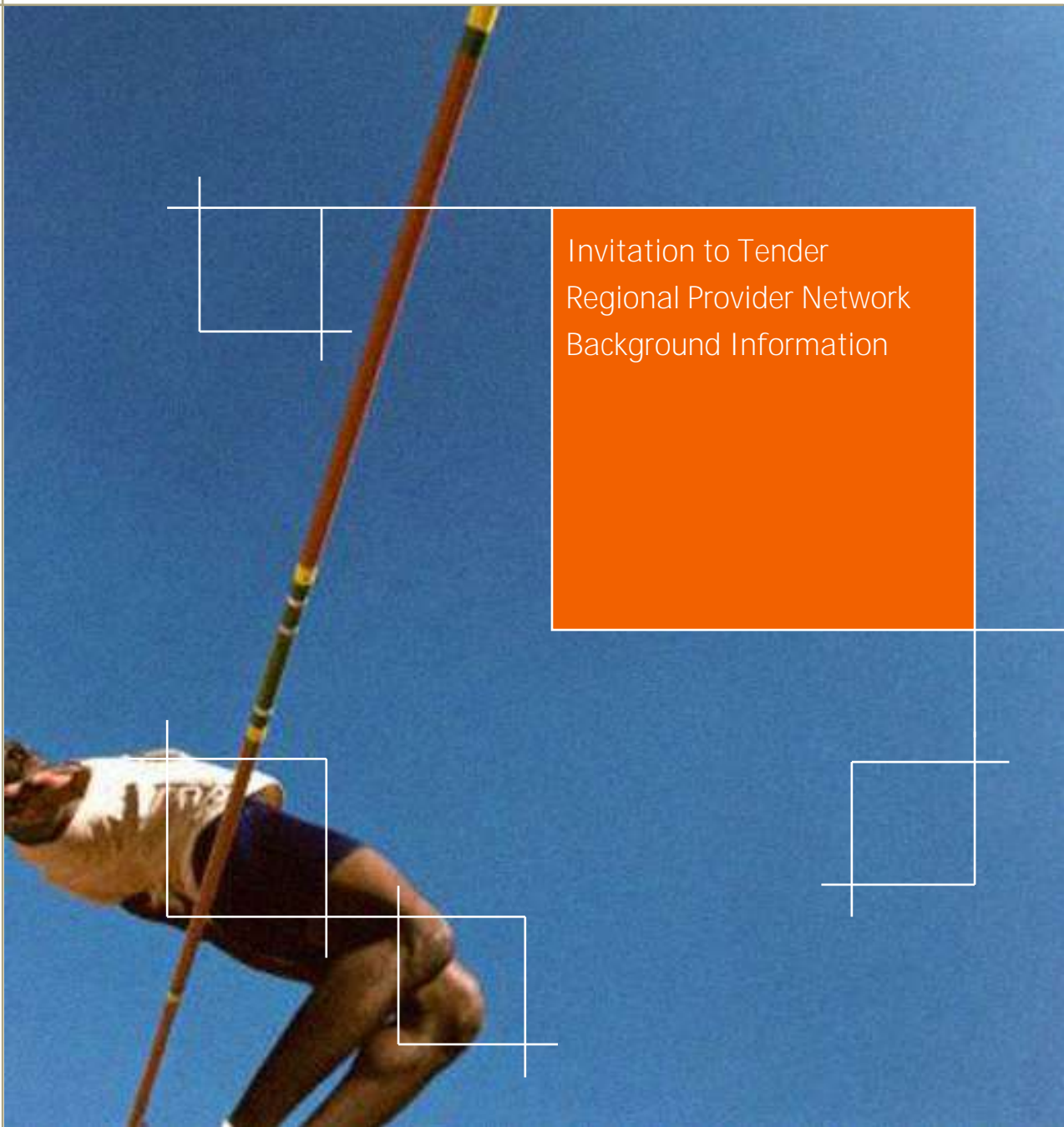


Sport and Active Leisure



Invitation to Tender
Regional Provider Network
Background Information

Part of:

SkillsActive

This document is for organisations that wish to apply to become part of the National Skills Academy for Sport and Active Leisure’s regional provider network.

1. Purpose of this document

1.1 This document sets out the tendering process to be followed for the recruitment of organisations seeking to become part of the National Skills Academy (NSA or Academy) regional provider network.

2. Why be part of the National Skills Academy for Sport and Active Leisure?

2.1 The NSA offers a unique opportunity to affect change in the delivery of vocational qualifications and training and be part of a high quality network of training providers for the Sport and Active Leisure sector.
2.2 The benefits of the Academy are wide ranging and will have a positive impact on learners, training providers and employers within the sector as a whole. The benefits for organisations involved in the regional network will include:

- Routes to market - an increasing opportunity for organisations to develop existing and target new customers
- Routes to work – for learners to gain the relevant skills, knowledge and experience to work in the sector
- Redirecting funding – the Academy will act as a focal point to access public funding for vocational qualifications and training needed by the sector¹
- Economies of scale - opportunities to increase training provision to employers and learners through improved economies of scale
- Improved access to learning – the Academy will enable high quality training provision that is ‘fit for purpose’ to be more widely available to learners
- Sharing best practice in learning – forums for training providers to meet and share good practice
- High quality network – recognition as one of the premium training providers for the sector; a key branding tool for business growth and marketing
- Profitability - an opportunity to improve the skills of the workforce, grow business and increase revenues
- Raising standards in learning – providers at the cutting edge of training provision and increasing the professionalism throughout the sector.

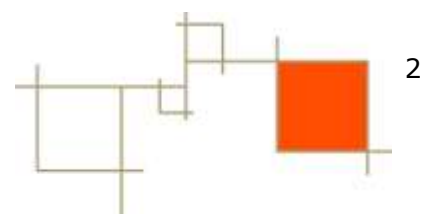
3. What is the National Skills Academy for Sport and Active Leisure?

3.1 The NSA for Sport and Active Leisure is being established by SkillsActive with a vision “to revolutionise the UK sport and active leisure industry by providing one, single coherent approach to the very best skills training in the sector”.

3.2 Being rolled out over three phases between September 2008-10, the NSA will provide an estimated 85,000 learning opportunities per year by 2012, with a quality training offer expressed in three ways:

- working with the best training providers;
- offering programmes of learning recognised and valued by employers; and
- providing new and innovative learning opportunities for the sector.

¹ The NSA is in continuous dialogue with key investors such as the Learning and Skills Council (LSC)



- 3.3 There will be a range of services and products offered initially – specifically for the sport and recreation, fitness and outdoors industries. The playwork and caravanning industries will follow subsequently. The services and products available from the NSA will include:
- vocational qualifications and training specific to the sector;
 - detailed information, advice and guidance to help businesses and learners within the sector; and
 - forums and opportunities to share good practice and influence future skills training and business requirements.
- 3.4 These services and products represent the strongest possible match between employers’ needs to access suitable vocational qualifications, training and business support to establish a more skilled workforce and create more profitable businesses. It is intended that the NSA network will offer provision to a range of learners, and should reflect employer needs, voluntary organisations’ needs and the needs of learners seeking to enter the sector.
- 3.5 Government/LSC revenue subsidy will be called upon during the first three years, with the NSA estimated to become fully self-financing from year 4 onwards. Actual revenue for the NSA will be generated from three main sources:
- a management fee on all learners enrolling on agreed programmes of learning delivered via the regional network;
 - membership fees for employers and training providers; and
 - courses and services bought online as packages or as ‘one-offs’.
- 3.6 The total capital cost of establishing the NSA is estimated at £22m. With the sector contributing £16m (or £4 for every £1 invested by the LSC) towards the NSA this demonstrates a real commitment from employers in the sector to a solution they have genuinely led and shaped.
- 3.7 The NSA will operate at three levels:
- An Online Academy – an interactive website providing information and access to service and products relevant to the sector;
 - A Regional Network – a network of organisations providing vocational qualifications and training to employers and learners.
 - A National Office – comprising an operational team and a national ‘Hub’ managing services and products for national employers.

4. National Skills Academy regional network

The NSA regional network will have a three-tier structure that will comprise:

- NSA Regional Hub Sites – 9 in total (one for every region in England), providing the focal point for the Academy in the region;
- NSA Centres of Excellence (CoE) – circa 5/6 per region in number, a network of the best quality assured training providers, each with a subject or sub-sector specialism(s) in the region (e.g. leisure operations, health and fitness, leisure management, sports development, outdoors, stewarding); and
- NSA Academy Providers (AP) – a network of the best, quality assured training providers that will ensure the NSA’s services and vocational qualifications and courses are delivered locally within each region.

Objectives of the regional network

1. Vocational qualifications and training – vocational learning opportunities that are nationally recognised, regionally needed and locally delivered; in partnership with employers, voluntary organisations and professional/ governing bodies within the sector.

2. Quality training provision - learning that is nationally accredited and/or related to National Occupational Standards², recognised within the sector.
3. Innovation and excellence – vocational training provision that is leading edge and quality assured as the best in the sector; sharing best practice and information amongst the sector’s employers and training providers.
4. Accessible and inclusive learning – provision that is accessible to all learners and where appropriate, can be delivered in partnership with employers and voluntary organisations with expertise in inclusion.
5. Flexible learning – innovative and varied learning methods provided throughout the regional network, preferably in bite-sized ‘chunks’.
6. Demand-led training – demand for skills development must be lead by the sector’s employers and voluntary organisations within the region.
7. Routes to work/volunteering – recognised and approved vocational qualifications and training to help learners into paid employment/voluntary positions.
8. Information, advice and guidance - high quality services to provide support to learners about careers, training requirements and qualifications relevant to the sector.
9. Professional development opportunities - increased opportunity to train and gain skills and qualifications to improve job prospects and career development.

A National Skills Academy Hub site will

- provide a coordinating and monitoring role for NSA training providers in the region
- act as a brokerage service for providers linked to the NSA
- liaise with and act on behalf of employers/voluntary organisations within the sector
- engage with key stakeholders and industry partners in the region
- operate as the communication centre for the regional network
- coordinate the strategic growth of the NSA network within the region
- support providers to meet the standards and requirements of the NSA.

A National Skills Academy Centre of Excellence will

- work with employers/voluntary organisations and industry partners to inform future training provision, to lead research and develop new initiatives in a specialist area³ of the sector
- lead the region to identify suitable funding and resources to develop and support the delivery of the specialist area(s) agreed
- provide vocational qualifications and training (in a specialist area) to meet the skills needs and training requirements of employers/voluntary organisations and learners seeking to enter the sector in the local and regional area
- lead/coordinate the development and implementation of innovative programmes to meet the needs of employers/voluntary organisations and those learners seeking to enter the sector
- work with a network of APs across the region to ensure that specialist provision is available to learners
- lead aspects of and contribute to the regional network’s continued development.

A National Skills Academy provider will

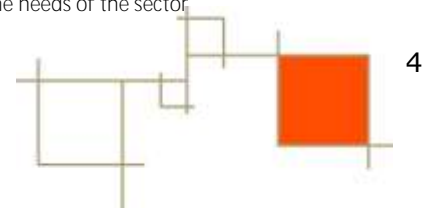
- work with CoE and the Hub to provide vocational qualifications and training in a specialist area to meet the skills needs and training requirements of employers/voluntary organisations and learners seeking to enter the sector in the local and regional area⁴
- contribute to the regional network’s continued development.

5. Establishing the National Skills Academy network

² Accredited qualifications on the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) or the emerging Qualifications and Credit Framework (OCF) and vocational higher education programmes e.g. **Foundation Degrees**, ‘sandwich’ **undergraduate programmes**

³ Specialist areas e.g. leisure operations, coaching, fitness, physical activity and health, outdoors, stewarding, playwork, caravanning, will be agreed by the region (via the Regional Operational Group). CoE can be specialists in more than one aspect of the sector.

⁴ APs may have a chosen specialist area of provision and/or be able to offer provision that meets the needs of the sector



5.1 A phased approach to developing the regional network has been planned in order to grow the Academy steadily, and to ensure an appropriate focus on quality from the outset.

5.2

Phase	Region	Operational
Phase 1	North West Yorkshire & Humber London	September 2008 September 2008 September 2008
Phase 2	South East East South West Playwork Caravanning	April 2009 September 2009 September 2009 September 2009
Phase 3	North East East Midlands West Midlands	September 2010 September 2010 September 2010

5.3 Each region’s network of providers will be based on regional needs for vocational skills and training. The specialisms for each region will be agreed by the Regional Operational Group (ROG) and will inform each wave of recruitment in time⁵.

6. What are we looking for

There are 3 main aspects against which we judge all applications:

- how well do you respond to employer needs in designing the courses and in the delivery of these courses to meet their needs
- how do you bring innovation: what is the difference these courses or their delivery will make from existing provision in terms of quality, work based learning, flexibility, meeting increased demand
- what are the programmes you want to deliver under the NSA banner

Enquiries

Please contact welcome@sportactivena.co.uk whereby you will be directed to the most appropriate person to respond to your enquiry.

⁵ There may not be a CoE for all areas of the Sport and Active Leisure sector within each region (e.g. the outdoors and caravanning being naturally more prevalent in some parts of the country than in others).

