

North East represents UK in WorldSkills competition

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One learner and three trainers from the North East are preparing for a trip West to show the rest of the world the talents and expertise of young people and adults from our region.

The quartet are part of a national team taking part in the intense four day WorldSkills competition, an international skills event held every two years – this year in Calgary, Canada. Taking place between the 2nd and 5th September, over 20,000 spectators will support delegates from the 51 member countries.

Team member Christopher Lonsdale, aged 22 from Bishop Auckland is a student at New College Durham and is employed by local plumbing company B Warm. He has a National Vocational Qualification Level 3 in Gas and Plumbing. Christopher won a WorldSkills UK competition to win his place in the finals, in the Plumbing and Heating category.

Christopher, who admits to having a competitive nature said:

“It didn’t seem achievable when the competitions started, but now I can see the finish line and it has totally motivated me to reach out and go that extra step. (This line has been approved by Christopher).

“I’ve always been competitive and I’ve been in 3 WorldSkills UK national finals. I get a lot of self satisfaction out of a competition.”

Competitors like Christopher will be supported at the event by training managers, or Experts as they are known, from different specialisms, who will work with young people to guide them through the competition.

Jen Bell, a Curriculum Area Manager from Northumberland College has been a training manager for 11 years, starting at the WorldSkills finals in Montreal in 1999, before becoming Chief Expert for WorldSkills at Seoul in 2001, St Gallen in 2003, Helsinki in 2005 and Shizuoka 2007. Jen is an expert for WorldSkills Calgary 2009.

Jen said:

“The strength of competitor’s year on year is an indication of how vocational skills are changing from competence to higher and higher standards.

“As a training manager, I am responsible for using competitions as a tool to engage learners and drive up skills from competence to excellence.”

Jen is supported by fellow experts Peter Moore a Lecturer at Redcar and Cleveland College who is a Plastering and Dry Lining Systems training manager, and Manufacturing training manager and expert Bill McGawley, who is Executive Vice Chairman of the TDR group.

Peter Moore, who only recently got involved in training said:

“We have great team spirit from both the training managers and the competitors. Being involved in such a massive event showing young people in a positive light is great.”

And his comments were supported by Bill McGawley, who has been a training manager since December 2006, when he participated in the WorldSkills squad and team selection for Shizuoka in 2007. During 2008, he was appointed as the UK Skills conservatory lead for applied engineering.

He said:

“Every competitor at Calgary will be focussed, expert at what they do, determined to win and an exemplar. To compete with the best, we must not just aspire – we must be the best. The UK Team now need to commit, persevere, challenge themselves and go the extra mile for themselves and their country.”

Many of the Team UK members were found through the national framework of WorldSkills UK competitions. Parents, tutors and employers enter young people into competitions, giving UK Skills the pool of talent to choose from. The development of this pool is even more essential for the next cycle of WorldSkills UK competitions beginning in October 2009, as for most skills it is the last opportunity to compete nationally for a chance to then go on to represent the UK at WorldSkills London 2011.

Dorothy Smith, interim regional director, LSC North East said:

“The WorldSkills competition champions the skills and learning needed for work and demonstrates clearly the skills needed by young people to succeed. There is no time more crucial than now to improve skills and this competition

is ideally placed to highlight the variety of opportunities out there for young people. Skills remain high on Governments agenda and competitions like this one help promote the benefits that gaining new skills can make to lives.

“Christopher Lonsdale has done fantastically well to reach the world final, and supported by other finalists and the 3 trainers from our region, I wish him every success.”

Simon Bartley, Chief Executive of UK Skills, which manages Team UK said:
“We are very pleased to welcome each and every member of Team UK. The quality and dedication all our competitors demonstrated during the selection process was of the highest level, but the exceptional work carried out by Christopher proved to the judges that he had what it takes to be part of Team UK and represent his country. We wish him the best of luck in Calgary.”

For more information on WorldSkills, please visit www.worldskillsteamuk.org

ENDS

About the LSC

The LSC exists to make England better skilled and more competitive. We are responsible for planning and funding high-quality vocational education and training for everyone. We have a single goal: to improve the skills of England's young people and adults to world-class standards. Our vision is that by 2010, young people and adults in England have the knowledge and skills matching the best in the world and are part of a truly competitive workforce. Established in 2001, we work nationally, regionally and locally from a network of offices across the country.

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About UK Skills www.ukskills.org.uk

- UK Skills, a not for profit organisation, manages the delivery of innovative, high profile competitions and awards which showcase excellence and demonstrate how exceptional performance improves individual and organisational success.
- Established in 1990, UK Skills works to raise the profile of skills in the UK and oversee the UK's premier set of skills competitions, WorldSkills UK.
- UK Skills also manages the UK team entry to WorldSkills, the biggest skills competition in the world. Most recently UK Skills spearheaded the bid to bring WorldSkills to London in 2011. WorldSkills London 2011 will be a truly global showcase for skills and young people from across the world.
- UK Skills also manages the National Training Awards which celebrate exemplary training in the workplace; from coordinating the awards famously robust judging processes to organising celebration events across the UK, UK Skills works on behalf of the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills to shine a spotlight on those who have made a difference to their organisation through training.

About WorldSkills www.worldskills.org.uk

- The WorldSkills Competition is the biggest skills competition in the world and is held every two years in one of its member countries. It sets world class standards in over 40 skill categories ranging from cabinet making to web design.
- Over four days of tough competition, young people drawn now from 51 member nations test themselves against tough international standards. The ultimate prizes are gold, silver and bronze medals.
- Locations of previous and future WorldSkills competitions:
 - 2003: St. Gallen, Switzerland
 - 2005: Helsinki, Finland
 - 2007: Shizuoka, Japan
 - 2009: Calgary, Canada
 - 2011: London, UK

About WorldSkills Calgary www.worldskills2009.com

- Calgary will host the 40th WorldSkills Competition, from September 1 to 6, 2009.
- UK Skills is responsible for selecting and training UK candidates for WorldSkills.
- The UK's WorldSkills team is managed by UK Skills working in partnership with the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills, the Department for Employment and Learning Northern Ireland, the Scottish Government, the Welsh Assembly Government and key partners from education, government and industry