



## VisitEngland reveals chef shortage figures as part of drive to attract young people to the industry during English Tourism Week

**Embargoed until 00:01 20 March 2015:** VisitEngland today announces new figures highlighting the shortage of skilled chefs across the country. **Nearly half, (47 per cent) of vacancies for chefs proved difficult to fill due to a lack of skilled applicants. Chefs made up a fifth (21 per cent) of all skill shortage vacancies for skilled trades,\*** suggesting that businesses are struggling to recruit the skilled chefs they need.

VisitEngland is highlighting the issue during **English Tourism Week (14-22 March)** to encourage young people to enter the industry and in particular, consider being a chef as a career option. Emphasising the work already being done by the hospitality sector to attract young people to take up apprenticeships, it also urges the entire sector to make even greater efforts to recruit more chefs.

English tourism is **predicted to be one of the biggest drivers of economic growth over the next decade, already worth £106bn (9% of total GDP) supporting 2.6m jobs.** By 2025 the value of tourism in England is set to double to over £216bn, providing 1 in every 10 jobs. However skills shortages are a major threat to tourism achieving its growth potential.

Figures from the UK Commission for Employment and Skills' (UKCES) Employer Skills Survey reveal that **1 in 5 vacancies in the hotel and restaurant sector are skilled jobs. When it comes to skilled chefs this rises to nearly half (44 per cent).**

Chef shortages are particularly prevalent in London (66 per cent) and in the South East (46 per cent).

The shortage of chefs is despite the growth in popularity for 'foodie' destinations. Waiting lists are long for tables at popular spots such as The Fat Duck in Bray, Hix, Lyme Regis, Rick Stein's restaurants in Padstow and Le Manoir Aux Quat'Saisons Oxford. If hotels, restaurants and pubs are to meet the demand for tourism in these areas, the chef skills shortage issue needs to be addressed.

Commenting on the new chef shortage statistics, **Tom Kerridge, chef patron of the ever popular, Michelin starred The Hand and Flowers and newly opened pub The Coach, in Marlow, Buckinghamshire** says: "The hospitality industry is a vibrant, fun and exciting place to be with many opportunities for growth and promotion, travel and experiences. The skill levels are so varied with so much to learn from base level catering through to highly skilled cookery or simple customer service, all the way through to fine dining. It is a wonderful career that I'm very proud to have chosen".

**James Berresford Chief Executive of VisitEngland** says: "We are proud of England's growing foodie reputation which relies heavily on skilled chefs delivering quality across the many fantastic restaurants, pubs and hotels across the country. We need to ensure there is enough being done at grass roots level to inspire young chefs to enter the industry and fill the skills gap, if we are to meet visitor demand."

Addressing the skills gap issue, the industry is rallying to encourage young people to take up apprenticeship schemes. The Big Hospitality Conversation is a nationwide campaign led by the British Hospitality Association uniting more than 1,500 businesses so far to provide hospitality and tourism careers for young people. As part of English Tourism Week, restaurants, hotels and catering establishments across South Yorkshire have come together (Tuesday 17th March 2015 at Sheffield Hallam University) to pledge job opportunities, apprenticeships and work placements for 16-24 year olds. Over 40,000 job opportunities have so far been created at events like the one at Sheffield Hallam University and tourism and hospitality industry is set to create up to 60,000 jobs for young people by 2016.

**Ufi Ibrahim, Chief Executive of the British Hospitality Association** says: “The hospitality and tourism industry is one of the best industries in the world. Our industry helps to take young talent and nurture it and develop people into future leaders, stars, franchisees, and chief executives. It takes people from dishes to riches, from kitchens to boardrooms on the way up the career ladder. We want The Big Hospitality Conversation to showcase the vibrancy of a hospitality career, attracting more young people to the industry, reducing skills shortages and helping to tackle youth unemployment.”

**Brigid Simmonds Chief Executive of the British Beer and Pub Association** says: “Making sure we have the training, apprenticeships and skills we need in the tourism sector is vital, and Visit England is absolutely right to highlight the issue. Our Pub Chef Passion initiative aims to attract thousands more talented young people into the pub and bar industry, and address the skills shortage facing pub kitchens. It is an exciting and demanding career that offers young people development, rewards and a great working environment. We need to do all we can to promote these opportunities to young people, to attract new talent into our pub kitchens”.

**Martin-Christian Kent, Executive Director, People 1<sup>st</sup> a multi-sector recruiter** says: “Employers report that 42% of chef vacancies are hard to fill. At the same time, a recent survey by People 1st found that 51% of colleges offering full-time programmes have seen a fall in numbers since last year. It is clear that there the industry faces a severe shortage of chefs unless action is taken to stop the decline. The new apprenticeship standards for professional and production chefs developed by employers and supported by People 1st, as well as the City & Guilds Professional Cookery Diploma delivered full-time in college provide essential entry routes into the industry for those wishing to become a chef. We know that there is employer demand, but we are calling on employers to come together and back an industry-wide campaign to stimulate demand onto these programmes and ensure we have more people entering the industry to pursue a career as a chef.”

**Simon Vincent, President, EMEA, Hilton Worldwide** says: “Our Food and Beverage teams served over 9.7 million customers in England last year, so attracting the best talent into our kitchens is crucial if visitors are going to experience the very best this country has to offer. In my role as co-industry chair of the UK Tourism Council we’re committed to working with government in addressing the shortage of trained chefs, and are leading a hospitality working group in launching new apprenticeship standards for chefs, preparing the next generation of leaders to carry the flag for English cuisine.”

English Tourism Week is led by the national tourist board, VisitEngland, and is an industry-wide initiative designed to shine a light on the importance of tourism in England. Hundreds of tourism organisations and businesses will be putting on events to celebrate English Tourism Week this year.

The Department of Culture, Media & Sport (DCMS) is running a week long social media campaign as part of English Tourism Week this week, highlighting career paths and opportunities across the

industry. The week aims to showcase a range of jobs on offer and make people see a career in tourism as rewarding, offering long-term career development in a thriving industry. Follow **#tourismcareers** or **#mytourismjob** on Twitter for further information.

## ENDS

Notes to editors:

**For more information please contact:**

Kaye Woodhouse, Corporate Communications Tel: 020 7578 1244, Email [kaye.woodhouse@visitengland.org](mailto:kaye.woodhouse@visitengland.org)  
[www.visitengland.org](http://www.visitengland.org)

### About VisitEngland

- VisitEngland is the country's national tourist board. We work in partnership with the industry to develop the visitor experience across England, plan national tourism strategy, grow the value of tourism in England and provide advocacy for the industry and our visitors. Our work is underpinned by robust research and customer insights. You can access the latest in-depth market intelligence and statistics on [www.visitengland.org/insight-statistics](http://www.visitengland.org/insight-statistics).
- England is a unique destination and a real powerhouse in global tourism. It represents 84 per cent of the total UK visitor economy, is worth £106 billion, and supports 2.6 million jobs.
- For corporate information see [www.visitengland.org](http://www.visitengland.org) and for consumer information see [www.visitengland.com](http://www.visitengland.com).

### The research:

- The UK Commission's Employer Skills Survey (UKCESS) is one of the largest telephone surveys of its kind in the world, involving around 90,000 interviews across the UK. The survey looks at what employers do in terms of training and staff development and includes a host of other measures on skills deficiencies, such as skills gaps and vacancies unfilled because of skills shortages, recruitment of education leavers and investment in training and workforce development. Skill shortage vacancies are where employers have vacancies that are hard to fill due to a lack of skilled applicants.
- Skills shortage vacancies for chefs represent 21 per cent of all skills shortage vacancies within skilled trades, not all skills shortage vacancies in the UK. So the issue is that a significant proportion of all skills shortage vacancies in skilled trades are taken up just by people struggling to recruit chefs
- \*Defining skilled trade category "These require a substantial period of training. Main tasks involve the performance of complex physical duties that normally involve initiative, manual dexterity and other practical skills". Examples include plumbers, electricians, gardeners and butchers
- *Please note, figures for the East Midlands, North East and Yorkshire and Humber should be considered as indicative due to the low response rates for these regions.*

**Table: Skill Shortage Vacancy Density for Chefs by Region**

	<i>Unwtd Base</i>	<i>SSV density (%)</i>
UK	<b>687</b>	<b>47</b>
England	<b>572</b>	<b>44</b>
East Midlands	35	44
East of England	<b>85</b>	<b>31</b>
London	<b>77</b>	<b>66</b>
North East	28	38
North West	<b>78</b>	<b>31</b>
South East	<b>109</b>	<b>46</b>
South West	<b>74</b>	<b>26</b>
West Midlands	<b>51</b>	<b>27</b>
Yorkshire and Humber	35	43

---

For more information about English Tourism Week see [www.english tourismweek.co.uk](http://www.english tourismweek.co.uk)