



# NEW WRITING NORTH

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## **Channel 4 Writing for TV Awards Announced in Leeds**

Winners of the Channel 4 Writing for TV Awards were announced [26 September] at a ceremony hosted at Leeds Playhouse.

The awards, which launched in 2014, offer new television writers based in the North of England unique and career-changing opportunities.

The ceremony featured speeches from the Mayor of West Yorkshire, Tracy Brabin, Head of Partnerships and Skills at Channel 4, Kevin Blacoe, and CEO of New Writing North, Claire Malcolm.

Funded by Channel 4's 4Skills, the awards are part of the Northern Writers' Awards - New Writing North's flagship writer development programme - and form part of Channel 4 and New Writing North's Talent Development Partnership.

Launched in 2022, the Talent Development Partnership aims to identify and support new writers, particularly those from backgrounds that are currently underrepresented in the television industry.

All three receive a package of support including a nine-month placement with either Bonafide Films (*Mood; The Last Post*), Red Production Company (*It's a Sin; Happy Valley*) or Rollem Productions (*Love Lies & Records; Girlfriends*), alongside mentoring with an industry professional and a £3000 bursary.

Winner Rebecca Glendenning-Laycock, from Newcastle Upon Tyne, won the placement with Red Productions. To date, her work has been commissioned and staged by Live Theatre, Freedom Studios, and the Alphabetti Theatre.

Rebecca said: "I feel so excited and privileged to have won the Channel 4 Writing for Television Award with Red Productions. The opportunity to work and collaborate with Red Productions and develop myself and my work is truly incredible. I can't wait to see where it takes me."

Emily Low was awarded the placement with Rollem Productions. A performer, writer, and storyteller based in Tyne Valley; her first commission was staged at the Alphabetti Theatre this year, and she was selected to join the Live Playwriting community.

Emily said: "It means so much to me that New Writing North read my script and saw its potential as an original comedy drama. Before I won this award, I would watch brilliant shows on TV and daydream about what story I would tell if I ever got the chance. I feel very astonished and excited that I now have the opportunity to develop my own script with the wonderful Rollem Productions."

Nana-Kofi Kufuor from Stockport was awarded the placement with Bonafide Films. A British-Ghanaian playwright and screenwriter, his work has featured at Leeds Playhouse and the



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Edinburgh Fringe. He has written for *Hollyoaks*, *Waterloo Road* and has been commissioned by Sky and the BBC to write original works, which lean towards social and political stories through a hyper surreal lens.

Nana-Kofi said: “Being able to work with Bonafide and Channel 4 will push my career to new heights. Having people there to help me focus and improve my craft is priceless. I am unbelievably grateful for this opportunity and cannot wait to get started.”

**Kevin Blacoe, Head of Partnerships and Skills at Channel 4 says:** “Congratulations to the incredible winners of this year’s Channel 4 Writing for Television Awards; they have all shown immense talent and creativity. 4Skills is proud to fund the awards and support new local talent. The placements and mentoring opportunities the winners have earned will undoubtedly open doors to set them on an exciting path in the world of television writing.”

Channel 4 and New Writing North have worked in partnership since 2014.

The awards have already launched the television careers of several writers, including Sharma Walfall, who has gone on to work on productions including *Noughts and Crosses* and *A Town Called Malice*, and Jayshree Patel, whose *Hollyoaks* episodes were submitted for a BAFTA.

Former winners of the award were also in attendance, including Taiba Ahmad, and mentors from the programme, such as the West Yorkshire actor and writer, Kat Rose Martin.

**Will Mackie, Senior Programme Manager (Talent Development) at New Writing North, says:** “The partnership between Channel 4 and New Writing North provides pivotal opportunities for screenwriters in the North. We are delighted to reveal three such gifted talents as Emily, Rebecca and Nana-Kofi as this year’s awardees and look forward to seeing them thrive during the exciting year ahead of them.

“The winners of the Channel 4 Writing for Television Awards will now have chance to work with three of the UK’s leading TV companies in Rollem Productions, Bonafide Films and Red Production Company. The dedication, innovation and expertise of our production company partners lies at the heart of what makes this programme so special. We are enormously grateful to Channel 4 and the brilliant 4Skills team for their ongoing support.”

The Northern Talent Partnership also delivers a year-round programme of activities and opportunities for new and emerging television writers in the North of England. It operates a Channel 4 Northern Talent Network, which features script hubs in Newcastle, Bradford and online, screenwriting events delivered by industry professionals, and online masterclasses.

An additional ten shortlisted writers from the Channel 4 Writing for TV awards will be offered placements on the Script Development Group, with a bursary, peer-group sessions with agents, writers and producers, and in-depth script feedback.

**ENDS**

## Notes to Editors

Photos (headshots) of the winners can be downloaded for press use [here](#).



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About the winners

## **Rebecca Glendenning-Laycock**

Rebecca is a writer and performer based in Newcastle Upon Tyne. Their work is funny and loud with a tender middle. She believes in the power of joy. Her first original play received a seed commission from Live Theatre in 2021 and her debut play, an adaptation of Lukas Moodysson's 'We Are The Best', was commissioned by Live in 2022.

Rebecca has had short pieces commissioned/staged for Freedom Studios, Workie Ticket, Live Theatre, and Alphabetti Theatre. They have most recently been a part of New Writing North's 2024 ADAPT cohort and Film Hub North's Script Lab Cohort 22-23.

## **Emily Low**

Emily is a performer, writer and storyteller based in the Tyne Valley. Her first commission 'Fold Me a Paper Man' was staged at Alphabetti Theatre this year. Emily has performed in sketches and clown shows with her friends at Soreslap Theatre and the Good Name Cabaret as well as filming in a major production this summer. Emily has recently been selected to join the Live Playwriting community where she will be developing a full-length play. When she's not dressing up and telling stories, you can find Emily wandering through the magical forests of the NE with her young family.

## **Nana-Kofi Kufuor**

Nana-Kofi Kufuor is a British- Ghanaian playwright and screenwriter from Stockport. His first play "My Voice Was Heard but Was Ignored" opened at Leeds Playhouse to strong reviews and then finished with a month-long performance at The Edinburgh Fringe Festival at The Summerhill Gallery. Kofi has written for Hollyoaks, worked for the new iteration of Waterloo Road and been in Sky writers' rooms. Kofi tends to write social and political oriented stories through a hyper surreal lens. Kofi has been commissioned by BBC and Sky to write original works.

## **New Writing North**

New Writing North leads the development of creative writing and reading in the North of England. We are based in Newcastle upon Tyne, where we have produced nationally significant work since 1996. We are proud to be a charity and an Arts Council England National Portfolio Organisation.

We believe that writing talent is everywhere, but that opportunities are not. We work hard to both identify talent and create fantastic career-changing opportunities for people from across society.

We develop programmes and activities that inspire people to engage with creative writing and reading, whether this is to develop their skills and professional ambitions or for pleasure and wellbeing.

We help excellent writing find local, regional, national, and international audiences.



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