

Scotland's Top Apprentices Crowned at 50th Scottish Plumbing Apprentice of the Year Competition

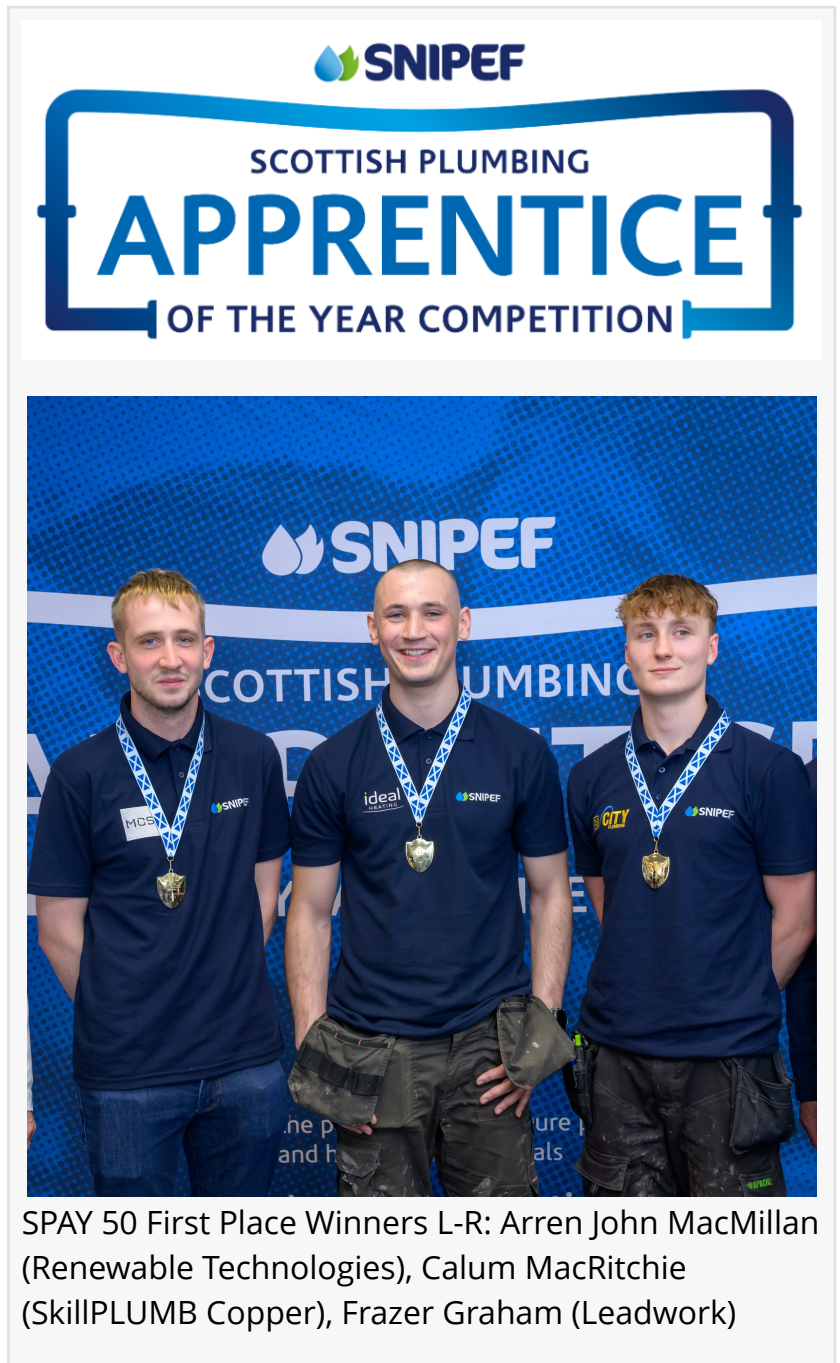
South Lanarkshire College and UHI Moray apprentices take seven of nine podium places as competition celebrates excellence in plumbing and heating training.

EDINBURGH, UNITED KINGDOM, June 18, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Three of Scotland's most talented plumbing and heating apprentices have been crowned winners in their categories at the 50th anniversary Scottish Plumbing Apprentice of the Year (SPAY 50) competition.

Held at South Lanarkshire College in East Kilbride on Friday, 13 June, the landmark event brought together 40 finalists from across Scotland to compete in three technical challenges: Copper, Leadwork and Renewable Technologies.

The competition, organised by the Plumbing and Heating Federation (SNIPEF), aims to recognise the highest standards of craftsmanship, innovation and professionalism among Scotland's next generation of plumbing and heating engineers.

National honours for Calum MacRitchie
in Copper (SkillPLUMB) competition



SPAY 50 First Place Winners L-R: Arren John MacMillan (Renewable Technologies), Calum MacRitchie (SkillPLUMB Copper), Frazer Graham (Leadwork)

Calum MacRitchie from Hamilton, an apprentice with Malcolm McArthur & Son Ltd and a student at South Lanarkshire College, won first place in the BPEC SkillPLUMB Copper competition, the official Scottish heat for the UK-wide SkillPLUMB national finals.

Speaking after his win, Calum said: "It feels really good to win the competition, though it was a bit of a surprise on the day, to be honest. I took part in 2024 and was disappointed with my performance, so it's great to see my improvement after putting in a lot of hard work over the past year."

Neil Collishaw, Chief Executive of BPEC, added: "We are delighted to see SkillPLUMB playing such a strong role in this year's SPAY 50 celebrations. Calum's success reflects the exceptional quality of training delivered by his college and employer, as well as his own dedication and ability.

"The top eight scoring competitors from across the UK will go on to the national finals, a prestigious platform that celebrates technical excellence and professionalism.

"I congratulate all of this year's competitors for their skill and determination, and I look forward to seeing how Scotland performs at the UK finals."

Leadwork and Renewables titles for UHI Moray and South Lanarkshire College apprentices

In the Leadwork category, sponsored by City Plumbing, Frazer Graham from Fochabers, an apprentice with Moray Council and UHI Moray, took first place, while fellow UHI Moray



SPAY 50 Leadwork competition: Celebrating the heritage of traditional plumbing techniques, with apprentices demonstrating their craftsmanship through intricate and detailed sheet leadwork challenges.



SPAY 50 Renewable Technologies competition: Preparing the next generation of plumbing professionals to install and maintain low carbon heating systems, including heat pumps, which will become an increasingly important part of the job.

apprentice Sweyn MacAskill from Elgin secured third.

Frazer said: "It feels good to have won, having put in a lot of hours to get here, and it's really paid off. I knew it would be close between me and another competitor as he was also in the competition last year. It's a great personal accomplishment for me."

In the Renewable Technologies category, sponsored by MCS, first place went to Arren John MacMillan from Carluke, an apprentice with John Frood & Sons and a student at South Lanarkshire College.

Arren said: "It's surreal, and a really good end to a difficult week. I didn't expect to win, so it's a really nice surprise.

"But I couldn't have done it without the team. The lecturers here aren't just your teachers, they're like your best pals – it makes it so much easier."

Seven of nine podium spots go to South Lanarkshire College and UHI Moray

South Lanarkshire College and UHI Moray delivered standout performances, securing seven of the nine podium places across all categories:

South Lanarkshire College

- 1st Place – Calum MacRitchie (Copper)
- 1st Place – Arren John MacMillan (Renewables)
- 2nd Place – Connor Moir (Renewables)
- 2nd Place – Taylor White (Leadwork)

UHI Moray

- 1st Place – Frazer Graham (Leadwork)
- 3rd Place – Sweyn MacAskill (Leadwork)
- 2nd Place – Kai Gray (Copper)

Commenting on their successes, Stephanie Lowe, Deputy Chief Executive of SNIPEF, praised the outstanding results: "The performances from both South Lanarkshire College and UHI Moray



SPAY 50 Copper competition: Testing precision, craftsmanship and real-world problem-solving skills in one of the most fundamental areas of plumbing installation.

highlight the incredible commitment across Scotland's college network to delivering world-class apprenticeship training.

"Behind every apprentice success is a team of committed lecturers, dedicated employers and high-quality learning environments, and this year's results are a testament to that.

"These apprentices are not just gaining practical skills, they are building future-proof careers that will help drive innovation, sustainability and excellence across our profession.

"Apprenticeships continue to play a vital role in tackling skills shortages, supporting economic resilience, and opening life-changing opportunities for young people in every community."

Full list of SPAY 50 winners with employers and college

BPEC SkillPLUMB Copper Competition

1st – Calum MacRitchie (Malcolm McArthur & Son Ltd / South Lanarkshire College)

2nd – Kai Gray (Cowie Plumbing & Heating Ltd / UHI Moray)

3rd – James Rankin (Eric Hyslop Ltd / Dumfries & Galloway College)

City Plumbing Leadwork Competition

1st – Frazer Graham (Moray Council / UHI Moray)

2nd – Taylor White (H F Group / South Lanarkshire College)

3rd – Sweyn MacAskill (Moray Council / UHI Moray)

MCS Renewable Technologies Competition

1st – Arren John MacMillan (John Frood & Sons / South Lanarkshire College)

2nd – Connor Moir (Energy How Ltd / South Lanarkshire College)

3rd – George Gannicott (A Thomson Plumbing & Heating Services / Borders College)

SNIEF extends its thanks to category sponsors BPEC, City Plumbing, and MCS, as well as the many employers, colleges and training providers who made this year's competition possible.

Notes to Editors

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About the Scottish Plumbing Apprentice of the Year competition:

The Scottish Plumbing Apprentice of the Year (SPAY) competition is Scotland's premier event celebrating the skills and dedication of plumbing and heating apprentices. Organised by the Scottish and Northern Ireland Plumbing Employers' Federation (SNIPEF), the competition is now in its 50th year, marking a significant milestone in the promotion of vocational excellence and professional standards within the profession.

Hosted in 2025 by South Lanarkshire College, SPAY 50 featured three distinct competition categories, Copper, Leadwork and Renewable Technologies, designed to reflect both the traditional craftsmanship and modern innovation shaping the profession. Apprentices from across Scotland competed under real-world conditions, judged by industry experts on technical precision, problem-solving, and overall excellence.

SPAY is supported by key industry sponsors including BPEC, City Plumbing and MCS, as well as a wide network of employers, colleges and training providers. Over the past five decades, the competition has helped launch more than 1,200 careers, contributing significantly to workforce development and the promotion of apprenticeships as a valued route into skilled, sustainable employment.

About the Plumbing and Heating Federation (SNIPEF):

The Scottish and Northern Ireland Plumbing Employers' Federation (SNIPEF) is the leading trade association representing plumbing and heating businesses across Scotland and Northern Ireland. With over 750 member firms employing more than 3,500 qualified professionals, SNIPEF has supported the industry for over a century through expert guidance, practical services, and advocacy. It continues to champion high standards, promote skills development, and provide relevant, hands-on support to help businesses thrive in an evolving industry landscape.

About BPEC (SkillPLUMB competition organiser):

BPEC (British Plumbing Employers Council) is a leading provider of training and certification across the plumbing and heating industry, committed to developing a skilled and competent workforce. A not-for-profit organisation, BPEC reinvests in the industry to support skills development, professional standards, and technical excellence.

BPEC delivers high-quality qualifications, assessment schemes, and learning resources across key areas including gas, water, renewables, and energy efficiency. As the organiser of SkillPLUMB, one of the UK's premier skills competitions, BPEC promotes the next generation of talent and celebrates excellence in vocational education.

Its support for the Scottish Plumbing Apprentice of the Year competition reflects BPEC's long-standing commitment to raising industry standards and championing apprentice achievement. For more information, visit www.bpec.org.uk.

About SkillPLUMB:

SkillPLUMB is one of the UK's leading skills competitions, showcasing the best young talent in the plumbing and heating industry. Managed by BPEC, the competition provides a platform for apprentices to demonstrate their practical skills, technical knowledge, and professional standards under pressure.

Recognised as part of WorldSkills UK, SkillPLUMB plays a vital role in raising the profile of vocational training and encouraging excellence across the sector. Competitors progress through regional heats, such as the Scottish heat hosted at SPAY, with top performers advancing to the UK finals, and potentially to international competitions.

SkillPLUMB helps inspire the next generation of skilled professionals and reinforces the importance of high-quality training and employer support in shaping a sustainable, future-ready workforce. For more information, visit www.skillplumb.org.uk.

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