



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 Jeremy Pak Nelson. 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 respond to themes relevant to the poets via key dates and projects in the 2027 calendar year (e.g. past poems include Nóra Blascsó's ['Guernica Children'](#) for Manchester Literature Festival and ['Let Wildflowers Bloom'](#): a collaborative poem written with Catalan poet Esteve Plantada, displayed at HOME Arches. The poets will also translate each other's writing into their mother tongue. Subject to funding, the post holder will also work on a collaborative project with Kahramanmaraş City of Literature in summer 2027.

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 Jeremy Pak Nelson). 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:

- 1x poetry commission in English and your mother tongue exploring the theme of migration for Festival of Libraries 2027, accompanied by a short supporting personal testimony/reflection piece.
- 1x poetry commission in English and your mother tongue, theme tbc. These could be (but not limited to) writing based on specific themes or significant days e.g.
 - World Poetry Day (March 2027).
 - Manchester Literature Festival (September 2027).
 - International Mother Language Day (Feb 2028).
- 2x translations of Jeremy Pak Nelson's work into your own mother tongue.
- 1x community engagement project: the nature of which will be agreed after appointment.
- Travel to Kahramanmaraş City of Literature in summer 2027, subject to funding.

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, such as Jeremy Pak Nelson's ['Distant Voices' exhibition and performance](#). Examples of other kinds of work 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 2027/2028 or Festival of Libraries 2027 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. We will be prioritising applications from those who work in languages other than those already represented in previous roles.
- Is comfortable travelling internationally with a Manchester City of Literature representative.
- 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 2 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 29th November 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 will be shared before the Christmas break, with interviews planned to take place in the new year.

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.

AI Policy:

Manchester City of Literature does not support the use of generative tools to create work in any public-facing outputs. Manchester City of Literature will not accept imagery, video or text that has been created by generative AI for our website, social media platforms or for any open calls or commissions. Anything written for the Manchester Multilingual City Poet role that has used generative AI for research must state this explicitly alongside their submitted work.