


New Writing North Young Writers Impact Report 2019–2020

A group of diverse young people, including a Black man in a blue hoodie, a white man, a young woman with curly hair, and a Black woman with long braids, are looking up at a starry night sky. They are all wearing blue t-shirts, and the woman in the foreground has a brown bag slung over her shoulder. The background is a dark blue sky filled with stars.

*“We raise each others’ spirits
and we raise each others’ aspirations,
we raise each other up”*

NEW WRITING
NORTH



New Writing North Young Writers is our award-winning programme for young people. We work with thousands of young people each year to identify and nurture talent, leadership skills and creative habits. We promote wellbeing and develop confidence and peer connection. The programme runs week in week out, year-round, and is free to access, providing a range of ways for young people to get involved.

This report details the work undertaken by the NWN Young Writers programme from September 2019 to August 2020. The programme was significantly disrupted in March 2020 with the arrival of the coronavirus pandemic, necessitating a shift to digital delivery. Our innovative digital programme 'Writing from Home' was supported by a key funding partner for our work, The Kavli Trust.



New Writing North's work with young people is designed to build relationships.

To do this, we offer consistent, year-round creative writing provision, providing pastoral support and a listening ear as well as artistic development, so that we can support young people's own creative ambitions. Systemic inequalities mean that we put more resources into engaging young people who have fewer opportunities to get involved in culture. Our long-term approach means young people become comfortable with artistic self-expression and develop a network of peers and professionals that they can co-create and collaborate with. New Writing North has the networks, resources and expertise to support young people in their own cultural journey, whether that is accompanying them to attend auditions for a film, investing in a mentor for their novel writing, being a sounding board when they want to set up their own rap and spoken word event, or providing a space for them to express their thoughts and feelings.

This report profiles the diverse and eclectic range of work created by NWN Young Writers. There are as many outcomes for young people from this work as there are young people, and we have designed our approach based on our experience, and with flexibility in mind, so that we can support those individual responses. Sometimes young people tell us they feel much happier coming to a creative writing group every Saturday to work with other like-minded young people; others feel that they are able to develop their identity as an artist; a few go on to achieve success as artists, while others have developed sufficient confidence to follow their ambitions into higher education or training.



The programme is shaped by the young people we work with. Ruth Dewhirst Senior Programme Manager (Participation & Young People) runs the programme supported by Programme Officers Sophie Crocker and Sophie Hall-Luke. We are grateful to all of our funding partners, and especially Arts Council England whose National Portfolio funding enables us to employ the staff who make this work happen.

The pandemic has disproportionately affected young people. Their education has been disrupted, employment prospects are uncertain and the formation of social bonds compromised. With the support of our funding partners, we were able to migrate our provision online during lockdown. This resulted in some new ways of working that we will continue, as well as bringing new young people into our network. However, we also have an eye on recovery – when the pandemic eases, we recognise the role we have in supporting young people to express their hopes, fears and aspirations, to encourage a sense of belonging no matter who they are, and to support them to lead happy and fulfilled lives.

Anna Disley

Executive Director (Programme and Impact)
New Writing North

April 2021

New Writing North Young Writers 2019–20 at a glance



Delivered **114 Young Writers' Group sessions** in six North East locations on Saturdays, attended by **70 young people**. These included sessions on podcasting, zines and green-screen filmmaking

Delivered a **six-week online climate writing summer school for 57 young people**, including self-guided workshops, weekly Zoom sessions and guest writer videos. The course encouraged young people to get outside and explore the world around them through writing

Created **30 Writing From Home self-guided worksheets**, supporting schools and young people to write remotely across a range of forms, topics and genres. They have been downloaded over **850 times** to date and our Writing From Home video workshops have received **880 views**

Worked with **over 1500 young people** across our programmes, introducing them to creative writing and developing their talent

Delivered **307 classroom sessions** in partner secondary schools for **990 young people**, covering a wide variety of forms including prose, poetry, songwriting, rap and scriptwriting

Delivered **162 extra-curricular sessions** in secondary schools including creative writing, rap group, choir and songwriting

Worked in-depth across **11 schools, six libraries** and **two community settings** in socio-economically disadvantaged areas of the North East



Invested in **15 individual young people** to develop their creative aspirations, through our Talent Fund, Young Writers' Awards, New Narratives of the North East and ongoing bespoke support

Launched a **Discord server** for young writers to connect with each other and receive feedback on their work

Produced over **40 creative outputs** across our programmes including music videos, anthologies, audio dramas, animations, songs, a narrative dance piece and an anti-racism resource for primary schools

Received over **£165,000** from trusts, foundations and partners to deliver our Young Writers programme. This includes the beginning of a grant of **£99,000 over the next three years** from Youth Music



Staged three productions: **a hip-hopera at Sage Gateshead created by young people from the West End of Newcastle** and **performance showcases** at BALTIC Centre for Contemporary Art, Gateshead, and the National Glass Centre, Sunderland, attended by over **400 audience members**

Worked with publishing partners including Faber & Faber and Harper Collins to provide eye-opening **work experience** for young people

Trained six writers from under-represented backgrounds to facilitate creative work with young people through Inkubator, our new development programme

Employed **50 writers and artists**

Our approach

Human-centred and place-based

There are a range of ways young people can start their creative writing journey with us, and that journey will look very different depending on their individual circumstances. Our programmes are therefore designed to be **human-centred**, considering each young person's needs and drivers and providing a variety of different entry points through both **Targeted** and **Open-Access** provision. We also have a **Talent Investment Fund**, which provides flexible support to individuals coming through the programme including seed funding projects, mentoring, career development and training.

We believe it is important to get to know the young people on our programmes and

respond to their interests. On almost every strand of our work we employ both a professional writer and a Project Producer; this team work together to support and develop the young people's writing skills, confidence and creative ambitions, as well as their pastoral needs. Along with staff at NWN, they develop relationships with young people over the long term, so that participants can progress to co-creating or leading their own creative writing or cultural activity.

To develop these long-term relationships, we take a **place-based approach** and much of our in-depth delivery takes place in Newcastle (especially in the West End of the city), Gateshead and Sunderland.



Targeted Work

Central to our targeted provision is Young Writers' City, taking place in four partner secondary schools serving some of the most socio-economically disadvantaged communities in Newcastle, Sunderland and Gateshead. We embed ourselves in these schools over a number of years, introducing young people to creative writing in their classes and supporting them to develop their talent or interest through a range of co-creative extra-curricular and community-based provision. Our partner schools are Excelsior Academy in Newcastle, Academy 360 in Sunderland and Kingsmeadow Community School and Grace College in Gateshead.



We want to keep building interest and confidence in creative writing amongst young people, offering consistent, year-round progression routes. We therefore build provision in our Young Writers' City locations over a number of years, working with other local schools, community centres and youth

provision to reinforce the programme. For example, in Gateshead we have strong links with key primary schools who feed into our Young Writers' City secondaries, and ran a film-making programme for young people on a housing estate near the school.

The unity we have found in Young Writers' City feels amazing, we look after each other, we motivate each other, we keep a look out for each other. If one of us struggles then the others step in and help us get back on our feet. I knew a few people but meeting other people and hearing other stories, you realise it's not just you that has problems. Everybody has their own story and is on their own journey. It's amazing what you can do when you realise you aren't alone, you can create something. We raise each others' spirits and we raise each others' aspirations, we raise each other up.

Young Writers' City participant

Open Access Provision



We've done so many things that I never would have explored without the group... through the group I've grown my love for writing. [But] it's also a proper little community, being around other people that love what you love and are supporting your writing and supporting you. It's a massive support network

Member of Cramlington Young Writers' Group

In addition to our targeted work, we run open access activity in our key communities in Newcastle, Gateshead and Sunderland. Our Young Writers' Groups meet weekly and are free for anyone aged 12-19 to join. We have also set up open access provision in response to demand from young people in our targeted programmes, for example our weekly Young Songwriters' Group in Newcastle.

In addition to our more intensive place-based activity, we also run weekly Young Writers' Groups in South Shields, and in Cramlington and Amble in Northumberland. We often run projects in local schools in these areas to introduce more young people to creative writing and to encourage them to continue to engage outside of school.

Newcastle In School

We have been embedded in Excelsior Academy (our Young Writers' City school) for seven years. We worked with 210 young people in classroom sessions from September 2019-March 2020, covering script writing, poetry, prose writing and songwriting. Sessions took place during lesson time with Years 7-9 and Years 12-13. There were 45 extra-curricular sessions with 75 young people volunteering to attend both at lunchtime and after-school to further develop their talent and interest.

We developed some innovative new projects in school, including a narrative dance project to support 15 young people at risk of exclusion from mainstream lessons and an LGBTQ+ wellbeing club in consultation with the school welfare team.



In addition to our targeted work in Excelsior, we also ran smaller, bespoke projects with Benfield School and Kenton School in Newcastle, and North Gosforth Academy in Seaton Burn. These involved 100 young people and focused on both creative writing and songwriting, providing additional pathways into our work.

BETHAN first met New Writing North through participating in Young Writers' City at Excelsior Academy. She began attending our Newcastle Young Writers' Group in autumn 2019, and subsequently won a commission to be one of our New Narratives for the North East young writers. With mentoring from writer Lisette Auton, Bethan wrote a poem about her local area, which was published by Durham Book Festival 2020.



Out of School

Our Newcastle Young Writers' Group met every Saturday morning from September 2019–March 2020 in Newcastle Central Library. The group consistently had at least 15 young people attending each week and in early 2020 our young writers were working on developing their own podcasts.

In addition to our creative writing group, we also run Newcastle Young Songwriters on Wednesday nights with rapper, actor and songwriter Kema Kay. This was attended by 30 young people from September to March 2020, with 15 regularly attending.



The environment is what I love, when you are first getting into it you are cautious about everything, thinking 'am I good enough, am I this, am I that' but then you feed off the confidence of the people around you. It makes you feel like you can do it.

Young songwriter

We also began working with Denton Youth & Community Project in summer 2020 to explore their young people's experience of lockdown through the medium of spoken-word.

On Stage

The highlight of 2019-20 was *Stitched: a Hip-Opera*. This project brought together ideas, words and music created by Young Writers' City participants over the past four years, crafted into a musical 'hip-opera' with the help of Laura Lindow (writer/director) and Liz Corney (musical director). Earlier in 2019, we took over 50 young people on a trip to London's West End to see *Hamilton*, providing inspiration for their own show! The young people worked with Laura and Liz to craft a powerful tale of love, crime and the pressures young people face especially in the

We didn't really talk that much, we started speaking to each other a lot more during the performance, and we started speaking with each other a lot more and helping each other with lines outside of school. When I do shows in school I always feel empty afterwards, but this time, the show finished but we were still together.



face of poverty, influenced by the experiences of young people on the programme. After an intensive period of rehearsals, *Stitched* was staged at Sage Gateshead on 26 September 2019 to an audience of over 200. The final performance was a triumph!

Stitched was particularly impactful for the 16 cast members, who formed a real bond during the rehearsal process:

I am really proud of the work we have done. 'Cos you know what, everyone in this group, we are not all the same but after rehearsals, we'd walk home on that (Tyne) bridge with our heads held high, singing.

Cast member, *Stitched*

Following the success of *Stitched*, we made three music videos featuring songs from the production, working with filmmaker Adam Opie: [Welcome to the West End](#), [Squares of Light](#) and [Tell Me A Story](#). These were co-created with the young people, using their narrative ideas and have received 2500+ YouTube views to date. We hope to build on the legacy of *Stitched* by developing a new show at Excelsior following lockdown.

It's a really great way to make new friends. The project has really allowed us, as a group, to express what's going on with us in our world as young people and work those things into the script.

Cast member, *Stitched*



ALDAIR, one of our *Stitched* performers, progressed from working with us on Young Writers' City to joining Live Youth Theatre. Aldair also participates in our Newcastle Young Songwriters group on Wednesday nights.



Talent Development



We had planned for another performance in March 2020 created with young people. The Change event was devised by a group of young people who attend the after-school rap group at Excelsior and our Newcastle Young Songwriters group. They programmed the event themselves, with all performances being their own original songs and spoken word pieces. The 12 young people involved were supported to take full ownership of the event, create and distribute marketing materials and give peer feedback. Unfortunately this event had to be postponed due to the pandemic, but we hope to support the young people to relaunch the event once public performances are possible.

We supported several young women including **Tessy, Angelica, Shakira and Manaar**, alumni of Young Writers' City Excelsior, to continue engaging with the programme. Building on their work on the anti-racism poem 'Colour Blind', the group visited St Bernadette's Primary School in Wallsend in November 2019 as part of Anti-Bullying Week, where they performed the poem and then led writing and discussion workshops with the children.

Since then we have been working with the young women to produce an anti-racism schools' resource which will be a mixture of filmed and written content, helping schools to discuss racism and challenge areas in need of change (e.g. non-diverse curriculums).

I'm not sure where to begin with feedback from today! It was one of the most inspiring days of my career! The four young ladies who arrived at school this morning were nothing short of amazing... The poem, as I am sure you will be aware, is so powerful to witness in person. However, the Q and A session where nine and 10-year olds openly discussed racist abuse with the girls was just amazing. What an amazing shift in popular culture for our children to look up to young ladies such as Angelica, Manaar, Shakira and Tessy who have such aspirations. For us today has been authentic, unique and brilliant.

**Deputy Head,
St Bernadette's Primary School,
Wallsend**

We also continue to support local young people as part of our Talent Fund investment programme:



Rhys Stone, an alumnus of our Young Writers' City Excelsior programme who, with our support, successfully gained a main part in Ken Loach's *Sorry We Missed You*. We have continued to support Rhys since his debut film feature, with ongoing mentoring support from producer Emily Wiseman. Rhys is currently developing ideas for a short film project as well auditioning; in August 2020 we supported him with an individual acting masterclass to prepare for a self-tape audition with a major director.

Miles Nelson, who we have supported with mentoring and facilitation experience following his longstanding involvement with Newcastle Young Writers. Miles gained experience delivering workshops with several of our Young Writers' Groups prior to the lockdown. Miles was also successful in securing a publishing deal for his debut novel with Elsewhen Press.



Since winning the Mathew Hale Award I have been showered with incredible opportunities from NWN. Previously I had a horrendous time with education and left school unsure on what I wanted to do with my life. Now I have found a passion for writing and film. I spent my prize on four weeks of mentoring with Emma Hill which was an excellent decision. I have learnt valuable tips for my writing (especially how to get into the routine of

writing and how to easily plan my stories), and Emma also gave me insight into the media industry. I am excited to put all of the advice to good use in my future career! The sessions with Emma also progressed my confidence, chatting about my past experiences and hearing Emma's words of encouragement has helped me find a belief in myself that has only recently appeared.

Jess de Beer, Mathew Hale Award 2020



Dani Watson, a previous attendee of our Young Writers programmes and Talent Fund recipient, won the TLC Free Read award in the 2020 Northern Writers' Awards.



Eliza Clark received a grant from the Talent Fund in 2018. In July 2020, she published her debut novel *Boy Parts* with Influx Press, to critical acclaim.

[The grant] was utterly invaluable... I sincerely doubt I would've written the novel without it. I was working in retail when I was offered the award. My motivation and confidence were completely in the toilet. I couldn't afford to dedicate any time or money to writing, and I just wasn't aware of any mentoring or funding opportunities which could help. The training and mentoring I received from New Writing North was genuinely life-changing, both in giving me space and time to do work, and experience which was invaluable in getting an office job in the creative industry (which, for me, has been far more compatible with maintaining a writing practice than the physically and emotionally draining retail role I was in). Mentoring and training really built up my confidence; reawakened my passion for writing and gave me the push I needed to finish and submit my work, and helped me discover how much I enjoy facilitating. I really cannot overstate the impact the Talent Fund has on my life.
Eliza Clark, Talent Fund recipient

Gateshead



Our Gateshead Young Writers' programme began in January 2019 with the support of the Kavli Trust. It is an ambitious programme of creative activity for young people across Gateshead, involving programmes in secondary schools, primary schools and community settings. The first six months of the programme saw Young Writers' City in Grace College and Kingsmeadow Community School, transition projects with partner primary schools, the start of our Gateshead Young Writers' Group and a two-month bespoke creative group for young people in care in partnership with Gateshead Council.



In School

In Grace College, we worked with 275 Years 7 to 9 in classroom sessions from September 2019-March 2020 and created a variety of outputs from punk songs to spoken word pieces! We also continued our work with the school's Alternative Learning Centre, delivering weekly creative writing sessions for young people who have been excluded from mainstream classes. We ran 31 extra-curricular sessions with 20 young people attending, both at lunchtime and after-school. As a result of this work, six young people progressed to our Gateshead Young Writers out-of-school opportunities.



I've not tried writing songs before. It was fun to try something new. It was different to the everyday; to write a song about an important thing. I'd want to write about something important that happens that nobody talks about. I like writing because you can write about something that happened to you and it can help you in real life. If you read a story it helps you understand things.

Year 8 student



In Kingsmeadow, we worked with 180 Years 7 and 8 in classroom sessions from September 2019-March 2020, alongside 31 extra-curricular sessions, and supported 11 students during their 'Active Tuesdays' enrichment time to develop Bronze Arts Awards focused on creative writing. We also collaborated with Newcastle University's 'Out of Bounds' programme to deliver some one-off poetry workshops with celebrated poet Malika Booker, and encouraged young people to enter the poetry competition In My Country, judged by Jackie Kay. We were delighted to discover in spring 2020 that a Kingsmeadow pupil came third in the competition, while another was highly commended. This represents a real step-change in the school's engagement with the arts, as well as being an amazing achievement for the individual young people.

Students enjoyed this experience and were very engaged and enthusiastic. I think students became increasingly more confident. They were proud of what they achieved.

Kingsmeadow teacher

Out of School



Our Gateshead Young Writers' Group meets in Gateshead Library on Saturdays in term-time. Between September 2019 and March 2020 we delivered 15 sessions attended by eight young people.

Alongside this, we are developing embedded relationships in the community. In October half-term 2019, we worked with 11 young people aged 9–14 on the Beacon Lough Estate on a filmmaking and poetry project. Collaborating with the Larkspur House community hub, we worked with writer Christina Castling to develop a poem about the young people's views of their estate – both the positive and the negative. The young people wrote, edited and recorded the poem. With filmmaker Adam Opie and with music composed by Calum Howard, the

young people then starred in a film, *This Place*, which was shot on the Beacon Lough estate.

The film was submitted as part of Larkspur House's bid to receive funding for a new playground, as it represented the children's views on their current park. The funding bid was successful, and the community were awarded £25,000 to rebuild the local park.

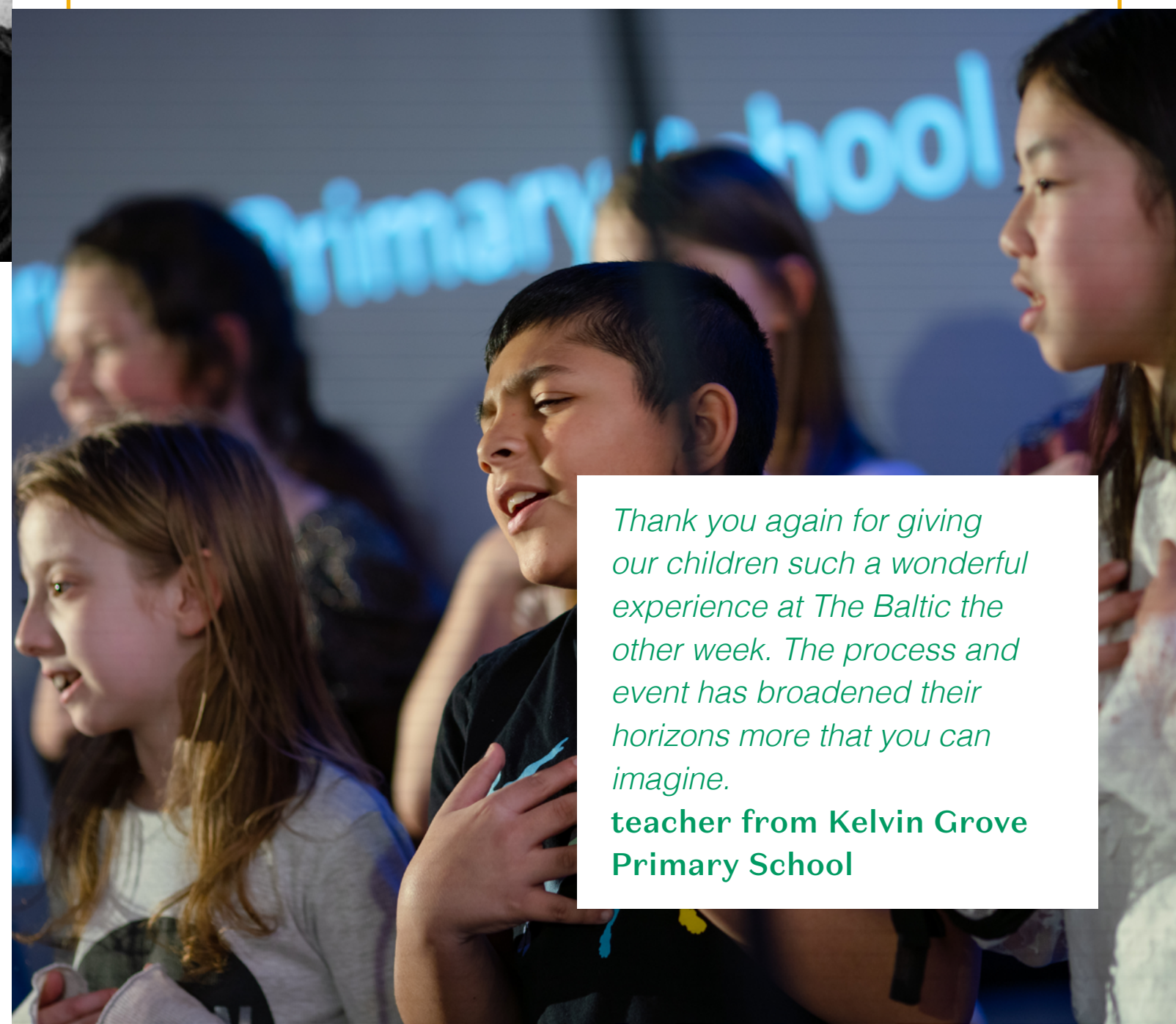
We are continuing our relationships in the community by running an after-school club on Mondays at Larkspur House. Although currently suspended, until March 2020 this was attended by eight young people and focused on songwriting. We hope to restart this club once restrictions allow alongside a partnership with Larkspur Primary.

On Stage

Projects from across Gateshead Young Writers and the wider NWN Young Writers network came together as part of our Inside/Outside event in January 2020. Marking the first year of the Gateshead Young Writers programme, Inside/Outside took place at the BALTIC Centre for Contemporary Art on Gateshead Quayside and featured performances from students at Grace College and Kingsmeadow, local primary schools Larkspur and Kelvin Grove, and our Gateshead Young Writers' Group, together with screenings of the film outputs produced

by the programme. There were also performances from other young people across the New Writing North Young Writers network. The event was attended by over 150 people including students, teachers and parents from our partner schools.

Over 50 children from Kelvin Grove Primary School worked with animator Sheryl Jenkins to create artwork for a music video to their song [*Who You Really Are*](#). A group of 15 children also rehearsed and performed the song *Who is Who* live with Calum Howard.



Thank you again for giving our children such a wonderful experience at The Baltic the other week. The process and event has broadened their horizons more that you can imagine.

teacher from Kelvin Grove Primary School

Talent development

Eight Grace College sixth formers worked with Claire Fenby from Harper Collins to learn about careers in publishing, as well as designing marketing for our Inside/Outside event. Some of these students were due to visit Harper Collins to gain further insight into the publishing industry; this was cancelled due to the pandemic but we hope to reschedule when possible, as well as pursuing other work experience opportunities for young people across our programmes.

In addition to supporting young people, we are committed to developing our freelance

artist staff and in 2020 we launched **Inkubator**, our new professional development programme for emerging artists from a diverse range of backgrounds who want to work with young people. Our six participants have been participating in online sessions with a range of experienced facilitators, as well as learning more about themselves as artists through reflection activities. They are due to take up in-person placements across our programme once it is safe to do so, and we hope they will progress to professional facilitation roles with us as well as other creative organisations in the North East.



SARAH WATSON, from Gateshead, received a Talent Fund bursary to work on *Zones*, a semi-autobiographical play about homelessness, trauma and addiction. New Writing North paired Sarah with two mentors, playwright Carina Rodney and director and actor Ruth Johnson. With Live Theatre, we co-commissioned a rehearsed reading of *Zones*, which was staged at Durham Book Festival in October 2019, directed by Joe Douglas. Sarah has gone on to write several stage plays; has received her first professional credit as a screenwriter for Curious Monkey's 360 Films project; and was selected as a participant for BFI Network Film Hub North's short script lab.

I owe a lot to New Writing North for their support and guidance over the years. If it wasn't for the encouragement I have received from them, I would never have submitted to anything. I think it's because of their constant belief in my potential that I didn't give up. I have been given amazing opportunities to work with incredible organisations.

Sunderland In School

In our Young Writers' City project at Academy 360, we worked with 136 young people in Year 7 and Year 8 classroom sessions from September 2019-March 2020. The young people worked on a variety of creative forms including protest performance art, spoken word and climate-inspired songwriting.

Students also benefitted from several bespoke sessions from writers: Jessica Andrews, the critically acclaimed author of *Saltwater*, delivered a session for pupils in October 2019 focusing on the importance of people in Sunderland being able to tell their stories and be listened to, while Gulwali Passarlay spoke to Year 8s in November 2019 about the refugee experience. These sessions were attended by approximately 30 young people.



We also ran 40 extra-curricular sessions with 32 young people attending, as well as creative writing and songwriting, these sessions included a new choir for pupils. The choir delivered several performances prior to lockdown, including in-school assemblies and Sunderland's Search for a Star competition.

In addition to our targeted work in Academy 360, we ran additional songwriting sessions in Sandhill View Academy (in partnership with

Sunderland Music Hub) and Thornhill Academy. A participant from Thornhill Academy also progressed on to We Make Culture's Young Musician's Project to develop their songwriting. Our partnership work led to several additional opportunities at Sandhill View Academy in particular, including a talk and masterclass from writer Lisette Auton and the beginning of Proud Words, our LGBTQ+ writing and reading programme, which we hope to resume in-person once restrictions allow.

It made us feel more comfortable and confident about music making. I'd not done anything like that before and now I want to do something outside of school. In music I've got more confident and better. It makes us feel actually good and better in myself. I feel good about doing things in the future. I feel as if we're all a group now and when we were doing it I was looking around and everyone was enjoying it. I've not put my ideas forward before, but here everyone was putting ideas forward and everyone liked them. I've made new friends...we never used to talk but now we do.

Young Writers' City participant

JESS first met New Writing North at Academy 360 and she has been developing her musical skills with us for a number of years. This has included performing at the Tall Ships celebration in 2018, winning Sunderland Music Hub's secondary songwriting competition in 2019 and participating in our online songwriting opportunities in 2020. We also encouraged Jess to attend We Make Culture's Young Musicians' Project sessions to learn about producing.



On Stage

The highlight of the Sunderland programme this year was our Call to Action event, held in January 2020. Hosted at the National Glass Centre, this event brought together performances from young writers at Academy 360, Sandhill View Academy and Thornhill Academy, as well as our Sunderland and South Shields Young Writers' Groups. Many of the young people attending had never visited the National Glass Centre before. The event was attended by over 80 people and was a great success, especially as it was the first celebration event held for the Sunderland programme.

This event is the best thing I've ever done... I never get to do things like this.

Thornhill participant



Out of School



In September 2019 we began a new Sunderland Young Writers' Group to support cultural infrastructure within the city and provide pathways from our school work. Since working digitally the group has grown in size and we're looking forward to returning in person when possible.



Amazed at the wonderful opportunities that the young people have been involved in. Clearly building confidence as well as creativity – just amazing!
Call to Action parent

DIGITAL Writing from Home

Since March 2020, all our groups have been suspended and unable to meet in person due to the coronavirus pandemic. We responded to this by innovating digitally.

We commissioned resources from writers who were meant to be delivering on our school and community programmes, as we felt it was important to continue providing creative practitioners with work where we could. The workshops covered a wide range of topics, styles and genres and were designed to be accessible to individual young people as well as being resources that teachers could use to support remote learning.

Thank you so much. These workshops are perfect for our GCSE students (and KS3) at the moment as we try to adjust to a school with fewer than 10 pupils and 1500 of them at home. NWN is definitely on the 'Hero' list!
Teacher at the beginning of lockdown



Alongside the Writing From Home workshops we also posted regular writing prompts on social media, and commissioned Writing From Home workshop videos from our regular Young Writers' Group Leaders, covering topics from mindfulness to rap.

We ran an online Summer School called Write Outside which had a climate theme, and migrated our Saturday Young Writers' Group online.

It is just really uplifting for him to be part of a group and feel like he might meet some kindred spirits. The plan was that he was going to watch and see how it was but he ended up joining in quite a bit. I can't tell you how good that feels. These are long and lonely weeks at home right now... Really appreciate everything you and the team are doing.

Parent of young person attending the Zoom Young Writers' Group

Future Plans

Our consistent and relationship-based provision means we have ongoing dialogue with young people across communities. We respond to their needs and interests, working with them to devise new programmes.

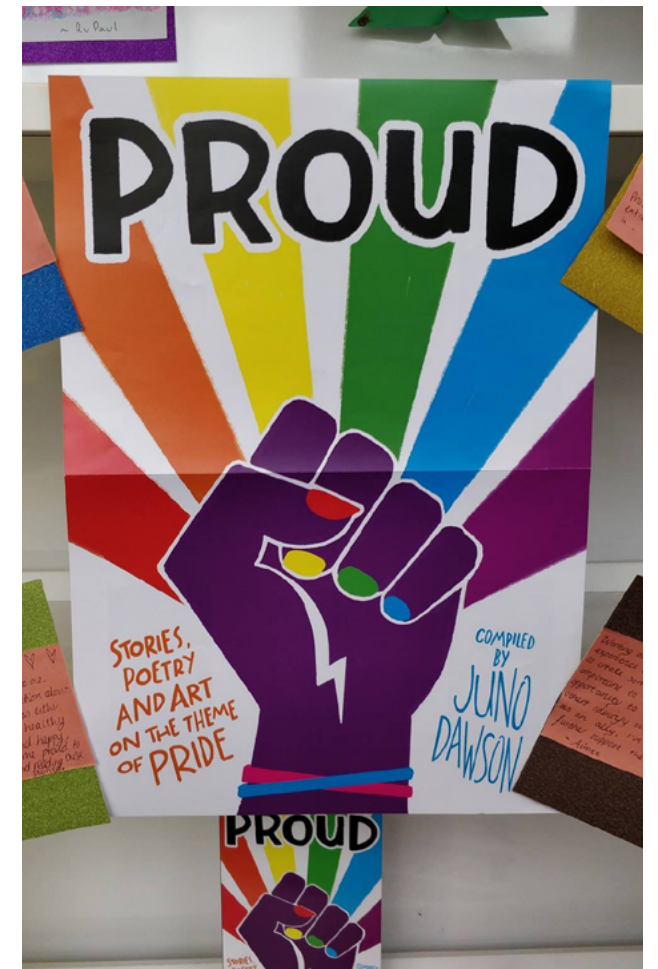
The programmes we have planned as a result of this dialogue are:

Proud Words, a reading and writing programme which uses books and responsive writing to explore LGBTQ+ issues in partner schools.

Balance the Books, an initiative aimed at diversifying the books available in socio-economically disadvantaged schools, and events and resources encouraging reading in and out of school amongst young people.

Well Read, a programme in schools using reading and writing to support wellbeing and mental health.

A **Young Creatives** group for 18–25 year olds, aimed at NWN Young Writers' Alumni who have aged out of our young writers provision but are still seeking support to develop their cultural engagement, considering further education and career opportunities.



Community based initiatives, especially in the West End of Newcastle and Gateshead, to reach more young people outside of school.

Developing our place-based, in-depth provision in **County Durham** to run alongside Durham Book Festival.

Programming more **young person-led festivals and events**, supporting our young people to engage with each other across communities and come together to share in their work. This will be a key part of the provision in NWN's new **Centre for Writing, Reading and Publishing**, which will have spaces dedicated to our Young Writers programme, over which young people will take a leadership role.

Our Writers and Artists

ZOE MURTAGH

I've been privileged enough to work on a range of projects with New Writing North Young Writers, and it's always an inspiring and vibrant experience. I LOVE the diversity of the projects we have had the freedom to create and have been so proud of the poems, songs, short stories and zines that have come out of the sessions. It's brilliant to engage with a diverse range of young people in a wide range of school and leisure environments. It offers great learning opportunities for me as a practitioner; my practice is playfully challenged, deepened and improved by the young writers.



Jessica Andrews

(Social action, Young Writers' City Sunderland; Creative writing, Write Outside)

Sian Armstrong

(Creative writing, South Shields Young Writers)

Heather Askwith

(Creative writing, South Shields Young Writers)

Lisette Auton

(Poetry, Gateshead Young Writers; Social action, Sandhill View Academy and Young Writers City Newcastle; Mentoring, Talent Fund)

Bob Beagrie

(Poetry, Gateshead Young Writers, Young Writers' City Newcastle and Write Outside)

Jade Blood

(Zine-making, Cramlington Young Writers)

Jennie Brewis

(Producer, Young Writers' City Sunderland and Benfield School; Songwriting, online sessions)

Lucie Brownlee

(Life writing, Young Writers' City Sunderland; Audio drama, Gateshead Young Writers; Fiction, Write Outside)

Malika Booker

(Poetry, Gateshead Young Writers)

Danielle Burn

(Creative writing, Cramlington Young Writers)

Lisa Burns

(Creative writing, Young Writers Groups)

Christina Castling

(Poetry, Gateshead Young Writers)

Kara Chin

(Animation, Gateshead Young Writers, Write Outside)

Kayo Chingonyi

(Poetry, Gateshead Young Writers)

Rue Collinge

(Creative writing, Cramlington Young Writers)

Liz Corney

(Songwriting, Young Writers' City Newcastle, Kenton School and Thornhill Academy)

Tess Denman-Cleaver

(Mentoring, Talent Fund)

LUCIE BROWNLEE

Working on the Young Writers' programme is undoubtedly a highlight of my writing life. Supporting the young people as they explore themselves and their capabilities through writing is a rare privilege, and I have witnessed first-hand its transformative powers – young people who say they 'can't write' going on to produce striking poetry and prose. But it's not just about the end result. Their confidence and pride grows each week as they see what they are able to produce and this is where the true strength of the programme lies.





KEMA KAY

Working on the Young Writers programme has been amazing! I've learnt so much by delivering sessions and it's helped me develop skills I didn't have before. It's also shown me a different way of approaching my own creative process.

Kay Greyson

(Songwriting, Newcastle Young Songwriters; Spoken word, Denton Youth and Community Project)

Bridget Hamilton

(Producer, Young Writers' City Newcastle; Podcasting, Newcastle Young Songwriters)

Phil Harrison

(Acting, Amble Young Writers)

Skye Hawkins

(Spoken word, Young Writers' City Sunderland)

Martin Heslop

(Sound production, Gateshead Young Writers)

Calum Howard

(Songwriting, Gateshead Young Writers)

Ziad Jabroo

(Songwriting, Gateshead Young Writers)

Sheryl Jenkins

(Animation, Gateshead Young Writers and South Shields Young Writers)

Ruth Mary Johnson

(Playwright, Write Outside)

Kema Kay

(Rap and songwriting, Young Writers' City Newcastle and Newcastle Young Songwriters)

Nick Lewis

(Music production, Newcastle Young Songwriters)

Laura Lindow

(Playwright, Young Writers' City Newcastle)

Ashleigh Lowes

(Songwriting, Sandhill View Academy and Thornhill Academy)

Alicia Meehan

(Choreography, Young Writers' City Newcastle)

Jordan Miller

(Songwriting and music production, Young Writers' City Sunderland and bespoke school projects)

Zoe Murtagh

(Poetry, Gateshead Young Writers; Drama and prose, Young Writers' City; Creative writing, Newcastle Young Writers)

Okechukwu Nzelu

(Narrative planning, Write Outside)

Adam Opie

(Filmmaking, Young Writers' City Newcastle, Gateshead Young Writers)

Gulwali Passarlay

(Social action, Young Writers' City Newcastle and Sunderland)

Louise Powell

(Dramatic monologues, Write Outside)

Phoebe Power

(Poetry, Write Outside)



Becci Sharrock

(Producer, Gateshead Young Writers)

Mim Skinner

(Mentoring, Talent Fund)

Sam Slatcher

(Songwriting, Gateshead Young Writers)

David Smith

(Songwriting, Sandhill View Academy)

Melody Sproates

(Comic books, Write Outside)

J.G. Tansley

(Creative writing, Sunderland Young Writers)

Sarah Tarbit

(Creative writing, Amble Young Writers)

James Varney

(Visual poetry, Write Outside)

Lauren Vevers

(Creative writing, Gateshead Young Writers)

Matt Weslowski

(Dark fiction, Benfield School)

James Whitman

(Choose Your Own Adventure, Gateshead Young Writers)

Emily Wiseman

(Producer, Young Writers' City Newcastle)

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