

SIR STELIOS NAMES WINNERS OF STELIOS FOUNDATION YOUNG ENTREPRENEUR AWARDS UK 2025

- Cash prizes of £300,000 will support the best young UK start-up founders on their growth journey to encourage job creation for the UK economy.
- Two of this year's winners are in the forefront of tech businesses: AI robotics and EV charging; the third one is a developer of social housing in Wales.
- Applicants more than double to 180 for the second year of the awards
- Top 20 businesses who applied had turnover in the range of £2.5m to £19m per year

Embargo: 1100hrs, May 27th 2025

Sir Stelios Haji-Ioannou has unveiled the winners of the 2025 young entrepreneurs' awards run through his UK-registered charity the Stelios Philanthropic Foundation. This year the winners are developing future technologies and social housing construction, bringing strong growth potential and job creation throughout the UK.

- **Ayan Mohamed** scoops top prize of £150,000 to support the growth of her company Digitech Oasis, which provides autonomous robotic solutions to make businesses more efficient. <https://www.digitechoasis.net/>
- **Dorian Payne** is named runner up and takes £100,000 for his social housing development business Castell Group. <https://castellgroup.co.uk/>
- **Andy Evangelou** wins third prize of £50,000 for his electric vehicle charger installation firm Plug-In Stations. <https://www.plugin-stations.com/>

The top prizes, totalling £300,000 were announced in London and follows on from the success of last year's inaugural awards and Sir Stelios's other UK awards for disabled entrepreneurs (run in partnership with Leonard Cheshire, the disability charity), now in its 17th year.

The 2025 UK Young Entrepreneur awards saw 180 UK-based businesses apply, with a shortlist of entrants facing a grilling from Sir Stelios over several key criteria. He chose winners who he and the Foundation felt could ensure the money would be best used to create jobs in the UK and provide a multiplier effect.

The awards target the best young start-up entrepreneurs and are designed to reward excellence. They also bring well-deserved recognition on their journey to scaling up into a successful growth business with job creation in the UK.

Winners were also chosen because Sir Stelios believes each entrepreneurs can be role models for young people who are dreaming of starting their own businesses and be their own boss rather than working for others.

THE WINNERS



Ayan Mohamed, Digitech Oasis – £150,000

Ayan started her first business as a teenager, organising parties and selling tickets to school friends. She moved to the UK and studied business management at Leeds University, followed by two postgraduate degrees also in business and finance.

In her spare time, while studying, Ayan mastered coding in the Python and C++ languages and did an internship with Google, and that is where she got the inspiration to start her first digital start-up. She travelled to China to research the latest AI and tech software before returning to the UK.

She launched Digitech Oasis, firstly with a business workflow management platform which quickly won her scores of lucrative contracts, and then created an HQ in Manchester with the aim of creating a North-West version of Silicon Valley.

She moved into designing the software and hardware for autonomous robots which make the logistics and manual tasks such as selecting products in vast warehouses super-efficient.

Ayan sought investment in the US from venture capital firms, doing about 150 pitches before selecting the most suitable investors. Alumni Ventures (www.av.vc) invested USD 6 million in Ayan's business - giving her the firepower to grow fast. She employs 25 people currently, with five in Manchester but the rest dotted around the world, mostly in the US. Digitech Oasis has also partnered with Google. She has received several accolades already, including the King's Awards for Enterprise and the KPMG Black Entrepreneurs' Awards, and has been invited to attend business breakfasts and panel sessions in Downing Street.

She plans to use the awards money to help create a new manufacturing plant, employing around 100 people in the north west of England; but some of the funds will also go towards marketing and legal IP protection.

Ayan said: "I really want to build something big with my business and winning this award will really help us scale up and grow."

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“The value of learning from Sir Stelios is profound and we look forward to building the relationship with easyGroup to help us target retailers and clients, and part of our aim this year was to expand our client base into the industrial sector.

“I am very much looking to learning from Sir Stelios and he can offer so much in terms of mentorship and knowledge of certain sectors we do not yet reach. We are building Manchester's next unicorn and I'm excited to continue this journey to IPO!”

Dorian Payne, Castell Group



Dorian also started his first business when he was a teenager, helping his dad who was a builder, and his mum with the bookkeeping of their property portfolio, before going on to set up a letting agency. He became the first member of his family to go to university and studied accounting at the University of South Wales.

Whilst studying a postgraduate Master's Degree in Quantity Surveying, he spotted a gap in the market for the creation of his social and affordable house building company, Castell Group, which partners with local authorities and housing associations to build hundreds of much-needed social housing in South Wales, where Dorian is from.

His firm now has a pipeline of over £200m worth of housing stock and Dorian says the prize money will go directly towards unlocking more social housing. He has already won a string of accolades and awards and is often invited to appear on government panels about SMEs. Castell currently employs 60 employees, but plans to scale up nationally.

Dorian said: “Our business is designed to be capital light, and client led, and with over 1.5 million people on the housing waiting lists, we are on a mission to deliver much needed social housing. The

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local authorities tell us what type of properties are needed, in what areas and the required specification.

“We take care of everything from identifying suitable sites, negotiating and securing them, managing planning permissions, legal consents and regulations. We then delivery the construction of the homes and receive monthly payments from the client, aiding cashflow.

“Stelios is very impressive and an inspiring role model with all the businesses he has created. It was a pleasure to meet him and answer his questions. The award means a lot for us: it will help us in our objective to scale nationally and help tackle the housing crisis. It also helps get us much-needed exposure in a difficult market. Hopefully, it will also mean more opportunity to share knowledge and learn from Sir Stelios.”

Andy Evangelou, Plug In Stations



Andy began his career as a reactive maintenance electrician, establishing strong partnerships within the local community. With his years of electrical experience, he then founded his first company, A Electric Solutions. Following that success, in 2020 Andy founded Plug In Stations after identifying a gap in the EV charging market. The business grew rapidly into a leader in the EV sector, serving both domestic and commercial clients across the UK, and helping over 30,000 customers transition to electric - alongside business partners Natalya Tsaparelli and Andrea Theodosi.

Plug In Stations provides bespoke and efficient EV charging solutions, bridging the gap between cutting edge technology and real world charging accessibility. As a trusted installation partner of Ohme Operations, who work closely with Motability, the NHS and leading automotive brands, the company has played a crucial role in shaping the UK's EV infrastructure.

Andy said: "We are very grateful for the opportunity given to us with this award. It would be a dream for us to work closely with Sir Stelios, who is a pillar in our community. I look forward to exploring further opportunities for collaboration in the future. The award prize will play a key role in

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the company's continued growth, supporting the purchase of a new headquarters and funding initiatives to empower the dedicated team behind the continued success of Plug In Stations.

"Our team shows up for our business every day, and without them, this would not be possible. This award will help us create new opportunities to support and invest in them."

Each applicant for the awards had to meet the following criteria:

- 34 years old or younger (born in 1990 or later)
- Running a start-up company registered at Companies House (UK) in the last 5 years (registered in 2019 or later)
- In current ownership of more than 50% of the shares of the company and be a director of the company
- Revised minimum revenue of £500,000 per annum in audited accounts filed at Companies House

There are three cash prizes for the winners totalling £300,000 that must be invested in the business to further its growth and success. For the avoidance of doubt: these are cash grants to be paid by the Stelios Foundation to the business accounts of the three winners without any other conditions. They are prizes, and not an investment in return for shares nor a loan.

Sir Stelios said: *"This year we saw an amazing reaction from UK young entrepreneurs, with a total of 180 entries – more than double last year. The competition was so popular we had to bring the deadline forward and raise the bar for revenues to £500k a year."*

"Once again there have been some astonishing and inspiring success stories that we have uncovered, demonstrating that entrepreneurship is alive and well in the UK among the young generation."

"Each of the winners are very good at promoting themselves and their businesses in the marketplace, and I think they would make great ambassadors for our awards going forward and great role models for others to start their own business! That is how new jobs are created in the real economy!"

The Stelios Philanthropic Foundation which is launching and funding the award has the stated mission of supporting a very diverse range of good causes but "close to home": in other words in the local communities that Sir Stelios and his family have lived and worked in – and, of course, the UK is one of them. The foundation has been running very successful similar entrepreneur's awards in Greece and Cyprus supporting job creation in the local economies for many years.

For more information

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About easyGroup Ltd and the Sir Stelios Philanthropic Foundation

easyGroup Ltd is the creator and owner of the easy family of brands (see www.easy.com, www.easyHistory.info).

www.stelios.org. Sir Stelios and easyGroup have donated more than €84,000,000 to the UK charity since 2010

The main projects are:

- Food from the heart: 35,000,000 free snacks given to those in need in Greece and Cyprus since 2013 with a retail value of €35,000,000
- €8,800,000 for about 300 Scholarships at London school of Economics, City University and other academic institutions
- €7,200,000 in cash prizes to entrepreneurs to encourage job creation
- €2,500,000 for the environmental working with WWF and the Prince Albert II Foundation

Over the past 30 years, the easy family of brands have been carefully managed and developed to become the icons they are today. easyGroup, owned by Sir Stelios Haji-loannou, has created a steady recurring income stream from the “easy” royalties. As a result, easyGroup donates the majority of its profits to the UK registered charity Stelios Philanthropic Foundation www.stelios.org through which Sir Stelios gives back to society. Sir Stelios every year launches new easy branded businesses in partnership with more entrepreneurs who are experts in their own fields; they have realised that using the easy brand under licence can fast track their own growth.

This investment is justifiably protected by easyGroup on behalf of the easy family of brands by stopping brand thieves who use the easy brand without our permission and without our controls. We want to uphold the rule of law and protect consumers from being misled by these brand thieves that they are a legitimate member of the easy family when they are not. Ultimately, it is this protection that allows Stelios Foundation to deliver a positive impact, including with this latest young entrepreneur competition.

A list of cases brought against brand thieves can be found at <https://easy.com/>.