

Press release: Launch of Great British High Street Awards 2019

- The [Great British High Street Awards](#) are back and very soon high streets across the United Kingdom will be battling it out to find Britain's best.
- They will all be trying to emulate the success of reigning high street champion, Crickhowell, commended for its community-led initiatives, including the Corn Exchange project which transformed a former pub into shops for independent traders.
- There was a huge response to last year's competition – over 200 entries – highlighting how retailers and community groups across the country are working in innovative ways to keep city, town and village centres' vibrant and strong.

Speaking ahead of the competition launch in High Street Crickhowell, High Streets Minister Jake Berry MP said:

The government awards celebrate the dedicated shop keepers, the committed volunteers and forward-thinking councils who together are creating vibrant and dynamic high streets that are loved by their communities.

Last year more than 200 high streets across the land battled it out in a hotly-contested competition to be crowned Britain's best.

I would encourage communities across the nation to enter, so their high streets and the people working in them gain the recognition they fully deserve.

The Great British High Street Awards 2019, run by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government in partnership with Visa and backed by other supporters, recognises and celebrates local achievements on the UK's high streets and supports the communities in which we live and work.

The campaign includes a competition to find the UK's best and most improved high streets within two categories:

- the Champion Award to celebrate the UK's best high streets
- the Rising Star Award for those taking the lead and working to adapt and diversify

For each, a winner will be named in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, as well as there being an overall UK winner.

Nominations for the awards can be made by local authorities, Business Improvement Districts and – for the first time – groups of high street

retailers, from today. Shortlisted entries will be announced in August 2019.

In addition, individuals will also be recognised through the High Street Hero Award which will identify those who, through their innovation, energy, time or enthusiasm, stand out as leading lights on their high streets and in their local communities.

Nominations for the Great British High Street Awards 2019 are now open. To find out more, visit [The Great British High Street](#) and follow on

There will be 26 short-listed entries in the Champion High Street category, 13 for England, 6 for Scotland, 4 for Wales and 3 for Northern Ireland. There will be 12 short-listed entries for the Rising Star category.

Ways the government is backing the high street

The Budget saw business rates relief cut small retailers' bills by a third, building on over £13 billion of business rates support since 2016.

In response to recommendations from the independent expert panel, led by Sir John Timpson, the government has recently launched a £675 million [Future High Streets Fund](#) to help improve infrastructure and access to high streets, put historic buildings back to use and make town centres fit for the future.

We have also announced a Town Centre Task Force to give local leaders expert advice and support in implementing their plans to revitalise their local high streets.

The [Open Doors](#) scheme will see empty shops being opened up to community groups offering services to the most vulnerable in our communities.

Through the planning system we are helping to support change on the high street, making it easier for high streets to adapt for the future, with a wider range of retail, residential and other uses.

We are empowering businesses to contribute to the success of their high street by providing loans to establish [Business Improvement Districts](#) across the country.