

Blackwood Design Competition – discovering the rising stars of design



A competition will be held next week in a Dragons' Den format to find the new, innovative ideas to help the day to day lives of those with physical or mental disabilities.

A hands-free computer mouse and an in-flight wheelchair are two of the short-listed entries battling it out at the Blackwood Design Competition intended to find the next rising star of design.

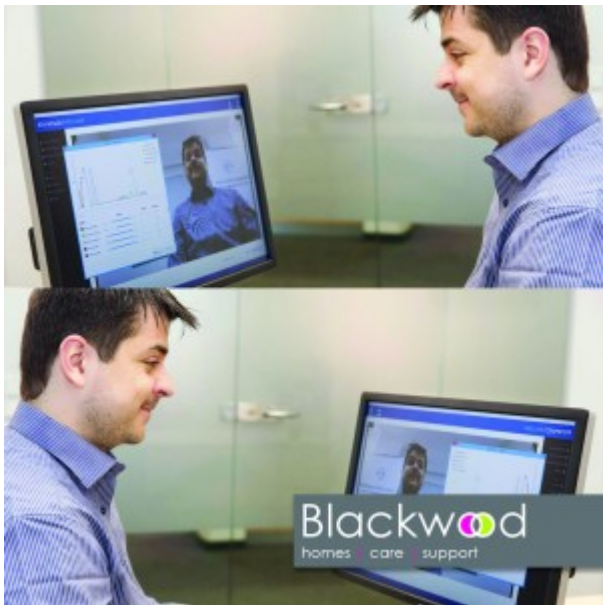
Dozens of ingenious entries were received and the four inventions on the shortlist have now been revealed, with a spoon that doesn't spill and a bus interior that can be adapted to allow wheelchair users to sit wherever they like, making up the finalists.



Sup spoon



Peter Short



Markus Proell



Grant Douglas

This year, the competition will take place on Friday 20th November at Blackwood's offices at Dundee Street, Edinburgh and will see the four selected inventors pitch for the top prize.

The winner will receive a cash prize of £1000 and invaluable backing from Blackwood to make their creative design into a working reality.

The competition has seen its previous winners go on to achieve a great deal of success, and this year's entries have come from all over the globe, with competitors located as far away as Canada and Pakistan.

Last year's winner, Kirubin Pillay, was delighted to see his Eye-Controlled Wheelchair scoop the coveted prize and has since taken the successful design to Zurich to feature in The Cybathlon competition.

He said: "I would definitely recommend the competition to anyone who has ideas that can help people with mental or physical disabilities.

"The opportunities are huge and you get to compare design ideas with other budding inventors – and see what they are working on, it's a very creative atmosphere."

Colin Foskett, Head of Innovation at Blackwood, believes the competition is a perfect example of the Blackwood ethos, which aims to provide beneficial digital and technological improvements to vulnerable groups of people.

He said: "At Blackwood, our aim is to enable our customers and tenants to live their life to the full and by investing in future technologies and equipment we believe we are successfully able to do this.

"By supporting, and promoting, new design talent we aim to

provide a platform for individuals to showcase their designs whilst also providing a helpful innovative technology to those with disabilities, the elderly and those with impairments.

“Some of the designs we have previously seen are revolutionary and have benefited the lives of many others, and the designs by this year’s four shortlisted finalists are no different.

“Many previous entrants have gone on to achieve great things so it is definitely a worthwhile opportunity for all budding designers out there.”

Colin will be joined on the judging panel by David Reid – Chairperson of Remap Scotland, Niall Ritchie – player for Lothian Phoenix Wheelchair Basketball club, David Keenan – Inclusivity Director at Neatebox, as well as some Blackwood tenants and members of the Board.

Blackwood has been a leading name for 40 years in the housing and care sector, operating all across Scotland and is renowned for its work in adapting properties to let people who are disabled, elderly or have sensory impairments, to live independently.

The four competing entries are:

1. The S’up Spoon – a spoon to aid those with cerebral palsy, essential tremor and Parkinson’s, created by Grant Douglas.
2. KinesicMouse – a piece of software that allows hands-free control of a computer by using head rotation and facial expression, developed by Markus Pröll.
3. Peter Short’s POSTA – a concept for passengers with limited mobility to travel in and out of their seats on an aircraft.
4. SAT Bus Design, by Matilda Swanson – an adaptable bus interior that transforms depending on the situation by moving foldable seats sideways on a rail.

