



Charlotte and Sophie Wilson, Yana Active

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Northumbria graduates named sustainability entrepreneurs of the year

Graduate entrepreneurs Sophie and Charlotte Wilson have jointly been named Sustainability Entrepreneur of the year 2022 in the prestigious [Great British Entrepreneur Awards](#).

The sisters won the award following the success of their business [YANA Active](#), set up in 2019 to offer high-end activewear clothing for environmentally-conscious women. YANA Active is driven by a belief that every brand has a responsibility to support the planet and reduce consumer consumption. Its activewear range uses fabric made from 78-100% recycled materials, and all of its technical performance garments are manufactured locally in a factory in Teesside.

Having both graduated from Northumbria, Sophie in Business Leadership and Corporate Management and Charlotte in Fashion Marketing, also received start-up mentoring and guidance from the University through the Northumbria Enterprise and Business Support 2 ([NEBS2](#)) programme. With funding from the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), NEBS2 provides a range of support for Northumbria graduate start-ups and growing businesses operating in Northumbria and Tyne and Wear.

The Great British Entrepreneur Awards champion the UK's most inspiring entrepreneurial success stories. The ceremony was held at Grosvenor House in London and saw 1,400 entrepreneurs and colleagues celebrate a collective £2 billion generated in turnover and over 17,000 jobs.

Commenting on the win, Sophie Wilson said: "Being recognised for consciously creating an ethical and sustainable business means a great deal to us, sustainability is embedded into our brand ethos and truly is part of YANA's DNA. We would also like to thank Northumbria for its wonderful support since we graduated. We couldn't have done it without them and being able to use their facilities such as the Incubator hub in the early days of the business."

Charlotte Wilson added "Creating an ethical and sustainable brand isn't easy and it doesn't happen overnight. Winning this award makes the challenges we've faced over the past three years and the hard work we've invested into the business, completely worth it. We know sustainability is immensely important for all businesses, and it confirms to us that YANA™ is heading in the right direction."

Graham Baty, Head of Enterprise Development at Northumbria, said: "We are incredibly proud of our entrepreneurial graduates and of the contribution they make to the regional economy. YANA's success has also shown the rewards of growing a business in a sustainable and environmentally

responsible way. I congratulate Sophie and Charlotte on their impressive win, and I'm delighted Northumbria's business support has been so beneficial to them.

"Through our support programmes, such as NEBS2, we offer a range of help both to our graduate start-ups and to local SMEs looking to expand and recruit and I would encourage any businesses interested to contact us."

Available to businesses in Tyne and Wear and Northumberland, NEBS2 will run until June 2023 to provide a package of services to enhance the competitiveness and growth of SMEs, and to support the creation of new graduate enterprises. For more information please [visit our website](#).

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