



HULL & EAST YORKSHIRE  
**BUSINESS  
AWARDS**

**ENTRY PACK 2026**

[www.heybusinessawards.co.uk](http://www.heybusinessawards.co.uk)





# WELCOME TO THE HEY BUSINESS AWARDS!

**Celebrating excellence, innovation, and outstanding achievements in our vibrant business community.**

We've created this Entry Pack to provide you with all the key information in one place. Inside, you'll find everything you need to know about the awards – including an overview of each category, answers to frequently asked questions and guidance on how to enter.

Each award category is designed to offer a flexible framework – allowing you to interpret it in a way that best reflects your business story.

Our advice? Be bold, be authentic and tell us what truly sets you apart. Your challenge is to impress the judges and showcase why your business deserves to be recognised.

You'll also find information about the judging process, key dates to remember and what happens if your entry is shortlisted.

For more detailed information, full terms and conditions and to submit your entry online, please visit [www.HEYbusinessawards.co.uk](http://www.HEYbusinessawards.co.uk).

**Good luck!**

# FAQS & KEY INFO ....

## Who can enter?

We welcome entries from all businesses whose base, or a substantial proportion of business, is based within the area of Hull and East Yorkshire (postcodes HU1-HU20, YO25, YO26, YO42 and YO43).

Agencies and third parties may enter on behalf of businesses providing the business nominated is aware of the entry and has approved the content in the application form.

You may enter a maximum of three categories, but you must complete a separate submission for each and tailor your entry to suit the specific category.

Businesses that won a Business Award in 2025 are not eligible to enter the same category in 2026 and must select an alternative category.

The awards are **free** to enter.

## What do I need to do to enter?

You must submit entries online at [www.heybusinessawards.co.uk](http://www.heybusinessawards.co.uk) on or before midnight on Friday 18 September 2026. Late entries can only be accepted with the discretion of HEY Business Awards. We cannot accept responsibility for entries lost or delayed during transmission.

## Specifications

For all categories you must upload your entry using our online entry form. Please also include a high resolution logo of your business. The submission should not exceed the word limit for each category. Ensure your text is embedded into the entry form and not on an attached PDF.

Please ensure you submit your financial performance for the Start-Up, Growth Award, Small and Large Business of the Year - note this information is treated in the strictest of confidence.

Businesses are only eligible to submit one entry across the following categories: Start-Up Business, Growth Award, Small Business, or Large Business of the Year. Choose the category where you believe you have the strongest chance of success.

## Confidentiality

Information provided in the entry form will be viewed only by the judging panel. If there is any information that is sensitive, please highlight this on the form.

## Judging

Desktop judging will take place week commencing 28 September, during which a shortlist of three entries per category will be selected. Once confirmed, the shortlist will be published online.

Following this, the judging panel will visit each shortlisted business in person. After all visits have been completed, the panel will reconvene to determine the overall winner in each category.

The judges' decision is final, and no correspondence will be entered into either before or after the judging process. Please note that the Chair of the Judging Panel reserves the right to overrule the panel's decision if deemed necessary.

## Top tips:

When completing your entry, make sure you carefully review the category criteria and clearly demonstrate how you meet each point. Judges will score entries against this criteria, so providing clear evidence is essential.

Don't just tell us how great you or your team are - show us! Provide clear, demonstratable evidence to back up your claims.

## Shortlist and winners

The shortlist will be announced on Wednesday 14 October. If your entry has been shortlisted, you will be notified via email.

Shortlisted entrants will be required to take part in the filming of a short video, which will be showcased on the awards evening.

Winners will be announced at the Hull & East Yorkshire Business Awards Dinner, taking place at the DoubleTree by Hilton, Hull, on Thursday 19 November 2026.



# CATEGORIES AND CRITERIA

## Rising Star

They've got heaps of potential and they're already making a difference in their businesses. A leader of the future and the 'one to watch'.

### The judges will be looking for someone who:

- Is under 25 years of age or under on 19 November 2026.
- Is thriving in the workplace and has the potential to become a future leader.
- Demonstrates commitment to personal development and progression
- Shows outstanding contribution to the workplace - in particular, areas or projects where they have exceeded expectations.
- Demonstrates inspirational levels of achievement and attainment.
- Is a role model for peers.

## Entrepreneur of the Year

A business person who can't stop having ideas, creating prosperity for themselves and for others.

### Judges will be looking for someone who can demonstrate:

- How their actions and strategies have been instrumental to the success of the business.
- Evidence of strong financial performance, including the clear identification of an opportunity that has had a measurable impact on the success of business.
- Enterprising behaviours such as participation, risk-taking, management and leadership, vision, originality and innovation.
- How they have overcome barriers to achieve at a high standard (ie social, geographical or physical).
- A positive impact on the wider economy and local communities through employment, additional work as mentors or in the voluntary sector.

Nominations can be made by the entrant if they run their own business, or a sponsor or nominee from the business they work for.

## Innovation Award

Who is doing things differently? Who is really pushing the boundaries and creating an example for others to follow? Celebrating inventive thinking, groundbreaking ideas, products or system developments and creativity in business.

### Judges will be looking for businesses that:

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- Have a clear vision of what the innovation project, product, system or process had to achieve.
- Can detail how the product was developed. Can evidence a gain in revenue or market share.
- Are able to detail the overall benefits to the business and its customers

# CATEGORIES AND CRITERIA

## Environmental & Sustainability

Who's not just talking the talk, but actually walking the walk when it comes to sustainability. This business is leading the way and pushing the boundaries.

### What the judges are looking for a business which:

- Has a clear, joined-up plan for sustainability -not just one-off actions
- Can show real progress, with evidence of the impact it's having
- Has found business benefits or new opportunities through being more sustainable
- Has buy-in from the whole team -from leadership to the shop floor
- Works with customers, suppliers or the community to make a wider difference
- Is thinking about people and planet, not just profits - and is linking their work to the bigger global goals like the UN's Sustainable Development Goals

A business that's taking action to reduce its own impact, but also thinking bigger - creating positive change in the wider world too. You don't need to be a big company to enter. What matters is your passion and the impact you're making.

## Charity of the Year

Which organisation is making a real difference to the lives of others? Let's put their name in lights!

### Judges will be looking for evidence of:

- A financially successful business
- Transparency, accountability, and good governance in its operations, including financial management and reporting.
- The ways the charity engages with the local community and forms partnerships with other organisations and/or stakeholders.
- Innovative approaches to fundraising and delivering support.
- The tangible impact, achievements and positive changes the charity brings to its beneficiaries. Include details about the beneficiaries and the number of individuals it supports.
- A clear business plan and measurable results.

The winning charity will need to demonstrate not just how much money it raises or spends, but also how it uses fundraising and the contribution of volunteers to make a significant difference to those they work for and the local community

## Team of the Year

This category recognises exceptional teams who have demonstrated an outstanding performance over the past year.

It celebrates close knit, well-drilled teams who have achieved significant business objectives and are pushing the business forward.

### The judges will be looking for:

- Achievement of objectives
- Evidence of collaboration, communication and teamwork both within the team and with other departments.
- Innovative approaches, creative problem solving and implementation of new ideas which have contributed to the team's success.
- Measurable positive impact the team has had on the business, such as improvements on efficiency, productivity, profitability or customer satisfaction.

Eligible entries include departments within companies (eg. IT/HR), project teams or teams which have come together in collaboration.

# CATEGORIES AND CRITERIA

## Best Place to Work

Who goes out of their way to create a workplace where people thrive and the days fly by?

**Judges will be looking for a business which:**

- Provides a good work-life balance and well-being initiatives.
- Offers rewards and recognition.
- Delivers exceptional training and offers career progression.
- Opens opportunities to all.
- Evidence of a motivated workforce.

Tell us how you meet staff needs and retention rates remain consistently high.

## Start-Up Business of the Year

They're new and they're going places. Let's celebrate them and help them take their next step.

**The judges will be looking for:**

- A business that has been established within the past two years (on the closing date of 18 September 2026).
- Demonstrates evidence of entrepreneurship and/or innovation.
- Has defied challenging economic conditions to succeed, grow and thrive.
- Can evidence financial success, stability and future growth potential.

## Small Business of the Year

They may be small but they're making a big impact on the business community in our region and beyond.

To celebrate a small business (with fewer than 50 employees) that combines commercial success with other elements, such as customer service, social impact, innovation and developing talent.

**The judges will be looking for:**

- A business (with fewer than 50 employees) that combines commercial success with other elements, such as customer service, social impact, innovation and developing talent.
- Details of financial performance, evidence of success and potential for growth.
- Outline of long-term plans and company strategy.
- Overview of product and service development.
- What staff training and development plans are in place.

# CATEGORIES AND CRITERIA

## Growth Award

They've expanded quickly and sustainably, or they've supported others to do so.

### The judging panel will be looking for:

- A growing medium-sized business that has taken tangible steps to increase its scale and impact.
- Strong financial performance including evidence of increase in turnover and/or profit.
- Inspirational leadership and effective management
- How the company has performed against its growth plan and an overview of future plans to sustain and further this growth.

## Large Business of the Year

A leading light in the region, making a difference through employment and using local supply chains.

This category is open to companies with more than 51 employees.

### Judges will be looking at all aspects of company performance, including:

- A company with more than 51 employees that has demonstrated exceptional performance and serves as a benchmark of success and inspiration.
- Evidence of a strong managerial and financial performance including revenue, profitability and market share.
- Future growth and development plans and clear strategic vision.
- Staff training, career development opportunities, employee welfare and a positive workplace culture.

## Lifetime Achievement Award

This award recognises a leader, one who inspires, creates opportunity for others and who will be heralded for making positive, lasting differences to the local economy and community.

### We will be looking for:

- A minimum of 10 years' commitment to Hull and East Yorkshire, and a sustained contribution to the local business landscape.
- Senior leadership experience with a proven track record of business growth or transformation.
- Clear contribution to regional economic growth, jobs or skills development.
- Evidence of giving back through mentoring, charity or voluntary work, education engagement or support for local causes and partnerships.
- A lasting legacy and influence beyond their own organisation.
- A widely respected role model who has helped raise aspirations and standards across Hull and East Yorkshire

# KEY DATES

- Launch date:** Wednesday 10 June
- Closing date:** Friday 18 September
- Desktop judging:** w/c 28 September
- Shortlist announced:** w/c 12 October
- Judges' visits:** w/c 12 October
- Awards ceremony:** Thursday 19 November



# FOR ENTRY QUERIES

Please email in the first instance:

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