Our pick of Britain's most inspiring small businesses

We love celebrating small business success – and our awards up and down the country are helping us to identify rising stars in fields from engineering to nappy recycling and beyond.

Here at BusinessLive we've brought together some of the winners from the business awards we've held across England and Wales in 2022.

Our winners range from a not-for-profit therapy firm to a Cornish pasty specialist and a private swim school and show the diversity of small businesses across the country. The categories covered here are always among the most competitive at our awards, and our judges always enjoy the challenge of picking the finalists and winners.

We'll be honouring more small businesses in 2023 at business awards on BusinessLive and across our sister Live sites in the Reach network – keep reading BusinessLive for more.

Manchester – GreatDrams Ventures

Winner of the Turnover under £1m category at the Manchester Evening News Business Awards in 2022

GreatDrams was founded five years ago by husband and wife team Greg and Kirsty Dillon, who say they "aim to make great whisky more approachable & available".

As well as winning at the MEN Business Awards, the company this year also celebrated a second Double Gold at the San Francisco World Spirits Competition, a 98/100 Gold Outstanding from the International Wine & Spirit Competition, and two Gold Medals at the London Spirits Competition

Greg Dillon said: “We never expect to win awards, we enter them in the quest for validation for what we are doing and to use as a barometer for the quality and flavour of the releases we are bottling.

“To win the two highest medals you can in world whisky and to be named Business of the Year has been a whirlwind – we truly are humbled and blown away by three separate whisky awards panels giving us gold medals this year as well as the MEN Business Awards. This gives us the impetus to kick on and produce even more awesome whiskies for our awesome customers.”

GreatDrams Ventures wins the turnover under £1m category at the Manchester Evening News Business awards at The Kimpton Clocktower Hotel, Manchester, in April 2022
(Image: Jason Roberts photography)

Gloucestershire – Every Cloud Play Therapy and Creative Arts Therapy

Winner of the Small Business of the Year category at the GloucestershireLive Business Awards 2022

Every Cloud is a not-for-profit that was first set up in 2019, with only two therapists and one therapy room. Increasing demand for the organisation's services, particularly following the pandemic, has led to its rapid expansion. There are now three therapy rooms and seven employees, seeing more than 40 children and young people per week.

During Covid, Every Cloud was awarded grants from local and national funders, such as the Barnwood Trust, Cheltenham Borough Council and the National Lottery so it could deliver Child-Parent Relationship Therapy (CPRT) to families who were really struggling.

The company said: "We have since continued to work with that determination to provide the very best service we can under changing restrictions and guidelines until we have been able to not only return to as normal as possible, but also to thrive, grow and expand our business."

The organisation recently received a 'No Child Left Behind' Award from Cheltenham Borough Council.



(Image: Gloucestershire Echo and Gloucester Citizen)

North East – McGovern & Co

Winner of the Small Business category at the grand final of the North East Business Awards 2022

And this year's Small Business category, sponsored by Newcastle City Council, was picked up by Gateshead-based brick merchant McGovern & Co Ltd, which beat Coote O'Grady and Lucid Technology Solutions.

Andrew Pickersgill, managing director, said: “It means a lot to the team. I’ve unapologetically thrown challenges at them on a day-to-day basis and they embrace everything that is given to them. They really want to make homes better in the North East, and that’s what it’s all about for us.

“We’ve done everything possible to make our business sustainable for the team and for people across the North East. It’s a really proud moment and I’m absolutely delighted.”

South Wales – Nappi Cycle

Winner of the Small Business of the Year category at the Swansea Bay Business Awards 2022

Ammanford-based Nappi Cycle works with all 22 local authorities in Wales recovering and recycling nappies via collection services – so diverting 41 million nappies a year from ending up in landfill sites.

Set up in 2008, our judges said the firm was an exemplar of innovation for the region and has recently partnered in a trial where fibres from nappies are being added to bitumen, glueing together asphalt road services.

Recovered fibre from nappies that is being added to bitumen that glues together asphalt road surfaces, in an initiative between baby care business Pura and nappy recycling experts NappiCycle
(Image: Pura)

Cornwall – Feritech Global

Joint winner, SME of the Year at the Western Morning News Business Awards

Feritech Global Ltd is a manufacturing, engineering and design company that works with clients in the marine engineering industries.

In the last year, Feritech has grown its turnover by more than 50%, launched several new products and opened an innovation centre in Cornwall. Founded in 2012, The business aims to innovate and become more effective – current projects include the design of an autonomous subsea vehicle to carry out

geotechnical surveys.

Cornish Premier Pasties Ltd and Feritech Global Ltd both took home the SME Business of the Year Award
(Image: Mike Lister Photography)

Cornwall – Cornish Premier Pasties Ltd

Business of the Year and joint winner, SME of the Year, at the Western Morning News Business Awards 2022

Cornish Premier Pasties is fast becoming an industry leader as one of the world's largest Cornish pasty makers while still keeping family values and high quality at the core of its business.

Cornish Premier Pasties produces more than 40,000 pasties a

day and employs more than 50 people in St Columb. It scooped gold and silver awards at the World Pasty Championships and has seen huge demand for its products. It is expecting sales to top £7million this year and is looking beyond Cornwall in its growth plans with new distribution deals. Judges were particularly impressed by its achievements this year, how it faced the challenges of the pandemic and its clear vision for the future.



Cornish Premier Pasties Ltd took home the grand prize of Business of the Year (Image: Mike Lister Photography)

Cambridgeshire – Elite Swimming Academy

Winner of the Small Business of the Year category at the CambridgeshireLive Business Awards 2022

Elite Swimming Academy is an established, private swim school teaching 1,500 children throughout Cambridgeshire every week. It constantly invests in new luxury pools to add to its small classes, inspiring teachers and five-star customer service

which have helped Elite Swimming grow in popularity over the past 10 years.

West Midlands – Word360

Winner in the Established Tech Business category at the West Midlands Tech Awards 2022

A firm which provides interpreting and translation services in more than 350 languages and dialects to clients across the region and beyond was a double winner at our West Midlands Tech Awards 2022.

Word360 was crowned top Established Tech Business, which was open to companies at least five years old and had shown exceptional performance, while co-founder Kavita Parmar was named West Midlands Woman in Tech.

She launched the Birmingham-based business in 2013 with her husband Tiku Chauhan, with Kavita focussing on growth and innovation and Tiku handling operations.

The company works with public, private and not-for-profit organisations to help them deliver access to their services through its own tech platform 'Wordskii'. Its network of self-employed interpreters can help clients with translation services at any time and anywhere, either in-person or via video or telephone.

We’re profiling winners from across the country – including Word360 which won the Established Tech Business title at the West Midlands Tech Awards. Pictured are Kavita Parmar, Scott Glover and Rahul Mohanachandran from Word360, with Tamlyn Jones from BusinessLive (left) and host Ben Hanlin

Liverpool – No9 Bar and Kitchen

Winner of the Start-Up Business of the Year category at the 2022 Regional Business Awards from the Liverpool ECHO and BusinessLive

No9 Bar and Kitchen is a family-run restaurant in Walton, Liverpool, that managed to expand during the pandemic and become a thriving community hub.

After their win, the restaurant posted on Facebook that the team “couldn’t be prouder”. And they said: “Thank you to all our fantastic customers/friends. Massive thank you to our amazing team at No9 for their continued hard work and support.

No9 is continuing to grow, great things coming in the next 12 months so keep your eyes peeled."

Speaking at the awards, Echo editor Maria Breslin said: "We were thrilled with the quantity and the quality of the entries we received this year. The volume of entries clearly showed that the business sector is very much rising to the challenges it has had to face, and continues to face during rebuild and recovery."

Leicestershire: HR4UK.com

Winner of the Small Business of the Year category at the 2022 LeicestershireLive Business Awards

HR:4UK is a Hinckley-based HR outsourcing company that provides a range of employee management services.

It offers businesses cost-effective support through a range of affordable services covering HR & employment advice, payroll & pensions, and health & safety. Its team of qualified professionals protects businesses from costly risks while reducing overheads, so that savings can be reinvested into a company for future growth.

Lincolnshire – Tradeglaze (Lincoln) Ltd

Winner of the SME Business of the Year category at the Lincolnshire Live Business Awards 2022

Tradeglaze, and its retail subsidiary Jackson Windows, is based in Lincoln and makes and installs PVCu and aluminium windows, doors, bifolds, curtain walling and conservatories.

Since 1995, the company has been providing bespoke double-glazing solutions for trade, commercial and residential customers in Lincolnshire, Nottinghamshire and South Yorkshire. The company portfolio includes Jackson Window Systems, Lincoln Bi Folds and Allenby Glass.

The business also won ‘Employee of the Year’ for marketing manager Katerina Pickup.

Managing director Jeremy Wetherall said: “We are beyond proud to have earned the two LincolnshireLive awards and delighted that the hard work of the team and our persistent commitment to high standards and exceptional customer care has been recognised.”

Tradeglaze (Lincoln) Ltd wins the SME Business of the Year category at the Lincolnshire Live Business Awards 2022
(Image: James Turner/Lincolnshire Live)