



New Woman Franchisor of the Year

With the 2017 Annual NatWest EWIF Awards over, we would like to shine the spotlight on each of our winners and their incredible achievements. Rachel Fay from Little Learners was the winner of the 2017 New Woman Franchisor Award sponsored by Daisy First Aid.

The concept for Little Learners was devised whilst Rachel was on maternity leave from her teaching job in 2015. In her teaching role, she had noticed many changes to early years education including a much greater emphasis on writing which could be overwhelming for young learners and wanted to combat this by using play to make children feel more relaxed and confident when entering the classroom. Rachel tested the model by running classes solo for 18 months, however after soon becoming inundated with requests the potential growth became clear.

In November 2015, Rachel signed her first franchisee and by January 2016 classes had begun in this new territory. Within a short period of time two parents who had previously attended classes expressed interest in purchasing a franchise. In April 2016, Rachel was a finalist in 'Networking Mummies' Awards for Business Growth of the Year and soon after a further two franchisees joined the Little Learners team. In June 2016, Little Learners was awarded 'Highly Commended' in the 'What's on 4 Junior?' Awards for Best New Children's Activity leading to a further two franchisees signing up to North-East territories. Following, a couple of months later was Little Learners next award, 'Highly Commended' Franchisor of the Year in the mumandworking awards. By Autumn 2016 Little Learners had signed their first franchisee outside of the North East.

"It felt great to win New Woman Franchisor of the Year! I was surprised, excited and so proud as the award has attracted so many brilliant, inspiring, entrepreneurial women. I hope I won it because I've managed to convert my passion for young children's early learning into a successful and thriving business and also welcome brilliant, talented and committed women franchisees- all of whom I'm proud to now call friends. I make helping them develop their franchises a top priority and we have become a strong, secure and welcoming group of women who learn from and support each other" explains Rachel.

"I think that winning such a prestigious, women-focussed' award has already had a positive impact on my business. Being able to display the achievement prominently on our Little Learners and all business literature has increased prestige and prominence for all of us. It has already, and will continue to help me make contact and network with other fantastic women franchisors and franchisees and share our ideas, innovation (and challenged!) – with other like-minded, entrepreneurial women" adds Rachel.

EWIF's primary focus is to support women who are looking for a route into the franchise industry. Our remit is threefold; to encourage women to consider buying a franchise, to encourage women to consider buying a franchise, to encourage business women to franchise their existing operations and to help franchisors attract more women to their networks. We are a not-for-profit organisation run entirely by volunteers, providing advice and guidance to anyone looking at trying to break into the franchise industry.