



Press Release



Announcing the Outstanding Winners of the 2024 Rising Star Awards: Celebrating Women's Excellence and Innovation

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WeAreTheCity, in collaboration with Royal Bank of Canada, is thrilled to announce the winners of the 2024 Rising Star Awards. In an era where women continuously break through glass ceilings, we take immense pride in unveiling this year's winners. These exceptional women have not only showcased outstanding talent in their respective fields, but have also emerged as inspirations for future generations.

Now in its milestone tenth year, the Rising Star Awards stand as the premier platform spotlighting the UK's female talent pipeline below management level. Through this initiative, WeAreTheCity celebrates the achievements of another 100 individual female contributors, across a diverse array of industries, who epitomise the leaders and role models of tomorrow. We are privileged to acknowledge their extraordinary achievement.

Rising Star Awards 2024 Awards attracted over 1,300 nominations, evaluated by a panel of 50 independent judges. Additionally, public support through 10,000 votes bolstered the 200 shortlisted nominees from 115 countries over a two-week period.

Our list of winners for 2024 spotlights remarkable women from across the UK, representing 20 categories spanning various industries. Among these are standout individuals such as:

- **Mollie Leivars in Advertising and Media**, a writer/director, who began her impactful filmmaking journey at 15, Mollie has been recognised by Thames Valley Police for their educational value, her films sparked conversations on issues like knife crime and bullying.
- **Emily Griffiths in Entrepreneurs & Start-Ups**, who's dedication to women's rights, gender equality and health equity, alongside her extensive activism and engagement with organisations like the UN and The Clinton Foundation.
- **Dawn Hills in All Other Industries**, a fibroid advocate and campaigner, has transformed her personal journey into a powerful mission to raise awareness and amplify the voices of women battling fibroids globally, through initiatives like the groundbreaking series "My Fibroid Journey" and her not-for-profit support group.

Furthermore, the awards honour five Rising Star Champions actively fostering women's progression in the workplace, such as:

- **Natalie Diana Busari**, who leads The Nerve of my Multiple Sclerosis CIC, advocating for Black individuals with MS, fostering dialogue, and collaborating with healthcare professionals and charities to address health disparities and promote inclusivity.

In addition, the awards extend beyond UK borders with the Global Award for Achievement, recognising five outstanding women worldwide, such as:

- **Alexandra Mercz**, Founder of Synterra Asia who is pioneering initiatives in cybersecurity, including increasing women's participation in mentorship programs, emphasising her commitment to diversity and inclusion.

We also celebrate the commitment of our male allies through the Men for Gender Balance award, honouring senior men championing women and gender balance, such as:

- **Mario Furiell**, an active member of HSBC Investment Wealth & Solutions Women's Network (IWIN) committee, for his commitment to gender balance through mentoring, leading interviews with female speakers, facilitating networking opportunities, and supporting female colleagues in career development, leadership, and mental health.

This year marks the second edition of the Public Vote Award, enabling shortlisted members to secure an additional accolade. Our 2024 winner:

- **Leia Patel**, earned this honour through overwhelming public support, her remarkable journey of philanthropy showcases her compassionate spirit and unwavering dedication to making a difference in the world. Despite her young age of 8, Leia has already achieved significant milestones in her efforts to support various charitable causes.

Our awards also feature five Editor's Choice winners, selected by the WeAreTheCity leadership team and an independent judge, in recognition of their exceptional contributions toward gender equality, such as:

- **Becky Patel**, Tech She Can, who has been instrumental in inspiring and educating the next generation of technologists, particularly focusing on empowering girls to consider careers in technology, leading a team that has directly reached over 120,000 children and indirectly impacted over 400,000 more through educational resources and experiences.
- **Selina Flavius**, the Founder of Black Girl Finance, a platform providing financial coaching, regulated advice, and planning. Through her podcast, book, and Black Girl Finance Festival, she empowers others with essential financial literacy skills, making money conversations more inclusive. Selina is a prominent voice in UK media discussions on financial well-being and inequality.

The awards also feature recognitions such as the Company of the Year award, acknowledging a single company's initiatives in supporting the advancement of the female workforce. The winner will be unveiled during the ceremony at The Londoner Hotel on July 17th.

Rising Star Awards are headline sponsored by Royal Bank of Canada. Category sponsors include an array of leading FTSE 100 companies and industry leaders: Agentiv, Barclays, Bloomberg, BAE Systems Digital Intelligence, C&C Search, CMI Women, Dentsu, FTI Consulting, HSBC, Knight Frank, Lloyd's of London, National Grid, Northern Trust, Oliver Wyman, Reed Smith, Smart Works, Société Générale, Visa, Warner Bros. Discovery and Warwick Business School.



Dave Thomas, CEO, RBC Europe said, *“Royal Bank of Canada (RBC) is delighted to be powering the Rising Stars Awards for the fifth year. We are committed to helping clients thrive and communities prosper and diversity and inclusion is more than just a value for us, it’s at the heart of what we do, so supporting these awards is a great way to celebrate and showcase incredibly talented people and organisations across multiple industries.”*



Vanessa Vallely OBE, Founder of WeAreTheCity said, *“I am so proud that for the tenth year running WeAreTheCity has been able to shine a light on the achievements of so many remarkable women across the UK. Our 2024 winners join a phenomenal alumnus of 1050 previous winners who continue to soar, both professionally and personally. These remarkable women embody the spirit of resilience, determination, and passion. Through their accomplishments, they have shattered stereotypes, championed equality, and forged new paths for women in their respective fields. Their success not only inspires us but also reminds us of the limitless potential that lies within every individual, regardless of gender.*

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The Rising Star winners will be honoured at a prestigious ceremony on July 17th at The Londoner Hotel, Leicester Square, featuring entertainment from Southend Vox Choir and Strictly Come Dancing Star Pasha Kovalev. For more details on the event, press passes, and ticket bookings, visit [here](#).

Editor's notes:

To view the full list of winners, [click here](#).

About the Company

[WeAreTheCity.com](#) is a website that provides free career resources for working women across the globe. WeAreTheCity also shines a spotlight on women through a series of awards and listings such as the Rising Star Awards (recognising Junior to mid-level women across 20 industries), the Trailblazer50 (recognising senior gender campaigners, women's charity leads and allies), the Pioneer20 (recognising female refugees who create impact and provide support within the refugee community). To date, WeAreTheCity has recognised over 2,000 women through their various awards and provided support thereafter through their partnerships with business schools and education providers. WeAreTheCity also hosts free webinars, conferences, and events throughout the year. To date, they have upskilled more than 40,000 since their formation in 2008. They currently have 80,000 female members and a following of 60,000 across social media platforms.

[WeAreTechWomen.com](#) is WeAreTheCity's sister company dedicated to seeing the increase of women in technology. WeAreTechWomen provides free resources and job opportunities to women working in Tech. They also shine a spotlight on women through their TechWomen100 awards (recognising junior to mid-level women, male allies, senior champions, networks, and companies). WeAreTechWomen host several conferences and summits throughout the year to support women into leadership positions and to address the barriers faced by women in the tech industry. To date, they have helped to upskill over 25,000 global women. WeAreTechWomen has a membership of over 40,000 women and a social media following of 30,000.

Both organisations were founded by Vanessa Vallely who was awarded an OBE for her services to women in 2018.

Media Contacts

This information is for readers who may want to reach out to the company.

NAME	CONTACT INFORMATION
All enquiries	Tel: 01268 770675 info@wearethecity.com

APPENDIX

Rising Star Award's 2024 winners

Advertising and Media

- Ally Boldan, instantprint
- Jessica Frank-Keyes, City A.M.
- Mollie Leivars, Spirit Productions
- Nicola McInnes, Dentsu
- Rebekah Schelfhout, Dentsu

All Other Industries

- Andrea Donaldson-Smith, The Hurlingham Club
- Catherine Tomlin, Transport for London
- Dawn Heels, The Guidance Suite
- Renee Francesca, Nottingham Trent University
- Tanya Simon-Hall, The Adeno Gang

Banking & Capital Markets

- Caitlin Hargreaves, Bank of England
- Caroline Garner, Accenture
- Dialid Santiago, Bank of America
- Emma Letheren, RBC
- Lucy Ellis-Keeler, Citi

Charity & Not-for-Profits

- Caroline Rees Williams, The Valesco Foundation
- Georgie Packer, Apps for Good
- Kellie Coyle, Action Tutoring
- Anna Rawcliffe, National Trust
- Laura Brown, My Emotions Activity Book

Defence

- Cara Swain, Royal Navy
- Daisy Robinson, BAE Systems Digital Intelligence
- Grace Beckham, BAE Systems Digital Intelligence
- Laura-Jane Piercy, Defence and Security Accelerator

- Lorna Nunn, Royal Air Force

Digital

- Gemma Walsh, City, University of London
- Georgina Snape, Accenture
- Lauren Smith, Aegon
- Lilymae Prescott, Sky
- Rebecca Varley, Zone Digital

Diversity

- Donna O`Connor, Northern Ireland Fire & Rescue Service
- Gina Patel, NHS England
- Kat Parsons, ISS UK & Ireland
- Polina Changuleva, Same But Different Consultancy Ltd
- Saiba Ali, Accenture

EA & PA

- Abigail Langridge, Poppins PA
- Catherine Harrison, Bee-Assisted Limited
- Kate Roughneen, Royal London
- Marie Hall, Barclays
- Zoe Haswell, Royal Bank of Canada

Education & Academia

- Kelly Farr, YourNorth
- Lyndsey Stuttard, ACS Cobham International School
- Marcia Brissett-Bailey, Diversity and Ability
- Maria Violaris, University of Oxford
- Usha Kong, Tower Hamlets Council

Entrepreneurs & Start-Ups

- Emily Griffiths, For The Women UK
- Jennifer Countess von Walderdorff, Look at the Labels
- Olivia Jenkins, D. Louise
- Sadia Akhtar, MSPhysioCoach (MSPHC Limited)
- Toyosi Olowe, ToyoWrites (TW)

Energy & Utilities

- Aimee Betts-Charalambous, KPMG

- Claire Huxley, National Grid Electricity System Operator
- Jacqueline Mathieson, SSEN Transmission
- Liz Burlon, Accenture
- Maddie Laidlaw, Macquarie Group

ESG

- Brigit Douglas, Organisation for Responsible Businesses
- Lauren Palmer, Barclays
- Micaela Spencer-Rogers, Barclays
- Namita Gupta, MUFG
- Pelin Turkmen, Cambridge & Counties Bank

Healthcare

- Dr Sania Shahbaz Hasnain, Salaso
- Julie Hammond, NHS, Dr Hammond Aesthetics
- Leah Brooks, University of Sheffield
- Naabil Khan, Skin For All
- Tipswalo Day, Hywel Dda University Health Board

Insurance

- Aikaterini Valentina Paschali, Direct Line Group
- Ally Redding, Guidewire
- Annie Terry, Lockton Re
- Hiba Hanif, PwC
- Nadine Teape, Lloyd`s of London

Investment Management

- Elizabeth Merrall, Top Tier Capital Partners
- Pamela Remmer, RBC Brewin Dolphin
- Sara Yemane, RBC BlueBay Asset Management
- Susanne Gardner, Aviva Investors
- Zixuan Wang, HSBC

Law (The Lynne Freeman Award)

- Firoza Dodhi, Simmons & Simmons
- Helen Penwill, Reed Smith
- Jessica Pinches, Black Antelope Law
- Lindsey Melnecsuk, Simmons and Simmons
- Victoria Bryden, Reed Smith

Professional Services

- Andriana Stampoli, Odgers Berndtson
- Faridah Ramirez, Ethos Farm
- Jennifer Grint, FTI Consulting
- Renata Yussupova, PwC
- Rukevwe Laura Akpwaye, PwC

Property

- Bethan Handley, Knight Frank
- Charlotte Hewett, Knight Frank
- Helen Lees, Fine & Country
- Leigh-Ann Smith, Barratt London
- Neetal Rajput, Slough Borough Council

Science & Engineering

- Carley Fountain, Castle Climate Control Ltd
- Donna Otchere, SiSTEM UK
- Frankie Thatcher, BAE Systems
- Kat Draper, Mott MacDonald
- Samrudhi Inamdar, AAC Clyde Space

Technology

- Holly Mather, Enable
- Jessica Harwood, Accenture
- Mariam Hussein, Slalom
- Nicola Ironside-Skene, Bank of America
- Tamara Tankosic, Accenture

Global Award for Achievement

- Alexandra Mercz, Synterra Asia
- Catalina Vieru, Royal College of Surgeons Ireland
- Pooja Doshi, MIRAYA ARTS
- Subarna bhattacharya, BNP Paribas
- Tarja Porkka-Kontturi, Tarja P-K / DeepWell DTx / The Global Game Jam

Champion

- Anna Blomqvist, HSBC Private Banking
- Hacer Evans, Accenture UKI

- Kellie Kwarteng, Halzak / Elevate - Women in Tech
- Natalie Diana Busari, The Nerve of My Multiple Sclerosis CIC
- Priya Rajendran, Citigroup

Men for Gender Balance

- David Morgan, Royal Bank of Canada
- Lee Burman, Morgan Stanley
- Mario Furriel, HSBC
- Scott Freeman, Compass Group UK & Ireland
- Shaheen Mamun, Black Antelope Law

Public Vote

- Leia Patel

Company

Shortlisted - Winner to be announced on 17th July

- Baringa
- HSBC
- Pareto FM