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East Midlands jobless get chance to go for gold as Olympic and Paralympic volunteers

Out of work people in the East Midlands are being offered a chance to take part in an innovative training programme, inspired by the 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games, to improve their job prospects. After gaining new skills, graduates will also have a chance to apply to become one of the UK's 70,000 Games-time volunteers.

The region's Personal Best programme is offering to train up to 302 people in the East Midlands who are out of work or socially disadvantaged in order to raise their skills and improve their employability.

Funded by the region's European Social Fund programme and backed by a partnership including the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) East Midlands, SkillsActive, Jobcentre Plus and the East Midlands Development Agency, the Personal Best programme was launched at East Midlands Development Agency on 19/11/2009.

Sue Peake, Skills Development Director, LSC East Midlands, said:

“This is an exciting training opportunity that is focused on raising skills levels and motivating out of work people in the region to improve their employability. The London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games are inspirational events, where sportsmen and women get a chance to excel. The region's Personal Best programme aims to encourage

people who are out of work, or lack skills, to follow their example and take steps back to work.”

Sebastian Coe, Chair of the London 2012 Organising Committee said: “When working towards a personal best, whether it be on the track or in the workplace, training is essential as it helps develop skills and strengths which will take you to the next level. For participants in the East Midlands’ Personal Best programme, the legacy of the 2012 Games starts now as the scheme enables people to make positive changes in their lives.”

The programme will primarily target adults who are out of work and have significant barriers to employment due to a lack of skills. They will be offered an opportunity to train for a Level 1 qualification in event volunteering and, after graduating from the scheme and following a successful application, will have a guaranteed interview with the London Organising Committee for the 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games (LOCOG), to act as a Games-time volunteer. Those completing the course will also have the opportunity to volunteer at local sporting, cultural and community events.

The tailor-made course includes a variety of modules covering everything from customer service to public safety awareness and understanding what makes an effective volunteer, combined with 30 hours of practical volunteer experience. In addition, trainees will receive ongoing support and guidance from a team of Personal Best advisers, to improve their chances of getting a job and enhance their interview technique.

The region’s Personal Best programme and complementary courses are being run by three regional training coordinators: Leicester College, South Nottingham College and YMCA Derbyshire.

For more information on Personal Best in the East Midlands, please contact Jeff Spencer - jeff.spencer@skillsactive.com or visit www.skillsactive.com/arounduk/eastmidlands/sport/personal-best-in-the-east-midlands

Training providers with contracts to deliver the programme are:

Leicester College | Claire Willis | 0116 2242 071 | cwillis@leicestercollege.ac.uk

YMCA Derbyshire | Steve Finch | 07703 109073 | Steve.finch@ymcaderbyshire.org.uk

South Nottinghamshire College | Neil Fowkes | 0115 846 1201 | neil.d.fowkes@snc.ac.uk

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Note to editors

About Personal Best programme

- The Personal Best programme has the backing of the Government and LOCOG. After being piloted in London, it is now being rolled out in other UK regions and nations.
- LOCOG aspires to recruit up to 10% of Games Time Volunteers from Personal Best programme graduates across the UK.

Press enquiries

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ISSUED ON BEHALF OF THE LEARNING AND SKILLS COUNCIL BY COI NEWS & PR EAST MIDLANDS. MEDIA ENQUIRIES TO LAURA GURNETT ON 0115 852 4358.