

## **Meeting (36) of Tourism Group, 10:30–12:30 Friday 12<sup>th</sup> February 2021**

### **Participants:**

Deputy Minister, CST	WG	Adrian Greason-Walker	WTA
Jason Thomas	WG	Sean Taylor	UK TIC Rep
Rob Holt	WG	Dave Chapman	UK Hospitality C
Claire Chappell	WG	Paula Ellis	SW Forum Chair
Lucy Von Weber	WG	Ian Edwards	VB Board rep
Claire Carew	WG	Steve Hughson	MW Forum Chair
Tara Croxton	WG	Philippa George	SE Forum Chair
Helen Butler	WG	Michael Bewick	North Forum Chair
Kerry Thatcher	WG	Anthony Rosser	UK Hospitality C
Sharron Lusher	Chair WT&H Skills Partnership	Andrew Campbell	WTA

*Apologies: Minister for Mental Health, Wellbeing and Welsh Language & Stephen Jones*

### **Version: Final**

### **Main points of the Meeting**

Deputy Minister welcomes all and Jason Thomas chairs the meeting.

#### **1. Skills update with Sharron Lusher and Kerry Thatcher.**

Sharon Lusher updates on the current situation with skills and discusses the short/medium/long term issues with recruiting, training staff and retraining staff. There are 4 clear sub-aims around this with the immediate focus on Covid recovery. Feedback received showed the concerns around skills were that the sector has been losing people to other industries, redundancies and that staff are largely on furlough. This raised questions on how to get sufficient numbers of staff in the right place to open up and the importance of sustaining this. SL mentions that they have been successful in retaining funding for the Flexible Skills programme for this financial year and continues discussing the training schemes available, with the need of trying to understand what the industry wants and if these schemes work.

#### **Questions from Members**

- Surprised at the amount of training and resources available and it's highlighted that the challenge is to make businesses aware of what's available. Positive outcome with the schemes and need to get this out to the industry.

SL agrees there is so much there, that it's easy to get confused by it. Flexible skills partnership are pulling this together, to be issued to the industry with what's available for staff. This should be ready for March.

Kerry Thatcher discusses that this will be circulated to the partnership members. Currently have a skills and training section in the industry engagement newsletter. Ramping this up and updating the skills page on the Tourism Zone. KT asks the group for ideas on how to get the information out to the industry (**Action – group**).

Rob Holt discusses the industry engagement was one of the reasons why the partnership was created. This was the biggest challenge as there wasn't any engagement and wanted to bring all of this together with the partnership. Need engagement from the industry and tailor the schemes for the industry.

## **Meeting (36) of Tourism Group, 10:30–12:30 Friday 12<sup>th</sup> February 2021**

- Discussion around the Qualifications Wales activity. Able to bring this forward to now from 2023. Important to engage and influence consistency of qualifications and practical applications. Important that people coming from collage are able to work straight away, otherwise will have a recruitment and retention issue. Need sufficient support, appropriate help in raising the profile of the industry and protecting the integrity of the qualifications.

SL discusses that Qualifications Wales have started their review on Hospitality and Tourism qualifications. Launched with the partnership in October with good engagement and working together to look at the research for the long term. SL has a further meeting with them in the next few weeks. In relation to recruitment and retention will have a separate discussion with Careers Wales and Job Centre Plus on their plans as what they can leverage as support to for the industry. **(Action – SL).**

- Concerns around the influence of Brexit and staffing. People abroad are struggling to come back and there are partnership breakups after going stir crazy in staff accommodation which will be reflected across the industry. Llandudno Hoteliers are concerned about staff who had gone home and are trying to come back from Bulgaria but have visa issues. This could restrict commercial activity due to the level of staffing in front of house.
- In relation to contacting the industry, suggestion of a direct mail campaign specifically on this subject. People are busy and in difficult situations, the importance of clear communication would be useful.
- Importance of addressing the skills level and the communality approach.

SL discusses Brexit and is a real concern. Will have discussion on this will JT & RH **(Action – JT/RH)**. Agrees with the idea of direct mail as people want something in front of them that's easy to read - will follow this up **(Action –SL)**.

JT discusses the impact of Brexit on also the creative industry and mentions that he is part of the Brexit Steering Group so will discuss this further with them.

Discussion around recruitment with 3 times higher applications than normally. Wonder if that reflects the differential of rural areas that are dependent on tourism, where there are fewer options. Interesting work to be done on this.

JT thanks Sharron and mentions that we will be returning to this, clearly a massive part of the tourism recovery plan and requests a further update in 3 months.

### **2. Update from Jason Thomas**

JT discusses the next 21-day review and highlighted the need to discuss Easter. Cabinet discussion on Tuesday with decisions ahead of the announcement by the First Minister on Friday. Indicators are going in the right direction, lockdown is having an effect and following this WG are prioritising education with this headroom. JT discusses that there is still pressures on the NHS with critical bed space currently at 120% and Wales is still not at the point of moving to tier 3. Prevalence figure in the region of 1.4% has slightly plateaued and needs to be 1% or below as one of the alert level 3 indicators. JT continues by discussing that the Ministers are aware of the public sacrifices over the last two months. SAGE are

## **Meeting (36) of Tourism Group, 10:30–12:30 Friday 12<sup>th</sup> February 2021**

recommending to Ministers that we come out of a lockdown in a phased manor and not release everything at the same time.

### **3. Easter Planning**

Rob Holt discusses the UK position around Easter planning and lockdown/easing restrictions.

Following this there was a confidential discussion around potential options for Easter on a Chatham House rules basis.

### **4. AOB**

- Suffering Ferry ports - Fishguard, Pembroke and Swansea.
- Report coming out next week on the impact of transmission on those who have been vaccinated already.
- Support from Members on the success of the WG with the vaccination roll out.
- Discussion around pre-election period with the sensitivity of supporting the sector during this time e.g. Addo behavioural lead campaigns.

### **5. Next meeting; Thursday 18th February 2021**

Ffion Evans-Humphreys  
17<sup>th</sup> February 2021