

Hairdressing student from Llanelli is cut above the rest after winning national competition

A 17-year-old from Llanelli has won a gold medal in the hairdressing final of a national skills competition.

Part of Skills Competitions Wales, and backed by the Welsh Government, Inclusive Skills competitions are designed to help equip young people who have learning difficulties or disabilities with essential life learning and employability skills for the future.

Caitlin Evans, who is studying a level 2 NVQ Diploma in Hairdressing, competed against seven other students from across Wales in a hairdressing challenge. The competitors were tasked with creating a bridal up-do on a model head within a two and a half hour time period, demonstrating technical styling skills they had learnt at college.

Caitlin, studying at Coleg Sir Gâr said she couldn't believe it when the judges announced her as the winner.

"I was really nervous at first but once I got started I realised it was a chance to show my creativity and I ended up coming up with a completely different style to the one I'd been practicing. I was relieved the risk paid off and I managed to win gold!

"Usually I work on real people rather than a model, but my up-do took a long time to complete with complex plaits and twists so I was glad I didn't have real person fidgeting around while I worked.

"I've always been interested in hairdressing and I can see myself working as a stylist or opening my own salon one day. With the experience of the competition under my belt, I feel like my options are endless."

More than 35 competitions are taking place this year, across a wide range of different vocations from plumbing and beauty therapy to aeronautical engineering and accountancy.

The successful Welsh competitors may go on to challenge youngsters from across the UK at the WorldSkills UK national finals, held at The Skills Show in Birmingham's NEC this November.

Minister for Skills and Science, Julie James said: "At the Skills Show last year, the Welsh team topped the leader board of UK regions winning a total of 45 medals, which demonstrates that we're producing some of the most highly skilled young people across the nation.

"In a year when Wales is celebrating legends of the past, competitions like these showcase the talent across the country and provide a platform for emerging Welsh legends of the future.

"Along with Caitlin's hard work and determination the support from her college is an important factor in her success, and I would like to extend a special thank you to all the local businesses, schools and colleges across Wales who support these talented individuals.

"I would like to congratulate Caitlin on her fantastic achievement and wish her the best of luck in the next stage of the competition and her future career."