

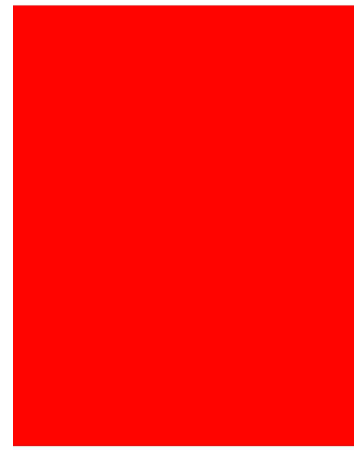


**Northern Builder**

**Circulation: 5.300**

**Pages: 10-11**

**Date: 01/07/2024**



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APPRENTICES COMPETED ACROSS 12 CATEGORIES, WITH SERC STUDENT LUKE MCILWRATH NAMED AS HALDANE FISHER YOUNG APPRENTICE OF THE YEAR...

## NI construction students build a bright future at **SkillBuild** NI Regional Competition

Twelve of Northern Ireland's most talented apprentices could potentially be headed to the **SkillBuild** UK National Final in Milton Keynes this November after winning their categories in the regional heat. Hosted by the **Construction Industry Training Board NI (CITB NI)** in partnership with **CITB (GB)** and South West College, the annual **SkillBuild** NI Regional Competition was held at the Technology and Skills Centre in Killyhevlin, Enniskillen. The competition is a search for the top performers within construction apprenticeship programmes across NI, who will now be ranked against winners in other regional heats to determine who progresses to the National Final. This year's regional heat saw 93 of the brightest recruits and top performers within construction apprenticeship programmes competing in 12 categories: Brickwork, Furniture & Cabinet Making, Carpentry, Electrical Installation, Joinery, Painting & Decorating, Fire, Security, Drylining, Plastering, Plumbing, and Wall & Floor Tiling. All first-place winners received a complimentary pair of safety boots from Denis Wilson at Glenavay and Steel Blue. The event also saw Luke McIlwrath, who came second in carpentry, named as Haldane Fisher Young Apprentice of the Year, while the Hugh Gettinby Award for best trainer went to Jimmy Martin of SWC and the **SkillBuild** Appreciation Award to Paddy Maguire of SRC. Delivered by **CITB GB** and supported by the Department for the Economy and local construction companies, **SkillBuild** provides an opportunity to showcase the high level of skills and impressive talent within the



L-R: Sarah Travers, host, Luke McIlwrath (Haldane Fisher Young Apprentice of the Year) and Barry Neilson, Chief Executive, **CITB NI**.

workforce, as well as raising the status and standards of professional and technical education and training.

Barry Neilson OBE, Chief Executive of **CITB NI**, said, "A huge congratulations to all the apprentices who took part in the **SkillBuild** NI Regional Competition 2024. The event displayed remarkable talent and showcased the dedication of future construction leaders.

"Witnessing their enthusiasm highlights a promising future for the industry. Apprenticeships are crucial for industry growth, allowing businesses to shape their future workforce and develop necessary skills. I would like to take this opportunity to thank our partners **CITB (GB)** and SWC for the fantastic showcase of the NI talent pool throughout the

competition and we look forward to the **SkillBuild** UK National Finals in November."

Celine McCartan, Principal and Chief Executive, said, "We were honoured to host the **SkillBuild** NI regional competition at our Technology and Skills Centre in Enniskillen. It's an affirmation of our commitment to nurturing talent and providing a platform for skill development.

"The standard of work on display was exceptional and I wish all the winners every success as they progress to the next stage of the national competitions. Their success is a credit to the further education sector lecturers and partner employers who have been supporting them in advance of the intense competition."

For further details on **SkillBuild** NI and **CITB NI** support for apprenticeships and employers, visit: [www.citbni.org.uk](http://www.citbni.org.uk). Follow **CITBNI** on Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn #SkillBuildNI2024.



Paddy Maguire, SRC (**SkillBuild** Appreciation Award).



Jimmy Martin, SWC (Hugh Gettinby Award).





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TWELVE NI FINALISTS COULD POTENTIALLY PROGRESS TO THE **SKILLBUILD** UK NATIONAL FINAL, HELD IN MILTON KEYNES IN NOVEMBER...

## SkillBuild NI finalists 2024

- 1 Bricklaying: Matthew Carswell (SRC)
- 2 Furniture & Cabinet Making: David Magee (SERC)
- 3 Carpentry: Jeremia Guzik (NRC)
- 4 Joinery: Jamie Matthews (NRC)
- 5 Painting & Decorating: Kirsty Leigh Stewart (SRC)
- 6 Drylining: Thomas Donnelly (Errigal)
- 7 Plastering: Thomas Maguire (SRC)
- 8 Wall & Floor Tiling: Rebecca Gevigan (NWRC)
- 9 Fire Apprenticeship: Taylor Rollo (SERC)
- 10 Security Apprenticeship: Kenzie Calvert (BMC)
- 11 Electrical Installation: Jonathan Gough (SRC)
- 12 Plumbing: David Bateman Smith (SWC)

*Photo credit: Peter O'Hara Photography*