

News story: Ideas mean business: winning young innovators announced

Innovate UK has announced the 24 winners of its Ideas mean business awards, which were open to applicants aged 18 to 30-years-old who were not in full-time education or employment.

The Ideas mean business campaign is a partnership between Innovate UK and [The Prince's Trust](#), designed to support young people to make their ideas a reality, regardless of their background.

Introducing the young innovators

Winners' ideas range from sustainable product design to online businesses and apps.

27-year-old Adam Root from Felstead in Essex will receive support to develop his sustainability-focussed product design company, Inheriting Earth.

Inspired by his love of the ocean, Adam is developing a filter system to help reduce the flow of microfibres – tiny plastic particles that enter the water system when we wash our clothes.



27-year-old Adam Root will receive support for his sustainable product design.

Laura Niehorster from Sketty in Wales will receive support for her company Proud Pads.

The 27-year-old has developed a sanitary product that can be washed and reused for up to 5 years. The pads could help to reduce sanitary waste: in the UK we throw away up to 200,000 tonnes every year [according to the Women's Environmental Network](#).



Laura Niehorster, from Wales, has designed a sustainable, reusable sanitary pad.

Watch videos about some of the other young innovators we're supporting

Stephanie Rolando, 23, on her business, Room for Help

[The Young Innovators – Stephanie Rolando](#)

Joshua Akorah, 22, on innovating in game design

[The Young Innovators – Joshua Akorah](#)

Leah Bertram, 27, on creative inspiration and innovation

[The Young Innovators – Leah Bertram](#)

[Meet all of the winning young innovators in our brochure.](#)

[Go to the full playlist of videos featuring our young innovators.](#)

Encouraging diversity in innovation

The campaign was launched following research commissioned by Innovate UK and The Prince's Trust.

Carried out by [YouGov](#), the report explored how disadvantaged young people felt about innovation and entrepreneurship. It revealed that, while this group is interested in entrepreneurship, there are significant barriers preventing them from starting their own businesses.

Ideas mean business was devised to encourage and empower young people from any background to innovate and be successful.

Each of the winners will receive a package of support to help them develop their innovative business or idea. The package includes:

- one-on-one coaching from an innovation champion
- funding to support the development of their business
- an allowance to cover living costs

[Views of young, disadvantaged adults: read the report.](#)

Supporting the next generation of disrupters and entrepreneurs

Sam Gyimah, Minister of State for Universities, Science, Research and Innovation said:

We are a nation of innovators and inventors and these Innovate UK awards showcase some of the greatest young talent we have in this country.

We have committed a big increase in the amount we as a country invest in R&D – from 1.7% today to 2.4% by 2027. This could see an additional £80 billion spent on developing the ideas of tomorrow and supporting the next generation of disrupters and entrepreneurs.

Ian Campbell, Executive Chair, of Innovate UK, which is part of [UK Research and Innovation](#), commented:

Innovation is the lifeblood of the UK, driving economic growth and creating a positive social impact.

The government's modern Industrial Strategy aims to break down the barriers that prevent talent from growing and potential being

realised, engaging young people in business innovation is a crucial part of that.

I'm incredibly proud to announce the inspiring winners of our Ideas mean business awards today. In telling their stories, we now hope to demonstrate to other young people from all backgrounds right across the UK that they too could transform an idea into a viable business.

[Find out how Innovate UK supports diversity and inclusion.](#)

[Search for other innovation funding opportunities.](#)