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

FITNESS INDUSTRY JOINS FORCES TO SHAPE SKILLS FOR THE FUTURE

SkillsActive and Chief Leisure Officers' Association team up to host Northern Ireland's first ever skills seminar for the health and fitness industry.

Taking place at Lisburn's Lesiureplex on Friday, 5 May 2006, the seminar is aimed at all those working in the leisure sector, and aims to paint a clearer picture of what the health and fitness industry needs in terms of future training and skills development.

SkillsActive's programme manager for Northern Ireland, Siobhan Weir said; "The seminar demonstrates the collective approach the industry is making towards improving skills development and training.

"We want the public to realise that when they enter a leisure centre, or swim in a hotel pool, the instructors and lifeguards have been through rigorous training and are fully qualified to work with them in a safe and fun manner.

"The seminar is aimed at anyone who cares about the industry and its future development, and I would encourage all likeminded people to come along and take part in the event."

Jim Rose from CLOA continued; "The seminar is an excellent opportunity for the active leisure industry to be part of the strategic development of the sector. The event will allow us to consider various options for multi-skilling our workforce and provide us with a better understanding of how we can use occupational standards to improve the recruitment and retention of staff.

"It's still not too late to join us at this event, just contact: www.skillsactive.com to register before 5 May"

To find more about Northern Ireland's first event skills seminar, contact Siobhan.weir@skillsactive.com

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For more information on SkillsActive please contact:

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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
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.