

Centre for Writing and Publishing FAQs

2 January 2026

What is going to happen in the centre?

The centre will be:

- Home to: New Writing North; Northumbria University's English and Creative Writing provision including its MA in publishing which is run in partnership with Hachette UK and New Writing North; start-ups and commercial and charitable publishers, businesses and organisations. This will provide income and enable connections and collaboration to happen which will strengthen the region's creative sector. In turn this will attract inward investment into the region and boost the local economy.
- Home to both free and affordable flexible workspace for writers and creative freelancers and practitioners.
- A place where we can nurture talented writers from the North through our professional development programmes and opportunities to network.
- A place where we deliver learning and opportunities for professional and aspiring writers as part of our Writing and Publishing Skills Hub.
- A space which can be used by the communities we currently work with across the region. Including: our Young Writers programme: our First Edition programme for 18–25-year-olds: our West End Writes programme which runs in community spaces in the west end of Newcastle.
- A space for people to try creative writing for the first time and to engage in reading, both of which have a positive impact on health and wellbeing.
- Home to our audiobook production studio and creative space for TV and film producers and developers.
- An exciting new venue for literary events, discussions and the debates that connect people to books and ideas.
- Home to a café and independent bookshop.

Why is it important to invest in the region's creative industries, and specifically writing and publishing?

The UK is an internationally recognised 'cultural powerhouse'. Creative Industries is one of the eight priority sectors identified in the Government's Industrial Strategy. The government estimates that creative industries generated £126bn in gross value added to the economy and employed 2.4 million people in 2022.

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.

Currently companies and organisations (and the jobs and opportunities that they create) within the creative industries, including publishing, TV and film, are predominantly based in London and the South East of England. However, things are changing and need to change more. The creation of a new centre for writing in the North East that will serve the North will help to rebalance where writing is developed, published and produced.

The North East Combined Authority's cultural strategy has writing and publishing as one of its three priority areas, along with music and TV and screen. The ambition is that the opening of a centre dedicated to writing and publishing will attract more industry partners to the region. One of New Writing North's partners is Hachette UK who are one of the world's leading publishers. They are looking to grow the number of employees they have in their Newcastle office in response to the opening of the centre.

Why do you need a physical building?

The centre will enable New Writing North to grow, increasing its reach, impact, and financial resilience and sustainability. It will create a more visible profile for the organisation and for writing in the North. It will provide high quality space in which to develop and run programmes and support other smaller organisations to use wonderful space for their activities.

Northumbria University will be the sole Higher Education partner resident in the centre. This will include space dedicated to Northumbria University from which a variety of their undergraduate and postgraduate courses related to the creative industries will be taught, and where researchers, including PhD students, can be based. This co-location extends Northumbria's commitment to supporting and nurturing the skills and talent needed by the creative industries.

By housing other creative arts organisations, start-ups and commercial businesses the centre will encourage connections and collaboration to happen. All of which will strengthen the region's creative sector. In turn this will attract inward investment into the region and boost the local economy and provide new jobs, skills and training and

Who will own and operate the Centre for Writing and Publishing?

The building will be co-owned by New Writing North and Northumbria University. The creative life of the building and its public-facing work will be created and delivered by New Writing North.

More about New Writing North:

New Writing North was founded in 1996. They have supported thousands of professional writers over that time with great success. Many have gone on to become successful authors, screenwriters, playwrights including Peter Straughan, winner of the

2025 Oscar for best screenplay, who was an early recipient of New Writing North support.

They have strong working partnerships with the BBC, Channel 4, Film4, Audible, Substack and Hachette UK. This means they are well-placed to bring together partners from different industries into the new centre for writing. This will benefit the creative sector in the North East.

Where is the centre going to be?

The intention is to acquire the Old Post Office on St Nicholas Street, Newcastle upon Tyne.

A number of locations have been considered, including Bolbec Hall in early 2025. However, in summer 2025, the Old Post Office came onto the market and presented a unique opportunity as a location for the project. The Old Post Office is a larger, more accessible and more recently updated building and presents better value for money. It will also bring back into public usage one of the city's most beautiful buildings.

The Old Post Office is situated within Newcastle City Council's Creative Central NCL - a zone for independent artists, creative professionals, and cultural organisations to thrive in central Newcastle.

How much will the Old Post Office cost to buy and transform into a centre for writing?

The current working budget for the acquisition of the building and a full refurbishment is £10.5 million. The project is in the process of securing funding from the North East Combined Authority (£2 million), Newcastle City Council (£1 million), Northumbria University (£2.5 million) and the Cultural Development Fund (£5 million).

What are the economic benefits of the Centre for Writing?

A detailed analysis of the project with specialist consultants New Skills has been done. The impact of the centre once fully functional will be: 11 new direct Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) jobs created (in operating the new centre, workspaces and support programmes), 44.4 new indirect FTE jobs created in businesses operating from the new centre (i.e. tenants, flexible users), 62 indirect jobs created in businesses (including freelancers) benefitting from support programmes and commissioning and additional city centre footfall (37,595 visits) generating £3.2m spend per year.

What will the centre be called?

We are still in preliminary stages of all decisions about the centre, so there is not an official name yet. For the purposes of the rest of the capital works campaign we will refer to it as the Centre for Writing and Publishing.

What is capital works?

Capital works is a term that refers to design development, cost assessment, construction procurement, renovation of a building or structure, or the purchase of equipment or land.

What about the rest of New Writing North's work across the North?

New Writing North will continue to run programmes and events across the North of England and look to build broader partnerships fuelled by the new opportunities of the centre.

Will New Writing North still work with communities in the region?

Yes, we will continue to deliver wide-ranging engagement projects to encourage reading and writing habits and to enable underserved communities to engage with writing. This includes an award-winning programme for young writers that reaches over 2,000 young people in schools and communities each year. This work will continue to happen in communities in the North East. We will always continue to deliver work within communities as well as in our new building.

When will the centre for writing and publishing be open?

The ambition is to open by 2028. However as with all large-scale building projects, especially ones involving heritage buildings, there are many variables, and this timeline may change.

Will it be free?

The building will be free to enter. The workshops and events that take place at the centre will be a mix of free and paid-for, as are current New Writing North programmes.

What are the opening times?

It is too early to say what the opening hours will be, but we hope to be a very bustling and busy centre that many people can use throughout the day and that hosts lots of opportunities for people to be involved.

How can I get involved?

We are very excited about the possibilities that the centre will bring for us and partners. Over the next three years we will be looking to build partnerships and to begin discussions with a wide range of people, businesses and organisations about how we can work together in new ways. If you would like to contact us, please email centre@newwritingnorth.com and we'll direct your enquiry to the right team member.

