

Welcoming the World update

December 2009



Regional Language Network London's 'Welcoming the World' training programme aims to develop the intercultural and language skills needed to improve customer service for international visitors, as well as the UK's diverse tourists and residents. The LDA-supported initiative is designed for people who work — or are seeking work — in frontline positions in hospitality, tourism, transport, retail, leisure and security as well as for volunteers at sporting and cultural events. To support the implementation of '[World Class Customer Service for 2012 and Beyond](#)', 'Welcoming the World' is the basis for a new award to be aligned to new National Occupational Standards in Intercultural Working, which are scheduled for addition to the Qualifications and Credit Framework in late 2009. Wider roll-out of the finalised programme will start in 2010.

About the 'Welcoming the World' course and resources

The practical, interactive course equips participants with knowledge, skills and confidence to help customers feel greeted and welcomed at a personal level and to leave a lasting impression of memorable customer service. It develops intercultural skills through:

- *cultural knowledge, customer service advice and simple greetings* – for working with people from two different countries or cultural backgrounds
- *social skills* – building relationships and being comfortable in unfamiliar settings
- *interpersonal skills* – adapting behaviour to show respect for other people, their values and ways of doing things
- *communication skills* – expressing yourself clearly to people who speak other languages.

Delegates for the standard training programme receive a training guide and customer service phrasebook in twelve languages and are directed to online resources at www.rln-london.com/welcoming. The 'Train the trainer' course and resources allow for differentiated and sector-specific tailoring of the programme.

The pilot and partnerships

The pilot training programme has been delivered to around 240 people working — or seeking work — in retail, hospitality, passenger transport, venues and visitor attractions and museums. 94% of delegates rate the standard programme overall as 'very good' or 'good', and 99% would recommend the programme to others. The 'Train the trainers' programme has already been delivered to twenty vocational trainers from a wide range of businesses and sectors.

Examples of companies and partners involved:

Addison Lee, BAA Heathrow, Blackjack Promotions, City Airport, City Cruises, Clarks, Emporio Armani, Firmdale Hotels, Greenwich Council Tourism Department, Harrods, Holiday Inn, London Underground, London Zoo, Making Training Work, Millers Hotel, Museum of London, National Express, Marks and Spencer, New West End Company, Novotel, Park Inn, Ramada Hotels, Science Museum, Southwark Cathedral, St Paul's Cathedral, Tate Britain, Tie Rack and Wilson James.