

# Hospitality Industry Training

**Sue Demetriardi** explains 'Train to Gain' and Apprenticeship funding to help train staff throughout your house, estate and businesses

For those responsible for historic houses, their contents, gardens and estates, ensuring their long-term survival – including income generation – is a continuing issue.

Training offers properties valuable and cost-effective support. Many houses are unaware that fully-funded NVQ training is available through the government's Train to Gain and Apprenticeship programmes in England. In other parts of the UK, training programmes with varying levels of funding up to 100% are available. In effect, this creates a targeted training budget for the house, often at little or no cost. Specialist training providers offer accredited courses delivered one-to-one on-site, tailored to the employee's and property's needs, improving performance and job satisfaction.

HIT Training – a new corporate member of the Association – specialises in fully-funded, tailored one-to-one training, providing NVQ courses in customer service, professional cookery, various hospitality services, team leadership, cleaning and housekeeping. This can help enhance the visitor welcome, improve the way you provide services and help income generating areas such as restaurants and shops. All training takes place at the property and HIT Training also accesses the funding directly for you. There's no government follow-up afterwards, and there's no commitment beyond the end of the training. Houses which are not open to the public can also benefit, as can estates and businesses where they exist.

A number of HHA Members have already benefited. The Director of Stansted Park, James Cooper, commented: "From an employer's perspective, even for good staff, it's useful to provide training to enhance awareness and increase job skills, whether it's in the house, tea room or elsewhere on the property. We have found the NVQ training, provided at all levels, to be very helpful and it has enhanced customer service and our visitors' experience." At the Pavilion Tea Room at Stansted Park, Anne Cripps, Tea Room Manager, said: "HIT Training's NVQ qualifications have raised our staff's knowledge and confidence to do their jobs and made them feel more motivated and valued. The workforce is more efficient, with better customer and culinary skills. We're delighted to be exceeding customers' expectations and developing the business further."

## How can specialist training providers like HIT Training help historic houses?

### *Houses open to the public or used for events*

Depending on size and visitor numbers, properties could have a reception desk (ticket sales, visitor enquiries), restaurant, shop and facilities from lavatories to bins. If the house has a functions or events business, many of these facilities may be used. Whilst the visitor welcome must reflect the property, so must the professionalism and standards of service, cuisine and cleanliness. Skills required normally include customer service, cookery, kitchen skills, possibly waiting, supervision, team leadership and cleaning.

### *Hotel/B&B facilities, holiday cottages and businesses that use the main house and ancillary buildings e.g. stables*

Some properties operate hotels, B&Bs and holiday cottages where

a range of customer service, front-of-house, cookery, housekeeping, cleaning, hospitality and leadership skills are needed. Some of these skills may also be useful in service-led businesses, e.g. activities, and supporting business development.

### *Family homes not open to the public*

These houses may have staff working for the family. Domestic staff can gain NVQs in relevant areas.

### *Wider estate*

Estates generate income from a range of sources including hotels, pubs, farms and shops, garden centres and commercial property. Government-funded training is available to these enterprises.

## How does it operate in England?

HIT Training, as do other workplace learning providers, conducts a training needs assessment with you to determine the necessary skills and most appropriate qualifications. Courses are tailored to your needs and the funding is accessed for you, subject to criteria. The property's commitment is supporting the employee by giving them time – often just an hour per week – for training. Skills are brought up to the NVQ's required standard through one-to-one training. This can include Skills for Life (literacy, numeracy), provided discreetly, as appropriate. A time frame for completing the NVQ is agreed, and training takes place at a convenient time during the employee's normal working hours on-site, without travelling to college.

## Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland

The system in Wales is slightly different to England, but still quite simple. Through the Workforce Development Programme (WDP), properties get a free skills review to ascertain training needs. The WDP helps you get the funding and find a training provider, before following-up to help get your training plan into action. In Scotland and Northern Ireland, the range of funded training and courses available isn't as wide as in England or Wales. In Scotland, contact Skills Development Scotland for advice on proceeding. The situation in Northern Ireland is similar, but there are basically two offices to contact – Apprenticeships, and Leadership and Management.

### *Training contacts*

#### **England**

HIT Training: 0800 093 5892 or [www.hittraining.co.uk](http://www.hittraining.co.uk)

Train to Gain: 0800 015 5545 or [www.traintogain.gov.uk](http://www.traintogain.gov.uk)

#### **Wales**

Skills People Success: 0845 606 6160 or [www.skillspeoplesuccess.com](http://www.skillspeoplesuccess.com)

#### **Scotland**

Skills Development Scotland: 0141 225 6710 or

[www.skillsdevelopmentscotland.co.uk](http://www.skillsdevelopmentscotland.co.uk)

#### **Northern Ireland**

Apprenticeships: 0800 085 4573 or [www.apprenticeshipsni.info](http://www.apprenticeshipsni.info)

Department for Employment & Learning, Leadership & Management:  
02890 441785 or [www.delni.gov.uk/leadershipandmanagement](http://www.delni.gov.uk/leadershipandmanagement)