

Five young entrepreneurs from Scotland win national award

Five of this year's Young Innovator Award winners, announced today by Innovate UK and The Prince's Trust, are from Scotland. The winners will receive a £5,000 grant, one-on-one business coaching and an allowance to cover living costs.

The Scottish innovators looking to make the world a better place are:

- Nina Birchard, 24, Glasgow, who has designed the Newborn Rescue Towel, a low cost emergency medical device which provides thermal support and the correct positioning to aid resuscitation in newborns.
- Lucy Fisher, 25, Aberdeen, who has taken a childhood passion for knitting and turned it into a business. Knit It aims to bring knitting into the 21st century via a new digital platform which enables knitters to have a choice in how they follow a pattern and guides them through creating their new designs.
- Elena Höge, 28, Edinburgh, who is creating educational games like Wholesome, a mobile forest school experience that teaches children and adults about nature, including how to forage and cook with wild food.
- Iona Mackenzie, 26, Edinburgh, whose Talk and Grow business aims to take the stress out of finding a therapist for those in need of support in Edinburgh with an online matching and booking platform to pair clients with a number of local counsellors.
- Petra Baiba Olehno, 30, a Glasgow-based Latvian who wants to create REPAIREL, a one-stop-shop for buying ethical footwear online which allows people to compare information about shoes and brands.

The Young Innovators Awards recognise young people from across the UK with great business ideas who have the potential to become successful entrepreneurs and future leaders in innovation.

Following an unprecedented level of entries, with an 87% increase in applications year-on-year, 64 young people have started the New Year with a boost after getting the coveted award, double the number of award winners/recipients of previous years.

With recent research showing over a third of 18 to 34 year olds want to launch an independent enterprise in 2021, compared to 28% of 35 to 54 year olds, it's even more important the support is available to those who want to venture into starting a business.

The winners from Scotland, are five of 64 inspiring young people who will receive Young Innovators Awards this year, each benefitting from a £5,000 grant, one-on-one business coaching and an allowance to cover living costs. The programme is set to continue awarding young people from diverse backgrounds until at least 2023. This year, 49% of the winners are female; nearly a third are Black, Asian or from an ethnic minority background; 17%

have a disability and the projects cover all regions across the UK.

From a way to help stroke survivors on the road to rehabilitation to support for parents to protect their children online, all of this year's Young Innovators have ideas that promise to address current challenges. Ideas this year span everything from technology to physical and mental health and from sustainability to fashion.

Commenting on her award and project, Nina Birchard said:

It is a simple, non-invasive positioning aid which ensures open airways while providing thermal support and an aide-mémoire to guide the user through the procedure. It is a novel, game-changing product which is simple to use and easy to produce.

The Young Innovators Award seems like an amazing, supportive platform to learn, build and launch your business idea. I am so excited to get stuck in!

Emily Nott, Head of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion at Innovate UK says:

With 2020 proving to be an incredibly difficult year, maintaining our focus on Young Innovators was a priority for Innovate UK since finding the great entrepreneurial minds of the future is more important than ever. Working alongside this year's winners, Innovate UK will help them grow and develop their business idea to make the world a better, and more innovative place. We can't wait to see what they achieve this year.

UK Government Minister for Scotland Iain Stewart said:

It's fantastic to see young people so passionate about starting a business. The UK Government is committed to encouraging entrepreneurship and rewarding innovation and hard work.

Investing in young people has never been more important as we bounce back from the coronavirus pandemic. We have seen truly exceptional ideas from some very worthy Scottish winners. I'm delighted to see their hard work pay off and I congratulate everyone involved.

Details on all 64 Young Innovators can found here. If you're an inspiring young innovator, check out how Innovate UK could support you [here](#)