

A stylized graphic of a microphone and headphones. The microphone is on the right, with a dotted pattern on its top. The headphones are on the left, with a cord that loops around the text. The background is a vibrant gradient of orange, red, and pink with abstract shapes.

# BRITISH PODCAST AWARDS

**Judges Tips & Tricks**



**Alex Anderson**  
**Director**  
**Tandem Productions**

**What are you looking for in a winning entry?**

The number one quality I always listen out for is authenticity. Listeners are quick to sense if a presenter is trying a touch too hard or a format is a bit contrived. As well as authenticity, I'm drawn in by podcasts that are shot through with a deep curiosity about their particular subject. My ears will immediately switch on when I sense I'm going to learn something new or embark on a surprising and intriguing journey. How compelling are those opening few minutes? I also spend a lot of time engaging with music, so I'll be listening for sensitive and creative use of music and sound design. Finally, I'll be listening out for treatments that aren't frightened of trying something new. I'm looking forward to a few surprises - I hope!

**What are your top tips for this year's entrants?**

Who are you making your podcast for? With such a crowded marketplace, what is its USP and how will it resonate with your target audience?

Be realistic with your listener numbers. There aren't many podcasts out there with tens of thousands of listeners per episode, but that doesn't matter if the audience you have is clearly defined and engaged.

Think about the subtlety of shading within your podcast. Even the toughest or densest subject matters need moments of relief.

It's never too early to start thinking about next year's entry,Ä¶! Keep a log of the best bits as you release your podcasts month by month.

**Kieron Banerji**  
**Director of Content and Production**  
**Delphia and Palm Tree Island**

**What are you looking for in a winning entry?**

With over 5 million podcasts worldwide, what sets yours apart? I'm interested in novel and creative methods of structuring your episodes to effectively achieve the goals of your podcast. Whether your aim is to entertain, educate, provide solutions, or ideally, all of the above - how do you ensure that your use of audio is intentional and purposeful?

**What are your top tips for this year's entrants?**

Can you provide me with the standout moments from podcasts that have challenged the traditional podcast formats? Additionally, how have you utilized audio in innovative ways



to captivate and involve your listeners, and more importantly, what distinguishes your show from others?

## **Simon Beale**

**Radio Presenter**

**Heart**

### **What are you looking for in a winning entry?**

Make your entry stand out - Grab my attention in the first 5 minutes and give me a reason to keep listening - Make sure your audio quality and production values are high

## **Megan Bradshaw**

**Senior Podcast Manager, Amazon Music**

**Amazon Music**

### **What are you looking for in a winning entry?**

Something that is representative of positive, creative and cultural change in telling stories in sound - something that could not have been made even 3 years ago, but is doing it now.

### **What are your top tips for this year's entrants?**

Surprise and delight. 2. Share work that demonstrates your expertise, mission, and strengths - i.e., tells a story about you as a creator, too. 3. As with all awards applications, remember: judges are people with busy schedules. How can you cut through the noise with your application?

## **Helen Brown**

**Freelance Podcast Producer**

**Effin Hormones**

### **What are you looking for in a winning entry?**

The kind of audio you'd stay in your car to carry on listening to after reaching your destination. Audio that you can't tear yourself away from. Audio that makes you laugh, cry, feel part of a community, or teaches you something you'd then go on to tell your partner about that evening because it was so striking or engaging.



**What are your top tips for this year's entrants?**

Always, always keep your listener's best interests at heart. Know who they are, know why you're doing it, and know what you're giving your listener through your podcast. If you create a community, then you've cracked it!

**James Chandler**  
**Chief Marketing Officer**  
**IAB UK**

**What are you looking for in a winning entry?**

I am a sucker for anything format-breaking, so bold ideas that wouldn't/shouldn't typically work on a podcast but somehow do.

**What are your top tips for this year's entrants?**

Give me warts-n-all accounts, the jeopardy, the bits where it almost didn't happen - don't just serve up a shiny number of listens or lists of results.

**Elise Cobain**  
**Senior Music Programmer**  
**Amazon Music**

**What are you looking for in a winning entry?**

As well as expected standards in production, it's about relevancy, surprise and delight moments, character and personality and flow within the listening experience. We hear a lot of voices in our world and in our headphones, so what makes this particular piece a 'must listen', 'would tell a friend' brand.

**What are your top tips for this year's entrants?**

Have three things you want to showcase from your world. (prod skill, personality/host, unique content, comedy, etc)  
Have flow in your extract so it's not disjointed for the judges to get into your world.

**Sali Collins**  
**Broadcast Lecturer**  
**Cardiff University**

**What are you looking for in a winning entry?**

Originality and creativity.



**What are your top tips for this year's entrants?**

It's possible the judges will not have listened the whole series - so make sure the entry is your best.

**Cass Denton**

**Development Producer**

**Auddy**

**What are you looking for in a winning entry?**

I'm a sucker for a creatively told story! Something that stops me in my tracks and stays with me. Something crafted in a way that puts me right in the middle of it, whether it be through the storytelling or sound design.

**What are your top tips for this year's entrants?**

Make the most of your time to show us the best you've got. Showcase your range!

**Rhianna Dhillon**

**Film and TV critic**

**BBC (BBC5Live and BBC6Music)**

**What are you looking for in a winning entry?**

I'm looking for originality, warmth, inclusivity and a clear indication of passion and knowledge.

**What are your top tips for this year's entrants?**

Where possible, try to entertain, inform, and showcase what makes you a standout podcaster.

**Jennifer Dollard**

**Content Director**

**Acast**

**What are you looking for in a winning entry?**

Quality audio that suits the context of the podcast and respects the ears of the listener.

**What are your top tips for this year's entrants?**

Put your best foot forward and hook the judges in the first 30 seconds.



**Peter Donaldson**  
**Creative Director**  
**Stak**

**What are you looking for in a winning entry?**

Finding the right section that sums up everything that's good about the show. Doesn't have to be the most polished entry production-wise, but a little nod to matching sound volume across one piece would help. Accompanying literature that explains the in-jokes will help too.

**Sandra Ferrari**  
**Head of Content and Production**  
**Message Heard**

**What are you looking for in a winning entry?**

Excellent technical execution (with fair consideration for podcasts without as many resources as larger publishers); Clever or creative use of sound/approach to storytelling; Something exceptional to set it above the rest.

**What are your top tips for this year's entrants?**

Remember to share why your work is important to you and/or your team. Extra points from me when I see clear evidence of joy and/or passion behind a project.

**Felicity Finch**  
**Radio Presenter/Producer and Actor**  
**Freelance**

**What are you looking for in a winning entry?**

Compelling, original, entertaining audio.

**What are your top tips for this year's entrants?**

Be brave and true to your story.



**Ben Firth**  
**Creative Director**  
**Factory Originals**

**What are you looking for in a winning entry?**

Engaging, Well-Produced content that has a strong narrative which showcases the strength of the podcasting medium.

**What are your top tips for this year's entrants?**

Ensure your content is well-produced and captivates your listener, encouraging them to keep listening! Don't be afraid to think outside the box!!

**Jane Gerber**  
**Creative Director**  
**Peanut & Crumb**

**What are you looking for in a winning entry?**

An interesting way in; engaging storytelling - always; compelling hosts and guests; fresh, unheard voices; sound design to lose yourself in; a clear purpose that changes and/or enriches us all.

**What are your top tips for this year's entrants?**

Use the power of the podcast to make change and inspire. And on a platform without restrictions, set no creative limits.

**Kaylee Golding**  
**Radio Presenter**  
**BBC Radio 1XTRA**

**What are you looking for in a winning entry?**

I need a gripping entry! Pull me in closer, then keep me there with engaging content! Now that the podcasting industry is developing I want to hear some original content, I wanna hear something different!

**What are your top tips for this year's entrants?**

Try and get your most original content in early!



**Anya Goncharova Spence**  
**Head of Marketing**  
**Message Heard**

**What are you looking for in a winning entry?**

Besides having a great idea behind the story told, I am looking for an engaging delivery ,Â in my opinion, one of the crucial elements of a viral podcast! A podcast might have a simple narrative but with the right hosts and production, I am certain that any story can cut through the noise. Combining knowledgeable, entertaining hosts with flawless production to tell the right narrative is what truly differentiates good podcasts from great ones.

**What are your top tips for this year's entrants?**

Think of your narrative: is it bringing something new to the podcast landscape? And can it translate to other mediums? While podcasting is very much a craft that has to hit multiple elements at once ,Â production, hosting, marketing, etc ,Â time and time again we see that excellent podcasts can also go beyond audio. These narratives undeniably have the winning combination that all judges and listeners find so irresistible.

**Lisa Hack**  
**Freelance Audio Producer & Educator**  
**Hackmedia / Goldsmiths, University of London**

**What are you looking for in a winning entry?**

Well-crafted, high-quality audio showing a good understanding of the medium.

**What are your top tips for this year's entrants?**

Pick the absolute best bits that show variety and where the sound quality is good. Don't assume judges know your podcast. Sometimes less is more; you don't have to completely fill the time.

**Michaela Hallam**  
**Director of Content**  
**Fresh Air**

**What are you looking for in a winning entry?**

Absolutely any topic can be made compelling through podcasting. As long as the creators believe in it. So make me believe in it too. I want to be transported. I want to be made to



feel something, not told how to feel. I want to get to the end of the entry and Google it to gorge more. I want to come away with something I want to share with my friends or family. It doesn't have to be complicated, or expensive. Or have a household name on the artwork. It does have to be considered, crafted, and make the most of the amazing medium we get to work in.

### **What are your top tips for this year's entrants?**

Think really carefully about how you construct your entry: think about a beginning, a middle and an end and save something for the last bit, Äi something we'll remember. Take us on a journey, and dare us to lose ourselves, laugh out loud, gasp, or get weepy. Create an entry that means that we "get" your podcast without any accompanying copy, so that we could describe in a nutshell what your series is to another person with confidence. And make sure that it's properly representative of your podcast series as a whole.

**Nick Harnett**

**Marketing Manager, UK & Ireland**

**Acast**

### **What are you looking for in a winning entry?**

I'll be looking for winning entries that think about the journey they take their listeners on and the respect for their audience. Podcasting is a listener-first industry (we wouldn't be here without people listening to podcasts), so podcasts that consider the diverse landscape of podcast listeners will always stand out to me.

### **What are your top tips for this year's entrants?**

Your podcast doesn't always need to be a groundbreaking idea. Sometimes just a simple piece of audio can capture someone's heart and mind for an hour. It doesn't matter how many listeners you think your podcast has; if you've got positive feedback and a loyal fanbase, you've struck gold and deserve to submit yourself.

**Marc Haynes**

**Podcast Company Director**

**Future Ghost**

### **What are you looking for in a winning entry?**

Original, well-produced, compelling content which exploits the unique medium of podcasting and understands the audience it's trying to attract.

### **What are your top tips for this year's entrants?**



Create the content that you've always wanted to hear, but which no one else has made. Enthusiasm is great, but so is editing!

**Hannah Hufford**  
**Development Producer**  
**BBC**

**What are you looking for in a winning entry?**

Fantastic execution of concept; in podcasting, an idea doesn't need to be the most original, but to stand apart every element needs to be considered and crucial. That means warm, genuine hosts who sell me on their vision for the show, I need to hear their buy-in at every moment, and if it's a hosting pairing then I want a real and natural sounding relationship. Whether I'm learning, laughing, or just spending time with interesting guests, I want to be engaged at every moment and normally having some fun along the way - light and shade is crucial no matter what the topic.

**What are your top tips for this year's entrants?**

Be totally honest about why your podcast is good. Not the stuff you think judges want to hear, but think about the real reason you love making it or why you enjoy listening to it once it's made? What are the moments from your podcast you can't get out of your head - choose those, even if they're not the most 'worthy' or 'flashy' - because chances are we'll agree with you if the audio really is that memorable!

**Chris Impey**  
**Editor**  
**The Economist**

**What are you looking for in a winning entry?**

I am looking for a selection of very special moments. Being totally honest, if you can make me cry (though I am pretty easily moved to tears) you're in with a better chance than if you can't.

**What are your top tips for this year's entrants?**

Put your best piece of audio first. The write-up is as important as the audio entry.



**Aled Jones**  
**Cyfarwyddwr Y Pod Cyf.**  
**Y Pod Cyf.**

**What are you looking for in a winning entry?**

A podcast that entertains, has high audio quality, and that listeners feel engaged with.

**What are your top tips for this year's entrants?**

Be confident in your entry and sell yourselves as best you can.

**Namulanta Kombo**  
**Podcast Host and Producer**  
**BBC World Service**

**What are you looking for in a winning entry?**

I'm looking for a podcast that shows an understanding of its listeners regarding content, structure, and production. I also want it to have global appeal, resonating with listeners while teaching and entertaining me.

**What are your top tips for this year's entrants?**

Be genuine, it shows in your content.  
Keep honing your craft.  
Trust your gut, you know what feels right.  
Practice active listening to engage better with guests.

**Remel London**  
**Broadcaster**  
**The Mainstream**

**What are you looking for in a winning entry?**

I want to hear a unique use of sound, entertaining and inspiring stories.

**What are your top tips for this year's entrants?**

Do your research and be sure to educate, entertain, and inspire us.



**Linda Marris**  
**TV/Film Critic/Editor, Writer**  
**The Jewish Chronicle**

**What are you looking for in a winning entry?**

Something entertaining and informative.

**What are your top tips for this year's entrants?**

Choose your entries wisely and be precise about what category your podcast is likely to fit or garner more attention.

**David Marsland**  
**Head of Audio**  
**Evening Standard**

**What are you looking for in a winning entry?**

Stylish confidence and revelation. Tell me something I don't know, or help me understand something I don't get, and do it with a bit of verve (as in the energy, not the band, although their music's very good). Change me for the better.

**What are your top tips for this year's entrants?**

Make your show your way and the audience (and prizes) will follow. If it feels right, it is right (and if it feels wrong, you'll always know it without anyone having to tell you).

**David McGuire**  
**Director**  
**Stabl / Adelicious**

**What are you looking for in a winning entry?**

Someone/something that understands what the audience wants, intimately.

**What are your top tips for this year's entrants?**

Make first impressions count. Judges have a lot to judge.



## Weyland McKenzie-Witter

### Producer

### NELLO

#### What are you looking for in a winning entry?

Audio that challenges my previous thoughts and mood. You know when audio is great because you get lost in the world of the show. That's what I'm looking for.

#### What are your top tips for this year's entrants?

Tell the truth and be sincere about it.

## Shirley Mcpherson

### Podcast Producer and Host

### Black Scot Pod

#### What are you looking for in a winning entry?

In my opinion, a winning podcast entry should be exciting, engaging, and leave me wanting more. It should draw me in with a compelling idea and keep me hooked with interesting guests, thoughtful insights, and engaging conversations... and with a lot of laughs along the way!

#### What are your top tips for this year's entrants?

As a seasoned podcaster, I believe that the key to success lies in being true to yourself and enjoying the process. So, my top tips for people entering in this year's awards are simple: have fun, be authentic, and create content that makes you happy. Try not to worry too much about what others might think or what's trending - focus on what truly inspires and motivates you. I love to think that a podcast is an extension of yourself, so let your personality shine through, let people fall in love with you- and most importantly-let your passion guide you!

## Lou Mensah

### Founder Shade Podcast

#### What are you looking for in a winning entry?

Innovative storytelling, strong narrative, engaging hosts/subject/quality sound. Content over perfect tech.



### **What are your top tips for this year's entrants?**

Edit wisely, be brave in sharing work that represents you rather than what you think judges are looking for.

**Harry Morton**

**Founder**

**Lower Street**

### **What are you looking for in a winning entry?**

Genuinely helpful, entertaining, or inspiring content. A differentiated show either in format, style, production, or content. Business podcasts can lean towards the dry, and I want to feel human connection vs a factual exchange, or hear fresh ideas and innovative approaches.

### **What are your top tips for this year's entrants?**

Think about what your show offers that no other business podcast can.

**Suzie Mwanza**

**Podcast Producer and Host**

**Black Scot Pod**

### **What are you looking for in a winning entry?**

An award-winning entry for me would be a podcast that not only captures the interest of the listener but generates and informs the conversation in the lives of its audience. An award-winning podcast lingers in the mind long after the headphones have been put away.

### **What are your top tips for this year's entrants?**

Firstly, "Be Brave." To produce an engaging and successful podcast, it's important to take risks and be bold with your content. Don't be afraid to tackle difficult or controversial topics, share your unique perspective, or try out new and innovative ideas. Being brave can help you stand out from the crowd and create a loyal following of listeners who appreciate your courage and authenticity.

Secondly, "Be Consistent." Consistency is key when it comes to podcasting. Regularly publishing new episodes on a set schedule can help you build an audience and keep them engaged. It also shows that you're committed to your audience and see them as key partners to the success of your show.



Finally, "Have Fun." Podcasting is meant to be an enjoyable and fulfilling experience, so it's important to have fun while you're doing it. Choose topics and formats that you're passionate about and that excite you. This comes in handy a lot and it'll help you to stay motivated and inspired in challenging times, which in turn can lead to more engaging and entertaining content. Don't forget to inject your own personality and sense of humor (if appropriate) into your podcast, and enjoy the process of creating something that you're proud of!

**Abigail Paterson**  
**Podcast Producer**  
**The Athletic**

**What are you looking for in a winning entry?**

I am looking to be entertained, informed, and possibly even improved. The winning entry should have me recommending it to friends and family from just 15 mins of listening.

**What are your top tips for this year's entrants?**

Put your best work at the start. It does not have to be chronological because we will make a snap judgment in the first 20 secs, and it will be hard to change that opinion.

**Sangeeta Pillai**  
**Founder & CEO**  
**Soul Sutras**

**What are you looking for in a winning entry?**

A clear and differentiating concept or point of view. As well as good storytelling/interview skills.

**What are your top tips for this year's entrants?**

Show us what's unique about your concept, demonstrate the specific "voice" of your podcast, share with us something we haven't heard before.

**Lizzy Pollott**  
**SVP Marketing Communications & Brand**  
**Acast**

**What are you looking for in a winning entry?**

Vibes. A different take. Quality of idea and audio. To move me - in any way.

**What are your top tips for this year's entrants?**

Sell your show. Show us why it really is the best. Avoid unnecessary info - get right to the point. And don't be disheartened if you don't win, we're all winners in podcasting.

**Jonathan Reynolds****Podcast Manager/Lead Producer****The Race Media****What are you looking for in a winning entry?**

I want to hear content that effortlessly engages and connects with me as a listener, that's well thought out in terms of format and purpose, and is consistent from episode to episode. And also production that elevates rather than detracts.

**What are your top tips for this year's entrants?**

Think carefully about your submission to make sure it best represents the essence of your podcast in a limited timeframe. Also, don't feel down if your podcast isn't shortlisted this time around - it doesn't mean your podcast isn't brilliant or hugely valued by the people who listen to it.

**Rhian Roberts****Commissioner, Podcasts, Formats & Digital****BBC Radio 4****What are you looking for in a winning entry?**

Surprise. Something fresh and new - in tone of voice or in content. A different way of attracting and holding on to the listener.

**What are your top tips for this year's entrants?**

Be clear about who your podcast is for and what it's offering to the market. It's so crowded out there your comms and promo plan has to be top-notch. Show your passion and commitment, be authentic and truthful.

**Anna Robinson****Series Producer, TV and Radio****Freelance**

**What are you looking for in a winning entry?**

Welsh Language - content that's explored in a way that is relevant to today's audience, whatever the subject and its treatment. An original and fresh way of telling stories and educating and engaging the listener. True Crime - Jaw-dropping investigative true crime serials that immerse the listener in the world of the victims, hosts, and contributors. A strong narrative with regular beats that reveal new information as the story unfolds.

**What are your top tips for this year's entrants?**

Provide a thorough and original treatment of the subject and take the listener somewhere they haven't been before.

Tell it well; tell it in the 2020s; tell it in a way that will surprise, inform, and educate, but most of all, in a way that will satisfy the audience.

**Hannah Rose****Development Producer****Tiger Aspect Productions****What are you looking for in a winning entry?**

An idea that really harnesses the potential of podcasting and does something that wouldn't work as well in any other medium, as well as engaging, dynamic, and inclusive conversation that makes the listener feel a part of the podcast's community.

**What are your top tips for this year's entrants?**

Think about what sets your podcast apart, what listeners come back for week after week, and why your series works so well as a podcast specifically.

**Zayna Shaikh****Producer****BBC****What are you looking for in a winning entry?**

Interesting and thought-provoking stories/conversation told in an innovative manner.

**What are your top tips for this year's entrants?**

Give yourself plenty of time and really let your podcast come through in your entry!



**Andrew Spence**  
**Co-Owner & Director Of Operations**  
**Ideas Genius t/a Unedited**

**What are you looking for in a winning entry?**

Those WTF moments, original storytelling, and diversity of thought and personnel.

**What are your top tips for this year's entrants?**

Keep it simple.

**Brett Spencer**  
**Director**  
**Centre of Podcasting Excellence**

**What are you looking for in a winning entry?**

A connection with the audience and a show seeking to build community. Something that is clearly a podcast and not just a radio show. A winning podcast should not outstay its welcome and should be tightly edited. Tell me something I don't know, surprise me, or make me laugh.

**What are your top tips for this year's entrants?**

If it's an interview, don't cut yourself out, as we can't judge an interview just by hearing the answers.

Make sure the clips represent the podcast and they are not just your favorites.

Make sure you go back through all the episodes carefully, don't use the first clips that come to mind.

**Craig Strachan**  
**Head of Podcasts**  
**Amazon Music**

**What are you looking for in a winning entry?**

Great audio quality and something that makes me want to tell all my friends to listen to the podcast.

**What are your top tips for this year's entrants?**

Think about what makes your podcast stand apart from the others.



## David Walker

### Podcast Executive

#### **What are you looking for in a winning entry?**

Something that holds my attention past the first few minutes and genuinely makes me want to listen to more episodes. I also like to see that the audio entry follows through on what the written submission promises.

#### **What are your top tips for this year's entrants?**

Always put your best stuff right at the start of your entry, and if you can, maintain that standard all the way through so that you leave the judges wanting more.

## Jake Warren

### CEO / Founder

### Message Heard

#### **What are you looking for in a winning entry?**

Innovation and equal attention and quality in both production and content terms.

#### **What are your top tips for this year's entrants?**

Be detailed in your application but also focused, whether it is the audio file for sizzle or the written application something should be as long as it compelling and not a second or word longer!

## Andrew Weeks

### University Lecturer

### Cardiff University- School of Journalism

#### **What are you looking for in a winning entry?**

An opening that grabs me. - A subject in which presenters and contributors have an emotional investment. - A podcast I'll stay with until the end.