

# Spread the Word: London Writers Awards Evaluation Brief

Spread the Word is seeking an evaluator for our high-profile annual development programme, the London Writers Awards for writers underrepresented in publishing.

The evaluator will have demonstrable experience of designing and delivering effective quantitative and qualitative evaluation frameworks and activity within an arts or creative industry context and, ideally, a knowledge and understanding of the non-profit literature and/or publishing sectors.

This is a significant freelance contract running over 20 months (from October 2021 to May 2023) and is open to UK based applicants only.

This Brief outlines our work, the context in which we work, the London Writers Awards programme, its outcomes, alongside the details of the work in hand and how to apply for the contract.

Spread the Word particularly welcomes and encourages applications from people with lived experience and/or an understanding of the issues most affecting the communities we work with and for. All reasonable adjustments will be made for shortlisted candidates.

## **Brief contents**

1. About Spread the Word
2. Context
3. The London Writers Awards Programme
4. Outcomes
5. The Brief
  - a. Primary Task
  - b. Outputs
  - c. Timeline and Delivery
  - d. Budget
  - e. Project Management
6. How to apply

### **1. About Spread the Word**

Spread the Word is London's Writer development agency, which means we are here to help London's writers make their mark – on the page, the screen and in the world.

We do this by kick starting the careers of London's best new writers, and energetically campaigning to ensure that publishing truly reflects the diversity of the city. We support the

creative and professional development of writing talent, by engaging those already interested in literature and those who will be, and by advocating on behalf of both. Spread the Word is committed, collaborative and adventurous. Operating in one of the most diverse and creative cities in the world, our work is focused on:

- Writers having the time, space and money to produce quality work and live as a writer;
- Readers and audiences experiencing a greater range of writing produced by London writers;
- More diverse writers being published by publishing houses and other media.

We act as a dynamic broker between writers, producers, agents, publishers, arts, and non-arts organisations. We manage a number of projects to support us to achieve our vision, including:

- a) London Writers Awards
- b) Young People's Laureate for London
- c) Life Writing Prize

Spread the Word is a charity and a National Portfolio Organisation of Arts Council England.

## **2. Context**

Spread the Word has a national and internationally recognised expertise and track record in the development and management of schemes for diverse writers and has led the literature and publishing sectors in commissioning research into diversity that has both ground-breaking and change making.

Our *Writing the Future Report*<sup>1</sup> (2015) provided the evidence base for a range of initiatives across the publishing industry. We are a partner with *The Bookseller* on the recently launched *Rethinking 'Diversity' in Publishing Report*<sup>2</sup> (June 2020) led by Dr Anamik Saha and Dr Sandra van Lente, Goldsmiths, University of London and the first academic study in the UK addressing the lack of diversity in the UK publishing industry.

The impact of not hearing our citizens' stories is felt acutely in cities like London. It means that despite being a world-leading culturally diverse city we do not hear the stories that reflect the voices of all our citizens.

The disproportionate impact of Covid-19 on Black and Asian communities and the drive for radical change from Black Lives Matters in the light of George Floyd's death, have thrown

---

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.spreadtheword.org.uk/writing-the-future/>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.rethinkingdiversity.org.uk>

into sharp focus the long-standing systemic and structural inequalities and lack of equity across our society and our culture.

The significant attitudinal, cultural, social and economic barriers faced by Black, Asian, Arab, Mixed Race and non-white Latinx and other under-represented writers, mean that the most stories we get to read and hear continue to express a narrow, and largely privileged, perspective and experience. Research has confirmed the shocking lack of diversity in children's<sup>3</sup> books where just 1% of lead characters are Black and in UK YA publishing where the number of authors of colour published has gone down between 2006 and 2016<sup>4</sup>.

The Bookseller's Working Class Survey findings<sup>5</sup> confirm that there are on-going access and inclusion issues across the publishing sector which impact not only on who is employed within the industry but also on the range of writers being acquired and going on to be published.

Arts Council England's *The State of 21<sup>st</sup> Century Fiction* found: *"writers from low income backgrounds (many of whom are disabled and/or BAME) are less likely to embark on a career in writing than their better-off peers as they are less able to take financial risks. This comes in addition to problems that are already recognised: those people from BAME or working class backgrounds who do attempt to gain entry to the publishing industry, either as writers or editors, publicists etc, are less likely to be successful. Given literature's position as a cultural gateway – the first artform to which most of us are exposed, and the one to which all of us, no matter where we live, have access to – the long-term implications, both social and artistic, of this state of affairs are significant."*

---

<sup>3</sup> Reflecting Realities – A Survey of Ethnic Representation with UK Children's Literature 2017 (Arts Council England/ CLPE) <https://clpe.org.uk/library-and-resources/research/reflecting-realities-survey-ethnic-representation-within-uk-children>

<sup>4</sup> The Eight Percent Problem: Authors of Colour in the British Youth Adult Market (2006-2016) by Dr Melanie Ramdarsham Bold, *Publishing Research Quarterly*, July 2018  
<https://link.springer.com/content/pdf/10.1007%2Fs12109-018-9600-5.pdf>

<sup>5</sup> [https://www.thebookseller.com/sites/default/files/BS08\\_p06\\_09.pdf](https://www.thebookseller.com/sites/default/files/BS08_p06_09.pdf)

### 3. The London Writers Awards Programme

Set up in 2018 as a response to our *Writing the Future* report, the London Writers Awards is a highly regarded annual development scheme for talented writers from communities and backgrounds currently under-represented in publishing: Black, Asian, global majority writers, d/Deaf and disabled writers, lesbian, bisexual, gay, trans-sexual and queer writers and working class writers.

The Awards aim to support writers to complete their manuscripts and to get agented. 30 London-based writers are selected each year from open submission. The Awards are free to participate in and offer bursaries and an access fund. The genres covered by the Awards are: literary fiction (including short stories); commercial fiction; narrative non-fiction and children's/YA.

It is an intensive scheme for advanced, un-agented writers, offering critical feedback groups, introductions to and contact with the publishing industry, 1-2-1 feedback and professional development sessions, self-care workshops and resources, and creative and career masterclasses.

Three new strands have been introduced into the Awards' programme of activity: Developing Tutors (to provide writers with the opportunity to gain experience and get paid for running creative writing workshops); an Alumni Network and a self-care strand of work.

The London Writers Awards are currently funded by Arts Council England and the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation and receive sponsorship from ALCS.

### 4. Outcomes

The outcomes and associated progress indicators for the London Writers Awards programme are:

Key Outcome	Progress indicators
1. Increase the number of underrepresented London writers being published	10% writers acquired by a publisher (12 over four years)  30% have work presented through to a publisher by an agent or direct presentation (36 writers over four years)  90% reporting increased knowledge of publishing marketplace (108 over four years)
2. Increase the number of underrepresented writers becoming agented	40% writers taken on by an agent (48 over four years)  70% have their work read by an agent (84 over four years)  90% reporting increased knowledge in how to find and approach an agent (108 over four years)

<p>3. Spread the Word will have influenced how effective writer development practice for underrepresented writers is delivered</p>	<p>Raised profile and awareness of the programme, learnings from the programme and Spread the Word's work across sector/ trade publications, media and platforms</p> <p>Spread the Word acknowledged as thought leader in writer development work leading to additional opportunities and partnerships</p> <p>Programme seen as representative of good practice in supporting underrepresented writers with elements of programme design being taken up by wider literature/ publishing sector</p>
--	--

The programme delivers directly on two of Spread the Word's shorter-term and longer-term key outcomes within our Theory of Change:

Shorter-term:

- Writers can access information and opportunities to support the development of their career and craft;
- Agents know about and publishers are open to publishing talented diverse London writers.

Longer-term:

- Writers have time, space and money to produce quality work and live as a writer;
- More diverse writers are published by mainstream publishing houses and other media.

We expect the programme to impact on our final longer-term outcome:

- Readers and audiences experience a greater range of writing produced by London's writers.

For the first three years of the scheme, evaluation has been devised and run internally by the Spread the Word team. This data and associated reports and case studies will be made available to the successful candidate.

## 5. The Brief

### a. Primary Task

The focus of this work will be primarily on the third outcome listed in section 4.

The evaluation will assess: the programme design model and its effectiveness in delivering equity and access to writers underrepresented in UK publishing; the impact on furthering their careers as writers, and the impact on the publishing industry with a focus on how the

programme has informed/ influenced development schemes run by publishers, literary agents and other arts organisations.

#### **b. Outputs**

The primary output is an impact report, which we will publish and promote in May 2023.

The work will involve the following elements subject to discussion with the evaluator:

- Evaluation framework
- Baseline, mid and end survey of each year's cohort of writers
- Annual survey of partners, agents and publishers
- Annual contextual analysis
- Preparatory and debrief meetings with Spread the Word team

#### **c. Timeline and Delivery**

Application window:	Monday 2 August to Friday 3 September 2021
Interview:	Friday 17 September 2021 (on Zoom)
Evaluator confirmed:	by Wednesday 22 September 2021
Commencement meeting:	Thursday 30 September (either on Zoom or in person)
Evaluation begins:	October 2021
Evaluation ends:	November 2022
Evaluation draft report:	March 2023
Evaluation report published:	May 2023

We would expect to have a progress meeting every 4-6 weeks.

#### **d. Budget**

The total fee to the evaluator for this freelance contract is £16,000 (inclusive of VAT and expenses). This covers approximately 40 days of work from October 2021 to May 2023. There is an additional budget to cover final report edit design, production and distribution.

#### **e. Project Management**

The work and contract will be managed by Bobby Nayyar, programme manager for the London Writers Awards.

The work will have input and oversight from Ruth Harrison, director, and Eva Lewin, writer development manager.

### **6. How to apply**

Please note that this contract is for UK based evaluators only who have experience of non-profit evaluation. Knowledge of the arts and publishing sectors is also desirable. We welcome applications from evaluators who reflect the underrepresented groups supported in this programme.

Please email the following to [hello@spreadtheword.org.uk](mailto:hello@spreadtheword.org.uk) by the deadline of: **12pm on Friday 3 September 2021:**

- Your evaluation proposal (no longer than five sides of A4) outlining your proposed methodology, budget and timeline, and experience of researching and writing previous evaluation reports; as well as your understanding of the brief, how you would approach the role and your relevant experience.

Shortlisted candidates will be interviewed online on Friday 17 September. Please confirm if you can attend on this date in your application email. For the successful applicant, we will also request contact details of two previous clients to seek references.

Please let us know of any reasonable adjustments that will need to be made, if you are invited to be interviewed.

Please make the email subject heading: London Writers Awards Evaluation

If you would like further information or to talk about what's involved prior to applying, please email [bobby@spreadtheword.org.uk](mailto:bobby@spreadtheword.org.uk) to arrange a call.

**Contacts:**

Ruth Harrison, Director

Email: [ruth@spreadtheword.org.uk](mailto:ruth@spreadtheword.org.uk)

Mobile: 07866 362870

Bobby Nayyar, Programme Manager

Email: [bobby@spreadtheword.org.uk](mailto:bobby@spreadtheword.org.uk)

Mobile: 07891169286