

Education Secretary meets competitors preparing for WorldSkills

Today (14 August), Education Secretary Gavin Williamson met with young people from Team UK who will battle it out against 65 other nations in their specialist skill at the 2019 WorldSkills Olympics in Kazan, Russia next week.

The bi-annual WorldSkills event – which runs from 22 –27 August – is the largest international skills competition of its kind, bringing together apprentices and young people from around the world to compete for medals in their chosen skill.

Team UK is sending 37 young people from across the UK to compete in 32 skills categories ranging from joinery, cyber security and restaurant services. Mr Williamson met some of Team UK at Westminster Kingsway College, London where they were taking part in a warm-up event before heading out to Russia. On the visit he met with Tonicha Roberts, 22, whose specialist skill is Chemical Laboratory Technology, Jack Goodrum, 21, who will be competing in Carpentry, Collette Gorvette, 20, who will be showcasing her Restaurant Service skills, Ross Megahy who will be competing in Mechanical Engineering CAD and Owen Aldous, 20, who will be representing the UK in Cabinet Making.

While he was there, Mr Williamson also got the chance to try his hand at some of the skills himself including hospitality cocktail making and carpentry.

Education Secretary Gavin Williamson said:

It was fantastic to meet members of Team UK and see them all in action. There is no greater honour than representing your country on a global platform like this, and I wish them all the very best of luck as they head out to Kazan next week.

These young people are an inspiration to the next generation, and a reminder of the importance we must place on building a skilled workforce that will help make sure we have a productive economy as we prepare for Brexit.

That is why we are pressing ahead with our vital reforms to technical education including introducing new T Levels from September 2020 and working with employers to create more high-quality apprenticeship opportunities.

Education Secretary meeting Jack Goodrum, Team UK carpenter

WorldSkills UK Chief Executive Dr Neil Bentley-Gockmann OBE said:

The members of Team UK are the high flyers of their generation. At WorldSkills Kazan, in front of a global audience, they will champion UK skills, demonstrating that the UK is a world-class place to do business and create jobs.

We know they have put in the hours of training and are ready to take on the rest of the world. Good Luck Team UK.

Mr Williamson's visit coincided with thousands of students getting their vocational and technical qualification results today in a range of subjects including Science, Technology and Engineering. He added:

I'd also like to say a huge congratulations to the thousands of students who are today collecting their results and thank you to all of the FE staff whose expertise has guided them along the way.

Technical education can open the door to so many exciting careers and I'm sure you all have bright futures ahead of you, whichever path you choose.