

From a sell-out FirstPro to private cross-sector dinners:
a successful year for Coventry & Warwickshire First

FirstPro 2016

FirstPro, the highlight of our year, was another resounding success. With more nominations than ever and a full house for the gala dinner at the Ricoh Arena, it was a wonderful celebration of the depth and breadth of the talent in Coventry and Warwickshire's professional services sector.

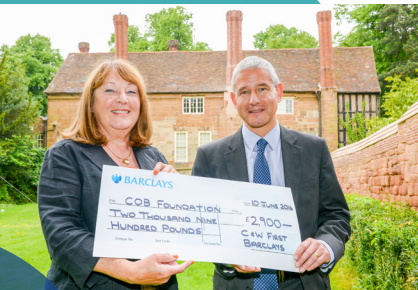
Jenny Simpson of SFB Group was the first Young Professional of the Year to go on to win the overall FirstPro 2016, a testament to her ability and determination.

Thank you to our sponsors – CWLEP, Shakespeare Martineau, Band Hatton Button, Arthur J Gallagher, Dafferns LLP, Cranfield Business Finance, Adees, Coventry UK City of Culture Bid and the Ricoh Arena - without whom FirstPro would not be possible.

Introducing YoungPro

Every year the calibre of the entries in the Young Professional category of FirstPro is exceptional. To shine a brighter light on their talent we have launched YoungPro.

We are on the hunt for YoungPro 2017 now – the category winners will be announced at a reception on 27 January at St Mary's Guildhall. The shortlist for the Young Professional category in FirstPro will comprise the YoungPro category winners; this is now the only route to becoming a Young Professional finalist at FirstPro.



£3,900 donated to charity

Our fun auction at FirstPro 2016 generated a brilliant £2,450 for charity. £1,450 was donated to the Cystitis and Overactive Bladder Foundation, a sum generously match funded by Barclays Bank plc and £1,000 was donated to the Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation.

A huge thank you to everyone who took part and Barclays for yet again giving us their support.



Touring the region in First Fridays

Our programme of informal networking events has toured the region this year, taking in Stratford-upon-Avon, Rugby and plenty of places in between. Yet again this year, the relaxed events have proved a great way to get to know colleagues in the sector while exploring a range of venues and finding out about new initiatives.

We have big plans for 2017

- **The inaugural YoungPro is taking place on 27 January:** there is still time to nominate
- **FirstPro is booked for 6 April:** tables go quickly, so book now to avoid disappointment
- **We are hosting a dinner for key influencers in the region in the spring:** we're feeding back your views and opinions
- **First Friday networking:** we're planning a varied programme designed to keep you 'in the know'
- **Cross-sector dinners:** we'll continue these popular, friendly opportunities to connect with colleagues in the sector
- **Mentoring:** the valuable programme continues
- **Young Professionals Network:** encourage the young talent in your business to get involved

We also have other initiatives in the pipeline, more of which will be announced throughout the year as plans are formulated.

Lively debate at our cross-sector dinners

Following the sector dinners we ran in spring 2015, we ran a series of cross-sector dinners this autumn. As well as having the chance to deepen relationships with colleagues, each dinner hosted a lively debate on topics relevant to our members.

A vibrant Young Professionals Network

Under the chair-ship of Rebecca Freeman of Ladders Solicitors and now Chrissie Elliot-Duxson of the University of Warwick, the Young Professionals Network continues to be an exciting environment in which to develop your career while building long lasting friendships.

A new phase for the popular Mentoring Programme

Working closely with the Young Professionals Network, we have matched another cohort of mentors from amongst our members with young professionals keen to develop their careers.

