

# INSPIRING WOMEN IN BUSINESS AWARDS



**2026 AWARDS GUIDE**

**WE ARE  
NORTH EAST  
BUSINESS**



# CELEBRATING THE ACHIEVEMENTS OF WOMEN ACROSS OUR REGION'S BUSINESS COMMUNITY



**Alice Andreasen**  
Chief Corporate Affairs Officer,  
Newcastle International Airport



We're looking to recognise truly inspiring women across the North East business community. Those who make a difference in their field, to their businesses and colleagues, to their community and to our great region.

For over 200 years, the North East Chamber of Commerce has championed businesses in the region. We are inspired by the strength, determination and positivity of our business community, despite many challenges. You are the leaders, innovators and the beating heart driving this region forward.

**NOW IS THE TIME TO RECOGNISE YOUR ACHIEVEMENTS.**

## OUR HEADLINE SPONSOR



"Newcastle Airport is proud to headline sponsor the Inspiring Women in Business Awards for a third year. The Airport plays a major role in the North East's economy, contributing more than £1bn to the region each year, supporting around 3,500 onsite jobs and over 17,000 jobs in the wider supply chain.

"Supporting these awards is important to us because they celebrate the ambition, leadership and achievements of women across our region, while helping to shine a light on the career opportunities available across different sectors.

"With 120 rewarding roles across 20 departments, the Airport offers career opportunities for people at every stage. We look forward to celebrating the outstanding achievements of this year's nominees."



## KEY DATES

### 30 JUNE 2026

Submissions open

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### 4 SEPTEMBER 2026

Submissions close at noon

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### LATE SEPTEMBER 2026

Shortlist announced

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### 27 NOVEMBER 2026, 12:30PM

Inspiring Women In Business Awards Final at Newcastle Civic Centre  
Event drinks reception kindly sponsored by Hargreaves

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## IMPORTANT SUBMISSION INFORMATION

### ALL SUBMISSIONS REQUIRE:

- Contact name
  - Company name
  - Company address
  - Email address
  - Telephone number
  - Social handles
  - Companies House or charitable registration no.
  - Number of employees
- 

## ATTACHMENTS AND EVIDENCE

- Please include your company logo.
  - A maximum of three attachments (for example, testimonials, tables, graphs or photos) may be uploaded with your entry form.
  - Attachments must be image files only (JPG, GIF, PNG or TIF) and must not exceed 5MB in total. PDF files are not permitted.
  - Any files that exceed the attachment limit or total file size will be removed.
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## KEY INFORMATION

- Your entry must be submitted by noon on 4 September 2026.
- Please ensure you check the spelling of your entry and your company name. If you are a winner, this is how your business name will be displayed on the award.
- When you make any amendments to any part of your entry on Awards Force (our awards platform), please ensure you click the 'save' button before leaving that page. You can review your entries in Awards Force by scrolling down under 'my entries'.



# TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF ENTRY

- ⌘ Only fully paid NECC members can enter these awards.
  - ⌘ Members must apply under their current membership package.
  - ⌘ Entry to more than one category is permitted.
  - ⌘ Financial information will be treated in confidence but forms will be shared with a select group of individuals for judging purposes.
  - ⌘ Information from the entry may be used for the host's speech.
  - ⌘ All entries must be submitted electronically.
  - ⌘ Submissions should reflect your organisation's own work and voice. While AI tools may be used for basic editing, entries that appear primarily AI-generated or lack authentic evidence may be marked down.
  - ⌘ Any website links used within your entry will not be activated by the judges.
  - ⌘ Applicants must be authorised to enter their organisation.
  - ⌘ Category or headline sponsors are not permitted to apply to these awards in the same year as their sponsorship.
  - ⌘ No employee of North East Chamber of Commerce, British Chambers of Commerce or an accredited Chamber is entitled to enter.
  - ⌘ Entering an award does not guarantee that you will be shortlisted. Three or four businesses or individuals will be chosen to be shortlisted, with one winner announced at the Awards Final.
  - ⌘ The judging panel consists of representatives from each category sponsor, as well as representatives from individual businesses across the North East. Awards are judged via the Awards Force external platform.
  - ⌘ Incomplete entries will not be judged.
  - ⌘ Please note, you will be judged by the content on your form. There will not be a face to face interview.
  - ⌘ The judges' decision is final and no further correspondence will be entered into.
  - ⌘ Award winners will be announced at Newcastle Civic Centre.
  - ⌘ Please keep the afternoon of 27 November 2026 free to attend the awards if you are shortlisted (please note, there is a cost to attend the awards).
  - ⌘ By registering and completing an entry for the awards, you agree to these terms and conditions.
- i IF YOU NEED ADDITIONAL SUPPORT PLEASE CONTACT: SARAH.CONNOLLY@NECC.CO.UK OR ASHLEY.CARNEY@NECC.CO.UK.**

**APPLY NOW**



# BENEFITS OF ENTERING

**APPLY NOW**

**Free marketing** – being shortlisted improves brand awareness, maximises your visibility and promotes your business.

**You will receive an image/logo to promote that you are shortlisted or a winner** – you can use this on marketing materials, emails and socials.

**Celebrating hard work and success creates great PR opportunities.**

**Boost morale** – winning an award feels great. Employees will feel proud of being part of the business. It may also support recruitment.

**Stand out from your competition.**

**Increase your credibility** – a win is a sign of quality for potential customers.



# FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

## How do I enter?

After reading the key information and terms and conditions, visit [necc.co.uk](http://necc.co.uk) and follow the links to the Inspiring Women in Business Awards entry page. Register an account, choose the category you would like to enter and don't forget to save your progress.

## Is it free to enter?

Yes.

## Can non-members apply?

No. Entering the Inspiring Women in Business Awards is one of the many benefits of Chamber membership. If you're interested in finding out more email: [your@necc.co.uk](mailto:your@necc.co.uk).

## Can I enter more than one category?

Yes.

## Which award category do I enter?

Review the criteria for each category to see what fits you, your business or nominee best. Questions are listed on the award categories section of the website – [www.necc.co.uk](http://www.necc.co.uk).

## Can I nominate myself and/or a colleague or someone from another business?

Yes, you can nominate yourself, your business, a colleague or someone else from another business as long as the nominee is a Chamber member.

## Can I revisit my entry and submit it later?

Yes (but we do encourage you to start your application sooner rather than later).

## I've previously created an awards account and can't remember my password, what do I do?

Click the forgotten password link. You will receive an email from Awards Force. Check your spam. If you have any problems please contact our events co-ordinator: [sarah.connolly@necc.co.uk](mailto:sarah.connolly@necc.co.uk).

## Who am I competing with?

The awards are open to all Chamber members, both individuals and businesses, representing organisations of every size and sector across the North East.

## When are shortlists announced?

Late September.

## If I get shortlisted what happens next?

Shortlisted members will be announced on our social channels. The Awards Final event booking site will then open early for shortlisted businesses, you'll be able to book tables and tickets to the final for guests and colleagues before general sale. The Awards Final takes place on Friday 27 November at Newcastle Civic Centre.

## What do I wear to the final?

We do not often stipulate a dress code as we represent many business sectors, however as this is an awards event and special occasion we would recommend a touch of sparkle or a smart dress code.

## If I win at the final, what happens?

The winning individual or business will be announced. Depending on the category, the individual or representatives from the business will go on stage to accept the award. You will then have your photograph taken and return to your seat.

## If I win, will I receive a physical award?

Yes, you'll receive an award and a certificate, and after the event, you'll receive a logo for you to use on marketing materials, emails and socials.

**i IF YOU NEED ADDITIONAL SUPPORT PLEASE CONTACT: [SARAH.CONNOLLY@NECC.CO.UK](mailto:SARAH.CONNOLLY@NECC.CO.UK) OR [ASHLEY.CARNEY@NECC.CO.UK](mailto:ASHLEY.CARNEY@NECC.CO.UK).**



# 2026 AWARD CATE





# EGORIES

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# INSPIRING WOMAN IN BUSINESS: MULTIPLE AWARDS

Focusing on individuals within our member organisations who deserve recognition, be it for their contribution to their organisation, the region or to other colleagues. A role model who possesses passion and drive and whose achievements and energy inspire others. A woman who has overcome adversity and challenges, although this is not essential.

In this category, there are four awards: one for individuals within small businesses (under 50 employees), one for larger businesses (over 50 employees, including Partner members), one for our internationally trading businesses and one for new businesses.

## INSPIRING WOMAN IN BUSINESS

For small businesses with under 50 employees

## INSPIRING WOMAN IN BUSINESS

For larger businesses with over 50 employees

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**Handelsbanken**

## INSPIRING WOMAN IN BUSINESS

For our international trade members

## INSPIRING WOMAN IN BUSINESS - NEW BUSINESS AWARD

For start ups, sole traders and new businesses under 3 years

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**Sage**

You can nominate yourself, a colleague or a fellow Chamber member.



### **Financial details**

You will need to confirm the organisation this nominee is part of is not only reputable, but also financially stable.

### **To enter this category please provide the following information:**

- ⊗ A brief description of the business, the products or services it supplies, its customers and the markets it operates in. (Please also include countries the business operates in if applying for international business award).
- ⊗ A personal profile and background of the nominee.
- ⊗ An explanation of how the nominee inspires others and how their achievements have led them to become a role model, who possesses passion and drive and whose achievements and energy inspire all.
- ⊗ Demonstrate what internal or external initiatives they have undertaken to support and inspire others and the impact this has had.
- ⊗ Testimonials are required.
- ⊗ Summarise your application in 100 words (if shortlisted, this content may be used in host's speech or printed).

# MOST INSPIRING EMPLOYER: MULTIPLE AWARDS

Awarded to the member organisations which have made a significant contribution to the development and retention of women in their workforce, whilst inspiring the next generation of women in business.

In this category, there are two awards: one for small businesses (under 50 employees) and one for larger businesses (over 50 employees, including Partner members).

## MOST INSPIRING EMPLOYER

For small businesses with under 50 employees

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**INTUIT**

## MOST INSPIRING EMPLOYER

For larger businesses with over 50 employees

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**RE:GEN**  
GROUP

### Financial details

Please provide an overview of your turnover, net profit over the last three years and current net reserves. This information is collected to ensure the business applying is financially stable. Please note that we require an overview or, where exact figures aren't available, a projection is acceptable.

#### Please provide:

- 2023 turnover and net profit
- 2024 turnover and net profit
- 2025 turnover and net profit
- Current net reserves

#### To enter this category please provide the following information:

- A brief description of your business, the products or services you supply, your customers and the markets your business operates in.
- Women are strongly represented across the overall workforce and in senior leadership roles.

- Your organisation demonstrates internal or external initiatives to support your talent or inspire the next generation of women in business.
- Detail the impact of these internal or external initiatives (including the development and retention of your workforce and the impact on inspiring the next generation of women in business).
- Outline the overall trend in your sales turnover and profit development, together with a brief description of any key events that have led to any changes where appropriate.
- What are the objectives for your business over the next three years and how will these be achieved?
- What external factors have affected your business and how have you dealt with those effects?
- Testimonials from staff members will be required.
- Summarise your application in 100 words (if shortlisted, this content may be used in host's speech or printed).

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“Winning the Women in Business Charity & CSR Award was a true honour. My work has never been about profit or personal recognition, it has always been about purpose, community, and creating meaningful change for children and families facing hardship.

“Like many people in the charity sector, my journey was shaped by personal challenges, and being able to channel those experiences into something positive that now supports thousands of families is something I am incredibly proud of.

“As a younger woman in a leadership position, this recognition was particularly special. It has provided an opportunity to amplify important conversations about child poverty, community action, and the role charities play in supporting people through difficult times. It spotlights what can be achieved when you have a strong tribe around you. No award is won alone and I am incredibly fortunate to be surrounded by an incredible team, volunteers, supporters and partners who share the same vision and values.”

**STEPH CAPEWELL**  
**FOUNDER AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE**  
**LOVE, AMELIA**

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# APPRENTICE OF THE YEAR

Would you like to recognise an outstanding apprentice you have within your organisation, or know personally or professionally, who represents the next generation of women in business?



## Financial details

You will need to confirm the organisation this nominee is part of is not only reputable, but also financially stable.

### To enter this category please provide the following information:

- ⊗ A brief description of the business, the products or services it supplies, its customers and the markets the business operates in.
- ⊗ Apprenticeship subject, start date and completion date (the individual should be a current apprentice or have completed an apprenticeship between January 2026 to Summer 2026).
- ⊗ Explain how the nominee has demonstrated exceptional skills as an apprentice, as well as exemplary drive, determination and/or an innovative mind and initiative.
- ⊗ Detail how the apprentice has had a positive impact on the culture within the business.
- ⊗ Demonstrate what influence the apprentice has had from a commercial perspective.
- ⊗ Explain how the nominee inspires others and how their achievements have led them to become a role model.
- ⊗ Nominees are welcome from a STEM background or male-dominated sector.
- ⊗ Summarise your application in 100 words (if shortlisted, this content may be used in host's speech or printed).



# ONE TO WATCH

This category is open to individuals doing amazing work. One to watch might be a future leader, a rising star with an exciting future ahead. Alternatively, the nominee could be an individual who is experienced in their field - a future star to look out for and 'one to watch'.

## Financial details

You will need to confirm the organisation this nominee is part of is not only reputable, but also financially stable.

## To enter this category please provide the following information:

- ⊗ A brief description of the business, and the products or services it supplies.
- ⊗ A personal profile and background of the nominee.
- ⊗ Explain how the nominee might be a future leader, a rising star with an exciting future ahead.

- ⊗ Explain how the nominee inspires others and how their achievements have led them to become a role model.
- ⊗ Demonstrate why the nominee is 'one to watch'.
- ⊗ Summarise your application in 100 words (if shortlisted, this content may be used in host's speech or printed).

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# INSPIRING WOMAN IN BUSINESS - BUSINESS LEADER OF THE YEAR

This category is open to inspiring women who have a strong regional profile and have achieved accomplishments of significance over their career. Nominees will possess qualities of vision, innovation, entrepreneurial drive and leadership.

A woman who goes above and beyond, with evidence of giving back to business and the community and/or individuals. A role model to all - a truly inspiring woman.

## Financial details

Please provide an overview of company turnover, net profit over the last three years and current net reserves. This information is collected to ensure the business is financially stable.

Please note that we require an overview or, where exact figures aren't available, a projection is acceptable.

### Please provide:

- 2023 turnover and net profit
- 2024 turnover and net profit
- 2025 turnover and net profit
- Current net reserves

### To enter this category please provide the following information:

- A brief description of the business, the products or services it supplies, its customers and the markets and countries the business operates in.
- A personal profile and background of the nominee.

- Demonstrate the nominee's competence in their chosen field and how this has benefited the business or the wider community in the North East.
- Nominees will demonstrate outstanding leadership, and a strong track record of building sales and profitability while inspiring others.
- Outline the overall trend in sales turnover and profit development, together with a brief description of any key events that have led to any changes where appropriate.
- Tell us if, and how, external factors have affected the business either positively or negatively. How has the nominee shown entrepreneurship in dealing with it?
- Summarise your application in 100 words (if shortlisted, this content may be used in host's speech or printed).

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sweeney  
miller **LAW**



# COMMUNITY AND CSR INSPIRING WOMAN OF THE YEAR: BUSINESS AWARD

This will be awarded to the individual who has actively been involved in supporting charity or the local community. The nominee could also be someone who has implemented initiatives and champions corporate social responsibility. The winner will be passionate about making a difference.

Please note, there are two other categories. One for charities and one for social enterprises.

## Financial details

You will need to confirm the organisation this nominee is part of is not only reputable, but also financially stable.

## To enter this category please provide the following information:

- ⊗ A brief description of the business, the products or services it supplies, its customers and the markets it operates in.
- ⊗ A brief description of the nominee's role within the business.
- ⊗ Detail specific initiatives that the nominee has implemented that have made a difference to the business, local community and/or the environment (from July 2024 to present).
- ⊗ Outline the impact the above initiatives have had on the company and the people within the company.
- ⊗ Supporting evidence such as cost savings, donations to charity, time dedicated to initiatives and photographic evidence. Please compile into documents to upload.
- ⊗ Testimonials will be required e.g. schools, charity, trustees, local community.
- ⊗ Extra credit will be given if the nominee's achievements are outside her employment.
- ⊗ Summarise your application in 100 words (if shortlisted, this content may be used in host's speech or printed).

Sponsored by  **Hargreaves**



# COMMUNITY AND CSR INSPIRING WOMAN OF THE YEAR: CHARITY AWARD

This category will be awarded to an individual who is employed by a charity, voluntary or third sector organisation, with registered charity status (excluding social enterprises and CICs, please see additional category). This person could be responsible for implementing new services or campaigns, or be a champion for their colleagues ensuring wellbeing within the organisation.

The nominee could be someone who has implemented initiatives to champion and enable corporate social responsibility with partner/supporter businesses. The winner will be passionate about making a difference and be able to demonstrate the impact their work has had on the organisation's beneficiaries or income.

## Financial details

You will need to confirm the organisation this nominee is part of is not only reputable, but also financially stable.

## To enter this category please provide the following information:

- ⊗ A brief description of the organisation or services it supplies, its beneficiaries and the area it operates in.
- ⊗ A brief description of the nominee's role within the organisation.
- ⊗ Detail specific initiatives that the nominee has implemented within their organisation that have made a difference to the organisation, local community, beneficiaries and/or the environment (from July 2024 to present).

- ⊗ Outline the impact the above initiatives have had on the organisation, the people within the organisation and the beneficiaries.
- ⊗ Supporting evidence such as cost savings, income generated, time dedicated to initiatives, partner business initiatives/impact and photographic evidence. Please compile into documents to upload.
- ⊗ Testimonials will be required e.g. colleagues, partner businesses, trustees, local community, beneficiaries.
- ⊗ Extra credit will be given for achievements and/or commitments outside of the nominee's role description.
- ⊗ Summarise your application in 100 words (if shortlisted, this content may be used in host's speech or printed).

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Community  
Foundation  
North East



# COMMUNITY AND CSR INSPIRING WOMAN OF THE YEAR: SOCIAL ENTERPRISE

This new award recognises an inspiring woman making a difference in a social enterprise and using business as a force for good. Open to women in social enterprises, the category celebrates leadership, innovation and measurable impact, including positive social, environmental or community change. A social enterprise is defined by its purpose, not its legal form. It is a business with primarily social objectives, where surpluses are principally reinvested in the business or community rather than used to maximise profit for shareholders or owners. Social enterprises are also expected to generate most of their income through trade, rather than relying on grants and donations.

The winner will be passionate about making a difference, resilient, with strong values and evidence of sustainable impact.

## Financial details

You will need to confirm the organisation this nominee is part of is not only reputable, but also financially stable.

## To enter this category please provide the following information:

- ⊗ A brief description of the business, including its products or services, target customer groups, and the markets in which it operates.
- ⊗ A brief description of the nominee's role within the business.
- ⊗ Detail specific initiatives that the nominee has implemented within their business that have made a difference to the business, local community, beneficiaries and/or the environment (from July 2024 to present).
- ⊗ Outline the measurable impact the above initiatives have had on the business, its employees, customers and beneficiaries.
- ⊗ Provide a brief overview of the business's social mission and explain how its profits or surpluses are reinvested to create social, community and/or environmental impact.
- ⊗ Supporting evidence such as cost savings, community benefit, partnerships, environmental outcomes, volunteering hours. Include photographs, testimonials, press coverage, impact reports, or other relevant material.
- ⊗ Explain how the nominee has helped make the business more commercially viable and less reliant on grants and donations.
- ⊗ Summarise your application in 100 words (if shortlisted, this content may be used in host's speech or printed).

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**NorthEast  
Enterprise  
Agency**



**NORTH EAST**  
Chamber of Commerce

[WWW.NECC.CO.UK](http://www.necc.co.uk)

# 20 INSPIRING WOMEN IN 26 BUSINESS AWARDS

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