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

## **MINISTER HOSTS SKILLSACTIVE LAUNCH IN SCOTLAND**

The Sector Skills Council for the Active Leisure and Learning sector, SkillsActive will today launch its programme of activity throughout Scotland.

Hosting the launch is Frank McAveety MSP, Minister for Tourism, Culture and Sport. Mr McAveety will also deliver the keynote speech.

Taking place at The Hub in Edinburgh, the event will attract MSPs and representatives and partner organisations from the Active Leisure and Learning sector.

The Scottish launch will raise awareness of the work of the Sector Skills Council and its contribution to economic and social policy and to reinforce the support of the industry and partner bodies.

John Zimny, Chair of SkillsActive's Scottish Committee, and Director of Leisure Services for Angus Council said; "This is a really exciting time to be part of SkillsActive in Scotland. We have built up a growing network of employers across the sport and recreation industry.

"Now, thanks to the support of the Scottish Executive and Scottish Enterprise, we have undertaken original work to identify long term trends in employment in sport, fitness, children's play and outdoor recreation and the courses and qualifications that will be needed to address skills gaps and develop the workforce we'll need in the future. "

John continues; "We will be working with our partners – national agencies, professional bodies and educators in HE, FE and private training organisations – to achieve a step-change in the quality of provision for training and professional development in the sector."

During the event, a number of young professional footballers will receive the new Modern Apprenticeship Certificate. Tom Docherty, from the Scottish Football Association, said; "The new award allows young footballers, for the first time, to generate tangible evidence about their own progression as they attempt to realise their ambition in professional football."

In October 2003, SkillsActive was awarded increased funding from the Scottish Executive's Skills Fund for a programme of activity throughout Scotland.

"SkillsActive is at the heart of several current national initiatives", explains Ashley Pringle, SkillsActive's Scotland-based Head of Home Country Development.

"Our involvement in the Sport 21 Ministerial Forum and implementation groups, which are promoting action on Scotland's Strategy for sport, illustrate that people – a well-trained and

appropriately qualified workforce – are the key to the drive for increased participation in sport. We are helping the Scottish Executive's Physical Activity Coordinator in the development of a NHS Health Scotland-funded training programme for those involved in the promotion of physical activity.

“Meanwhile, our Playwork Sector Group, which has undertaken a number of ground-breaking projects over the last five years, has been commissioned by the Scottish Executive's Education Department to bring together the various providers of services for Scotland's children to ensure integrated provision for the needs of the whole child. We have just appointed Joan Beattie as Programme Manager (Children Services) to coordinate this network.”

- Ends -

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## **NOTES TO EDITORS**

1. SkillsActive is the Sector Skills Council (SCC) for sport & recreation, playwork, health and fitness, outdoor education/training and adventure and 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)