

Case Study – Tom Pratt

Overview



Tom was a graduate of the thriving hospitality provision at West Somerset Community College (WSSC) in 2015. The facility in this remote location was an essential training provision for the key employment skills in the area, namely agriculture and hospitality. The area suffers from low social mobility, aspiration, and training opportunities. EDF the organisation behind the Hinkley Point project have made generous funding available to the surrounding region to help alleviate some of the impact of the project and provide a legacy to assist the area to provide opportunity and prosper. The hospitality section was one such project. EDF funded a well equipped professional kitchen. The training restaurant at the WSSC was open to the general public giving the young people the opportunity to hone their culinary and service skills in a quality environment under the supervision of industry professionals. Additional part time industry experience was embraced by the many visitor economy businesses in the vicinity, providing students with income, operational experience and eventually full time employment. The facility was closed several years ago. We are at this time experiencing the largest skills crisis in local hospitality recruitment in living memory with many operators constraining capacity and reducing operating hours which has a direct impact on visitor satisfaction, the local economy and VAT tax revenue.

Tom's Story

Tom joined the hospitality offering at West Somerset College on a BTEC diploma. After two years of study and working part time at a local highly acclaimed boutique country house he joined the business full time as a Trainee Manager to hone his craft. Tom moved on to the five star Huka Lodge in New Zealand, consistently rated as one of the world's best resorts on a three year visa, where he was able to gain a complete understanding of working and providing outstanding experiences to an elite international guest portfolio. Tom returned to the UK and gained experience in a local coaching inn to help develop his understanding of guest expectations in a variety of different styles of property. Now working for the nationally acclaimed Pig group of hotels on their Budding Entrepreneur programme

	Tom is living proof of the career and leadership development opportunities in this thriving and dynamic industry.
Conclusion	There is a critical need for a partnership network of stakeholders to drive the agenda for skills in hospitality in the rural economy where 60% of all employment is reliant on the visitor economy. We need to train the skills to meet the needs of local business, upskill business and create a thriving well trained dynamic sector for local residents and visitors alike. This also encourages local young people to reside in this area where there is little progression opportunity, and also contributes to addressing the demographic of one of the highest ageing populations in the UK.
Quotes	<p>Tom Pratt “The training program offered at WSCC gave me the basics overall skills to hit the ground running in any hospitality job as well as allowing me the opportunity to work out what area of hospitality I enjoyed working in the most.”</p> <p>Max Lawrence, FIH MTMI “The training provision at WSCC provided the sector with a funnel of profession well trained young people to meet the needs of business, many of whom have progressed onto fulfilling careers in the hospitality industry”.</p>