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Hachette Children's Group and New Writing North renew partnership and seek new children's authors from the North of England

Hachette Children's Group and New Writing North seek to discover new children's authors from the North of England, as they mark the start of a new three-year agreement which will offer career-changing opportunities to six debut children's authors.

The Hachette Children's Novel Award 2023 is open until 10 March 2023 to unpublished manuscripts of middle-grade fiction by debut children's authors based in the North.

Since 2018, the Hachette Children's Novel Award has been a key strand to the Northern Writers' Awards, which is England's biggest writer development programme, supporting new unpublished work from the North of England. The award focuses on debut middle-grade authors and has discovered James Harris (2019), Hannah Durkan (2020), Andy Ruffell (2021) and Karon Alderman (2022), leading to publication by Hachette Children's Group of:

- *The Unbelievable Biscuit Factory* by James Harris (Hodder Children's Books, 2021)
- *Happytown Must Be Destroyed* by James Harris (Hodder Children's Books, 2022)
- *Zeina Starborn and the Sky Whale* by Hannah Durkan (Orion Children's Books, 2022)
- *Zeina Starborn and the Emerald King* by Hannah Durkan (forthcoming Orion Children's Books, July 2023)
- *Lily Grim and the City of Undone* by Andy Ruffell (forthcoming Hodder Children's Books, May 2023)

Now, the partnership is strengthening its offer by awarding the Hachette Children's Novel Award to two writers each year, and a commitment to a three-year plan. Each winning writer will receive a £3000 cash prize alongside a 9-month programme of mentoring opportunities with Hachette Children's Group and a children's publishing agent, through which they will receive professional development sessions in the areas of editorial and design, sales, marketing and rights. The two winning writers

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will also receive entry into the Northern Writers' Awards Talent Network, as a result benefitting from support from New Writing North, membership of the Society of Authors and networking opportunities.

The Hachette Children's Novel Award supports the shared aims of Hachette Children's Group and New Writing North to encourage work that engages with the lives of children everywhere. The award also builds on a broader long-term partnership between New Writing North and Hachette, who share offices in central Newcastle and co-deliver an MA in Publishing at Northumbria University.

The children's author Rachel Fatureoti; literary agent Lauren Gardner; Hachette Children's Group's senior commissioning editor, Polly Lyall Grant; and New Writing North senior programme manager, Will Mackie, will judge the Hachette Children's Novel Award in 2023.

Rachel Fatureoti said: 'I am very excited to be on the judging panel this year and I can't wait to read the entries from undiscovered talent across the North of England. The publishing industry can feel like a well-guarded secret and schemes such as this one provide writers with the opportunity to interact directly with a publisher and agent, and they're able to attend professional development sessions too.'

Lauren Gardner said: 'Having lived and studied in Manchester for four years, I'm honoured to be asked to be part of this year's judging panel for the Hachette Children's Novel Award. The work that New Writing North do to encourage and empower writers from the North of England is so vital and I can't wait to read the amazing entries that come through this year.'

Polly Lyall Grant said: I am delighted to be a judge this year – as an editor, I am passionate about finding new voices outside of the London sphere. It is essential we change the landscape of the market so we better represent our readers, writers and communities. New Writing North opens doors to creatives, and importantly celebrates the richness of children's writing in the North of England – I am proud to be a part of their powerful partnership with HCG. Bring on the submissions!

Will Mackie said: 'We're delighted to be extending and enhancing an already wonderful relationship with Hachette Children's Group. The Hachette Children's Novel Award is a flagship opportunity within our portfolio, standing as New Writing North and Hachette's commitment to the long-term development of children's writing in our region. Our shared value-driven approach will offer a new flock of writers transformational and multi-dimensional support from leading industry professionals.'

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It's been a real joy to see James, Hannah, Andy and Karon flourish and I'm looking forward to us discovering another six amazing writers over the next three years.'

The Hachette Children's Novel Award is now open for entry to debut children's authors based in the North of England until 10 March 2023. For full details and to apply, visit northernwritersawards.com

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For media enquiries, contact Laura Fraine laurafraine@newwritingnorth.com

Notes to Editor

About the Hachette Children's Novel Award 2023 judges:

Rachel Faturoti is a YA and children's fiction writer, editor, and poet with a passion for broadening the scope of Black representation in YA and children's fiction. She believes it's important for readers to see themselves represented well in stories. Rachel was awarded the inaugural Bernardine Evaristo Scholarship to fund her MA in Creative Writing at Brunel. Rachel's debut middle grade novel, *Sadé and Her Shadow Beasts* published in 2022 by Hachette Children's Group. Finding Folkshore, Rachel's debut YA novel publishes in April by Jacaranda Books.

Lauren Gardner joined Bell Lomax Moreton in 2014, where she represents authors across Children's, Teen and YA fiction and Adult Non-Fiction. She has a passion for children's literature and is always looking for stories with heart, humour and maybe a high concept twist (or two). She represents a number of award winning and bestselling authors including Katy Birchall, Elle McNicoll, Alex Sheppard, Jenni Spangler, and Pooja Puri. In July 2020, Lauren was selected as one of The Bookseller's Rising Stars, a commendation she continues to try very hard to live up to. When she's not at her desk reading ALL the books, you can usually find her walking her four-legged assistant Arnie or sharing breadsticks over an episode of Bluey with her daughter Nell.

Polly Lyall Grant is a Senior Commissioning Editor at Hachette Children's Group, where she works across middle grade and YA fiction, with authors including Rosie Jones, Dean Atta, Rachel Faturoti, and Tanya Byrne.



Will Mackie is Senior Programme Manager (Talent Development) and Programme Leader (MA in Publishing) at New Writing North. He leads on talent development and devising programmes of support for writers and translators while working alongside partners such as Channel 4, Hachette Children's Group and the British Council. Additionally, he manages the David Cohen Prize for Literature. He develops module content for university courses and is Programme Leader on the MA in Publishing, run in partnership with Hachette UK and Northumbria University. He previously worked as an editor for publishers in London and Edinburgh and was Head of Writer Development at the literature charity, Scottish Book Trust.

About Hachette Children's Group

Hachette Children's Group is one of the largest children's publishers in the UK, with an excellent track record in creating bestselling and award-winning books for children. The Group aims to cater for every child, with baby and pre-school books, picture books, gift, fiction, nonfiction, series fiction, books for the school and library market and licensed publishing and comprises the imprints Hodder Children's Books, Orchard Books, Orion Children's Books, Little, Brown Books for Young Readers, Quercus Children's Books, Laurence King Children's Books, Pat-a-Cake, Wren & Rook, Franklin Watts and Wayland Books.

The Group publishes a wide range of authors, illustrators, series and licences including: Cressida Cowell, Kes Gray, Jim Field, Jessica Townsend, Onjali Q. Raúf, Kiran Millwood Hargrave, Matthew Syed, David Almond, Lauren Child, Sinead Burke, Rachel Bright, Marion Deuchars, Dermot O'Leary, Nick East, Dean Atta, Francesca Simon, Alex T. Smith, Zanib Mian, J.K. Rowling, Giles Andreae, Guy Parker-Rees, Benjamin Zephaniah, Piers Torday, Alice Oseman, Juno Dawson, Pippa Curnick, Dr Ranj Singh, Simon Farnaby, Leigh Bardugo, Rainbow Magic, and Beast Quest. Hachette Children's Group is also the publisher of author Enid Blyton, and the owner of Enid Blyton Entertainment.

hachettechildrens.co.uk @hachettekids

About New Writing North:

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.

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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 & Faber, Hachette UK, 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.