
CATEGORY

Library of the Year

thebookseller.com/british-book-awards
#BritishBookAwards

What are the judges looking for?

Public libraries are at the heart of communities. We want to celebrate impactful reading projects or campaigns run by UK and Irish public library staff to reach and engage new library users and readers within their community. We recognise that each library is unique and has a special understanding of the opportunities in the local communities they serve as well as the challenges they face. We are especially keen to learn what you did to engage with a particular demographic or audience to encourage more interaction with your library and reading. Equally, we want to hear about the impact that this activity has had on the readers and library space. The awards are announced in three stages: in February, Regional and Country finalists will be announced; Regional and Country winners are unveiled in March; these winners then make up the shortlist for the overall Library of the Year award.

Who can submit?

Any public library in the UK or Ireland, including community run libraries if they form part of the statutory service.

What to submit?

Please submit via the awards website, a zipped-file, including a PDF of up to 1,500 words covering the requirements listed on the right, alongside any supporting graphics. Please include a high-res image of either your council logo, library logo or a photo of your library (interior or exterior) as a separate attachment. If you encounter any difficulties, then please email awards@thebookseller.com.

Please include

Tell us about your library

- **Background:** Public libraries are vital community hubs for engaging people of all ages and backgrounds with books. The ways in which you reach readers and audiences are as varied as the communities you serve. Tell us about your library and the usual audience it serves.
- **Specific project or activity:** Briefly summarise the project or activity that reached new library users and readers. Explain how you delivered the activity and how it reached a reader demographic who may not have been fully engaging with the library previously. Did you do this by community initiatives, flagship events, festivals or clever partnerships? Tell us, with examples, what makes your project unique, how it engaged and reached new readers, and any further outcomes.
- **Please tell us about your staff and/or volunteer involvement:** How were they involved in the planning and delivery of your project? What did you do to encourage them?
- **Partners:** Did you work with publishers, partners (including other local organisations), or authors? If so, how?
- **Community:** Was your community involved in planning or delivering the project? How has your library helped your local community more broadly? Community is internal, too - tell us about your team and how you work together.
- **Loans and footfall:** Did you increase your library footfall, membership or loans?
- **Next steps:** Were/are there any next steps from this project or campaign? Tell us about any legacies from this activity or future plans.

Other guidance

- **Judging period:** work that has taken place between January to December 2024.
- Please note library Regional and Country winners will receive two free places to attend The British Book Awards in London on 12th May 2025. The librarians from the winning library will be asked to do a short acceptance speech when collecting the award. A livestream link will be shared so the rest of your team and local community may want to host a celebratory event for those who cannot attend in person. Travel costs will also be reimbursed subject to application.
- The Reading Agency will share articles on its website which will support with regional and national recognition for shortlisted libraries and winning library.
- The winning library will receive assets from The British Book Awards (including a winning logo) which can be displayed on your website and in the library. The winning library will be featured in an article on The Bookseller and The Reading Agency's website, and also feature in posts across The Reading Agency's socials and newsletters.