

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – DATE: THURSDAY, 8 DECEMBER 2005.



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

MINISTER TO OPEN SKILLSACTIVE CONVENTION

Phil Hope, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Skills, will today open SkillsActive's first annual skills convention for employers.

Speaking from the Congress Centre in London, the minister will set the scene for the conference by stressing the importance of investing in skills and training. He will highlight the potential of Sector Skills Agreement's as a catalyst in improving standards of vocational training and ensuring that it meets employers' needs. The minister will go on to announce a programme of major reform which will flow from the assessment of skills needs that SkillsActive is undertaking as part of their Sector Skills Agreement (SSA) – this will lay the foundation for the agenda of reshaping the vocational qualifications system.

SkillsActive will use the convention to sign off the first phase of its SSA with employers from the active leisure and learning sector – some 300 are expected to attend the event.

SkillsActive chief executive Stephen Studd said; “We have spent the last nine months consulting with employers across the UK to find out what the real training issues are and to identify the skills gaps of the sector.

“We are now at the stage where we can report back our findings and ensure that we have appropriately identified what the issues are.

“I am delighted that so many influential employers from the sector have taken part in our consultations, and signed up to the convention.

“It proves that the sector is serious about skills and training and is willing to take the time to help us formulate a plan of action to combat the sectors issues.”

SkillsActive is championing the need for a demand-led system that will raise the standards of training, improve efficiency and help to deliver employees with the skills urgently needed for the survival and growth of the sector.

The minister for skills, Phil Hope said; “The Government's Skills Strategy enables businesses to compete globally by helping them develop the multi-skilled workforce needed for our productivity. Sector Skills Councils form a crucial part of this strategy and give employers a powerful voice in allocating resources to close skills gaps.

"I am pleased with the work SkillsActive is doing to develop its Sector Skills Agreement. It will enable them to work with Government to develop world class learning provision within their industries, meet business needs and give individuals the right skills for proficiency in their jobs."

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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.