

ProShare Awards 2026 – Criteria for Nominations

Award Categories	Thresholds
Best New Share Plan	All sizes (other than private companies)
Best New Share Plan in a Private Company	Privately-held companies of any size
Best International Share Plan	All sizes
Most Effective Share Plan Communications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In a Private Company • Up to 5,000 employees • 5,001 – 30,000 employees • 30,001+ employees
Best Outcome or Use of Equity in Times of Change (formerly 'Best Share Plan Outcome Following a Major Corporate Change')	All Sizes
Best Commitment to Employee Share Ownership in a Private Company	Privately-held companies of any size
Most Innovative Use of Technology	All sizes
Best Financial Education Initiative	All sizes
Championing & Fostering Employee Share Ownership (formerly 'Best Performance in Fostering Employee Share Ownership')	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Up to 5,000 employees • 5,001 – 30,000 employees • 30,001+ employees
Best Team Collaboration of the Year	All sizes
Rising Star	Individual Award (no formal submission)
Share Plans Champion	Individual Award (no formal submission)
Services to Employee Share Ownership	Individual Award (no formal submission)

Please note: ProShare is the UK's voice of employee share plans and share ownership. All submissions - with the exception of Best International Plan - **must** relate to employee plans which have at least a small UK element. If you have any questions about this, please do get in touch – team@proshare.org

Important: Please ensure that you include the name of your share plan administrator as well as any other organisation you would like recognised in your submission – i.e. plan advisers, external comms provider, compliance and tax consultants etc.

ProShare reserves the right to re-allocate submissions to different categories and to merge award categories if seen fit.

***NEW – Please complete for all submissions**

1. Overview of your company – 200 words
2. Take up [and increase from last year if relevant]
3. Eligibility
4. Countries
5. What main category are you entering?
6. What other categories would you like to be considered for?
7. In 200 words tell us why you should win for each category
8. Are you happy to share your success story at a future ProShare forum (e.g. Celebrating Excellence, webinar, focus group etc)

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Best New Share Plan

This award is open to any company that has launched one or more new employee share plans, or extended an existing plan to a significant number of employees in countries other than the 'home' country during the last 12 to 18 months.

Judging criteria:

- Plan design which links clearly with business or corporate objectives
- Outline your share plan(s) and how they meet those objectives. Include details of any areas of innovation.
- Your business case for the plan/ plan changes
- Effective communication of the plan to encourage participation
- Analysis, pre- and / or post-launch, of eligibility and / or take-up data to identify and ensure inclusion of eligible and under-represented employee groups
- Describe or exhibit communication methods that make the plan attractive to potential participants, especially those that have not previously participated in a scheme.
- Ease of participation for employees - describe what employees must do to participate in the plan
- Quantifiable success as measured by the proportion of employees at all levels who have participated

Top Tips:

- We want to understand clearly and concisely, what were the challenges and /or goals, that led to the development or change in your plan
- How did you design your plan to achieve this
- How did you measure success (stats, employee feedback, management feedback)

Best New Share Plan in a Private Company

This award is open to any private company that has launched one or more new employee share plans, or extended an existing plan to a significant number of employees in countries other than the 'home' country during the last 12 to 18 months.

Judging criteria:

- Plan design which links clearly with business or corporate objectives
- Outline your share plan(s) and how they meet those objectives. Include details of any areas of innovation.
- Your business case for the plan/ plan changes – with an overview of challenges internally, and in the external market
- Effective communication of the plan to encourage participation
- Analysis, pre- and / or post-launch, of eligibility and / or take-up data to identify and ensure inclusion of eligible and under-represented employee groups
- Describe or exhibit communication methods that make the plan attractive to potential participants, especially those that have not previously participated in a plan
- Ease of participation for employees - describe what employees must do to participate in the plan.
- Quantifiable success as measured by the proportion of employees at all levels who have participated
- Describe any internal market arrangement that helps employees realise value

Top Tips:

- We want to understand clearly and concisely, what were the challenges and or goals, that led to the development or change in your plan
- How did you design your plan to achieve this
- How did you measure success (stats, employee feedback, senior feedback)

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Best International Share Plan

This category is for companies which operate their share plans internationally. Companies operating an employee share plan on a global basis face many challenges. We introduced this category to recognise those companies that, in spite of the challenges faced, operate their employee share plan(s) internationally. To win this award you will need to offer your share plan(s) in at least three countries outside of the UK.

Judging criteria:

- Plan design that links clearly with business or corporate objectives
- Outline your share plan(s) and how they meet those objectives. Also include details of any innovation used in plan design.
- Describe how you addressed the challenges of operating an international share plan
- Describe how you dealt with regulatory requirements and any other challenges that were presented
- Describe how you overcame any challenges that arose due to cultural differences.
- Include information on how you dealt with exchange rate issues.
- Analysis, pre and/or post-launch, of eligibility and/or take-up data to identify and ensure inclusion of eligible and under-represented employee groups
- Effective communication of the plan to encourage participation
- Describe or exhibit communication methods that make the plan attractive to potential participants.
- Ease of participation for employees
- Describe what employees must do to participate in the plan
- Quantifiable success as measured by the proportion of employees at all levels who have participated

Top Tips:

- Share the challenges / goals due to international needs
- Demonstrate your understanding of nuances; solutions you considered; and those you chose (compared to those you did not)
- What are your success measures and why

Most Effective Share Plan Communications

In a Private Company

Up to 5,000 employees

5,001 – 30,000 employees

30,001+ employees

These awards are for the companies that have most effectively communicated their share plans to employees to encourage and increase their understanding of, and engagement with, the plan, and to create a closer identity of interest between employees and shareholders.

Judging criteria:

- Clarity and design of documentation
- Innovation (e.g. use of AI or other tools) and variety in communication methods
- Analysis of eligibility and/or take-up data to identify and ensure inclusion of eligible and under-represented employee groups
- Describe or provide examples of intranets, financial modelling tools, telecoms, audio, video, face-to-face briefings, etc. (note that there is also a separate category for most effective use of technology).
- Provide examples of booklets, circulars, posters, on-line campaigns, summaries of rules, etc.
- Involvement of employees in the design of the communication programme at the time of offering participation and when dealing with queries and follow-up
- Describe how employees were involved before, during and after the launch and at the time of making subsequent offers under one or more employee share plans
- Quantifiable success as measured by the proportion of employees at all levels who have participated in the plan.

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Top Tips:

- Share the challenges / goals for your communications
- Tell us about the solutions you considered; and those you chose (compared to those you did not)
- What are your success measures and why

Best Outcome or Use of Equity in Times of Change

This category is for any company that has been through any type of major corporate change. This could be in relation to transactions, like an IPO, rights issues, demerger, takeover or restructuring. Or regulatory, geopolitical or other external market pressures that mean changes to share plans are required, or can help support employees and organisations in times of change. These changes will very often impact employees who are participating in existing share plans, and often at a sensitive time for those employees. This category recognizes the efforts to include, incentivize, support and champion employees through ownership at what can be difficult times.

Judging criteria:

- Outline the transaction and its impact upon your employee share plans
- Board commitment to continued employee share ownership
- Describe how you weighed up the different alternatives you could have offered employees and why you chose the route you did. Demonstrate the Board's ongoing support for employee share ownership within your organisation.
- Analysis of participation data to identify and ensure inclusion of eligible and under-represented employee groups
- Effective communication with employees
- Describe or exhibit communication methods used to make the transaction easy for employees to understand.
- Ease of participation for employees
- Demonstrate quantifiable success as measured by the proportion of employees who participated in the transaction.

Top Tips:

- Share the challenges / goals that drove your approach
- Tell us what you considered; what you chose to implement and why (compared to what you did not)
- What are your success measures and why
- Share any supporting materials/ visual aids that tell your story

Best Commitment to Employee Share Ownership in a Private Company

This category aims to recognise and acknowledge best practice in commitment to employee share ownership, and the particular challenges faced in achieving this, at privately-held companies. The company should demonstrate that its philosophy, attitudes, ambitions, and actions are conducive to fostering employee share ownership and participation, whether listed or privately held.

Judging criteria:

- A clear vision of the positive impact that employee share ownership has had on the culture of the company
- Provide evidence of the board's commitment to employee participation and examples of the employees' positive attitudes and behaviours
- A clear link between employee share ownership and strategic, business, or corporate objectives
- You could, for example, refer to rules on eligibility, performance, forfeiture, retention, etc.
- Effective communication of the plan(s) to encourage participation
- Liquidity opportunities / private markets provided for employees to allow them to trade their shares, where offered / appropriate

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- Describe or exhibit communication methods that make the plan(s) attractive to potential participants
- Quantifiable success as measured by the proportion of employees at all levels who have participated

Top Tips:

- Share the challenges / goals that drove your approach
- Tell us what you considered; what you chose to implement and why (compared to what you did not)
- What are your success measures and why
- Share any supporting materials/ visual aids that tell your story

Most Innovative Use of Technology

This award recognises the increasingly sophisticated technologies being used in connection with the communication, administration, and legal and tax compliance management of employee share plans. This could include the use of AI tools, data led decision making, and other innovative ways of designing, implementing and championing share plans.

Judging criteria:

- Explain why the technology was implemented and issue(s) that it addressed. Highlight any areas of innovation.
- A clear vision of the positive impact that technology can have
- Provide evidence of the impact of technology on share plan participation
- Analysis of plan data to identify and ensure inclusion of eligible and under-represented employee groups
- Show how the use of technology fits in with the company's communications and employee demographics

Top Tips:

- Share the challenges / goals that drove your approach
- Tell us what you considered; what you chose to implement and why (compared to what you did not)
- What are your success measures and why
- Share any supporting materials/ visual aids that tell your story

Best Financial Education Initiative

This award recognises the role that financial education can play in the workplace in supporting employees in making informed decisions regarding their share plans and other workplace benefits. The timing of provision of financial education is also critical given that employees need to make decisions at key points in their working life e.g. buying their first home, ahead of retirement, when share awards mature or vest etc.

Judging criteria:

- Effective implementation with delivery utilising a range of employee-centred channels
- Clear explanation of the reason for the initiative and positive outcomes
- Clarity on rationale for choice of third-party provider (where relevant)
- Analysis of plan data to identify and ensure inclusion of eligible and under-represented employee groups
- Feedback from participants
- Data supporting better-informed decisions made and/or behaviours changed by participants immediately afterwards or as a direct result of their participation in the initiative.

Top Tips:

- Share the challenges / goals that drove your approach
- Tell us what you considered; what you chose to implement and why (compared to what you did not)
- Were recipients better informed, e.g. share survey results
- What are your success measures and why
- Share any supporting materials/ visual aids that tell your story

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Championing & Fostering Employee Share Ownership

Up to 5,000 employees

5,001 – 30,000 employees

30,001+ employees

These awards are for companies committed to employee share ownership. Companies that enter this category are likely to have been operating employee share plans for some years. However, a company that has only recently introduced its first share plan could be considered if it can demonstrate that its philosophy, attitudes, ambitions, and actions are conducive to fostering employee share ownership in the longer term.

Judging criteria:

- A clear vision of the positive impact that employee share ownership has had on the culture of the company
- Provide evidence of the Board's commitment to employee participation and examples of the employees' positive attitudes and behaviours
- Innovative design of the share plan(s) to support the vision - describe the features of the plan that might be held to be innovative and supportive of a long-term fostering of employee share ownership
- Plans that link clearly with business or corporate objectives
- Analysis of eligibility and/or take-up data to identify and ensure inclusion of eligible and under-represented employee groups
- You may refer to rules on eligibility, performance, forfeiture, retention, etc.
- Effective communication of the plan(s) to encourage participation
- Describe or exhibit communication methods that make the plan(s) attractive to potential participants
- Ease of participation for employees - describe what employees have to do to participate
- Quantifiable success as measured by the proportion of employees at all levels who participate in the plan(s) and the number of employees who are shareholders
- Provide the number of participants in each plan and the number of employees who have retained some shares to become direct shareholders in the company

Top Tips:

- Share the challenges / goals that drove your approach
- Tell us what you considered; what you chose to implement and why (compared to what you did not)
- What are your success measures and why
- Share any supporting materials/ visual aids that tell your story

Best Team Collaboration of the Year

The most effective teams happen when individual contributors come together to pool their talents, look out for each other and work toward a common goal. They are the product of hard work, commitment and great collaboration.

Many people are involved in launching and managing employee share plans, within an issuer as well as working with their advisers and administrators. This award recognises teams of all sizes working within an issuer on its employee share plans, as well as extended teams including their external advisers and administrators. The team will have demonstrated excellent collaboration, who have brought out the best from team members and developed effective, innovative ways of working. They will have a strong sense of team identity, an understanding of their common purpose, good communications, and clear and complementary skills and roles. Above all, they will share a clear focus on the delivery of the goals.

Judging criteria:

The judges are looking in particular for teams who can evidence they are delivering outstanding performance. Include the following in your submission:

- A description of the team and if it includes external advisers and administrators, their roles and what makes the team special?
- Evidence of how the team has pushed for and implemented best practice.

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- How teamwork was effectively employed to deliver business impact.
- How team members have been developed in their roles, and team building with or without external partners.

Top Tips:

- Consider what makes up your dream team – internal and external members (this could be your share plan team, internal stakeholders and supporters, your providers, advisors and anyone else that made things easier!)
- Tell us what you worked on together – what were your goals, challenges and how did different team member contribute to shared successful outcomes
- How did you achieve ‘joined up’ thinking as a group across multiple areas
- What did you learn from your partners in this process
- Share any supporting materials/ visual aids that tell your story

Rising Star

For any organisation, success starts with your people. This award recognises the rising stars of the share plans and incentives sector. These stars are the people who, even with just a few years’ service behind them, are making a substantial contribution. They are the ones who are proactive in embracing new challenges, who show imagination and energy, and who are resilient in the face of adversity. The ones who help and support colleagues and who are committed to growth and development for themselves, their companies and the industry.

The judges are looking for nominees who demonstrate these qualities and more, who make a significant and positive impact in their organisations and the industry. They are looking for evidence of why nominees are destined to get to the top, and why in particular this is the year they should win an award.

There is no formal submission process for this category – however we welcome you to share for judging consideration, those who are a Rising Star in your eyes! In 500 words we encourage you to share who you’d like to be considered and why.

Top Tips:

- Why do they deserve this award?
 - What makes them an outstanding share plan community member
 - What have they already contributed to the organization to enhance the team or the wider industry community
 - What learnings have they put into practice to help evolve and achieve better outcomes for your organization or in the industry
 - How are they passionate about employee share ownership and how have they put this into practice
- Key achievements that help them stand out against their peers. The judges will want to know how they have gone about their achievements.
- Their aspirations - what might they want to achieve in the future?
- You can include endorsements from colleagues or clients

We cannot accept self-nominations for this award.

Share Plan Champion

This award recognises those in who are passionate about employee share ownership and go above and beyond to support the cause and our industry. This could be someone who embodies and creates this culture within a company; or someone who supports their organization to find new and better solutions to support share plans; or someone who is driving forward innovation and change in the industry; or even someone who has been the backbone of your employee share ownership experience for a long time that you want recognized for their efforts.

The judges are looking for nominees who demonstrate these qualities and more, who make a significant and positive impact in their organisations and the industry. They are looking for evidence of how nominees are supporting and championing share ownership, and, why in particular this is the year they should win an award.

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There is no formal submission process for this category – however we welcome you to share for judging consideration, those who is a Share Plan Champion in your eyes! In 500 words we encourage you to share who you'd like to be considered and why, particularly in this year, they should be considered.

Top Tips:

- Why do they deserve this award?
 - What makes them an outstanding share plan community member
 - What initiatives have they put into practice to help evolve and achieve better outcomes for your organization or in the industry
 - How are they passionate about employee share ownership and how have they put this into practice
- Key achievements in the last 12-18 months

We cannot accept self-nominations for this award.

Services to Employee Share Ownership

This award recognises those whose passion and commitment has been at the forefront throughout their share plans career. Those who have been drivers of the growth, evolution and excellence in employee share ownership. Someone who has worn the T shirt metaphorically, who now deserves it in reality as well – in the form of this recognition award to thank them for their contributions and commitment over the years in this close-knit community.

The judges are looking for nominees who demonstrate these qualities and more, who make a significant and positive impact in their organisations and the industry. They are looking for evidence of what these individuals have achieved, pioneered, or supported in their endeavours to leave the share plan industry better than they found it.

There is no formal submission process for this category – however we welcome you to share for judging consideration, those who you feel fit this category. In 500 words we encourage you to share who you'd like to be considered and why.

Top Tips:

- Why do they deserve this award?
 - What makes them an outstanding share plan community member
 - What initiatives have they put into practice to help evolve and achieve better outcomes for your organization or in the industry
 - How are they passionate about employee share ownership and how have they put this into practice over the course of their career
- Key achievements in their career

We cannot accept self-nominations for this award.

Very best of luck to all organisations who submit for a prestigious ProShare award. We hope to see you at the InterContinental, London Park Lane on **Thursday 26th November 2026!**