

4 October 2007

Press Information

Derbyshire Skills Festival Attracts Thousands to Pride Park

Thousands of Year 10 and 11 students from across Derbyshire are due to descend on Pride Park for the fifth annual **Derbyshire Skills Festival** on **Monday 15 and Tuesday 16 October 2007**.

Derby County's Jason Beardsley will kick off this year's festival, which is organised by the Derbyshire Education Business Partnership, supported by the Learning and Skills Council Derbyshire and Connexions Derbyshire.

Young people and their parents will be able to explore the wide range of opportunities available to school leavers, presented as a mix of live demonstrations and interactive workshops. Advice and guidance about different career opportunities will also be available.

Mick Brown, area director, LSC Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire, comments: "The Derbyshire Skills Festival is an open-door opportunity for young people to find out about the many opportunities that await them – from further education and vocational learning to jobs and training. The event is now a firm annual fixture in the calendar and has helped thousands of young people determine the direction they want to take with their lives."

Dianne Campbell, project manager for the Derbyshire Skills Festival explains, "The Skills Festival is a real 'hands on' event, letting young people experience taster sessions so they can make more informed decisions about their future."

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“They can test their scientific skills in the ‘lab in the lorry,’ have a go at being a television presenter, watch live music and dance or try plastering, plumbing and brick laying. There really is something for everyone!”

During the day over 4,500 pupils from 46 schools across Derbyshire will be attending, and from **5pm to 8pm** the festival opens to the wider community with young people and their parents or carers invited along to get all the help, information and advice they need.

Jason Beardsley, who plays in defence for Derby County Football Club, will open the event says: “I’m lucky enough to have a clear career path ahead of me, but if I didn’t have football then an event like this would be a great help. It’s amazing the choices you have when you leave school – I know I had no idea there were so many so hopefully this event will really help other young people with their choices.”

This year the festival will have over 60 exhibitors including local training providers, school sixth forms, colleges, universities, together with employers from numerous sectors including agriculture, engineering, leisure and tourism, public services and the armed forces.

Parents’ Info Zone is a new addition to the evening events and will give parents and carers the chance to ask any questions they may have. They could be worried about what options their child has, be struggling to understand the new qualifications or want to try **Routes Ahead** – the new on-line prospectus which has information on learning opportunities for 14– to 19-year-olds in and around, Derby and Derbyshire.

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John O’Callaghan, DEBP manager said: “The Derbyshire Skills Festival provides an excellent opportunity for young people to find out more about their options, as well as parents and carers. It’s a great chance to help and support teenagers in making the right choices in the future.”

For further information, please telephone the Skills Festival office on **01773 571 590** or email dianne.scitec@debp.co.uk

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Notes to editors:

About Derbyshire Education Business Partnership (DEBP)

DEBP sets up partnerships between schools and local businesses to provide young people with the opportunity to learn about work, for work and through work. The DEBP is part of Connexions Derbyshire Limited.

About Connexions Derbyshire

Connexions are the Government’s information, advice and support service for all 13- to 19-year-olds and older for those with learning difficulties or disabilities. Specialising in helping young people plan their career, education or training, Connexions Personal Advisers work in partnership with other youth support organisations to also help young people overcome more personal issues that might be stopping them moving forward. Its overall aim is to help all young people take part in some form of learning and fulfil their potential, whatever they choose to do and regardless of their abilities and background.

About Learning and Skills Council Derbyshire (LSC)

The LSC exists to make England better skilled and more competitive. It is responsible for ensuring the availability of high quality education and training for everyone. It has a single goal: to improve the skills of England’s young people and adults to world class standards. Its vision is that young people and adults in England have knowledge and skills matching the best in the world and are part of a truly competitive workforce. It works nationally, regionally and locally to deliver this ambition on behalf of learners and employers.

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Websites

www.connexions-derbyshire.org (the local service, Connexions Derbyshire)

www.connexions-gov.uk (the national service and links to Connexions Direct)

Freephone: Connexions Derbyshire Helpline - **0800 269 468**

www.lsc.gov.uk/regions/EastMidlands (Learning and Skills Council East Midlands)

www.debp.co.uk (click on to 'SciTech/Skills Festival Office', then scroll down and click on to 'Derbyshire Skill Festival' to view the event prospectus)

www.routes-ahead.org (Local on line prospectus)

For further press information contact:

Clive Purcell

Redbrick Communications

T 0115 910 1500

E clivep@redbrickcommunications.com