

Volunteers to help out at Gleneagles



Gleneagles where the 2014 Ryder Cup will be played from today

Hundreds of businesses across Scotland have signed up to a training programme to help make tourist services more accessible, Tourism Minister Fergus Ewing revealed today.

The free online course will equip managers and their employees with the skills and knowledge they may need to enhance the visitor experience for visitors with access requirements.

It offers online training and guidance on how to better understand the needs of disabled people, parents with small children, elderly people, and cater for these needs at tourist attractions and hotels.

National tourism agency VisitScotland has also provided training to support 80 volunteers who will offer assistance to those with access requirements during the Ryder Cup at Gleneagles.

Mr Ewing said:

“In June I launched VisitScotland’s Accessible Tourism on-line training programme, which aims to improve accessibility. This will help achieve tourism industry growth and boost the wider economy.

“It is important that Scotland’s tourism industry has a clear business model geared to deal with those guests that have additional needs, and provides the training on how to respond to individual customers.

“The Scottish Government provided £45,000 towards producing

the online training programme, which is clearly helping staff who work in hotels, B&Bs, restaurants – generally all those who serve the public.

“I am pleased that Ryder Cup Europe has worked closely with the Scottish Government and VisitScotland to ensure that a comprehensive accessibility policy is in place for this week’s Ryder Cup.”

Chris McCoy, VisitScotland Accessible Tourism Scotland project manager, said:

“2014 is the year we welcome the world and we want to make sure everybody receives the same warm Scottish welcome, whether it’s at a large-scale event such as The Ryder Cup, or a small visitor attraction, venue or hotel.

“However, we know that poor customer service and a lack of accurate information are among the most common barriers facing visitors with access needs.

“This programme is designed to help equip employees and managers with the skills and knowledge they may need to welcome all visitors, regardless of their access needs.

“We hope through innovative online tools such as this, we can position Scotland as a country with world-class accessible tourism facilities, offering more choice as well as excellent customer service.”