

## **How to apply for the London Writers Awards 2026**

**This is an inclusive and easy to read application pack.**

The pack tells you everything you need to know about our awards including:

- Why we set up the Awards
- Who can enter
- How to enter
- What the Awards offer
- Entry fee and costs
- How the Awards will run this year
- How to apply for the Awards
- How we choose the writers
- Who is judging the Awards
- Funding and bursary money
- Access fund for disabled writers
- When to send in your application
- Anything else you need to know

You can get this pack in other formats including audio. Please go our webpage to find out more:

<https://www.spreadtheword.org.uk/projects/london-writers-awards/>

Please read all the information in the pack.

We will be setting up a **free online information session** about the Awards on **30 September 2025**. You can find out how to book a place on page 6 of this pack.

If you want to ask a question or need more information, please send an email to

Bobby Nayyar: **bobby@spreadtheword.org.uk**

## Who we are and what we do

We are **Spread the Word**.

We give support and advice to writers in London.

We want to help writers who may not always get the same chances to:

- get their work published
- connect communities to words and stories

We work with writers that believe in equal chances and social justice. This is at the heart of all our work.

We publish books and run programmes for writers including:

- CRIPtic Arts
- Spread the Word Salon
- Wellcome Collection Non-Fiction Awards
- Literature Festivals and Campaigns

We want to remove the barriers some people might face when they try to get published. By doing this we get to read and hear the work and stories of writers across the whole of society.

## More about the London Writers Awards

We want to give more opportunities to writers who may not get the same chances as other people.

We started this programme in 2018.

In the last 5 years we have:

- ✓ Supported **144 writers**
- ✓ **50 writers** have an agent
- ✓ **62 books** have been published

Writers who took part in our awards programme include

**Natasha Brown, Tice Cin, Oisín McKenna, Ashani Lewis, Tom Newlands, Pam Williams and Santanu Bhattacharya.**

We want to thank **Sam and Rosie Berwick.**

They have donated money to support **24 writers** every year from **2025-2027**.

This programme will give writers without an agent or publisher the chance to take part in:

- a development programme for **10 months** from **February to November 2026**
- **2 Writers Labs** with talks and workshops by writers, agents and publishers
- **13 critical feedback sessions** – this is when your work is talked about with an experienced author in a supportive group
- **5 creative masterclasses**
- **3 career seminars**
- **121 professional development meetings** with a Spread the Word team member.
- a meeting with an agent or editor.
- a **showcase booklet** of your work that we send to over **350 literary agents** plus support to introduce you to agents

We also offer funds for:

- ✓ writers on a low-income
- ✓ deaf and disabled writers

## Who can enter

Our Awards are aimed at adults who are 18 or over and live in London.

We have 24 spaces available on our programme.

You can enter your work in **3 different categories** of writing. You **must not** have an agent or have been published before.

We have spaces for people who write

- 1. Literary fiction – 12 spaces**
- 2. Commercial fiction** – this means crime, romance, thriller or science fiction **6 spaces**
- 3. Children and Young Adult Fiction** – this is writing aimed at young people but not picture books **6 spaces**

We are looking for writers who are:

- Black, Asian or from the **Global Majority**

- Disabled people – this might be a physical or a learning disability/difficulty.
- Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer (LGBTQIA+)
- Working class or from a working-class background
- On a low-income – you might be on benefits or living below the **London Living Wage**

As well as being unpublished with no agent, you must be:

- 18 or older
- Live in London full-time
- Not be working in publishing
- Have written at least 50% of the project you want to work on with us

## How to apply for the Awards

You can apply for the Awards from

**Midday on Tuesday 23 September 2025 until 5pm on Thursday 30 October 2025**

We use an online space called **Submittable** for you to upload your application.

You will need to make your own account to upload your information.

You can send in your Submittable form using

- √ Words
- √ Audio/Video

You can also send your application in the post.

There will be a separate form for each category of writing you apply for.

Here are the links to send your work to us

### Literary Fiction

<https://spreadtheword.submittable.com/submit/0aae94b3-8544-4447-856d-fefa60582e59/london-writers-awards-2026-literary-fiction>

### Commercial Fiction

<https://spreadtheword.submittable.com/submit/16aae8e8-f715-4942-acc2-52847ee243b1/london-writers-awards-2026-commercial-fiction>

## Young Adult/Children's Fiction

<https://spreadtheword.submittable.com/submit/c9d9aab2-4261-42dd-a6d3-1d43038e7bdf/london-writers-awards-2026-ya-childrens-fiction>

**Please use this link if you are sending an audio or video application.** You can use it for any category.

<https://spreadtheword.submittable.com/submit/028adc7a-d60d-4f60-9a13-ebbab02f3d8b/london-writers-awards-2026-audio-or-video-submission>

You can find out how to print and post your application here

<https://www.spreadtheword.org.uk/projects/london-writers-awards/>

Please post your entry to this address

**London Writers Awards  
Spread the Word  
The Albany  
Douglas Way  
London SE8 4AG**

## What to send to us

As well as your form and contact details, please add this information to your application

1. A statement about your writing life, what you want to get out of the programme, and why you meet what we are looking for

Please send **250 words** or **2 minutes 30 seconds** of Audio or Video

2. A **short summary of the project**

Please write this in. **30 words** or 1 minute of Audio or Video

3. A longer overview of your project

Please only send **300 words** or **2 minutes 30 seconds** of Audio or Video

4. Upload around **3000 words** from the project you want to work on. Try to send the start of the book if you can or you can record the first **3000 words**.

We only want to see what you have already written for your project. Please don't send poems or short stories.

If you want to apply for **bursary money** or the access fund, then you will need to send an extra **150 words** or **2 minutes** of audio or video

## **More support with your application**

We will have a form you can use to work on your application before you send it.

We will also have a free online session with **Ruth Harrison**. You can book for the event on this link:

<https://www.tickettailor.com/events/spreadtheword/1843039>

This is on

**Tuesday 30 September from 7- 8.15pm**

You can ask questions, get advice on how to apply and find out more about the programme. We will also have one of the judges with us and a writer who has taken part in the programme.

We will record the session and have a BSL interpreter there.

## **How we judge your application**

We want to find writers who are ready to make a change in the way they write and learn more about being an author.

We want to find people who are ready to finish writing the first draft of their book.

We will judge every application in the fairest way we can. For example, we won't know your name or who you are when we read your application.

We will have 2 rounds of reading so that everyone gets a fair chance.

After the second round we will make a long list of people we want to look at again.

Our judges will read the work of everyone on the long list. They will choose the people who go forward for an interview.

## Our judges

Our judges this year are

**Tom Newlands** - Literary Fiction A

**Ashani Lewis** - Literary Fiction B

**Tasneem Abdur-Rashid** - Commercial Fiction

**Alexandra Sheppard** - YA/Children's Fiction

**Liv Maidment**, Madeleine Milburn - Literary Fiction A

**Juliet Pickering**, Blake Friedmann - Literary Fiction B

**Kerry-Ann Bentley**, KAB Literary - Commercial Fiction

**Christabel McKinley**, DHA - YA/Children's Fiction

There are 2 literary fiction groups to judge as we have more spaces in this category.

We will have the interviews in person or on Zoom.  
Each interview will last around 30 minutes.

Here are the dates if we ask you to have an interview

Literary Fiction A and YA/Children's Fiction interviews

**Tuesday 20 January 2026**

Literary Fiction B interviews

**Wednesday 21 January 2026**

Commercial Fiction Interviews

**Thursday 22 January 2026**

## Key dates for applications

Application window opens

**Tuesday 23 September 2025 at 12pm (midday)**

Zoom event about London Writers Awards with Q&A

**Tuesday 30 September 2025, 7pm-8.15pm**

Application window closes

**Thursday 30 October 2025, 5pm**

We will let everyone who has applied if we have chosen you to come for an interview by

**Thursday 8 January 2026**

## **Key dates for interviews**

Literary Fiction A and YA/Children's Fiction interviews

**Tuesday 20 January 2026**

Literary Fiction B interviews

**Wednesday 21 January 2026**

Commercial Fiction Interviews

**Thursday 22 January 2026**

We will contact everyone on our shortlist by

**Monday 26 January 2026**

## **Key dates on the programme**

Writers Lab 1 in person event to start the programme

**Saturday 21 February 2026**

Writers Lab 2 in person event to close the programme

**Thursday 26 November 2026**

We will run all the masterclasses and seminars in person.

We will run feedback sessions on Zoom.

We will make adjustments if you need this. Please let us know about your access needs.

**The dates might change but we will send the full list again in January 2026 if we choose you for the programme.**



## Bursary and access money

We want to support writers on a low income and deaf and disabled writers.

You can apply for both the bursary and the access fund if you want to.

The **bursary fund** is meant for

- Carers
- Single parents
- **Care leavers** (this means an adult who spent time in care as a child)
- Have experience of being homeless
- Ex-offenders
- Unemployed
- On a low income – this means either on benefits or a living below the **London Living Wage**

You can use this bursary money to travel and for materials. The amount of money will depend on

- ✓ How many people apply
- ✓ What needs you have

If you think you are the right person to apply for bursary money, please fill out the relevant section in your application form.

We are sorry but we can't accept applications from writers who are:

- ✓ Currently or are about to be enrolled in a graduate or postgraduate creative writing programme (BA, MA or PhD)
- ✓ Part of a longer-term development programme for writers (such as the Faber Academy, Curtis Brown Creative, Jerwood Arvon Mentoring scheme, Penguin Random House Write Now, London Libraries Emerging Writers scheme)
- ✓ Work in a publishing or literary agency
- ✓ Have previously completed a creative writing course in the last two years, you are also not eligible to apply.

We must have these rules so we can reach writers who haven't had the chance to be published before.

## **Anything else you need to know**

To find out more, please read our [Terms and Conditions](#) and [Eligibility Criteria](#) for the London Writers Awards.

If you still have questions, please email Bobby at [bobby@spreadtheword.org.uk](mailto:bobby@spreadtheword.org.uk).

Good luck with your application! We can't wait to hear from you!