

STRATEGY **2025-2030**



**SOCIETY OF
AUTHORS**

Contents

WHO WE ARE

1. Introduction	3
2. Strategic Framework: 2025-2030	4
– Vision and Mission	
– Values and Behaviours	
3. Our structure	5

WHERE WE ARE

4. External environment: PESTEL analysis	6
5. The Society of Authors: where we are now	7

WHERE WE WANT TO GO

6. Five-year strategy: the roadmap	8
– Support	
– Organise	
– Advocate	
– Celebrate	
7. Annual business plans	11

MEASURING SUCCESS

8. Overarching Key Performance Indicators	12
9. Monitoring and Evaluation	12
10. Impact and Feedback	12



**However stories reach
readers, authors need
to be rewarded fairly
for their creative work**

WHO WE ARE

1. Introduction

Empowering authors since 1884

The Society of Authors is the UK's largest trade union for all types of writers, illustrators and literary translators, at all stages of their careers. We have been fighting for authors' rights and advising individual authors for over a century.

Members receive unlimited free advice on all aspects of the profession, including confidential, clause-by-clause contract vetting, professional development training and events (online and in-person), plus a wide range of exclusive benefits and offers.

We work closely with many organisations to support and develop authors at all stages of their careers, and we speak to authors throughout the UK as part of our outreach work.

We also provide grants and prizes to support and celebrate authors, as well as administering many literary estates, the income from which helps to fund our activities.

The Society of Authors' Strategic Plan 2025-2030

Set by the SoA Board, the Strategic Plan 2025-2030 is delivered by the staff team. The detail of the organisational strategy is contained within our annual business plans.

Throughout this document references to "we or us" mean the Society of Authors and, specifically, the Board, Nation and Special Interest Groups, and our staff team, working together in a collaborative partnership to execute this strategy and deliver our work on behalf of members.

Setting, monitoring and evaluating strategy is a continual process, driven by our renewed vision and mission. It is agile and responsive to changes in the external environment, and by any new issues faced by members. However, all our activities will align with our agreed overarching strategic priorities.

As we execute this strategy for members, we will be rigorous in our choices, constantly monitoring and evaluating whether we are doing the right work, and staying on course to meet our agreed strategic objectives.

As a membership organisation, we are accountable to our members, and therefore we will report annually to our members on our progress at our AGM each November.

Signed:



Vanessa Fox O'Loughlin, Chair of the Board

Signed:



Anna Ganley, Chief Executive

2. Strategic framework: 2025-2030

Our vision

That all authors can sustain a living income on fair terms, whilst retaining control over their work and career.

Our mission

As a special register trade union, we exist to promote, protect and campaign on the business of authorship. For our members, we exist to:



Our core values and behaviours

We work to fulfil our mission by being:

Member-focused: members are at the heart of everything we do. As an expert and dedicated team, we are proactive and we add value by supporting, connecting and advocating for our members.

Authoritative: we share our expert knowledge and speak out for the profession. We stay informed about the issues affecting authors.

Supportive: we help members and we collaborate with colleagues to achieve our shared mission and goals.

Inclusive: we promote and encourage diversity in its broadest sense. We work to ensure that all voices are heard, and represented fairly and equitably.

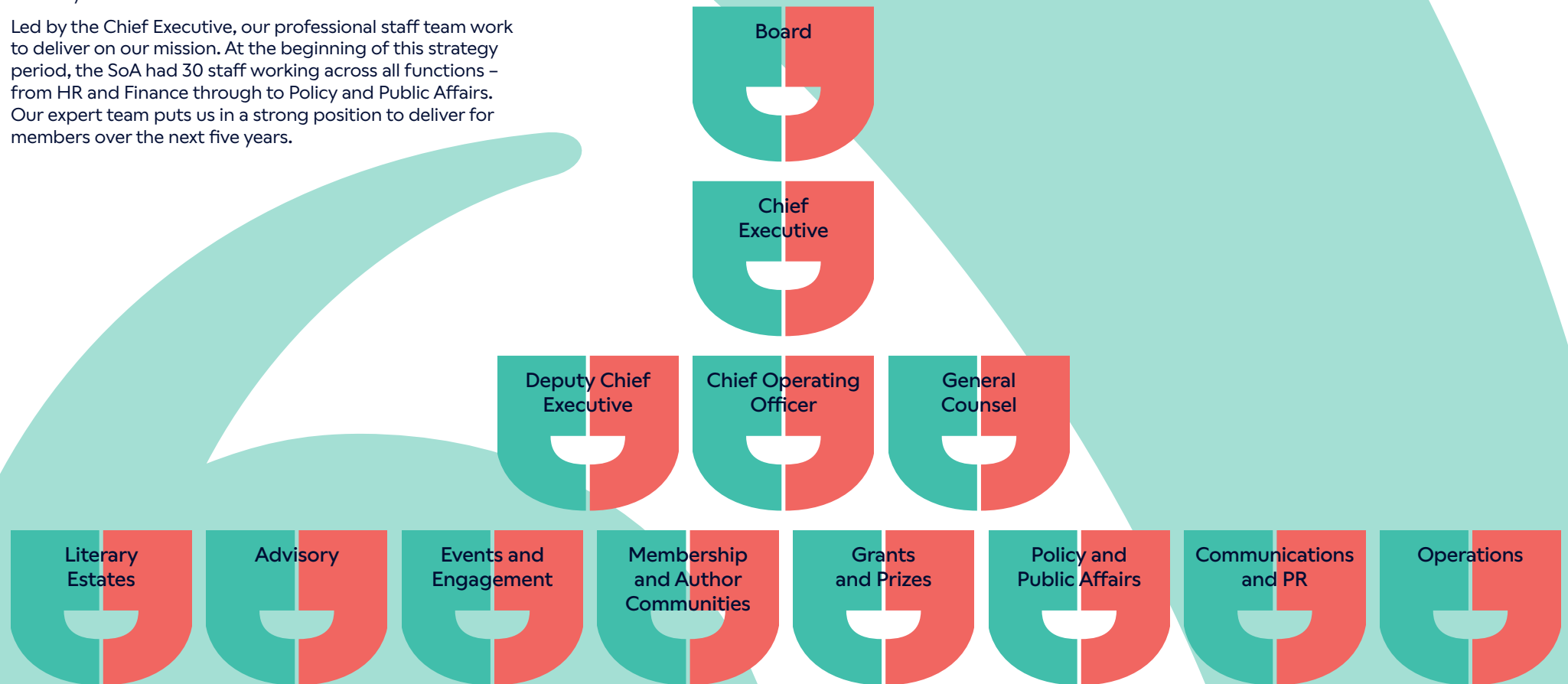


3. Our structure

The Society of Authors' Board is responsible for the direction of the SoA and together they make all major policy and strategy decisions. The Board consists of up to 12 democratically-elected members who are our volunteer legal directors.

Board members are directly elected by our membership and each serve a term of three years. Chairs of SoA groups whose membership is more than 5% of the total membership attend Board meetings, and they are encouraged to participate fully, but they do not have a vote.

Led by the Chief Executive, our professional staff team work to deliver on our mission. At the beginning of this strategy period, the SoA had 30 staff working across all functions – from HR and Finance through to Policy and Public Affairs. Our expert team puts us in a strong position to deliver for members over the next five years.



WHERE WE ARE

4. External environment: PESTEL analysis

Key challenges for authors

This PESTEL analysis examines how Political, Economic, Social, Technological, Environmental and Legal external factors impact on our business operations. Reviewing this analysis each year will help us to make decisions about our activities.

Political	The political landscape calls for: • The protection of copyright, enforcement of Intellectual Property rights, and regulation of AI tech companies to mitigate the threats to authors' IP and livelihoods. • Improved tax and benefits systems that work for freelancers. • The protection of freedom of expression and against increasing censorship.
Economic	Financial opportunities and challenges: • Industry: lobbying for a fair and equitable share for authors. • Government: lobbying for IP enforcement via legislation. Redress and compensation for the unlicensed uses of authors' work. • Lobbying for adequate funding and support for the creative industries. • Technology: adapting to advances in machine learning so that authors can make the most of new opportunities and mitigate the threats to their livelihoods.
Social	Cultural landscape: • Nurturing a culture of lifelong reading: books and reading need to remain relevant as a source of entertainment and learning in our fast-paced world of unlimited choice, competition and content expected for free.
Technological	Machine learning: • Challenge: the protection of copyright and compensation for copyright infringement in the piracy and unlicensed uses of authors' copyright-protected works. • Opportunity: assistive technology can support authors with their administrative and research processes.
Environmental	Sustainability: • The publishing eco-system: ensuring we keep pressure on the publishing industry to support authors and help them to sustain long-term creative careers in an era of AI technology. • The planet: ensuring we keep pressure on the publishing industry to continue its journey to be more climate-friendly and reduce its impact on the environment.
Legal	Protect and promote authors' rights in relation to: • Copyright and Intellectual Property law. • Consumer and contract law. • Data protection law. • Better protections for freelance workers.

5. Where we are now

As we enter this new strategy period (November 2025), the Society of Authors has 12,494 members, which means we have grown by 9% since the beginning of our last strategy period.

Looking ahead to the next five years, our goal is to sustain membership growth during a period in which it has never been harder to earn a living income as an author.

Our goal is growth because the bigger and stronger we are the more influence we will have. We continue to work hard to encourage authors to stand together to promote, protect and campaign on the business of authorship.

Our overarching strategic ambition: Sustainable growth

Our strategic ambition is to grow to 13,500+ members by 2030.

We will reach this by supporting, organising and advocating for authors across the UK. Over the next five years, our goal is to continue to recruit, retain and enrich members in relation to their experience of the business of authorship.

To do this, the SoA needs a strong Member Value Proposition with a great range of benefits, an expert and experienced staff team and efficient systems, to ensure the smooth-running and success of the Society of Authors.

Our recruitment target: 10% growth over five years. 13,500+ members by 2030.

Our retention target: 50%. Members drop in and out of membership as they need our help.

WHERE WE WANT TO GO

6. Five-year Strategy: the roadmap

The Society of Authors in 2030 will be the sum of all of the ideas, plans and projects we deliver over the next five years. As well as the innovative, extraordinary and unexpected activities that are born from our human creativity, collaboration and sometimes, a little leap of faith.

In this strategy publication, we outline our direction of travel over the next five years – and how we plan to get there. We hope you will join us for this journey.

How we will get there

SUPPORT

We work to ensure authors have the individual support they need to navigate a complex industry and to empower them in their professional relationships with publishers, agents and other publishing professionals.

OUR GOAL: to support and empower authors

We will achieve this by providing:

Individual member advice

We will continue to provide expert, one-to-one advice and member casework to our members – this includes line-by-line contract vetting and bespoke, confidential support with disputes and issues, as well as business and wellbeing resources to help empower and sustain authors.

Member benefits

Members will have access to an increasingly wide range of useful benefits, including:

- advice on professional issues and problems
- clause-by-clause contract vetting
- lobbying and collective negotiation
- *The Author* – the SoA's highly-respected quarterly magazine
- access to all our professional guides and articles
- free access to our online events
- membership of national, regional, special interest and peer support author communities
- free membership to the Authors Licensing and Collecting Society
- discounted offers on specialist insurance, including professional indemnity insurance and tax protection insurance
- up to 25% discounts on books and Premier Inn stays
- access to a free tax helpline provided by the accountants HW Fisher & Company
- discounts on membership to affiliated organisations

Financial support

We also provide financial support to authors through our grants for works-in-progress, hardship and access grants for authors in need.





ORGANISE

As a member-led organisation, our members are our biggest asset. Our aim is to connect, co-create and collaborate with our members across the UK and abroad. We will work to strengthen our multi-disciplinary author communities with peer support networks, and we will collaborate with our member-volunteers to connect our author communities.

The Society of Authors is an organisation where everyone is welcome and where thoughts and ideas can be shared freely and respectfully.

OUR GOAL: to connect and collaborate with our author communities

We will achieve this by:

Developing our activities both at the Society of Authors' headquarters and UK-wide through:

- **Author community activities and outreach:** strengthening our national, local, special interest and peer support networks across the UK and abroad.
- **The SoA community hub space:** bringing our members together to network, share ideas, organise or simply enjoy each others' company at our London offices.
- **Offering a creative hub space for industry partners:** hosting creative partners such as English PEN, The Reading Agency, the Royal Literary Fund and the Great Britain Sasakawa Foundation.
- **Providing an accessible and affordable central London event space:** for meeting and events, for member book launches, external events and meetings in Bloomsbury, London.

Our professional development training, and networking events, most taking place online to ensure the widest access and participation possible.

Online events and training currently fall into four strands:

- Professional development training
- Industry Insider panel discussions
- How I write/illustrate/translate... in-conversation talks
- Wellbeing events

In person events (both in London and the wider regions) take the form of:

- SoA Lates – evening networking events
- Coffee and Chat sessions – afternoon café style events
- Author community building events

Our partnerships and outreach work

We continually explore new ways to develop and strengthen partnerships, and maximise our influence in our campaign for authors' shared interests and need for resources. During 2025–2030, we will strengthen strategic alliances and nurture opportunities for reciprocal sharing and programming by strengthening our partnerships and engagement with:

- organisations such as the Authors' Licensing and Collecting Society, Association of Illustrators, Association of Authors' Agents, Black Writers Guild, British Copyright Council, Creators' Rights Alliance, English PEN, and the Writers Guild of Great Britain.
- regional literature development agencies and universities across the UK.
- cross-industry fora covering topics like diversity, equity and inclusion, sustainability and lifelong reading.
- trade and retail industry bodies such as the Independent Publishers Guild, the Publishers Association, the Booksellers Association and online and bricks-and-mortar, booksellers, festivals and more, to ensure author views are represented.
- international groups like the European Writers' Council, the International Authors' Forum and writers' organisations worldwide.

ADVOCATE

We will work collegiately with our international partners to ensure that the Society of Authors is viewed as a world-leading union for authors' rights, by policy-makers and stakeholders in the UK and internationally.

The Society of Authors should be seen as a respected and trusted representative body that clearly communicates its views on a variety of issues that impact members.

As an organisation, we need to articulate what it means for authors to be able to sustain a living income on fair terms, whilst retaining control over their work and career.

Over the next five years we will work to increase the profile of authors and lobby for their rights through our advocacy work and stakeholder engagement across the UK.

OUR GOAL: to promote and campaign for authors' rights through asserting our interests with government and the publishing industry

We will do this through:

- campaigning on the business of authorship: from copyright and fair remuneration to the equitable treatment and care of authors within the industry.
- championing the fair terms and conditions required for authors to sustain a living income, whilst retaining control over their work and freelance careers.
- identifying and responding to relevant external consultations relating to the SoA's strategic priorities.
- increasing the number and range of research collaborations; exploring key issues that affect authors' rights and interests.

HOW WE AMPLIFY AUTHORS' INTERESTS

Lobbying for AI regulation

1. Lobby Government and Industry

- We meet regularly with parliamentarians across all parties to raise the issue and build support for authors.
- We respond to consultations and generate influence at the very highest level of government, having regular meetings with a range of civil servants across Whitehall.
- We provide data for parliamentarians so that they can use all levers at their disposal e.g. Parliamentary questions to influence debate and reports such as 'Brave New World? Justice for Creators in an Age of Gen AI'.
- We engage with All-Party Groups in Parliament and provide evidence to Select Committees.
- We comment on policy debates to ensure that the SoA has a place in the wider conversation within the cultural and creative industries and as part of the Creators' Rights Alliance.

2. Collaborate

- We conduct regular stakeholder mapping to understand who is supportive and who can become advocates for authors.
- We develop strategic alliances to build strong relationships with key partners.
- We meet with ethical AI companies to get a better understanding of how they can deliver technical solutions.
- On Gen AI, we collaborated with the US Authors Guild to launch a UK version of their Human Authored labelling scheme.

3. Inspiring members to take action

- We mobilise members, involving them in our campaigns to raise awareness. For example, the #MakeItFair and #Don'tStealThisBook campaigns.
- We encourage members to share their lobbying activities. For example, by sending letters to their MPs.
- We use member evidence. For example, case studies and experiences to help us to land arguments on author incomes.





Specific campaigns that will help us to achieve these goals will include:

- A Fair Deal for Authors – for fair and equitable terms and conditions.
- AI and Copyright – for transparency, consent and compensation when an author's work is used.
- Author Care – for open, inclusive and respectful practices in publishing.
- Human Authored Scheme – for clear labelling and provenance of creative works.
- Ghosts are Real: for transparency and fairness in collaborative projects.

CELEBRATE: recognition and reward

We will work collaboratively to raise the profile of authors and authorship in the UK. The Society of Authors should be the leading authority on author care. We will articulate what it means for authors to be able to sustain a living income on fair terms, whilst retaining control over their work and career. We will work to increase the profile of authors and lobby for their rights, by advocacy and stakeholder engagement across the UK.

OUR GOAL: to celebrate the hard work, dedication and creative craft of authors

We will achieve this by:

Administering a range of prizes

We do this to celebrate authors of all genres and at every stage of their careers, with annual awards for fiction, non-fiction, poetry, translation and drama worth over £170,000.

We celebrate authors at our annuals awards ceremonies and summer party which is generously supported by the Authors' Licensing and Collecting Society.

Expanding our profile

We build our brand and influence nationally and internationally through the long-term positioning of the Society of Authors as the UK's largest trade union for writers, illustrators and translators. We will continue to do this to increase the impact of our advocacy work and stakeholder engagement.

Managing literary estates

Our literary estates generate around £100,000 in annual income to the Society of Authors (from royalty commission and management fees), which helps to support the costs of our work.

7. Annual business plans

Annual business plans for each area of the SoA's work are available to members on request.

MEASURING SUCCESS

8. Overarching Key Performance Indicators

We will measure progress against our strategy through a range of qualitative and quantitative measures. These will include the use of the following overarching key performance indicators:

- Membership levels
- Member engagement
- *The Author* subscription and advertising revenue
- Employee turnover
- Engagement with members by geographic area, special interest and need
- Engagement with key industry stakeholders.
- Number of consultation responses submitted
- Member retention
- Member satisfaction
- Employee satisfaction
- Brand awareness
- Number of outreach collaborations and partnerships developed
- The SoA's profile with government and industry
- Increase in evidence base / research profile

Overarching goals:

Through this strategy period, we will work to:

- Break down barriers to entry and participation in the publishing industry.
- Reach authors before they sign their first contract so that we can advise them on what is fair and equitable.
- Encourage members to make the most of our wide range of resources to help them develop professionally and sustain a career as an author.
- Stimulate and encourage open and respectful dialogue in accordance with our cross-industry professional values.

9. Monitoring and Evaluation

Each department business plan details how we will collect data (both quantitative and qualitative) on the activities we conduct, to ensure that we are meeting the overarching objectives in this strategy.

At the end of each activity or project we will produce an evaluation report to ensure that we are learning from our practice.

10. Impact and Feedback

Each year we will deliver an annual impact report on our activities at the AGM to inform and update members.

We invite feedback and questions from members about our services or anything that relates to the services that the SoA provides. We use this feedback to inform how we improve our services to members.



Society of Authors

24 Bedford Row

London WC1R 4EH

E info@societyofauthors.org

T 020 3880 2230

societyofauthors.org