

2026

**NECCA**

North East Contact Centre Awards

Recognising and celebrating excellence in  
North East Contact Centres



@necca



@northeastcca



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**TOOLKIT 2026**



# ABOUT THE AWARDS

Welcome to the official NECCA 2026 Entrant Toolkit. This master guide brings together everything you need to understand the refreshed categories, criteria and judging process, while helping you craft a compelling and competitive submission.

## About NECCA

For over 20 years, the North East Contact Centre Awards have recognised the individuals, teams and organisations who make our region one of the most respected contact centre communities in the UK.

NECCA is more than an awards ceremony. It is a benchmark for excellence, a platform for sharing best practice and a celebration of the people who power our industry.

## WHY ENTER?

Entering NECCA provides an opportunity to:

- Benchmark your performance against regional leaders
- Recognise and motivate colleagues
- Demonstrate measurable customer and commercial impact
- Strengthen your employer and industry brand
- Celebrate success at a prestigious regional event

Many previous entrants describe the reflection process itself as invaluable.

### What's New for 2026

The 2026 programme introduces:

- A consistent What, How, Impact and Innovation framework across all categories
- Transparent scoring weightings
- A stronger emphasis on commercial contribution
- Clearer guidance on innovation and adoption of best practice
- Embedded performance snapshot tables within nomination forms

These enhancements ensure clarity for entrants and consistency for judges.

# TIMELINE



## NOMINATIONS OPEN

1st June 2026

## WEBINAR

Wednesday 27th May 2026



## NOMINATIONS CLOSE

5pm 24th July 2026 deadline

## JUDGING BEGINS

1st August 2026



## SHORTLIST ANNOUNCED

9th September 2026

## INTERVIEWS, PANEL PRESENTATIONS & SITE VISITS

12th September 2026 until 30th October 2026



## THE AWARDS CEREMONY!

The big night

# HOW TO ENTER

## THE AWARDS WILL OPEN FOR NOMINATIONS ON 1st June 2026

It is free of charge to enter the awards and can make as many nominations as you like. You can nominate colleagues, clients, one of your teams or even yourself!

### TO ENTER

1. Download the "NECCA 2026 Categories & Criteria" document from the website: [www.necca.co.uk/categories](http://www.necca.co.uk/categories)
2. Decide which categories you would like to make nominations for. Reflect on your individual, team and organisation's significant achievements, and consider the criteria that each category will be assessed against.
3. Each award has a nomination form, available from the Enter page of the website: [www.necca.co.uk](http://www.necca.co.uk) This year we have linked with Awardify on online awards platform to make the process easier, once you have registered you can start completing your nomination form.
4. Complete your forms online with input from colleagues, customers and stakeholders as required. We have kept forms short to ensure they do not take too much time to complete.
5. We will be holding a webinar on 27th May to give entrants the opportunity to hear from the judges. Sign up to the mailing list for notifications.
6. Submit your form no later than **5pm on 24th July 2026**, stating the name of the individual, team or centre you are nominating and the category applied for in BLOCK CAPITALS in the subject line. We will confirm receipt.
7. Our judges will conduct initial evaluation assessments between 31 July 2026 - 3rd September 2026
8. We will aim to contact all entrants on 9th September 2026 via email to notify them of the outcome. **The shortlist will be announced on 9th September 2026**
9. Shortlisted individuals & teams will be invited to an interview/panel presentation in September/October. We will give entrants plenty of notice of the date for this.
10. If you have any questions or queries during the application process, don't hesitate to get in touch with us.

[www.necca.co.uk](http://www.necca.co.uk)



# CATEGORIES

Our judging panel has used significant industry experience to revise and update the categories and evaluation criteria for North East Contact Centre Awards in 2025.

The new categories for the awards this year are listed below. They are divided into three main groups: **Individual Stars**, **Awesome Teams** & **Outstanding Organisations**

## AWARDS

### INDIVIDUAL STARS

CUSTOMER SERVICE STAR

CUSTOMER SUPPORT STAR

SALES STAR

CONTACT CENTRE INDUSTRY NEWCOMER

RESOURCE PLANNING STAR

SERVICE & SUPPORT TEAM LEADER

SALES & RETENTION TEAM LEADER

INSPIRATIONAL LEADER

QUALITY MANAGER OF THE YEAR

### AWESOME TEAMS

CUSTOMER SERVICE TEAM

SUPPORT TEAM

RESOURCE PLANNING TEAM

LEARNING & DEVELOPMENT TEAM

COMPLAINTS/CUSTOMER RELATIONS TEAM

### OUTSTANDING ORGANISATIONS

PEOPLE CENTRIC ORGANISATION

BEST BUSINESS CHANGE OR TRANSFORMATION

BEST USE OF AI FOR COLLEAGUES & CUSTOMERS

CONTACT CENTRE OF THE YEAR UNDER 250 SEATS

CONTACT CENTRE OF THE YEAR OVER 250 SEATS

Download the full categories & criteria document: [www.necca.co.uk/categories](http://www.necca.co.uk/categories)

# JUDGES



## **Sarah Hunt, HEAD JUDGE**

Sarah enjoyed over 25 years working in the contact centre industry. During that time she has worked in leadership roles across Retail, Banking, Insurance, Funeral care and Outsourced Operations. She has worked in operational roles as well as change roles in business and customer transformation projects – but her real passion is working with people and helping them to develop skills and knowledge that make our industry a great place to work.

Her role as Membership Director at the CCMA and Lead Judge for the UK National Contact Centre and the European Contact Centre and Customer Service awards (ECCCSA) enabled her to draw on years of experience to support Contact Centre members, suppliers and sponsors share best practice and help to raise the standards across the industry.



## **Julie Mordue**

### **Head of Marketing & Partnerships, NRG & Greenbean**

Julie Mordue, Head of Marketing at NRG, is a well-respected contact centre specialist. Founder and Lead of the North East Contact Centre Partnership (NECCP), Julie has several years' experience judging for several industry awards programmes including the North East, UK and European Contact Centre & Customer Service Awards. During the day, she is responsible for greenbean's business engagement activity including Call VIP, the North East's only contact centre networking group as well as supporting inward investment to the region with market insight and benchmarking. In addition to this, Julie supports the on-going marketing strategy for the NRG and greenbean brands including website content, social media, internal comms and client recruitment marketing.

# JUDGING PROCESS

APPLICATION  
DEADLINE:  
5PM  
24TH JULY 2026

## STAGE 1 - SHORTLISTING

Once you have submitted your nomination form, we will confirm receipt.

All entries will be reviewed by our panel of independent judges and shortlisted against the category criteria outlined in the categories & criteria document.

We will aim to contact all entrants via email to notify them of the outcome in September.

**The shortlist will be announced on 9th September 2026**

## STAGE 2 - INTERVIEWS, PANEL PRESENTATIONS AND SITE VISITS

### **Individual Star categories:**

The final judging for shortlisted individual categories will involve a face to face interview with our expert judges. The interviews will take place during September/October. Interview dates will be published on the categories page of the website during April - please do make a note of the relevant date and ensure you are available should you be shortlisted.

Interviews will last no longer than one hour. We want you to enjoy the process - our judges are experienced interviewers and are focused on giving the nominees the best opportunity to shine!

### **Awesome Team categories:**

Shortlisted teams will be invited to give presentations to a panel of judges during October. The panel is made up of 3-4 independent judges, each with a wealth of industry expertise. The session will require the team to give a 20 minute presentation on why they should win the category, followed by a Q&A session.

Judging sessions will last no longer than one hour in total. You can nominate up to three individuals to represent your team.

### **Outstanding Organisation categories:**

Organisations shortlisted for any of the Outstanding Organisation categories will be assessed during a site visit by a panel of expert judges.

We will contact shortlisted organisations to arrange the site visit with plenty of time. Site visits will take approximately 2-3 hours and will involve an agreed agenda, including meetings with staff and directors of the centre.

# JUDGING FRAMEWORK

All entries are assessed against four core dimensions:

Download the categories & criteria document from  
[www.necca.co.uk](http://www.necca.co.uk)

## The 2026 Judging Framework

**What** – The challenge, objective or opportunity addressed

**How** – The behaviours, collaboration and leadership demonstrated

**Impact** – Measurable customer, colleague and commercial outcomes

**Innovation** – Differentiation, best practice and forward-thinking delivery

Impact carries the greatest weighting across all categories.

## Category Weightings

### Individual Awards

What 25% | How 25% | Impact & Commercial Impact 40% | Innovation 10%

### Team Awards

What 25% | How 25% | Impact & Commercial Impact 40% | Innovation 10%

### Organisation Awards

Strategy 20% | Delivery 20% | Impact & Commercial Performance 40% | Innovation & Sector Influence 20%

## Demonstrating Impact & Commercial Value

Commercial impact is relevant across all roles and functions.

Examples include:

- Revenue growth or improved conversion
- Operational efficiency or cost reduction
- Productivity uplift
- Reduced attrition or absence
- Risk mitigation or compliance improvement

Judges assess commercial impact proportionate to role level.

# JUDGING FRAMEWORK

Download the categories & criteria document from  
[www.necca.co.uk](http://www.necca.co.uk)

## **Innovation & Best Practice**

Innovation often differentiates good entries from exceptional ones.

This may include:

- Cross-sector learning
- New processes or technologies
- Cultural transformation
- Influencing standards beyond your organisation

Innovation does not need to be complex; it must demonstrate fresh thinking and measurable change.

## **How to structure a strong entry**

The strongest entries:

- Tell a clear and structured story
- Focus on evidence and outcomes rather than activity
- Use performance data to validate impact
- Demonstrate sustainability of results
- Avoid jargon and management language

Always link performance measures directly to the outcomes described.

## **Final Thoughts**

NECCA celebrates the talent, commitment and innovation within North East contact centres.

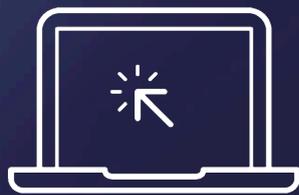
We encourage you to reflect on your achievements, recognise your people and share your story.

We look forward to celebrating excellence with you in 2026.

# TOP TIPS

## BE PRECISE AND CONCISE

Short and compelling usually trumps longer, wordy explanations or descriptions. Try to use punchy, straight to the point language.



## USE NUMBERS

Figures & statistics - used sparingly, they can often tell a compelling story: growth, percentage changes, market share etc.

## TELL YOUR STORY

Introducing a core narrative in your nomination/application can be a strong way to help judges understand the impact and outcomes achieved. Use real life case studies and examples that support your application and tell your story.



## AVOID MANAGEMENT SPEAK / JARGON

Try not to use management cliches or any jargon which could distract the judges from understanding the unique nature of your nomination.

## GET PERSONAL!

While you may prefer to use outside help with your nomination, such as a PR firm or similar, we find that the best nominations are those that come from the heart and present personal industry knowledge. Make sure you reflect your own specific circumstances and experiences.



# FAQS

## **Is there an entry fee?**

No, the awards are free to enter.

## **Is there a limit to the number of entries that can be submitted?**

There is no limit to the number of entries that can be submitted for individuals or teams, but only one entry per organisation is allowed for the various Contact Centre of the Year awards.

## **What is the deadline for nominations?**

Your completed submission must be with us by 5pm on 28 July 2023.

## **Can public sector contact centres enter?**

The awards are open to contact centres from private and public sectors.

## **What geographical area do the awards cover?**

The local authority areas of Darlington, Durham, Gateshead, Hartlepool, Middlesborough, Newcastle, North Tyneside, Northumberland, Redcar and Cleveland, South Tyneside, Stockton-on-Tees and Sunderland. **If you are not sure if your centre falls within the geographical boundary, contact [MARC@FRESHSTARTEVENTS.UK](mailto:MARC@FRESHSTARTEVENTS.UK) who will be able to verify this for you.**

## **Is there any support available during the nominations process?**

As well as this toolkit, there will be a range of resources such as articles and interviews with our judging panel available on the resources page of our website. Additionally, we will be holding a webinar in late May which is a great chance to hear from the judges. It will offer an in-depth introduction the nomination and judging process.

This webinar will be recorded and available on the website from the following day

[www.necca.co.uk/resources](http://www.necca.co.uk/resources)

Be sure to sign up to our mailing list via the [homepage](#) of the website to keep updated.

### **When will we find out if we have been shortlisted?**

We will aim to contact all entrants via email on 9th September to notify of the outcome.  
**The full shortlist will be announced on 9th September 2026.**

### **Can I get feedback on my entry?**

Unfortunately, due to time restraints and the high number of applicants, it is not possible for our judges to offer feedback at the shortlisting stage.

### **How do I buy a ticket for the awards dinner?**

Tickets are now available via the website [www.necca.co.uk](http://www.necca.co.uk):

Individual tickets: £140+VAT

Table of ten: £1250+VAT

**If you have any questions at all during the application process, don't hesitate to get in touch with the team. We are more than happy to help:**

# GOOD LUCK!

Thanks for your interest in the 2026 awards. Best of luck with your nomination and we look forward to seeing you at the awards ceremony & gala dinner in November!

To keep up to date with all the exciting news on the awards, sign up to our mailing list via the website: [www.necca.co.uk](http://www.necca.co.uk), and join the conversation on social media:



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