

## **Could you follow in Stevie G's footsteps?**

*The Learning and Skills Council teams up with Southport Football Club to find Merseyside's football stars of the future.*

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The Learning and Skills Council (LSC) in the North West is offering Merseyside's footballers a second shot at stardom with the Southport Football Club Football Scholarship Scheme. The club is on the look out for talented young players to join the youth team in time for July's pre-season training.

The LSC funded scheme, which is aimed at school leavers who have played for Premiership or Football League clubs at any age between 10 and 16, gives players the opportunity to further their dreams of becoming professional footballers.

Successful applicants will play in the nationally recognised Conference Youth League while working towards a BTEC Sports Diploma and NVQs in Sports Coaching, Fitness, Refereeing, Sports Management or First Aid. The training is delivered in partnership with the L.A.W training agency, one of the largest educational delivers within the Football League.

The selection of the squad will be entirely based on footballing talent, with the successful students going on to be coached by UEFA qualified coaches. Southport FC Manager Liam Watson will be paying particular attention to the players' progression, as the club looks to take on talented teenagers who can project Southport FC up the league with the ambition of promotion into Coca Cola Division Two.

Haydn Preece, Chief Executive of Southport Football Club said: "The North West is a real hot-bed for football, yet there are many young people in the area who have their dream of

professional football dashed when League and Premiership clubs decide to release them. Southport FC is one of the first football clubs to have its very own Football Scholarship scheme which gives talented 16 year olds the opportunity to continue with their personal development and football aspirations, providing a real springboard to the prospects of a professional career in football.

“Realistically not everyone embarking on the course will achieve professional football status, but most importantly by providing the opportunity to gain valuable qualifications while on the scholarship, at the end of the course students will be well placed to work within the sports industry.”

Simon Pierce, Acting Director of Area for the LSC in Merseyside, commented: “The LSC is committed to ensuring that young people have the opportunity to take courses which make the most of their talents.

“The Football Scholarship gives talented young footballers the opportunity to develop their careers further in the sport, while also providing them with the sort of qualifications that could open doors to a new career. It is just one example of the diverse range of opportunities now available to school leavers, and illustrates that there are training courses to suit everyone.”

The new scholarship is open to all 16 year olds who have the football talent, and the vocational courses on the scholarship are tailored to the meet the needs of the individual.

Applicants for the course should send in their football CV to Secretary Ken Hilton, Southport Football Club, Haig Avenue, Southport PR8 6JZ or email [secretary@southportfc.net](mailto:secretary@southportfc.net)

**Ends**

**Learning and Skills Council:**

The LSC exists to make England better skilled and more competitive. We are responsible for ensuring the availability of high-quality education and training for everyone. We have a single goal: to improve the skills of England's young people and adults to world class standards. Our 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. We work nationally, regionally and locally to deliver this ambition on behalf of learners and employers.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION:**

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