**Irish Hotels Federation Skillnet media release**

**For immediate issue: Thursday, 24 June 2021**

**Irish Hotels Federation Skillnet launched to deliver new upskilling**

**for Irish Hotels and Guesthouses**

*The national business network will address skills challenges in the sector, offering subsidised development and upskilling and training courses tailored to the needs of the sector.*

**24 June 2021** The Irish Hotels Federation (IHF) and Skillnet Ireland, the national agency responsible for the competitiveness, productivity, and innovation of Irish businesses through enterprise-led workforce development, has today launched a new Irish Hotels Federation Skillnet to address business and skills challenges in the industry.

Offering bespoke training courses and workshops specifically tailored to the unique needs of the hotel and guesthouse sector, this Skillnet Business Network aims to deliver best practice learning and development opportunities through high-quality, subsidised training and events, designed to meet the needs of Irish hotels and guesthouses and their teams, ensuring the delivery of world class hospitality experiences. Together with hospitality companies, programmes are co-funded by Skillnet Ireland, a business support agency of the Government of Ireland.

The suite of supports offered by the Irish Hotels Federation Skillnet is available to hotels and guesthouses and will encourage productivity, growth, and collaboration within the sector. Training programmes available include *Leadership and Training Skills for the Hotel Industry,* *craft training courses on bar service skills, food service skills and housekeeping skills* and a focus on customer care through a special ‘*Welcoming Back the Guest’* programme. There are also a wide range of accredited training programmes in development for Autumn 2021 including HR management, leadership and development for new managers, digital marketing, train the trainer, facilities and IT skills*.*

Welcoming the announcement **Minister for Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science Simon Harris TD** said: “*Ireland rightfully enjoys an international reputation for the excellence of our tourism and hospitality sector. Although it has been a difficult 15 months for the industry, everyone involved has shown great resilience and innovation, and it’s time now to focus on building up skills to protect staff and businesses as we emerge from the COVID-19 pandemic. I know the Irish Hotels Federation Skillnet will be a huge asset to those working in hotels and guesthouses throughout Ireland. You can always learn something that will help your business or your career grow, and I would really encourage people working in the sector to take the training and development opportunities offered*.”

Speaking at the launch of the programme, **Elaina Fitzgerald Kane, President of the Irish Hotels Federation (IHF)** said training courses will be a crucial support to the tourism and hospitality sector in the coming months as well as laying the foundation for the continued strategic development of Ireland’s hotels and guesthouse community into the future: “*As hotels and guesthouses continue to welcome back guests, it is an opportune time to offer bespoke training and upskilling support to their teams. The programmes offered through the IHF Skillnet support the continued development of the wide variety of careers available throughout our industry, from culinary arts to leadership and management.*

*For hotels and guesthouses, retaining skilled, trained teams is essential to the quality and professionalism of their offering. Irish hotels have always had a well-earned reputation globally for their high service standards, and the training offered by the IHF Skillnet will ensure that reputation is maintained in what continues to be a highly competitive market*.”

Speaking at the launch, **Chief Executive of Skillnet Ireland, Paul Healy** said: *“Preparing businesses for the recovery is a core focus of Skillnet Ireland. We are delighted to partner with the Irish Hotels Federation to launch the new IHF Skillnet Business Network, which will play a pivotal role in addressing the industry’s skills shortage, in driving innovation and in supporting the competitiveness of businesses in this vital sector of our economy.”*

The Irish Hotels Federation Skillnet is promoted by the Irish Hotels Federation and membership of the network is open to hotels and guesthouses in the Republic of Ireland. More information is available at [www.ihfskillnet.ie](http://www.ihfskillnet.ie)

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**Editors’ notes**

**Tourism sector at a glance (prior to COVID-19 pandemic)**

* 10.9 million out of state visitors
* Tourism accounts for almost 4% of GNP
* Total tourism revenue of €9.2 billion in 2019 (including carrier receipts)
* Tourism industry created over 90,000 new jobs since 2011. Before the COVID-19 crisis it supported almost 270,000 jobs, equivalent to 11% of total employment in Ireland with over 65,000 of these jobs in the hotel sector alone.
* €7.25 billion in foreign exchange earnings
* €1.96 billion in domestic tourism revenue in 2019
* Total of 62,897 hotel and guesthouse bedrooms in Ireland (2019)

**About Irish Hotels Federation Skillnet**

The Irish Hotels Federation Skillnet is a national business network for hotels and guesthouses of all sizes in Ireland. The network works collaboratively to share best practice and to respond effectively to the specific needs of the sector. The network addresses both technical and non-technical skills needs of its members.

The objective of this national network is to support Irish hotels and guesthouses by enhancing industry-specific skills and knowledge, broadening access to skills development opportunities and encouraging ongoing professional development.

Website: [www.ihfskillnet.ie](http://www.ihfskillnet.ie)

**About IHF**

Founded in 1937, the Irish Hotels Federation (IHF) is the national organisation of the hotel and guesthouse industry in Ireland. The primary functions of the Federation are to promote and defend the interests of its members. The IHF represents almost 1,000 hotels and guesthouses nationwide, employing over 60,000 people and is a key stakeholder in the Irish tourism sector.

Website: https://www.ihf.ie

**About Skillnet Ireland**

Skillnet Ireland is a business support agency of the Government of Ireland, with a mandate to advance the competitiveness, productivity, and innovation of Irish businesses through enterprise-led workforce development. Skillnet Ireland partners with 60 industry bodies and enterprise clusters, supporting over 18,000 businesses and 70,000 trainees annually, through its 73 Skillnet Business Networks across most sectors and all regions in Ireland. Skillnet Ireland is funded from the National Training Fund through the Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science.

Website: www.skillnetireland.ie

Skillnet Business Network search tool: https://www.skillnetireland.ie/our-networks/