

Blackwood Design Awards – shortlist revealed



There have been many ingenious entries for the Blackwood Design Awards and they have now revealed the nine inventions on the shortlist.

These include a blink-controlled hands free phone system and a body temperature regulating cushion for wheelchair users.

The judging will take place on 20 January 2017 at the Dundee Contemporary Arts Centre in a Dragons Den style final.

The winner receives a cash prize of £2,000 from sponsor Kingdom Gas.

This year, for the first time, it will be made up of two distinct categories – Best New Product, in which there are four finalists, and Best New Concept, which has five shortlisted entries.

Colin Foskett, Head of Innovation at Blackwood, believes the competition is a perfect example of the Blackwood ethos and says this year's move to two categories will double the chances to identify and champion breakthroughs that improve life for those with disabilities.

He said: "We've been delighted with the way the annual awards have caught the imagination and developed into an important way to bring through genuinely revolutionary products.

"By having the additional category for this year's competition, we are aiming to support, and promote even more new design talent. Some of the products we have previously seen have benefited the lives of so many people and the designs by this year's nine shortlisted finalists are no

different.

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

“Many previous entrants have gone on to achieve great things so we wish all our finalists the best of luck for this year.”

The Blackwood Design Awards are run by the company which is a leader in the care market. The Edinburgh-based charity has more than 1500 homes throughout the country caring for disabled or elderly clients along with those who have sensory impairments.





The nine competing entries are:

Best New Product

1) **C-Brace** – A brace for people who have either a weakness in the knee or an injury that impairs their ability to stand/walk independently. It is relatively discreet and could make the difference between being confined to a wheelchair/mobility scooter and being able to remain upright and walking.

2) **FRIEASEL** – A manoeuvrable canvas that can be adjusted so someone with severe disabilities can paint independently, which could have hugely therapeutic benefits.

3) **Drink Universal Holder** – A product that is fixed to a person's wheelchair and can fit nearly any kind of glass.

4) **Glassouse** – A set of light-weight glasses that are suitable for computer users who do not have the use of their arms. It remotely links to the computer and the mouth piece serves as a mouse. Biting down on it acts as a click.

Best New Concept

1) **Argonaut** – A versatile concept wheelchair that can go up and down steps and pavement edges as well as go up to cupboards.

2) **MeBot** – Similar in some respects to the Argonaut in that it is a wheelchair that can go up and down steps, but a different design by a different company.

3) **RT-Movers** – A really smart wheelchair that can also go up and down steps. It differs from the others is that it has great stability and suspension and the mechanism of the wheels make it really good for going over uneven or bumpy terrain.

4) **Wheelair** – A temperature regulating cushion for people whose body doesn't communicate well with their brain and causes difficulty getting their body temperature right.

5) **Eye-wink** – A system to control a phone without hands, which uses winks to go back and forth in the options. Very useful for anyone who has limited hand movement or poor dexterity in their fingers.

