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*****PRESS RELEASE*****

HEALTHY FUTURE FOR RECRUITMENT IN THE INDUSTRY

Employers in the industry will finally be able to recruit people with the right skills to support their business.

The Skills White Paper, launched by the Government today, put employers at the heart of driving the supply of education and training, highlighting a major shift toward delivering demand-led skills solutions.

Making this happen for the sport and recreation, health and fitness, playwork, outdoors and caravan industries is SkillsActive, the Sector Skills Council for Active Leisure and Learning.

Recent research in England shows that at the time of the survey 8% of establishments face a hard-to-fill vacancy. It is estimated that 24% of establishments in the active leisure and learning industry suffered from internal skills gaps.

SkillsActive has launched a massive UK-wide consultation with employers across the industry to identify the skills shortages for their organisations. It is looking at ways to work with providers of education and training, ensuring that the skills needed in the workplace directly influences the content of training and education at college and university level.

This consultation will result in a Sector Skills Agreement between employers and the Government and will ensure that all future training gives people the skills they need, and will highlight how this training is funded.

SkillsActive chief executive, Stephen Studd said; "A Sector Skills Agreement is our opportunity to create a vision for the active leisure industry and to agree a strategy with the Government to make that vision a reality.

"Jobs require more skills today than ever before. The industry is growing rapidly. Employers need more, better trained staff, because without them, they will not survive, and the country will lose its battle to be more healthy and active. People have more leisure time; this in turn demands more highly skilled people working in the industry.

"This Agreement acknowledges health and fitness industry employers commitment to training and education, and places emphasis on the Government to step up and deliver on their skills promises."

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For more information please contact:

Shelly Beresford
Tel: 020 7632 2033
Email: shelly.beresford@skillsactive.com

NOTES TO EDITORS

1. SkillsActive is the Sector Skills Council (SSC) for Sport and Recreation, Health and Fitness, Playwork, The Outdoors and the Caravan industries.
2. SkillsActive's mission statement is: "To ensure best quality, best business and best value within 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.
4. For more information about SkillsActive, please visit our website @ www.skillsactive.com
5. SkillsActive is currently developing a Sector Skills Agreement for the Active Leisure and Learning Sector which will define the Sector's skills needs and ultimately form an agreement between employers, Government and funding partners to shape the workforce for the next ten years.