

Scotland's Top Apprentices Crowned at 51st Scottish Plumbing Apprentice of the Year Competition

4 hours ago



UHI Moray and South Lanarkshire College apprentices take home top honours as competition celebrates excellence in plumbing and heating training.

Three of Scotland's most talented plumbing and heating apprentices have been crowned winners in their categories at the 51st Scottish Plumbing Apprentice of the Year (SPAY) competition.

Held at West College Scotland in Paisley, the competition brought together 27 of Scotland's most skilled plumbing and heating apprentices to compete across three technical disciplines: Copper, Leadwork and Renewable Technologies.

Anne Campbell, Principal and Chief Executive of West College Scotland, said: "It was a real honour for West College Scotland to be selected to host this year's Scottish Plumbing Apprentice of the Year competition. We are proud to play a leading role in developing apprentices and were delighted to welcome competitors, partners and the team at SNIPPEF to our campus for this exciting and inspiring event."

Organised by the [Plumbing and Heating Federation \(SNIPPEF\)](#), SPAY remains one of the most respected competitions in Scotland's apprenticeship calendar, providing a platform for apprentices to demonstrate their technical ability while highlighting the value of vocational training and career opportunities within the profession.

The competition comes at a time when apprenticeship pathways are facing increasing pressures and the industry continues to tackle skills shortages. SPAY plays an important role in showcasing the talent coming

through the profession and the contribution apprentices make towards Scotland's economy, infrastructure and transition to low-carbon heating.

National honours for Kai Gray in BPEC SkillPLUMB Copper competition

The Copper category once again served as the Scottish qualifying heat for the UK-wide SkillPLUMB competition, delivered in partnership with BPEC and linked to the WorldSkills UK framework.

Kai Gray of Cowie Plumbing and Heating and UHI Moray secured first place in the Copper category, with James Rankin of Eric Hyslop Ltd and Dumfries and Galloway College finishing second and Chris Ripley of BPS Group and Glasgow Clyde College taking third.

Speaking after his victory, Kai said: "It feels great to be honest with you! Last year I came second, so to come first this time round is fantastic. I think I had a good chance this year, but it still comes as a nice surprise by winning.

"I'd like to thank my lecturer Jim and all the boys at work, especially Connor Cruden who won this competition before and went through to the Worlds. They have all definitely helped a lot.

"I would 100% encourage other people to get involved in plumbing and heating - taking part in competitions like this are a real highlight and you can make friends for life."

Neil Collishaw, Chief Executive of BPEC, said: "We are delighted to see SkillPLUMB once again forming part of the Scottish Plumbing Apprentice of the Year competition. The standard of work on display this year has been exceptional, demonstrating the high level of talent being developed by employers and colleges across Scotland.

"Competitions like SPAY provide apprentices with an invaluable opportunity to test their skills, gain recognition for their achievements and benchmark themselves against the very best in the industry. I congratulate all of this year's competitors for their commitment, professionalism and technical ability, and I wish the highest-scoring apprentices every success if they progress through to the next stages of the SkillPLUMB competition."

Leadwork title for UHI Moray apprentice

The Leadwork category continues to showcase the enduring importance of traditional skills within the profession, highlighting the opportunities available within heritage and conservation work.

This year's Leadwork title was won by Sweyn Macaskill of Moray Council and UHI Moray. Logan Fawkes of Dumfries and Galloway College secured second place, while Ross Dingwall of ID Plumbing and Heating and Glasgow Clyde College finished third.

Speaking after receiving his award, Sweyn said: "It feels really good to win - I've put in a lot of effort practicing for this event, so to win feels incredibly rewarding. To win awards and recognition like this definitely makes you feel like you've chosen the right path.

"I'd like to thank everyone who has supported me and kept pushing me forward over the years.

"It's definitely a great career to get involved in – by getting your apprenticeship you've got a career for life in front of you."

Renewable Technologies category highlights future skills

Now in its fourth year, the Renewable Technologies category continues to reflect the changing demands of the profession and Scotland's transition towards low-carbon heating technologies.

Blake Lockhart of HF Mechanical and Electrical Ltd and South Lanarkshire College claimed first place in this year's Renewable Technologies competition. Calum Wylie of Orbis Services Ltd and UHI Inverness finished second, while Aiden Docherty of HF Electrical Ltd and South Lanarkshire College secured third place.

Commenting on his win, Blake said: "I'm buzzing! Didn't expect it at all. It was a great day out, mixing with everybody and having the chance to showcase my skills. I did think I had a good chance, but I've got to keep myself humble.

"I'd like to thank South Lanarkshire College for giving me the opportunity and my company HF have been so supportive in helping me develop my skills.

Fiona Hodgson, Chief Executive of SNIPEF, praised the standard of competition and the contribution apprenticeships continue to make to the profession.

She said: "As we celebrate the 51st Scottish Plumbing Apprentice of the Year competition, it is fantastic to see the calibre of talent coming through our industry. The skill, professionalism and commitment demonstrated by every finalist reflects the bright future of the plumbing and heating profession.

"Competitions like SPAY showcase the value of apprenticeship training and the crucial role played by employers, colleges and training providers in developing the next generation of skilled professionals. In a safety-critical profession such as plumbing and heating, apprenticeships create lifelong careers while delivering the skills needed to support Scotland's homes, businesses and infrastructure.

"It is therefore vital that apprenticeship pathways continue to be protected, supported and remain affordable for employers, ensuring more young people have the opportunity to enter and thrive within our profession.

"I would also like to thank BPEC for its continued support of SPAY. Long-standing partnerships such as this help ensure the competition remains a respected platform for recognising excellence, celebrating achievement and inspiring future apprentices to pursue a career in our profession."

Full list of SPAY 2026 winners:

BPEC SkillPLUMB Copper Competition

1st – Kai Gray (Cowie Plumbing and Heating / UHI Moray)

2nd – James Rankin (Eric Hyslop Ltd / Dumfries and Galloway College)

3rd – Chris Ripley (BPS Group / Glasgow Clyde College)

Leadwork Competition

1st - Sweyn Macaskill (Moray Council / UHI Moray)

2nd - Logan Fawkes (Dumfries and Galloway College)

3rd - Ross Dingwall (ID Plumbing and Heating / Glasgow Clyde College)

Renewable Technologies Competition

1st - Blake Lockhart (HF Mechanical and Electrical Ltd / South Lanarkshire College)

2nd - Calum Wylie (Orbis Services Ltd / UHI Inverness)

3rd - Aiden Docherty (HF Electrical Ltd / South Lanarkshire College)

SNIPEF extends its thanks to BPEC, West College Scotland, the competition judges, participating employers, colleges and training providers for their continued support in making SPAY 2026 a success.