



RISING STARS 2026

NOMINATION GUIDE

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

This guide shows the questions you'll be asked in the nomination form so you can prepare your answers in advance.

You do not need to complete everything at once — nominations can be saved and continued later.

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SHARED CATEGORY QUESTIONS

The following categories all use the same set of nomination questions.

If you are nominating within one of the categories listed below, you will be asked the same core questions in the nomination form. We recommend reviewing these questions in advance and preparing your responses before starting your nomination.

- ALL OTHER INDUSTRIES
- ADVERTISING AND MEDIA
- BANKING AND CAPITAL MARKETS
- CHARITY AND NOT-FOR-PROFITS
- DEFENCE
- DIGITAL
- EDUCATION AND ACADEMIA
- ENERGY AND UTILITIES
- ENTREPRENEURS AND START-UPS
- HEALTHCARE AND WELLBEING
- HR AND RECRUITMENT
- INCLUSION AND BELONGING
- INSURANCE
- LAW (LYNNE FREEMAN AWARD)
- PROFESSIONAL SERVICES AND CONSULTING
- PUBLIC SECTOR
- TECHNOLOGY
- CHAMPIONS*
- MEN FOR GENDER BALANCE*

**Please note starred categories have additional questions.*

NOMINATION QUESTIONS – SHARED CATEGORIES

The questions below apply to all of the categories listed in the previous section.

These questions focus on impact, contribution, and outcomes. There are no right or wrong answers — we encourage clear, honest responses supported by examples.

Please answer by reflecting on your own experiences, achievements, and potential. Use this section to describe what you do, why it matters, and how your work contributes to positive change within your role, organisation, or industry.

Take your time with your responses and provide as much relevant detail as you feel is appropriate.

1. Please provide specific examples of any significant achievements/contributions you have made in your day job (e.g. projects you have delivered, ideas that have delivered impact in your organisation or externally etc.)
2. If applicable, please detail how you are helping others (e.g. mentoring/charity work/internal and external networks/school activities)
3. Have you ever won any other awards? If yes please detail your previous awards
4. Please tell us why you believe you are a future leader and should be named as a Rising Star?
5. If you were named as a Rising Star, how would you leverage this award?
6. If you belong to any industry professional bodies or networks, please provide details

CHAMPIONS CATEGORY QUESTIONS

This category recognises senior individuals of any gender who are actively championing gender equality, either inside or outside their organisation, within the UK.

How to approach your answers

Please answer the questions by reflecting on your own actions, influence, and commitment to advancing gender equality. We are interested in how you use your position, voice, or platform to create meaningful change.

In the additional questions section, you'll be asked to expand further on your motivation and the impact of your advocacy.

1. Please tell us why you are passionate about supporting women in the workplace
2. Please tell us about any gender initiatives you have been involved in and their impact

MEN FOR GENDER BALANCE CATEGORY QUESTIONS

This category recognises senior men who are actively championing women and gender balance, either inside or outside their organisation, within the UK.

How to approach your answers

Please answer the questions by reflecting on your own role, behaviours, and advocacy. We want to understand how you actively support gender balance, challenge inequality, and contribute to a more inclusive workplace or industry.

You will also be asked additional questions specific to this category to explore your impact in more depth.

1. Please tell us why you are passionate about supporting women in the workplace
2. Please tell us about any gender initiatives you have been involved in and their impact

COMPANY OF THE YEAR CATEGORY QUESTIONS

This category is open to UK-based companies that clearly articulate and demonstrate a strong commitment to supporting their female talent pipeline.

How to approach your answers

Please answer on behalf of your organisation. Your responses should focus on company-wide initiatives, policies, culture, and outcomes, rather than individual achievements.

We're looking for clear evidence of long-term commitment, measurable impact, and meaningful support for women at all stages of their careers.

1. Please provide any initiatives that are currently in place within your organisation that support/develop your female pipeline. Please tell us in no more than 500 words and include the impact that these initiatives have had on your female pipeline (e.g. promotions, retention, attraction, successful mentoring partnerships etc.). We are interested in hearing about initiatives from an apprentice/graduate level through to middle management initiatives.
2. What is the percentage of women on your company's executive board
3. How many of these women are non-executive board?
4. Do you have an internal women's network or similar employee relation group? If yes, please provide basic details such as activities, reach, structure, etc.
5. Do you have specific development programmes for your women? If yes, please provide details, such as frequency and what level they are aimed?

COMPANY OF THE YEAR CATEGORY QUESTIONS

6. Has your company signed up to any gender initiatives (e.g. HeForShe, The Finance Charter, The 30% Club)? If so, please detail
7. Is your maternity policy standard or above standard? If above standard, please detail
8. Does your company offer flexible working/job shares? If so, please detail
9. Is shared parental leave actively encouraged within your organisation? If so, how?
10. Has your company won any awards for your gender-based initiatives? If yes, please detail
11. Do you have a female returners programme or do you plan to at some stage? If yes, please detail
12. Finally, why do you believe your company deserves to win the Rising Star Company of the Year Award for 2026?



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GOOD LUCK