

Four young Welsh experts to represent UK in the world's largest Global Skills competition

Joseph Massey, 23, from Coleg Cambria; Alfie Hopkin, 18, from Llanelli, Elizabeth Forkuoh, 20, from Llanelli and Ethan Davies, 21, from Mynydd Isa have been recognised as the UK's most highly skilled young people in their industry, and will travel almost 5,000 miles to the Abu Dhabi National Exhibition Centre (ADNEC) to compete against the best students, apprentices and employees in the world.

Held every two years, WorldSkills International sees more than one thousand young people, aged 18 to 25, come together from seventy-seven countries to compete for medals in fifty-one skill competitions, including CNC Milling, Restaurant Service, Web Design and Aeronautical Engineering.

As part of Team UK, these four Welsh youngsters will showcase their skills by demonstrating their technical abilities in specific tasks, which they study or conduct in their workplace, over the course of six days.

Elizabeth said:

“WorldSkills has enabled me to travel the UK and receive training from some of the best restaurants in the country. For example I've trained at the Ritz and Michel Roux Jnr's two Michelin star restaurant, where they actually offered me a job!

“I'm so excited to be able to compete on an international level, it's something I've dreamed about for years now and I can hardly believe I'll be going. Being part of the competition is such an amazing experience. From the people I've met and the new skills I've learnt, to the places I've travelled to and worked in, none of it would have been possible without WorldSkills.”

Joseph, Alfie, Elizabeth and Ethan were invited to compete in the selection process after excelling at the Skills Competition Wales and WorldSkills UK National Competitions, the finals of which take place at The Skills Show each November.

Backed by the Welsh Government through the European Social Fund, these competitions promote the importance of developing a highly skilled workforce and world-class individuals.

Minister for Skills and Science, Julie James said:

“Congratulations to all four competitors on their way to represent the nation. The number of Welsh members in Team UK is a testament not only to their hard work and determination but also the support from their families, and training from Welsh colleges, training providers and employers.

“Wales has been competing in WorldSkills for many years and has nurtured some of the most highly-skilled young people in a range of industries. Taking part in WorldSkills competitions enables the whole of Wales to benefit. Not only do competitors return to the country to inspire others to follow in their footsteps but they also bring their knowledge and experience to the workplace, helping develop skills and setting high industry standards.

“However, the journey neither starts nor ends with WorldSkills international – there is a cycle of programme development behind Welsh involvement in competitions which allows colleges and training providers to benchmark and quality assure themselves against the best in the world, encouraging continuous professional development and raising our teaching standards. We wish Joseph, Alfie, Elizabeth and Ethan good luck in Abu Dhabi and look forward to following their journey.”