers is no longer an option. We have three requests, and we ask that you consider these a matter of urgency to prevent further decline in one of the largest employment sectors in the UK:
1. We ask that you introduce the same approach to that of Defra which would be to consider exemptions from the new immigration rules for the hospitality sector facing worsening worker shortages. We will work with you to look at how this can be achieved. There are several options including 6-month or two-year working visas and potentially a cap on the numbers entering the UK on either visa.

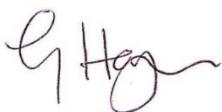
Similar schemes were once offered to South Africans and Australians providing fantastic opportunities for them to enter the UK, work and contribute to local economies.

2. Our second request is to add the role of Chef to the shortage list of workers. Despite what many think, working in hospitality is a skilled profession and no more so than as a chef. Whether it is as a commis or head chef we had a national shortage prior to the changes to the immigration policy and this has been escalated further because of the pandemic.
 3. Our third request is that Government fund an urgent recruitment drive, highlighting the career opportunities the sector offers and dispelling some of the negative myths that can be associated with industry such as low pay.
- Give examples of how you have sought to address the challenge yourselves as well as how this situation is impacting on your business and ability to recover from the last 18 months.
 - Tell your MP this is not an issue that can wait. Without support many businesses Government has helped to survive the pandemic will only go on to fail as they do not have the capacity to service the demand. In turn, Cumbria will fail to meet customer expectations and lose the opportunity the staycation boom offers to create repeat custom and support economic recovery.

We urge you to spare the time to write a letter and share with Cumbria Tourism (please cc jwinter@cumbriatourism.org.)

Without significant and collective effort to overcome this issue tourism cannot fulfil its full huge potential to help the economy recover and benefit the communities in which it takes place.

Kind regards,



Gill Haigh, Cumbria Tourism Managing Director