

PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

BLACK TALENT AWARDS 2025 FINALISTS ANNOUNCED: CELEBRATING UK BLACK EXCELLENCE AND 'IMPACT'

The Evenfields **Black Talent Awards (BTA)** has officially announced the shortlist of finalists for its upcoming 2025 awards ceremony, shining a spotlight on outstanding Black professionals across the UK.

A total of 16 award categories – spanning industries from finance and STEM to education, media, and entrepreneurship – will honour Black talent at all levels, from rising stars to senior leaders.



The winners will be unveiled at a gala **black-tie event on 26th September at the ICC Birmingham**, aligning with this year's theme of **"Impact"** in celebrating those driving real change in their fields and

communities.

As the nation's only UK-wide awards platform exclusively dedicated to Black professionals, the Black Talent Awards prides itself on being **purpose-driven** and **community-rooted** rather than performative. Key features that make the BTAs unique include:



- **Celebrating Excellence Across Sectors:** The UK's only national awards based in Birmingham exclusively for Black talent, spotlighting achievers in every field – from rising stars to industry leaders.
- **Purpose-Led Mission:** Founded by **Denise Myers** – a nationally respected voice in inclusive recruitment and social mobility – the BTAs are rooted in long-term visibility, legacy building, and systemic change. This platform doesn't just hand out trophies; it opens doors to real opportunities all year round.
- **Relatable Role Models:** The awards champion real people with real stories. By showcasing **relatable role models**, the BTAs provide inspiration and tangible career pathways for the next generation of Black professionals.
- **Backed by Committed Partners:** Major organisations that “walk the talk” on diversity power the BTAs. Supporters and sponsors include **Merlin Entertainments, Lloyds Banking Group, Birmingham City University, EDF, Barclays, Jaguar Land Rover, and JCDecaux**, among others – all brands actively investing in the advancement of Black talent.

Past editions of the Black Talent Awards have been both celebratory and impactful. **Last year's ceremony saw a standing ovation** for the Trailblazer Award winner, whose moving acceptance speech left the audience in tears and underscored why this platform matters.

The event's joyous moments – from powerful award speeches to lively after-party scenes – have resonated across social media, sparking viral LinkedIn posts and conversation throughout the Black professional community. Notably, **previous BTA winners have leveraged their accolades into new leadership roles, media features, and business opportunities**, real-world proof of how visibility at the BTAs can open doors beyond the night itself.

This year's awards are set to be especially memorable, with a new theme and special highlights reflecting its forward-looking mission. The 2025 theme **“Impact”** sets the tone – celebrating professionals who are creating real, measurable change. In line with this focus, **two new award categories** have been introduced: *Excellence in Education*, to spotlight changemakers building legacy through learning, and *People & Culture*, to honour those aligning workplace policies and practices to truly empower Black professionals.

The ceremony will also debut a special **“Where Are They Now?”** segment, highlighting past winners and the continued impact of their BTA recognition on their careers and communities.

Behind the scenes, the finalist selection process has been rigorous and inclusive. **This year saw over 300 nominations submitted, with 238 completed entries** from across the country. An independent panel of **31 judges** from across the UK – featuring senior leaders from law, tech, education, healthcare, media, and the creative industries – convened on June 18 for Judging Day to evaluate the entries and select the shortlist. Significantly, the process also included an additional **10 youth judges** embedded in the judging teams – a mentorship initiative that gave young aspiring professionals a voice in the process, invaluable experience working alongside industry experts and relationships that could last a lifetime.

Through this mentorship element, the youth judges sat in on interviews and deliberations with their mentors, gaining a front-row education in what excellence looks like and how large-scale events are run. Finalist interviews will continue throughout July to ensure each winner is chosen with care, and **all winners will be revealed on 26th September** at ICC Birmingham in what is set to be an inspiring evening.

Denise Myers, founder of the Black Talent Awards and CEO of Evenfields, commented on the finalist announcement: *“We are absolutely thrilled to reveal this year’s shortlist of Black Talent Awards finalists. Each name on this list embodies the very essence of ‘Impact’ – these individuals are not only excelling in their own careers, but are also driving positive change in their industries and communities.*

*“When I created the BTAs, it was with the vision of shining a light on extraordinary Black professionals who too often go unseen. Now, seeing such a diverse range of talent being recognised – from young innovators to transformational leaders – is incredibly rewarding. By celebrating their achievements and sharing their stories, we hope to inspire the next generation and show that Black talent not only **belongs** in every sector, but **leads**. I couldn’t be prouder of this year’s finalists, and I look forward to honouring each of them on awards night.”*

SHORTLISTED FINALISTS BY CATEGORY

Charity & Change Employee of the Year: Alethea Balbuena-Pitt; Bob Clarke; Chloe Lewis; Daniel Sukula

Entrepreneur of the Year: Daniella Blechner; Fabio Embalo; Kameese Davis; Paulette Watson

Facilities & Supply Chain Employee of the Year: Kelo Uchendu; Melanie Grizzle; Patricia Mensah; Ramona Williams

Financial Services Employee of the Year: Cherryl Cooper; Jeffrey Krampah Williams; Khalia Ismain; Shauna Roper



Marketing, Media & Creative Employee of the Year: Benjah Pozi-Quansah; Eva Masawi; Jayd Williams; Lydia Amoah

People & Culture Employee of the Year: Deborah Barnett; Kameka McLean; Mandisa Gordon; Natalie Simmonds-Alleyne.

Professional Services Employee of the Year: Dr. Tunde Okewale OBE; Isaac Eloj; Natalie Rose; Tafadzwa Chaduka

Public Sector & Services Employee of the Year: Adeshola Akanji; Dr. George Obolo; Jahnine Davis; Shaun Pascal

Retail & Leisure Employee of the Year: Carol Muriithi; Jasmine Okonkwo; Morgan Brown; Ramona Williams; Zoe Broadway

Rising Star of the Year: Aaron Michael Dorsett; Ibukun Oluleye; Morgan Brown; Tarisiro Fundira

Senior Leader of the Year: Akin Ogboye; Bridget Tatham; Kizzy Augustin; Shauna Roper

STEM Employee of the Year: Choolwe Mandona; Donna Otchere; Ignatius Kaku; Mandisa Gordon

ERG of the Year: Black Professionals Network and Friends (BPNet); Coventry Building Society; Elevate Network – the Financial Conduct Authority’s Multi-ethnic Women’s Network; NatWest Group Multicultural Network

Excellence in Education: Professor Bertha Ochieng (De Montfort University); Gurdeep Chima (Centre for Research in Ethnic Minority Entrepreneurship); Dr. Myrtle Emmanuel (University of Greenwich); Olu Orguboh (Synergy Solutions)

Small Business of the Year: Butterfly Books; Caribbean & African Health Network (in partnership with University of Greater Manchester); Black Rise; Legacy Centre of Excellence

Social Impact Organisation of the Year: Barclays Eagle Labs; Be The Change Youth Project CIC; The Black Collective of Media in Sport; Black Equity Organisation

The winners of each category will be announced at the Black Talent Awards ceremony on 26 September 2025.

For more information on the Black Talent Awards, visit blacktalentawards.co.uk

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For more information about the event, or interview requests, please contact Kevin Urquhart at FU Media on 077137 40272 or kevin@fu-media.co.uk



EDITORS' NOTES

The Black Talent Awards is an Evenfields event.

Evenfields Careers is a connector of Black talent and inclusive employers in the UK. Since 2019, they have been a grassroots organisation from the West Midlands using diversity recruitment and communications to help job seekers from diverse communities, particularly black and ethnic minorities. Their message is “We see you!” and that is exactly what they do - they recognise the richness of Black talent and strive to celebrate and catapult it as much as possible.

Additional high res images upon request.

