Lloyds TSB extends ‘Local Heroes’ initiative to increase support of promising athletes on their journey to London 2012 and beyond

LONDON, 21 April 2009: Lloyds TSB, proud partner of the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games, has today announced the expansion of its Local Heroes programme in response to research confirming that funding is the biggest hurdle on the sporting journey of prospective Olympic and Paralympic talent.

Research conducted by SportsAid* indicates that costs incurred are the biggest single hurdle for promising young athletes succeeding in elite sport. The survey highlights that a talented young athlete spends on average over £5,000 a year to continue on their sporting journey.

In addition to funding, the SportsAid Athlete Survey revealed that ‘access to coaching’ was of vital importance to young athletes seeking success in their sport. Of the athletes surveyed, 40% train up to 19 hours a week and a further 20% train as much as 24 hours a week. Three quarters admitted that, as talented young athletes, balancing school and educational commitments with their sport is the most difficult area of their lives to manage.

The second year of Lloyds TSB Local Heroes will support 271 emerging Olympic and Paralympic prospects from across Britain by providing each of these athletes with a £1,000 award - effectively 20% of their average annual sporting expenditure.

In response to the survey findings and to help young athletes further, the Lloyds TSB Local Heroes scheme will run day-long workshops designed to coach the ‘Local Heroes’ on how to effectively manage their sporting and educational commitments and provide them with the skills to prepare for life as an elite athlete. The workshops are being held at elite sporting centres across Britain, including today’s workshop at Roehampton University in London with over 50 Lloyds TSB Local Heroes from around southern England. Expert coaches and successful Team GB athletes, such as SportsAid Alumni Mark Foster will be on hand to provide inspirational insights and practical advice on a range of issues including nutrition, health and fitness, lifestyle management and sports psychology.
LOCOG Chairman Lord Sebastian Coe said: “I’m delighted that Lloyds TSB Local Heroes has been able to develop as we move onto the next stage of our journey to London 2012. These young athletes are potential Olympic and Paralympic medal winners at London 2012 and beyond and the support ‘Lloyds TSB Local Heroes’ provides to them will make a real difference to their development.”

Mark Foster, Olympian and previous SportsAid recipient said, “without a doubt funding is the most important factor to the success of any aspiring athlete. However, the importance of effectively managing the lifestyle pressures and commitments that accompany life as an elite sportsperson cannot be underestimated. I was lucky enough to receive a SportsAid grant when I needed it most and now with the Lloyds TSB Local Heroes programme, the next generation has the chance to be even better prepared for the spotlight as they work toward the ultimate goal of their first Olympic or Paralympic Games.”

Sally Hancock, Director of the Lloyds TSB London 2012 partnership said, “In 2008 Lloyds TSB Local Heroes supported 250 aspiring young athletes. Of those, 24 have now progressed onto the Talented Athlete Scholarship Scheme (TASS) and 21 have moved up to World Class lottery support. These Lloyds TSB Local Heroes are Britain’s sporting stars of the future and demonstrate the benefit of supporting promising talent at a young age when they need it most. In 2009, Lloyds TSB Local Heroes will be supporting 271 athletes, 125 of which are new to the scheme, through an expanded programme designed to fulfil the needs highlighted by the SportsAid Athlete Survey. With this enhanced programme we hope to enable even more young athletes to progress on their sporting journeys.”

Tim Lawler, CEO of SportsAid said, “Year one of the Lloyds TSB Local Heroes programme has been a great success, achieving its objectives of helping athletes and their families with the financial implications of training and competing at a high level. Just as important however, is enabling these inspirational young people to engage with their local communities and be recognised for their talent. They are genuine Local Heroes and we want to tell their story.”

To find your Lloyds TSB Local Hero or find out more about Lloyds TSB Local Heroes visit www.lloydstsb.com/localheroes
Notes to Editors:


1. **Lloyds TSB and London 2012:** Lloyds TSB is the exclusive Banking & Insurance Partner of the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games and is committed to inspire and support young people, businesses and communities across Britain through Lloyds TSB Local Heroes.

2. **Lloyds TSB Local Heroes:** Lloyds TSB Local Heroes, in partnership with SportsAid, is an innovative and practical initiative which is supporting promising and emerging British sporting talent on their journey to London 2012 and beyond. The Lloyds TSB Local Heroes programme has a national reach with local impact, supporting athletes from across Britain with awards of £1,000 to help with the costs of training and competing at national and international level and as recognition of their emerging talent.

All Lloyds TSB Local Heroes are identified by the experts, the National Governing Bodies of Olympic and Paralympic sports; they have proven talent and potential and meet criteria set out by SportsAid.

3. **SportsAid:** SportsAid is the charity for sports people, helping the next generation of British sportsmen and women to succeed. SportsAid is a registered charity no.1111612. For more information visit [www.sportsaid.org.uk](http://www.sportsaid.org.uk).


5. **Ambassadors:** Mark Foster, SportsAid alumni, six times World Champion and ten times European Champion, Mark is Britain’s most successful ever male swimmer. In 2008 Mark competed in his fifth Olympic Games and carried the British flag at the Beijing Olympics opening ceremony.

6. **Supporting Quotes:**

**Paralympian and Lloyds TSB ambassador for London 2012, Ade Adepitan:**

“I know how expensive equipment, travel and training can be when you’re coming up through the ranks. This year even more Olympic and Paralympic hopefuls across Britain are going to directly benefit from ‘Lloyds TSB Local Heroes’ at a time when they need it most - as they work towards competing at London 2012 and future Olympic Games.”
Gerry Sutcliffe MP, Minister for Sport
"I'm delighted to see the expansion of Lloyds TSB Local Heroes as the initiative moves into its second year. This is a key development in the journey to London 2012 and beyond and will mean increased support for hundreds of talented youngsters."

Andy Reed Labour & Co-operative MP for Loughborough
"This support from Lloyds TSB Local Heroes will be a fantastic help to aspiring athletes at a critical stage in their journey to becoming our future champions."

Lloyds TSB Local Heroes Quotes: Tom Smith, disabled cyclist
"I am very happy to know that there is a company out there willing to help young athletes through their paces and to encourage sport with the public. Lloyds TSB Local Heroes Programme is absolutely brilliant and a big help to us all, so thank you very much to you and everyone else involved in this."

Twinelle Hopeson, sprinter
"It was amazing becoming a Lloyds TSB Local Hero last year because I felt like all my efforts were being recognised both nationally and locally. It gave me a massive boost of confidence to meet other young aspiring athletes who, like me, hope to represent Great Britain in future Olympics. With my local area being Croydon (Greater London) I was happy to attend as many events as I could to promote young athletes aspiring to London 2012. I am very grateful to SportsAid and Lloyds TSB Local Heroes as the funding helped me to pay for my necessary expenses to perform to the highest level."

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