

THE NATIONAL INFRASTRUCTURE PLANNING ASSOCIATION EARLY YEARS PRACTITIONER AWARD 2026 SUBMISSION GUIDANCE

Welcome to the third year of the NIPA Early Years Practitioner Award – this document provides guidance on making an Award submission, the Award process and how Award nominations and photographs will be used after the Award presentation.

Please read this carefully before entering a submission for the 2026 Award.

AWARD SUBMISSION

The Award builds on our diversity and engagement strategy and seeks to recognise and celebrate learning and contribution from early years practitioners (EYPs) through engagement, planning and delivery of nationally significant infrastructure projects.

Submissions can come from anyone who is a member of NIPA and can be made by a candidate or a proposer.

Please note that:

- Any submission must relate to a NIPA member within their first 10 years of practice (as at 30 September 2026).
- You can submit more than one entry for the Award, provided that it covers a different qualifying early years practitioner.
- In making an Award submission, you are agreeing that your submission(s), and / or part thereof, including hi-res photographs and other images, can be published by NIPA, shown at NIPA or other national infrastructure events and / or turned into a case study. Any profile/case study may, in turn, be published online, used in NIPA reports, be promoted and circulated at NIPA and other national infrastructure events and during NIPA meetings with stakeholders.
- NIPA will take the details provided in submissions at face value. Please ensure that all submissions are accurate and capable of verification.
- If you make a candidate or proposer submission to the NIPA EYP Award you must ensure that you have authority from all relevant parties involved, prior to submitting it to us (the individual and any organisation for example).

Submissions must:

- Be written in an appropriate and suitable manner so they can easily be adapted to become profiles/case studies (on no more than 2 pages of A4 **in addition to the completed form** (although appendices with more detail are encouraged)). If making use of hyperlinks to the Planning Inspectorate project page or other external resources, please provide specific references that are relevant so this is clear and proportionate for the judges.
- The submission should demonstrate the candidate's:
 - understanding of infrastructure planning and delivery and the planning system they are working within;
 - the range, quality and variety of recent experience and achievements;
 - enthusiasm and originality of approach;
 - personal and team working skills including collaboration;
 - commitment to continuing professional development and involvement with professions, networks, events, outreach work or relevant voluntary activity, with particular reference to NIPA; and
 - the extent to which they serve as a role model for other early years practitioners and raise awareness of opportunities in engaging in and delivering nationally significant infrastructure.
- Provide quotes from those the candidate has worked collaboratively with and engaged.
- When submitting your submission please name the file as – 2026 NIPA EYP Award. Name of the candidate. Date (submitted in the format xxxxxx (e.g. 291026)).
- Only those submissions made using the completed NIPA EYP Award submission form will be accepted.
- Be received at info@nipa-uk.org by **6.00pm on Friday 30 October 2026** as no extensions will be granted.

AWARD PROCESS AND TIMETABLE

The NIPA EYP Award 2026 will be launched via a communication to Members and on the NIPA Website on **Monday 12 October 2026**. All submissions must be made using the NIPA EYP Award submission form by **6.00pm on Friday 30 October 2026**.

All submissions will then be considered by a panel of judges. A shortlist will subsequently be published with the shortlisted candidates invited as guests of NIPA to the Annual Dinner (hosted by members of the EYPs steering group) and the winner of the EYP Award will be announced at the NIPA Annual Dinner on **Wednesday 02 December 2026**.