

A nationwide search to find young people in Wales who are passionate about tackling climate change gets underway today.

The Environment Minister, Jane Davidson is launching a competition to find a group of 14 to 18 year olds who are up to the challenge of becoming Wales' official Climate Change Champions for 2011.

The successful champions will be tasked with spreading the message about the likely effects of climate change and with showing people in their own communities and across Wales how they can play their part in helping Wales to reduce its carbon footprint.

The Minister appealed to young people with an interest in helping Wales move to a sustainable, low carbon future to apply for this exciting opportunity. She said:

“Our ambition is to reduce the amount of greenhouse gases that Wales emits by 3% every year – but we can't do it alone. Everyone in Wales – individuals, communities and businesses need to do their bit and reduce their carbon footprint.

“We know that engaging young people is key to our success in this area, not only because of their passion and enthusiasm but also because it is they who will have to deal with the impacts of a changing climate.

“That is why we are looking to find an informed, inspiring and persuasive group of young people who can convince their families, friends, neighbours and school mates of the benefits of living more sustainable lives.

“This will be the fourth year in which we have selected Climate Change Champions for Wales. The standard so far has been incredibly high and the Champions have undertaken some truly impressive work in their efforts to get climate change messages out there.

“There’s no doubt that the 2011 Champions will have a lot to live up to but it is an excellent opportunity and I urge anyone with the necessary passion and skills to apply today. “

Sebastian Giraud-Jones, 2010 Climate Change Champion said:

“Being a champion has been a truly amazing experience. It has further opened my eyes to the increasing threat that is posed by climate change, and the experiences that I have gathered have been fantastic.

“I have met such a range of people - whether delegates from the commission, Ministers and local school children – and I can really look back at the end of my term and feel that I might just have made a difference.”

Cyril Nqaba Moyo, a 2010 Climate Change Champion said:

“To say that being a Climate Change Champion is amazing is an under statement.

“Not only does it give you the chance to influence to the way things are run, it also allows you to really test yourself and your capabilities. It is an incredible challenge and a great way of building up your skills. ”

The 2011 Champions will work together on a group project aimed at spreading Wales' key climate change messages. The Champions will also need to develop a high profile in their local community by attending key local events and working with the local media. They will be supported through the process by the Welsh Assembly Government.

The competition will close on Friday 19 November. You can access more information on the competition at www.walescarbonfootprint.gov.u