



Business leaders representing some of the region's most successful travel and tourism organisations at the ITT Future Conference hosted by Northumbria University at the Sage Gateshead

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## Leading lights in the North East travel tourism and hospitality sector inspire a new generation

More than 200 future leaders of the travel and tourism industry in the North East of England gathered at the Sage in Gateshead to hear from today's top tourism and event leaders.

Organised by Newcastle Business School at Northumbria University, in partnership with The Institute of Travel and Tourism (ITT) and Sage Gateshead, business leaders representing some of the region's most

successful travel and tourism organisations shared their knowledge and expertise on how to succeed in business.

The event called 'ITT Future You' aims to demonstrate the diverse career paths available in the sector and provide a platform for students to speak directly to industry professionals and potential employers.

Students from Northumbria University, Gateshead College and Newcastle College grasped the opportunity to hear about career development and future opportunities.

Key speakers included John Hays, MD of Hays Travel, which was recently named in the Sunday Times' Best Companies to Work For in the UK. He was joined by Jonathan Gilroy, destination manager at NewcastleGateshead Initiative, Jessica McCabe, head of conference & events at Sage Gateshead, Gemma Dishman, marketing & communications manager Sunderland BID, Kate Hall, digital communications at Newcastle International Airport, Nikki Gott, MD at She's Gott It Events and Claire Davies, director of sales at DoubleTree by Hilton.

Dr Helen Nicholson, programme leader for BA (Hons) Tourism and Events Management at Northumbria University's Newcastle Business School, said: "As a Centre for Excellence, Northumbria University is proud to organise the regional ITT Future You event and provide a crucial opportunity for leading industry practitioners to connect with, transfer knowledge and inspire students at various stages of their studies."

John Hays, MD of Hays Travel, said: "As a major employer in the North East, it is great to be able to share my story with the region's next generation of travel and tourism leaders and to give something back.

"I've been working in travel for over 30 years and still love every moment. Success doesn't happen overnight but if you're resilient and passionate about what you do, it can be an extremely rewarding career path that's packed with opportunities for talented people with the drive and enthusiasm to succeed."

Jessica McCabe, head of conference & events at Sage Gateshead, said: "The ITT Future You event is a superb showcase of travel, tourism and hospitality

workforces in our region. It was great to welcome everyone to the Sage and have the opportunity to meet so many students keen to pursue a career in the sector. It's important for industry operators to continue to support new talent development."

Hannah De Koning-Teasdale, 22, from Edinburgh is a final year Travel and Tourism Management student at Northumbria University, she said: "I haven't decided which area I'd like to specialise in yet, therefore hearing from industry professionals on how they got their start in business along with the diverse routes their careers have taken was reassuring. They really demonstrated the breadth of career opportunities available."

Abi Stott, 20, is a second year Tourism and Events Management student at Northumbria, she said: "I would like to say thank you to the speakers and organisers behind the conference. I was actually beginning to doubt whether what I am doing is right and the best thing for me, but after today I have never felt so motivated or inspired."

Northumbria is the only university in the North East of England to be recognised as a Centre of Excellence by the Institute of Travel and Tourism, the UK's professional body for the travel and tourism industry. With 31,500 students, Northumbria is one of the largest universities in the country, offering courses on either a full-time, part-time or distance learning basis.

To find out more go to: [www.northumbria.ac.uk](http://www.northumbria.ac.uk).

Photo Caption: Dr Helen Nicholson, programme leader for BA (Hons) Tourism and Events Management at Northumbria University's Newcastle Business School with John Hays, MD of Hays Travel and Claire Steiner, Chair of the ITT Education and Training Committee at the ITT Future Conference in Newcastle.

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If you have a media enquiry please contact our Media and Communications team at [media.communications@northumbria.ac.uk](mailto:media.communications@northumbria.ac.uk) or call 0191 227 4604.



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