

Let's not forget Surrey successes!

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Teams and individuals who do outstanding work on behalf of the people of Surrey have been celebrated at the first Stars in Surrey award ceremony. In part sponsored by Epsom based firm **Atkins**

The event - funded through sponsorship - saw standing ovations, laughter and some tears last week.

Winners included County Council staff who look after young people in care, help elderly people live at home for longer, keep Surrey's libraries thriving and encourage more people to access the countryside.

There was also special recognition for people doing extraordinary things at partner organisations like Ukraine UK Unity Woking.

Founder of Ukraine UK Unity and winner of 'The Make It Happen Community Hero Award (Empowering Communities)', Irina Garmash Creeger, said: "It was an emotional and very inspirational night. It felt like I was sharing a room with superheroes & each nominee had special superpower.

"I was pleasantly surprised, overwhelmed & honoured to receive the Award. Although the award was given to me as an individual, I wanted to share it with the incredible multicultural strong team of volunteers at Ukraine UK Unity.

"Our efforts have been stellar, our commitment is unquestionable, and our goals for the future will always involve spreading kindness, compassion and hope, and sharing in all that we have and know with people in need."

Leader of the Council Tim Oliver, who presented an award, said: "Stars in Surrey really was a wonderful way to pay tribute to some incredible people and teams who work in many different ways to benefit Surrey.

"Everything we do as a council is driven by our ambition that no one is left behind here, and the stories from the Stars in Surrey Awards are all a great reflection of that work.

"I'd like to say a big thanks to the sponsors of the event too that made it possible, and for everyone who nominated their Surrey heroes."

The final award presented on the night was the People's Choice Award, that received 1,200 votes, and was won by Christy Niven, a Specialist Speech & Language Therapist in the Children, Families and Lifelong Learning directorate.

The event was sponsored by Atkins, Pick Everard, Concerto, Vail Williams, Tile Hill and Impower.

Here is the full list of winners:

- Award for Outstanding Customer Service - **Claire Hodgson**, Trading Standards Specialist, Buckinghamshire and Surrey Trading Standards
- Team Award for Innovative Working - **South-West Asylum Care Leavers' Team**, Children, Families and Lifelong Learning
- Championing Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Award - **Funke Adelekun**, Principal Project Manager, IMP Major Projects
- Greener Future Champion Award (Enabling a Greener Future) - **Sharon Newton**, Resource Manager, Children, Families and Lifelong Learning
- Young employee of the Year Award - **Durante Cartwright**, Weekend Library Assistant at Camberley Library, Customer and Communities
- Frontline Worker of the Year Award (No One Left Behind) - **Jo Ellis**, Occupational Therapist Assistant, Elmbridge Locality Team, Adult Social Care and Integrated Commissioning

Nominated by Amy Watts: "Jo is the hardest working person that I know and her dedication to her role and supporting vulnerable adults and children is something to be admired... One (urgent welfare visit) that sticks into my mind where the gentleman was really, really vulnerable, due to Jo's willingness to go the extra ten miles they managed to keep him home and safe... I couldn't think of anyone better to receive Frontline Worker of the Year."

- Entrepreneurial Person or Team of the Year Award (creating a sustainable economy) - **Caroline Price**, and **Helen Delatouche**, Countryside Team, Environment, Transport and Infrastructure
- The Make It Happen Community Hero Award (Empowering Communities) - **Irina Garmash-Creeger**, Ukraine UK Unity Woking

Nominated by David Meller: "On the fourteenth of March this year the UK opened its borders to Ukrainian refugees through the Homes for UK scheme... Irina stepped in to really make it happen for our community. She matched hosts with refugees, she set up the hub where refugees could get support on administration matters when they arrived... I think she is really one of Surrey's brightest stars."

- The Jacqueline Foglietta unsung hero Award - **Andy Baldwin**, Support Worker, Leaving Care Teams, Children, Families and Lifelong Learning
- People's Choice Award - **Christy Niven**, Specialist Speech & Language Therapist, Children, Families and Lifelong Learning

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