

NEW WRITING NORTH

Press release

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Northern Writers' Awards 2021: £40,000 to support outstanding unpublished works from the North of England

As the Northern Writers' Awards 2021 open for entry today (26 November), writers from across the North of England are invited to send in their unpublished work-in-progress for the chance to win a share of £40,000 in cash awards and professional development.

The Northern Writers' Awards were founded by New Writing North in 2000 and exist to recognise talent and support new work towards publication or broadcast. The awards are the largest of their kind in England and have a reputation for identifying some of the country's best unpublished writing.

Writers are invited to submit their work to the Northern Writers' Awards 2021 until midnight on **Thursday 18 February 2021**.

The Northern Writers' Awards 2021 winners will join an impressive list of more than 300 writers who have been previously supported through the programme, many of whom have gone on to critical acclaim.

Previous Northern Writers' Awards winners include:

- **Yvonne Battle-Felton**, who won an award for her debut novel *Remembered* (Dialogue Books), which went on to be longlisted for the Women's Prize for Fiction and shortlisted for the Jhalak Prize.
- **Okechukwu Nzelu**, who received an award for *The Private Joys of Nnenna Maloney* (Dialogue Books), which went on to be shortlisted for the Desmond Elliott Prize.
- **Benjamin Myers**, who was awarded for his novel *Beastings* (Bluemoose), which later won the Portico Prize for Literature.
- Poets **Rachael Allen** (*Kingdomland*) and **Zaffar Kunial** (*Us*) who were both supported with awards for their debut collections, which were subsequently published by Faber & Faber.
- **Karen Powell**, whose debut novel *The River Within* was published by Europa Books this autumn.
- Books due out in 2021 by Northern Writers' Awards winners include *The Biscuit Factory* by **James Harris** (Hachette Children's Group), *Alfie Miller, Lightning Catcher* by **Clare Weze** (Bloomsbury Children's); *Diamond Hill* by **Kit Fan** (Dialogue); *Castles from Cobwebs* by **J.A. Mensah** (Saraband).

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Other previous winners include the crime writers **CJ Cooke**, **Mari Hannah**; short story writers **Carys Davies** and **Angela Readman**; poets **Phoebe Power** and **Vidyan Ravinthiran**; and television writer **Jayshree Patel**.

Judges for this year's awards include the writers **Cathy Rentzenbrink** and **Jacob Ross**, who will judge fiction and narrative non-fiction categories. The poet **Andrew McMillan** won a Northern Writers' Award in 2014 for his debut poetry collection, *physical*, which went on to win the Guardian First Book Award. This year he will be judging poetry entries.

The Northern Writers' Awards offer support for writers at all stages of their careers, including mentoring, developmental support and cash awards to buy time to write.

THE NORTHERN WRITERS' AWARDS AVAILABLE FOR 2021 ARE:

The **Northern Writers' Awards** flagship awards strand, which offers cash prizes of up to £5000 to support writers of fiction, narrative non-fiction, YA, graphic novels, short stories and poetry.

The **Hachette Children's Novel Award** is open to debut children's writers with a full-length manuscript. The winner will receive £5000 and a guarantee of publication with the Hachette Children's Group, whose list includes authors such as: David Almond, Onjali Q. Raúf, Cressida Cowell, Piers Torday, Jessica Townsend, as well as previous winners of this award, James Harris (2019) and Hannah Durkan (2020).

The **Channel 4 Writing for Television Awards** offer two emerging writers development opportunities within television. One writer will receive a mentoring placement with Lime Pictures working on their award-winning serial drama *Hollyoaks* for Channel 4 and E4. The second writer will develop an original TV drama project with Bonafide Films, whose recent shows include *The Last Post* by Peter Moffat for BBC One. Both winners will receive a bursary of £3000.

The **Northern Debut Awards** offer structured developmental support to writers of fiction, young adult fiction, narrative non-fiction or poetry who are yet to publish a full-length work. The package of support includes a £2000 bursary, mentoring and access to New Writing North's development activities. This year, there are three Northern Debut Awards for poetry and three for fiction. One additional fiction place will be made in memory of the North East writer **Andrea Badenoch** (1951-2004), whose novels include *Blink* and *Loving Geordie*. This award is open to debut writers over the age of 42 who self-identify as women or non-binary.

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The **Northumbria University Student and Alumni Award**, worth £2000, for fiction or poetry, is open to final-year students and recent graduates of the university in any discipline.

The **Sid Chaplin Award**, in partnership with Newcastle University and the North Literary Agency, supports writers of fiction and narrative non-fiction who identify as originating from a working-class background. The winning writer will receive a bursary of £2000 and a comprehensive package of support. Additionally, this year's winner will receive a week-long writing retreat at Embleton Bay in Northumberland, generously provided by EmbleArts. The award is made in memory of the writer Sid Chaplin (1916–1986) whose novels including *The Day of the Sardine* and *The Watchers and the Watched*. This year's judging panel will be joined by the writer Eleanor Thom.

The **Word Factory Northern Apprentice Award** offers a bursary of £1000, eight months of mentoring and support from the Word Factory to a writer of a single short story. This year's mentor is the acclaimed author Catherine Menon.

TLC Free Reads Scheme offers up to three poets or prose writers an in-depth editorial report from The Literary Consultancy and a £500 bursary.

The **Arvon Award** offers a prose writer the chance to undertake an Arvon residential creative writing course.

The **Matthew Hale Award** is open to young writers who show promise but have had limited opportunities to pursue their talent. This award is for a young person in Year 7 upwards (up to a maximum of 18 years of age) and consists of a package of support created by New Writing North, worth £500.

The **Young Northern Writer Award** will recognise one young writer in Years 7 to 9 and one in Year 10 upwards (up to a maximum of 18 years of age) whose work shows exceptional promise. Each writer will be awarded £150.

In addition to individual awards, New Writing North supports its winners with up to 12 months of tailored support. In 2021 selected winners will be offered additional opportunities including:

- The chance to pitch work to literary agents and editors at the annual **Summer Talent Salon** in London;
- Membership of **The Society of Authors**;
- A professional development session with the leading independent publisher, **Oneworld Publications**;
- Advisory sessions with literary agents **Madeleine Milburn Associates**.

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The Northern Writers' Awards are produced by New Writing North with support from Northumbria University and Arts Council England. The full suite of awards is made possible by a range of vital partnerships with Arvon, Bonafide Films, Channel 4, EmbleArts, Hachette Children's Group, Lime Pictures, The Literary Consultancy, Madeleine Millburn Agency, Newcastle University, The North Literary Agency, Oneworld Publications, The Society of Authors, The Word Factory as well as generous donations from individual donors.

Claire Malcolm, Chief Executive of New Writing North, said: 'We're very excited to open this year's Northern Writers' Awards and we look forward to reading work-in-progress from writers across the North.'

We're grateful to all of our partners for their investment in the Northern Writers' Awards, which has enabled us to build a major northern programme that identifies and fast-tracks talent into the creative industries and has a fantastic record of success. Through the awards programme we are able to both nurture individual writers with tailored support at a crucial stage of their careers, and contribute to addressing the imbalance of the London-centric publishing and broadcasting industries.'

Professor Katy Shaw, Professor of Contemporary Writings at Northumbria University said: 'Northumbria University is proud to be the headline sponsor for the 2021 Northern Writers' Awards. The North of England has always been a hot bed of literary talent. In 2021, this annual suite of awards will shine a spotlight on new works and voices and amplify them to the rest of the world. There has never been a more important time for writing and we would encourage anyone thinking about applying to attend a roadshow or submit their work.'

JUDGES' COMMENTS

Jacob Ross said: 'I'm thrilled to be a 2021 judge of Northern Writers' Awards which, from its inception, has recognised, promoted and rewarded the talent, ambition and creative vigour of Northern writers. There is much to look forward to.'

Cathy Rentzenbrink said: 'I'm delighted and honoured to be judging these awards as I think it is profoundly important to find ways to support promising writers on their journey towards finishing a full-length work. I'm looking forward to reading the entries.'

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Andrew McMillan said: ‘When I won a Northern Writers’ award back in 2014, it was the final push I needed to finish my debut collection *physical*; since then it’s been wonderful to see the poets at all stages of their careers who have been helped by the awards, and it’s great to come full circle to judge them this time around.’

Catherine Menon, mentor for the Word Factory Apprentice programme, said: ‘The Word Factory Apprentice awards are a hugely important initiative in discovering new voices and emerging talent. I’m honoured to be a mentor for these, and I’m very much looking forward to working with this year’s selected authors.’

Tig Wallace, Senior Commissioning Editor at Hachette Children’s Group and judge for the Hachette Children’s Novel Award, said: ‘I’m thrilled to be working with New Writing North on The Hachette Children’s Novel Award. Their awards form a brilliant, much-needed programme of dedicated outreach, all-round support, and championing of writers from the North of England. We have already seen such great talent emerge through NWN’s work – including authors we’re proud to publish at HCG – and I can’t wait to find out who will be discovered this year.’

Enter online at www.northernwritersawards.com by Thursday 18 February 2021. Donate to the Northern Writers’ Awards to support new writing from the North of England at <http://northernwritersawards.com/donate/>

Ends

For all media enquiries, please contact Laura Fraine laurafraine@newwritingnorth.com 07411 164 837

NOTES TO EDITORS

Winners of the Northern Writers’ Awards will be announced in June 2021.

New Writing North is the writing development agency for the north of England, and is an Arts Council England National Portfolio Organisation www.newwritingnorth.com. The Northern Writers’ Awards are its central platform for discovering and developing new writers from across the region, and were founded in 2000. More information about the Northern Writers’ Awards is available at www.northernwritersawards.com. New Writing North works with writers to develop career opportunities, new commissions, projects, residencies, publications and live events.

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Northumbria University, Newcastle is a research-rich, business-focused, professional university with a global reputation for academic excellence.

One of the largest institutions in the UK with almost 34,000 students from more than 132 countries and over 200,000 alumni worldwide, Northumbria is empowering a new generation of innovators, visionaries and change-makers to transform lives, to make a remarkable impact on the world, and to take on tomorrow. Northumbria has invested more than £250 million in its estate since 2005 to improve the student experience. Northumbria is ranked top 50 in the UK for research power and had the 4th largest increase in quality research funding (REF 2014). According to Times Higher Education, Northumbria had the biggest rise in research power of any university in the UK. Northumbria's cultural partners include New Writing North, Live Theatre, BALTIC Centre for Contemporary Art, Tyneside Cinema, and Tyne & Wear Archives and Museums.