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*****NEWS RELEASE*****

SKILLSACTIVE SUPPORTS YEAR OF THE VOLUNTEER

SkillsActive is helping to lead the drive for volunteering in sport, and welcomes this year long celebration of volunteering that Home Secretary Charles Clarke and Chancellor Gordon Brown officially launched today.

Stephen Studd, SkillsActive Chief Executive said; "Volunteers form the backbone of sports clubs throughout the UK. Without their help, sport and recreation in the UK would not exist in the way that it does."

The Year of the Volunteer is a celebration of the vital role that volunteers play in society, and a call to action to get more people volunteering. The Home Office, as the government department with responsibility for encouraging active citizenship, is working in partnership with Volunteering England and CSV to coordinate the Year. See www.yearofthevolunteer.org for more information.

The sporting sector accounts for the single largest amount of volunteers in the UK, with twenty six per cent of all volunteers citing 'sport' as their main interest.

As well as being vital to sport, volunteering can also provide important work experience opportunities. Stephen Studd believes, "The skills developed through voluntary work contribute greatly to the employability of young people and this must not be undervalued."

SkillsActive is currently leading work on National Occupational Standards for the management of volunteers, to ensure that volunteers are valued as vital members of the workforce within the industry. See www.skillsactive.com for more information on how SkillsActive is helping to support volunteers.

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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