

NEW WRITING NORTH

New Writing North appoints Creative Associates

Two writers have been appointed to the staff team at New Writing North. The appointments are made at a time of growth and development at the Newcastle-based creative writing and reading agency for the North of England.

Adam Sharp and Sharmin Islam responded to an open call for Creative Associates. Launched by New Writing North in March 2022, the call aimed to find writers that could be supported by the organisation to create new work, as well as bringing fresh perspectives and helping to inform the way New Writing North develops as it grows.

Adam Sharp is a novelist, non-fiction writer, and former music journalist, based in Newcastle upon Tyne. He takes up the post of Creative Associate, a part-time role over two years, where he will have the time and space to create new work, a project budget, and project management, marketing and organisational support from New Writing North.

At New Writing North, he will work on a new book that combines memoir and journalism to explore the effects, both physical and mental, of being a heroin baby. Both of Adam's parents were heroin addicts and his mother took heroin throughout her pregnancy with him. Through the *Heroin Baby* project, he hopes to meet other adult heroin babies and tell their stories alongside his own.

Adam's book about language and lists, *The Correct Order of Biscuits*, was published by Orion in 2020. His short piece of memoir 'Play' was published in Kit de Waal's *Common People: An Anthology of Working-Class Writers*. He has an MA in creative writing from St Mary's University and a PhD in creative writing from Northumbria University.

Sharmin Islam joins New Writing North as a Creative Associate Intern, having recently graduated from Northumbria University in International Relations and Politics.

Sharmin previously completed an editorial internship at Picador and has written for *The F Word Feminist Magazine*, *aurelia magazine*, and *gal-dem*. She is interested in both publishing and editorial, particularly writing about her lived experience as a South Asian woman living in Newcastle.

The internship will offer Sharmin the opportunity to work with staff across New Writing North on a wide range of projects including A Writing Chance and the organisation's award-winning Young Writers programme, as well as developing her own practice as a facilitator and producer, especially in the South Asian community.

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Due to taking up an MA in South Asian Politics at Oxford University, Sharmin's internship at New Writing North will last three months. After this, the post will be reviewed to extend the opportunity to other writers.

Anna Disley, Executive Director (Programme and Impact) at New Writing North said: "We are delighted to welcome Adam and Sharmin to New Writing North. The Creative Associates programme has been and will continue to be a journey of discovery for us. We have come across some fantastic writers and great ideas during the recruitment process. Adam and Sharmin were proposing ambitious and original bodies of work that NWN could help develop and that would also inform our own work. We look forward to learning from Adam and Sharmin and seeing the creative ideas they provoke come to fruition, as well as supporting them to develop their own projects."

Adam Sharp said: "Being appointed a Creative Associate with New Writing North is genuinely life-changing for me. I recently finished a creative writing PhD and desperately wanted to follow up on the memoir I wrote for that with a book called *Heroin Baby*, which would share my experiences, and those of others, of being a substance-exposed child. However, I couldn't envision having the time, money or support to tackle such a large project, not anytime soon at least. But getting the Creative Associate position, and with it the much-needed support of New Writing North, means I can now dedicate the next two years to the project. The role will also give me the opportunity to help New Writing North promote the therapeutic benefits of creative writing by running workshops with local communities. This is something that is very important to me because writing has had such a positive impact on my own mental health."

Sharmin Islam said: "I'm so excited to be working with New Writing North. I have been following this organisation and their projects during my undergraduate degree and have been amazed at their commitment to empowering communities in the North to recognise their artistic potential. I feel as though the encouragement to pursue a career in the arts sector is minimal for Bengali women particularly, especially when most opportunities are concentrated in the South. Bengali culture is imbued with poetry and creativity so I'm really looking forward to developing projects with New Writing North and potentially changing the future for so many racialised working class people."

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