



For immediate release

VISITBRITAIN CEO SALLY BALCOMBE TO OPEN 2015 ASAP ANNUAL CONVENTION - 3 DECEMBER

The Association of Serviced Apartment Providers (ASAP) is delighted to announce that **Sally Balcombe, Chief Executive of VisitBritain, Britain's national tourism agency**, will open their 2015 Convention in London on 3 December.

This year's Convention – the sector's must-attend event of the year – will mark the beginning of a new chapter in the evolution of both the serviced apartment sector and the Association with so much growth as the sector expands significantly into 2016 and beyond.

James Foice, ASAP Managing Director, confirmed:

"We are absolutely delighted to have Sally Balcombe CEO of VisitBritain open our 2015 Convention. ASAP has doubled in size in the last 12 months to 130 members representing over 25,000 apartments, not just in the UK but increasingly we are expanding our membership base worldwide, now that our Quality Accreditation programme – a first for our sector - has been rolled out globally."

VisitBritain Chief Executive Sally Balcombe commented:

"Last year was a record year for inbound tourism numbers and visitor spend to Britain, while the first seven months of 2015 are on track to break all previous records, with more than 20 million visits from January to July – a three per cent increase on the same period last year. The serviced apartment sector offers another great alternative for the growing numbers of international visitors, from business travellers to tourists, and their diverse accommodation needs including the flexibility to prepare their own meals or having the space to entertain friends and family – or simply having the feel of a 'home away from home'."

The event, which will attract over 300 delegates, has a very strong speaker line-up including:

- **Mike Ashton**, ex Hilton, will deliver the keynote address at this year's Convention. Customer experience specialist Ashton will focus his address on *'the world of customer service: Long on promises – short on delivery ...and customers have had enough!'* Ashton will also lead an interactive workshop at the event focussed on *'getting the best from our people'* to deliver service excellence.
- **Hans Meyer** - founder & managing director of exciting new hospitality brand – **ZOKU** (home-office hybrid launching in Amsterdam this winter) – will headline the afternoon programme, outlining the critical role technology plays in enhancing the guest experience.

- **Ufi Ibrahim**, Chief Executive of the **British Hospitality Association (BHA)** will deliver the closing address, recognising the importance of the sector within the hospitality space.

The event will also cover all the latest updates on market trends, occupancy and forecasts for the sector and key topics will be debated in panel discussions. A full event programme can be found here:

<http://www.theasap.org.uk/page/2015ConProg/>

The Convention will culminate with the **ASAP Industry Awards Dinner** recognising and celebrating the achievements of ASAP's members 2015.

For more information on the 2015 ASAP Annual Convention visit:

<http://theasap.site-ym.com/page/2015Convention/>

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Background Information

ASAP: Association of Serviced Apartment Providers is the not-for-profit trade body dedicated exclusively to the serviced apartment industry. Our 130 members own and operate over 25,000 properties throughout the UK, Ireland, Europe, the USA and Canada. Our membership also includes 13 serviced apartment agencies committed to supporting and growing the sector. Our industry generates annual revenues of £600 million, and we sell three million accommodation nights each year. We provide employment to many thousands of people and our staffing costs are in the region of £70 million, many of which are low paid jobs. Founded in 2002, our members range from large international companies to small independent operators so represent the full cross-section of the industry. www.theasap.org.uk

VisitBritain is Britain's national tourism agency, responsible for marketing Britain worldwide. VisitBritain has a unique role in raising Britain's profile worldwide, increasing the value of tourism exports and developing Britain's visitor economy. Their mission is to grow the value of inbound tourism to Britain, working with a range of partners in both the UK and overseas. www.media.visitbritain.com

