

# PRCA SPOTLIGHT AWARDS

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*For Excellence in Communications* **2025**

Entrant Briefing Document | Updated 13 March 2025

## The Entry Process

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- **Online Submission Only:**
  - Via [PRCA's platform](#)
  - Can save drafts
  - Online support with the platform - 9.30 - 17.00
- **Period during which work is carried out:** February 2024 and 7 March 2025
- **Shortlists in each category will be published on Tuesday, 20th May**
- **Submission Requirements:**
  - Entry form (250-600 word limits per section)
  - Supporting materials (up to 5 PDFs, max. 32MB)

## Who Can Enter?

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- The Awards are open to **PR agencies, sole traders and in-house PR teams who have worked with a PR agency or sole trader** to deliver impactful campaigns.
- Multiple entries permitted
- **Entry Fee:** €200 per submission

## Timeline

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# PRCA SPOTLIGHT AWARDS

**7 March 2025:** Entries Open

**15 April 2025 @12pm:** Entry Deadline

**20 May 2025:** Award shortlist announcement

**20 June 2025:** Gala Ceremony at The Shelbourne Hotel, Dublin

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## Why Enter?

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- **Define Excellence** – Set new standards for the industry.
- **Demonstrate Impact** – Showcase the value you contribute through your work.
- **Industry Recognition** – Celebrate outstanding campaigns and professionals.
- **Business Development** – Raise your profile with clients and peers.
- **Join the Celebration** – Awards Gala at The Shelbourne Hotel, Dublin.

## New Award Categories

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The 2025 Awards includes **new and improved categories** that will demonstrate the **tangible value PR agencies create** for their clients including:

- Best Contribution to a Client's Goals through a Social-First Campaign
- Best Technology Campaign
- Best Lifestyle Campaign
- Best Ongoing Communications Strategy
- Best Agency Innovation
- Outstanding Contribution to the Industry Award
- Hall of Fame




















## Categories: Full List

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1. **Best Consumer Campaign**
2. **Best Lifestyle Campaign**
3. **Best Health & Wellness Campaign**
4. **Best Technology Campaign**
5. **Best Social-First Campaign**
6. **Best Charity/Not-for-Profit Campaign**
7. **Best Integrated Campaign**
8. **Best Use of Sponsorship**
9. **Best PR Event Contribution**
10. **Best Public Information Campaign**
11. **Best Public Sector Campaign**
12. **Best Contribution to Societal Change**
13. **Best Corporate Campaign**
14. **Best ESG Campaign**
15. **Best Crisis/Issues Management Campaign**
16. **Best Earned Media – Short Term**
17. **Best Earned Media – Medium to Long Term**
18. **Best Ongoing Communications Strategy**
19. **Campaign of the Year**  
*Judges will select from category winners*
20. **Rising Star Award (for emerging professionals under 32, on or before 15th April 2025)**
21. **Outstanding Contribution to the Industry (Individual or Team)**
22. **Agency of the Year**
23. **Best Agency Innovation**
24. **Hall of Fame - Honour to be bestowed by the PRCA Board**

## Categories: Campaign Based Awards – 1-19

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-  **Best Consumer Campaign**
-  **Best Lifestyle Campaign**
-  **Best Health & Wellness Campaign**
-  **Best Technology Campaign**
-  **Best Social-First Campaign**
-  **Best Charity/Not-for-Profit Campaign**
-  **Best Integrated Campaign**
-  **Best Use of Sponsorship**
-  **Best PR Event Contribution**
-  **Best Public Information Campaign**
-  **Best Public Sector Campaign**
-  **Best Contribution to Societal Change**
-  **Best Corporate Campaign**
-  **Best ESG Campaign**
-  **Best Crisis/Issues Management Campaign**
-  **Best Earned Media – Short Term**
-  **Best Earned Media – Medium to Long Term**
-  **Best Ongoing Communications Strategy**
-  **Campaign of the Year**  
*Judges will select from category winners*



## Criteria for individual categories

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### **Best Consumer Campaign**

Campaigns targeting consumers that delivered an important outcome for clients who sell consumer products including FMCG, retailing and household products. Campaigns can cover everything from launching a product, to revitalising a brand or growing market share.

### **Best Lifestyle Campaign**

Campaigns that deliver an important outcome for clients who address the lifestyle, leisure and luxury sector, including but not limited to fashion, beauty, travel, tourism, hospitality, entertainment and recreation.

### **Best Health / Wellness Sector Campaign**

Campaigns that deliver an important outcome for clients in the health and wellness sector, both public and private. It covers all facets of the sector from health providers to pharma, medical research, medical equipment and support groups. Campaign outcomes can cover a very wide range and include, but are not limited to, changing behaviour, raising money and launching products or services.

## Criteria for individual categories

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### **Best Technology Campaign**

Campaigns that deliver an important outcome for technology products, services, or brands. This category recognises strategic and creative communications campaigns that have successfully raised awareness, shaped perceptions, or driven engagement in the technology sector. Whether launching an innovative product, managing a crisis, or positioning a brand as an industry leader, entries should demonstrate clear objectives, strong execution, and measurable impact.

### **Best Contribution to a Client's Goals Through a Social-first Campaign**

Campaigns that delivered an important outcome for clients with a social-first approach. The campaign may include other communications techniques, but the strategy and execution must demonstrate why a social-first approach was the best solution for the client. If a part of longer-term outreach, there must be a clear client outcome to be achieved.

### **Best Charity / Not-for-Profit Campaign**

This category is for campaigns that delivered an important outcome for clients who are charities, voluntary and not-for-profit organisations. If the campaign addressed fundraising, you must be explicit about how your work has contributed to the financial stability or fundraising objectives of the organisation.

## Criteria for individual categories

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### **Best Integrated Campaign**

Campaigns that deliver a specific contribution to an important outcome for a client by using an integrated communications approach across earned, owned and paid – and using any or all communications formats.

### **Best Contribution to Achieving Client Goals Through Sponsorship**

Campaigns that deliver a specific contribution to an important outcome for a client by using sponsorship. The contribution of the sponsorship to the client goal must be made explicit by the entry.

### **Best Contribution to Client Goals Through a PR Event**

Campaigns that deliver a specific contribution to an important outcome for a client by using a PR event. The contribution of the event to the client goal must be made explicit by the entry.

## Criteria for individual categories

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### **Best Public Information Campaign**

Campaigns that improved awareness or generated support for a specific topic among the general public or specific interest groups. The campaign may be instigated by a company, government department, local authority, state body or interest group.

### **Best Public Sector Campaign**

The Best Public Sector Campaign is for a single topic that delivered an important outcome for clients who are a public sector organisation, local authority, or a government department.

### **Best Contribution to Societal Change Campaign**

Campaigns that deliver an important contribution to affecting societal change, such as a change to legislation that has a significant positive impact on Irish society.

## Criteria for individual categories

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### **Best Corporate Campaign**

Campaigns that deliver an important outcome for a business or organisation by focusing on the organisation as distinct from its products or services.

### **Best ESG Campaign**

Campaigns that deliver an important outcome for a client by focusing on its approach to Environment, Social and Governance. Just highlighting the ESG approach is not enough, the entry must demonstrate a positive outcome from the campaign.

### **Best Crisis / Issues Management Campaign**

This category is for work undertaken to protect a client from financial, reputational or brand damage. This covers crisis situations and/or managing difficult issues. Judges are especially aware of the need for discretion in this category.

## Criteria for individual categories

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### **Delivering Impact Through Earned Media - Short Term**

Delivering immediate business impact through earned media in less than one month. This category shines a spotlight on campaigns that delivered an important outcome for a client by using earned media. This award recognises how the agency created immediate impact as a result of its strategy and execution. Just highlighting coverage is not enough, the entry must demonstrate a positive outcome from the campaign.

### **Delivering Impact through Earned Media - Medium to Long Term**

Delivering business / organisational impact through earned media over a longer time frame. This category shines a spotlight on campaigns that delivered an important outcome for a client by using earned media. This award recognises campaigns that ran for 1-12 months and delivered specific impact as a result of the strategy and execution. Just highlighting coverage is not enough, the entry must demonstrate a positive outcome from the campaign.

## Criteria for individual categories

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### **Best Ongoing Communications Strategy**

This category recognises sustained PR, communications, and media relations consultancy for long standing clients. It celebrates agencies and teams that consistently deliver strategic, long-term communications that enhance reputation, drive engagement, and achieve measurable impact over time. This award recognises how the agency created impact as a result of its strategy and execution. Judges will look for demonstrated success, adaptability, and the ability to maintain momentum in an evolving media and business landscape.

### **Campaign of the Year**

The winners of the other campaign categories will be entered into the Campaign of the Year category and reviewed by the panel of judges.

## Award Criteria Categories (1-18) | 1/5

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### **1. Client problem and outcome | 20 points – up to 400 words**

In assessing an entry, the judges will need to understand the level of difficulty and the level of value to the client. There will be 10 points available for each - so hard challenges score higher than easy ones - high value more than low value.

Please provide sufficient information so the judges can assess the value to the client of achieving the outcome and also how difficult it is to achieve the outcome by identifying the key barriers to success.

For example, if a client was launching a product into a sector that already had several other competitors and a dominant market leader, the agency would need to work very hard to make the client's product top of mind with buyers. It would also need to build sufficient trust in the client's product to persuade buyers to choose it over the dominant market leader.



## Award Criteria Categories (1-18) | 2/5

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### **2. Your strategy for making a tangible contribution to solving the problem or achieving the outcome | 30 points – up to 400 words**

Judges will allocate up to:

- a. 10 points for the depth and quality of research or insight that guided your strategy
- b. 10 points for the quality of audience targeting that ensured the right effort was focused on the right people
- c. 10 points for the clarity about the contributions it will make to the client's success. This section needs to include the metrics agreed with the client to measure your contribution. Using the product launch example above, this section would need to explain how you planned to cut through competitor 'noise' to make your client top of mind and how you would build trust in the client's product in the process.

Please explain your strategy so it is clear how you were planning to contribute to the client's success. Identify any research that led you to this strategy. Show how you planned to measure and prove your contribution. Judges will be looking for an explicit connection between your work and the outcome to be achieved. General statements such as raise awareness will not suffice. You will need to show who needed to be aware, what they needed to know and what this awareness needed to trigger.

## Award Criteria Categories (1-18) | 3/5

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### **3. How you delivered on your strategy | 20 points – up to 400 words**

The goal here is for you to show how the actions you took increased the certainty of making the required contribution to the client. Judges will be assessing the effectiveness of your processes and team as well as the level of innovation or creativity that was applied in relation to the specific client problem/outcome.

Please explain the specific steps you took to make success more assured and why you took these particular steps. For example, why you developed a particular message or campaign, why you selected a particular influencer or expert or why you chose a specific communications technique or channel.

## Award Criteria Categories (1-18) | 4/5

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### **4. The results of your work | 30 points – up to 400 words**

This is weighted higher because it's essential that your expert thinking and approach translated into the valuable contribution to the outcome that the client was seeking. Using the product launch example above, it is unlikely a client would make the agency responsible for achieving the launch sales target. But it would agree with you that making their product top of mind with buyers and building buyer trust would be essential contributions to achieving their sales target.

Please share tangible results that prove you achieved or exceeded the expected contribution. Judges will be looking for a direct connection between the results and the metrics mentioned in section 2.

## Award Criteria Categories (1-18) | 5/5

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### 5. Why you should win | up to 150 words

Please provide a brief summary of why your entry should win the award. This needs to highlight the value delivered, the expert thinking and the outstanding execution.

#### What judges are looking for:

- ✓ Clear articulation of client challenge & objectives
- ✓ A strategic approach to problem-solving
- ✓ Creativity and innovative execution
- ✓ Measurable impact – media coverage and beyond media coverage
- ✓ Alignment with client goals and business objectives
- ✓ Clear ROI and success metrics

## Categories: Individual & Team Excellence Awards – 20-24

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**Rising Star Award (for emerging professionals under 32 years of age, on or before 15th April 2025)**



**Outstanding Contribution to the Industry (individual or team)**



**Agency of the Year**



**Best Agency Innovation**



**Hall of Fame**

## Rising Star Award - About

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The Rising Star Award recognises an emerging communications professional who demonstrates talent, dedication, and impact. This award will honour an individual who, within a few years of entering the industry, has made an impact on their agency and for the clients they work for, showing innovation, strategic thinking, and the ability to drive meaningful engagement for clients or organisations. The person must be under 32 years of age, on or before 15th April 2025.

Recipients of the Rising Star award exhibit leadership potential, a keen understanding of communication trends, and a results-driven approach that sets them apart from their peers. Their work contributes to the advancement of the industry, whether through creative campaigns, media relations, crisis management, or digital storytelling.

This award celebrates not just past achievements but also the promise of a bright future in public relations.

## Rising Star Award - Criteria 1/4

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Applicants for the Rising Star Award must meet the following criteria:

### **1. Professional Experience | 20 points – up to 300 words**

- The nominee must have a minimum of three years professional experience in public relations / communications in a communications / PR agency and currently be employed in a PR / communications-related role.
- Include a description of yourself and your career to date.

### **2. Age Limit**

- Applicants must be under 32 years old as of the award submission deadline 15th April 2025.

## Rising Star Award - Criteria 2/4

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Applicants for the Rising Star Award must meet the following criteria:

### **3. Demonstrate Excellence | 30 points – up to 500 words**

- Candidates must show evidence of exceptional talent, innovation, or impact in their comms role.
- Please include a case study of a campaign you worked on and your contribution to it within 28 February 2024 and 7 March 2025). The case study should demonstrate:
  - Successful execution of a PR / communications campaign that shows creative problem-solving or innovative use of communications tools and platforms.
  - Tangible communications impact results such as media coverage, audience engagement, reputation management, brand recognition, audience growth.
  - Provide an example of how you introduced an innovative idea, approach, or strategy in your work. What impact did it have?



## Rising Star Award - Criteria 3/4

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Applicants for the Rising Star Award must meet the following criteria:

### **4. Approach and Leadership Future Potential | 30 points – up to 300 words**

- Demonstrate your approach to working in PR covering your approach to working with colleagues, with your employer, clients and with stakeholders.
- Nominees should demonstrate potential for future leadership within the communications industry, such as mentorship, team collaboration, continual upskilling and growing industry knowledge.

### **5. Future Gazing | 20 points – up to 300 words**

- Outline challenges, opportunities and some PR trends you see impacting the industry and development of your communications role over the next 5 years.
- How do you see your career evolving in the next 5 years? What impact do you hope to make in the PR industry?

## Rising Star Award - Criteria 4/4

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Applicants for the Rising Star Award must meet the following criteria:

### **6. Endorsements**

- Please include a recommendation from a manager/agency lead on why you are an appropriate candidate for the Rising Star Award (150 word limit).

### **7. Submission Materials**

Completed entry form, including:

- Professional headshot.
- CV.
- Supporting case study file - optional.

## Outstanding Contribution Award - About

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The Outstanding Contribution to the Industry from a Team or Individual Award recognises a team or individual who has made a significant, lasting impact on the public relations / communications profession in Ireland.

This prestigious honour is awarded to those who have demonstrated exceptional leadership, innovation, and dedication to advancing the industry through their work, thought leadership, and mentorship. Whether through groundbreaking campaigns, advocacy for ethical standards, contributions to industry education, development, and betterment, or driving meaningful change for the industry and clients, the recipient(s) of this award have set new benchmarks for excellence. Their influence extends beyond individual success, shaping the future of public relations and inspiring the next generation of professionals.

This award celebrates those whose contributions extend beyond individual achievements, leaving a meaningful legacy that inspires and benefits the broader PR community in Ireland.

## Outstanding Contribution Award - Criteria 1/3

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Criteria for the Outstanding Contribution to the Industry from a Team or Individual includes:

### **1. Industry Leadership & Advocacy - 25 points – up to 300 words**

- Demonstrates thought leadership and has played a key role in shaping and advancing the public relations / communications profession.
- Advocates for the growth, ethical integrity, and evolution of the industry.
- Actively participates in or leads industry organisations, initiatives, or professional development efforts.

### **2. Industry Impact - 25 points - up to 300 words**

- Plays a key role in shaping industry trends or best practices through their work.
- Demonstrates creativity and strategic thinking that has resulted in measurable industry-wide impact.
- Demonstrated success in elevating the role and value of PR in business, media, or society

## Outstanding Contribution Award - Criteria 2/3

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Criteria for the Outstanding Contribution to the Industry from a Team or Individual includes:

### **3. Contributions to Professional Development & Mentorship - 25 points – up to 300 words**

- Actively supports and mentors emerging communications professionals, fostering talent and leadership within the industry.
- Contributes to education, training, or knowledge-sharing through speaking engagements, published work, or teaching.
- Creates or supports initiatives that enhance diversity, equity, and inclusion within public relations.

## Outstanding Contribution Award - Criteria 3/3

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Criteria for the Outstanding Contribution to the Industry from a Team or Individual includes:

### **4. Measurable Impact & Legacy - 25 points – up to 300 words**

- Has made a demonstrable, long-term contribution to the industry through their body of work.
- Developed campaigns, policies, or initiatives that have led to positive change in the profession.
- Introduced or championed new strategies, tools, or approaches that have influenced the industry.
- Recognised by peers, industry organizations, or media for their lasting contributions.

## Agency of the Year

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The Agency of the Year will be the agency that has demonstrated significant positive impact in four key areas:

- **Impact for clients | 25 points - up to 250 words**  
Proof of excellence would include client Net Promotor Score (NPS) and client retention as well as outstanding results for clients. It would also include service innovation and how this contributed to all four elements of this award
- **Impact for the agency's people | 25 points - up to 250 words**  
Proof of excellence would include employee NPS and employee retention as well as culture development and the professional development of people and how this contributed to the other three elements of this award
- **Impact on agency business performance | 25 points - up to 250 words**  
Proof of excellence would include how the business has become more resilient by increasing profitability, generating cash, commanding premium prices and breaking the time to revenue equation.
- **Contribution to the sector | 25 points - up to 250 words**  
Proof of excellence would include how the agency has been a leading light in the sector for creating reasons why the sector should attract the best talent. This would include service innovation, culture and professional development and the value delivered to clients.

## Best Agency Innovation

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This category is designed to recognise the way an agency has responded to changing client needs and expectations by developing a new service or enhancing an existing service. Entries can include, if appropriate, how new technology has been used to improve either internal or client-facing processes. This covers any technology and does not have to involve AI. This category will help agencies and PR professionals demonstrate innovative solutions to client problems and needs.

Judges will be looking for the following:

- A description of the new service and the problems it solves or client outcome it contributes to - **25 points – up to 150 words**
- An explanation of why this is innovative - **25 points – up to 150 words**
- An explanation of why the new service is better than traditional approaches - **25 points – up to 150 words**
- Proof that the new service has been well received by clients – **25 points – up to 150 words**



## PRCA Hall of Fame

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The PRCA Hall of Fame is an honour awarded by the PRCA Spotlight Awards, recognising individuals who have made a significant, lasting impact on the public relations and communications industry in Ireland. The PRCA Board will consider suggestions and make a decision accordingly. You can email [info@prca.ie](mailto:info@prca.ie) with nominations for this prestigious award. Please ensure that nomination emails are 500 words or less. This prestigious award celebrates those who have demonstrated exceptional leadership, innovation, and dedication throughout their careers. Inductees into the Hall of Fame have not only shaped the communications industry but have also contributed to its evolution through thought leadership, mentorship, and outstanding professional achievements.

### Criteria:

- ✓ **Industry Leadership & Advocacy** – Driving change and setting new standards in public relations and communications.
- ✓ **Long-Term Contribution** – A proven track record of excellence and sustained impact on the profession.
- ✓ **Mentorship & Development** – Supporting and nurturing the next generation of communications professionals.
- ✓ **Innovation & Influence** – Introducing pioneering ideas, strategies, or campaigns that have reshaped the communications industry.
- ✓ **Recognised Excellence** – Consistently delivering outstanding results and earning respect from peers and clients alike.

## How to Win – Tips for a Strong Submission

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Align with Objectives – Clearly demonstrate client goals and how your results delivered against the goals.

- ✓ Make sure your **contribution** to the client's success is **explicit**.
- ✓ **Clarity & Conciseness** – Get straight to the point.
- ✓ **Tell a Story** – Outline the challenge, solution, and impact.
- ✓ **Prove Effectiveness** – Use data, results, and client testimonials.
- ✓ **Show Creativity & Innovation** – What makes your campaign a good solution for your client's challenge?

## How NOT to Win

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- ✗ Recycle entries from other awards or different categories – there MUST be a good match to each award criteria.
- ✗ Exceed the word count – the platform won't let you.
- ✗ Fail to give explicit contributions – expecting judges to 'read between the lines' will not work.

## Supporting Materials & Technical Notes

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Supporting material may be submitted in support of your entry, but the judges will focus on the submission submitted above. Supporting material include press releases, sample press cuttings, photos, broadcast material and any other information deemed relevant.

Please note that while only a moderate amount of media material is required at least one original press release must be included.

- **Formats:** PDF submissions
- **Size Limit:** 32MB total across 5 files
- **Required Materials:**
  - At least one original press release
  - Sample media coverage (if applicable)

## Esteemed Judging Panel

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**New Chair:** Crispin Manners

**Members:**

- **Chloe Brennan**, Matchstick Talent Agency
- **Andy Green**, Story Starts Here
- **Geraldine Herbert**, journalist and broadcaster
- **Thomas Kelly**, DCU
- **Eoin Kennedy**, Novartis Ireland
- **Geoff Lyons**, PML Group
- **Padraig McKeon**, Consultant
- **Allison Morris**, Belfast Telegraph
- **Andras Sztaniszlav**, CEO of ICCO
- **Florence White**, Uisce Éireann
- **Nikki Gallagher**, IBEC
- **Gillian Nelis**, The Business Post

# Next Steps

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# PRCA SPOTLIGHT AWARDS

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