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PwC: Leisure spending to increase

PETE HAYMAN

PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC) has found that leisure is set to account for nearly a quarter of total consumer expenditure by 2030.

PwC's latest *UK Economic Outlook* reported that household spending on recreation had increased by 3.5 per cent between 1963 and 2009.

Consumers have increased spending on restaurants and hotels during the same 46-year period by 0.4 per cent, which is set to continue growing in the coming two decades.

PwC said that the increases in 'superior goods' such as hospitality and recreation will be in part due to an ageing population. Overall, spending is expected to grow by 1 per cent in 2011 compared with 2010, "lagging behind" an anticipated increase in gross domestic product (GDP).



Spending on restaurants and hotels has grown 0.4 per cent since 1963

"As spending shifts further towards leisure, recreational or more indulgent activities, new uses for existing space will develop," said UK retail and consumer leader Mark Hudson.



Lancashire aims to secure an Ashes Test in 2013

High Court backing for Old Trafford plans

PETE HAYMAN

Trafford Council's decision to approve plans for the multi-million pound redevelopment of Manchester's Old Trafford cricket ground has been upheld by the High Court.

Derwent Holdings, the owner of the nearby White City retail park, had applied for a judicial review of the decision, which has been dismissed by the court.

Lancashire County Cricket Club said the decision means that the latest £32m stage of investment can now commence, which will include new stands and pitches.

DCMS 'has improved' financial management

PETE HAYMAN

The Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) has "improved the maturity" of its financial management, according to a new National Audit Office (NAO) report.

In its report, the spending watchdog said the department had shown 'good' management of finances in its Olympic programme that should be replicated across its entire remit.

However, the NAO also found that the DCMS had taken the decision to merge or axe arms-length bodies without fully considering the costs.

New Responsibility Deal launched

PETE HAYMAN

A range of leisure and hospitality groups have signed up to a new deal to help tackle some of the UK's most pressing public health issues.

The British Hospitality Association, Business in Sport and Leisure and the British Beer and Pub Association are among signatories of the Responsibility Deal, along with SkillsActive.

Among the key collective pledges announced by health secretary Andrew Lansley is the introduction of calorie counters on menus and increasing physical activity at work.

Other signatories include the Youth Sport Trust, the Women's Sport and Fitness Foundation, Sport and Recreation Alliance, the



IMAGE: DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

Lansley has called for more organisations to sign up

Fitness Industry Association and the Amateur Swimming Association.

Lansley said: "While I'm pleased that more than 170 organisations have already signed up, we want more organisations to do so."

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SPORT

Approval for NI stadium plans

PETE HAYMAN

The Northern Ireland Executive has approved a funding package worth £138m towards the redevelopment of the province's three main sports stadiums in Belfast.

More than £61m has been awarded to the Irish Football Association (IFA) for the planned overhaul of Windsor Park, as well as to establish a new national training centre. A number of sub-regional football stadium schemes will also benefit from the award, which will be made available over a six-year period.

Meanwhile, the Ulster Council of the Gaelic Athletic Association (GAA) has been awarded the same amount as the IFA – £61.4m – to help upgrade the Casement Park venue and Ulster Rugby is to benefit from nearly £15m towards its plans for the future redevelopment



Windsor Park is to be transformed using the £61.4m secured by the IFA

of its Ravenhill Stadium base, which currently boasts a spectator capacity of 12,300.

Northern Ireland sports minister Nelson McCausland said: "Modern, fit-for-purpose and spectator-friendly stadium facilities can only enhance the sports' standing and will assist the development of the three sports."

Belper leisure centre proposals submitted

PETE HAYMAN

Plans been submitted for the development of a new leisure complex in Belper, Derbyshire.

Last year, Amber Valley District Council put forward two proposals for the facility mix at the new venue as part of a public consultation.

The majority of residents opted for a complex comprising a 25m pool with teaching pool.

Healey Associates are behind the design of the venue, which will also boast a 70-station gym and a health suite, as well as a sports hall originally omitted from the plans.

Saracens submits Cophall Stadium plans

PETE HAYMAN

Saracens rugby union team has submitted plans to transform London's Cophall Stadium into a multi-purpose community sports venue.

Saracens said it will not use Cophall Stadium for more than 16 days of Premiership rugby and has devised a comprehensive matchday plan. Rugby would be played at the venue between September and May with a 10,000 capacity, incorporating three removable stands. The new-look stadium will also provide a home for Shaftesbury Barnet Harriers athletics club and offer international-standard facilities during summer.

Saracens chair Nigel Wray said: "The award-winning Saracens Foundation will be based at



Saracens proposes a new multi-use venue for rugby union and athletics

the stadium, working in the Barnet community, creating 'Teams not Gangs,' improving the quality of life and creating opportunities for young people."

Firms eye Olympic working plans

PETE HAYMAN

A third of large UK businesses are prepared to offer flexible working in order to allow staff to watch the 2012 Olympics and Paralympics, according to new research by Deloitte.

The business advisory firm surveyed 201 companies with more than 500 employees as part of the report, which found that 32 per cent would be prepared to be accommodating during the Games.

Deloitte has also found that nearly half (44 per cent) of firms intend to encourage staff to attend live events, while 42 per cent are planning to install large screen televisions in canteens or communal areas.

Heather Hancock, London 2012 lead partner at Deloitte, said: "As at all times, the priority will be to meet client needs but businesses need to factor in high numbers of staff wanting



IMAGE: ODA

44 per cent of firms will encourage staff members to attend live events

to attend or watch live events, a transportation system under increased pressure and potential disruption to supply chains."

Deloitte head of HR Stevan Rolls added: "Organisations that adopt a reasonable, open-minded approach to this can create a great feel-good factor in the office."

Work starts on National Football Centre

PETE HAYMAN

Work has commenced on St George's Park near Burton-upon-Trent – the Football Association's (FA) new £100m home for coach education.

The complex is designed to provide an accessible grassroots football centre, while all 24 representative England squads will make use of the facilities. The League Managers Association is also to be headquartered there.

Other amenities will include a 142-room Hilton hotel; an 86-room Hampton by Hilton hotel; a 90-seat lecture theatre; and a conference facility, while Circle, the FA's medical partners, will also provide an integrated sports medicine and sports science screening and treatment centre.



IMAGE: THE FA VIA GETTY IMAGES

St George's Park will be available for use by grassroots and elite players

Redbox Design Group is behind the plans for the St George's Park complex, which will be delivered by Bowmer and Kirkland and is due to open next summer.

Highland Safaris to open new mountain bike facility

PETE HAYMAN

The Safari Lodge at Highland Safaris, Aberfeldy, has added a purpose-built mountain bike training skills loop.

BikeTrax has been designed with skills development in mind, and aims to push mountain

biking to a new level. Among its features are some built in stone to mimic natural trails and others from timber.

The loop was designed with help from industry expert Pete Laing and is expected to be open in early April.

UKA confirms plans to bid for World Championships

PETE HAYMAN

UK Athletics (UKA) has confirmed that it plans to bid to host the 2017 World Athletics Championships in London.

The capital has become the first city to throw its hat into the ring after submitting a letter to the International Association of Athletics Federations (IAAF).

A formal bid is due to be handed to the IAAF by 1 September, which will be followed up by an evaluation visit in October and a presentation in November before a final decision is announced.



The pool is to remain closed for around 20 weeks

Work starts on £3m Kingswood centre revamp

TOM WALKER

A £3m refurbishment scheme has begun in a bid to upgrade the facilities at Kingswood Leisure Centre in Bristol.

The project is being carried out by ISG Pearce and will include work to the main pool to eventually incorporate the learner pool. Changing areas will also be upgraded and a new Active Fitness Gym added.

Stage one of the scheme involves the main pool, which will close for around 20 weeks. The learner pool, however, will remain open for lessons and public use.

Olympic ticket touts to face £20,000 fines

PETE HAYMAN

Home secretary Theresa May has revealed that the unauthorised sale of tickets to the 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games will be met with a fine of up to £20,000.

The sale of tickets to London 2012 events without permission was made a criminal offence in 2006, which would have seen fines of up to £5,000 imposed on touts.

A dedicated unit – Operation Podium – has been established by the Metropolitan Police in order to crack down on touts and Olympic-related fraud.

£2.5m package to continue Birmingham gym scheme

PETE HAYMAN

Birmingham's Be Active gym scheme will be continued into 2011-12 after a £2.5m funding package was secured by the NHS and Birmingham City Council (BCC).

The scheme has attracted more than 300,000 members since its launch and offers all city residents free swimming, group exercise classes and gym sessions.

BCC and the city's four Primary Care Trusts sponsor the Be Active scheme, which supports the Change 4 Life programme and has grown participation by 10 per cent.



Alesha Dixon is creative director at LA Fitness

Alesha Dixon launches new LA Fitness classes

TOM WALKER

Reality show starlet Alesha Dixon has officially launched LA Fitness's new programme of small group exercise classes.

As part of a marketing deal signed with the health club operator in December 2009, Dixon was given the title of creative director at LA Fitness and has seen a programme of dance classes launched bearing her name.

The new Accelerator and Fight Fit classes were unveiled on 9 March and will be run as small group sessions, targeting those with less time to spend at the gym.

Whitstable college adds new £162,500 fitness gym

TOM WALKER

The Community College in Whitstable, Kent, has opened a £162,500 fitness suite as part of its upgrade under the Building Schools for the Future programme.

The redevelopment, designed and carried out by Createability in partnership with Zynk Design, included linking the main school building with its sports centre.

Life Fitness equipped the gym, with use of the school's facilities – managed by trust Active Life – extended to the local community in the evenings and at weekends.

New Quest format announced

TOM WALKER

The new format for the Quest assessment scheme has been revealed ahead of its launch date of 1 June.

There are significant changes to the way leisure centres are assessed by Quest, with the aim of making the process more flexible.

Three new levels have been introduced – Quest Entry is a one-day, operational assessment aimed at smaller and community sites; Quest Plus is a two-day process, which includes a one-day operational assessment; while Quest Stretch will feature an unannounced day-one assessment, plus a second day focussing on a centre's approach to measuring impact and outcomes.

According to Caroline Constantine, Quest operations director, there will also be a renewed focus on health and safety measures.



The new Quest format will provide a renewed focus on health and safety

"If sites don't pass [the health and safety threshold score], they won't pass their assessment. They will also have to know the impacts and outcomes their changes have made – for the first time Quest will be asking sites to measure the difference they make to their customer's lives," said Constantine.

DP Associates to enter fitness sector

TOM WALKER

DP Associates, the leisure consultancy which has operated largely within the attractions sector, has unveiled plans to expand its services into the fitness industry.

As part of the company's expansion strategy, founder Duncan Phillips has appointed two new members – Ben Silcox and Norris Panton – to his team. Both Silcox and Panton join the consultancy from budget health club chain Nuyuu.

Silcox's experience includes a year-long stint as managing director of Nuyuu, a company which he helped set up with James Caan. The group launched in September 2009 and operated for a year before being sold to énergie in October 2010.



Norris Panton (left); Duncan Phillips (centre); and Ben Silcox (right)

Meanwhile, Norris Panton is a former independent gym operator who has also worked as operations director at Nuyuu. Panton has also held positions at health club chains Esporta, LA Fitness and Fitness First.

Barry leisure facilities set for £400k overhaul

PETE HAYMAN

The Vale of Glamorgan Council is to invest £400,000 in a series of improvements to three leisure facilities in Barry, South Wales.

Colcot Sports Centre's Hammer Strength Gym is to be moved to a new, larger venue at

the Holm View Leisure Centre and will accommodate twice as many stations.

The vacant space at Colcot Sports Centre will be turned into additional football changing facilities, while Barry Leisure Centre's dry-side changing areas will be overhauled.

Green light for Ely leisure plans

PETE HAYMAN

A new eco-friendly leisure complex is to be developed in Ely, Cambridgeshire, after the local authority approved the proposals.

East Cambridgeshire District Council's (ECDC) planning committee has awarded planning permission for the Roberts Limbrick-designed facility, which is set to incorporate a 25m, six-lane swimming pool; a children's leisure water area; a six-court sports hall; and an additional fitness area.

Space for indoor cricket; spinning rooms; dance and aerobic rooms; and a wet health suite – featuring saunas, steamrooms and spa baths – are also earmarked for the complex.

ECDC has confirmed that it will now investigate funding options for the development, which will replace the Paradise Pool facility.



Roberts Limbrick are behind the design of the new Ely leisure complex

Fred Brown, leader of the district council, said: "Now we have [planning permission], our aim is to work hard to get the money to turn these plans into a reality.

"We know this will not be a walk in the park but it is a challenge we are determined to meet for the benefit of future generation."

Kiss Gyms launches in Milton Keynes

PETE HAYMAN

Kiss Gyms, a new privately-owned health club concept led by chief executive officer Rupert McKenzie-Hill, has opened in Milton Keynes.

Launched in January, the gym – remodelled from a children's activity play centre by design company Createability – is one of the first 24-hour facilities in the region and offers a monthly membership for £14.99 with no contracts.

Gym users are able to access the 15,600sq ft (1,449sq m) Kiss Gym at Knowhill with a PIN code system, while 24-hour CCTV security and assistance is also available.

Matrix has supplied more than 120 pieces of cardiovascular and strength equipment, while a free weights area is also on offer.



The new club has been developed in a remodelled children's play centre

McKenzie-Hill revealed plans to open a further 10 Kiss Gyms across the UK, backed by a combination of private, bank and venture capital funding, with sites planned in London, Reading, Cardiff and Swansea among others.

Tone to launch second Feel Good Factory

TOM WALKER

Leisure trust Tone has begun building work on the second of its Feel Good Factory-branded ladies only gym spaces in Devon.

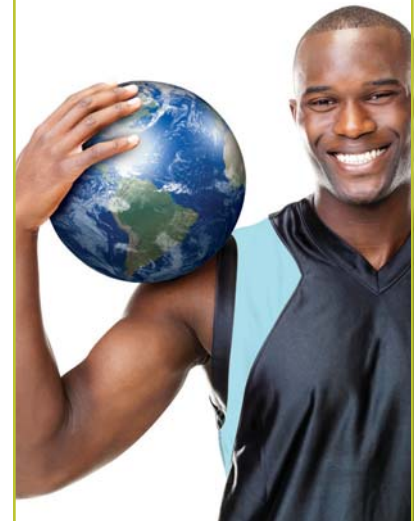
Based at Ivybridge Leisure Centre, the fitness and weight loss centre will house equipment

supplied by Shapemaster, Powertone and the new range of Easytone machines.

The Ivybridge Feel Good Factory will have its own entrance and reception separate from the main facility and is aimed at females who are overweight and/or have limited mobility.

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ATTRACTIONS & MUSEUMS

At-Bristol gets go ahead for Real Brain Exhibit

TOM WALKER

The Human Tissue Authority has approved At-Bristol science centre's plans to open an exhibit featuring a real human brain.

Costing £1.5m to develop, the Real Brain exhibit will consist of a large tank, engraved with the image of a person on one side and the skeleton and central nervous system on the other. In the position of the brain will be the real human brain, showing both the right and left hemispheres.

It will feature as one of the key exhibits within the attraction's Brains zone.



Two otters are to go on display at the Oceanarium

Oceanarium to unveil new mammal display

PETE HAYMAN

Bournemouth's Oceanarium has announced that a pair of Oriental small-clawed otters are to take up residence in its "first-ever" mammal enclosure.

More than £150,000 has been invested in the new experience, which is also set to include background information on otter species across the world.

The otters will be housed in a naturally-themed environment, including a mixture of grass, bamboo, oriental shrubs, pebbles and sand, as well as a stream.

Spring 2012 launch for new Harry Potter experience

PETE HAYMAN

Warner Bros has announced plans to launch its new Harry Potter studio tour attraction at Leavesden Studios, Hertfordshire, in spring 2012.

In January, it was revealed that US-based Thinkwell had been appointed to design the Warner Bros Studio Tour London – The Making of Harry Potter.

The three-hour tour will allow visitors to go behind the scenes of the film series, with authentic sets, costumes, animatronics, props and effects to be on display.

The Cardiff Story set for opening

PETE HAYMAN

The Cardiff Story – a new museum exploring the history of the Welsh capital – is due to open its doors on 1 April.

A special St David's Day event took place on 1 March to mark the completion of the attraction, which is located at the city's Grade II*-listed Old Library Building.

The new attraction will feature a permanent introductory gallery and a secure, fully-interactive lifelong learning suite. Classrooms; a community showcase gallery; and access to a Grade II*-listed tiled corridor will also form part of The Cardiff Story, which will house more than 3,000 objects. Exhibits will incorporate loans from partner museums and contributions from local communities.

The Heritage Lottery Fund contributed £440,000 towards the scheme, in addition



Bethan Parry and Mari Lowe (front) test content at The Cardiff Story

to funding from Cardiff Council; the Welsh Assembly Government; and the Federation of Museums and Art Galleries Wales.

Last February, Admiral Insurance chief executive officer Henry Engelhardt provided a "very generous donation" through the family's Moondance Foundation.

MLA unveils provisional Renaissance budget

PETE HAYMAN

The Museums, Libraries and Archives Council (MLA) has published details of provisional funding arrangements for the Renaissance programme in 2011-12.

It follows an announcement in February that a 'road map' for the scheme had been agreed as responsibility for the funding transfers to Arts Council England towards the end of the year.

A total of £45.6m has been announced, of which £34.5m will go directly to Hub museums in grant aid. Individual business plans for each attraction are being finalised.

Nearly £3m has been earmarked to enable the completion of projects already approved in this year's business plans and currently



A total of £45.6m is to be spent on the Renaissance programme this year

underway at Hub attractions. Meanwhile, £3m of the remaining £8.3m funding will be spent on museum development across England, with more than £300,000 to help sites through the Accreditation process.

Northern Ireland museums' policy unveiled

PETE HAYMAN

Northern Ireland's first museums' policy – designed to guide the sector's development for the next 10 years – has been launched.

Culture minister Nelson McCausland expressed hope that museums will play an

integral role in helping to address social inclusion and cohesion issues going forward.

National Museums Northern Ireland and the Northern Ireland Museums Council helped to develop the new policy and will work with the government to deliver its aims.

Falkirk hotel to unveil new spa

TOM WALKER

Macdonald Inchyra Hotel and Spa near Falkirk is to unveil its revamped spa in April.

The £2.3m refurbishment – part of an overall £4m redevelopment of the four-star hotel – has created eight new treatment rooms, a relaxation room and a spa café lounge, in addition to a Technogym-equipped fitness suite.

Additional spa facilities, including a 20-metre swimming pool, an aroma steam room, a rock sauna, an ice fountain and an experience massage shower, will be opened in May.

Andrew Seal, general manager of Macdonald Inchyra Hotel and Spa, said: “The redevelopment will not only enhance our guests’ experience but has also allowed us to secure the positions of our 100-strong workforce and to add a further 20 new positions, which is



The £2.3m refurbishment of the spa forms part of a wider £4m scheme

welcome news in an economic climate that remains challenging for many.

“This development has allowed us to provide unrivalled facilities in the local area and across central Scotland and we look forward to welcoming both residential and nonresidential guests to be the first to experience it.”

Work starts on £12m Birmingham scheme

PETE HAYMAN

Sanguine Hospitality has confirmed the start of work on a £12m flagship hotel and spa in the centre of Birmingham.

Denizen Construction has moved on site at The Cube, which will boast a 52-bedroom Hotel Indigo; a 300-seat Marco Pierre White restaurant; and the Club and Spa.

Facilities at the Club and Spa will include an indoor pool; a sauna and steam-rooms; 10 treatment rooms; and a hydrotherapy pool. A dry floatation tank and a fitness suite will also be available at the Club and Spa – open to members and hotel guests.

Hotel Indigo will occupy the 23rd and 24th floors and the Marco Pierre White Steakhouse Bar and Grill will be on the 26th floor.



Treatments at the Pure Health-branded venue are supplied by Decléor

Nick Taplin, the managing director of Sanguine Hospitality, said: “The Cube offers an excellent location, with a real sense of place in the heart of the city and situated perfectly to welcome both business and leisure guests.”

Mouse Castle Golf Club set for revamp

TOM WALKER

Plans for a £40m upgrade of the Mouse Castle Golf Club at Eastend, Cleghorn, in Scotland, have been submitted for public consultation.

Ringsdale Leisure has put forward an outline of the scheme to South Lanarkshire Council.

If approved, the 5.2-acre (2-hectare) sporting resort will feature a revamped golf course, a castle-style clubhouse with a swimming pool and a golf training academy, and a gym.

A health spa and a two-tier driving range/PGA putting green are also proposed.

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Arts philanthropy scheme consultation underway

PETE HAYMAN

An informal consultation into an £80m match funding programme to increase arts philanthropy has been launched by the government and Arts Council England.

A series of round-table discussions with arts leaders will set out further details of the approach, which was proposed in the Davey Report on *Endowments in the Arts*.

The match funding scheme is one of a series of measures designed to help build the skills and potential of arts groups to boost philanthropic donations.



Scarborough's Spa complex has been refurbished

May finish for Scarborough Spa redevelopment project

PETE HAYMAN

Work on an extensive £6.5m overhaul of the Scarborough Spa complex in North Yorkshire is to be completed on 7 May, according to the local authority.

In February, Scarborough Borough Council revealed that the first stage of the project had been finished to provide a new stage area and stage lift and a converted caretaker's cottage.

When complete, the scheme will have delivered a comprehensive renovation of the Grade II-listed Victorian concert hall.

New report underlines Glasgow's cultural appeal

PETE HAYMAN

A report commissioned by Glasgow City Council and Glasgow Life has described the city as a "creative powerhouse".

The new study – part-funded by Creative Scotland – has been undertaken by cultural policy analyst John Myerscough and has revealed that Glasgow's creative sector has experienced strong growth since the city was European City of Culture.

The number of performances across all sectors has grown by 82 per cent since 1992, with audiences also increasing.

Stars warn of arts funding cuts

PETE HAYMAN

A number of Britain's leading cultural performers – including Dame Helen Mirren and Jeremy Irons – have warned of the impact that cuts will have on regional and subsidised theatres.

In a letter to the *Observer*, a consortium of actors and actresses highlighted the £7bn contribution of the arts sector to the UK economy each year. It comes after Arts Council England said last year that it was facing a 29.6 per cent cut in funding as a result of the Comprehensive Spending Review.

Culture secretary Jeremy Hunt has looked to mitigate the effects of the cuts by earmarking £80m in match funding as part of efforts to increase philanthropy.

However, the funding cuts have been criticised by some of the UK's leading performers,



Dame Helen Mirren was one of the leading performers to sign the letter

a number of whom said in the letter: "If we are serious about rebuilding our economy, culture should not be an easy target for cuts."

"All those who have a role in taking decisions on cuts must think hard about the potential damage that could be caused to our economy and society."

Joint director to lead Manchester galleries

PETE HAYMAN

Manchester City Council and the University of Manchester have said that a joint director will lead two of the city's prominent art galleries.

An agreement has been reached in principle that will see Dr Maria Balshaw extend her

role as Whitworth Art Gallery director to head Manchester Art Gallery too.

The joint post is to come into effect when Manchester Art Gallery director Moira Stevenson retires and is designed to help bring significant benefits to the attractions.

Landmark 2012 art scheme for North West

PETE HAYMAN

Column – a spinning column of cloud created by artist Anthony McCall – is to rise up from the Wirral Waters site in Merseyside next year as part of the Cultural Olympiad.

One of the first count-down events to the London 2012 Festival, the landmark artwork will be visible across the North West region – from Lancaster to Llandudno.

The column will be taller than Blackpool Tower and has been commissioned by Arts Council England as part of Artists Taking the Lead.

Meanwhile a 6ft (1.8m) scale model of the work will be on show as part of an exhibition of McCall's work at Ambika P3, University of Westminster, until 27 March this year.



A vision of how Anthony McCall's *Column* will appear throughout 2012

McCall said: "Wirral Waters' cavernous estuary sky, constantly shifting weather, and its available docks already makes it a compelling location for *Column*."



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PHILIPPE ROSSITER
is chief executive of the
Institute of Hospitality

Life expectancy in the UK has now reached its highest levels – 79.9 years in 2008 – and the nation is getting older. This has two implications for the hospitality industry; firstly, the growth of what is known as the ‘grey market’, and, secondly, from an employment perspective, an older workforce and fewer young people. In this context, all social research points in the same direction. In future, people will have to work much later, or continue some type of paid work into retirement in order to support themselves.

Yet hospitality is perceived mainly as a career for young people. It is often physically demanding, frequently seasonal, has unsociable hours and perceptions of relatively low pay, with little experience necessary, and where high staff turnover is not an issue. The feeling is that older workers don’t want to do hospitality jobs, and even if they do, shouldn’t we be creating opportunities for young people; surely, they need the jobs more? These are just some of the views generated by any discussion of ‘age’, in a sector where you are an ‘older worker’ at 25.

This perhaps explains the muted employer reaction to the effective abolition of a mandatory retirement age which comes into effect on 1 April this year. This is a sector which employs a high proportion of migrant labour, and often sees benefits in having a transient workforce. Many hospitality jobs are ‘entry level’ – particularly in the restaurant and bar sectors – and are suited to young people. The age profile of the industry does reflect this.

No wonder there is concern that the UK’s hospitality employers are not responding to demographic change and the need to retain and employ older workers. Nor do firms see the business case for doing so. Yet is this really the correct image to project of an industry which employs more than 1.5 million people in the UK?

Demographic change, the scrapping of the Default Retirement Age and the immigration cap will all have an impact on hospitality recruitment needs and practices. Does the hospitality industry need to wake up in order to meet the challenge?

HOTELS

Deloitte: EU hotels top rankings

TOM WALKER

Deloitte has revealed that European hotels were among the world’s top performers in 2010, despite the slow recovery and the introduction of austerity measures.

According to the research, London came third only to Sydney, Australia; and Seoul, South Korea, in the global occupancy rankings at more than 82 per cent.

Geneva, Switzerland; and the Italian city of Venice were revealed as the top two performing locations in terms of average room rate and RevPAR. Four European cities – London; Paris, France; Istanbul, Turkey; and Zurich, Switzerland – appeared in the top 20 across all three performance rankings.

Alex Kyriakidis, global managing director of tourism, hospitality and leisure at Deloitte, said: “RevPAR growth gained momentum [in



London properties were among the world’s top performers during 2010

London] during 2010 and the results were good despite the current economic uncertainty facing the UK economy.

“2011 may prove to be more challenging, however, as the city starts to see new hotel supply come on board in the run up to the 2012 London Olympic Games.”

New budget hotel opens in the UK ‘every week’

TOM WALKER

The branded budget hotel sector remains the most dynamic segment of the UK hotel industry, according to analyst HotStats.

In its report, HotStats found that a total of 54 properties were added to the UK’s branded

budget hotel supply – with more than 5,400 new rooms being made available last year.

The market continues to be dominated by two players – Premier Inn remains the biggest brand with a 37 per cent share by rooms, followed by Travelodge with 27 per cent.

Leaf Hotels to run new-look Dover hotel

PETE HAYMAN

Leaf Hotels has announced that the Best Western Dover Marina Hotel and Spa is to open on 24 March, following the completion of a multi-million pound redevelopment.

Nicholas Hollinshead Interiors led the design of the renovation of the Grade II-listed hotel, which will overlook Dover Harbour and was previously known as the Churchill Hotel.

The 81-bedroom property will be run by Leaf Hotels under the Best Western brand, and is set to include three conference, function and meeting rooms and a restaurant and bar. However, the reopening will not include the launch of the property’s spa area; coffee shop; and ice cream parlour.



The new-look 81-bedroom hotel offers sweeping views of Dover harbour

A spokesperson confirmed that the spa is expected to form part of the next phase of improvements at the hotel, which are due to be carried out later this year.

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A new central park is among the first phase plans

£100m regeneration scheme planned for Derby

PETE HAYMAN

Renewal and regeneration specialist Compendium Living has been appointed to lead a new £100m urban village development for Derby.

Stage One will be centred on a pedestrian-friendly boulevard linking Derby railway station with the city centre. The whole project will take 10 years to complete.

Around 2,500sq m (26,910sq ft) of commercial space and community facilities are included in plans for the first phase, along with a central park.

Consultation into Swindon Union Square plans

PETE HAYMAN

Swindon Borough Council has launched a new public consultation into proposals for a major redevelopment of the town centre's Union Square.

Muse Developments has been commissioned to deliver the regeneration of the site, which is located between the railway station and The Parade shopping area.

It is anticipated that the scheme will deliver a range of uses, including a hotel, offices, residential units and the potential for a relocated primary care trust.

Revamp plans for Rhondda Cynon Taf towns

PETE HAYMAN

Aberdare, Mountain Ash and Treorchy are all in line to be overhauled after Rhondda Cynon Taf Council agreed to formally adopt regeneration strategies for the towns.

A £7.7m funding package for public realm improvements has been allocated to deliver the Aberdare plans, including £2m from the Townscape Heritage Initiative.

Meanwhile, expressions of interest for cash have been submitted to both the Welsh European Funding Office and the council to help deliver the other two strategies.

Olympic Park legacy revamp firms sought

TOM WALKER

The Olympic Delivery Authority (ODA) has launched a search for contractors to deliver the transformation of London's Olympic Park following the 2012 Games.

Among the schemes to be carried out is the completion of the 250-acre (101-hectare) legacy parklands, which will help create one of Europe's largest urban parks.

The ODA's search will see two opportunities offered to interested parties – one in the north of the Olympic Park and the other in the south.

Other work to be carried out includes the delivery of legacy cycling facilities in the Velopark; new football fields; and the removal of temporary infrastructure.



IMAGE: ODA/ANTHONY CHARLTON

Two redevelopment opportunities are to be offered to interested parties

The ODA is also seeking contractors to carry out the conversion of Games-time venues into their legacy use, including works to the Handball Arena and the Velodrome.

Co-op unveils Manchester scheme

PETE HAYMAN

An £800m regeneration scheme, which will transform Manchester's Northern Gateway, has been unveiled by The Co-operative Group.

The NOMA development will transform a 20-acre (8.1-hectare) city centre site and create 4 million sq ft (371,612sq m) of leisure, office, retail and residential space.

Centred around the Co-operative Group's proposed new head office, it is expected around a quarter of the project will be accessible to the public. City authorities have already approved the masterplan for the development and talks are now underway with a view to securing joint venture partners for the 10-15-year programme.

Co-operative Estates managing director Martyn Hulme said: "The Co-operative Group



The scheme is centred around the group's proposed new headquarters

has the strength and capability to deliver NOMA and confirm Manchester's position as the UK's original modern city."

It is also proposed that the NOMA development will be able to generate its own power with a renewable energy centre to cater for all its power requirements.

Partnership to 'step up' East Manchester plans

PETE HAYMAN

New East Manchester, Manchester City Football Club and Manchester City Council are to progress with a regeneration deal.

A Memorandum of Understanding signed in March 2010 is now set to be formalised

with the creation of a new joint venture – the Eastlands Development Partnership.

The vehicle is designed to help deliver development opportunities on land surrounding the Premier League club's City of Manchester Stadium and neighbouring communities.



**WOKINGHAM
BOROUGH COUNCIL**

Sports / Leisure Development Opportunity, Winnersh, Berkshire

Wokingham Borough Council is inviting Expressions of Interest from suitably experienced Leisure Operators for the financing, development and management of a new Sports / Leisure building and all weather multi-pitch within the grounds of Forest Secondary School, Winnersh.

The facilities to include commercial gym / fitness suites, multi-purpose sports hall and a full size artificial pitch capable of sub-division for 5 aside football.

There is a requirement for School use of the facilities at certain times of the school day.

Interested companies will be required to complete a Pre-Qualification Questionnaire to demonstrate their suitability for a short tender list.

Further information and the Questionnaire can be obtained from the Council Website:

www.wokingham.gov.uk/business/procurement/tender-and-contract

Alternatively, if you would like to discuss the opportunity, please contact Bernie Pich, Head of Strategic Assets on telephone number 0118-974-6700, or Marc Sartorio, Asset Manager on telephone number 0118-974-6799 or email: propertyservices@wokingham.gov.uk.

The closing date for receipt of completed questionnaires is 3rd May 2011 direct to propertyservices@wokingham.gov.uk or by mail to Bernie Pich, Wokingham Borough Council, Shute End Offices, Wokingham, RG40 1BN.

Highfields Park Leisure Concession Tender

Nottingham City has a historic network of open and green spaces with over 20% of the City's total land area made up of accessible, open and green spaces, including public parks, natural spaces, green corridors, allotments, cemeteries and sports grounds. 13 sites hold Green Flag Awards, with a further 8 Green Pennant winning community-run sites

As part of the City's ongoing improvement programme, the City Council seeks interest for the day to day running and improvement of a boating lake and putting green at Highfields Park, University Boulevard, Nottingham.

Highfields Park is an historic open space located between the Wollaton and Dunkirk areas of Nottingham City, adjacent to the University of Nottingham campus. The park originates from late 18th and early 19th century landscaping with the estate then purchased in 1920 by Sir Jesse Boot, founder of Boots and Co. Ltd.

A major element of the park is the boating lake and putting green, whilst the visitors also come to use the children's playground, and adjacent Lakeside Arts Centre and café.

Nottingham City Council
Loxley House, Station Street, Nottingham, NG2 3NG

Return of documents date / deadline for contract: 31 Mar 2011

Estimated start date: 01 May 2011

Estimated finish date: 30 Apr 2014

Option to extend no more than 2 years

Full contact details:

Sid Sharma
Nottingham City Council
Loxley House, Station Street
Nottingham, NG2 3NG



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Tel No. 0115 8764195

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Grad Expectations

Graduating from university is only the end of the beginning of your path towards a successful career in the leisure industry



Graduating is not something at the forefront of your mind when enrolling on at one of the UK's many higher education institutions during Freshers' Week. But chances are it has come around a lot quicker than you would ever have imagined – it's true: time flies when you're having fun. While the prospect of completing your degree draws closer, the time is now to start thinking about where you turn to next in order to ensure you get the job that you want.

Media headlines may focus on negative employment statistics, but the reality is that now is a fantastic time to enter the hospitality, tourism and sport sectors – industries that are among the few in recent years to continue growing. New research has found that students and graduates looking for a career within the leisure sector on the prospects.ac.uk website has increased 180 per cent between January 2010 and January 2011. There are already plenty of things can you do now to enhance your job prospects. Stephen Studd, CEO of Skills Active, says: "The leisure industry offers a variety of opportunities to put your skills into practice such as seasonal employment, volunteer programmes, part-time employment options and work placements."

However, it's not all plain sailing. The leisure sector may be going through a period of growth, but you still need to know which qualifications and skills will help you get your foot on the proverbial ladder. Your degree is the key that helps unlock your potential; it's just about choosing the right door.

Postgraduate study

Whisper it quietly, but you don't have to leave university just yet. There are plenty of sector-specific postgraduate courses on offer across the country – perhaps even at the institution you're about to graduate from.

Adrian Schonfeld, lecturer in sport and

exercise psychology at Leeds Metropolitan University, reaffirms the importance of understanding that a degree may not cover everything you need to know, but also believes that students differ in obtaining the employability skills. "You can expect that an applicant with a masters degree

CASE STUDY

James Thompson

What university course did you take?

Electronic Imaging and Media Communications at University of Bradford

What is your current position with Goals?

general manager of Goals Leeds

What does your current role include?

As general manager I have full financial, commercial and operational responsibility for the facilities which includes 18 state of the art outdoor floodlit pitches and a licensed sports lounge. The role is very much front of house and hands-on. I'm responsible for devising and implementing sales and marketing plans, working to strict key performance and quality indicators in terms of daily activity and revenue streams

What is the best part of your job?

Working in a city with so many exciting opportunities but also working with like-minded people and dealing with customers that I can relate to.

What attracted you to leisure?

The fact that every day would be different and I would get to work with so many like

mind people (customers and staff)

What attracted you to 5-a-side football specifically?

What's not attractive about saying 'I work in football'. People actually think my job is cool. Being passionate about football outside of work means that I can enjoy coming to, talking about, thinking about and dreaming about work.

Was it easy to secure a placement on the graduate/training scheme?

I actually started in a part time role while at university, progressing to full time trainee and assistant managers roles.

What advice would you have for last-year students/graduates looking to get into the industry?

Ask yourself, what other industry can you learn all the valuable skills of sales and people management whilst being part of the country's national sport and passion? I would even suggest popping down to your local Goals Centre to feel the atmosphere and excitement of a busy night.



will look more attractive to an employer than an applicant with only an undergraduate degree, however it is unlikely that an employer only looks at academic qualifications," he says.

"Postgraduate students should make sure they are building a balanced CV by taking advantage of work experience opportunities either as part of their course or opportunities they create themselves."

There are a couple of main issues you need to consider before deciding to embark on a postgraduate course – the cost and the competition. Dr Richard Winsley, the director of education for sports and health sciences at Exeter University, reveals the level of interest that some courses can attract.

Dr Winsley explains: "The affordability of study is always going to be an issue. Every student in their own circumstances will have to consider that and weigh up whether the benefits and enjoyment of postgraduate study justify the cost. For sport and health sciences, we get about 8-10 applications for every available place, so we expect that we will be able to fill our places with calibre students."

There are ways of coping with the additional cost burden of postgraduate study. The fact is that there are less funding avenues open to you, but some High Street banks offer career development loans for vocational courses, while universities may also provide bursaries and scholarships in some instances.

Out of the frying pan...

It's an inconvenient truth that higher education costs money, especially with the future

Leisure management graduates who have gained work experience often have the edge over those who haven't

increase in tuition fees looming.

"The increase in University tuition fees will inevitably raise a question mark over whether entering higher education to gain a career in fitness is a financially viable option," says Stephen Studd. The rise will also impact upon the number of people seeking postgraduate qualifications. However, SkillsActive urges graduates to consider returning to study for such qualifications, for example in sports management, at a stage in their career when they intend to use them immediately."

Figures calculated for the BBC in March 2011 revealed that the new fees system may see students paying back double their initial student loan, dependent on future earnings. While that won't be the case for this year's cohort of graduates, it is a reality that may deter some from opting to continue into postgraduate study. Dedicated training providers offer a useful way to acquire the industry-accredited skills, most prominently in the fitness sector. Firms such as Lifetime and Premier Training International offer an extensive range of courses that will equip you with the skills needed to become a fitness professional. Some companies, such as the Fitness Training Company, even provide a purpose-built graduate training programme to help you on your way. However, the result will often be the same – sector-recognised qualifications.

CASE STUDY

Sean Mitchell



What university course did you take?

I did a BSc Business Administration course in London back in 2007

How did you hear about the emerging managers programme at SLM?

After applying for an operations manager role within SLM I was then informed about the programme.

What is your current job with SLM?

In November of last year (2010) I was promoted to general manager

What does your job include?

I monitor the financial performance of the centre whilst at the same time manage a team of just under 100 employees. I'm actively involved in increasing awareness of SLM in the local community and regularly meet with the council and local organisations to build partnerships.

What is the best part of your job?

That every day is different. One day you will be talking to a parent about their child's swimming lesson and the next day you will be discussing partnership opportunities with local business directors. 'Boring' is not a word I use!

What attracted you to leisure?

I've always been involved in sports and I think exercise is the best way to escape from the stress we endure daily, not to mention the health benefits of an active lifestyle. When you look past the daily operations we do, you realise what a great sense of achievement it is when you can physically see the service we provide change someone's life in a positive way.

Was it easy to secure a place on the emerging managers programme?

The interview process was lengthy but securing a place wasn't that difficult once SLM knew I was fully committed to the programme and the company

What would you do differently?

Nothing really. As long as you learn from your mistakes then it can only make you a stronger person and actually give you an advantage over your competition

What advice would you have for graduates looking to get into the industry?

In the current climate staff turnaround has reduced, therefore there's more pressure on candidates to impress. As somebody who's recruited, my advice is to be overly passionate and enthusiastic. As an interviewer you could have the best qualifications on paper however if I don't feel inspired you won't get the job.

CASE STUDY

Jackson Garner



What university course did you take?

I attended Loughborough University studying Sports Technology.

How did you hear about the graduate management scheme at GLL?

I found the scheme advertised on the Leisure Opportunities website.

What is your current position with GLL?

I am a first year graduate trainee manager (GTM). I started in September 2011

What does your current role include?

The two year GTM scheme involves travelling around different centres undertaking a number of different job placements. Since joining I've spent two months as a receptionist, two months in the sales team and two months working as a fitness instructor. My current placement is in HR. The first year will give me an excellent experience of all the front line roles in a leisure centre.

What is the best part of your current role?

Having the opportunity to travel around different centres in London and really get an understanding of the leisure industry.

What attracted you to leisure?

I'm a very sporty person, therefore from a young age I've always wanted to be involved with sport in my working career.

Was it easy to secure a placement on the graduate scheme?

I wouldn't say it was easier, it took a lot of hard work and effort during my final year at University to secure employment. The selection process for the Trainee Manager Scheme included a first interview, swim test and then a day's assessment with a mix of activities to allow me to demonstrate my skills.

What would you do differently if given the chance?

To be honest it is difficult to say anything in particular given that I have only been on the scheme for six months, ask me in a year or so!

What advice would you have for last-year students/graduates looking to get into the industry?

You need to start to look for roles as early as possible in your final year, and never give up when searching. Register with as many graduate websites as possible, you may get loads of e-mails each day, however the right opportunity will come up, that is how I found this job!



Graduation isn't a time for sadness and apprehension, it's a time for excitement and optimism

Managing your career

Perhaps postgraduate study isn't for you, and neither is the health and fitness sector – what next? Well, across the leisure industry's varied spectrum are many operators and companies that have established dedicated graduate management skills, which aim to entice some of the brightest young talent into their organisation. While competition for places on such schemes can be tough, the potential can be a particularly alluring one. It is an option that can be particularly favourable for those wishing to enter the attractions, commercial sports or hospitality sectors, as well as leisure management.

Parkwood Leisure currently operates more than 80 sites – leisure centres, theatres and events venues to name but a few. It offers a graduate scheme that, as human resources manager Samantha Holloway says, is designed to accelerate graduates into management positions across its portfolio.

"The objective is to provide advanced, strategic, and day to day training and development in community leisure facility management and leadership, to create senior managers for tomorrow," she says. "A development plan will be specifically created for each graduate and will be tailored to fit their specific requirements and competencies. This will be linked to the opportunities available at the placement facility."

However, Parkwood has received more

than 400 applicants to date this year and is able to be "selective" in who it recruits to the scheme. Holloway explains that a good CV, a desire to work for the company and a strong degree can all help to secure the all important place on the scheme.

Elsewhere, Greenwich Leisure (GLL) also operates a two-year trainee manager scheme that is specifically aimed at graduates who are ready to take on the working world. Consisting of three eight-month placements, it provides graduates with a wealth of experiences.

GLL recruitment manager Fiona Groutage said: "We will consider candidates with any degree however a business or leisure management-related qualification is an advantage. Candidates need to be hard working, committed and flexible so a previous work or volunteering history is also important. At the end of the scheme, trainee managers are encouraged to apply for a suitable vacancy up to the level of a service manager (assistant centre manager). The scheme has been in place for 14 years and 55 per cent of trainees still work for GLL."

But if sports and active leisure aren't the way you see yourself going, maybe you are more interested in entering the hospitality sector? Q Hotels, for example, has three graduate schemes – event sales, front office and operational management, while it is a company that also recruits graduates directly.



GLL will consider candidates with any degree for its two-year trainee scheme

football centre operator Goals Soccer Centres explains, it could lead to so much more.

"A number of our current general managers started with us in a part-time role while at college or university," he said. "Instead of going into a traditional role, they decided to forge their career in leisure with an exciting and expanding company. Graduates - and anyone else - showing aptitude to be a manager of the future can be selected at any stage by their regional manager to go onto our Future Leader programme."

The choice is yours

If you're inspired to enter the leisure industry, then hopefully you will now be aware of the many options there are to lay the foundations for a bright career. It is an industry at an advantage to other sectors, as Stephen Studd says, because it "the chance to turn a hobby or a sporting passion into a career."

With that passion and an understanding of the qualifications and skills needed to turn your dream into a reality, your degree can help propel you in the direction of your choosing. Getting started now, whether it be volunteering or part-time work, may even make the transition from student to graduate that little more easier.

More importantly, graduating isn't a time for sadness and apprehension. It's a time for excitement, anticipation and optimism. Because the future is in your hands. ●

So what can you expect from the Q Hotels graduate schemes? "Graduates will learn on-the-job skills as well as management development and additional skills related to the part of the business they are working in," explains a company spokesperson. The graduate programmes include secondments into two hotels in the group to show different elements of the business and the differences between how large and small hotels operate."

Working your way

Q Hotels, GLL and Parkwood each show you that on-the-job training is a key aspect of climbing the career ladder - but there is the option to get ahead by starting out before your studies have even concluded.

Part-time work may seem like nothing more than a few extra pennies towards your university living costs - but, as Keith Rogers, managing director of five-a-side

CASE STUDY

Mike Wakeley



Where do you work?

What is your position?

I am centre manager for Parkwood Leisure at both Kennet Leisure Centre and Theale Green Recreation Centre, west Berkshire

What university course did you take?

BSc mathematics, statistics and operational research and then MSc in sport and health sciences - both at Exeter University.

Did you enter the leisure industry directly from university?

I completed my postgraduate MSc in sport and health sciences graduating in the January before continuing to be involved in the leisure industry until the commencement of the graduate course.

How did you find your first job?

Company advert through the university.

Was it easy to find a job?

No, I had to explore various avenues to discover how to find about the jobs that were available to me. As I worked on improving my qualifications and skillset, more opportunities opened up for me.

What would you do differently?

I would have started looking at job opportunities earlier on during my time in higher education and spoken directly with companies in order to find out what skills and experience I needed to progress in my career, to accompany my qualifications.

What does your currently role include?

I'm responsible for the operation and management of two leisure centres and the staff that work at them. I monitor the financial performance of the site and am responsible for site expenditure on a day-to-day basis to ensure that the sites meet their budgetary targets. I work and communicate with the local council and schools to maintain relationships.

What are your future ambitions?

I would like to continue progressing within the industry, ultimately being responsible for even larger facilities.

What advice would you have for graduates looking for a job like yours?

Be proactive! Investigate the type of job you would like to get at an early stage. Contact companies and your careers advisor to get advice on the skills and experiences that you would need for that role. With so many graduates, go out and gain experience so you can demonstrate that you have more potential than them.

"And now we move
onto the hard bit..."



KURT JANSON
is policy director of
Tourism Alliance

The government's much awaited, and much delayed, tourism policy has finally been launched and the overall verdict from the industry has been that it's a considerable step in the right direction of making UK tourism more competitive with other destinations.

It was disappointing, although not unexpected, that a number of key issues were either skipped or omitted altogether, such as VAT on tourism products and services; Air Passenger Duty; and – most noticeably – daylight saving. It seems the government got cold-feet at the last moment.

However, the policy still contains a number of proposals which hold the prospect of significantly boosting the tourism sector. These include the establishment of a joint government/industry task force to reduce the regulatory burden faced by many tourism businesses and efforts to make the visa application process less onerous.

The policy also commits to ensuring the needs of tourism businesses are taken into account during the development of legislation by all departments, as well as looking to improve the planning process to enable the growth of tourism businesses.

The trick now is to ensure that the government does not simply file the policy, along with these proposals, on a shelf and walk away thinking that it has "solved" tourism. The good words in the Prime Minister's introduction that "the challenge now is to make sure we deliver on these plans and make the most of this opportunity to make Britain's tourism industry thrive" need to be turned into appreciable benefits if targets are to be achieved.

To help keep the government steered to the task, the Tourism Alliance has launched a new publication – *Tourism for Growth*. Among other things, it rates initiatives in the tourism policy on their ability to provide growth and employment.

More importantly, it provides that basis for an analysis of how well the government now performs on delivering the initiatives. In December, we will produce an *End of Year Report* that scores its performance.

TOURISM

Three 'major' issues for UK

TOM WALKER

The European Tour Operators Association (ETOA) has warned of a drop in inbound visitor numbers to the UK after outlining three "major" issues facing the sector.

High taxation; an "arrogant and racist" visa regime; and the impact of the Olympic Games have all been identified as challenges for the UK tourism industry.

ETOA has claimed that UK-based companies working to sell the country as a tourist destination overseas currently face a "huge" disadvantage due to tax regulations. Under the Tour Operators' Margin Scheme, domestic firms incur a levy on the investment made in the sale and delivery of visitors to the UK.

The UK's visa regime also came under fire from ETOA, which said that more than



ETOA said the UK's visa process deters visitors from long-haul markets

300,000 long-haul visitors had been put off visiting Britain due to bureaucracy.

ETOA's Tom Jenkins said: "The cost to the UK in foreign exports is between a half and three quarters of £1bn per year. Thousands of jobs are being lost though this surly and alienating stance towards our customers."

Scottish Government in APD devolution call

PETE HAYMAN

Scottish transport minister Keith Brown has urged Westminster to devolve responsibility for Air Passenger Duty (APD) to Holyrood.

According to Brown, transferring the responsibility for APD to the Scottish Government

will help to provide more direct international routes in and out of Scotland.

Brown said: "We need APD to be devolved now in order to give our aviation industry the competitive edge that it needs for the benefit of passengers and the wider Scottish economy."

Tourism Alliance unveils growth strategy

PETE HAYMAN

Tourism Alliance has unveiled its new *Tourism for Growth* strategy, which is to provide an assessment of the government's plans for the sector.

The document also sets out a number of additional requirements and opportunities that have not been covered by the UK's new Tourism Strategy, which was revealed in early March.

In its new strategy, Tourism Alliance welcomed the government's commitment to the sector but has demanded that more be done to address a number of issues. *Tourism for Growth* has called for action to increase the UK's competitiveness, with the Air Passenger Duty and high VAT rates among the group's concerns.



Tourism Alliance said more can be done by government for the industry

Meanwhile, an 'End of Year' report will be published in December by the Tourism Alliance to monitor the government's progress in fulfilling its pledges to help the sector.

Leisure job 'ban' for non-EU migrants

TOM WALKER

UK firms will find it increasingly hard to recruit non-EU migrants as fitness instructors, sports coaches, spa managers and fast food chefs.

A review of the UK's skill shortages by the Migration Advisory Committee (MAC) has recommended changes in the current points system.

MAC has deduced that many jobs within the leisure sector are "non-skilled" and therefore do not qualify for Tier 2 status – requiring applicants to have a level 4 qualification or above on the National Qualifications Framework.

New classifications are due to come into force on 6 April as part of the government's strategy of reducing non-European Economic



The changes will make it difficult for firms to recruit non-EU workers

Area (EEA) immigrants in the UK workforce. The Home Office has already announced that in future, only graduate-level EEA workers will be allowed to apply to come to the UK.

Report calls for vocational shake-up

PETE HAYMAN

A study commissioned by education secretary Michael Gove has called for a major shake-up of the provision of vocational courses.

The Wolf Review – carried out by Professor Alison Wolf from King's College London – found that up to 400,000 young people aged between 16-19-years-old are currently studying on courses that have "little value". Wolf also said that students without a C grade in GCSE English and Maths should continue to study those subjects post-16.

Recommendations for reform include the removal of "perverse incentives" for students to enter low-quality courses and enabling 14-16-year-olds to enrol in colleges. Directly involving employers in assessment activities is another measure to be proposed.



Professor Wolf proposed a radical reform of UK vocational education

Professor Wolf said: "We have many vocational qualifications that are great and institutions which are providing an excellent education and are heavily oversubscribed.

"But we also have hundreds of thousands of young people taking qualifications that have little or no value."

EHFA launches leadership programme

TOM WALKER

European Health and Fitness Association (EHFA) will host an executive leadership programme in Barcelona, Spain, this summer.

Taking place between 6 and 10 June – at the IESE Business School – the interactive and

intensive one-week programme has been specifically designed to help health and fitness professionals sharpen their leadership skills and broaden their vision of the sector.

The programme will be operated under the EHFA University banner.

Simplifying the sector's qualifications



STEPHEN STUDD

is chief executive of SkillsActive

For some time, employers have requested a simple entry route for people wanting to enter the leisure sector, as well as clear pathways for those looking to progress. With the historically large number of qualifications and training available, it has been unclear to young people which courses are valued.

Through the emergence of the new Qualifications and Credit Framework (the government-backed framework for all publicly-funded qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland), we have worked with employers to rationalise more than 1,000 previously recognised qualifications to around 300. However, employers in the leisure operations and management sector require more clarity when it comes to the key qualifications that support their workforce. We can now offer this.

Working closely with employers, training providers and awarding organisations, we have led the development of a single qualifications framework for leisure operations and management. It initially covers qualifications that support the roles of recreation assistant and duty manager. It is a direct response to those looking for more clarity in the qualification landscape.

By working directly with employers, an agreed set of standard qualifications has been identified for these important roles within the sector. By putting employers at the heart of this process, we have addressed the key skills required for their current and future workforce, with a particular emphasis on customer care. These developments are also reflected in improved programmes of learning within the sector.

The first set of qualifications will be available on the Qualifications and Credit Framework in April. We are now starting work to expand the Single Qualifications Framework to include qualifications that support other key roles in the sector, including customer care advisers and higher management level roles.

For more information on the framework, visit: www.skillsactive.com.

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Salary: £6 - £20 per hour

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Closing date: 31 Mar 2011

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Company: Champion Soccer Ltd

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Company: Gym 64

Location: Dunfermline, United Kingdom

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Salary: Competitive Salary + Benefits

Location: West London, United Kingdom

Swimming Teacher

Company: Virgin Active

Salary: Competitive Salary + Benefits

Location: Manchester, United Kingdom

Swimming Teacher

Company: Virgin Active

Salary: Competitive Salary + Benefits

Location: Crawley, United Kingdom

Lifeguard

Company: Virgin Active

Salary: Competitive Salary + Benefits

Location: Northampton, United Kingdom

Freelance Personal Trainer

Company: The Gym Group

Location: Leeds, United Kingdom

Closing date: 12 Apr 2011

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Company: Red Bulls New York

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Closing date: 31 May 2011

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Location: Loughborough, United Kingdom

Closing date: 28 Mar 2012

Senior Beauty Therapist

Company: Virgin Active

Salary: Competitive Salary + Benefits

Location: Crouch End - London, United Kingdom

Beauty Therapist

Company: Virgin Active

Salary: Competitive Salary + Benefits

Location: West London, United Kingdom

Beauty / Massage Therapist

Company: Verdura Golf and Spa Resort

Location: Sicily, Italy

Beauty Therapist

Company: Virgin Active

Salary: Competitive Salary + Benefits

Location: Edinburgh, United Kingdom

Beauty Therapist

Company: Virgin Active

Salary: Competitive Salary + Benefits

Location: Chelmsford, United Kingdom

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Salary: £17k plus commission and benefits

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Company: Mecca Bingo

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General Catering Manager-Sports Stadium

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Location: Manchester, United Kingdom

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Leeds Trinity University College is a Higher Education institution which offers a high quality learning experience to its students. Applications are invited for the following posts:

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Further details and application packs are available from: <http://www.leadstrinity.ac.uk/aboutus/jobs/>

Alternatively please contact the Human Resources Department, tel. 0113 2837313 or email l.thompson@leadstrinity.ac.uk

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Please send your CV to Neil or Cathal
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Newbury to launch as music venue

TOM WALKER

Newbury Racecourse in Berkshire has announced plans to launch as a new standalone concert venue.

The first music event to be held under the Newbury LIVE brand – the racecourse's bid to generate alternative revenue streams – will be a Rod Stewart concert on 29 May.

Stephen Higgins, joint managing director of Newbury Racecourse, said: "The racecourse has the potential to seat over 20,000 visitors and will be transformed into an intimate, sit-down only event for the Rod Stewart gig."

"For future events, we will be hosting up to 60,000 in seats and standing combined. Newbury LIVE is an excellent example of



Rod Stewart will perform in the first Newbury LIVE-branded concert

how we are expanding the racecourse as a host venue and because it's only 40 minutes from London, it's perfectly placed to become of the UK's most diverse entertainment venues."

JD Wetherspoon chair slams tax increases

PETE HAYMAN

JD Wetherspoon chair Tim Martin has criticised "zealous" and "unsustainable" increases in regulations and taxes affecting the industry.

According to Martin, both the current and previous governments' approach had forced

pubs to increase drinks prices; a move which has helped boost supermarket alcohol sales.

The comments came as JD Wetherspoon posted a 7.6 per cent growth in revenue for the 26 weeks ending 23 January, compared with the same period last year.

Cineworld reports revenue growth

PETE HAYMAN

Cineworld Group has recorded a 4.8 per cent increase in revenue for the year to 30 December 2010, compared with the previous 52-week period.

EBITDA and pre-tax profits grew by 8.1 per cent and 0.3 per cent respectively in 2010, with the cinema operator capturing more than 26 per cent of the UK market share. Despite a 2.1 per cent fall in admissions, the average ticket price was up 6 per cent to £4.99.

A new Cineworld site has been rolled out at London's O2 Arena, and agreements have been secured for cinemas at Leigh, Aldershot and Wembley City, London.

Cineworld Group CEO Stephen Wiener said: "Our strategically eventful year saw progress in rolling out digital screens across our estate, and continued expansion.



Cineworld has captured a quarter of the UK market

"After the impact of the heavy snow at the end of 2010, admissions have returned to normal and we look forward to a release schedule for 2011 with a strong line-up of potential blockbusters as well as an increased number of 3D films."

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