



PRESS RELEASE

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CANAL & RIVER TRUST NW STAFF GET TOP MARKS IN CUSTOMER SERVICE

Visitors to the canals of North West England are promised excellent customer service from the Canal & River Trust charity, thanks to a trailblazing training programme.

In a joint collaboration with Visit England and Welcome to Excellence, a total of 73 North West Waterways staff, from engineers and office administrators to seasonal lock keepers and operations staff, have undergone training leading to qualifications in 'Exceeding Visitor Expectations' and City and Guilds Level 2 – Principles of Customer Service in Hospitality, Leisure and Tourism.

And the training has already had a dramatic effect on staff performance. The number of complimentary emails and thank you notes from boaters and visitors has risen dramatically and customer appreciation is at an all-time high.

The Canal & River Trust was one of the first organisations to undergo this type of bespoke training programme with Visit England and is now delighted to hold its 'Welcome to Excellence' corporate status.

Chantelle Seaborn, North West Waterway manager with the Canal & River Trust said: "We have been overwhelmed with the hundreds of thank you notes praising the performance of our staff who go out of their way to give visitors a brilliant experience when they come to the Lancaster and Leeds & Liverpool canals.

"Our staff are a fantastic bunch of people – very professional, friendly and helpful. I can rely on them to go the extra mile when they come across visitors who need an extra helping hand. This training programme has given them techniques and approaches for dealing with the wide range of demands on them. They have clearly risen to the challenge and I am really proud of what they have achieved."

John Barlow, who delivered the training on behalf of Visit England and Welcome to Excellence, added: "It was a pleasure to deliver the Exceeding Visitor Expectations courses for the Canal & River Trust. The content was specifically tailored to incorporate key elements of service excellence across the organisation. It's helped staff to appreciate the importance of giving visitors a first class experience and I am sure they will become

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great ambassadors for the Trust, boosting tourism to the North West's wonderful waterways."

Canal & River Trust chief executive Richard Parry presented staff with their certificates at a special ceremony in Wigan to mark their achievements.

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Notes to editors:

The Canal & River Trust is the guardian of 2,000 miles of historic waterways across England and Wales, caring for the nation's third largest collection of listed structures, as well as museums, archives, and hundreds of important wildlife sites.

We believe that *living waterways transform places and enrich lives* and our role is to make sure there is always a place on your doorstep where you can escape the pressures of everyday life, stretch your legs and simply feel closer to nature.

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