

Press release: Launch of Great British High Street competition 2018

- The Great British High Street awards are back and bigger and better than ever
- Winners will receive a share of £25,000 and dedicated support and mentoring from industry experts
- High streets in Northern Ireland to battle it out to be the United Kingdom's best for the first time

Communities across the UK are being urged to back their local high streets by entering them into the Great British High Street Awards 2018.

The awards, run by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, and sponsored by Visa, recognise and celebrate local achievements on our high streets, supporting the communities they serve.

The Great British High Street awards will not only celebrate the best high streets across the nation, but will also champion 'Rising Stars' – the most ambitious high streets which are taking a lead and working together to revive, adapt and diversify.

By shining a light on great examples of how high streets can meet the challenges of changing consumer behaviour and a changing retail environment, the awards will provide all communities with top tips for success.

Speaking ahead of the competition launch on Lower Marsh, Waterloo, a former finalist, Communities Secretary Rt Hon James Brokenshire MP said:

The Great British High Street Awards acknowledge how vital high streets are to our nation. They are crucial in creating jobs, nurturing small businesses and driving local and regional economies. We want to celebrate the best examples of high streets, as well as those individual businessmen and women playing a leading role.

The government is committed to ensuring high streets continue to thrive and I'm delighted to support this brilliant competition.

The awards, first held in 2014, have been simplified for 2018 with winning high streets to be named in England, Scotland, Wales and for the first time, Northern Ireland – across 2 categories: Champion High Street and Rising Star High Street.

High Streets Minister Jake Berry MP said:

The Great British High Streets competition this year will celebrate

the creativity of the many businesses in the UK which are providing the shops and services so vital to our economy.

The previous awards were hugely successful, proving the Great British public really cares about the centres of their cities, towns and villages. I'd urge everyone to get involved in this important competition.

The 26 shortlisted entries in the Champion High Street category and 12 Rising Stars will be announced in October. They will then go through to a public vote and be visited by a judging panel made up of industry leaders from across retail, property and business.

Britain's best high street will be announced in November, with the winner receiving a £10,000 cash prize for a local community project. Winners from each of the remaining nations will receive a £5,000 contribution to a street party or community project.

The competition was last held in 2016. Blackburn in Lancashire was crowned the Great British High Street overall winner that year thanks to the determination of the community and local businesses who worked together to overcome the challenges their high street was facing.

The government is committed to helping local business communities and has introduced over £9 billion worth of business rate support so that many small businesses now pay no rates. This sits alongside a reduction in annual rises, worth a further £4 billion, and helping shops and restaurants across the country.

Through the [Future High Streets Forum](#), the government is also working closely with retail leaders and industry experts to support high streets and town centres to adapt and compete in the face of changing consumer and social trends.

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

The deadline for entries is 15 August 2018

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.

High Streets are changing, and the government is committed to helping communities adapt. By delivering on our commitment to give councils more control over the business rates they raise locally, they have never had a better reason to support their shops and restaurants.

We have introduced over £9 billion worth of business rate support so that

many small businesses now pay no rates and we are reducing annual rises which is worth a further £4 billion, helping shops and restaurants across the country.

In 2017, we launched a £300 million discretionary relief scheme over the next 4 years, which local authorities can use to grant relief to businesses.

With our Future High Streets Forum, we are working closely with retail leaders and industry experts so we can develop new solutions to the current challenges we are facing

We are reviewing the wider taxation of the digital economy, including ensuring international corporate tax rules deliver fair results across different businesses and that sellers operating through online marketplaces pay the right amount of VAT.