

Northern Ireland's 'Magnificent Seven' Going for WorldSkills Gold

29 June 2011

Seven highly-talented young people from Northern Ireland have fought off stiff competition from across the UK to be selected as members of Team UK for WorldSkills London 2011.

Commending the seven on their achievements, Employment and Learning Minister, Dr. Stephen Farry said: "Northern Ireland's strong representation on Team UK is testament to the high standards of technical and professional training in our colleges. This is a wonderful opportunity for these young people to demonstrate to the world that Northern Ireland has a workforce with the high levels of skills and training required to compete in the global economy and meet the economic challenges which lie ahead."

The overall team of 43 members representing 37 skills areas was announced last night by Minister of State for Further Education, Skills and Lifelong Learning, John Hayes MP, at the National Apprenticeship Awards at the Mermaid Theatre, London.

Northern Ireland, with its seven competitors in the skills of bricklaying, wall and floor tiling, refrigeration and air conditioning, landscape gardening, CNC milling, and mechatronics which is a two person team, has the highest number of Team members of all the UK regions.

The Minister continued: "To be selected for Team UK is an amazing achievement and I wish each team member the best of luck with their training, and look forward to watching them take on the best in the world in October. Northern Ireland has a proud history of medal winners at WorldSkills and I am hopeful that this will continue at WorldSkills London."

The entire team will now spend the next three months preparing to take on the very best young skilled people from 50 nations at the largest international vocational skills competition in the world, WorldSkills London 2011, which takes place from 5-8 October 2011 at London's ExCel Centre. At WorldSkills young people from across the globe compete to become the best of the best in their chosen skill. 150,000 visitors are expected to watch 1,000 competitors from 50 nations competing in 45 skill areas over four exciting days of competition.

The members of Team UK have been and will continue to be supported in their training by Edge, the independent education foundation, and Brathay Trust.

Notes to editors:

1. WorldSkills London 2011 will see 1,000 young people from 50 countries compete for gold, silver and bronze medals (and medallions of excellence) in 45 skills categories across six sectors: Creative arts and fashion; Construction and building technology; Information and Communications technology; Manufacturing (and engineering) technology; Social and personal services; Transportation and logistics. Visitors to the event will discover how skills shape our world, get the chance to 'have a go' at a wide range of skills activities, and have an opportunity to talk to a range of experts about future career options and opportunities. To find out more, visit: www.worldskillslondon2011.com.

2. Team UK Worldskills London 2011 – Northern Ireland members:

- David Nicholl from Ballymena will compete in the CNC Milling category. David is employed by Schlumberger and attends Northern Regional College.
- Philip Green from Lisburn will compete in the Bricklaying category. Philip is self-employed (DG Green and Sons) and attends Belfast Metropolitan College.
- James Cuffey from Downpatrick will compete in the Landscape Gardening category and attends CAFRE college.
- Stuart Millar from Loughgall will compete in the Refrigeration & Air Conditioning category. Stuart is employed by Shilliday Refrigeration and attends South Eastern Regional College.
- Chris Downey from Ballymena will compete in the Mechatronics category. Chris is employed by Michelin and attends Northern Regional College.
- Mark Maginty from Ballymena will compete in the Mechatronics category. Mark is employed by Russell Electrical Contractors and attends Northern Regional College.
- Ian McMahon from Limavady will compete in the Wall and Floor Tiling category. Ian is self employed and attends North West Regional College.

3. Images of the Team UK members from Northern Ireland are available on the Department for Employment and Learning section on the NI Executive Flickr site - <http://www.flickr.com/photos/niexecutive/collections/> or on request from the Department for Employment and Learning Communications Branch on the below number.

4. For a full list of Team UK members visit www.worldskillsteamuk.org

5. All media queries should be directed to the Department for Employment and Learning Communications Branch on 028 9025 7466. Out of office hours please contact the duty press officer via pager number 07699 715 440 and your call will be returned.