THREE NEW NATIONAL SKILLS ACADEMIES EXPAND NETWORK

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Today David Lammy announced the expansion of the National Skills Academy network with the approval of three new National Skills Academies: Sport and Active Leisure, Creative and Cultural and Hospitality.

The new Skills Academies will provide for more than 20,000 learners in their first year alone, with the aim of reaching over 400,000 learners over five years, representing a significant boost to the UK’s talent pool.

Skills Academies have been created to solve specific and potentially acute skills shortages in their respective sectors, enabling employers, government and other stakeholders to design more effective solutions to training needs. There are now nine approved National Skills Academies, representing real progress towards the Government’s target of having a Skills Academy in each major sector by the end of 2011.

Minister for Skills, David Lammy said:

"The National Skills Academy network will make a substantial contribution to the success of the UK economy. By making a long term investment in high quality training, tailored to specific sector needs, the employers involved in these partnerships will reap dividends in terms of enhanced productivity, creativity and competitiveness."

The National Skills Academy for Sport and Active Leisure, led by among others, Sport England, Fitness First and the England and Wales Cricket Board will provide one single, coherent approach to all skills training across the sector. It will be driven by twin ambitions: to stage a successful London Olympic Games in 2012 and to see 50 per cent of the nation active and healthy by 2020.
The Creative and Cultural Industries have always been at the heart of the UK’s competitiveness and to keep this vital industry alive we will need 30,000 extra backstage staff over the next decade – a problem the National Skills Academy for Creative and Cultural industries plans to address.

It is estimated that 860,000 new and replacement skilled staff at every level of the hospitality industry will be needed by 2012. The National Skills Academy for Hospitality and its leading employers Barcelo Hotels, Compass Group plc, Terry Laybourne and Edge Foundation, has set out to provide the focus and profile needed for the industry to raise skills standards and therefore productivity across the board. The Skills Academy is also supported by major employers in the sector including Accor Hotels, McDonalds Restaurants, Sodexho and Whitbread.

Michele Roberts, Director of Skills Development Network at the LSC added:

“The network is result of teamwork between business and Government to keep training provision the core of these vital industries. We are working hard to help modernise training delivery so that it is relevant and keeps pace with employer demand. We want learners to access industry skills so they remain inspired and competitive for years to come.”

The network has already been instrumental in raising skills levels in England, in sectors as diverse as construction, food and drink manufacturing, financial services and nuclear. The growth of the network is set to continue with the launch of a new prospectus aimed at encouraging more employers to work together to set the training agenda in their sectors.

For further information please contact Alice Perry at Hill & Knowlton on 02074133761 or email alice.perry@hillandknowlton.com
NOTES TO EDITORS

National Skills Academy network

The National Skills Academy network is the new gold standard for industry training, aiming to improve productivity and tackle skills shortages across England. In addition to the two new academies announced today, there are a further six active skills academies in the financial services, construction, manufacturing, food and drink manufacturing, nuclear and process industries.

Each National Skills Academy puts employers at the heart of skills training for their sector: they influence the curriculum to ensure it reflects employers’ needs; get involved in the skills academy’s management; set standards; and influence strategic direction.

National Skills Academies aim to:

- deliver high quality training for a specific sector;
- provide first-class teaching in a modern learning environment;
- be centres of innovation and creativity in skills development for their sector;
- be flexible, sustaining the closest possible relationships with employers of all sizes; and
- build specialist networks with a range of other learning providers, so that new thinking, new methods and higher standards are shared to the benefit of learners and employers.

The National Skills Academy network was initiated by the Government to address the need for a world class workforce with better skills than ever before. It is managed by the Learning and Skills Council working in partnership with the Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills, the UK Commission for Employment and Skills, the Skills for Business Network and the Department for Business, Enterprise and Regulatory Reform.

The Government’s commitment to have 12 National Skills Academies in place by the end 2008 was further endorsed in ‘World Class Skills: Implementing the Leitch Review of Skills in England’ presented to Parliament by the Secretary of State in July 2007.

The Skills for Business Network is made up of licensed Sector Skills Councils. This network is responsible for improving skills and productivity within the UK.

For more information see: www.nationalskillsacademy.co.uk