

**Manchester
City of Literature**

manchestercityofliterature.com

UNESCO Membership Monitoring **REPORT**



A UNESCO City
of Literature

2017-2021

WELCOME

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Cover image: Marketing Manchester



Culture, creativity and the arts are in Manchester's DNA and have shown themselves time and again to be central to the city's enduring strength, resilience, and world-wide reputation. In Manchester, we recognise the significant contribution culture plays in the growth and economic success of the city as well as the wider benefits to residents from the significant growth in the tourist industry, from creating jobs and opportunities as well as making Manchester a vibrant place to live.

I was delighted when UNESCO recognised Manchester's distinctive strengths in libraries, poetry, learning, festivals, multilingualism and publishing and awarded us the City of Literature designation in 2017.

This report on the first four years of the UNESCO designation shows how all the partners under the Manchester City of Literature banner have worked hard – and adapted – to better promote the literary offer to reach all residents. I applaud their work to share the positive impact reading, writing, literacy and language skills have on our communities – on health, well-being,

education and skills, and across all age groups from young to old.

These four years have not been without challenge given the global pandemic but I am proud of the response from the literary partners to ensure culture and creativity drives the city's sustainable development, ensures the city is attractive, culturally rich, outward-looking and welcoming, and that Manchester remains connected internationally.

**COUNCILLOR LUTHFUR RAHMAN,
DEPUTY LEADER, MANCHESTER
CITY COUNCIL**



1. EXECUTIVE Summary



In Manchester, literature is woven into the fabric of the city. Literature generates jobs and drives development; and creative people move to the city because they recognise that ‘we can do this here’.

Following our designation in 2017, Manchester City Council, Manchester Metropolitan University and the University of Manchester pooled resources to establish a City of Literature office. This is run by an independent not-for-profit, Manchester City of Literature, on behalf of those funding stakeholders and thirty literary organisations across the city.

“This is such an important part of what has kept me in **MANCHESTER** and what has made it a great home as a writer.”

JOHN MCAULIFFE, CENTRE FOR NEW WRITING AND UNIVERSITY OF MANCHESTER

Our collective vision is to create an innovative, distinctive, equitable, globally connected city of reading and writing. We want Manchester to be a city where diverse voices are celebrated, creative talent and industries are nurtured and where literary activity changes lives.

We will do this by uniting the collective strength and voice of writers and all those involved in literary activities across Manchester and create projects that over time will reach all parts of the city.

This report shows the achievements of partners and the City of Literature office across these first four years of the designation and our contribution to the UNESCO Creative Cities Network. It shows the key initiatives we have delivered at a local and an international level and our ambitions for the next four years. Thank you to all our partners, supporters and writers for their contributions to bringing the UNESCO designation to life in Manchester with imagination and enthusiasm.

**IVAN WADESON,
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR,
MANCHESTER CITY OF LITERATURE**

2. General INFORMATION

2.1. Name of the city **MANCHESTER**

2.2 Country **UNITED KINGDOM**

2.3 Creative field **LITERATURE**

2.4 Date of designation **2017**

2.5 Date of submission of the current report
NOVEMBER 2021

2.6 Entity responsible for the report
MANCHESTER CITY OF LITERATURE

2.7 Previous reports submitted and dates **N/A**

2.8 Points of contact:

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3. Contribution to the Programme's **GLOBAL MANAGEMENT**

3.1 Since designation in October 2017, Manchester has attended ALL the UNESCO Creative Cities Network conferences in person or virtually when in-person was not possible due to COVID-19. Namely, the UCCN conferences in KRAKOW AND KOTOWICE 2018, in FABRIANO in 2019, online in 2020 and 2021 presented in partnership with SANTOS. In Fabriano the City's Culture Lead, Councillor Luthfur Rahman, addressed the Conference. Manchester also attended the UCCN sub-network conferences for Cities of Literature: in IOWA CITY in 2018, in NOTTINGHAM AND NORWICH in 2019, online in 2020 hosted by PRAGUE and in REYKJAVIK in-person in 2021.

3.2 Hosting of a previous or future UCCN Annual Conference

Manchester as a newly designated city did not host an Annual Conference in this period.

3.3 Hosting of working or coordination meeting(s) addressed to one or more UCCN creative field representatives (notably sub-network meetings)

Manchester has been active in the Press & Communications working group and in leading in coordinating evaluation for the sub-networks scoring of applications from prospective Cities of Literature in 2021. Manchester leads on International Mother Language Day celebrations for the sub-network. In November 2021 Manchester organised and hosted the Slamovision Global Poetry Slam Final between 8 Cities of Literature. Manchester also participates in the UK UCCN cluster.

3.4 Hosting of international conference(s) or meeting(s) on specific issues salient to the Creative Cities with a large participation of members of the Network

N/A

3.5 Financial and/or in-kind support provided to UNESCO in order to strengthen the sustainability of the UCCN in different areas

including management, communication and visibility (dates, types of contribution, factual or estimated amounts, main objectives, etc.)

Manchester City of Literature and partners has provided significant in-kind support to UNESCO through promotion of the Network, staff time and the cost of attending the Annual Conference and the sub-network conference. This is calculated as £23,820 in-kind and over £32,000 cash in the period 2017-21.

3.6 Serving as cluster coordinator or deputy coordinator

In the first years of its designation, Manchester has not taken on either of these roles.

3.7 Participation in the evaluation of previous applications and/or of previous Membership Monitoring Reports

The staff, Trustees and funding stakeholders in Manchester scored, evaluated and provided feedback on all applications in 2019 (18 applications) and in 2021 (11 applications). In addition the focal point provided the leadership and coordination of the sub-network's combined scoring and evaluation from 35 out of 39 Cities in 2021.



Lemn Sissay MBE, Poet & Chancellor
of the University of Manchester

4. Major Initiatives at **LOCAL** and **CITY LEVEL**

The partnership has used poetry to inform placemaking, public realm and civic identity over the last four years. Some examples of that are:

POETRY AND PLACE-MAKING

Manchester is a city of poetry. It is inscribed into our city pavements, found on building walls, and it is displayed in stations. Poetry is found in our universities, in our communities and is performed in cafes, bars, libraries, book shops, museums and faith centres across the city. Nationally renowned poets occupy significant civic positions: the current Chancellors of the University of Salford and Manchester are Jackie Kay and Lemn Sissay respectively. Carol Ann Duffy, the UK Poet Laureate 2009 to 2019, is the head of Manchester Writing School at Manchester Metropolitan University.

POETRY IN THE PUBLIC REALM

Poetry has been a substantial part of the animation of the public realm in Manchester in the period of the designation. Following on from Lemn Sissay's Counting Numbers poem on the walls of the new Shudehill Bus Station, in 2018 Manchester Literature Festival commissioned Helen Mort to create a series of

poems, There and Back, for Victoria Station. In 2019/20, the station had annual footfall of 9.71 million passengers.

Lemn Sissay's poems appear across the city on the outside walls of cafés, shopping centres, social housing and pubs. In 2021, one of his earliest street poems was restored by a partnership of Manchester International Festival and Bruntwood Works supported by Arts Council England and Manchester City Council. The poems originally embedded into pavements of the Northern Quarter in 1998 had deteriorated and were restored by artist Tim Ruston including a new poem from Lemn Sissay.

Pavement cracks
are the places
Where poets pack
warrior words

In October 2021, Manchester hosted its first festival of light and language along Oxford Road Corridor, the city's innovation district. Over three days, Corridor of Light put language and poetry centre stage.



POETRY, BELONGING AND IDENTITY

Poetry has been used to promote community cohesion and civic pride in innovative and award-winning ways since the designation.

Made in Manchester is a multilingual poem and installation created in 2019 by school children and community groups adding lines to those written by local poet Zahid Hussain.

The poem is written in 64 different languages to highlight the cultural diversity of the city – a city that is proud to be called home by people speaking more than 200 different languages. The final poem appears as a video installation that has been housed at the city's Central Library, and now at Manchester Poetry Library, with an English translation alongside the many community languages.

Mother Tongue Other Tongue, a multilingual schools' poetry competition led by Carol Ann Duffy, Manchester Metropolitan University. Since its inception, the project has been repeated annually, involving approximately 35,600 pupils between the ages of 9 and 17, across 77 participating schools. To take part, pupils are required to write poetry either in a language they are learning at school (Other Tongue) or in a language which they speak at home (Mother Tongue). In a post-engagement survey 75% of pupils indicated that their understanding of their mother tongue had improved as a result of their participation in the contest. 84% of the pupils who took part in the survey also said that Mother Tongue Other Tongue had made them "feel more connected to their cultural background", and 77% stated that writing poetry in their mother tongue made them "feel

that their identity and culture were valued in school." In 2019, Mother Tongue Other Tongue was awarded a Queen's Anniversary Prize for its quality and innovation and for the benefits it delivers to the wider world and public through education and training. The Prizes are the highest national Honour awarded in UK further and higher education.

In September 2021, **Manchester Poetry Library** opened its doors after nine months of online engagement with the public. Manchester Poetry Library is only the fourth poetry library in the UK and the first in the North West of England. It is a public library that offers over 10,000 books and recordings that can be explored through online catalogues, in person and through an annual events programme. The collection offers an extensive range of poetry in the many languages spoken in Manchester starting with curated Chinese and Polish collections and with physical donations of books from thirteen UNESCO Cities of Literature in their native languages.



64

languages in the
Made in Manchester poem

35,600

pupils entered poems for
Mother Tongue Other Tongue

"The Manchester City of Literature project has brought to life a **LITERATURE ECOSYSTEM** in our city. It has enabled new ways of collaborative working for all of us and we're only at the beginning of the potential benefits this could unlock."

JESS EDWARDS, MANCHESTER METROPOLITAN UNIVERSITY





Anjum Malik
Courtesy of Humanity Hallows MMU

“Manchester has incredible **DIVERSITY**. There’s over **200 LANGUAGES** spoken here from all the way up north in Blakely down to Wythenshawe, from east to west this is an incredible city, it’s more than just football, it’s more than its music, it’s more than films, it’s more than its literature, the people of Manchester represent the world.”

ZAHID HUSSAIN, MANCHESTER CITY OF LITERATURE CHAIR AND MUSLIM WRITERS ASSOCIATION

INTERNATIONAL MOTHER LANGUAGE DAY

UNESCO’s International Mother Language Day (IMLD) is a worldwide annual observance held on 21 February to promote awareness of linguistic and cultural diversity. It has been observed globally since 2000 and has important historical roots. 21 February is also Bangladesh independence day after the struggle for recognition of the Bangla language.

Around 200 languages are spoken in Manchester at any one time and it is Britain’s city of languages, where half of all adults and 4 in 10 young people in the city are multilingual.

Since 2017, Manchester has celebrated the rich diversity of the languages spoken here with free events taking place across the city. IMLD celebrations bring together diverse community groups, academic partners, libraries, museums, schools and artists to produce an exciting programme that is ambitious and reflective of the languages Manchester celebrates being home to.

Each year, IMLD has grown to engage over 5,000 people in 2019 and 2020. IMLD 2021 was an online programme that attracted 3,500 viewers, with 85% of visits to the Manchester City of Literature website being from first-time visitors, and the PR campaign achieving 51 pieces of press coverage.

“From our point of view, Manchester has always been a City of **LITERATURE**, from its earliest inception as the world’s first **MODERN CITY** and the **POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT** that this represented. More specifically, it’s a City of Literature in terms of that it’s a **VOICE OF THE PEOPLE**.”

MARTIN DE MELLO, COMMONWORD

One innovative component of IMLD in Manchester has been the Multi-Language Mushaira project.

Developed by The Manchester Writing School (Manchester Metropolitan University) and artist Emma Martin (Stanley Grove Primary School) and first held at Longsight Library in 2019, the Multi-language Mushaira is a standout example of Manchester’s commitment to promoting multiculturalism. A mushaira is a lively and interactive poetry performance event, traditionally in Urdu and other South Asian languages. At the Multi-language Mushaira, school children and members of the community are invited to share poetry in any language of their choice, around a particular theme.

3,500

online viewers

85%

of visits to the Manchester City of Literature website being from first-time visitors

51

pieces of press coverage.



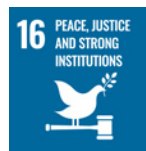


FESTIVAL OF LIBRARIES

The Festival of Libraries was a key part of Manchester's initial bid to become a UNESCO City of Literature. The Festival was planned to showcase the city's many independent, public and heritage libraries and to celebrate Manchester's pioneering role in the development of the public lending library. The 2020 event was postponed due to COVID-19 so the inaugural event was held in June 2021.

Over 80 events were held across Greater Manchester, with more than 70 artists and writers engaged, many creating work with the local communities. The festival featured a vibrant programme that highlighted libraries' full offer across wellbeing, culture and creativity, digital and information, and, of course, reading. The festival was a hybrid of online and in-person events and we reached audiences of over 6,000 over 5 days in June despite restrictions. The social media reach included over 250,000 Twitter impressions and the PR campaign reached a potential audience of over 5 million.

Independent evaluation showed that 78% of those attending gained new knowledge or skills and 44% said the festival events had improved their wellbeing. 31% said it changed their view of libraries and 39% will visit their library more often. Our plan is for the Festival of Libraries to become an annual event.



"We're a very firm believer in the **TRANSFORMATIVE POWER of STORIES** and I think through being a City of Literature we can really help transform the lives of Manchester residents."

**CATHY BOLTON,
MANCHESTER
LITERATURE FESTIVAL**

"Manchester is library city, it's home to some of the most amazing spectacular **LIBRARIES** in the UK, if not in Europe, if not the world. Being a UNESCO City of Literature allows us a banner to bring those libraries together whether it's at the **THE UNIVERSITY OF MANCHESTER, THE PORTICO, MANCHESTER CENTRAL** or others, under one umbrella and start to work in a more holistic way to celebrate libraries."

**NEIL MACINNES,
HEAD OF LIBRARIES**

READ MANCHESTER

Read Manchester is a partnership between Manchester City Council and the National Literacy Trust that engages local families with books and stories. The project uses book gifting and reading challenges to inspire people to make reading a priority in their everyday lives.

Achievements in the four-year period of the designation:

gifting a total of 107,165 free Bookstart packs to families with children under five

donating 20,000 library cards parents to ensure library access to every child born in the city.

26,013 children took part in an annual Summer Reading Challenge

using World Book Day to raise the profile of reading in the city: 75% of children involved stated they would read more following the 2020 event.

Engaging 2,000 adults with low literacy levels in the Reading Ahead challenge which invited participants to pick six books to read, record, rate and review in a special diary.

Read Manchester also launched the Take 10 initiative on World Mental Health Day 2018 encouraging people to read for ten minutes each day for mental wellbeing. This initiative has now been taken up across the UK by the National Literacy Trust.



“The opportunity of working with the City of Literature is to reach **DIVERSE COMMUNITIES** and it's really getting that message out to people that everybody can become a reader at whatever level you're at.”

**CHERYL PRIDGEON,
READ MANCHESTER**

107,165

free Bookstart packs gifted to families with children under five

20,000

library cards donated to parents as a means of ensuring library access to every child born in the city.





Tony Walsh
Photography by Katy Hall



Shirley May
Photography by Samantha Guess

“What Manchester City of Literature designation does is it recognises the fact that Manchester isn’t just a self regarding city, it’s actually an **INTERNATIONAL CITY**. It’s national and international and a lot of what we do relates to the wider world.”

**MICHAEL SCHMIDT,
CARCANET**

PUBLISHING

Publishing in Manchester has changed and expanded since the UNESCO designation in 2017. One of Manchester’s most prolific independent publishers Comma Press, part of the Northern Fiction Alliance, wrote an open letter calling for a decentralisation of UK publishing away from London and for diversification within the industry, both the workforce and the voices that are published. This letter alongside other reports and initiatives have led to significant change.

Manchester has now two of the largest UK commercial publishers with bases in the city and a commitment to Northern voices: Harper North (of Harper Collins) and Hachette UK. These new publishers work alongside our many established independent presses including the world-renowned poetry press Carcanet (founded in 1971), Flapjack Press, Comma Press and the academic publisher Manchester University Press (founded 1903). The period has also seen the opening of new indies including Fly On The Wall Press with a strong commitment to social action. In 2019 a new Publishing MA was offered for the first time at Manchester Metropolitan University designed and delivered in partnership with local publishers.

Many publishers and partners also deliver events and programmes to open up the publishing industry. These include the Get Into Publishing Conference which aims to “demystify” the publishing industry and the National Creative Writing Industry Day where early career and aspiring writers are granted one-to-one pitching sessions with publishing professionals. In 2021 the Portico Library ran an annual weekend programme called Pathways Into Publishing comprising 17 free online events to enthuse young people about a potential career in publishing, writing or illustration.



5. Major Initiatives Implemented Through **INTER-CITY** and **INTERNATIONAL** Cooperation

POETRY CITIES

Poetry Cities is a digital and physical exhibition that gives readers and viewers the chance to explore selected UNESCO Cities of Literature through its poetry as well as celebrating the opening of Manchester Poetry Library.

Thirteen cities are profiled as part of the digital exhibition on poetrycities.co.uk. They are Bucheon, Dunedin, Heidelberg, Krakow, Leeuwarden, Lviv, Melbourne, Milan, Odessa, Reykjavik, Tartu, Ulyanovsk and Wonju. In the digital exhibition, each city shares images of their cityscape alongside three poetry collections that provide readers with an alternative guide to the place and people. Cities also donated physical books in their native language to Manchester Poetry Library's permanent collection.



VIRTUAL WRITER RESIDENCIES AT THE FESTIVAL OF LIBRARIES

Our first writer residencies to build links between UNESCO Creative Cities were created for the Festival of Libraries in summer 2021 in partnership with Manchester Literature Festival.

Following an open call for applications, two writers were selected: Alicia Sometimes from Melbourne City of Literature hosted by The Portico and Anna Polonyi from Iowa City of Literature hosted by Central Library. During a three-week residency, each writer explored their online collections and archives, met librarians and enjoyed virtual tours of the city. Both writers created exciting new work that was captured on film and shared as part of Manchester Literature Festival's MLF DIGITAL programme in November 2021.



“As part of being a City of Literature we want the **POETRY LIBRARY** to be a place where any resident across Greater Manchester or beyond, any visitors to the city can **FIND THEMSELVES** in collections and in events and see somebody on stage performing and think that could be me.”

BECKY SWAIN,
MANCHESTER POETRY LIBRARY, MANCHESTER METROPOLITAN UNIVERSITY

THE NEW ARRIVALS

We wanted to bring international perspectives to raising the profile of comic literature within the new Corridor of Light Festival in 2021. We commissioned three comic artists, namely Ian Bobb, Francis Desharnais and Sayra Begum representing Manchester, Quebec City and Nottingham Cities of Literature respectively to create a large-scale, outdoor and illuminated public comic which told a story of Manchester from the perspective of migrants. The artists responded to a storyline written by Manchester writer Peter Kalu celebrating the city's enduring commitment to multiculturalism and multilingualism.

The comic strip was shown on the windows of a building sitting at a key transport interchange. It is estimated that the work was seen by over 10,000 members of the public between 21st and 23rd October 2021.

"I think Manchester being a UNESCO City of Literature means that there's a great opportunity for **UNITY** all around the world and to bring together young **LIKEMINDED** people working in collaboration is wonderful for this city and the rest of the world."

**SHIRLEY MAY,
YOUNG IDENTITY**

MANCHESTER-SLEMANI POETRY TRANSLATION PROJECT

This joint project between Manchester and Slemani City of Literature in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (designated by UNESCO in October 2019) focused on sharing expertise in poetry translation and building cooperation and understanding between the two cities. A joint team of translators from Slemani and Manchester was assembled to work on translating poetry from Kurdish into English and vice versa. Kurdish <> English is a relatively new field of literary translation so the learning was rich for both cities. An online talk from the translation team featuring this learning was shared at an academic conference in Slemani on International Translation Day 2021.

Each city selected eleven current poets to represent the range of styles and diverse voices in their contemporary poetry scene alongside four examples of historic poetry.

As well as a collaborative creative project, the publication of the accompanying anthology also introduced writers from different cultures and countries to a new and wider audience. This was the first time that the majority of Manchester poets had been translated into Kurdish (Sorani).



My Body Is Not Yours

An anthology of poems
from Manchester and Slemani

6. PROPOSED ACTION PLAN for Forthcoming Mid-Term Period of Four Years

6.1 THREE INITIATIVES AT LOCAL LEVEL:

Write Manchester

Write Manchester will be a coordinated four-year programme encouraging residents of all ages to engage in creative writing. Write Manchester will support confidence and well-being, help improve literacy, will create writing that reflects on identity and location and for those keen to continue their writing it will signpost people to regular groups, short courses and development opportunities. We want to celebrate and value the creativity of local people and build grassroots engagement with literature in any genre, style or format.

The first stage of Write Manchester will be a resource for schools and young people aggregating all relevant writing opportunities and writing competitions including Mother Tongue Other Tongue, the University of Manchester Schools Poetry competition and The Portico Sadie Massie Awards as well as other time-limited projects, workshops or writing resources.

Community Champions

Community Champions are literature animateurs who work on behalf of local communities to codesign and deliver bespoke activities that are

geared towards improving literary engagement and literacy skills. Underpinned by the latest participatory arts research and practice, the Community Champions will work closely with participants to better understand why the community is not accessing literature on their own terms and to change this for the better. A pilot in 2021 engaged underserved communities including newly arrived migrants, South Asian women and members of Black Pentecostal churches in Manchester with a range of activity including journaling, poetry and memoir writing. We will also produce a toolkit to share with other Cities of Literature.

Multilingual City Poets

Over the next four years, we will work to introduce a new and imaginative approach to the City Poet model. In Manchester, our City Poets will be multilingual to reflect some of the 200 languages spoken in the city. The project will appoint a team of three poets for each 12-month period to be ambassadors for multilingualism and to write for civic and high-profile cultural occasions as well as working in education settings.



6.2 THREE INITIATIVES ON AN INTERNATIONAL LEVEL:

Multilingual Exchanges

Manchester writers and the Multilingual City Poets will be paired with writers, poets and communities in other Cities of Literature. These annual programmes of exchange, learning and creative development will expand the writers' inter-cultural skills, experience and knowledge, extend their creative practice and build new international networks. Once the model is established, we would look to extend this programme to other literary roles for example publishers and translators.

Festival of Libraries Librarian Exchange

The inaugural Festival of Libraries in 2021 included a two-day and an online conference, the Knowledge Exchange, that shared learning and best practice between library professionals around the world. Over one hundred delegates registered from Europe, South and East Asia, North America and Australasia. Going forward the principle of exchange will be developed to include specific international exchanges that pairs a librarian with a librarian from another City of Literature. Each year over the forthcoming four-year period will look at a different theme to frame the exchange. For example: reading for young people; diverse literature and representation; literacy for older people; and environmental action.

Poetry Cities

To date this work has focused on book donations and an online exhibition in partnership with Manchester Poetry Library. Over the next four-years, initiatives under this

banner will be expanded, to create meaningful partnerships on an inter-city basis across academic, research, publishing and writing communities. The aim is to share how poetry is used to support sustainable development within policy and practice across the UCCN network.



“Manchester City of Literature is about **EVERYTHING** from street art to poetry, from novels to flash fiction, about performance and about archives, about the beautiful things that we have from the 16th century and the 17th century, the really beautiful manuscripts and first editions but also about what’s happening right now. Activity that’s happening online and that’s happening in **GRASSROOTS COMMUNITIES**, it is about writing generally defined”

JEROME DE GROOT,
UNIVERSITY OF MANCHESTER

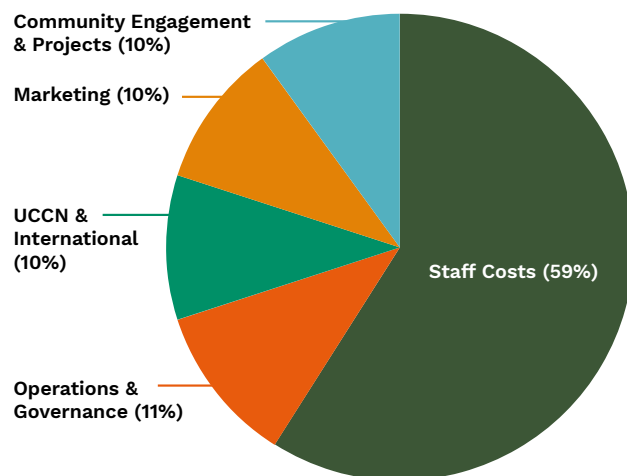


Mike Garry
Photography by Samantha Guess

6.3 BUDGET and RESOURCES for the proposed Action Plan

CITY OF LITERATURE OFFICE

Manchester City of Literature is an independent non-for-profit organisation that receives public support from Manchester City Council, the University of Manchester and Manchester Metropolitan University, all subject to annual renewal. This support provides the core costs of the City of Literature office, a total of £150K per annum, which are expended as follows:



In 2021-22, its first full year of operation, the charity raised an additional £100,490 to support community engagement, employment and development for writers and students, and international exchanges. This is our projected budget for each of the next four years: that the City of Literature office will attract £250K per annum or £1million over the four-year period from public, private and commercial sources. This represents new and additional investment to the funds already deployed within the city on literary activity.

INVESTMENT IN WRITER DEVELOPMENT

Manchester is home to two renowned university writing schools – the Centre for New Writing at the University of Manchester and the Manchester Writing School at Manchester Metropolitan University – and three specialist writing agencies: Commonword, Muslim Writers and The Writing Squad. Their combined work is a significant factor in establishing Manchester as a city of writers. Each organisation shares a commitment to writer development, to finding and nurturing diverse new voices and to creating the next generation of talent. In 2022-23, these organisations alone will invest £3,627,473 in writer development, or over £14million over the next four years.

INVESTMENT IN LIBRARIES

Manchester City Council runs 23 public libraries and archives in the city including Central Library which in 2018 and 2019 was the busiest public library in the UK with two million visits per year. Manchester Libraries will be investing £10,458,514 in the service in 2022-23 or over £40million over the next four years. Manchester City Council is also investing a further £6million in library buildings over the three years 2022-24 with a new children's library opening within Central Library, two new neighbourhood libraries in Gorton and Abraham Moss and refurbishment and improvements to Chorlton and Longsight Libraries.

STUDENT AND GRADUATE EMPLOYMENT

A valuable resource for the city is the large student population across the two city centre campuses. The City of Literature office and partners have engaged undergraduates, recent graduates and post-graduates from the University of Manchester and Manchester Metropolitan University as marketing placements, student reviewers, data analysts, report writers and paid research consultants. This will be expanded over the next four years to engage with over 470 students to support their development and future employability. The percentage of students who stay in the City after graduation is second only to London.

6.4 Plan for **COMMUNICATION** and **AWARENESS**

Our main communications tools are currently our website, social media (Twitter, Facebook, Instagram and LinkedIn) and our monthly e-newsletter. Since the launch of the website almost a year ago our website visits have more than doubled and in 18 months we've increased our newsletter subscribers by 75%. Our social media following has grown exponentially since our designation with a 200% growth for our Instagram following, 270% growth of our Facebook audience and 142% growth of our Twitter following. Social media continues to be one of our primary engagement tools with local and international audiences.

The updated website, launched in November 2020, will continue to have a strong focus on sharing information, news and events from our partnership as well as growing awareness for Manchester as a City of Literature. The website features a 'What's On' area for the whole city to submit their literature events to as well as a directory of every partner organisation working in literature in Manchester. We aim to be the central place for anyone who may be interested in literature can go to and find something that interests them, whether it's an event, a course or educational activity or a place to connect with other writers

Manchester UNESCO City of Literature is a

broad and diverse partnership of over 40 organisations including universities, writing agencies, independent publishers, cultural venues, over 130 public and independent libraries, the Manchester Literature Festival and many grassroots spoken word promoters. Our future communications plan will continue to use the size and scope of this powerful network to build awareness and support for the designation.

To ensure we keep the literary community in Manchester connected, we will continue to hold monthly partnership meetings where partners can cross-collaborate and share best practice as well as discuss and share the work that's happening in the city. Going forward we plan to extend these meetings to include an annual 'Town Hall' meeting for communities and partners, drop-ins for writers and to support sub-network meetings such as a Greater Manchester libraries network. We will continue to act as a broker and to encourage cross-pollination of work between the literary networks e.g. publishers regularly meet with writing agencies.

This connectedness goes for international collaborations too. We stay regular contact with the UK Creative Cities network and the UK High Commission to ensure a joint voice at

a national level and promote the work of Cities of Literature to national bodies such as the British Council. Our plan is to develop the site to incorporate individual Cities of Literature profiles from around the world and build stronger connections with the UNESCO and Cities of Literature websites.

Our communications have been informed by a survey on brand awareness in 2019; and we plan to repeat the brand awareness survey in 2022 to measure the growth in awareness, although we can see that our audiences have grown substantially.

Manchester has assisted other Cities of Literature with their strategic communications and would like to continue to do this going forward. We have had sessions with Slemani, Edinburgh and Melbourne. One of our core staff members is on the Cities of Literature sub-network's Communications and Promotions taskforce to ensure that learning is shared network-wide and to increase the awareness of the network externally.



@MCR CITY OF LIT
MANCHESTERCITYOFLITERATURE.COM

7. Initiatives In Response to COVID

In March 2020, Manchester went into the first national lockdown, and would remain under local or national restrictions for over a year. The team at Manchester City of Literature moved quickly to support Manchester's literary sector and Manchester's residents in lockdown.

These initiatives included:

Fortnightly conference calls for literary partners to share intelligence, provide mutual support and create collaborative initiatives in response to the pandemic.

A City Connects: a new website to amplify the collective digital offer of the literary sector. From its launch to the retirement of the site in December 2020, there were over 150 events listed including spoken word nights, book launches, online readings and more.

Manchester Online Book Fair in November 2020 supported book sales direct from independent publishers hit by the closure of bookshops. Over the course of one day, twelve Manchester publishers were promoted through video guides, interviews and social media competitions.

Creative writing workshops for vulnerable adults in partnership with The Men's Room by writer and therapist Jane Bradley

Workshops on resilience with writer and coach Shamshad Khan for female writers of South Asian heritage.

We commissioned three **creative writing activity packs** by local writers Nicole May, James Varney and Cheryl Martin for isolated young and older people in lockdown.

Exercises from these packs featured in **Creative Care Kits** coordinated by Greater Manchester Combined Authority. The Creative Care Kit contained a range of home-based activities for people in isolation. Between June and September 2020, over 38,000 Creative Care Kits were distributed.

In partnership with Contact Theatre and Young Identity we curated an evening of live spoken word from Manchester artists called **Our City Speaks**, broadcast on the United We Stream platform. The event entertained and inspired communities in lockdown, whilst raising funds to support the night-time economy. Between April and June 2020, the online platform raised over £477,000 for regional charities and had over seven million viewers.

Connectedness Through Comics: we commissioned artist Ian Bobb to create a comic strip with young people from mental health

"I've always associated the city with **INVENTION, NEWNESS** and **INNOVATION** so it's great to be able to celebrate that as a network. One of the things about literature is that it's invisible and you don't have these great big buildings so it's really important as an organisation that we work together to get literature the profile that it deserves and being a City of Literature gives us the ability to do that."

**STEVE DEARDEN,
THE WRITING SQUAD**

charity 42nd Street to enable young people to share their feelings about isolation and loneliness. The same comic was workshopped with young people in Nanjing City of Literature to show how we were all connected in our feelings of isolation during the global lockdown.

Other Manchester initiatives.

POETRY FOR WELLBEING

This annual Schools Poetry Competition for school pupils aged 7 to 11 was launched in 2017 by Manchester University Chancellor and poet, Lemn Sissay MBE and the Centre for New Writing. As the COVID-19 pandemic forced schools to close in March 2020, the programme moved online and was extended to schools who not previously engaged in some of the most deprived areas of the city.

READ MANCHESTER

Read Manchester coordinated book gifting to children of school age during the crisis. Gifting books became even more important during the lockdown as access to reading material was limited with libraries closing following national guidance. Read Manchester created a series of initiatives with new partners to reach young people in isolation and the 1 in 8 disadvantaged children who don't own a book in the city. Since the pandemic started, Read Manchester distributed over 60,000 books and magazines through a variety of partners including foodbanks, community grocers, mental health organisations, Early Years partners and schools.

LIBRARIES IN LOCKDOWN

During lockdown, libraries adapted how they delivered services to local communities. Between 1 April and 30 September 2020, Manchester Libraries loaned 147,819 digital audio books and ebooks. There were over 99,589 views of the online local history Memory Boxes created by the Archives+ service based at Central Library. Over 350 storytime, book club, author event and craft session videos and live streams were created by Manchester Libraries staff.

WRITE WHERE WE ARE NOW

Carol Ann Duffy initiated this project during the first 2020 national lockdown as a response to the Coronavirus pandemic. Conceived as 'a radical reinvention of the anthology form', WWWAN has solicited and curated new work from a wide range of emergent and established poets from 16 different countries. Duffy invited the poets to write directly about the pandemic or about the situation they found themselves in during lockdown: their responses were published on the university's website, which by 30 June featured 607 poems from 207 poets. Global media coverage of WWWAN between April and August had a total reach of 352,861,861 across 10 countries, and the website had received 174,000 hits. Readers of the poetry were encouraged to tweet their responses, including poetry of their own, and these responses had a reach of 2,164,570 across 19 countries.

MLF DIGITAL

Responding to the Covid 19 pandemic, Manchester Literature Festival moved to a digital iteration in 2020 and offered all their events as Free or Pay What You Can, enabling it to reach out to a much more socially diverse and international audience. In 2021, they presented a hybrid Festival of live events with restricted capacity audiences and Digital events and New Commissions. Over the past four years a total audience of 59,615 have visited MLF Live and Digital events, 749 artists have participated in events and 26 writers have been specially commissioned to create new work.



MANCHESTER'S CULTURAL RECOVERY

A Cultural Recovery Plan for the city's creative and cultural sector was created and a Cultural Recovery Board convened by Manchester City Council to oversee the development and then implementation of the place-based recovery plan.

The plan involved two phases:

1 Stabilisation to support organisations and artists in lockdown through information sharing, targeted support and extending grant funding programmes.

2 Unlock – a stimulus programme to help artists and cultural organisations play a vital role in the recovery

Working collectively across the city, the cultural sector secured over £20 million recovery grants from central government and national cultural funding bodies.

APPENDIX 1 – MANCHESTER CITY OF LITERATURE PARTNERS

BLACKWELLS MANCHESTER Bookshop and café at University Green

CARCANET One of the UK's foremost independent publishers of modern and classic poetry

CENTRE FOR NEW WRITING A dedicated contemporary writing hub within The University of Manchester with internationally recognised teaching staff

CHETHAM'S LIBRARY The oldest public library in the English-speaking world founded in 1653 housed in Grade 1 listed Medieval building.

COMMA PRESS Award-winning not-for-profit publisher specialising in the short story and fiction in translation

COMMONWORD Long-running writing agency specialising in supporting marginalised and working class writers.

CREATIVE MANCHESTER Based at The University of Manchester, supporting the creative industries with academic support, student interns, and partnership and funding opportunities.

ELIZABETH GASKELL'S HOUSE A Victorian villa that was home to the novelist between 1850 and 1865 now restored as a visitor attraction.

FLAPJACK PRESS An independent publisher and spoken word promoter

FLY ON THE WALL PRESS An independent publisher of innovative short stories, poetry and photography books on pressing issues

HACHETTE CHILDREN'S GROUP One of the largest children's publishers in the UK

HARPER NORTH A commercial publisher of fiction and non-fiction from the North

INTERNATIONAL ANTHONY BURGESS FOUNDATION Library, archive, study centre & performance space dedicated to Anthony Burgess

JOHN RYLANDS RESEARCH INSTITUTE

AND LIBRARY Grade 1-listed neo-Gothic building housing a world class collection of rare manuscripts

MANCHESTER CENTRAL LIBRARY The busiest public library in the UK with over 2 million visits a year

MANCHESTER CHILDREN'S BOOK FESTIVAL A year-round programme of events, projects & activities for children, young adults and families.

MANCHESTER CITY COUNCIL The local government authority for Manchester and holder of the UNESCO designation.

MANCHESTER LITERATURE FESTIVAL Annual festival bringing international writers, artists and activists to the City since 2006

MANCHESTER METROPOLITAN UNIVERSITY A modern public university committed to education excellence, research and internationalism.

MANCHESTER POETRY LIBRARY Opened in 2021, a new public library with over 10,000 books and recordings

MANCHESTER UNIVERSITY PRESS Academic publisher and distributor founded in 1903

MANCHESTER WRITING SCHOOL The UK's largest and one of its oldest Writing Schools, based at MMU, and led by former UK Poet Laureate Dame Carol Ann Duffy.

MUSLIM WRITERS & PUBLISHERS ASSOCIATION A writer development agency supporting Muslim writers to cross into the mainstream on page, stage and screen.

OXFORD ROAD CORRIDOR A consortium of knowledge, business and cultural partners based in the city's 'innovation district'.

QUEER LIT MANCHESTER Manchester's longest running independent gay bookshop

READ MANCHESTER Engaging local families with books and stories to inspire them to make reading a priority in their everyday lives.

SARABAND Independent publisher of fiction, nature writing and memoir.

THE PORTICO LIBRARY A subscription library and newsroom whose historic collection spans over 450 years.

THE WRITING SQUAD A development agency for writers aged 16-21 who live, work or study in the North of England.

UNIVERSITY OF MANCHESTER The largest single-site university in the UK with 25 Nobel laureates among its past and present students and staff.

WORKING CLASS MOVEMENT LIBRARY Housing collections and exhibitions telling the story of Britain's working classes from the beginning of industrialisation to the present day.

YOUNG IDENTITY Spoken word collective delivering poetry and performance workshops for young people.



A UNESCO City
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