

SPORTS APPRENTICES GET ONTO STARTING BLOCKS FOR 2012

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More than one hundred new Sports Apprenticeships are to be made available this year as the South West begins its warm up for the Olympic and Paralympic Games in 2012. The investment means the South West is now one of the fastest growing regions for sports apprentices in England.

Young Apprenticeships in Sport Management, Leadership and Coaching – funded by the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) – will enable 125 more students (aged 14 to 16) to learn the practical skills and knowledge required by employers from the sports or leisure industry while studying for relevant academic qualifications.

The additional places will be available at six schools and colleges across the South West. These are: Heywood Community School (Cinderford); The Castle School (Taunton); Filton College (Bristol); Yeovil College; Exeter College; Kingdown School (Wiltshire); and Weymouth College (Dorset).

The announcement reflects the growing popularity of Sports Apprenticeships in the region. For example, there are now some 180 elite athletes (aged 16 to 18) taking the Advanced Apprenticeship in Sporting Excellence (AASE) and training with some of the region's top sporting institutions, including Bristol, Bath and Gloucester rugby clubs.

As recently as 2006, there were no young people engaged in either Young Apprenticeships or the AASE Programme in the South West.

Running from September 2008 to 2010, the new crop of 14 to 16-year-olds enrolled on the Young Apprenticeship in Sport programmes will complete a Level 2 vocational qualification in sport and leisure (the equivalent to between two and four GCSEs at A*-C grade), an NVQ Level 1 in sport and recreation and 50 days structured work experience with one – or a range of – employers.

The provision of the new Apprenticeships is being driven by the LSC and SkillsActive, an employer-led organisation, licensed by the Government as the Sector Skills Council for Active Leisure and Learning across the sport and recreation, health and fitness, outdoors, playwork and caravan industries.

Paul Lucken, LSC Regional Director of Skills, said: "The Young Apprenticeship in Sport Management, Leadership and Coaching provides a fantastic opportunity for sports-minded 14 to 16-year-olds to combine their academic studies with a blend of vocational qualifications and work placements. Their growing popularity will lead to a skilled workforce delivering sustained productivity for the sport and leisure industries in the region."

Despite being based in London, the South West is set to play an essential role in the 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games. Weymouth and Portland National Sailing Academy (WPNSA) will play host to both the elite and Paralympian sailing events and will be the first Olympic venue ready for the Games.

The South West has also been successful in securing 60 venues across the region to be included in the London Organising Committee (LOCOG) Pre-Games Training Camp Guide, covering all sports to feature during the 2012 Olympic Games. These include Hartpury College (equestrian, modern pentathlon), Cheltenham College (table tennis) and Plymouth YMCA (fencing, judo and wrestling).

Paul Lucken added: "The Olympic and Paralympic Games are now less than four years away, and both events will undoubtedly present businesses with unrivalled commercial opportunities as the profile of sport increases. It is essential that those young people who wish to be involved start learning the practical skills and knowledge required by employers in the sport and leisure industries and study for relevant qualifications. If they grab these opportunities their prospects look good for years to come.

"As a region we must be prepared to capitalise as much as possible on the Games, and Young Apprenticeships and AASEs will go a long way to ensuring the South West has a ready supply of athletes, coaches, officials, trainers and stewards for 2012 and beyond."

Jim Clarke, Regional Director for Sport England, said: "We are delighted to have supported this initiative alongside the LSC and SkillsActive. Investment and training to help develop the skills of our young people in Sport and Leadership is essential if we are to build capacity within the sports system and continue to meet our legacy aims for the region from 2012 and beyond."

Ends

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Note to Editors:

- Launched in September 2004, there are currently around 3,000 pupils on Young Apprenticeship programmes across a variety of sectors.
- The Young Apprenticeship in sports management, leadership and coaching was launched in September 2005.
- Over the last decade, Apprenticeship places have also risen from 75,000 to nearly 240,000, with more than 42,000 young people at 13,000 companies currently on work-based training programmes in the South West.
- The achievement rate among apprentices is 63 per cent, more than double that of five years ago.

LSC

The LSC exists to make England better skilled and more competitive. We are responsible for planning and funding high-quality vocational 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 by 2010, young people and adults in England have the knowledge and skills matching the best in the world and are part of a truly competitive workforce. Established in 2001, we work nationally, regionally and locally from a network of offices across the country. For more information visit: <http://www.lsc.gov.uk/westofengland>

SkillsActive

SkillsActive is licensed by government as the Sector Skills Council for Active Leisure and Learning. Charged by employers, SkillsActive leads the skills and productivity drive across the sport and recreation, health and fitness, outdoors, playwork, and caravan industries – known as the active leisure and learning sector. For more information visit:

<http://www.skillsactive.com>

Public Document

Sport England

Sport England is a non-departmental public body and National Lottery distributor. We are committed to creating a world leading community sports development system and increasing participation in sport.

Sport England has been a statutory consultee on planning applications affecting playing fields since August 1996. We object to any application that is detrimental to sport, unless alternative provision of at least equivalent value is found elsewhere.

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