Chair
Vice Chair
Trustee
Recruitment Pack
November 2023

Deadline for applications:
Thursday 30 November 2023
12 noon
Thank you for your interest in joining the Board of New Writing North.

I have had the honour of chairing this exceptional charity since 2016 but will be stepping down in 2024.

The Board of Trustees is looking to appoint a new Chair to lead the organisation through this next, exciting phase. At the same time, we are also looking for a new Vice Chair and a Young Trustee to join our Board.

New Writing North was established in 1996 and we are an Arts Council England National Portfolio Organisation. We work to empower people from across society to become writers; to support high quality work from the North of England; and to help good writing find local, regional and international audiences. We are a charity and a company limited by guarantee.

We believe that talent is everywhere but that the opportunities to pursue a creative life are not. Through our programmes and activities we enable writers from across society to achieve their ambitions. We specialise in identifying, developing, and promoting writing talent and act as a dynamic broker between writers, audiences, readers and producers across the creative industries.

Based in Newcastle upon Tyne we work across the North of England and work in around 70 cities, towns and villages each year. Our in-depth year-round work with young people and communities is focused within the North East where we run large scale projects such as the award-winning Young Writers’ City.

Strong, creative partnerships are at the heart of everything we do. We work with leading brands including Channel 4, the BBC, Sky Studios, Faber and Faber, Hachette UK and with universities, and cultural partners across all art forms. Most of our work is human-centred and entails long-term relationship building with participants and partners to achieve high value and impact.

We are currently developing an ambitious capital project to create a ground-breaking Centre for Writing in Newcastle to help rebalance the creative industries nationally and to create better opportunities for young people, commissioning, and production in the North.

We have made significant progress on this journey and are in a strong position. The new Chair will play a key role in leading the Board and supporting our experienced Executive Team to deliver this project, ensuring we have a robust financial strategy and operating model for the future. You will join and lead a talented Board of trustees who come from a wide range of backgrounds and bring a rich variety of valuable skills and perspectives to our work.

We are looking for an experienced Chair who can build on our success to date, is inspired by the challenge ahead, and who is passionate about the North East to be a visible ambassador for our important work.

For our new Vice Chair, we are looking outside of the North East for someone who can help maintain and develop New Writing North’s relationships with the publishing and media industries in London and beyond, while working closely with our Chair in the region.

A young Trustee with a passion for writing that will bring a new perspective to our Board and specifically help the organisation to champion the work that we do to empower young people across the North of England.

More than anything, we want people who share our vision for writing as a tool for social change and progress and who want to be part of making real, meaningful, and lasting change happen in the North East.

Warm wishes

David Roche
Chair of the Board of Trustees
OUR VISION

We believe that our work can have a positive influence on social justice, the climate crisis and civic dialogue, and that we can raise the voices of young people and those whose experiences and ideas are not yet heard in the mainstream.

We recognise that to do our work we may need to take risks, to be pre-disposed to action, to learn by doing, and, if necessary, disrupt the systems that have perpetuated inequality. Writing is a powerful tool for social change and has a role to play in rebuilding communities and encouraging civic dialogue.

We aim to make the North a centre of excellence for literature by creating a physical Centre for Writing, in Newcastle upon Tyne, which will expand and develop our work and others’ and help to rebalance the national picture of who gets to write.

OUR MISSION

Our mission is to bring people together through writing, reading, and engaging in ideas, deepening mutual understanding, and encouraging creative habits. We find and support talented people from all backgrounds to access creative opportunities and to enable them to flourish.

OUR VALUES

• We are relationship builders
• We are a learning organisation
• Our creativity and leadership go hand-in-hand

OUR CREDENTIALS

In 2019 New Writing North was awarded the Best Creative Company award at the North East Business Awards. In 2021 our work with young people was nominated for the National Charity Awards. In 2022 our CEO was awarded an MBE in the Queen’s Birthday Honours for her Services to Literature, Young People and the North East and was this year noted by The Bookseller as one of the 150 People Changing Publishing.
Our Board of trustees represents leadership and expertise in publishing, education, media, and the arts from across the UK. Earlier this year we appointed four new Trustees including a new Treasurer, who are leaders from the North East’s and national business and cultural sectors.

New Writing North’s Executive Team is led by founder, Chief Executive, Claire Malcolm MBE; Executive Director of Programme and Impact, Anna Disley; Director of Communications and Development, Eugene Grant; and Director of Finance and Operations, Fiona Melvin.

See our full team >
A NEW CENTRE FOR WRITING

We are making significant progress in our bold and ambitious plan to open a flagship Centre for Writing in Newcastle upon Tyne.

We will show how a literature organisation can scale up to be an effective lever for investment to create a nationally significant centre for the arts, business, and education - themed around writing, publishing, and content development - and with a wide-ranging public offer of events, wellbeing programmes, and work with young people to develop creativity, enterprise, and innovation.

This new development draws on our years of experience in partnership building across the higher education and commercial sectors and will be the way that New Writing North steps up to the next stage of development, playing a broader and more public role in our city and region and through this creating new ways of thinking about what literature and writing can do for a place.

A great deal of stakeholder engagement and project development has been achieved and we have support in place from Northumbria University, Newcastle City Council, and the North of Tyne Combined Authority. We have an active building acquisition plan in place and hope to have acquired a site for the development by early 2024.
Our work isn’t possible without the skills, knowledge, lived and professional experience and expertise of the people who give their time to our charity.

The Chair and Board of Trustees are responsible for the overall governance and strategic direction of the charity and its financial health, developing the organisation’s aims, objectives, and goals in accordance with the governing document, and legal and regulatory guidelines.

Successful candidates will share our passion for transforming the lives of young people and adults through writing and literature and will bring new connections and perspectives to the charity during our transformational capital project and transition to a new operating model.

To complement the skills of existing board members we are ideally looking for the following:

JOIN OUR BOARD OF TRUSTEES

CHAIR
• Strong roots and regional connections across the business and public sector in the North East
• Experience of chairing and leading boards
• A strategic, senior leader in their field
• Willing and able to be a passionate ambassador for the work of New Writing North.

VICE CHAIR
• Senior leadership experience in the publishing and or media and film industries
• Willing and able to connect New Writing North to industry contacts and to advocate for our work in London and beyond
• A passion for discovering and supporting new writers in the North of England and an understanding of why developing the creative industries in the North is of national benefit.

TRUSTEE
• We particularly welcome applications from younger people (under 30s) as we are currently underrepresented on the Board of Trustees for that demographic, and we wish to have a Board that is made up from people that are more representative of our target beneficiaries.
• A passion for writing and social change
• Creativity and ideas that will help connect young people to New Writing North
• Previous Board experience is not essential for this role as training will be given.
CHAIR ROLE DESCRIPTION

REPORTS TO

The Board of Trustees

SUMMARY

The new Chair will play a vital role in leading and inspiring New Writing North through an exciting new chapter. They will oversee the continued success and delivery of ongoing programmes of activity and to achieve a major capital project that will create a Centre for Writing and a new home for the charity in Newcastle upon Tyne – ensuring the right strategies, resources, and partnerships are in place for the long term.

PERSON SPECIFICATION

• A demonstrable passion for the mission and values of New Writing North and why it is so important to the region
• Experience of chairing and leading boards to make effective decisions using good, independent judgement
• Proven track record of strategic leadership at both Executive and Board level in your own field of work
• An understanding of financial reporting
• Proven ability to grow and scale organisations using strong commercial acumen
• Experience of, and ability to develop, effective working relationships between a Chief Executive, Executive Team, and Board members
• Excellent regional networks and contacts and the ability to open out new connections for New Writing North to a wide range of people, organisations, and sectors
• A willingness and ability to devote the necessary time and effort to being a Chair
• A demonstrable commitment to equal opportunities and the diversity of New Writing North’s voices and audiences
• An understanding of charity governance would be helpful but previous charity experience is not essential.

MAIN RESPONSIBILITIES

• Lead the Board and the Executive Team through an exciting chapter of change and growth
• Act as a passionate figurehead, advocate, and champion for New Writing North and their capital plans
• Lead the organisation in pursuit of its charitable objects as defined in its governing document, holding the Board and Executive Team to account for delivery of the mission and objectives
• Ensure the organisation complies with its governing document, charity law, company law and any other relevant legislation or regulations
• Ensure the effective and efficient administration of New Writing North through strong governance, clear strategic planning, and effective decision making
• Line Manage the Chief Executive, providing challenge, advice, and support, and lead their annual performance review
• Support the Chief Executive and Executive Team to develop relationships with new and existing stakeholders in local and regional government, civil society, publishing, the media, and other relevant sector/industry bodies
• Attend and lead all Board meetings, participate in panels and committees as required, and lead the annual Trustee appraisal process
• Ensure the Board has an appropriate and diverse mix of skills, knowledge, and experience
• Adhere to New Writing North’s Code of Conduct and all other relevant policies
• Maintain confidentiality and declare any conflicts of interest while carrying out Chair duties
• In addition to the above, the Chair and Trustees should use any specific skills, knowledge, or experience they have to help the Board of Trustees reach sound decisions and advance the aims of the organisation (e.g., scrutinising board papers, leading discussions, focusing on key issues, and providing advice and guidance requested by the Board on new initiatives, or other issues relevant to the Charity’s work in which the Chair/Trustee has special expertise).
VICE CHAIR ROLE DESCRIPTION

REPORTS TO
The Board of Trustees

SUMMARY
The Vice Chair will build an excellent working relationship with our new Chair to lead and inspire New Writing North through an exciting new chapter. The Vice Chair will specifically help the organisation maintain and develop its industry relationships in the fields of publishing and media while working to support the delivery of the new Centre for Writing, a major capital project that will create a new home for the charity in Newcastle upon Tyne.

PERSON SPECIFICATION
• A demonstrable commitment to the mission and values of New Writing North and why it is so important to discover and support new writers and to invest in the development of the creative industries in the North of England
• Excellent networks and contacts in the publishing and media industry and the ability to connect New Writing North to a wide range of people, organisations, and sectors beyond the North
• Senior leadership experience in the publishing and/or film and media industries
• Experience of, and ability to develop, effective working relationships with the Chair, Chief Executive, Executive Team, and Board members
• An understanding of financial reporting
• A willingness and ability to devote the necessary time and effort to being Vice Chair
• A demonstrable commitment to equal opportunities and the diversity of New Writing North’s voices and audiences
• An understanding of charity governance would be helpful but previous charity experience is not essential

MAIN RESPONSIBILITIES
• Act as a passionate figurehead, advocate, and champion for New Writing North within the publishing and media industries and attend meetings and events to further that aim
• Support the Chief Executive and Executive Team to develop relationships with new and existing stakeholders in the publishing and media industries and related contexts
• Support the Chair and deputise where necessary in leading the Board and the Executive Team through an exciting chapter of change and growth
• Ensure the organisation pursues its charitable objects as defined in its governing document
• Ensure the organisation complies with its governing document, charity law, company law, and any other relevant legislation or regulations
• Ensure the effective and efficient administration of New Writing North through strong governance, clear strategic planning, and effective decision making
• Attend Board meetings and participate in or chair panels and committees as required
• Adhere to New Writing North’s Code of Conduct and all other relevant policies
• Maintain confidentiality and declare any conflicts of interest while carrying out Vice Chair duties
• In addition to the above, the Vice Chair should use any specific skills, knowledge, or experience they have to help the Board of Trustees reach sound decisions and advance the aims of the organisation (e.g., scrutinising board papers, leading discussions, focusing on key issues, and providing advice and guidance requested by the Board on new initiatives, or other issues relevant to the Charity’s work in which the Vice Chair has special expertise).
REPORTS TO
The Board of Trustees

SUMMARY
With a passion for writing and social change, you will join a committed Board of Trustees who are leading and inspiring New Writing North through an exciting new chapter. Our Young Trustee will bring a new perspective to our Board and specifically help the organisation to continue supporting and empowering young people across the North of England. You will also work alongside other Trustees to support the delivery of a major capital project, the Centre for Writing which will create a new home for the charity in Newcastle upon Tyne.

We particularly welcome applications from younger people (under 30s) as we are currently underrepresented on the Board of Trustees for that demographic, and we wish to have a Board that is made up from people that are more representative of our target beneficiaries

PERSON SPECIFICATION
• A passion for the mission and values of New Writing North and why it is so important to discover and support young, new writers in the North of England

• Creativity and ideas that will help connect young people to New Writing North

• Excellent written and verbal communication skills and willingness to contribute to discussions

• Ability to analyse complex information and to think critically

• Enjoys being part of a team and working alongside others

• A willingness and ability to devote the necessary time and effort to being a Trustee

• A demonstrable commitment to equal opportunities and the diversity of New Writing North’s voices and audiences

• Previous charity or Board experience is not essential and training and support will be given.

MAIN RESPONSIBILITIES
• Act as a passionate figurehead, advocate and spokesperson for New Writing North for other young people and attend meetings and events (e.g. Northern Writers’ Awards, Durham Book Festival, Young People’s performances, and other public profile events)

• Advise the Chief Executive and Executive Team on the development of new programmes and initiatives that will discover and support young writers in the North of England

• Attend Board meetings and participate in panels and committees as required

• Ensure the organisation pursues its charitable objects as defined in its governing document

• Ensure the organisation complies with its governing document, charity law, company law and any other relevant legislation or regulations

• Adhere to New Writing North’s Code of Conduct and all other relevant policies

• Maintain confidentiality and declare any conflicts of interest while carrying out Trustee duties

• In addition to the above, Trustees should use any specific skills, knowledge or experience they have to help the Board of Trustees reach sound decisions and advance the aims of the organisation (e.g. scrutinising board papers, leading discussions, focusing on key issues, and providing advice and guidance requested by the Board on new initiatives, or other issues relevant to the Charity’s work in which the Vice Chair has special expertise).
TERM

The Chair, Vice Chair and Trustees serve an initial three-year term to be eligible for re-appointment for a maximum of nine years.

TIME COMMITMENT

Chair – approximately 20 days a year to prepare for and attend Board meetings and sub-committee meetings and to attend events and to meet regularly with the Chief Executive.

All Trustees - there are four board meetings per year, one strategy away day, at least one Sub-Committee membership with an additional three to four meeting per year and occasional task and finish groups. Trustees are expected to attend a minimum of 75% of board meetings a year and participate in working groups. Board meetings take place during weekday working hours and dates are programmed two years in advance.

LOCATION

Newcastle upon Tyne, and via video conference.

REMUNERATION:

Voluntary. Expenses are paid for travel and, if necessary, accommodation costs to attend meetings and for any other costs incurred whilst undertaking activities on behalf of the organisation.

INDUCTION

• One to one meetings with the outgoing Chair (new Chair only), new Chair and Chief Executive

• Observation of a board meeting

• An induction pack

• Two, two-hour induction meetings to meet the staff team, review policies relevant to the role, and an introduction to core areas of programme.

Board appraisal is undertaken annually by the Chair at the start of the calendar year and reported to the full board in February. Trustee training requirements will be considered alongside this process and training is offered throughout the year.
HOW TO APPLY

TO APPLY

Please email Kate Bradley at kate@kate-bradley.co.uk with:

• A current CV with details of two referees

• A supporting statement (on no more than two sides of A4) that explains your motivation for applying and addresses the criteria in the person specification

Please also complete our Equal Opportunities Form >

An informal discussion with current Chair or Chief Executive can be arranged when making an application.

RECRUITMENT TIMELINE

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Date</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Closing date</td>
<td>30 November 2023</td>
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<tr>
<td>First Interviews (Online)</td>
<td>January 2024</td>
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<tr>
<td>Second Interviews (Face to Face)</td>
<td>January 2024</td>
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<tr>
<td>Appointments made</td>
<td>By 31 January 2024</td>
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<tr>
<td>Board meeting observation</td>
<td>February 2024</td>
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<td>Formal Appointments</td>
<td>June 2024</td>
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EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

NWN’s Equity policy pledges to eliminate discrimination and create an inclusive environment for our employees, audiences and communities. To do that we have to recognise and address structural racism and inequality of opportunity for people with protected characteristics and socio-economic disadvantage and put in place a series of measures that disrupt the systems that have promoted this inequity.

DATA PROTECTION AND PRIVACY

New Writing North is committed to protecting your privacy and data. We will use the information that we collect about you in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation 2018 and the Privacy and Electronic Communications Regulation 2003.

Our Privacy Policy is here >

Kate Bradley is processing applications on behalf of New Writing North.