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Long-term unemployed get fresh start



FANTASTIC OPPORTUNITY: From left, Steven West, Brendan Hayes, Grant Hedley, Rae Davies, Nick Christophi and Kay Hanson were among 13 people given skills training by Jurys Inn and Engage Brighton

Hotel's room for jobless

A HOTEL has taken ten people out of long-term unemployment.

Jurys Inn teamed up with recruitment broker Engage Brighton to offer training to 13 people who have struggled to find permanent work.

They were given four weeks' training in basic IT, food hygiene, health and safety, first aid, customer care and fine dining and wine.

Of the group, ten have now secured full-time jobs with the hotel, which has been running its pre-employment programme for ten years.

The trainees had to organise a lunch for 30 people – deciding the menu, preparing the food, serving the diners and decorating the room.

Sarah Heard, HR manager for Jurys Inn, Brighton, said: "I'm absolutely delighted with the

by **JAMES LANCASTER**

success of the Brighton pre-employment programme.

"We have been able to offer a much wider training opportunity than ever before – and to offer ten of the 13 candidates a position is fantastic.

"The group has progressed so much over the course of the scheme. Each individual has grown in confidence and developed their skills base – some are going to be real high-flyers in the future. We couldn't have asked for more."

Engage director Claire Mitchell said: "This is an excellent example of how Engage works with businesses, getting them the right staff at no cost to their business.

"In a time of skills shortages,

where businesses are experiencing high turnovers in key customer-facing roles, these types of projects provide a vital, effective solution."

The three-star Jurys Inn hotel is based in the New England Quarter near Brighton station.

It opens at the end of the month, creating 46 jobs.

Recruitment consultant Claire Wills, from job brokers Kennedy Scott, worked with the group and was impressed by the spirit that quickly developed.

She said: "The group were really supportive of one another and the team spirit has been amazing.

"As well as learning practical skills, confidence has soared and members have really learned how to work as a team."

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Holiday operator's sunny forecast for year ahead

FIRST CHOICE holiday operator TUI said its 2007 summer season had gone well after wet weather drove demand for holidays in warmer climes.

The company said it will meet expectations for the financial year.

Germany-based TUI Travel, which merged with Crawley-based First Choice earlier this year, said it had seen "encouraging" sales of its forthcoming winter and summer programmes.

It said mainstream holiday sales for the winter were seven per cent up on last year in Britain and ten per cent across northern Europe as a whole.

Holidaymakers are increasingly wanting to travel further from Britain, with Egypt, Tunisia and Mexico driving demand.

The company said: "Consumer demand for leisure travel remains strong, reflecting high demand for overseas holidays following poor

weather conditions in summer 2007.

"Consumers continue to view overseas travel as a part of their annual expenditure."

Demand is also rising in Germany as the country's improving economy and rising income boosts demand, TUI said.

But capacity is set to fall by ten per cent in Britain and 12 per cent in Germany during the summer as TUI exits unprofitable short-haul markets.

TUI chief executive Peter Long said: "I am pleased with the way winter trading is progressing across our businesses.

"In Britain, early indications for next summer's trading are encouraging, where we are benefiting from operating two very strong franchises."

He added that the merger of the TUI and First Choice businesses in Britain was "progressing as planned".