

# Wales secures the highest number of finalists for WorldSkills UK competition

The WorldSkills UK finals will take place at Birmingham's NEC between 16 and 18 November as part of the NEC's annual Skills Show, the largest skills and careers event in the UK.

The competition is used to benchmark excellence across a range of vocational skills areas. It is also used as part of the selection process for WorldSkills, a global competition held every two years where the UK regions compete as one team. These finals are part of the selection process for WorldSkills 2019, which is being held in Kazan.

A total of 462 competitors are taking part in the WorldSkills UK finals, which consists of up to 60 national competitions where entrants battle it out for Gold, Silver and Bronze award recognition. Of that figure, 74 competitors are Welsh, which is 16% of the UK total and by far the highest regional representation.

In addition to the 74 Welsh finalists taking part in the national competitions, a further nineteen entrants will be representing Wales at the Skills Show in other competitions, bringing Wales' overall number of entrants to this year's Skills Show to 93.

The additional competitors are the 'Kazan cohort'; nine talented students who have already met the qualifying criteria for Kazan 2019 so will now be competing to for a place on WorldSkills' Team UK. Ten entrants are also taking part in the 'Inclusive Skills' competitions, which have been specifically designed for those with disabilities.

Welcoming the news, Skills and Science Minister Julie James said:

"That Wales has been recognised as the top region for entries in the whole of the UK is a reflection of our skills excellence and the huge collaborative effort from partners that we have here in Wales.

"Through Skills Competitions we are creating a highly skilled nation that will support our economy, safeguard our industries and improve the prospects of Wales.

"I wish everyone taking part in next month's competitions the very best of luck and would like to thank those who have supported them on their journey for all their hard work and dedication to help make this happen."