



Manchester Multilingual City Poets: Call Out

Manchester City of Literature are inviting poets to apply for consideration to be a new Multilingual City Poet alongside our current City Poet Nóra Blascsó. The City Poets will work together across our partnership network, acting as an ambassador for Manchester's residents, communities, and literature organisations. The City Poet roles carry a civic responsibility, much like conventional Poet Laureate designations, and the appointees will be commissioned to both produce and translate new writing, as well as contribute to the development of poetry in education and community settings through an engagement project of their choice.

Commissioned work will either respond to themes relevant to the poets via key dates and projects in the 2026 calendar year (e.g. past poems include Anjum Malik's [We Are Butterflies Forever in Flight](#) poetry film and Charlotte Shevchenko Knight's [SPEECH ACT](#) for a Manchester City of Literature x Nanjing City of Literature collaborative project) or respond to other exciting public events and community outreach programmes coordinated by Manchester City of Literature and its partnership network (e.g. Nóra Blascsó's [Guernica Children](#) for Manchester Literature Festival). The poets will also translate each other's writing into their mother tongue.

Manchester has a rich literary tradition, as home to some exceptional and high-profile poets, a thriving poetry and spoken word scene, awarding-winning publishers and writing development agencies and libraries which place writing and community outreach at the heart of their work. This heritage is represented in Manchester's designation as an UNESCO City of Literature in 2017.

The newly appointed City Poet will occupy the role for a period of one year (alongside Nóra Blascsó). The City Poets will each be paid a total fee of £3,250 for a number of key deliverables that make up each City Poet position, including:

Key deliverables:

- 2-3x poetry commissions in English and your mother tongue with marketing via news post/press release and social media - these could be (but not limited to) writing based on specific themes or significant days e.g.
 - World Poetry Day (March 2026).
 - Festival of Libraries (June 2026)
 - Manchester Literature Festival (September 2026).
 - International Mother Language Day (Feb 2027).
- 2-3x translations of Nóra Blascsó's work into your own mother tongue.
- 1x community engagement project: the nature of which will be agreed after appointment.

For this role, we are particularly open to poets bringing in their own community networks in order to enhance and shape the focus of their 'community engagement' piece of work. Examples of the kind of project that could be delivered include (but is not limited to):

- Facilitating a writing workshop/talk in a school setting.
- Facilitating a writing/translation workshop for another poetry organisation as a guest speaker.
- Speaking on relevant panels about poetry/multilingual writing and translation.
- Organising a workshop at International Mother Language Day 2026/2027 or Festival of Libraries 2026 with a relevant community group.
- Hosting a multilingual poetry night/open mic.

City Poet Characteristics

We are looking for a City Poet who:

- Is reliable, resilient and comfortable working flexibly and managing their own time.
- Is fluent in reading and writing poetry in at least one language other than English. Due to our previous poets' fluency in Arabic, Spanish, Urdu and Ukrainian, we will be prioritising applications from those who work in languages other than these.
- Has a publication or live performance history of at least 2 years.
- Has a strong and demonstrable relationship with Manchester.
- Has experience of working as a writer and facilitator in a number of settings, including, but not limited to: libraries, schools and community settings.
- Are passionate about representing Manchester and increasing its profile as a city of literature.
- Is confident producing commissions with specific briefs and tight deadlines.
- Is willing to collaborate on creative projects with other artists if the opportunity arises..

Application Process

Poets interested in applying for the role should send an expression of interest to hawwa.alam@manchestercityofliterature.com outlining their suitability for the role and detailing what they can offer as the City Poet. This letter should be no longer than 3 pages of A4.

Should you prefer, we will accept expressions of interest submitted in the form of a video or audio recording. These should be no more than 8 minutes in length.

We are also inviting applicants to submit an artistic CV which demonstrates your experience as a poet. This should be no more than 2 pages of A4 and should speak to the City Poet characteristics outlined above.

Finally, we request that applicants submit 2 original poems of their choice to support their application. This can be any poem of your choice, a new unpublished poem or a personal favourite that gives Manchester City of Literature and its partners a sample of the work that you do. We have no preference as to the format of these poems. Applicants can submit written poems or link to videos of the poem being performed.

Closing date for applications is midnight on Sunday 18 January 2026.

Selection Process

Once the deadline for application has passed, the Manchester City of Literature team will shortlist applicants and arrange for online interviews to take place.

Ahead of the interview, shortlisted applicants will be provided with further details of what the interview will entail so that they can adequately prepare.

Notification of shortlisted applicants and interviews are planned to take place online in the last two weeks of January.

Further Information

Should you have any questions, please direct them to hawwa.alam@manchestercityofliterature.com in the first instance.

Values of Manchester City of Literature

The Contractor shall ensure the vision and values of Manchester City of Literature, stated below, are embedded in all their activities and communications.

The successful applicants will be expected to support the realisation of the collective vision for Manchester City of Literature, formed through conversations with stakeholders across the city, for: an innovative, distinctive, equitable, globally connected city of reading and writing, where diverse voices are celebrated, where creative talent and industries are nurtured and where literary activity changes lives.

They will demonstrate and promote the City of Literature's core values, which are:

- **Distinctive:** Creating distinctive cultural experiences inspired by Manchester's unique, radical character and rich cultural heritage whilst looking to the future.
- **Inclusive:** Celebrating the rich diversity of voices in the city, building on the strengths of Manchester's people and widening participation in literary activity.
- **Transformative:** Developing skills, nurturing creative talent and transforming lives.
- **Connected:** Linking and supporting literary activity and enabling collective advocacy for Manchester's literary community and international collaborations.
- **World-leading:** A beacon for high quality, culturally democratic, truly diverse literary activity.

As a UNESCO Creative City, Manchester City Of Literature is committed to building international relationships with other Creative Cities and believes that these relationships and sharing of practice create bridges of understanding between peoples. These bridges cross political, geographical, ethnic, cultural, religious and other divides. Manchester City Of Literature therefore supports the right to freedom of opinion and expression and believes there is a significant benefit to be gained from working in cooperation with Creative Cities to champion freedom of expression, share best practice and demonstrate the benefits that can be gained in cultural, economic and social terms from enabling such freedoms.