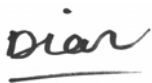


WELCOME!

Welcome to the first issue of SkillsActive's newsletter for the North West. This issue marks the first in a series of regular NW newsletters, which will focus on some of the many initiatives occurring within our region. The overall aim of the newsletter is to:

- Communicate with colleagues across the region
- Provide relevant information for employers and partners within sport, fitness, outdoors, playwork and caravan industries
- Share good practice

As this is our first newsletter, I would welcome any feedback you might have as how to improve the newsletter in the future.



Dian Shaw, SkillsActive's North West regional development manager

REGIONAL NETWORK

The launch of a virtual network that aids communication and activity across the region was established after suggestions made at the first SkillsActive and SALSPA (The

Sport and Active Leisure Skills and Productivity Alliance) regional event in April 2005. Since the launch, the network has continued to grow with over 300 contacts.

The virtual network is open to all who may be involved in the active leisure and learning sector and provides an opportunity to:

- Receive this newsletter
- Hear about initiatives that may be useful for your organisation
- Share Information
- Contribute to regional developments

OPPORTUNITIES FOR EMPLOYERS AND PARTNERS

The NW sporting Centre of Vocational Excellence (CoVE) was awarded up to £130,000 of European social funding to help women into training and employment in sport in the Greater Manchester region. This in turn enables the NW CoVE to offer free training, information, advice and guidance for women in the Greater Manchester region. A variety of courses from level 1 to level 3 in sport and recreation including coaching and instruction are available. If you have any female employees who would benefit from this training in the Greater Manchester region, please contact Dian Shaw.

These opportunities may apply to other sub regions in the North West in the near future. SkillsActive will keep you informed!

SKILLS ACTIVE & SALSPA'S SUCCESS

The Sport and Active Leisure Skills and Productivity Alliance (SALSPA) was formed in 2003. The group is formed of representatives from key public sector organisations, who have the potential to influence and fund skills, employment and business improvement support to the sector; including Sport England, SkillsActive, The Learning and Skills Councils, Northwest Development Agency, Jobcentre Plus, The Regional Intelligence Unit, the North West University Association and Business Link.

Since the group was formed, progress and development has prevailed for the benefit of the sport and active leisure Sector in the NW. Based on key evidence from industry and effective partnership working, over £2.3 million of new funding and investment for the sector has been provided by key agencies in order to support the sector and its workforce. Some examples of key achievements which have surfaced as a result of this effective partnership working are outlined below.

REGISTER of EXERCISE PROFESSIONALS (REPs) NW CONVERSION PROGRAMME

In November 2005, the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) awarded £72,000 for the REPs conversion programme in the NW. The initiative sought is to upskill members of REPs who were, and are, on provisional status at level 2.

Individuals are to be given effective training, as well as support and advice, in order to achieve a full REPs status at level 2. Incentives of up to £250 per employee are offered to employers, and employees receive a £100 for completing their course successfully.

THE REGIONAL SPORTS BOARD INVEST £2 MILLION FOR SPORTS COACHING

Thanks to the evidence contained in the action plan from SALSPA; the NW sports board allocated £2million in their regional investment strategy towards the development of coaches and coaching in September 2005.

This funding will be used to help increase the volume of coaches in the region, in response to the regional priority identified in the plan, for 3000 new coaches over the next five years. It will also be used to explore the feasibility of creating a regional coaching agency to ensure the sustainability of the coaching infrastructure in the region. It is hoped the structure will provide a vehicle through which coaches' skills, CDP, business support and knowledge requirements can be effectively managed to raise the bar on coaching throughout the region.

UPDATES IN THE REGION

£1 Million Challenge!

In May 2005, Sport England NW launched an innovative new initiative called the '£1 Million Challenge'. The challenge was launched to offer financial incentives to businesses across the NW to encourage them to introduce opportunities for their employees to participate in sport and physical activity during their working day.

41 projects have since received funding (equating to over £1.2 million) and over £1.8million has been secured in partnership funding from the successful applicants. These include many sport and active leisure learning organisations within the NW.

FIRST NW YOUNG APPRENTICESHIP SCHEME IN SPORT

Young Apprenticeships (YAs) were launched across a number of sectors in 2004. The initiative, which receives funding from the Learning and Skills Council (LSC), is aimed at 14-16 year-olds. The programme seeks to address the issue surrounding school leavers entering the 'working world' under-qualified and under-skilled.

In February 2006, the Department for Education and Skills approved further partnerships which were funded through the LSC. The partnerships were set up across England, between schools, specialist sports colleges and local employers, allowing up to 320 students to take part in the YAs for the sport and active leisure sector in sports management, leadership and coaching.

Central Sports Management & Training is to deliver the first North West YA in Sport. This will be delivered in partnership with Wigan Schools, Wigan Education Business Partnership, SkillsActive and employers within the NW. The YA programme works alongside the national curriculum and offers students vocational training whilst they continue with their core curriculum studies.

For more information about the YA in sports management, leadership and coaching, please contact:
katie.couchman@skillsactive.com

TRAIN TO GAIN – FORTHCOMING INITIATIVE FOR EMPLOYERS

Train to Gain will be a service to employers which will fund Skills for Life and first level 2 qualifications for employees. There will also be some level 3 trials in the NW for employers. This initiative takes over from the existing national employer training programme and will be closely linked to the business support service. There will also be wage subsidies for businesses which are small or medium enterprises. SkillsActive will keep you informed on any progress, so you can access this service in the near the future.

SECTOR SKILLS AGREEMENT (SSA)

The SSA aims to reach all individuals working in a paid or unpaid capacity within sport and active leisure learning organisations. The SSA promises to revolutionise the way training is delivered in the UK. The survey will reveal skill needs, gaps and training needs. This information will be used to assist the development of the sport, fitness and outdoors industries. SkillsActive will use the information obtained from employers to speak on behalf of the sector.

SALSPA conducted detailed NW industry research in 2004/05. A fully interactive conference was held in April 2005 with an attendance of over 100 employers and partners. SkillsActive presented detailed quantitative and qualitative research gained from the feedback of over 300 employers and partners. All NW regional research will be included in the SSA.

If you would like further information on this SSA please contact our Dian Shaw.

NEW REGIONAL ECONOMIC STRATEGY (RES)

The RES is a 20 year strategy, implemented to help shape future economic direction in the North West, with a particular focus on activities in the next three years.

The North West Development Agency is launching the new RES on 30th March 06 at the Reebok Stadium, Bolton.

You can find update on the RES at:

<http://www.nwda.co.uk/RelatedContent.aspx?area=100>

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