

NEW WRITING NORTH

Author pics for press use:

https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fo/g6c1wthpip0hamc25dp8b/AKHBGZKliF6v_Gm4nis4Aq8?rlkey=939ymynb2bpgk6kkqzidfxgr9&st=eop4urlm&dl=0

Over 80 Writers Join North's Creative Call to Arms

Leading authors, academics and writers put their support behind a campaign to secure a major new centre for the writing industries in the North.

What do *Slow Horses*, *Vera*, and TV's *Wolf Hall* all have in common? They're all creations of writers with strong links to the North East.

Mick Herron, Ann Cleeves, and Peter Straughan are just three of 82 professional writers who have put their backing behind a campaign urging the government to back a major new centre for the writing industries for the North.

In an open letter, titled, 'A Creative Call to Arms' the stable of writers call for the Culture Secretary, Lisa Nandy, to back the scheme after a decade of funding cuts to the arts.

Peter Straughan, the screenwriter who adapted *Wolf Hall*, co-wrote *Tinker, Tailor, Soldier, Spy* for the big screen, and adapted Tony Young's memoir, *How to Lose Friends and Alienate People*, grew up in Gateshead.

Ann Cleeves, famed for her creations, *Vera*, and *Shetland* – adapted for ITV and the BBC respectively – lives in Whitley Bay, the seaside town in North Tyneside.
Mick Herron, behind the Apple TV hit, *Slow Horses* starring Gary Oldman, was born in Newcastle upon Tyne.

The writers have put their voice to the campaign, which was launched this summer by a coalition led by the writing development charity, New Writing North, Northumbria University, and Hachette UK, and supported by the North East Mayor, Kim McGuinness.

The coalition is awaiting the outcome of a £5m bid with the Department of Culture Media and Sport, which is expected to be announced at the end of October.

The investment will unlock a further £5.5m in pledges from regional partners, to make the new centre a reality.

The new hub for the writing industries will transform a disused heritage building in the heart of Newcastle - the 1907 Bolbec Hall - located next to the Lit & Phil, the largest independent library outside London.

The open letter states: "Writing is an art that the UK excels in and it plays a major role in the Creative Industries – underpinning publishing, media, film, TV, audio, and spilling over into games, music, theatre, local news and innovations in VR and AI, alongside jobs in related industries such as communications.

NEW WRITING NORTH

“For too long, the writing industries have been centred in London and the South East, creating an unbalanced eco-system, spread of jobs, and barriers to those in underserved and northern communities.”

The UK’s publishing industry contributes £11 billion overall to the economy alone.

New Writing North has worked with Hachette UK and Northumbria University on a number of initiatives to re-balance the southern-centricity of the writing industries. This month, they announced a new audiobook studio based at Northumbria University’s city centre campus in Newcastle, with its first major production being Andrew Michael Hurley’s new novel, *Barrowbeck*.

The initiatives support the wider creative and cultural ambitions for the North East Combined Authority and Newcastle City Council’s industrial strategy to increase content production in the region.

The open letter said: “Investment in the Centre for Writing and Publishing will revitalise the region, attract inward investment, and help train and develop a new generation of local talent. We want young people in the North to be able to grow up to be publishers, writers, and creatives and to not presume that they will need to leave the region to achieve their ambitions.”

Signatures include local authors David Almond OBE, who grew up on a council estate in Felling on Tyne, close to Newcastle, and the Booker Prize winning novelist, Pat Barker CBE who was born to a working-class family in Thornaby-on-Tees, and lives in Durham.

The open letter featured a host of leading northern writers such as Benjamin Myers, David Peace, and the poet, Ian McMillan. It has also attracted support from across the UK, such as the Brighton-born crime writer Peter James, the Scottish crime author Val McDermid, and the London novelist, Louise Doherty, and has been supported by Newcastle musician Paul Smith of Maximo Park.

Claire Malcolm MBE, CEO of New Writing North, who launched the campaign this summer with key partners, Northumbria University and Hachette UK, said: “The huge outpouring of support from professional writers up and down the country is incredibly welcome. We’re proud to lead the development of creative writing and reading in the North, and know first-hand the transformative power it has. Investment into a new centre of national import will help revitalise the region, attract inward investment and help train and develop a new generation of local talent.”

North East Mayor Kim McGuinness said: “The North East is a powerhouse of creativity and culture and as mayor, I have made commitments to build our economy around creative industries, writing, publishing, and film. Doing so will transform people’s life chances, unearth hidden talent, and ensure our creative voice is heard on the national and world stage. I’m calling on Ministers at DCMS to back our ambition, and help unleash the talent and potential of our great North East.”

ENDS

NEW WRITING NORTH

Notes to Editors

For further media info contact Ann: ann@causeuk.com m: 0753 489 2715

The Open Letter in Full

A CREATIVE CALL TO ARMS: OPEN LETTER

We are supporting New Writing North's call for Lisa Nandy and the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) to back a major new centre for the writing industries. After over a decade of funding cuts for the arts, now is the time to invest and New Writing North's plan will bring transformation to the North.

Writing is an art that the UK excels in and it plays a major role in the Creative Industries – underpinning publishing, media, film, TV, audio, and spilling over into games, music, theatre, local news and innovations in VR and AI, alongside jobs in related industries such as communications.

For too long, the writing industries have been centred in London and the South East, creating an unbalanced eco-system, spread of jobs, and barriers to those in underserved and northern communities.

The UK's publishing industry contributes £11 billion overall to the economy and the industry exports more books than any other country globally. International demand for UK publishing is set to grow by a further 20% in the next decade.

Bringing the writing industries to the North will have wide benefits for the writing talent here and will create creative, meaningful, and fulfilling jobs.

Literacy is proven to improve just about every aspect of life. People with poor literacy skills are significantly more likely to experience poverty, live in poor quality housing, be unemployed, become a perpetrator or victim of crime, have poor physical or mental health, and even lead shorter lives.

The Centre for Writing will support writing and reading initiatives in the community, as well as the professionals (writers and publishers) that create the content to be read.

Investment in the Centre for Writing and Publishing will revitalise the region, attract inward investment, and help train and develop a new generation of local talent, a mission backed by the North East Mayor Kim McGuinness.

We want young people in the North to be able to grow up to be publishers, writers, and creatives and to not presume that they will need to leave the region to achieve their ambitions.

I am putting my voice to the campaign for a new writing centre of national import.

NEW WRITING NORTH

This investment can transform people's life chances, unearth talent, and ensure the North's creative voice is heard on the national and world stage.

Establishing a new centre for the writing industries in the North East is a vital first step to make that happen.

Ann Cleeves OBE, Crimewriter and patron of the Reading for Wellbeing project, North Tyneside.

Pat Barker CBE FRSL, (Novelist), County Durham

David Almond OBE FRSL (Novelist), Tynemouth

Val McDermid, FRSL FRSE HonHFRIAS

Mick Herron FRSL, (Novelist), Oxford

Lee Hall (Screenwriter), London

Peter Straughan (Screenwriter), Hastings

David Peace (Novelist), Tokyo, Japan

Peter James. D.Litt. (Hon.) (Writer)

Terri White (Journalist & Author), Northwest England

Dr Jill Dawson, FRSL (Writer) Norfolk

Sara Collins, (Writer), London

Irenosen Okojie, MBE (novelist and Festival Director), London

Adele Parks MBE (Writer), Tees Valley

Andrew O'Hagan, FRSL, (Writer), London

Ross Raisin (Writer), York

Benjamin Myers, FRSL (Author and Screenwriter) Hebden Bridge, West Yorkshire.

Debbie Taylor (Editor of Mslexia), Newcastle-upon-Tyne

Tony Williams (Writer and Professor of Creative Writing), Northumberland

Amelia Loulli (Writer), Newcastle upon Tyne.

NEW WRITING NORTH

Degna Stone (Poet), Gateshead

Holly Turner (Novelist), Cramlington

Dr Susannah Ronnie (Writer), Northumberland

Ian McMillan, (Writer and broadcaster), Barnsley, South Yorkshire

Sarah Hall, FRSL (Novelist), Kendal, Cumbria

Paul Smith, (Musician, Maximo Park), Newcastle upon Tyne

Louise Doughty, (Novelist and Screenwriter), London

Ishy Din (Playwright and Screenwriter), Middlesbrough

Michael Chaplin (Playwright, Screenwriter, Author), Newcastle upon Tyne

Dr Adelle Stripe (Author) Calder Valley, West Yorkshire

Okechukwu Nzelu FRSL (Novelist) Manchester

Jayshree Patel, (Screenwriter), Greater Manchester

Dr Yvonne Reddick, FHEA

Harry Man (Author), Stockton on Tees

Kit Fan FRSL (Author and Poet), York

Karen Powell (Author), York

Patricia Grace King (Author) MFA, PhD, Durham

Carmen Marcus, FRSA, (Author and Playwright) Redcar

Lisette Auton (Author and playwright), Darlington

Carina Rodney (Playwright and Screenwriter), North Tyneside

Dr Lucie Brownlee (Author), County Durham

Chloe Daykin (Author), Northumberland

Carys Davies, FRSL, (Author), Scotland

Dr Louise Powell (Author and Playwright), Middlesbrough

NEW WRITING NORTH

Ian Fenton, (Creative Producer and Educator), Tees Valley

Mari Hannah, (Author and Screenwriter), Northumberland

Neil Bushnell (Author), Tees Valley

Adam Farrer (Author), Manchester

Alan Johnson (Author and former MP), Hull

Anna Woodford (Poet), Newcastle upon Tyne

Doug Johnstone, (Writer) Edinburgh

Dr Anna Barker, (Poet), Durham

Richard T Kelly, (Writer), London

Dan Smith, (Writer), Newcastle upon Tyne

Dr Bob Beagrie, (Poet), Middlesbrough

Dr Jake Morris-Campbell, (Poet), Oswestry

Fadia Faqir, (Writer), Ushaw Moor, County Durham

Tawseef Khan, (Novelist), Manchester

Mark Nixon (Writer), Country Durham

Alison Carr (Writer), Newcastle upon Tyne

Dr Yvonne Battle-Felton (Novelist), Sheffield and Cambridge.

Katie Hale, (Novelist and Poet), Cumbria

Julie Ward (Writer), Board Member, Culture Action Europe, County Durham

Lucy Nichol (Novelist), Newcastle upon Tyne

Victoria Morley (Writer), Tyneside

Lisa Matthews, (Poet and Content Designer), North West

Rishi Dastidar, (Critic), London

Yvonne Reddick, (Writer), Manchester

NEW WRITING NORTH

**Preti Taneja FRSL, Writer and Professor of World Literature and Creative Writing,
Newcastle Upon Tyne**

Vici Wreford-Sinnott (Playwright and Screenwriter), Tees Valley.

Margaret Wilkinson (Novelist), Newcastle upon Tyne

Claire Dupree Jeans, (Editor), Northumberland

Emma Layfield, (Children's Books North Agency), Manchester

John Challis (Poet), North Shields

Linda France (Poet), Northumberland

Mymona Bibi (Writer), Newcastle upon Tyne

Dr Dan Jackson, (Writer), Northumberland

Dr Rachael Allen, (Poet and Editor), London

Sunila Galappatti (Writer and Editor), London

Emily Wiseman (Writer and Educator), Newcastle upon Tyne

Sophie Yeo, (Writer), Durham

Professor Kit de Waal (Author), West Midlands

About 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.

[Home - New Writing North](#)