

**Press release**  
**Wednesday 20 December 2018**

## **New £200,000 project brings creative writing to Gateshead**

A new project from New Writing North promises to inspire the next generation of young people in Gateshead to write.

The £200,000 Gateshead Young Writers Programme is funded by The Kavli Trust, owners of Primula, which is based on Gateshead's Team Valley. All of the commercial business's profits go to supporting good causes.

New Writing North supports writers at all stages of their careers and has over 20 years' experience in working with schools and in communities to support young people to write. The organisation's comprehensive Young Writers' programme currently runs five weekly creative writing groups across the North East, six annual summer schools, a talent investment scheme and regular masterclasses and development programmes. Its award-winning Young Writers' City project has staff and professional writers based at Excelsior Academy in Newcastle and Academy 360 in Sunderland, three days a week all year round.

Funding from The Kavli Trust brings the full suite of the New Writing North Young Writers programme to Gateshead.

The programme's key partners are Gateshead Council, secondary schools Joseph Swan Academy, in Low Fell, and Kingsmeadow Community Comprehensive School, in Dunston, as well as feeder primary schools.

From February 2019, writers, artists and project producers will be based in each secondary school, where they will run innovative 10-week creative writing programmes with around 400 Year 7 and 8 pupils each year. In each school, writers will also run lunchtime and after-school clubs throughout the year on a range of writing forms from rapping and songwriting to screenwriting and poetry, so that all young people with an interest can develop their writing talent.

Outside of school, a free creative writing group for 12-19 year olds will be held every Saturday at Gateshead Central Library, complemented by free creative writing summer schools in the borough.

Throughout the programme, young people in Gateshead will be enabled to express their own creative ideas supported by professional writers and artists. They will meet other young people who enjoy writing, create new work, and share it with audiences including their families and peers.

All of this creative activity adds up to a transformative opportunity for young people in Gateshead, says **New Writing North's Executive Director, Anna Disley**: "We are so grateful to Kavli for this visionary investment in young people

in Gateshead. The programme will support young people, especially those who have fewer opportunities, to find their own creative talent or interest and it will make provision for them to pursue that on an ongoing basis. Working intensively, and over the long term with groups of young people can have a real impact on their confidence, creativity and aspiration, thus increasing their life choices. This programme will help us to set up an infrastructure which enables more young people in Gateshead to identify and pursue their own talents and ambitions.”

**Inger Elise Iversen, General Manager at the Kavli Trust, said:** “It is with great pleasure that the Kavli Trust has decided to award a grant to New Writing North’s Gateshead Young Writers programme.”

“In the four countries where the Kavli Trust operates, we prioritise mental health for children and youth, work for inclusion and prevention of loneliness, and projects that give more people the opportunity to take part in and experience cultural events. Our goal is to contribute to make a difference in the lives of individuals, in their local communities and to society as a whole. In this New Writing North programme all these qualities come together. We look forward to working together to inspire and give young people in Gateshead the tools and opportunity to write and grow creatively and personally.”

**Alice Wiseman, Director of Public Health for Gateshead, said:** “The evidence is clear that being involved in the creative arts is positive for people – it promotes social engagement and enhances mental health and wellbeing. This is even more important in childhood, where it boosts social and behavioural development, as well as literacy and educational attainment and helps build the resilience which can help to overcome disadvantage. This exciting initiative with New Writing North will provide the opportunity for many children in Gateshead to be involved in the creative arts for the first time and I am keen to see them engage and enjoy the benefits this will bring.”

**Domenic Volpe, Headteacher at Kingsmeadow Community Comprehensive School, said:** “This is an opportunity that Kingsmeadow could not pass by. The talent in this community relishes the opportunity to flourish and this investment in our students will make a real difference. We are all very excited to see where this partnership will lead us.”

**Heather Scott, Headteacher at Joseph Swan Academy, said:** “Here at Joseph Swan Academy we are so pleased to be involved in this inspirational project. To be able to link with professional writers is an exceptional opportunity, which I know our students will not only enjoy but most importantly will greatly benefit from. We are very much looking forward to the project starting and are excited to be involved in such a worthwhile and ambitious opportunity to support and develop writing talent both now and in the future.”

**For all media enquiries, contact Laura Fraine at New Writing North at [laurafraine@newwritingnorth.com](mailto:laurafraine@newwritingnorth.com) or 0191 204 8850**

## **Notes to Editor**

### **About New Writing North**

New Writing North is the development agency for creative writing and reading in the North of England, and an Arts Council England National Portfolio Organisation. The organisation works in partnership with regional and national partners to produce a range of literary and performance activities including flagship projects such as the Northern Writers' Awards, the Gordon Burn Prize, Read Regional, New Writing North Young Writers and Durham Book Festival.

New Writing North specialises in developing and investing in writers of all ages and acts as a dynamic broker between writers, producers, publishers and broadcasters across the creative industries. As a producer of new work, New Writing North commissions a wide range of writing from topical essays and publications to award-winning dance theatre productions, short films, live literature and broadcast projects. [www.newwritingnorth.com](http://www.newwritingnorth.com)

### **About The Kavli Trust**

In 1962 the Kavli Trust was established in Norway with a legal duty to carry on the good works of the Kavli family by donating profits from the Kavli Group to humanitarian, research and cultural projects.

The Kavli Trust owns the Kavli Group, which generates the long term funding for its work. Part of Kavli's profits are reinvested to strengthen and develop group's operations, while the remainder benefits humanitarian work, research and cultural activities through the Kavli Trust.

Grants from the Kavli Trust have risen substantially in recent years as the Kavli Group has expanded and in 2018 a total of NOK 131 million was donated to good causes.

The Kavli Trust supports a broad range of local and international projects which fall under the key headings enshrined in its statutes:

- Humanitarian: Support for the poor and disadvantaged people in the global south and within the Kavli countries, with a focus on education to give individuals opportunities to grow, develop and break out of poverty.
- Research: Support for research into important social areas which can benefit humanity. To prevent and combat serious illnesses and damage caused by modern lifestyles with a focus on mental health for children and youth, treatment for OCD (Obsessive Compulsive Disorder) dementia and MS/CFS.
- Culture: Support for cultural activities which enrich and stimulate society, with particular focus on young people.