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

BARRIERS TO VOLUNTEERS WON'T GO AWAY

Calls came today for a public consultation into the barriers affecting volunteers as Julian Brazier's Promotion of Volunteering Bill was effectively talked out in its remaining stages.

Although the Bill has been talked out, the problems facing volunteers won't go away quite so easily.

SkillsActive backed the Bill through its early stages and came across numerous examples of volunteer marshals, coaches and referees deterred from offering their services due to the increase in actual and threatened litigation against volunteers.

So many sport and active leisure opportunities rely on the efforts of volunteers something has to be done to redress this situation.

Stephen Studd, Chief Executive of SkillsActive, said: "Although the Bill could not be made law in its current form, it is plain that a mutual recognition exists amongst Ministers, MPs, and the Voluntary Sector that something should be done to further enable people to volunteer.

"That is why SkillsActive is calling for a working group of the Russell Commission to be established with the remit of conducting a full consultation on the threats to volunteering. If we can establish the exact nature of the threats to volunteering, perceived or otherwise, we can decide what to do about them.

"I would share the view that the proper training of volunteers is absolutely key to reducing the likelihood of accidents, and I regret the lack of support available to volunteers to help them access this vital training.

"SkillsActive is grateful to Julian Brazier MP for raising these issues through his Bill and we hope to continue the useful dialogue it has created on the matter with Government."

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NOTES TO EDITORS

1. SkillsActive is the Sector Skills Council (SSC) 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