

THE SECTOR SKILLS AGREEMENT

## The Action Plan for Scotland



SkillsActive is the Sector Skills Council for Active Leisure and Learning, which encompasses industries within the following sectors across the UK:

**Sport & Recreation, Playwork, Health & Fitness,  
The Outdoors and The Caravan Industry.**

It is a very exciting time to be working in our sector in Scotland. With Scots doing well on the world stage of sport, an investment into active schools, the review of physical education, the pilots of the United Kingdom Coaching Certificate (UKCC) and Glasgow's bid for the 2014 Commonwealth Games, sport is of interest to all Scots. Lets Make Scotland More Active is the strategy to get Scots more physically active and there is investment into the sector's workforce to deliver this.

This is a crucial period too for the playwork profession in Scotland. The National Review of the Early Years and Childcare Workforce has just been published and SkillsActive's Playwork Education and Training Strategy for Scotland is to be launched in October 2006. The contribution of active leisure to Scotland's unique outdoor landscapes in key areas of national policy such as tourism, the environment, health and wellbeing is increasingly acknowledged.

It's an attractive and rewarding sector to work in.

It's a sector that depends on good communication skills, an aptitude for working in a people-industry and the ability to inject fun into the services we provide. Bland, hands-off "provision" is insufficient in our sector!

In order for the sector to offer the best services possible we need a workforce with the appropriate skills. SkillsActive works extensively with employers and training providers to make this happen and this Sector Skills Agreement has enabled us to identify and agree joint action plans with our stakeholders to provide strong foundations on which to build our sector's workforce.

Sector skills agreements (SSA) bring together employers, providers and funders of education and training with the key purpose of developing a more demand-led system of public investment in skills for the sector, combined with an increase in employer commitment to workforce development.

#### Sector skills agreements:

1. Provide a means for employers and government to collaborate in meeting the priority skills needs of sectors.
2. Present a unique opportunity for employers to shape training provision and coherent progression routes.
3. Challenge employers to work collaboratively.
4. Give individuals access to training which is relevant to industry needs and helps secure well paid employment and progression.

We have undertaken extensive research including desk top reviews of existing information along with commissioning research where there were gaps, and we've carried out consultation with key sector employers through focus groups, questionnaires and face to face meetings.

Our skills needs assessment, assessment of current provision and analysis of gaps and weaknesses reports provide the fullest picture and are available on [www.skillsactive.com](http://www.skillsactive.com). To follow is a summary of some of our findings.



## SKILLSACTIVE SCOTLAND SECTOR SKILLS AGREEMENT KEY OBJECTIVES

### Improve quality and range of services

Engage employers in addressing the skills and training needs of the sector

Better recognition of the social and economic value of playwork

Align training and qualifications in the sector to the drive to meet government agendas and customer expectations

Promote diversity in the workplace

Meet the skills challenge of the potential Commonwealth Games in Glasgow

Disseminate good practice to employers and training providers across our sector

### Improve recruitment and retention

Improve careers advice and guidance

Better inform learner choices

Ensure students have good quality opportunities for work experience

Promote the Modern Apprenticeship programme

Investigate fully the career destinations of learners undertaking courses related to the sector

Put the case for improvements to pay, conditions and equality

### Match training supply to employer demand

Improve interaction between the sector and training providers

Develop national occupational standards, using experts from our sector

Improve the relevance and responsiveness of further and higher education provision

Embed sector qualifications in further and higher education

Integrate sector training and qualifications into the STUC Union Academy

Improve standardisation and transferability of skills and qualifications

### Professionalise and upskill the existing workforce

Address the skills and training needs of the existing workforce (paid and volunteers)

Improve the take-up of vocational qualifications by volunteers

Promote and facilitate workplace learning

Make qualifications more accessible to people seeking to develop their skills

Broker training solutions to meet employers' skills needs

Improve management and leadership skills in our sector

Develop, support and implement professional registers

Address the personal training and qualifications needs of employees

### Increase sector investment in our people

Increase the number of industry experienced assessors and internal verifiers

Make volunteering experience count towards career development

Encourage employers to embed training in their business plans

### Source funding for training

Attract funding to address employers' workforce development needs

Re-direct funding from public sources to meet the skills needs of sector employers

Reduce barriers to accessing training – more local, flexible, work-based training provision

## Value of our sector

- The SkillsActive sector contributed £0.8 billion in output to the Scottish economy in 2004 – growth has been over one and a half percent faster than that of the Scottish economy per year over the last five years;
- The sector is expected to continue outperforming or equalling the Scottish economy until 2008 then fall below the whole economy – with output of nearly £1 billion reached in 2014;
- Employment growth has been strong in the past five years – more than four times that of all industries in Scotland;
- 60% of employers funded or arranged training for their staff in the previous 12 months compared to 63% for all industries.
- There are 540,000 volunteers in the sports workforce, which represents 13.2% of the Scottish population, 135,000 of whom volunteer regularly, at least once a week or more;
- 19% of the volunteering activity in Scotland is helping with recreational opportunities;
- The playwork sector employs 11,210 staff in Scotland;
- Over 60% of staff hold childcare qualifications at the equivalent of SVQ level 3 (SCQF level 6) or above. A further 13% have qualifications below this level. 26% have no formal childcare qualifications but 40% of this group are working towards one.

## Profile of our workforce

- SkillsActive's five sectors employ 52,800 paid employees in around 3,150 workplaces and this is forecast to increase to 63,000 by 2014;
- Sport and recreation is the largest sub-sector employing 65% of the total;
- The SkillsActive sector is geographically spread across Scotland, with no particular "honey-pot" areas although the outdoors and caravan sub-sectors tend to be concentrated in rural and coastal areas;
- The sector comprises micro organisations (73%) and small to medium enterprises (SMEs) with less than 1% of employees employing over 250 employees;
- 41% of the sector's employees are full time, 32% part time, and 6% are self employed with 15% seasonal;
- 60% of the workforce are women, higher than the Scottish average of 48%;
- The average age of those who work in the sector is 35, in comparison to the Scottish average age of 40;
- The ethnicity of our sector corresponds to that of the whole Scottish workforce and is comprised predominantly of white people;
- There are 90,000 coaches in Scotland, only 38% of whom are qualified;
- There are 18 coaches per 1,000 population in Scotland the lowest in the UK;
- £3 million is estimated to be required per annum to implement the UKCC proposals;
- The average age of a coach is 39;

## Challenges for our sector

- Scotland's health is improving but there are still key issues to be addressed;
- A new sports policy will be launched in late 2006 and will be led by the Scottish Executive;
- Glasgow's bid to host the Commonwealth Games in 2014 has set a target to recruit 15,000 volunteers;
- The connection of the different parts of the physical activity workforce to encourage Scots to become more physically active, even those who do not see themselves with this role to play;
- Tourism is one of Scotland's largest business sectors providing employment for 8% of the Scottish workforce, it sustains many small businesses in rural communities including those offering outdoor activities and in the caravan industry;
- Increasing legislation and regulation in the sector leading to organisations spending the majority of their training budgets on statutory training requirements;
- Short term approach to funding that cannot match policy aspirations;
- Seasonality and low wages at entry level lead to a high turnover;
- Health and fitness courses have seen a four fold increase in entrants since 1999;
- 70% of employers said they immediately need to arrange vocational training for new recruits;
- 66% of organisations have one or more of a business plan, a training plan or a training budget;
- Employees attended an average of four training days in the previous year;

- The main barrier to training was reported to be allowing the employee time off;
- The integrated services approach to children's services being led by the Scottish Executive will have far-reaching effects on the training and skills expected of playworkers and others in this sub-sector.

### Skills development challenges

- Vocational skills for jobs in the sector are vital, but as important are core skills including; communication, willingness to learn, management and leadership, customer care, team working and problem solving;
- 43% of the SkillsActive workforce is not qualified up to SVQ level 2 or equivalent;
- The recent publication of The National Review for the Early Years and Childcare Workforce and the targets to qualify the profession;
- To ensure that the core values of play and the valuable contribution of the playworker are recognised in the implementation of the National Review of the Early Years and Childcare Workforce;
- The proportion of part time and voluntary workers and the seasonality of our sector;
- 31% of employers had hard to fill vacancies the most frequent reasons being lack of financial incentives, unsocial hours and lack of applicants interested or with relevant skills;
- 59% of employers reported a skills shortage, the most commonly reported was communication;
- 37 separate education institutions are offering courses in sport and recreation (there are 43 colleges and 20 higher education institutions funded by Scottish Funding Council);
- 50% of graduates from Higher Education go on to full time work, and 14% into part-time work – (not necessarily in the sector);
- Pass rates in HNC/D courses are low in some areas;
- The sector's contribution to tourism is increasingly recognised, with the growth of activity tourism and the future attraction of major international events. Skill-sets ranging from teamwork and customer care, to event management and outdoor leadership are likely to be in increasing demand in the next ten years.

### Input from sector employers

SkillsActive in Scotland now has an employers executive committee and employer committees representing the outdoors and sport, recreation, health and fitness and also a playwork education and training committee all led by employers. We are grateful to all those employers who have devoted time and energy to inform this SSA and continue to guide our work in Scotland.

Employers themselves are central to the overall delivery of our solutions and at every stage they have a vital contribution to make. As we were reaching agreement with stakeholders on the solutions that would be contained in this SSA, SkillsActive sent a questionnaire to a selection of key employers to gauge their commitment to the process generally and to the emerging solutions in particular.

#### The majority who responded agreed to:

- Disseminate examples of good practice;
- Give presentations on skills related issues at events and seminars;
- Provide case studies on careers;
- Offer substantial and worthwhile work placements for students on courses endorsed by SkillsActive;
- Improve and formalise induction training and continuing professional development for their own staff;
- Assist in the development of National Occupational Standards;
- Advise Further and Higher Education and other training providers on course content and design;
- Undertake cost effective and low cost ways of training staff through mentoring, shadowing or using in house trainers;
- Arrange guided sites visits for students;
- Guest lecture on courses endorsed by SkillsActive;
- Provide advice on careers and career pathways in our sector;
- Take part in an employers' network linked to a Learning Hub that will broker and coordinate training and develop bespoke training solutions on behalf of the sector.

As this agreement is on behalf of the employers in our sector, their actions, which complement those of our stakeholders, have been included in this SSA.

## Sources

Annual Digest of Statistics on Volunteering in Scotland 2006

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Scottish Employers Skills Survey 2004

SkillsActive Sport, Fitness and Outdoors Employment Survey 2005

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The Future of Active Leisure and Learning: Scotland, Experian Business Strategies 2005



## SkillsActive

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