



CORPORATE FINANCE *Awards 2026*

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Winners Brochure

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Overview

The Corporate Finance Awards have, for the last three years, celebrated the exceptional financial performances and accolades of the UK's medium- and larger-sized companies.

The awards also acknowledge the firms that support the corporate finance space, such as accountancy and private equity firms, banks, asset managers, tech companies and other providers.

While there have been challenges over the past year, including geopolitical conflicts, increases in prices and general economic uncertainty, this year's winners have demonstrated the business acumen, efficiency and leadership to tackle these challenges, continuing their successes into the current financial year.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank all the firms that entered the awards and congratulate those who won an award.

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The winners

Asset Manager of the Year

WINNER: Royal London Asset Management

Investment Strategy of the Year

WINNER: Pluto Finance

Fintech Company of the Year

WINNER: Acre

Corporate Consultancy of the Year

WINNER: LCP

Corporate Partnership of the Year

WINNER: Fair for You



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Asset Manager of the Year: Royal London Asset Management

Judges said that the winner of 2026's Asset Manager of the Year award demonstrated robust investment processes, strong levels of innovation and responsible investment considerations, making it a clear leader in the investment space.

The winner, for the third consecutive year, is Royal London Asset Management.

The investment company manages around £199bn of assets (as of 31 December 2025), split between equities, fixed income, multi-asset investing, property and cash, with a market-leading capability in sustainable investing.

Across the year, Royal London Asset Management has maintained a consistent and disciplined approach to investment management, assessing performance over the long term rather than in short-term market positioning.

The firm said that the past year has continued to present a challenging environment for investors, with elevated inflation, higher interest rates and ongoing geopolitical uncertainty.

However, its long-term orientation has supported clients in maintaining appropriate positioning, rather than reacting to short-term market volatility.

The company considers its performance in the context of clearly defined objectives and client expectations, with an emphasis on resilience, repeatability and capital preservation, alongside income generation where appropriate.

Across its fixed income, cash and, in particular, multi-asset strategies, this approach has been increasingly valued by corporate and institutional clients seeking stability and clarity in uncertain conditions.

Alongside its investment strategies, Royal London's innovation has been driven by close engagement with its UK corporate and institutional clients, focused on practical investment solutions and long-term risk management, instead of product complexity.

The firm has continued to develop and embed specialist capabilities across its fixed income and credit markets, designed to support clients operating in evolving funding and regulatory environments.

This includes the ongoing integration of its asset-backed securities capability within the broader fixed income platform, which has strengthened valuation discipline, governance and downside risk management across securitised credit strategies.

It has also continued to support clients through cash and liquidity solutions, designed to provide flexibility and capital preservation within broader balance sheet-management frameworks.



The past year has seen Royal London Asset Management engage directly with UK corporates through stewardship as part of its investment approach. This has included multi-year engagement with UK water utilities, conducted in collaboration with other asset owners, focusing on financially material risks including climate adaptation, biodiversity, affordability and operational resilience.

This programme reflected the firm's emphasis on constructive dialogue to support improved corporate practices and more resilient long-term outcomes in strategically important sectors.

Furthermore, Royal London has integrated responsible investment considerations across its investment processes, alongside financial analysis to better understand risks and opportunities that can influence long-term value.

This approach is set out in its Stewardship and Responsible Investment Report, which reflects its view that "environmental, social and governance factors should be considered in the content of each strategy's objectives rather than applied as a uniform overlay".

Across the year, Royal London Asset Management has demonstrated that it is an asset manager operating at scale, which combined its breadth of capability with a focus on consistent delivery. Once again, it has been able to support corporate and institutional clients with differing objectives across a range of market conditions.

Congratulations once again to Royal London Asset Management for picking up this award.

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**In everything
we do...**

**our people
make the
difference.**

Owned by clients. Managed for clients.
We're a different kind of asset manager.

**Asset management excellence
with a longer-term perspective.**





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Investment Strategy of the Year: Pluto Finance

In a time when the UK housing crisis remains a structural challenge, judges noted how this year's winner for this category moved from being a UK SME residential lender to a pan-European real estate private credit platform.

This year's Investment Strategy of the Year winner, for the third time, is Pluto Finance.

The investor provides credit solutions for property developers and investors across the UK and European markets, including Ireland, Germany, the Netherlands, Spain and Portugal, offering bridging, development and investment finance tailored to clients' needs.

Pluto Finance has lent over £4bn through its vehicles since its 2011 inception, facilitating the development of more than 15,000 new homes.

In September 2025, the firm announced a £2bn strategic partnership with Blackstone Real Estate Debt Strategies (BREDS), combining its origination and structuring expertise with BREDS' institutional capital and scale.

This included targeted whole-loan financing of £25m to £100m across development, bridge and investment opportunities in living and logistics, with an exciting pipeline already in place across Germany, Spain, Portugal, Ireland, the Netherlands and the UK.

The partnership would go on to deploy its inaugural loan in January, comprising a €35m senior facility to Dutch family office, N&W Capital, financing its acquisition of the 115-unit Kilcarbery Square PRS scheme in Dublin. The partnership then entered the German logistics space, with two loans totalling €93m.

This place-based investing has been a core feature of Pluto's strategy in the past year, with the firm developing a scalable solution that would ringfence of LGPS capital for specific regional housing developments, while diversifying that capital across the firm's main loan portfolio.

Across 2025, Pluto allocated £80m to Welsh affordable housing through investment in the Wales Pension Partnership, the first deployment of which had a 100% local supply chain. It also scaled its lending platform across all areas of the UK, after establishing a regional presence in Scotland 2025.

This led to a pipeline of £374m to support the development of 1,824 new homes, along with the completion of three loans for 184 new homes in Edinburgh in May 2026.

As of Q2 2025, Pluto confirmed through its inaugural Report for Fund VIII, prepared by The Good Economy, that the fund had deployed £628m to 43 SME developers across 56 schemes,



unlocking 3,927 homes.

The Fund, which was launched in 2022, had also supported 4,700 jobs and generated £315m in gross value added in local economies.

Its performance has also been consistent, as it delivered a net IRR of 10.2% across 10 vintages, with zero capital losses and just seven interest impairments across 331 senior secured loans.

Over half (59%) of these loans were with repeat borrowers, and Pluto Finance averaged just four weeks from enquiry to drawdown.

Over the past year, Pluto Finance has demonstrated that it is possible for a disciplined real estate private credit platform to scale across geographies and sectors, without diminishing quality or impact.

It has continued to deliver long-term, secured returns to institutional investors, while also addressing urgent structural challenges across the UK and Europe.

Congratulations once again to Pluto Finance for being presented with its hat-trick of wins in this award category.



Empowering Local Communities with Real Estate Private Debt



Lending since
2011

£4bn+
Lent to Date

350+
Loans agreed

15,000+
Homes financed

Market leading access | Stable secured returns
Local affordable opportunities

Pluto Finance is a real estate private credit platform, specialising in senior lending on predominantly residential assets in the UK. Since its inception in 2011, the company has provided over £4bn of lending across bridging and development finance, funding the delivery of over 15,000 new homes. Pluto Finance is part-owned by the Universities Superannuation Scheme, the UK's largest private sector pension scheme.



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