

NEW WRITING
NORTH



31 January 2025

New Writing North and Channel 4 announce renewed partnership to find and nurture extraordinary writing talent from the North of England for TV.

Through its 4Skills work, Channel 4 has committed to a new three-year partnership with New Writing North to support talented writers based in the North of England.

This partnership will support the development of new and emerging writers, and those that may want to crossover into screenwriting from other art forms. It includes bursaries, bespoke programmes of talent development, screen industry insight and expertise, networking, mentoring and peer-support.

The UK has created some of the most influential and loved cinema and television in the world. In 2022 inward investment into the UK was £3.62 billion for high-end TV and £1.74 billion for film. However, the British Academy of Film and Television Arts' (Bafta) Invisible Barriers guide reports only 9% of people who work in the industry (across all roles) would declare themselves as coming from a working-class background.

Talent is everywhere but opportunities are not. This partnership will help create pathways for talented writers from a wide range of backgrounds, and based in the North, to reach global screens. This comes at a time of significant expansion for the screen industry in the region. The North East has seen an 89% increase in film and TV production over the last two years and the government is investing in Crown Works, a new £450 million film studio to be built in Sunderland.

New Writing North has increased its programmes of support for screenwriters in recent years. The flagship Channel 4 Writing for Television Awards have supported screenwriters including: Sharma Angel-Walfall, who has just been announced as a new writer for Doctor Who; Bafta-nominated Jayshree Patel who has written for Hollyoaks; and Adam Bennett-Lea, who received a commission from Bonafide and Channel 4 and has worked on Waterloo Road. New Writing North created an in-house screen development producer role in 2023 and has established partnerships with North East Screen, Film4, BBC, Red Production Company, Bonafide Films and Rollem Productions.

The partnership with 4Skills was announced today (31 January 2025) at New Writing North's Screenwriting Weekender sponsored by North East Screen. This sellout event was the first of its kind in the region. The keynote speech was delivered by Gateshead-born Peter Straughan

who was an early recipient of New Writing North support. Straughan recently won the Golden Globe for Best Screenplay for Conclave and has been nominated for an Oscar.

Anna Disley, Executive Director (Programme and Impact), New Writing North, said:

“Our long-established partnership with Channel 4, and now 4Skills, has enabled us to discover and develop some of the most exciting, diverse, and talented writers in the UK. Stories by writers such as Sharma Angel-Walfall are appearing on our TV screens week in, week out. However, the industry is still very London-centric, and this is often reflected in the stories we see on TV. New Writing North plays a vital role in creating change in the TV sector. And at a time of opportunity and investment in screen in the North our partnership with 4Skills will enable us to do more to find talent from all corners of the North and help it find a place on national and international screens. We are grateful for the ongoing support of Channel 4 and the team at 4Skills and our valued production company partners.”

Sinead Rocks, Channel 4’s Managing Director, Nations and Regions, said:

“Channel 4 is committed to nurturing new talent, particularly people from backgrounds who may have never considered a career in the creative industries.

The partnership between 4Skills and New Writing North will help identify talent from regions like the North East, voices which otherwise might go unheard just because of where or who they are. We are determined to address that imbalance and create opportunities for a new generation of writers which is why this partnership is so important and exciting.”

The partnership will deliver:

Channel 4 Writing for Television Awards. Channel 4 will support four emerging writers, selected via open call, to go through a talent development programme. This comprises bespoke writer development, mentoring, financial support, and invaluable professional experience working with a production company.

Slate and Screen Play Weekends. Channel 4 will support eight writers, who have not worked on screenplays before, to attend two weekend events. Over the course of a weekend the writers can explore their ideas for TV with an experienced showrunner (top-level executive producer of a television series). Writers will be drawn from open calls, Northern Writers Awards, and existing New Writing North networks.

Screen Development Slate. New Writing North will lead and manage a 'development slate' (a group of projects not made yet). Channel 4 will support five writers with screenwriting experience to be part of this slate which will get their project/s ready for industry.

Northern Talent Network Open Events. Channel 4 will support three open-access community events across the North each year. These events are for emerging writers and those completely new to screenwriting. The events will feature role-model writers, producers and others involved in creating and making TV.

Northern Talent Network Script Hubs. These are peer-group spaces which provide a safe, nurturing, and supportive environment for a group of up to ten new writers. Channel 4 will support two new script hubs for writers facing intersectional challenges (those that face simultaneous prejudices based on their race, gender, sexuality, or class). One in person in Barrow-in-Furness, Cumbria, and one online for Global Majority writers.

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For more information contact Jill Read, jillread@newwritingnorth.com

[Download image of 2024 winners of Channel 4 Writing for TV](#) (left to right) Nana-Kofi Kufuor, Rebecca Glendenning-Laycock, Emily Low. Photo: Guzelian Media.

Notes to Editors

About New Writing North

Writing talent is everywhere. But opportunities are not. That's why New Writing North exists. To identify and nurture talent. To inspire a love for creative writing and reading. To create life-changing chances for people across the North. Through our programmes, events, and activities, we find and support talented people of all ages and backgrounds to access creative opportunities and to enable them to flourish. Find out more at www.newwritingnorth.com

About 4Skills

4Skills is Channel 4's nationwide training and development strategy which aims to create thousands of opportunities nationwide with a particular focus on people from diverse and disadvantaged socio-economic backgrounds who want a career in broadcasting.

It has generated thousands of training, development and learning opportunities for people across the UK, focusing on those from underrepresented groups.

In 2025 4Skills will invest £10m in training, development and learning opportunities annually. For more information visit: <https://careers.channel4.com/4skills>