

## **Wellcome Collection x Spread the Word Writing Awards**

### **Application Pack**

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#### **About the Awards**

Spread the Word has partnered with Wellcome Collection to launch an ambitious project aiming to find and support writers from underrepresented groups, who have a big idea for a non-fiction book for general readers, that engages with health and being human.

Do you have a big idea or a burning story to tell that touches on being human? Wellcome Collection explores health and human experiences, from climate change to mental health, identity, wellbeing and infectious diseases, making connections across science, medicine, life and art. But all too often the stories we have told and the narratives in our museum are from a white, Western, ableist perspective. We urgently need new points of view, and new voices.

We are looking for applications from writers who have considered writing non-fiction for a general audience but have not had the guidance and support to develop their ideas. We will

be offering up to 6 places on a five-month development programme that will run from February to June 2022.

The programme will offer the selected writers:

- A £2,000 bursary
- Insight and Industry days
- Mentoring by a published author
- Mentoring by a non-fiction editor
- An induction to Wellcome Collection, its library and resources
- 1:1 sessions with Wellcome Collection's team, including the publishing team, library research specialists and Stories editorial team
- The chance to be published by Wellcome Collection
- Four workshops on writing non-fiction
- Meeting with an agent
- Travel and Access fund as required

We will be selecting up to 6 writers to take part in the programme. By the end of the five-month programme the writers will have honed their book idea into a proposal and sample extract. We will close the programme with a sharing event at Wellcome Collection with networking with agents and editors. Each writer will be awarded a £2,000 bursary to support their writing and research. There will be a travel fund to support those who live outside of London, as some of the project will take place in person in London. There will also be an access fund to support writers who may need additional support to take part. At this stage we are planning for the opening and closing events to take place in person.

If you have a question or would like more information, please contact Spread the Word's Bobby Nayyar at [bobby@spreadtheword.org.uk](mailto:bobby@spreadtheword.org.uk).

**Who is this programme for?**

The Writing Awards aims to increase the diversity of writers actively writing a non-fiction book that touches on health and being human. Applications will be open to writers who identify as:

- D/deaf, disabled, and/or neurodivergent and/or
- Black, Asian, or Global Majority\*
- Unpublished or have not published or self-published a non-fiction book(s)
- Unagented
- Aged 18+
- Full-time resident in the UK

\*Global Majority defined as Black, Indigenous and people of colour.

**How we define Non-Fiction about Health and Being Human**

To be eligible for the programme, your proposed book project should have a central theme that engages with some aspect of medicine, health, illness, or identity. This can cover many genres of writing – including science, medicine, memoir, history, essay or polemic. Examples published under the Wellcome Collection imprint include *After the Storm* by Emma Jane Unsworth, *The Rules of Contagion* by Adam Kucharski, *How to Stay Sane in an Age of Division* by Elif Shafak, and *Being Mortal* by Atul Gawande.

At some point, health, illness and medicine touch all our lives. Writing that finds stories in those moments adds new meaning to what it means to be human. The subjects these projects grapple with might include but not be limited to: the climate crisis, mental health, physical illness, the body, infection, pain, memory, identity, medical justice, and

decolonising health. In keeping with its vision and goals, the Wellcome Collection x Spread the Word Writing Award aims to change whose stories and work is published in the UK.

### **What you need to do to apply**

Applications will be managed by Spread the Word's [Submittable](#) and will be open from midday on Monday 18<sup>th</sup> October 2021 and close at 5pm on Monday 22<sup>nd</sup> November. You will need to create a free Submittable account to enter. There will be a form to complete with your contact details plus:

- An eligibility statement about your writing life, what you aim to achieve in the programme, and how you meet the eligibility criteria (300 words)
- An outline of the idea for the book you'd like to write and how it relates to health and being human (300 words)
- Optional access information (150 words)
- Upload a sample of your writing. This could be from the project you'd like to write or a piece from another prose project, which could be fiction or non-fiction. (up to 3,000 words)

There will also be a Submittable form, which you can use to enter with Audio or Video files. If you require further information on submitting your entry, please contact us at [hello@spreadtheword.org.uk](mailto:hello@spreadtheword.org.uk).

### **How is it judged?**

There will be several rounds of assessment of your Submittable application plus an interview via Zoom to select the final 6 writers for the programme. In the first stage all entries will be anonymised and read by a first reader as well as staff at both Wellcome Collection and Spread the Word. A longlist will be read by the three judges Dr Annabel Sowemimo, Dr Camilla Pang, and Raymond Antrobus to decide upon the 9 candidates to be interviewed for the 6 spaces on the programme. The interview will take place via Zoom and will last up to 30 minutes. We will undertake our own due diligence at the longlisting stage

to ensure that the applicants are eligible. The shortlisted candidates will need to prove their full-time residency in the UK.

We are looking for writers who are fully committed to making a step-change in their writing careers to focus on writing a non-fiction book that engages with some aspect of health. We will be looking for varied and compelling ideas, clarity that you are ready to make the most of this ambitious opportunity, and an exceptional writing sample. The main deliverable of the programme is for each writer to have developed their idea into a proposal plus sample that will be ready to submit to agents and publishers. Our overall goal is for each writer to go on and be published in this field. Wellcome Collection will be requesting first refusal on each proposal for a period of three months from the completion of the programme. This means they will have the first opportunity to make an offer to publish the books developed by the writers.

### **Key dates**

18 October – 22 November 2021 – Application window

Wednesday 27 October, 7pm-8pm – Zoom event about the Awards with Q&A

w/c 3 January 2022 – All applicants will be contacted to let them know if they have been selected for interview

Thursday 13 January – Interviews for shortlisted candidates

Monday 17 January – Shortlisted applicants will be contacted to let them know if they have been selected for the programme

Saturday 12 February – In person Induction and Industry Day at Wellcome Collection in London

Wednesday 29 June – In person evening sharing event at Wellcome Collection in London

There will also be workshops delivered via Zoom in March, April and May. Mentoring sessions will be conducted either in person or online. There will be optional access to the Wellcome Collection Library, plus additional sessions either in person or online. Dates are

provisional at this stage. A full schedule of dates will be given to the successful candidates in January 2022.

### **About Wellcome Collection**

Wellcome Collection is a free museum exploring health and human experience. Our vision is to challenge how we all think and feel about health by connecting science, medicine, life and art. We offer changing exhibitions, museum and library collections, online stories and public events, in addition to a café. Wellcome Collection publishes books on what it means to be human and collaborates widely to reach broad and diverse audiences locally and globally.

Wellcome Collection is part of Wellcome, a global charitable foundation that supports science to solve urgent health challenges. Wellcome supports discovery research into life, health and wellbeing, with a focus on mental health, global heating and infectious diseases.

### **About Spread the Word**

Spread the Word is London's writer development agency, a charity and a National Portfolio client of Arts Council England. It is funded to help London's writers make their mark on the page, the screen and in the world and build strategic partnerships to foster a literature ecology which reflects the cultural diversity of contemporary Britain. Spread the Word has a national and international reputation for initiating change-making research and developing programmes for writers that have equity and social justice at their heart. In 2015 it launched, *Writing the Future: Black and Asian Writers and Publishers in the UK Market Place*. In 2020 it launched *Rethinking 'Diversity' in Publishing* by Dr Anamik Saha and Dr Sandra van Lente, Goldsmiths, University of London, in partnership with The Bookseller and Words of Colour. Spread the Word's programmes include: the Young People's Laureate for London, the London Writers Awards, the national Life Writing Prize and *This Is Our Place*.

## **FAQ**

### **Do I have to pay anything?**

No. Participation in the Spread the Word x Wellcome Collection Writing Awards is free at the point of delivery. For the recipients who live in London, travel costs associated with participating will not be covered by Spread the Word. For the recipients who live outside of London there will be a travel fund to cover journeys to in person activity. Each recipient will receive a £2,000 bursary to cover costs in developing their ideas. There is also an access fund to support writers participating in the programme.

### **Will it be online or in person?**

At this stage we are preparing for the programme to be run in person and online via Zoom. We are also monitoring the advice from the government and will make a decision towards the year on the balance of in person and online activity.

### **Will it take up much of my time?**

This is a short but intensive programme with workshops, mentoring sessions, events and opportunities to develop your work on site at Wellcome Collection. We want to be ambitious with the programme, so that each candidate develops their ideas into a detailed proposal and sample extract by the end of June 2022. We estimate that you will need to commit 25 hours per month to make the most of the opportunities the programme will offer you.

### **I've done/am doing a creative writing course – can I apply?**

If you are currently or are about to be enrolled in a graduate or postgraduate creative writing programme (BA, MA or PhD) or currently are or will be part of a longer-term development programme for writers that lasts for 3 months and above (such as the Faber Academy, Curtis Brown Creative, Jerwood Arvon Mentoring scheme, Penguin Random House Write Now, London Libraries Emerging Writers scheme) you are not eligible to apply. If you have previously completed a BA, MA or PhD in creative writing in the last two years,

you are also not eligible to apply. We have made this eligibility requirement to reach people who have not had sustained writer development.

**I'm a published writer, can I apply?**

Yes, you can apply as long as you have not self-published or published a non-fiction book for a general trade audience. If you have published an academic monograph, you can still apply.

**I have an agent, can I apply?**

No, we are looking for writers who do not yet have the support and guidance of an agent.

**I have access needs, what should I do?**

If you have access requirements that will need to be supported for you to participate in the programme, please complete the relevant section in the submission form when submitting your application.

**Is this programme connected to the Wellcome Collection publishing imprint? Will they publish my book?**

Staff from Wellcome Collection's publishing imprint will be involved in the judging and delivery of the programme. The Publishing team are actively looking for under-represented writers to take on and publish.

Participation in the scheme shall not be interpreted as a commitment to publish your work, and you will not be obliged to accept any publishing offer made to you during or following the scheme. However, by accepting the terms of the scheme, applicants agree that they will extend to Wellcome Collection the first option of publishing their first work of non-fiction on fair and reasonable market terms to be agreed in good faith.



**Does my proposal have to relate to items in Wellcome Collection?**

No. There's no requirement for your proposal to centre on, or refer to, Wellcome Collection's archive or exhibition themes, or the wider research and priorities of Wellcome.

As long as your idea relates to health and being human, we want to hear about it.

If you take part in the programme, there will be support to start researching your idea within Wellcome Collection's library collection and with its wider research partners and network. Whatever your starting point, we hope this will be a valuable resource. But we recognise this might not be relevant to every writer's idea or approach.

**My question isn't listed here – what do I do?**

Please also read the terms and conditions in this document. If you still have any questions, please email Bobby at [bobby@spreadtheword.org.uk](mailto:bobby@spreadtheword.org.uk).

**Terms and Conditions**

1. Applicants must be aged 18+.
2. Applicants must be permanently resident in the UK.
3. Applicants must be D/deaf or disabled, neurodivergent and/or Black, Asian, or Global Majority (defined as black, indigenous and people of colour).
4. Applicants can be unpublished or published, as long as they have not published or self-published a non-fiction book for a general trade audience. If you have published an academic monograph, you can still apply.
5. Applicants must be unagented.

6. Applicants who are currently enrolled on an academic creative writing course (BA, MA or PhD) or have completed a BA, MA or PhD in creative writing in the last two years in the last two years are not eligible to apply.
7. Applicants who have been selected for a writer development programme that runs during February-June 2022 are not eligible to apply.
8. Applications will be accepted either online through our Submittable page: <https://spreadtheword.submittable.com/submit> Or as an audio or video file entered through our Submittable page. If you have access requirements and need assistance to apply, please contact [bobby@spreadtheword.org.uk](mailto:bobby@spreadtheword.org.uk).
9. To qualify, an application must consist of two items: the completed online/audio/video form and an uploaded sample of creative writing written in prose, which can be uploaded as a Word/PDF/audio and/or video file.
10. Incomplete applications will not be considered or acknowledged.
11. Applications must be written by a single author who meets the eligibility criteria of the Writing Awards.
12. All work submitted must be the individual and original work of the applicant.
13. Applications must be in English.
14. Applications received after the deadline of 5pm on Monday 22 November 2021 will not be accepted.
15. Applicants agree that they will extend to Wellcome Collection the first option of publishing their first work of non-fiction on fair and reasonable market terms to be

agreed in good faith. The first option will last for three months from the completion of the programme.

16. The written sample does not need to be from the non-fiction project the applicant plans to write. The sample could be from a novel, novella, short story or non-fiction article or narrative. We will not be accepting poetry submissions. The sample must be a maximum of 3,000 words, please ensure your prose extract is double-spaced, 12-point font and paginated. If you are submitting an audio application, this will need to be in one of the following formats: MP3; WAV or M4A. Please contact us if you plan to apply by audio. If you are submitting a video application, this will need to be either in MP4 or MOV file format. Please contact us if you plan to apply by video.
17. Entries will be judged anonymously. To that effect, please do not include your name on any uploaded documents. This includes your writing sample. Any writing samples with names or identifying information on them will render the application disqualified.
18. Only one application will be considered per writer.
19. Due to the high number of applications, Spread the Word does not guarantee to offer feedback on any application.
20. Shortlisted applicants will be invited for an interview on Thursday 13 January 2022 online via Zoom. Please check that you are available on this date before applying. We will confirm the interview format and other details in January.
21. Successful applicants must be available to attend all the activities associated with the Writing Awards, including an in person launch event on Saturday 12 February 2022, workshops, mentoring, meetings, one-on-one support, and a sharing event on

Wednesday 29 June 2022. A full schedule of dates will be made available to successful applicants.

22. For the avoidance of doubt, the Award organisers are under no obligation to select the maximum number of Winning Applicants (i.e. six) if it is felt that not enough of the Submissions are of a sufficient quality.
23. Participation in the programme is free at the point of delivery. Other costs associated with participating in the Writing Awards will not be covered by Spread the Word.
24. Each recipient will be awarded a bursary of £2,000, which must be used to support the development of their proposed project.
25. Access funding will be given to writers with access requirements and made at Spread the Word's discretion. If you request access funding, you must complete the access funding section of the application form.
26. Spread the Word reserves the right to withdraw and reclaim the financial value of an Award, bursary or access fund monies and to ask the recipient to leave the programme if they fail to attend activities without a valid reason, break our code of conduct, or are found to have fabricated any information or material in their application.
27. Spread the Word will make final decisions on eligibility and perform due diligence checks on interview candidates. Our decisions are final, and no correspondence will be entered into on the subject. Please also refer to the eligibility criteria.
28. Successful applicants must be available to participate in media and PR for the Writing Awards' announcement, sharing event and related activity.

29. Judges, their close family members, employees or trustees of Spread the Word and Wellcome Collection are not permitted to apply.
30. Submission of an application to the Wellcome Collection x Spread the Word Writing Awards will be taken to mean acceptance of Spread the Word's and Submittable's privacy policies.
31. Submission of an application to the Wellcome Collection x Spread the Word Writing Awards will be taken to mean acceptance of these terms and conditions. Entries that fail to comply with these terms and conditions will be disqualified.
32. The judges' decision is final and no correspondence or discussion about the judging process will be entered into.
33. Spread the Word reserves the right to alter dates, timeline, and terms and conditions stated above should it be necessary for any reason.