

Industry Weekly Digest

School of Hospitality & Tourism Management



Linking with Schools

Manchester Hotel Association (MHA) has been trying to find innovative and creative long term solutions to the recruitment challenges that are facing the hospitality industry. Whilst hoteliers in the city have been working closely with local Colleges and Universities over the last few years, it was felt that a closer tie and link-up with schools would also be beneficial for the long term success of the industry. Indeed most Hotels didn't have any fixed arrangement with any of the schools and after discussions, most schools were unaware of the opportunities and careers available to students within Hotels.

In this Digest, guest contributor and Chair of the **Manchester Hoteliers Association**, **Adrian Ellis**, expands on this initiative.

Have a great Weekend!



Manchester Hoteliers' Association: Hotels and Schools Pilot Project

From the summer of 2021, meetings were held with local schools to gauge interest and in the majority of cases there was support for a programme to be built to aid awareness and understanding of the opportunities available. The **MHA** then held a meeting with the Trafford regional Head Teachers forum where many schools signed up to start a pilot programme which began at the end of 2021. The idea was to try and introduce school students, teachers and parents to the wide range of work and career opportunities available in Hotels and for students to experience the diversity and dynamism of hospitality.

22 Schools came on board for this pilot programme and these were then matched with 22 Hotels with each Hotel having a school to work with based on their geographical proximity. The project began with tours of Hotels organised by Hotel General Managers - an eye-opening experience as many students did not appreciate the full scope of roles available within Hotels. Next, each Hotel organised a series of monthly programmes either going to the school or the school visiting the Hotel. During these visits, there would be cookery demonstrations, Spa visits, event planning sessions and bed making competitions, plus quizzes and competitions to keep everything fun and engaging. Some Hotels also organised takeover days where students helped with the service of a lunch or afternoon tea and all these initiatives aimed at garnering interest in hospitality and the type of work available.



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In addition there are also some parent/student events organised so that Hoteliers could gain the support and interest from parents. Especially where students have registered an interest following their visits, the support from parents will be crucial in the decision making process to pursue hospitality as a career of choice. Each Hotel was tasked with organising a parent/teacher/student occasion before the end of term.

Having sparked some keen interest, **MHA** is now working with local Colleges so that school students who are interested can find out how to further their studies in catering, tourism and hospitality with the hope being that a reasonable percentage of students coming from school will either take up further studies in hospitality or take on part time work or full time work in Hotels. To date the project has been successful with lots of positive feedback from the schools and the students and we hope that this will translate in many more seeing this is a career of choice for the future.

The aim then this summer is to evaluate the feedback from schools, students and hoteliers with a view to creating a prototype model can be used both in Manchester and hopefully for other Hotel Associations up and down the country. The more school students that can gain experience and awareness of opportunities available within the industry, the better chance we have of tackling our long term recruitment challenges in the Hotel industry in the UK.

For more information on the Manchester Hoteliers Association and their work - visit this [link](#)