IoH Broadsheet

The Institute of Hospitality Broadsheet is a thought-leadership article written by a Member or Fellow of the Institute. Celebrating the wealth of professionalism, knowledge and expertise within our diverse, worldwide hospitality family, the IoH Broadsheet is published exclusively for members.

First Job. Future Career. Making the Case for Apprenticeships in Hospitality

Mike Worley FIH, Managing Director, HIT Training

Mike Worley has spent more than 20 years championing skills and workforce development in Hospitality. Having joined HIT Training at its inception in 2006, he became Managing Director in 2023.

A Fellow of the Institute of Hospitality and former Chair of AELP's Hospitality & Catering Sector Forum, Mike is passionate about the transformative power of apprenticeships, developing talent and creating meaningful career opportunities for the next generation.



Why apprenticeships, Government incentives and a renewed commitment to young people could help Hospitality build its next generation of talent.

At a time when Hospitality businesses face mounting employment costs, recruitment pressures and increasingly tight margins, investing in inexperienced young people can feel like a luxury many employers simply cannot afford.

Yet the need to build our future workforce has never been greater.

And with Government increasingly recognising the value of apprenticeships through new funding arrangements and financial incentives, there is a real opportunity for employers to reconsider how they recruit, train and develop talent.

Hospitality has always been an industry that opens doors. Many successful chefs, hoteliers and broader business leaders began their careers waiting tables, working behind a bar or helping in a kitchen.

The question now is how we ensure the next generation can benefit from those same opportunities.

Recognising the opportunity - and the support available...

Recent Government reforms have significantly strengthened the financial case for employing young apprentices.

Eligible apprentices aged 16 - 24 can now have 100% of their training and assessment costs funded, up to the relevant funding limit. Qualifying non-levy employers can receive a £2,000 payment for recruiting eligible new apprentices, while further incentives are available for Foundation Apprenticeships and younger recruits.

Employers can also benefit from National Insurance relief for apprentices under 25.
These measures can substantially reduce the cost of investing in new talent, although employers must still meet wages and provide appropriate supervision.

For Hospitality businesses struggling with recruitment costs, the opportunity deserves serious consideration. And the principle applies internationally, although apprenticeship structures, qualifications and funding will vary between countries.

Recruit for potential, not simply experience

The latest UK figures show 981,000 young people aged 16 - 24 were not in education, employment or training between April and June 2026. And here at HIT, we know that the majority of youngsters want to work.

Yet too often, entry-level vacancies require experience that applicants have never had the opportunity to gain.

Hospitality is uniquely placed to change this. Communication, enthusiasm, teamwork and a willingness to learn can be just as valuable as previous employment.



Make apprenticeships part of your workforce strategy

Apprenticeships aren't simply a route into employment. They offer structured, work-based learning that develops practical skills, confidence and professional competence while employees contribute to the business. Importantly, their value extends beyond young recruits.

Developing an existing team member into a supervisor, or helping a supervisor progress into management, strengthens internal capability, supports retention and creates opportunities for others to enter the workforce.

For employers, this means building a sustainable talent pipeline rather than continually competing to recruit experienced staff.

Making progression visible from the outset

For someone entering Hospitality for the first time, the difference between seeing a temporary job and a potential career can be transformative.

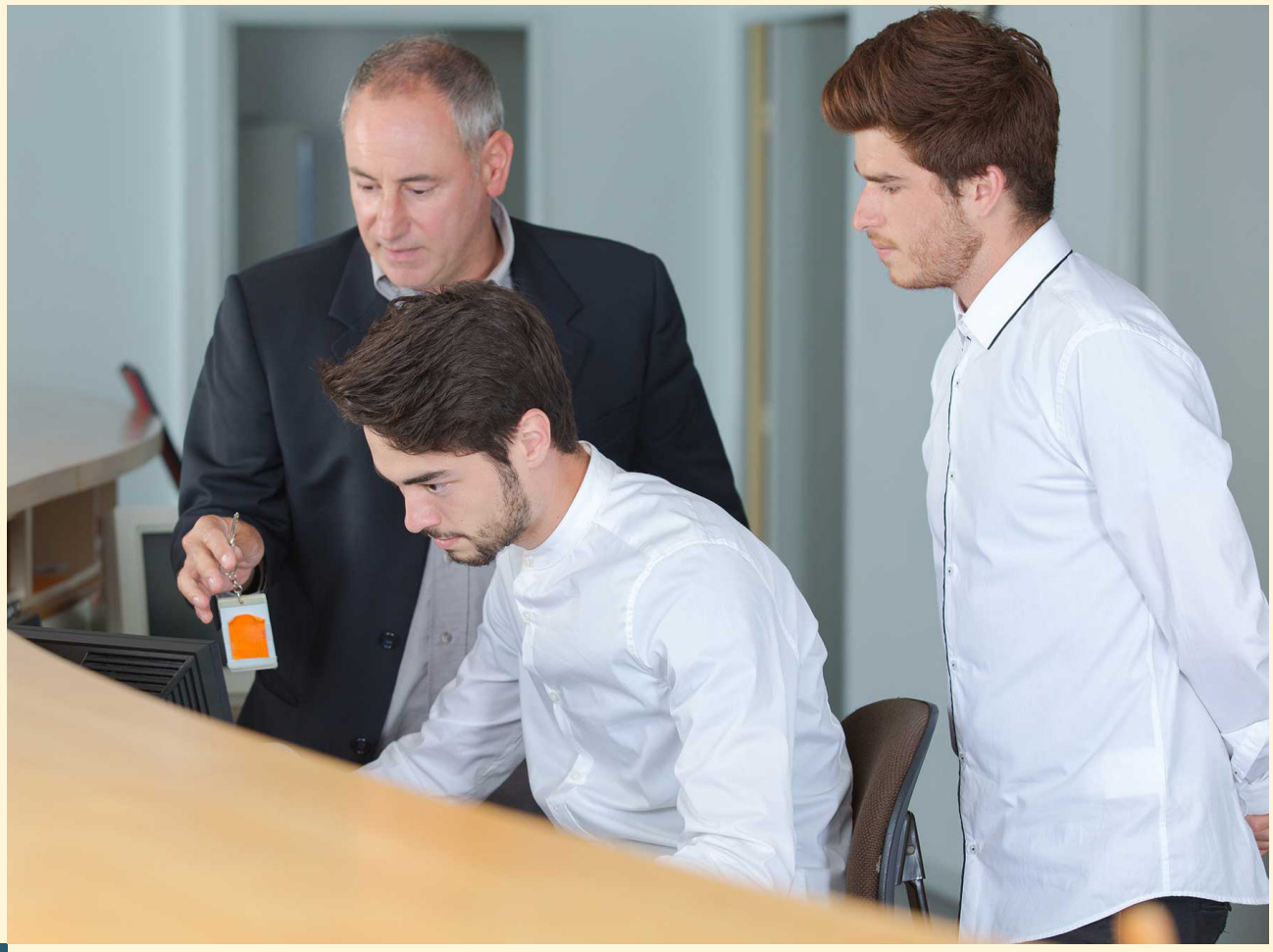
This thinking sits at the heart of HIT Training's new national First Job. Future Career. campaign. Through HIT's Commit to Youth initiative, we're encouraging employers to create meaningful opportunities, embrace apprenticeships and provide the support young people need to succeed and grow.

Turning opportunity into action

With greater Government support helping to make apprenticeships more accessible, employers have a valuable opportunity to invest in young talent while building the skills, loyalty and leadership their businesses need.

Apprenticeships offer something powerful for both sides: a supported first step towards a rewarding career for young people, and a practical, commercially attractive route to developing the workforce of the future for employers.

First Job. Future Career. is about making that opportunity count.



About the Author

Mike Worley FIH is Managing Director of HIT Training, having joined the organisation as a trainer when it was established in 2006.

He went on to establish its South West operations before becoming Operations Director in 2013 and Managing Director in 2023.

During the pandemic, Mike led the digital transformation of HIT's apprenticeship programmes, moving its training provision online within just three weeks of the first lockdown.

A proud Fellow of the Institute of Hospitality, Mike is a passionate advocate for apprenticeships and workforce development. Having benefited from the support of workplace mentors throughout his own career, he is committed to creating opportunities for others to develop their skills and fulfil their potential.



CONNECT WITH MIKE IH