

TACKLING THE PLAYWORK SKILLS DEBATE

Yesterday, 4th November 2003, saw the House of Commons debate on Children's Play. The debate, which was initiated by Paddy Tipping MP for Sherwood, sought to raise the political awareness of children's play and help develop the national strategy for Children's play and playwork.

SkillsActive welcomed the debate as it brought to the members of parliament the difficulties the the playwork sector has with funding and the training issues the sector has with both its paid and unpaid staff. SkillsActive covers a sector that has well over 2.38 million volunteers, with the playwork sector having a workforce which is made up of 59% being unpaid employees.

The value of SkillsActive overcoming the skills issues for both the paid and voluntary workforce in the playwork sector was highlighted by The Minister for the Arts, the Rt Hon Estelle Morris MP in her summary of the debate:

"In particular, I wish to mention SkillsActive, which will run as a sector skills council. Training will be covered for the entire sector. I join all Members in recognising the contribution of the voluntary sector: the fact that people are volunteers does not mean that they do not need training. The important thing about the skills training that will be given is that it will be inclusive: people will not have to get paid, or take on a job or be full-time to get training. It is very important that we do not lose the skills and experience that exist in the voluntary sector. I am delighted that SkillsActive is now in place, and I look forward to its working with the Government—the Department for Education and Skills—in the months and years ahead to create a skills strategy that is led by the sector and supported by the Government, so that it is a strategy that the sector wants... There must be more resources. Despite all the money that has been put in, nobody can say that play is now adequately funded. This is only the beginning: there is more to be done."

In response to the debate Stephen Studd, Chief Executive of SkillsActive said:

'XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX'

- Ends -

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About SkillsActive

1. Skillsactive is the Sector Skills Council (SSC) for sport & recreation, playwork, health and fitness, outdoor education/training and adventure and caravan industries.
2. Skillsactive's mission statement is "To ensure best quality, best business and best value within the Sector through improvement of personal and corporate skills thereby enabling the Sector to achieve its economic and social potential."
3. SSCs are employer led organisations that aim to tackle the skills and productivity needs of their sector throughout the UK. SSCs provide employers with the opportunity to provide leadership to meet their sector's skills and business needs. In return they receive substantial public investment and greater dialogue with government departments across the UK.