

Scheme making careers in cruise more accessible set to expand

A scheme aiming to boost diversity and social mobility in the cruise industry by enabling A-Level students to learn more about careers within the sector is set to expand after a successful pilot phase.

Brainchild of Mundy Cruising's Matthew and Edwina Lonsdale, The Compass Project has supported 10 pupils from socially diverse backgrounds at St John Bosco College in London's Battersea to engage with the cruise industry and its potential job prospects.

The two-month programme, supported by CLIA, its member brands and organisations and Cruise Britain saw students visit two ships – Anthem of the Seas and Seven Seas Splendor – and take part in training and development classes.

The project culminated on Thursday (6 July) with students giving a presentation on they would recommend a friend to apply for a job in cruise to an audience of industry representatives.

Edwina Lonsdale said she "couldn't have begun to imagine what an energising and inspiring experience this would be" when she and husband Matthew first came up with the idea.

"The students have been engaged and charming, and the time and commitment from so many individuals within the cruise industry has been extraordinary," she said.

CLIA UK and Ireland chief Andy Harmer said the scheme had been "a great success", adding he was "looking forward to seeing the opportunities it now opens up for our first student cohort" as well as the programme's longer-term plans.

Ian McQuade, Chair, Cruise Britain said "We were delighted to support with an overview of shoreside opportunities in the cruise sector; with UK cruise following a growth trend, there are certainly exciting prospects ahead."

As it enters its next phase, the project will look to create apprenticeships, work experience and intern job opportunities for students and will be renewed by St John Bosco College for its next academic year. Plans are also in place to expand the scheme via a Southampton-based college.

The scheme was supported by Royal Caribbean, AmaWaterways, Silversea, P&O Cruises, Explora Journeys, Regent Seven Seas, Oceania, Norwegian Cruise Line, Celebrity Cruises, Maritime UK, Cruise Britain, the Port of Dover and Portland Port.

Maritime minister Baroness Vere praised the Compass Project for highlighting the cruise industry's benefits "to a new generation of mariners".

"Not only is it an exciting sector filled with incredible career opportunities and possibilities, but it plays a vital role in growing the UK economy and carrying passengers right across the globe," she said.

Paul Dunne, headteacher at St John Bosco College, said it was "definitely a project we will continue to support and invest in", describing how "delighted" staff had been to see the enjoyment of students who had taken part.