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Do You Have Designs To Help People With Disabilities?

A LEADING housing and care specialist has launched its annual search to find the brightest and best new innovations to help those with disabilities.

The Blackwood Design Awards seek to celebrate the brilliant new designs, technologies and adaptations which help people with disabilities to live life to the full.

The Awards are open to both seasoned professionals and gifted amateurs, meaning that both technologically advanced and those simpler, yet often most successful designs, are equally welcome.

Past entries include a design for a wheelchair that allows users to control its direction with their eyes, as well as the 'S'up Spoon', which enables people with shaky hands to eat more easily.

Max Brown, Chair of Blackwood Board, said: "The Awards are a terrific celebration of the brilliant designs and ideas that help to transform the lives of people with disabilities.

"We're blown away each year by the depth and the quality of the designs entered and are always delighted and proud to give the ideas the prominence they deserve – and to open a path for them to perhaps go into production.

"It's a privilege to work in a sector where so many people are working incredibly hard to improve others' lives.

"There's no idea too simplistic or too extravagant. We're open to judging on as many designs as possible, as they all play an important role in helping people living with different challenges."

The Blackwood Design Awards are open to all, and entries can come from either groups or individuals, with a university academic as likely to win as a talented amateur.

There are four categories of Award; Best Collaborative Project by a University or Institute of Higher Learning, Best New Concept, Best New Accessible Technology and Best New Aids and Equipment.

Max continued: "People shouldn't be put off because they're an independent person with a design, and likewise, we're always delighted to see the talented entries produced by design students.

"Many previous entrants have gone on to achieve great things so it's a fantastic opportunity for all budding designers out there."

The competition has a rich history of finding success, with entries from all over the globe, as diverse as Canada and Pakistan.

Entries last year included an ingenious hands-free computer mouse and an in-flight wheelchair.

Entries should be submitted no later than 12 noon on Friday, March 30, and entrants will be notified that their submission has been received.

Shortlisting of entries will be completed by April 27 and if selected as a finalist, entrants will be asked to make a final pitch to the judging panel via Skype or in person.

For more information and to enter, visit: <http://www.bespoken.me/forum/topics/blackwood-design-awards-2017-18-now-open>

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Notes to Editor

Edinburgh-based charity, Blackwood, has more than 1500 homes throughout the country making it a leader in helping those who are disabled, elderly or with sensory impairments to live more independently.

As it works in 29 of Scotland's 32 local authorities, it is more widely dispersed than most other care or housing providers and has embraced the challenges of taking housing and care into innovative areas at a time when funding is increasingly limited.

Blackwood is also renowned for constantly pushing the boundaries of technology to allow property adaptations which make a huge difference to people with disabilities.

Issued on behalf of Blackwood by Holyrood PR. Further information, contact Fraser on 0131 561 2241 or fraser@holyroodpr.co.uk