

Ten years of design awards – and more to come

The Blackwood Design Awards (BDA) is celebrating a decade of excellence and innovation by welcoming entrants to take part in the 2023/24 competition.

An international awards programme that seeks to find innovative and life-changing inventions and concepts that enhance independent living for people with disabilities, this year marks the 10th anniversary of the competition.

The Blackwood Design Awards are open to anyone, who has produced a great idea that supports people with disabilities, regardless of their background or level of experience.

Entrants can range from professional designers to just enthusiastic novices with a phenomenal idea and the deadline for submissions is Thursday 31 August.

The judging panel consists of mixture of industry experts and disabled people, who will run the rule over the practicalities of the design's use in everyday life.

Past winners have included top universities as well as gifted amateurs, who have an insight into the challenges of living with a disability.

The competition is looking for inventions, designs, and concepts that can enable people with disabilities to live their life to the full.

There are three categories open to the public:

1. **Best New Concept (with prize money of £2,000)**
2. **Best New Aids, Equipment, or Accessible Technology (already accessible on the market)**

3. **Best Collaborative Project (by a University or Institute of Higher Learning)**

The deadline for the best collaborative project category has been extended to Friday 29 September to enable University students the necessary term time to complete their design work.

Full details on each category, including eligibility and submission requirements can be found on Blackwood's website, www.blackwoodgroup.org.uk.

The winners will be announced in January 2024 at an event scheduled to take place in Edinburgh.

The Blackwood Design Awards is an opportunity for inventors, designers, and enthusiasts to showcase their talent and contribute to society by creating innovative and life-changing solutions. Entrants can win £2,000 prize money for Best Collaborative Project and support from sponsors such as Hyper Luminal Games.

Last year's winners included Edinburgh-based Nick Fitzpatrick, who won the Best New Concept category with a special kettle which had dual horizontal handles, specially created for older people, who have reduced strength and dexterity.

Julie McDowell, Chair at Blackwood Homes and Care, said: "We are excited to launch the Blackwood Design Awards 2023 and discover more life-changing inventions and concepts while celebrating a decade of innovation.

"Over the past 10 years, the competition has made a positive impact on the lives of people with disabilities, and we are confident that the entrants in 2023 will continue that fine tradition."

Colin Foskett, Head of Innovation at Blackwood Homes and Care said: "The ongoing success of the Blackwood Design Awards is something we're extremely proud of and reaching the 10-year anniversary is a significant milestone.

“Our format is well-established, but we’re always on the look-out for the next fresh and innovative idea, so we strongly believe the 2023 awards will prove to be the best one to date.

“Over the years, our winners have always put the user at the heart of their designs, using lived experience is fundamental in creating products that enable independent living.

“We’re looking forward to seeing another broad range of quality entrants participate this year and what life-changing inventions will end up winning the prizes.”

Simon Fitzpatrick, CEO at Blackwood Homes and Care, said: “This is a special competition that brings positive change to people’s lives and we see it first-hand with our customers, who are at the heart of everything we do at Blackwood.

“During the past decade, we’ve seen impactful inventions that have enhanced independent living, which is something we’re extremely passionate about.

“We welcome more talented entrants this time around and we also look forward to the next 10 years of impressive innovation created through the Blackwood Design Awards.”

To enter the Blackwood Design Awards Competition, fill in the application form at

www.bespoken.me. For more information, visit the Blackwood website or follow the awards on social media.

