**Early Career Bursaries for London Writers: Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)**

We thought it might be useful for you to take a look through these FAQs, along with the Eligibility Criteria and Terms and Conditions, if you are thinking of submitting to the Early Career Bursaries programme this year. If you have a question about the programme, please take a look through these FAQs to see if it’s answered.

The Early Career Bursaries is a 12-month programme for unagented and unpublished writers aged over 18 and resident in London who are on a low income. By a low income we mean writers:

* whose income is through benefits (i.e.: Universal Credit, PIP etc);
* or whose income is paid at or below the London Living Wage hourly rate: [www.livingwage.org.uk/what-real-living-wage](https://www.livingwage.org.uk/what-real-living-wage);
* and whose savings do not exceed the amount needed to pay for three months living costs (rent, gas and electricity, food etc.).

If you are not sure this applies to you please feel free to contact us by emailing Emily Ajgan: [emily@spreadtheword.org.uk](mailto:emily@spreadtheword.org.uk) putting ‘Early Career Bursaries’ in the subject line.

The Early Career Bursaries particularly welcomes entries from writers from the following communities:

* Black, Asian, Global Majority;
* Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer (LGBTQ);
* Working class upbringing;
* Deaf and disabled;
* Refugee;
* Care experienced;
* Experience of homelessness;
* Experience of imprisonment.

Please note that the 2024 Bursaries are for writers who are developing an existing or early stage writing project in the following genres: Fiction for Adults (e.g., Literary Fiction, Commercial Genre Fiction, Short Stories), Young Adult Fiction, Narrative Non-Fiction (e.g., Life Writing and Memoir).

You can view the **BSL video**, listen to the **audio** and read **.doc** versions of these FAQs on the Bursary website: www.spreadtheword.org.uk/projects/early-career-bursaries/

**FAQs**

**What does the 2024 Bursary programme offer early career London writers?**

The 2024 Early Career Bursaries will offer three bursaries to the value of £15,000 to each successful applicant. £10,000 of each Bursary will be paid to the writer to create time to write and £5,000 will be held by Spread the Word on the writer’s behalf to go towards craft and career development opportunities.

The 2024 Bursary programme will run for 12 months from February 2024 to January 2025. Spread the Word will work with each successful applicant to develop a plan alongside a tailored package of support including: one to one professional development sessions and access to our regular programme of workshops, masterclasses, courses, networking events (with publishers and agents) and opportunities.

**Why has the Early Career Bursaries for London Writers programme been established?**

The Early Career Bursaries have been established as the need for early career writers to receive support is stark. Unlike other artistic professions there is no defined career pathway for writers. It is particularly true for writers whose voices are underrepresented in the UK’s publishing industry who do not have the networks and connections to support them to take their first steps as a writer. All writers need time. Time to create. And time to write. When you are at the beginning of your career creating time to write, and sustaining your life while doing so, is a priority. Without time, you cannot develop work to gain commissions or demonstrate your talent to agents and publishers.

**Why are the Bursaries just for London writers?**

Spread the Word is London’s literature development agency, this means that the majority of our work is focused on supporting London’s writers, with craft and career development opportunities.

**Why are the 2024 Bursaries just for writers of Fiction for Adults, Young Adult Fiction and Narrative Non-Fiction?**

This is the second year of the Bursaries following the pilot year where we opened applications to Literary Fiction, Commercial Fiction and Narrative Non-Fiction. Upon review of the submissions received, we have decided to include Young Adult Fiction this year. We may change these genres for future years as we analyse the submissions we get and indicators of need.

**Do I have to finish writing a book if I get a Bursary?**

No. The Early Career Bursary programme is focused on providing writers with the time and space to write and to explore and develop their work without the obligation or pressure of having a defined output (i.e.: finishing a book). The judges will be looking for applications from writers who have a clear idea of their goals for their writing over the Bursary period (12 months).

**Are the Bursaries just for writers who already have a writing project on the go?**

Yes. You can apply with an existing writing project you are working on or with an early stage writing project by which we mean you have a developed idea and an outlined plan (for e.g.: concept, characters, story arc) and have started writing the project you would like to work on.

**I’ve never done a creative writing workshop or development programme, should I apply?**

Yes. We want this programme to be open to writers who meet the eligibility criteria regardless of any previous creative writing development they have had.

**What can the cash part of the Bursary be used for?**

The £10,000 cash part of the Bursary can be used by successful applicants to help them create time to write for e.g.: to cover living costs, rent, childcare etc.

**What can the development part of the Bursary be used for?**

The £5,000 towards craft and career development can be used for, for e.g.: mentoring, memberships/subscriptions, research costs (for e.g.: travel and accommodation), equipment (for e.g.: laptop), retreats and feedback. Spread the Word will work with each successful applicant to create a plan and tailored package of support over the 12 months of their Bursary. Please note there is a limit on spend for equipment to ensure there are funds available for craft and career development.

**How will the Bursary be paid?**

We will agree with each successful applicant the best way for them to receive the cash part of the Bursary. The development part of the Bursary will be held by Spread the Word and we will pay directly for agreed development opportunities.

**I’m on benefits and I’m concerned that receiving a bursary may affect them.**

We are aware of the impact of receiving additional money when you are on benefits and that notifications of changes in circumstances may need to be made to the relevant government body. We will work with you to help mitigate any changes that could occur. If you have any further questions about this, please contact Emily Ajgan: [emily@spreadtheword.org.uk](mailto:emily@spreadtheword.org.uk)

**Will I have to pay tax on the Bursary?**

Tax is likely to be due on the cash part of the Bursary (£10,000). We would advise successful applicants to get advice from their Financial Advisor. If you do not have a Financial Advisor, we can help you to get access to the advice you need.

**I’m currently on or about to start a graduate or postgraduate programme in any discipline (BA, BSc, MA, Msc, Mphil or Phd) and/ or be accepted on a longer-term writer development programme (for e.g.: WriteNow, London Libraries Development Programme, Faber Academy), can I apply for a bursary?**

No. If you have completed your course or development programme you can apply, otherwise you are not eligible.

**I’ve just received or am about to receive funding to support my writing work (for e.g.: Arts Council England’s Developing Your Creative Practice), can I apply for a bursary?**

No.

**Can the Early Career Bursary be used as match-funding for a grant or another bursary application?**

No.

**Can the Early Career Bursary cash bursary be used to pay for or pay off university fees or a longer-term professional development course, for e.g.: a creative writing course?**

No.

**Can I submit more than one entry?**

Only one entry will be accepted. Please adhere to this; if we see multiple entries we will read your first entry and discount the others.

**Is there a fee to apply for a Bursary?**

There is no fee for applying.

**Does the Bursary programme have an access fund?**

Yes. An access fund is available for deaf and disabled writers to fully access the Early Career Bursaries offer. This fund will be a contribution to the additional costs that may be incurred for you to participate in the programme (e.g. for BSL interpreters, additional personal assistant support, scribe). There is space on the entry form for you to tell us about any reasonable adjustments that may need to be made.

**Can I submit a video or audio entry?**

You may submit your answers to the entry form questions (Eligibility Supporting Statements, Access Fund, About Your Project) by text in English, audio in spoken English or video in spoken English or British Sign Language.

Your writing extract will need to be by text in English.

You can download the entry form from the Bursary website which gives more details. The entry form is available in BSL, audio and .doc format.

**How do I make my submission?**

Online entries should be made through the online form:

[spreadtheword.submittable.com/submit](https://spreadtheword.submittable.com/submit)

This link is also on the Early Career Bursaries for London Writers website. Please note you will need to create an account with Submittable, which is free to do, to submit your entry. For your reference, we have provided BSL, audio and .doc versions of the entry form on the Bursaries website so you can prepare your submission prior to entering.

If you prefer to post a printout of your entry, you can download the postal entry form from the Bursary website. The entry form is available in BSL, audio and .doc format from this link:

www.spreadtheword.org.uk/projects/early-career-bursaries

Send it to: Early Career Bursaries 2024, Spread the Word, The Albany, Douglas Way, London SE8 4AG.

We can only accept printed text postal entries. Please make sure you send us copies of your work as postal entries cannot be returned. We will acknowledge receipt.

**Can my writing extract be from a different writing project from the project I want to develop during the Bursary?**

No. Even if you are at an early stage with your project, the judges would like to see a writing extract from the work you would like to develop. You can submit an extract from anywhere in the project, but we would suggest that, if possible, the extract is from the beginning of your project if you are writing fiction or narrative non-fiction.

**Will you be providing feedback for all the entries?**

Unfortunately, we aren’t able to provide feedback for all the entries we receive. Judges will provide a paragraph of feedback for the top twelve entries. If you are looking for feedback, we suggest that in the first place you ask a trusted critical friend, whose opinion you trust.

**Can I submit a writing extract that has been published elsewhere?**

This programme is for unagented and unpublished writers. The writing sample you enter must be from the project you’d like to develop as part of the programme. So the only instances where we might accept published work is if you are working on a collection of short stories or essays and you are submitting one which has been published.

**Can I submit a writing extract from a book that already has a publishing deal but has not yet been published?**

The Early Career Bursaries are for London based writers who are unagented and unpublished. If you have a publishing deal, you are ineligible to apply.

**I have self-published previously. Can I enter?**

It is ok to submit to the Early Career Bursaries if you have only self-published your work, as long as you have not had a publishing contract or been published by a press or publishing house.

**For my writing extract I want to enter a piece that I’ve published on my blog. Can I enter it?**

Yes. Your writing extract will need to have been written in the last three years and ideally from the project you’d like to develop as part of the programme.

**I have previously lived in London but am now based elsewhere in the UK/ abroad. Can I enter?**

Unfortunately not. The Early Career Bursaries for London Writers is open to writers living full-time in London.

**I was not born in the UK, but I now live here in London. Can I still enter?**

Yes, people over 18 residing in London are welcome to enter, you do not have to have been born in the UK.

**Who are the judges for the 2024 Early Career Bursaries?**

Monique Roffey, Patrice Lawrence and Santanu Bhattacharya are the judges for the 2024 Bursaries.

**How long have the Bursaries been running for?**

This is the second year of the Bursaries.

**How is the Early Career Bursary programme funded?**

The Bursary programme is funded through a generous philanthropic gift from Sam and Rosie Berwick.

**How can I connect with the Early Career Bursaries on social media?**

You can connect in the following ways:

On Twitter: [twitter.com/STWevents](https://twitter.com/STWevents)

On Instagram: [www.instagram.com/spreadthewordwriters/](http://www.instagram.com/spreadthewordwriters/)

**I’m a publisher, agent, writer, philanthropist or funder. How can I get involved?**

We welcome a wider conversation with the publishing industry, philanthropists and funders on the need for philanthropic support for writers and equitable and accessible early career interventions to address the systemic barriers faced by writers on a low income in creating work and progressing a creative career. Email [bobby@spreadtheword.org.uk](mailto:bobby@spreadtheword.org.uk) if you’d like to be involved in the Bursaries programme.

**I’d like to enter the Early Career Bursaries for London Writers but I still have a question.**

You can sign up for the **free online information session** we’ll be running at 7pm-8pm on Tuesday 25 July 2023. The session will be BSL interpreted.

Email [emily@spreadtheword.org.uk](mailto:emily@spreadtheword.org.uk) and we’ll do our best to answer your query.

The Early Career Bursaries website is: www.spreadtheword.org.uk/projects/early-career-bursaries/

If you are considering submitting an entry to the Early Career Bursaries, please make sure you have read the **Eligibility Criteria** and **Terms and Conditions**, available on the website in BSL, audio and .doc formats.

The Early Career Bursaries for London Writers are managed by Spread the Word and made possible by a generous philanthropic gift from Sam and Rosie Berwick.

June 2023