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

SKILLSACTIVE LAUNCHES SECTOR SKILLS AGREEMENT

At an event held in Westminster and attended by Parliamentarians, industry figures and representatives of other Sector Skills Councils; SkillsActive launched the findings of its Sector Skills Agreement alongside other members of the Skills for Business Network.

The launch follows months of consultation and marks the beginning of a long-term relationship between employers and stakeholders to deliver relevant skills, training and development to the sector.

The action plan is based on the assessment of current and future skills needs, and an assessment of current training provision. Six core solutions for the active leisure and learning sector have been drawn up:

- Improve the quality and range of services,
- Improve recruitment and retention,
- Professionalise and up skill the existing workforce,
- Match supply to demand,
- Re-direct funding
- Increase sector investment in our people.

These priorities are broken down into key objectives for each home country and English region for the five sub-sectors which SkillsActive represents (sport and recreation, health and fitness, playwork, the outdoors and caravans).

The reception gave SkillsActive the chance to showcase the research that had been carried out as well as giving VIPs the chance to see the sector in action, with a fitness instructor putting MPs through their paces and a football freestyler entertaining people with his footballing expertise.

Speaking at the launch, Skills Minister Phil Hope MP said; "SkillsActive's Sector Skills Agreement shows how employers are engaged in the process of addressing the needs of the sector and helping to set its direction and priorities. The SSA is a crucial component of the process to build a legacy for, and beyond, 2012 and I welcome the work carried out by SkillsActive to help create a sustainable future for the active leisure and learning sector.

"With the help of employers and the Sector Skills Councils, there is an opportunity for huge economic success based on the foundations of the SSA. By creating the qualifications employers need and want, and by providing integrated flexible work pathways for individuals, we will be ensuring the growth and success of a dynamic industry."

The National Museum in Cardiff will be the venue for the Welsh launch with Jane Davidson, Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning and Andrew Davies, Minister for Economic Development and Transport speaking.

September will see the launch of the Scottish SSA at the ÒranMór, in Glasgow's West End, and the Northern Ireland event is yet to be confirmed.

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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.
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.