

Latest news from the Enterprise Board

Birmingham adviser is named best in the business for boosting Minority Ethnic enterprise

One of Birmingham's leading figures on enterprise was recognised for her achievements this week when the region's Business Support Professional Awards came to a finale.

The competition, which was sponsored by Business Link West Midlands and organised by Business Enterprise Support (BES), celebrated the achievement of seven leading support professionals, who between them had helped 5,000 companies get off the ground and played a role in creating more than 10,000 jobs.

Go-Woman's Yasmin Akhtar walked off with one of the main awards after beating off strong competition to secure the title of Minority Ethnic Business Professional of the Year.

It marks what has been an exciting year for the SFEDI accredited adviser, who has been providing pre-start and ongoing support to Minority Ethnic women in disadvantaged areas of Birmingham.

This excellent service is removing a lot of the barriers faced by these individuals and her thorough understanding of this client group has seen her lobby key stakeholders to make the assistance on offer more tailored and relevant.

"I'm extremely honoured to be recognised by my peers and the people I've tried to assist," explained Yasmin, who has used her own money to continue the project for the last three months.

"Enterprise will be an essential element of our recovery from the downturn and it is vital that we deliver specialist support to minority ethnic women so that they can have the same opportunities as others to take their ideas and businesses forward.

Over 100 delegates attended the Botanical Gardens in Birmingham for the second Business Support Professional Awards for the West Midlands.

The competition was designed to promote the excellent work of advisers from the public and private sector and highlight their growing impact on increasing productivity, boosting the enterprise culture and creating jobs.

In addition to Yasmin, there were six other winners announced:

- Julie White (Growing Rural Enterprise) - Business Professional Adviser of the Year and Women's Business Support Professional
- Sue Cartwright (Unisey Ltd) – Business Consulting Professional
- Kulwant Chahal (Black Country Enterprise) – Business Information and Enterprise Coach.
- Emma Kemshall (Walsall Endeavours) – Young People's Professional
- Jim Lindsay (Business Enterprise Support) – Business and Skills Brokerage Professional

- Nick Wilson (Coventry and Warwickshire Co-operative Development Agency) – Social Enterprise Professional

BES's Ian Carlier concluded: "We all want the West Midlands to be the most enterprising region in the UK and Europe so it is imperative that we have the right people in place to help support individuals as they try to turn ideas into commercial reality.

"The awards, which are long overdue, celebrate the excellence we currently have in the region for delivering tailored business support to all manner of client groups be it minority ethnic, young people, women and social enterprises."

The West Midlands Business Support Professional Awards were organised by Business Enterprise Support and sponsored by Business Link West Midlands, Natwest, Young People's Enterprise Centre of Expertise (YPECOE), Social Enterprise Centre of Expertise (SECOE), Fair Finance Consortium, Institute of Leadership and Management and Women's Business Development Association (WBDA)

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