



Director of the Year
Awards 2023

A celebration of leadership talent, success and achievement

29 September | 4pm – 10pm
116 Pall Mall, London

Category sponsors



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#DOTYA2023

Welcome to the 2023 IoD England Director of the Year Awards

A very warm welcome to all attendees of this year's IoD England Director of the Year Awards!

We are very pleased to welcome our guests to 116 Pall Mall for a face-to-face celebration, where we acknowledge the exceptional finalists and recognise a new cohort of winners. This year, we've taken a different approach by combining the IoD England regions into three super groups: the North, Midlands and the East, and the South. However, what remains consistent — both this year and every year — is our commitment to showcasing our most inspirational directors. These leaders adeptly represent their local markets and communities through innovative business strategies, solid governance practices, and dedicated employee support.

I extend my gratitude to all participants, the discerning judging panel, and the hardworking Executive team and Volunteers. Their dedication has been instrumental in identifying, supporting, and championing the nominees throughout this process. Tonight, provides an opportunity for all of us to come together and acknowledge the efforts of everyone involved, particularly our finalists and successful winners. As outlined in the programme, the diverse talent we honour tonight spans various sectors, reflecting the IoD's broad spectrum: from business and public service to the vibrant third sector.

Our nominees exemplify real resilience, determination, and adaptability — qualities that are crucial for our nation's growth. By fostering dynamism and recognising aspirations, we collectively contribute to promoting the strengths of England as a hub for business, work, and habitation. Our collective effort creates an environment where achievements are nurtured and acknowledged.

At the IoD, we take pride in supporting not only our valued members but also our extended communities. For those who haven't yet had the privilege to engage with our wide-ranging community, this evening offers a valuable opportunity to connect, build relationships, and learn more about our endeavours.

The IoD remains committed to equipping current and future leaders with essential skills through various courses and events held throughout the year. This empowering curriculum covers a range of subjects that foster actionable leadership, encourage effective governance, and guide individuals on the path to becoming more proficient leaders. In today's landscape, organisations adhering to high governance standards prove to be more productive and successful, and we encourage such practices.

Our engagement with government bodies and policymakers continues to be robust. We advocate for our members' perspectives through constructive dialogue that promotes growth and addresses critical social and educational programs vital to the workplace. As we work toward a more harmonious approach to building a sustainable and equitable environment in England, we are pleased to welcome The Prince's Trust as our charity partner for 2023. Representatives from the charity are pleased to be here in person tonight to tell you more about the trust's work, and there is a chance to donate too, through our silent auction partners.

For those attending this event, I hope you have an enjoyable evening filled with networking opportunities. To those unable to join us, I trust you can still share in the festivities from afar. All of us here at IoD look forward to connecting with you in the future. Your ongoing support is greatly appreciated.

Programme

- 4pm** Arrival for drinks reception
- 4:45pm** Guests seated for awards
- 5pm** Awards ceremony
- 6:15pm** Awards conclude
- 6:30pm** Dinner served
- 8:30pm** Closing remarks
- 8:30pm – 10pm** Networking
- 10pm** Event close

Menu

Starter

Searcys gin infused salmon, lemon yogurt cream, fennel pollen, pickled dill cucumber (gf)

British heritage tomatoes, barrel aged feta, smoked almonds, basil (v) (gf)

Main

Crispy duck leg confit, chili Bok choy, plum sauce, honey and sea salt glaze

Spring beans and asparagus risotto, baked ricotta cheese, lemon verbena (v)

Dessert

Treacle tart, raspberry, vanilla Chantilly, lemon verbena (v)



Jonathan Geldart
Director General, IoD



Patrick Macdonald
Non-Executive Chair, IoD



Roisin Sweeney
Director of Membership Services, IoD

Hosts and speakers



Danni Hewson
Host, Broadcast Journalist,
Finance Analyst



Jon Geldart
Director General, IoD



Carole O'Neil



**Chris Cliffe FCIPS
(Chartered) MIoD**



Patrick Macdonald
Non-Executive Chair, IoD



Roisin Sweeney
Director of Membership
Services, IoD



**Claire-Marie
Boggiano CEng**



Dev Govender

**PROUD TO SUPPORT
THE PRINCE'S TRUST**

Judging panel



David Roberts



**Glenn St John-Colgan
FIoD**



Ian Dormer CBE CDir | Head Judge



**Kathryn Stone OBE
CDir FIoD**



James Gardner



Dr Andrew Robertson



Andy Leask CDir



John Harte



Jo Barnes CDir



Judeline Nicholas



**Jules Quested-Williams
FloD**



**Professor Keith
Jackson CDir FloD**



Lewis Stringer



Lilly Miller



Dr Richard Smith CDir



Simon Walton



Connecting leaders across the UK

The difference between a good director and a great director is the company they keep.

The IoD is a thriving membership community for directors across the UK and beyond, where you can connect with other leaders, develop your skills and be heard. At a time when great directors have never been more important, the IoD offers professional development, valuable connections and influence.

Start up and Young



Eleni Polychroniadou | Sintali

Eleni is a passionate advocate for the “do good and be good” ethos. Her dedication shines through her work in fostering an inclusive and supportive work culture. As a key driver of Sintali’s international business expansion, she has led initiatives resulting in projects in over 80 countries. Eleni’s unwavering commitment to green buildings and climate action has not only made a global impact but also fuelled the company’s growth.



Emma Armstrong | EmPro Consultants

Emma is the Director of EmPro Consultants, a boutique real estate and facilities change consultancy based in Birmingham. Emma has successfully led her growing team through a variety of successful and award-winning projects, which has earned the company a fantastic reputation. Emma leads her business to be climate-conscious, inclusive, and innovative which is reflected in her partnerships with Ecologi, Tommy’s and Emma’s board position at the Invictus Education Trust.



Graham Nash | BusinessWise Accountancy and Tax

Graham Nash is the director of multi-award-winning start-up company BusinessWise Accountancy and Tax. Graham brings over 20 years previous experience of running companies and transforming them from an idea to commercial success. He leads a growing team and is an advocate for developing young talent through an active apprenticeship programme. Graham is dedicated to supporting business owners achieve their dreams advising them on financial efficiencies and systems to ensure the highest return possible.



John Lugsden | Rogers McHugh Recruitment Limited

Having spent 10 years in the recruitment sector John thought that he could provide a better service to clients and candidates alike while also being altruistic and providing to local and National communities. In their three years of trading they feel that this has been delivered and John now leads a team across two offices (more to come in the future) and a business turning over £5 million.



William English CBE CDir FIoD CMgr FCMI FRGS MSc | Owen English & Son

Seven years in monastic self-determination (in Business and Postgraduate Brewing & Distilling education) transitioning from ‘Tank man to Business man’. Five years as chair of a significant veterans’ association; four years as non-executive directorship of a mid-sized global trading company; owner, chair and combined CEO of a family multi-generational estate. Purpose and Vision driven, Governance at the core, English remains on a personal journey living the Values of Knowledge, Perseverance and Selflessness.

Innovation

sponsored by: **Allica Bank**



Gary Moore | UNTHA UK

Gary Moore is an accomplished director — and former IoD award finalist — having held multiple international roles within the environmental sector. With a passion for collaboration, engineering, and sustainability, he’s supported hundreds of global organisations to turn unwanted and soon-to-be discarded materials into reusable resources — protecting the planet while driving commercial success for clients. He has taken to the world stage to share his knowledge in countries ranging from America to Australia.



James Horseman | Horseman Coaches Ltd

Since joining the company James has steered the business through two recessions and a global pandemic while maintaining growth in all areas. Specialising in educational and corporate transport requirements the company has been awarded the title of Coach Operator of the Year for six of the last seven years. James’ key goal is to become carbon neutral by 2030 with a strategic and targeted decarbonisation strategy which the company is currently on target for.



Janet Legge | Association of Corporate Treasurers

Janet’s vision has been to achieve the best quality of training and qualifications for the ACT and she has delivered many innovative projects for the ACT. From improving the online assessment and remote invigilation offering, to rolling out digital credentials to all members, moving to flexible on-demand assessments and recently developing eight courses on the FutureLearn platform - from treasury to leadership and lastly ESG. Her innovative leadership and strategic thinking has ensured the ACT remains relevant.



Manny Athwal | School of Coding

Manny founded the School of Coding from his bedroom in 2017 and has since grown the company into a world-class brand with offices in the UK, Asia and Europe, employing over 110 people. His strategy is to hire younger people and invest in their training to grow with the business, 65% of the company’s workforce is female. In 2022 Manny was given scholarship by Goldman Sachs for executive education at University of Oxford Saïd Business School, helping the business’ 73% growth in the last 12 months.



Paul H Jones FRSC | Bitrez Ltd

Paul has pioneered new, innovative and disruptive chemistry to help rectify the anthropogenic damage inflicted on our planet. Through the use of green principles, he has led businesses to revolutionise polymer development and product scalability. His bio-based Patented IP is utilised in EU Horizon projects to aid decarbonisation of the transport sector, and he has led businesses to produce components for both harvesting green energy, and utilising it efficiently.

**Peter Jarvis | Contechs Ltd**

Previously the managing director of Contechs, Peter has taken over as Group Chief Executive Officer to drive the company's growth and innovation, shaping its strategy as it expands globally. He has been instrumental in establishing Contechs as a respected name in the automotive world, providing cutting-edge innovations to some of the world's most prestigious brands and tier one suppliers.

**Rich Kenny | Interact DC Limited**

Rich is the Managing Director at Interact, a world leading environmental consultancy utilising circular economy machine learning software, and Visiting Research Fellow in the School of Engineering at London South Bank University. Winner of CTO of the year in 2021, his research and innovation focus are energy efficiency and the environmental and economic impacts of IT hardware during creation, use and disposal. He is a firm believer in the circular economy and sustainable solutions for IT hardware. He has contributed to the UK's Industrial Strategy, European Legislation and his research has been published in internationally renowned academic journals, conferences and anthologies.

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**Steve Rigby | Rigby Group Plc**

Steve Rigby is Co-CEO of Rigby Group, one of the world's largest family-owned businesses founded in 1975. The Group is a multinational conglomerate employing over 8,500 people across Europe with revenues of £4 billion (\$5 billion). Steve has led a dramatic transformation of the company in the last decade through strategic planning, a robust M&A programme and dynamic asset allocation. He operates with a highly capable but small head office team of 30.

**Stuart Burlton | Make An Entrance Limited**

Stuart is the Managing Director of Make An Entrance. He has pivoted the brand from simple ecommerce to becoming a UK manufacturer of custom entrance mats. Under Stuart's leadership a traditional British craft has been saved, numerous individuals with significant challenges have returned to work from long term unemployment and the company has seen sustained growth. The company is now on the cusp of enormous growth through export and innovation.

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Family Business

sponsored by:

**Julianne Ponan MBE | Creative Nature**

Julianne, diagnosed with severe anaphylaxis at age 2, founded Creative Nature, a top allergen-free brand, drawing from her own allergy experiences. She received an MBE in 2023 for Business, Export, and allergy advocacy. The brand is now in major stores and exports to 16 countries. Julianne is an allergy advocate, blogger, and speaker, speaking at the Houses Parliament. She's a Medic Alert ambassador, Forbes 30 under 30, and Guardian's Leader of the Year.

**Stephen Bagnall | Bagnalls**

Stephen Bagnall has been Managing Director of the fifth-generation family business, Bagnalls, since 2004. Stephen is an inspirational leader to the Company's 650 employees. He is a passionate custodian of Bagnalls for future generations and actively plans succession across the business, including the recent Board appointments of two former apprentices. Stephen successfully de-risked Bagnalls' legacy pension scheme and oversaw the Company's most profitable year in its 148-year history, in 2022.

Public and Third Sector

**Caroline Stockmann FCA Hon FCT | Association of Corporate Treasurers**

As Chief Executive Caroline successfully led the ACT through two crises. A colleague says "Caroline brought...the organisation together through exceptionally challenging times, and while there were some very tough commercial decisions ... she never lost sight of us as individuals, and we could not have been in better hands. She leads with kindness, champions diversity and inclusion..., and [inspired] every one of us to push our limits and strive for excellence."

**David Noble | Migrant Help UK**

Over his six years on the Board of Migrant Help, David helped transform it from a £120k deficit on £9 million income to a £4.1 million surplus on £43.2 million income. He successfully led the Project Board for the asylum support services contract from the UK government. This has enabled Migrant Help to deliver a wide range of new charitable support to beneficiaries including funding services delivered by other charities in the sector.


Jens Gemmel von Döllinger | Public Sector Reformist

Jens designs and implements sustainable operating models for organisations that provide city and community solutions, and he has led some of the most innovative and radical public sector reform programmes in the UK. This includes the transformation of several councils in London, a blueprint for leadership on the design and organisation of the City of Birmingham, and a new corporate strategy and priorities for the City of Peterborough.


Sarah Gobran and Matt Pinches | Guildford Shakespeare Company

Sarah and Matt passionately believe in theatre that is inclusive of the whole community. Producing over 50 unique, immersive shows in community and heritage sites, they have championed a mandate that theatre is a vital asset for a strong, happy and healthy society. They have nurtured pioneering Outreach programmes for the most isolated members of the community including young carers, the homeless, displaced people, the elderly, excluded teens and families struggling with poor mental health.


Sonya Chowdhury | Action for M.E.

Sonya has led significant growth at Action for M.E. and recently, her work contributed to a cross-government delivery plan for ME/CFS. Working collaboratively and systemically at a national and international level, Sonya co-founded the World ME Alliance and co-leads the world's largest ME/CFS research study. Sonya is also a NED for Curo, a social housing and house-building company.


Sofia Azam | IgniteQuals Ltd

Sofia is a grassroots strategic leader, with extensive experience developing proven ED&I strategies, in the education sector. Her drive for fairness within education, as a senior consultant, led her to find her own education establishments - IgniteQuals and EduEco+. She is the first senior leader to appoint an EDIB advisor at corporate level with a clear-cut vision to ensure 'Belonging' is central to all business activities from recruitment to client and student engagements.

Equity, Diversity and Inclusion


Clare Wright | Jardine Motors Group

Clare's experience spans a multitude of sectors where she is recognised as a leader who develops and evolves business culture by ensuring people are always put first. Clare joined JMG in 2015. As Chief People Officer she has transformed the business by holistically reviewing the employee experience creating a flexible, inclusive and recognition-rich culture. Her approach of trust and transparency has made the recent acquisition by US firm Lithia Motors effortless and aligned to their mission of Growth Powered by People.


Sandhya Sabapathy | Thames Freeport

Sandhya Sabapathy is the newly appointed Director of Skills and Employment at Thames Freeport. Her previous role was Head of Social Impact at Adecco Group responsible for all social impact programmes and products, driving the social innovation lab. She has been in multiple international roles previously in over 15 markets covering marketing, innovation, and public policy. She was selected via the prestigious CEO for one month leadership program that chooses top young leaders from over 250,000 global applicants. She specializes in innovation and entrepreneurship and is an active alum from HEC Paris & McGill. She is a former international swimmer, is a former WEF global shaper and serves on the board of multiple charities.

Non-Executive Director

sponsored by:


Paul Cadman | Steps To Work

Paul is the Interim CEO of Steps to Work and a Professor in Entrepreneurship at Birmingham City University Business School. An award-winning CEO, he has led businesses to grow to over £100 million through organic growth and strategic expertise. He's also philanthropist supporting various organisations, including Acorns Children's Hospice Trust, EmployabilityUK and St Basils. His focus is on improving opportunities, fostering growth, and giving back. He's known as 'the quiet changemaker,' emphasizing professionalism, integrity, and loyalty. His motto is: "Connect enthusiastically, give relentlessly and lead bravely. Do that and the future is yours."


Trusha Lakhani | Elmhurst Energy Systems Ltd

Trusha is a NED for an energy efficiency accreditation company and successful award-winning Fractional CFO. Bringing a strongly commercial approach on business growth and Board support for SMEs, Trusha leads with strategic planning and strong financial acumen to various areas to quickly manoeuvre for best advantage ensuring organisations retain their values. Trusha also sits on the Board of ACCA Council, the global governing board of the worlds' largest accounting body.

Sustainability



Astrid Wynne | Interact DC Limited

Astrid leads the Sustainability function at Interact, the first of its kind solution to IT energy efficiency in server estates, and Techbuyer, a sustainable IT solutions provider. She has co-authored five academic papers on circular economy and energy efficiency in enterprise IT and is the chair of the Sustainability Special Interest Group at the Data Centre Alliance.



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Oliver Butts | The English Soap Company

In 2012, Oliver stepped into the position of Managing Director. From this moment, he has continued to strive for growth ensuring The English Soap Company is a key player within the beauty sector. This appetite and belief in the brand has seen it go from strength to strength. Along his journey he has ensured to invest in the correct people and machinery which has led the family business to become a worldwide success.



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Small-Medium Enterprise

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Jessica de Vere | Stage One Creative Services Ltd

Jessica led a comprehensive review of the HR strategy, developing and aligning this to the Company vision. She created a people vision to develop and invest in the people who bring creative concepts to life, providing career development pathways. With her enthusiasm to improve Company culture, Jessica implemented the CSR and Social committees and brought HR expertise to the board, bringing people to the forefront of discussion and decision making.



John Lugsden | Rogers McHugh Recruitment Ltd

Having spent 10 years in the recruitment sector John thought that he could provide a better service to clients and candidates alike while also being altruistic and providing to local and National communities. In their three years of trading they feel that this has been delivered and John now leads a team across two offices (more to come in the future) and a business turning over £5 million.



Jonathan Chapman | Burns & McDonnell

Jonathan set up the Burns & McDonnell business in 2017 and has since grown it to £35 million revenue with over 100 employees serving the UK infrastructure sector as an engineering led design and construction company. His energy, entrepreneurship and ambassadorial enthusiasm has seen him secure major contracts with blue chip clients in the energy and mission critical sectors and being recognised as a top 100 Best Small Companies to work for.



Julianne Ponan MBE | Creative Nature

Julianne, diagnosed with severe anaphylaxis at age of two, founded Creative Nature, a top allergen-free brand, drawing from her own allergy experiences. She received an MBE in 2023 for Business, Export, and allergy advocacy. The brand is now in major stores and exports to 16 countries. Julianne is an allergy advocate, blogger, and speaker, speaking at the Houses Parliament. She's a Medic Alert ambassador, Forbes 30 under 30, and Guardian's Leader of the Year.


Kate Sikora | Noble Performs

Since spearheading Noble's UK launch, Kate has masterfully guided the company to seven-figure triumph through astute financial, operational, and client-centric strategies. Her leadership has steered Noble's growth through the challenges of Covid, Brexit, and beyond, cementing its success in the UK market.


Sean Read CDir | Wesleyan Bank Ltd

Sean is a highly experienced banker and financier and has sat on numerous boards and executive committees throughout his career. He sees Chartered Directorship as a significant step in developing both himself and his organisation's strategy. He is currently Managing Director of Wesleyan Bank and is leading the orderly wind-down following its acquisition by Hampshire Trust Bank last year, where he was also recently appointed Chief Service Officer.


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Tsira Kemularia CDir | Shell

Tsira Kemularia is a senior finance leader with more than 23 years of international experience across the energy sector including regulated commodity trading and financial services. Her previous roles covered market risk management and commodity trading at companies including Dynegy Inc. in the US and UK, and at Shell International Trading and Shipping Ltd (STASCO) in London, Russia CIS, and Caribbean operations. Tsira is currently a Vice President of Corporate and UK Country Controller responsible for the Shell Group's financial management of the corporate segment.

Chartered Director

sponsored by:



Upcoming IoD events


Alk Brand CDir | Westfalia Fruit International

Alk is successfully leading Westfalia Fruit, a global produce company which operates in five continents and in 17 countries, at a time of turbulence in global markets. His extensive knowledge of international markets and skills in transformational leadership and growth has recently been strengthened by obtaining the IoD Chartered Director status enabling him to further advance his governance and compliance knowledge for the benefit of his company.


Better Director Series: inclusive business

17 October, 1pm – 6:30pm, 116 Pall Mall, London

There will be opportunities to tour our historic London hub and participate in organised 'speed networking', in addition to a topical panel discussion around equity, diversity and inclusion. Secure your place to meet fellow members, your IoD team and selected partners.


Lee Bailey CDir | Ace Today Limited

Lee is a Director at Top Gun Technologies Europe. He is currently implementing their go-to-market strategy after he used IoD acquired skills to review the current business position, analysed it critically and developed strategic options for the future desired state. Lee lives and breathes strategy and said he found the IoD programmes provided him concise frameworks, which when applied in the boardroom and the workplace made his businesses very successful.


Chartered Director Conference: building success through people

2 November, 12:30pm – 8pm, Aerospace Bristol

This event equates to five hours of verified CPD learning and is open to qualified chartered directors, as well as aspiring chartered directors: IoD members who have been awarded the Certificate in Company Direction and/or the Diploma and are therefore on the journey to becoming CDir.

Sponsors and supporters



Allica Bank

Allica Bank are Britain's award-winning business bank focused exclusively on supporting established businesses with 10-250 employees. Alongside giving every customer a dedicated relationship manager, Allica Bank offers a full range of lending and current accounts. Allica Bank were named 'Best Business Finance Provider' at the British Bank Awards in 2022 and 2023, and are rated 'Excellent' on Trustpilot.



Halo Financial

Halo Financial provide a better way for the most globally active and ambitious companies to transfer money across borders. Their experienced team of currency specialists are focused on mitigating foreign exchange risk. By applying bespoke solutions, Halo Financial protects revenue and profit margins, helping your business trade successfully across borders, and grow with confidence.



Meta Advisors

At Meta, we engage with clients that want to build a clear pathway to their goals. We start by exploring their values, understanding the principles that really matter and how they shape a client's thinking. This conversation allows us to identify key priorities that we can build a strategy and relationship around. We focus on building financial security, achieving financial independence and leaving a legacy and the personal definition of this for each client.



NJR

NJR is a fast-growing executive search company with a global-reach that focuses on delivering cross-functional executive and non-executive appointments, supporting exciting start-ups right through to major blue-chip organisations, using a mix of technology plus traditional search methods and to significantly accelerated timelines. Our team have on average 20+ years' consulting experience and bring insight from careers outside recruitment which combine to help them identify and attract candidates who fit the culture of an organisation and will bring the expertise and mindset necessary for success.



Perception Live

Perception Live is a group of companies that focusses primarily on audio visual solutions for the corporate sector, both as technical event specialists and integrators.



Searcys

Searcys, events caterer and restaurateur, has been at the IoD since 2021 opening the Carlton Brasserie, Champagne Bar, as well as hosting ticketed events such as Afternoon Tea and Champagne Masterclasses, making the building available to the public for the first time in 116 Pall Mall's history. With a focus on exceptional service and catering, 116 Pall Mall has established itself as a leading events destination in central London.

Charity partner



Prince's Trust

The Prince's Trust is one of the UK's leading youth charities, helping to change young lives. Their vision is that every young person should have the chance to succeed, no matter what their background or the challenges they are facing. The Trust helps those aged 11-30 who have faced disadvantage and adversity to build a better future for themselves, through employment, education and enterprise.

Certificate in Company Direction



What you need to know to be an effective director.

Find out more

iod.com/professional-development/





**Director of the Year
Awards 2023**

**Thank you for joining us at the England
Director of the Year Awards 2023.**

**Well done to all 2023 finalists and
congratulations to this year's winners.**



Institute of Directors

E: events@iod.com

W: iod.com/events

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