

English Publishing Grants

Guidelines: Advances/Fees for Authors and Illustrators

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Mae'r ddogfen hon hefyd ar gael yn Gymraeg /
A Welsh-language version of this document is also available

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Guidelines

1 Aims

The Advances/Fees to Authors and Illustrators Scheme enables publishers in Wales to commission books of wide appeal which will help them to increase sales, target new markets and develop their future publishing programmes as a whole. The scheme is designed primarily to provide advances on royalties for writers but may also be used to provide flat fees for contributors to multiple-authored volumes and to support the commissioning of illustrations.

Preference will be given to authors/illustrators with a proven publishing and sales track record, but this does not preclude publishers applying on behalf of new authors/illustrators of particular potential. We welcome applications for books that help to increase diversity in the provision available, in particular work that articulates the life experiences of black, Asian and minority ethnic writers, as well as others with the protected characteristics of the Equality Act 2010.

The Books Council of Wales administers a separate commission grant scheme for Welsh-language writers, for which guidelines are available.

2 Eligibility

Who may apply?

This scheme is open to publishers in Wales who have a regular publishing programme or have viable plans to establish such a programme. Authors and illustrators may not apply.

Which authors and books can be commissioned?

A wide range of authors and books can be supported under this scheme. The following list gives the main eligible categories:

- Art & architecture
- Biography
- Children's books
- Comic books and graphic novels
- Cookery
- Cultural history
- Cultural tourism (but not guidebooks)
- Current affairs
- Fiction
- History (but not local history)
- Literature
- Music, stage and screen
- Photography
- Reference
- Religion and spirituality
- Nature
- Sport
- Travel

The following categories are not generally eligible for support:

- Address books, journals, diaries, etc.
- Antiques and collectables - user guides
- Building
- Business
- Do-it-yourself
- Education: teaching methods and materials (except where these directly relate to Welsh writing in English)
- Family
- Finance
- Games and puzzles
- Guidebooks
- Health and fitness
- Holiday
- Home and garden
- Hobbies
- Languages
- Law
- Lifestyle
- Local history
- Maps and guides
- Self-help
- Technical manuals

Neither of the above lists is comprehensive. Where there is uncertainty as to eligibility, publishers are asked to discuss their proposals with the Books Council's Publishing Development Department before submitting an application.

3 Assessment Criteria and Priorities

The following priorities are factors when considering grant applications:

Book

- The book's likely market appeal
- The likely quality of the book's content and production
- The sales forecast

N.B. It is expected that titles funded under this scheme will reach a sales target of 1,000 copies within 18 months. Consistent failure by a publisher to meet this target will be considered in future applications.

Publisher

- the strength of the publisher's current list and programme, particularly Welsh writing in English
- the degree to which this list is likely to benefit from revenue generated by the proposed project
- the publisher's willingness to offer competitive discounts

- the publisher's previous sales record (for books in receipt of similar grants)
- the publisher's track record in keeping to publishing timetables

N.B. In the case of new and emerging publishers without established lists, please contact the Publishing Development department to discuss alternative ways to demonstrate eligibility, which may include proposed programme lists, confirmed titles, relevant sales figures or other examples where appropriate.

Author/Illustrator

- the author/illustrator's track record (success/sales of previous titles where applicable), appropriateness for proposed commission, standard of work, ability to deliver work on time)
- the projected completion date. If a large sum is awarded, it is normally expected that the work will be completed within a calendar year or less

Relevance to Wales

- where all other factors are equal, preference will be given to projects involving Welsh or Wales-resident authors and illustrators, and/or books about Welsh subjects.

4 The Grant

- The total annual budget for this scheme is in the region of £50,000
- The maximum grant will be £5,000 for a single title (though please note that most grants awarded will not reach the maximum sum). The grant may meet 100% of the proposed advance/fee. The fee paid to the author may exceed customary/expected royalties for the first print run.
- The grant will normally be made as an advance against royalties, but publishers may also apply for a flat fee payment for certain projects where appropriate (e.g. multiple-authored volumes or commissioning illustrators).
- The grant can contribute only to an author/illustrator's advance or fee; payments for research or other costs are not eligible, although the author/illustrator may use their advance or fee to cover such costs
- The publisher will be responsible for drawing up an appropriate contract and paying the author/illustrator whom they commission. The publisher may discuss the application for a grant with the author (and is advised to do so), but should make it clear that the grant is payable to the publisher and that all publisher-author relations should be laid out in the contract according to usual industry practice
- The publisher should ensure that the contract with the author includes a clear timetable for delivery of the work and a payment schedule. It should also include clear provision for repayment of any advances, should the work not be delivered as agreed

- It is the publisher's responsibility to reclaim any advances in the event of default on the part of the author. The Books Council will reclaim all and any grants paid to the publisher where a book is not published due to failure to deliver a completed manuscript on the part of the author
- Books supported by the scheme are eligible to receive a Marketing Grant; a separate application must be made for this and the level of such a grant will depend on the marketing plans submitted
- There is no restriction on the number of applications a publisher may submit; however, the Books Council will seek assurance that the publisher has the capacity to undertake any such titles before a grant is awarded. Past performance and similar projects in hand may be factor when considering future applications.

5 Application Procedure and Timetable

Applications should include the following supporting documents:

- a sample of the work of the author(s)/illustrator(s) concerned (either a sample of the work in progress or a short sample of a previously published work)
- a full list of English-language titles published in the previous financial year and planned for the current financial year, grouped according to whether or not they received any form of BCW grant and including publication dates. A pro forma is available
- a detailed profit and loss forecast for the proposed book. A pro forma is available electronically which will automatically calculate profit/loss.

Applications are considered by the English-language Publishing Grants Subcommittee, which meets four times a year, usually in February, May, July, and October. Deadlines may be obtained from the address at the end of this document, or from the BCW website.

Grants will not be awarded retrospectively. **Publishers should allow sufficient time between a Subcommittee meeting and the planned publication date (six months) to avoid committing to publication before hearing the outcome of their application.** Should the publication date be too close to the date of the Subcommittee meeting, the Subcommittee may assume that there is not a genuine need for grant-aid.

All publishers in receipt of an Advances or Fees to Authors and Illustrators Grant must adhere to the conditions of grant aid for this scheme, see [GT&C AAG (2025)], including the timely supply of bibliographical data and making grant-aided titles available through normal trade channels (including the Books Council's Distribution Centre). **Publishers are asked to familiarise themselves with this document before proceeding with an application.**

6 Payment of Grants

The Books Council will release the grant to the publisher in the stages outlined below.

Authors/illustrators will receive their payment from their publisher according to the payment schedule given in their contract, which should mirror this timeline.

A completed claim form must be submitted at each stage, accompanied by the appropriate documentation. Claim forms are available from the address below.

Payment 1 on signing a contract

- The Books Council will issue payment on receipt of a claim form [GC AAG (2025)], together with a copy of the contract **signed by all parties**. The contract must include a clear timetable for the delivery of the work and note the sums payable at each stage. **If a copy of the contract has not been received within 6 months of the offer of grant, the grant will be cancelled.**

Payment 2 on delivery of completed manuscript

- The Books Council will issue payment on receipt of a claim form [GC AAG (2025)] testifying that the publisher has received the completed manuscript (at the publisher's discretion this payment may be claimed prior to the final edit being completed). At this stage the publisher should complete the part of the claim form which confirms the publication timetable, intended format and print run.

Payment 3 on publication

- The Books Council will issue payment on receipt of a claim form [GC AAG (2025)], and four complimentary copies of the title will be ordered from the Distribution Centre.

7 Changes to the Original Application

The Books Council reserves the right to alter the amount of the grant payable if the details on the claim form differ significantly from information presented in the original application or if the publisher fails to adhere to the conditions of grant aid [GT&C AAG (2025)]. The publisher must note any changes to the original application on the relevant claim forms, and should discuss any significant changes (e.g. content, proposed contributors, print run) with the Publishing Development Department in advance.

8 Monitoring and Evaluation of Work Funded

The Books Council will ask publishers to provide regular updates of sales figures and sales revenue for titles supported under this scheme and may also require copies of reviews to help monitor quality. In the longer term, consideration will also be given to the benefits of profits to the publishers' programme of Welsh writing in English.

9 Notes On Completing The Application Form (as referred to on the form)

- **Category:** Please insert the Category of book you intend to publish. The Book Industry Communication (BIC) Standard Subject Categories & Qualifiers scheme is the standard classification scheme for the UK book trade and other English-language markets, and a full list of categories can be found at www.bic.org.uk/productinfo-subjectcat.html. The main relevant category headings are as follows, but please see the full list for more detail:

A The Arts	H Humanities (History, Archaeology, Philosophy, Religion)
B Biography & True Stories	J Society & Social Sciences
C Language	W Lifestyle, Sport & Leisure
D Literature & Literary Studies	Y Children's, Young Adult & Educational
F Fiction & Related Items	
G Reference, Information & Interdisciplinary Studies	

- **Format:** The format of the book you intend to publish should be appropriate for the category of book and follow industry norms, e.g. 'A format', normally a trimmed page size of 178 x 111 mm (unsewn), is the usual format of mass market paperbacks; 'B format', normally a trimmed page size of 198 x 126 mm (unsewn), is the usual format for paperbacks favoured for non-fiction and literary fiction. If in doubt, please consult the Books Council. Grants will not be awarded for books which have inappropriate formats or poor production standards.
- **Publication Date:** Please give a full publication date. You may amend this if necessary at a later date as long as adequate notice is given (see the General Terms and Conditions of Grant). Where only a month and year are given, the default date of the 15th of the month will be used by the Books Council.
- **Profit and Loss Forecast:** The aim of this scheme is to help publishers commission titles which have the potential to generate substantial sales income. A detailed profit and loss forecast for each title should therefore be completed so that the publisher, as well as the Publishing Grants Panel, may gauge how profitable the given title will be. A pro forma designed as an Excel document and including the automatic calculation of profit margins is available. In addition, the summary information should be inserted in the appropriate place on the application form.
- **Previous Performance:** The aim is to demonstrate the good sales potential of the proposed book by drawing on evidence of past sales of similar titles or titles by the same author.
- **Target Audience/Market:** It is important to demonstrate a good knowledge of the market for the type of book you are attempting to promote, and this is the market that you must show you will reach by undertaking the activities described in your marketing plan.

- **Additionality:** It is important that the publisher demonstrate additionality to support the case for the awarding of a grant. For the purpose of this scheme, additionality can be defined as improving sales figures (give sales forecast with and without a grant), extending the print run (give print runs with and without this grant), significantly enhancing the public profile of the book/author/series (how will this be measured?), or similar outcomes. Please ensure that you provide specific detail to support each aspect of additionality described.

Application forms and further advice may be obtained from:

Publishing Development Department
Books Council of Wales
Castell Brychan
Aberystwyth
Ceredigion
SY23 2JB

Tel: 01970 629554

E-mail: english.grants@books.wales