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**\*\*\*PRESS RELEASE\*\*\***

## **LAUNCH OF APPRENTICESHIPS FOR YOUNG SPORTING ELITE**

**SkillsActive is pleased to announce the official launch of the Advanced Apprenticeship in Sporting Excellence (AASE) today at the home of Rugby Union in Twickenham with cricket, tennis and swimming.**

The AASE programme, which has been funded by the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) and developed by SkillsActive together with a number of governing bodies of sport and industry experts, has been designed to meet the needs of young people who have the realistic potential to achieve excellence in their sport and are seeking to perform at the highest level as their main career goal.

Notionally taking two-years to complete, AASE will provide, for the first time, a structured national training and development route, across all sports, for talented young athletes aged between 16-18, many of whom may go to represent their country on the world, Olympic or Paralympic stage, or gain professional contracts.

Speaking at the launch, Phil Hope MP, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Skills, said; "Today's launch is evidence of the commitment, from both government and the industry itself, to the ongoing development of skills in the UK. The AASE programme will enhance both the vocational and academic skills of today's and tomorrow's sports men and women, whilst providing people with information on wider career options within sport."

The Rt Hon Richard Caborn MP, Minister for Sport, added; "Being a professional sports person in the 21st century is about more than just athletic prowess and sporting skill. You also need to know how to manage your lifestyle and career off the sporting field. I am delighted that through the Advanced Apprenticeship in Sporting Excellence framework there is now a structure in place to support the professional development of our most hopeful young sporting prospects. This is especially important in the run up to the London 2012 Olympic Games and Paralympic Games, and beyond."

SkillsActive's chief executive, Stephen Studd, continued; "SkillsActive is proud to be involved in the development of AASE. We hope the programme will have a major, long term impact for both employers and athletes across a wide range of competitive sports. We foresee AASE providing a structured national training and development route, for young athletes who may go on to represent their country on the Olympic or Paralympic stage or gain professional contracts. Importantly, as well as addressing the technical, tactical, physical and psychological skills involved in the chosen sport, AASE will also cover wider aspects, such as lifestyle, communication, working with

others, career management and health and safety. We warmly welcome today's launch."

For more information on AASE, contact Stephen Mitchell at SkillsActive on: 020 7632 2012 or email: [Stephen.mitchell@skillsactive.com](mailto:Stephen.mitchell@skillsactive.com)

For an explanation of the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) and the various levels of qualifications, including S/NVQs visit: [www.qca.org.uk](http://www.qca.org.uk) or [www.sqa.org.uk](http://www.sqa.org.uk)

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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](http://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.
6. SkillsActive is *Shaping Skills for the Future*, through...
  - PEOPLE...  
...ensuring all people in the sector are appropriately trained and qualified.
  - PRODUCTIVITY...  
...ensuring better performance through the professional development of the sector.
  - PROVISION...  
...ensuring the sector has accessible, relevant and funded training across the UK.
  - PROMOTION...  
...ensuring the contributions of the sector are recognised at a governmental level.