

LOCAL IRELAND MEDIA AWARDS CATEGORIES 2026

The qualifying period is 2025. No more than three submissions per entry for all categories please.

The following categories are awarded to individual journalists and photographers

Best News Story

Entries can be a single story on a single topic or a series of up to three per journalist about the same lead news story/issue. The winner will be the journalist who produces a major news story with a strong local focus, which is well written and structured and makes a significant impact for the local community. Attracting national coverage could be advantageous but a strong exclusive specific to a local community can also emerge as the winning entrant.

Best News Series

This should be a series of three stories related to the same topic or issue.

The winner will be the journalist who produces a series with a local focus, which is well written and structured, and generates a high level of response from the local community. Attracting national coverage/attention can be advantageous but is not essential.

Feature Journalist of the Year

This can be a single story or a range/series of up to three articles.

Stories can include human interest, lifestyle, local personality profiles or any other topics outside of the news and sports categories.

The winner will be the journalist who produces a story with a local focus which is relevant, well written and delivers great insight.

Sports Journalist of the Year

The judges are looking for great writing about sports, in particular analysis, insight, profiles and features.

Straight match reports or match previews may be submitted but are unlikely to make the final shortlist unless there is a sensational or highly effective aspect to the work.

Three pieces should be submitted. If a submission contains different aspects of sports journalism such as interview, analysis and feature, the chances of receiving the top award will improve.

Sports supplements should be entered into the supplement category but individual stories within supplements are still eligible to be included in the Sports Journalist of the Year category.

Columnist of the Year

This can be a single article or series of articles. The winner will be an accomplished journalist and writer whose insights stimulate public interest and debate in their subject matter. The judges will favour factually informed articles rather than opinion or observation alone.

Best Diversity Journalist

This category is for coverage of all inclusivity and minority issues, including disability, race and gender. The list is not exhaustive.

Best Sustainability Journalist

This category is for coverage of all issues relating to sustainability, including climate, waste management or environmental/agricultural sustainability. The list is not exhaustive.

National Lottery Community Journalist of the Year

This will be awarded to the news story or feature that best captures community spirit and the impact of local people working together to make a difference. It can be a single story or a series of stories. This category is chosen by judges from the National Lottery.

Best Photograph

This award will be presented to the photographer who presents a remarkable and impactful picture with excellent composition. Jpegs should be entered rather page grabs.

Best Use of Photography

The winner will be the entry which best demonstrates how photography is used to illustrate news, sports or feature stories, or uses photography creatively on its own to make an impact. PDFs of pages should be entered.

Young Journalist of the Year

The winner will be the entrant who demonstrates outstanding journalism among those aged 28 or under in the qualifying year. Three examples of work should be provided. They can reflect any category of journalism that demonstrates both skills and creativity.

The following categories are awarded to publishers

Best Supplement

The winner will be the newspaper that produces a supplement of outstanding quality combining excellent editorial and advertising content, great design and quality reproduction. Supplements can be pull-outs or stand-alones but they must be free with the newspaper at the initial point of delivery.

Two hard copies of each entry should be sent to Bob Hughes, Ashfield, Kilcloon, Co Meath A85 CK79.

Up to three supplements per title can be entered. A digital copy uploaded to the entry portal is helpful, but the two hard copies are a must.

Best Front Page

This category will recognise the impact of a dynamic front page. Essential to this will be strong page layout and design, an excellent headline, eye-catching photography, great captions and creative graphics if appropriate.

Best Headline

This category will be specifically for impactful and creative use of a word or words that encapsulate the wider story or image.

Best Local Advertisement

This will be a single stand-out advertisement for a local client which displays excellent copywriting, design and reproduction in print or digital. The ad must have been created or commissioned exclusively by the news publisher. Generic ads that appear in other publications are not allowed.

Best Advertising Campaign

The winner will be an advertising campaign for a single, local or national client which makes best use of local print media to deliver its messages. It may include clearly identified advertorial. The ad must have been created or commissioned exclusively by the news publisher.

Best Innovation

This can be any business or editorial initiative print or online that demonstrates a creative and inventive approach to enhance the news publishers' offering to its readers and audiences or has grown the business in an innovative way. An explanation of how the initiative has been effective is important.

Best Use of Digital

The award will go to the local news publisher which demonstrates how its digital offerings complement or enhance its print editions by expanding its total audience, increasing engagement and growing revenue.

It can include a newspaper's website, digital editions, apps or any combinations or parts thereof, use of social media podcasts and use of video. It can also include strategic initiatives.

Best Political Coverage

Three examples of work should be submitted per title. They can demonstrate excellence in any combination of stories, supplements, analysis, photography, design, headline, front page. The list is not exclusive. All political coverage is eligible.

Special Category

Lifetime Achievement Award

This award is not open for entries and will be selected by a panel from the Executive Committee of Local Ireland.