

# NEW WRITING NORTH

Press release

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## **Northern Writers' Awards 2022: Publication, mentoring and cash awards to support outstanding unpublished works from the North of England**

Writers across the North of England will be polishing their draft manuscripts as the cold winter nights mean one thing: it's time to enter the Northern Writers' Awards.

People living in the North – whether they have been published before or are completely new – are invited to submit their unpublished work-in-progress to the Northern Writers' Awards 2022, for the chance to win a share of £40,000 in publication and professional development opportunities.

New opportunities for 2022 include a short story award sponsored by previous winner Benjamin Myers, a development opportunity for emerging poets in partnership with Out-Spoken Press, and seminars given by The Soho Agency. All winners will have the chance to be part of a new Northern Writers' Awards Talent Network to receive a package of money-can't-buy opportunities.

The Northern Writers' Awards were founded in 2000 and exist to recognise talent and support new work towards publication or broadcast. They are produced by New Writing North with support from Northumbria University and Arts Council England and a range of partners.

Now in their 23<sup>rd</sup> year, the awards are the largest writing development programme of their kind in England and have a reputation for identifying some of the country's best unpublished writing. The 2022 winners will join an impressive list of 360 writers who have been previously supported through the programme, many of whom have gone on to critical acclaim.

In 2021, published books which previously received Northern Writers' Awards support as work-in-progress included:

- *The Unbelievable Biscuit Factory* by James Harris (Hachette Children's)
- *Diamond Hill* by Kit Fan (Dialogue)
- *Castles from Cobwebs* by J.A. Mensah (Saraband)
- *Approval* by John D Rutter (Saraband)
- *The River Within* by Karen Powell (Europa)
- *Much With Body* by Polly Atkin (Seren)

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- *Inscape* by Kathleen Bainbridge (Vane Women)

In May 2022, Hachette Children's Group will publish the middle-grade fantasy novel, *Zeina Starborn and the Sky Whale*, by Hannah Durkan, which won the Hachette Children's Novel Award in 2020.

Other previous winners include Yvonne Battle-Felton, whose NWA-winning book *Remembered* was longlisted for the Women's Prize; bestselling crime writer Mari Hannah, who found her literary agent through the awards; and poet Andrew McMillan whose debut collection, *physical*, supported by the awards, became the first poetry collection to win the Guardian First Book Award.

2013 award winner Benjamin Myers has gone on to critical acclaim since winning a Northern Writers' Award for his novel *Beastings*; recent titles include *The Offing*, *Male Tears* and *The Gallows Pole*, which is currently being filmed by Shane Meadows for a BBC TV series. Now he is supporting other writers with the introduction of a new award, The Finchale Award for Short Fiction.

The Northern Writers' Awards offer a wide range of support and opportunities for writers at all stages of their careers, including publication, mentoring, manuscript assessment, writing placements, retreats and cash awards to buy time to write.

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, Hachette Children's Group, Lime Pictures, The Literary Consultancy, Madeleine Millburn Agency, Newcastle University, The North Literary Agency, Oneworld Publications, Out-Spoken Press, The Society of Authors, The Soho Agency, University of York, as well as generous donations from individual donors.

**Claire Malcolm, Chief Executive of New Writing North, said:** "As our main platform for identifying the writers and works that we'll support towards publication and broadcast over the years that follow, the Northern Writers' Awards are an incredibly special part of our programme, so we're thrilled to open the 2022 Awards and can't wait to read the work that comes in. If you're a writer at any stage of your career in the North, we'd love to hear from you. As always, we are grateful that our awards partners and sponsors are as passionate as we are about discovering and supporting new writing talent from the North of England.

It is a great pleasure to watch the positive impact our awards and support can have on a writer's career, so it means a lot that with the new Finchale Award for Short

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Fiction our 2013 winner Benjamin Myers is now in a position to pass on that gift to other emerging writers.”

**Professor Katy Shaw, Professor of Contemporary Writings and Director of Cultural Partnerships at Northumbria University, said:** “The Northern Writers’ Awards are a landmark suite of regional writing awards that have a distinguished record of identifying the next generation of new Northern talent for the wider UK creative industries. The Northern Writers’ Awards are the jewel in the crown of the Northern literary scene and Northumbria University is proud to be their long-term sponsor, supporting their aim to amplify talent from the North, for the world.”

**Of launching the new Finchale Award for Short Fiction, Benjamin Myers said:** “Winning a Northern Writers’ Award was the first crucial step in my writing career. I always vowed that if I were in a position to give back the £5000 prize money via an annual competition, I would, and fortunately now with one of my novels being adapted for the screen, I can. The prize is named after Finchale Priory, once a medieval place of retreat for the monks of Durham cathedral, and a place that’s special to me. I’m excited to read the entries, and encourage writers of any background or ability to enter. I firmly believe that here in the North we don’t wait for things to happen – we make them happen.”

**Hilary Murray Hill, Chief Executive of Hachette Children’s Group, said:** “We are incredibly proud to work alongside New Writing North, recognising and nurturing Northern writers for children and young people. Hachette UK’s Manchester, Sheffield and Edinburgh offices are all now open for business and soon we’ll be sharing office space with New Writing North in our new Newcastle premises. These are all tangible signs of our commitment to finding, developing and publishing creative writing from the North of England and Scotland. Collaboration and innovation are at the heart of our relationship with NWN and we very much look forward to working with them on the 2022 Awards.”

**Professor Helen Smith, Head of Department, English and Related Literature, University of York, said:** “We’re delighted to support the NorthBound Book Award again this year, celebrating and promoting the vibrancy of writing and publishing in and about the North of England. Our regional literary heritage is a constant source of inspiration to the University and our students, and we’re proud to be part of an award bringing the best new Northern writing to audiences across the world.”

## JUDGES’ COMMENTS

Judges for this year’s awards include the writers Tahmima Anam and Doug

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Johnstone, who will judge fiction and narrative non-fiction categories, Helen Mort and Anthony Anaxagorou, who will judge poetry categories, and Katy Massey, who will judge the Sid Chaplin Award. Children's author Michael Mann will be one of the judges of the Hachette Children's Novel Award.

**Anthony Anaxagorou** said: "It's become more apparent in recent years how crucial a broad conception of ethical early-career support is to a vibrant poetry sector, not just a rush to publication but the importance of nurturing emerging voices and ensuring we provide resources to develop the work and equip poets with the skills to navigate and advocate for themselves in the industry."

**Doug Johnstone** said: "I'm absolutely thrilled to be a judge for this year's Northern Writers' Awards. They are a terrific boost to the writing community of the North, and have helped so many writers build their craft and careers over the years. I'm looking forward to reading diverse and unique stories, work that can only have been written by that particular author. Having worked with New Writing North before, I know the standard will be extremely high."

**Michael Mann** said: "This is an incredible opportunity to be part of – it's so nice to be able to give something back. These competitions make a real difference to aspiring authors (as they did to me) and it's great to be supporting the North, as I grew up there and know it to be a source of real creativity and talent."

**Katy Massey** said: "The Northern Writers' Awards are such an important route to support and publicity for writers outside the London bubble. While living in Newcastle I learned about the excellent reputational springboard the awards provide and how their existence foregrounds the need for funding to enable working-class and other under-represented voices to emerge. I am thrilled to be asked to be one of the judges of the Sid Chaplin Award, a rarity in that all forms of writing, including non-fiction and young adult, is welcomed. I can't wait to read the entries."

**Helen Mort** said: "As a previous winner, I know just how transformative the Northern Writers' Awards are for authors across our region. I am so excited to be involved as a judge and to see other poets being given this opportunity. The North is home to so much literary talent and I cannot wait to read this year's entries."

Enter online at [www.northernwritersawards.com](http://www.northernwritersawards.com) by Thursday 17 February 2022.  
Donate to the Northern Writers' Awards to support new writing from the North of England at <http://northernwritersawards.com/donate/>

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## NOTES TO EDITORS

### THE NORTHERN WRITERS' AWARDS AVAILABLE FOR 2022 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. There is one winner for this award. The winning writer will be offered a publishing contract from Hachette Children's Group granting Hachette world rights in all languages, including audio, film, TV and merchandising, with an advance of £5,000 to be set against royalties. Royalties will be on Hachette Children's Group's standard terms. Additionally, the winner will receive access to New Writing North's programmes of support. HCG reserves the right to: (i) withdraw its offer of a contract to the winning writer if terms cannot be agreed (in these circumstances, the winning writer will still be paid £5,000); and (ii) offer an additional publishing deal to any of the shortlisted titles, on the same terms as the winning entry.

The **NorthBound Book Award** is open to writers based in the North of England with an unpublished full-length manuscript for a fiction or narrative non-fiction book. The University of York will award the winning writer with an advance of £5,000 and an invitation to present their work as part of the University's Writers at York series. The winner will also receive a publication contract with Saraband and a package of support from New Writing North.

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 the Northern Writers' Awards Talent Network. 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 women and non-binary writers over the age of 42. One of the three poetry awardees will be admitted onto the Out-Spoken Press Emerging Poets Development

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Scheme, a new initiative to nurture and support poets, and will receive mentoring from Anthony Anaxagorou.

**NEW: The Finchale Award for Short Fiction** is a new opportunity that will award a short story writer a prize of £1000. The award is named after Finchale Priory, a place of retreat for the monks of Durham during the Middle Ages. It is made possible by the generosity of writer Benjamin Myers, who will judge alongside Wendy Erskine.

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. The award is made in memory of the writer Sid Chaplin (1916–1986) whose novels include *The Day of the Sardine* and *The Watchers and the Watched*. This year's judging panel will be joined by the writer Katy Massey.

**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 aged 11-18 and consists of a package of support created by New Writing North, worth £500.

The **Young Northern Writers' Awards** will recognise one young writer aged 11-14 and one aged 15-18 whose work shows exceptional promise. Each writer will be awarded £150. Up to two writers may also be highly commended across the age categories.

## The Northern Writers' Awards Talent Network

In addition to the individual programmes of each award strand, all Northern Writers' Awards winners over the age of 18 will receive ongoing support (winners under 18

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will receive separate support) as part of the Northern Writers' Awards Talent Network.

This support will be designed around your individual requirements as a writer. We will help you to identify your personal goals for your writing and support you as you work towards them.

The network may include a combination of the following:

- Consultations with a designated in-house contact at New Writing North.
- Advice and support for funding applications when appropriate.
- Support with brokering connections with literary agents and publishers.
- Professional development sessions for poets delivered by a publisher.
- A place on New Writing North's Pitching Workshop.
- Regular peer group meetings with fellow winners.
- A year's free membership of the Society of Authors.
- A professional development session with the Society of Authors.
- An in-person or Zoom visit to Oneworld Publications.
- An in-person or Zoom visit to the Madeleine Milburn Agency.
- An Arvon Masterclass.
- Specially designed seminars delivered by the Soho Agency.

**Winners of the Northern Writers' Awards will be announced in June 2022.**

**New Writing North** is the development agency for creative writing and reading in the North of England. Based in Newcastle upon Tyne since 1996, it is 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, Young Writers, the Gordon Burn Prize, Durham Book Festival and Read Regional.

New Writing North specialises in developing and investing in writers of all ages and act as a dynamic broker between writers, producers, publishers and broadcasters across the creative industries. Current partners include BBC Radio 3, Channel 4 Drama, Faber and Faber, Hachette Children's Group, Northumbria University and Durham University.



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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.

New Writing North's extensive and award-winning Young Writers programme develops the creativity and skills of young people. Work in schools with children and their teachers is complemented by a large and diverse out-of-school programme that is open to all, with a special focus on areas with fewer opportunities.

As a promoter and producer of festivals and literary events and through its partnerships with schools, libraries, universities and prisons, New Writing North engages audiences with enriching and creative reading experiences.

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](http://www.northernwritersawards.com).

**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 35,000 students from 142 countries and almost 220,000 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 almost £300 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.



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