

# Welcoming the World update

## May 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-funded 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 by autumn 2009. Wider roll-out of the finalised programme will start in early 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* – including listening and expressing yourself clearly to people who speak other languages.

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

### The pilot and partnerships

The phase one pilot in summer 2008 was delivered to over 100 people working — or seeking work — in retail, hospitality, passenger transport and museums. 94% of delegates rated the programme as 'very good' or 'good'. Phase two in 2009 will extend trialling to volunteers and customer service agents in passenger transport, sport and active leisure, venues and visitor attractions. The 'Train the trainers' programme has already been delivered to a cross-sectoral group of vocational trainers.

### Examples of companies and partners involved:

BAA, City Lit, Emporio Armani, Firmdale Hotels, First Step Trust, Greenwich Council Tourism Department, Holiday Inn, London Leisure College, London Metropolitan University, London Underground, Making Training Work, Museum of London, National Express, Marks and Spencer, New West End Company, Novotel, Park Inn, Tate Britain, Tie Rack and Wilson James.