

Have your voice heard with new short story competition Inclusive Voices

Pioneering audiobook charity Calibre Audio celebrates its 50th Anniversary by launching the competition to encourage new writers and champion new stories featuring characters with print disabilities



27th March 2024

Winners' prizes including the winning story being recorded as an audiobook available to all Calibre Audio members

Judging panel includes

Author, BBC Radio 2's Book Club and the Book Off podcast's **Joe Haddow**
Public speaker and author of augmented reality picture books **Pamela Aculey**

Novelist **Katharine McMahon**

Children's illustrator and author **Dave Shelton**

Children's and young adults' author **Julia Green**

Managing Editor of The Week Junior **Vanessa Harriss**

Dave Steele aka The Blind Poet

Calibre Audio is working towards an inclusive future where everyone has the right and the opportunity to read

Wednesday 27 March 2024: Calibre Audio, the pioneering audiobook charity, this year celebrates 50 years of making books accessible to everyone. Marking the occasion with a programme of celebratory interactive activities, Calibre Audio has today launched Inclusive Voices, a new short story competition aimed to raise print disability awareness and champion new creative voices. The competition is supported using public funding by the National Lottery through Arts Council England.

The first prize winner in each category of the competition, whose winning story will include a print disabled character, will have the opportunity to visit the Calibre Studio in Buckinghamshire to record their story or hear their story being recorded for inclusion in the Calibre Collection.

In addition, the story will be included in the Best Inclusive Voices print book which will also be recorded in audio and winners are invited to attend a prize giving event at the Birmingham Central Library on Monday 21st October 2024. An Echo Dot and Book Tokens make up the rest of the first prize package.

Established in 1974, Calibre Audio is a pioneering audiobook charity that aims to use the full range of technology to make books accessible to everyone. From cassette tapes through to Alexa, Calibre has made books audible for 50 years and gives its members the power to read their way through a choice of audiobook platforms. The service is free for under 18s and those still in full time education, creating learning opportunities to help young people grow and thrive through reading.

Entries to the Inclusive Voices competition can be narrative or verse and can be submitted in written, video or audio form. Entries must include a main character with a print disability and be a maximum of 550 words. Entry details and further Terms and Conditions can be found here on the [Calibre Audio website](#).

Entries are now open until 5pm on 31st August with results announced on 21st October 2024 at the Calibre Conversations Book Festival Live Event at Birmingham Central Library.

Judges for the competition include author, producer of BBC Radio 2's Book Club and host of the Book Off podcast Joe Hadow, public speaker and author of augmented reality picture books Pamela Aculey, Novelist Katharine McMahon, children's illustrator and author Dave Shelton, children's and young adults' author Julia Green, managing editor of The Week Junior Vanessa Harriss and Dave Steele aka The Blind Poet.

The judges will select from entries in the following categories: Under 11s , 11-17s, 18-25s and Over 25s. Under 18s will require parental / carer permission to enter.

Anthony Kemp, CEO of Calibre Audio has said: *"We're delighted to be launching our 50th celebrations with our Short Story Competition, Inclusive Voices. We're really proud of what we've achieved over the last 50 years, helping many thousands of people to enjoy, learn, connect and grow through listening to books. Our members face really diverse challenges caused by their struggles to read print in a world that assumes everyone can. From underachieving at school, feeling left out in friendship groups and navigating the work environment to loneliness and social isolation in later life, our competition seeks to get people thinking about what life can be like for these people through our Inclusive Voices stories. We'd like as many people to get involved as possible and we look forward to sharing the very best of the stories towards the end of the year."*