

Women leading the way in breaking down boundaries in science and innovation

- Government unveils almost £3 million new fund for visionary, entrepreneurial female innovators
- 10 female inventors will receive £50,000 each to develop solutions for climate change, energy efficiency and health issues
- support for women and science and innovation comes on International Women's Day and during British Science Week

Over 100 entrepreneurial women and young people are set to benefit from government-backed funds to turn inspiring ideas into thriving businesses.

Today (8 March 2020), the UK's first dedicated female Science Minister, Amanda Solloway, committed almost £3 million and a package of business support to help inventions by women and young people like clean energy solutions and healthcare services.

Female entrepreneurs could contribute £250 billion to the UK economy if they started and scaled their businesses at the same rate as men.

Speaking on International Women's Day, Science Minister Amanda Solloway said:

Looking through the UK's history, we find inspirational women in every decade, from Ada Lovelace to Rosalind Franklin and Dorothy Hodgkin. Their discoveries had a profound impact on all our lives.

We are committed to supporting women and young people and opening up new opportunities for them. Initiatives like the Women in Innovation Awards and the Young Innovators' Awards will help the next generation of inventors turn their unique concepts into businesses.

Of the government's funding commitment, £2.2 million will go to the [Young Innovators' Awards](#). In partnership with The [Prince's Trust](#), the government-backed award will support young people with creative and ground-breaking business ideas to turn these into reality. The package will include a £5,000 grant, one-on-one coaching and an allowance to cover living costs. The 3-year national programme aims to target 18-30 years olds from a variety of backgrounds.

Ben Marson, Director of Partnerships at The Prince's Trust:

At The Prince's Trust we believe that every young person, no matter their background, should have the chance to thrive in work. We know the immense potential and entrepreneurial spirit of UK young people but not everyone has the opportunity to turn their ideas into

reality.

Working with partners like Innovate UK on the Young Innovators initiative allows us to encourage and enable entrepreneurship and innovation among more young people and bring diverse ideas and businesses into the economy.

A further £500,000 will be provided to pioneering female entrepreneurs to develop innovations such as those to tackle climate change, developing new treatments and services for healthcare patients and cleaner transport. Ten female inventors will be awarded with a cash injection of £50,000 each, as well as receive coaching and mentoring.

Ian Campbell, interim Executive Chair, Innovate UK, has said:

Diversity in businesses is a proven driver of economic growth. Through our focused campaigns we have shown how Innovate UK's support has enabled winners to embrace innovation, expand and refine global product ranges, and continue to grow and develop their own diverse teams.

By continuing these efforts we can help bring attention to many inspirational role models for our next generation of innovators, strengthening the UK as a world leader in innovation.

Today's funding announcement forms part of the government's ambitions to significantly boost research and development fund across the UK – with the clear ambition to reach 2.4% by 2027.

The [Alison Rose Review of Female Entrepreneurship](#) estimated that an additional £250 billion could be contributed to the UK economy if female entrepreneurs started and scaled their businesses at the same rate as men.

Women in Innovation Awards

Through the Women in Innovation Awards, established by Innovate UK, 10 female inventors will be awarded with a cash injection of £50,000 each, as well as receive coaching and mentoring.

Previous winners of the Women in Innovation Awards have had a huge impact developing ideas while creating a new community of female entrepreneurs, proving that anything is possible, including:

- Daniela Paredes Fuentes the creator of Gravity Sketch, software that allows designers to sketch in 3D.
- Agnes Czako who invented AirEx, a smart-tech airbrick that could help householders save money on their energy bills by improving the energy efficiency of tens of millions of UK homes.
- Dr Debbie Wake who is the CEO, co-founder and clinical lead for My Diabetes My Way – a self-management platform for diabetes patients.

Since the launch of the Women in Innovation programme in 2016, the number of women leading applications to Innovate UK has increased by 70%.

As part of the Women in Innovation programme, the government also announced today:

- the ongoing rollout of purple plaques at UK schools to celebrate award winners, engage students and leave schools with a lasting connection to women's roles in innovation
- a new partnership with Founders4Schools to highlight the importance of women-led businesses engaging with schools to inspire future innovators
- annual Global Business Innovation Programmes that showcase UK women innovators and provide them with access to international research and innovation opportunities and build networks across different countries

Young Innovators' Awards

As well as supporting women in innovation, Amanda Solloway today announced support for young people with new and creative ideas. The scheme is backed by [Innovate UK](#), who will partner with the Prince's Trust to deliver the Young Innovators programme – a 3-year national programme, which aims to target 18-30-year olds from diverse backgrounds.

Previous female recipients of the Young Innovators' Awards include:

- Yagmur Masmaz who created GreenBook, an erasable whiteboard notebook with customisable, reusable pages
- Claire Skelton who produces hand-made contemporary jewellery from reclaimed metal
- Laua Neihorster received funding for her sustainable, reusable sanitary pad design, which can be washed and reused for up to 5 years

The programme will comprise of annual competitions for Young Innovators' awards alongside an Ideas Mean Business' communications campaign to encourage young people to make their ideas a reality. Roadshows across the UK will inspire and engage young people to get involved in science and innovative projects, supporting the government's work to level up opportunities for research and development around the country.

Dates for the Young Innovators' regional roadshows are:

About Innovate UK

Innovate UK is part of [UK Research and Innovation](#), a non-departmental public body funded by a grant-in-aid from the UK government.

Innovate UK drives productivity and economic growth by supporting businesses to develop and realise the potential of new ideas, including those from the UK's world-class research base.