



THE KEY AWARDS 2026

Celebrating you



The Key Awards 2026 is a night to celebrate inspirational KEY+ achievements and journeys. We'll once again be celebrating at Newcastle Crowne Plaza on the evening of Thursday 9th July 2026 and we'd love you to be there as one of our prized nominees.

Take a look at the categories below and get nominating your groups, projects, facilitators, partners and volunteers using our [online nomination form here](#).

The Key Social Action Superstars: This award recognises KEY+ projects that have demonstrated significant community benefit. The judging panel will take into consideration how young people:

- Understood the community need for their project
- Created significant social change
- Galvanised others and created a ripple effect in the community
- Benefitted others from the local community

The Key Pitch Innovators: This award recognises a group of young people who have delivered their Key Panel pitch in an innovative or unusual way. The judging panel will take into consideration how the pitch to panel was:

- Creative
- Unique
- Detailed – demonstrating their development, project idea, planning and budgeting

The Key Unique Project Award: This award recognises a KEY+ project that has been particularly innovative and unique. The judging panel will take into consideration how the project was:

- Creative, unusual and unique
- The project was a new approach to an issue or idea
- The young people thought outside of the box
- Stretched their idea and pushed what they could achieve beyond the limits

The Key Inspirational Achievement Award: This award recognises young people who have positively changed throughout the KEY+ Challenge. Nominations can be for either a Key Group as a whole or an individual young person. It aims to recognise how they have grown and developed through their Key journey. The judging panel will consider how they:

- Achieved or have taken on something that they would never have thought they were capable of at the start of their Key journey
- Built the 12 Key Skills and developed their self-confidence and self-esteem
- Realised that they are in control and can achieve anything they put their mind towards
- Overcome barriers
- Inspired others

The Key Best Group Name: The award recognises a unique Key Group name.



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The Key Exceptional Facilitator: This award recognises an exceptional Key Facilitator. The judging panel will take into consideration how the Key Facilitator has:

- Inspired belief in young people
- Went above and beyond
- Demonstrated dedication to The Key
- Made a positive impact on their young people
- Delivered a quality intervention for their young people using the KEY+ Challenge
- Supported other Key Partners e.g. sitting on Key panels or offering guidance when needed both inside and outside of their organisation

The Key Outstanding Partner: This award recognises an exceptional Key Partner that has championed The Key in their organisation and has made the most of their Key Membership. The judging panel will take into consideration how the partner:

- Used their Key Membership, KEY+ and Key Project allocation with young people
- Advocated The Key, KEY+ and their Key Membership
- Positively promoted the achievements of their young people using The Key i.e. press release to newspaper, tagging The Key on social media, referring to us as The Key and not Keyfund
- Supported other Key Partners e.g. sitting on Key panels or offering guidance
- Made the most of KEY+ i.e. using their membership in new ways or settings

The Key Volunteer of the Year: This award recognises an exceptional Key Volunteer. The judging panel will take into consideration how the Key Volunteer has:

- Inspired belief in young people
- Went above and beyond
- Demonstrated dedication to The Key and supported multiple Key partners
- Made a positive impact on their young people

The KEY+ Completers of the Year: This award recognises an inspirational group of young people who completed all stages of KEY+. The judging panel will consider:

- The group's personal development through the KEY+ Challenge including development of skills, self-confidence, self-esteem, mindset and attitude.
- Overcome barriers to progression
- Realised that they are in control and can achieve anything they put their mind to
- Inspired others

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Deadline for submissions is 12pm on Friday 1st May 2026.
If you have any questions please speak to us on 0191 731 7830.