**Northern Short Story Festival (NSSF) Academy**

Applications for the Northern Short Story Academy 2020/2021 are open from Thursday 20 August 2020 and close at midnight on Wednesday 30 September 2020. The Academy is supported by arts@Leeds, part of Leeds City Council, and The Walter Swan Trust.

The Academy is a development programme aimed at helping and supporting short story writers, resident in any part of Yorkshire, who have already shown serious commitment to short story writing, and who want help and support to develop their work further. Over the last two years we have supported 12 such writers, could you be one of our next intake? Perhaps you have published a few stories already (in print or in online magazines) or had stories placed or longlisted in competitions. If this sounds like you, we want to hear from you!

Successful applicants will participate in a monthly workshop critique group, where they will read and critique each other’s stories and if it is possible to take part in NSSF events in 2021.

The programme will last six months from January-June 2021, led by writer and creative writing tutor Anna Chilvers. The meetings will take place in Leeds on a Monday evening, or on Zoom if face-to face meetings are not possible. Participants should be willing to meaningfully engage with others' work by giving helpful and constructive critique. They should also be willing to accept critique and advice on their own work.

This is a rare development opportunity for short story writers in our region. Places on the scheme will be limited. For details on how to apply, please read on.

**Eligibility**

Please read these guidelines carefully, as any applications that do not meet the criteria or which are not formatted correctly will be disqualified without being read.

**Do I have to be from Yorkshire to apply?**

No. We do not mind where you are from, all we care is that you are here now.

However, you do need to be a current resident of Yorkshire (and be able to prove this), intending to stay here until the scheme ends in June 2021. You will also need to be able to come to Leeds (or to attend a Zoom meeting) on a Monday evening from 6-8 on the following dates: Jan 11th, Feb 15th, March 15th, April 19th, May 17th, June 14th. If you know you will be unable to make these dates, please do not apply.

**What do you expect of applicants?**

You need to be able to attend all 6 meetings/Zoom calls (dates above.) You also need to be willing to engage seriously and meaningfully with the other writers' work, and to accept critique and advice on your own work.

The Northern Short Story Festival has an ethos of writers helping other writers. We might ask you to participate in events, and to give something back to us either by writing a blog article about your participation in the Academy, or by writing short story book reviews for the blog. You will also need to be willing to take part in publicity around the scheme, for example by having your photo taken.

**Do I need to be under/ over a certain age?**

You need to be over 18, but other than that, you can be of any age.

**How much will it cost?**

Nothing. It is free to apply and, if you are successful, it will be free to participate. You will need to fund your own travel expenses to Leeds for meetings if they are not held via Zoom.

**How to apply**

Please read these guidelines carefully, as any applications that do not meet the criteria or which are not formatted correctly will be disqualified without being read.

To apply, please send us a writing sample (1,000 words) and a short, written statement covering the following:

**1. How can you show us you have already shown commitment to short story writing?**

This could be courses you have taken, workshops you have attended, or a group you go to. If you are self-taught, it could be the books you have read, or the number of hours you have spent writing. If you have published stories or been placed in a competition, please tell us about that here.

**2. Tell us why you think now is the time for you to access this opportunity.**

**3. What can you give back to the Northern Short Story Festival?**

The NSSF has an ethos of writers supporting other writers, and accessibility and equality of opportunity for everyone. We want to know how you and your approach would support that. If you can evidence this ability to help and support others, whether that is through literary citizenship, or from other areas of your life, please tell us about that here.

**4. How can you be an advocate for the Festival in the future?**

Our Academy Graduates will become a part of NSSF, and we hope that they will stay in touch with us as they continue to have success in their careers. We would like Graduates to be willing to help future Academy participants as they come through future schemes. Please tell us how you would support other writers and be an advocate for us in the future.

**5. Please tell us where you live.**

We do not need your full postal address. We just need confirmation that you live in Yorkshire and that you intend to stay here until June 2021.

**6. Your written statement and writing sample.**

Your written statement should be a maximum of 1000 words in total. Your writing sample should be 1000 words or less. These should appear together in a single Word document. The writing sample does not need to be a complete short story; it can be an excerpt (but please make it clear if this is the case.) In other words, the entire document should be fewer than 2,000 words.

Please send these to us in the following format:

1. Please send your statement and writing sample in a single Word document, saved in .doc or .docx format. Your name should not appear ANYWHERE in the Word document. If it does, we will disqualify your application.

2. The document should have a footer at the end of every page, containing the title of your story. For example, if your story is called “Billy and the Ants”, this should appear in a footer at the end of every page in the Word document.

3. Your story title should also be the subject header in the email you send. For example, if your story title is “Billy and the Ants”, when you send it to us, the subject header should be: Academy Application: Billy and The Ants. This allows us to read the applications blind and match them up afterwards.

4. Email it all to northernshortstoryfestival@gmail.com. This is also the email address to use should you have any questions.

5. All applications will be read blind. Canvassing of any type (whether that is via email, Facebook, direct message, phone, or in person) will result in your application being disqualified. Genuine queries may be addressed to northernshortstoryfestival@gmail.com.

6. You cannot change your application once it is in, so make sure you are happy with it before you send it.

7. Only one application per person. Subsequent applications from the same applicant will be discarded unread.

8. Closing date for applications is midnight on Wednesday 30th September 2020 and we hope to contact all successful applicants by the end of November 2020.

Good luck! The Academy application process is open to ALL writers who can fulfil the above criteria.