

Press release: for release 22 September 2023

Channel 4 announces support for three emerging northern writers

Three emerging screenwriters from the North of England have been awarded Channel 4 Writing for Television Awards 2023 to support their development.

Each of the writers wins a £3000 bursary and a package of money-can't-buy opportunities, including nine-month placements with independent production companies where they will develop original scripts, and mentoring with industry professionals.

The Channel 4 Writing for Television Awards were founded in 2014 as part of the Northern Writers' Awards. They are funded by Channel 4 and produced by New Writing North, the writing development agency for the North of England. The Northern Writers' Awards are England's largest and longest-running writer development programme, supported by Northumbria University, Arts Council England and a range of partners.

The 2023 winners were announced on Thursday evening (21 September) at The Biscuit Factory, Newcastle, at a celebration hosted with North East Screen, the North East's regional screen agency which develops and nurtures homegrown talent including writers, producers and directors. The event was attended by writers and industry professionals from television and audio, and included a showcase of new writing talent from across the North.

Harriet Ghost, an actor-writer from Newcastle, will receive a nine-month programme of mentoring and support from the Leeds-based production company, Rollem Productions (*The Syndicate*; *Fat Friends*). Harriet trained at the American Academy of Dramatic Arts and her acting credits include Ken Loach and ITV projects. She has written for the stage and in 2020 was selected for BFI's Script Lab and received mentoring from Aisling Bea through the BAFTA Connects scheme supporting women in TV and film.

Joe McNally is a writer from Liverpool whose debut play 'Cosmic' was staged at Liverpool's Royal Court theatre in April 2023. Joe holds a Masters in Screenwriting and is a graduate of both Liverpool's Royal Court Stage Write Development Programme and Liverpool Everyman's YEP writers' programme. His award includes a nine-month placement with Bonafide Films (*Mood*; *The Last Post*), where he will develop an original script.

Liz Redwood, from Southport, won the Channel 4 Writing for Television Award: Lime Pictures. She will spend her placement on the production of *Hollyoaks*, where she will work with members of the core writing team and shadow the script development process. Liz has completed the Liverpool Royal Court's Playwright Programme and the Liverpool Everyman's Playwrights' Programme. In 2020 she

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was shortlisted for the Kenneth Brannagh New Drama Award at the Windsor Fringe Festival and the Sphinx Theatre programme for female playwrights. Her first professional production, 'A Topsy Christmas Fairy Tale', was staged by Liverpool Royal Court in 2022.

Harriet, Joe and Liz join a growing list of television writers supported by Channel 4 and New Writing North. Previous winners include Sharma Walfall, who won the inaugural award in 2015 and has gone on to write for productions including *Dreamland*, *Noughts and Crosses* and *A Town Called Malice*, and Jayshree Patel, whose award led to her becoming a core writer on *Hollyoaks* before recently moving to *EastEnders*. The programme has also launched the television writing careers of Taiba Ahmad, Adam Bennett-Lea, Joshua Halm, Kemi-Bo Jacobs and Samantha Neale.

The Channel 4 Writing for Television Awards form part of Channel 4 and New Writing North's Talent Development Partnership, which offers year-round support and opportunities for new writers from the North, with a particular focus on supporting writers from backgrounds that are currently underrepresented in the television industry. Alongside the awards and industry placements, it offers script development, writers' roadshows and workshops, and the formation of the Northern Talent Network.

Channel 4's Head of Drama Caroline Hollick said: "Nurturing the next generation of talent is a key priority for Channel 4, particularly in the north, which is why we are so committed to these awards. We want to ensure that anyone who is determined to work in the creative industries has an opportunity to fulfil that ambition, regardless of their background or where they live."

Will Mackie, Senior Programme Manager (Talent Development) at New Writing North, said: "Our flagship awards programme for screenwriters continues to grow and thrive through Channel 4's generous ongoing support. The Channel 4 Writing for Television Awards give us the chance to identify and support three immensely gifted and exciting emerging writers. These awards offer genuine career-changing experiences and it's enormously fulfilling for us to play a part in nurturing and celebrating new talent. So much of the success of this programme is down to the dedication and innovation of our brilliant production company partners -- Rollem, Bonafide and Lime – who open doors into the world of TV for writers in the North."

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For all media enquiries, including high res images, please contact Laura Fraine at New Writing North laurafraine@newwritingnorth.com

About New Writing North

New Writing North is the development agency for creative writing and reading in the North of England.

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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 and Durham Book Festival.

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.

newwritingnorth.com

About North East Screen

North East Screen is the screen agency for the North East. We develop and champion North East England as one of the UK's leading film and TV production hubs where exceptional screen industry talent can live, create and work. We support all incoming productions with crew, locations and facilities shooting anywhere in the North East England through our free and invaluable Film Office. We work with Indie production companies based in the North East providing them with business and commission development support.

We offer talent and professional support for home grown freelancers (writers, producer, directors and artist filmmakers). We connect experienced crew to job opportunities and, for those just starting out and wanting to work in film and TV, we run the NE Screen Crew Academy.

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About Bonafide Films

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We are an independent production company whose ethos is simple, work with exceptional talent to develop the most distinctive ideas and bring brilliant drama to the screen. We make stories that are ambitious, thought provoking and that we love. Our latest production was MOOD for BBC & AMC, starring, created and written by Nicôle Lecky as adapted from her play *Superhoe*. MOOD has won Baftas for Best Mini-Series and Best Original Music along with a Broadcast award for Best original Programme and RTS awards for Original Music Score and Best Limited Series.
<https://bonafide.co.uk/>

About Lime Pictures

Lime Pictures, with bases in Liverpool, London and Los Angeles, produces world-class, cutting-edge programming, covering a wide range of genres from reality drama, through to kids scripted to Channel 4's multi-award-winning daily soap, *Hollyoaks*. With more than 30 years' experience in producing content for global audiences, it produces for all platforms, both linear and VOD, and has played a pioneering role in the launch of new formats as well as using television as a way of on-screen storytelling, and as an off-screen platform, to communicate with a younger audience.

Lime Pictures' extensive catalogue of programming includes worldwide Netflix hits *Dance Monsters*, *Zero Chill* and double Emmy award-winning *Free Rein*, *Hollyoaks* for Channel 4 and the BAFTA award-winning reality series *The Only Way Is Essex* for ITVX. Productions for MTV include *Geordie Shore* (the highest rated series outside of North America), *Geordie OGs*, *True Love or True Lies*, *Love at First Lie: Who's A Couple And Who's A Con* and *Are You The One? UK*. Lime Pictures also produces E4's highly successful *Celebs Go Dating* as well as ITVX's *Georgia and Tommy: Baby Steps*.
<https://www.limepictures.com/>

About Rollem Productions

Rollem is a production company with a difference - female-led, genuinely independent and based in Leeds, West Yorkshire. Set up in 2000 by BAFTA award-winning writer Kay Mellor OBE to produce her hugely successful ITV drama series *FAT FRIENDS*, Rollem has gone on to produce a host of hit shows including: *THE SYNDICATE*, *IN THE CLUB*, *A PASSIONATE WOMAN*, *GIRLFRIENDS* and *MY LEFT NUT* to name a few.

Rollem champions new writers and creative talent in all its forms and is dedicated to producing TV and Film which is relatable, innovative and original. But above all, Rollem is passionate about producing drama and comedy that audiences across the world love to watch and re-watch. We tell stories that resonate.
<https://rollemproductions.co.uk/>