

# NEW WRITING NORTH

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## **Northern Writers' Awards to become year-round platform for discovering and supporting northern writing talent**

The Northern Writers' Awards 2023 have opened for entry – with a difference. While £30,000 worth of awards are now open for entry with a closing date of 22 February 2023, other awards will open at staggered dates throughout 2023, providing a year-round platform to support northern writing talent and allowing writers to enter work into multiple strands.

Founded by New Writing North in 2000, the Northern Writers' Awards exist to recognise talent and support new work towards publication or broadcast. Judges for this year's awards include the writers Caroline Bird, Anthony Anaxagorou, Sairish Hussain, Zaffar Kunial, Ross Raisin, and Adelle Stripe, and the literary agent Lucy Irvine.

By supporting writers at an earlier stage than most literary awards – usually before an agent or publisher is involved – the Northern Writers' Awards offer crucial support for writers at a pivotal stage of their careers, as well as providing a pipeline of new talent to the publishing and broadcast industries.

The awards have grown over the last 24 years to become the biggest writer development programme of their kind in England, with a reputation for identifying some of the country's best unpublished writing. More than 2000 writers enter the awards each year, a number which is set to grow as the awards evolve into a yearly platform.

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, Lockhaugh Farm, Newcastle University, The North Literary Agency, Oneworld Publications, Out-Spoken Press, The Society of Authors, University of York, the Word Factory as well as generous donations from individual donors including the Chaplin family, the Hale family, and Benjamin Myers.

**Will Mackie, Senior Programme Manager (Talent Development) and Programme Leader (MA in Publishing), said:** “As we launch the 2023 awards, we're massively grateful for the support of our incredible partners, the commitment of our judges and readers, and the continued engagement of the communities we're privileged to work with. Each year we welcome entries from across the North of England and are beguiled, delighted and stunned by the creative work we receive. We're lucky to live in a region so bursting with imagination and writing talent. Not only are we seeing such high-quality work, we're also pleasantly overwhelmed by the

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numbers of submissions we receive and so this year have developed a staggered portfolio which we're confident will both showcase the benefits of individual awards while also lengthening and deepening our offer to writers."

**Katy Shaw, Professor of Contemporary Writings and Director of University Cultural Partnerships at Northumbria University said:** "The Northern Writers' Awards are the jewel in the crown of the literary awards season beyond the M25. Over more than a decade, Northumbria has proudly sponsored the awards in recognition of the vital role they play in identifying and accelerating new talent from across the North and connecting new writers to the best agents, producers, editors and mentors. As more creative industries move into our region, this is a timely moment to profile the role of writing in supplying the wider creative economy and for profiling the best of new British writing in an inclusive and diverse suite of work in progress awards."

**Benjamin Myers, author of *The Perfect Golden Circle*, and founder of the Finchale Award for Short Fiction, said:** "The Finchale Award for Short Fiction exists to support and encourage writers across the North. Away from the publishing power base of London, exciting things are afoot and last year's inaugural prize uncovered some astonishingly good pieces of writing that suggests the region is ripe with undiscovered talent. We encourage and welcome writers of any age, ability, race, sexuality and economic background."

**Sairish Hussain, author of *The Family Tree*, and Northern Writers' Awards judge, said:** "I am so honoured to be judging this year's Northern Writers' Award for Fiction. Writing from the North continues to inspire and resonate with readers from all backgrounds. I am thrilled to have the opportunity to discover, reward and ignite conversations about new Northern talent."

**Caroline Bird, poet, playwright, and Northern Writers' Awards judge, said:** "I grew up in Leeds and this prize combines two of my favourite things – writing and the North – and what's more I'll get to devour new books, so I couldn't be happier. I'm looking forward to poetry that flings open the door of my head and makes itself at home, or possibly breaks my furniture."

**Ross Raisin, author of *A Hunger*, and Northern Writers' Awards judge, said:** "It can make an important difference to a writer's fledgling career to be recognised by an award, especially one with a reputation and track-record like the Northern Writers' Awards. So, it is a privilege – and excitement – to have the opportunity to find the best of these writers and help them on their way."

**Lucy Irvine, literary agent and Northern Writers' Awards judge, said:** "I'm so excited to be judging the Northern Writers' Award in the Young Adult and Young Writers' categories and to get a sneak peak of the new talent coming out of the region. Really looking forward to reading the shortlist and huge good luck to everyone entering!"

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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.

A new addition to the 2023 awards is Writing Weekends at Lockhaugh Farm, open to winners of Northern Debut Awards.

**Deborah Hunter, owner of Lockhaugh Farm, said:** "It's so important to have time away from the demands of our everyday lives and I hope the Lockhaugh Farm retreat for winners of the Northern Debut Awards will provide them with the opportunity to explore ideas and perhaps collaborate with each other. Beautiful things can happen when we make space to pause and just be."

**The following Northern Writers' Awards are open now until 22 February 2023:**

- **Northern Writers' Awards**

Cash prizes of up to £5000 to support writers of fiction, narrative non-fiction, YA, graphic novels, short stories and poetry.

- **Northern Debut Awards**

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 and mentoring. One of the poetry awardees will be admitted onto the Out-Spoken Press Emerging Poets Development Scheme, an initiative to nurture and support poets, and will receive mentoring from Anthony Anaxagorou.

- **Northumbria University Student and Alumni Award**

Worth £2000, for a single standalone piece of fiction, narrative non-fiction or poetry, or an extract of a longer work, is open to final-year students and recent graduates of Northumbria University in any discipline.

- **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 supported by the Chaplin family, in memory of Sid Chaplin (1916–1986) whose novels include *The Day of the Sardine* and *The Watchers and the Watched*.

- **The Finchale Award for Short Fiction**

Awards a short story writer a prize of £1000. This award is made possible by the generosity of writer Benjamin Myers.

- **Matthew Hale Award**

Open to young writers aged 11-18 who show promise but have had limited

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opportunities to pursue their talent. This award is funded by the Hale family and consists of a package of support created by New Writing North, worth £500.

- **Young Northern Writers' Awards**

Recognises 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.

## **Northern Writers' Awards 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 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 Arvon Masterclass.

**Winners of the Northern Writers' Awards will be announced in June 2023.**

**Entry is now open via the New Writing North**

**website <https://newwritingnorth.com/northern-writers-awards/>**

**ENDS**

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## **Notes to Editor**

**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

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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.

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

- Winner of the prestigious Times Higher Education University of the Year Award 2022
- A research-intensive, modern university with a global reputation for academic excellence.
- Results from the Research Excellence Framework (REF2021) show Northumbria University with the biggest rise in research power ranking of any UK university
- Northumbria is one of the largest universities in the UK with over 37,000 students from 137 countries
- Key cultural partners include Tyne & Wear Archives & Museums (TWAM), BALTIC Centre for Contemporary Art, New Writing North and The British Film Institute (BFI).

## Lockhaugh Farm

The south-facing farm sits on an acre of land over-looking fields and forests with

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uninterrupted views to Gibside National Trust and the Column to Liberty. It comprises of the 18th century farmhouse where Deborah and her family live and converted farm buildings and railway carriages for self-catering and retreat guests. Wild swimming, cycling and endless walks lie just beyond the gate. The night skies are spectacular and often punctuated with calling owls and the rustle of hedgehogs & badgers. It is a peaceful sanctuary in the heart of nature not far from Newcastle city centre with 5\* reviews and superhost status.

[www.lockhaughfarm.com](http://www.lockhaughfarm.com)