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# **Our Voices: a development programme for emerging prose writers**

**GUIDANCE FOR APPLICANTS**

Round 3: December 2021

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## Do you need this information in another format?

Creative Scotland is committed to offering clear and accessible application processes and programmes that are open to everyone. On request this information is available in alternative formats including translations.

We offer access support to disabled applicants, tailored to individual requests. Support includes Sign Language Interpreters for meetings and scribing support for dyslexic applicants. Our Equalities Team can offer additional one-to one support to applicants with access requirements.

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## Help, further advice or feedback

If you require support, further information or have any general enquiries about the application process please contact our Enquiries Service. Our Enquiries Service will be able to advise you or will put you in contact with one of our officers.

Email: [enquiries@creativescotland.com](mailto:enquiries@creativescotland.com)

Web: You can send us a message [via the Creative Scotland website](#)

Twitter: Get in touch [@creativescots](#)

Facebook: We are at [www.facebook.com/CreativeScotland](https://www.facebook.com/CreativeScotland)

If you are a D/deaf BSL user, you can access our services with the Contact Scotland-BSL programme. Go to: [contactscotland-bsl.org/deaf-bsl-users](https://contactscotland-bsl.org/deaf-bsl-users) for more information.

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## About the Programme

Our Voices is a manuscript feedback scheme run by Creative Scotland and the **Association of Scottish Literary Agents** (ASLA).

Applications for Round 3 will open at **2pm** on **Wednesday 15 December 2021** and will close at **12 noon** on **Monday 31 January 2022**.

If selected, you'll receive written feedback on the first 20,000 words of your book-in progress from a member of the Association of Scottish Literary Agents.

You will also have the chance to discuss the feedback and your ambitions as a writer in a 30 minute one-to-one with them. This will be offered by telephone or Zoom (with access support available).

We expect to support around 30 writers in this round.

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## The Purpose of the Programme

Feedback on your book-in-progress at the right time can help you understand the strengths of your writing, how to structure your first book and the steps you can take to edit and improve it for future publication.

Our Voices aims to support writers from underrepresented communities to develop their first book-length fiction or creative non-fiction aimed at a traditional publishing market, and to consider their next steps in building a career as a writer.

This programme does not include an offer of representation from any of the literary agents involved, but we hope it will help clarify the process of how to find the right literary agent and how to connect your writing with a publisher in the future.

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## Delivery partners

The Association of Scottish Literary Agents (ASLA) is the representative body of literary agents based in Scotland. Members of ASLA represent the rights and interests of writers and illustrators from all over the world.

Literary Agents are a vital bridge between writers, illustrators and publishers. They present submissions on their clients' behalf to publishers and to other media including film and TV, broadcast media and electronic platforms, and offer support and guidance to their clients relating to all their creative work.

Literary Agents work on a commission basis – so they take on only those writers and illustrators for whom they are confident of securing a publisher's support.

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# Timeline

## Timeline

Applications open: **2pm on Wednesday 15 December 2021**

Applications close: **12 noon on Monday 31 January 2022**

Successful applicants notified: **by 2 March 2022**

Successful applicants to submit their writing extract: **by 15 March 2022**

Unsuccessful applicants notified: **by end of March 2022**

Written feedback from literary agents: **by end of April 2022**

One-to-ones with literary agents: **by end of May 2022**

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# Selection process

After the closing date, all eligible applications will be read and discussed by a panel of literary agents, chaired by a member of the Creative Scotland Literature Team.

The panel will select the applications they are best placed to support.

Successful applicants will be contacted by 2 March and asked to submit their 20,000 words plus synopsis/outline before 15 March: if you are unable to meet this deadline, no longer wish to participate in the programme or no longer meet the eligibility criteria, your place will be given to another applicant.

Unsuccessful applicants will be contacted by the end of March. We aim to provide all eligible applications with brief individual feedback from the decision-making panel.

If selected for the programme, you will receive your written feedback from a literary agent by the end of April, and will be invited to book your one-to-one feedback session from a selection of dates and times before the end of May.

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## Who can apply?

To be eligible to apply you must be:

- aged 18 or over
- based in Scotland
- someone who self-identifies as being from an underrepresented/marginalised community
- writing a novel or creative non-fiction book aimed at the traditional publishing market in the UK

We particularly welcome applications from unpublished writers who identify as disabled, LGBTQ+, care-experienced, BAME (Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic), and/or from a low-income household.

This opportunity is open to writers based in Scotland who are not currently represented by a literary agent and who have not yet published or self-published a novel or narrative non-fiction book (e.g. biography or memoir) for the traditional publishing market in the UK. By traditional publishing, we mean professional publishing houses that publish a range of authors and titles each year and then distribute these works via recognised channels such as online retailers and through bookshops.

We are not able to accept pitches for collections of poetry or short fiction; picture books; graphic novels; books which have already been published in another language or in another territory; textbooks; educational materials; academic or reference books.

Creative Scotland has a remit to support writers working in all the languages of Scotland, including English, Scots and Gaelic. As this strategic project engages specifically with a commercial publishing context, and in the UK, this does not support books written primarily in languages other than English or Scots, we work with partners and through other funding routes to support the development of these writers elsewhere.

Writers who have previously published full-length works in Gaelic or other languages but who are now working on a book that meets the criteria for Our Voices are eligible to apply. If you are uncertain if you or your book-in-progress meet the eligibility criteria for this programme, you are strongly encouraged to get in touch to discuss your situation before making your application: [ourvoices@creativescotland.com](mailto:ourvoices@creativescotland.com).

An equivalent scheme to Our Voices, Ar Guthan, tailored for Gaelic writers will run from early 2022, in partnership with [Comhairle nan Leabhraichean](#). This programme will invite applications from emergent writers living in Scotland and working in Gaelic, who have not yet published a full-length creative work or collection for a Gaelic speaking market. Successful applicants will receive mentorship and professional industry feedback on a work-in-progress, developing it further for publication.

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## How do I apply?

To apply for this feedback programme, please read these guidelines and complete the online application form by **12 noon** on **Monday 31 January 2022**.

If not already registered, you must register on the Creative Scotland online application portal at [my.creativescotland.com/signup](https://my.creativescotland.com/signup). Once registered, you can log in and select the Our Voices application form. If already registered, go to [my.creativescotland.com/login](https://my.creativescotland.com/login).

You may only submit one application for Round 3. Applications may not be added to or amended once submitted.

Successful applicants will be notified by early March and asked to send the following within 10 days:

- **For a novel:** a synopsis (no more than 1 page) and up to 20,000 words of your book-in-progress.
- **For creative non-fiction:** a full outline (no more than 1 page) and up to 20,000 words of your book-in-progress.

If you have any queries about the programme, please email [ourvoices@creativescotland.com](mailto:ourvoices@creativescotland.com).

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# What will I be asked in the application form?

In the application form, you will be asked to fill in:

- The title of your book-in-progress
- Whether your main audience for this book is Adults, Young Adults, or Children
- How many words you have written so far
- How many words you expect the final draft will be

You'll need to copy and paste the first 250 words of your book, to give us a glimpse of your writing style.

We will also ask you to respond to three questions. There are prompts next to each question to help you understand why we're asking it.

• **Imagine your book sitting on the shelf in a bookshop: what might the blurb (on the back of your book) say?** (approx. 200 words)

We want to get a sense of what your book is about: where is it set? Who are the main characters? What themes drive it along?

• **What is your writing background, so far?** (approx. 200 words)

We want to understand what relevant experience you've had – if any – in developing your creative writing up to this point.

For example, submitting work to writing competitions, local media or literary magazines; being part of a writing feedback group; attending creative writing courses or workshops; working with a mentor to develop your writing; swapping work with another writer; pitching this book or others to a literary agent or publisher; showing your writing to a family member; reading articles about writing craft online; have never shared your writing with anyone before; being part of an online writing community; reading avidly around your interests and preferred writing genres.

• **Why do you want to participate in Our Voices?** (approx. 200 words)

We want to understand what you hope to get out of this programme and how you think it might benefit you as a writer.

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## Data Protection

Creative Scotland (CS) requires some personal information about you / your organisation to consider your application for funding. Without this information CS will be unable to process your application.

If you would like to see a breakdown of the personal information CS requires, why it is required, what CS does with that information and how long CS keeps it, please refer to CS's Funding Privacy Notice available online [www.creativescotland.com/privacy-policy](http://www.creativescotland.com/privacy-policy).

CS may share your personal information with third parties to comply with the law and/or for the legitimate interests of CS and/or the third parties concerned.

Where the personal information you have provided to CS belongs to other individual(s), please refer to CS's Funding Privacy Notice. You must share this Funding Privacy Statement and CS' Funding Privacy Notice with the respective individual(s).

You have some rights in relation to the personal information that CS holds about you under data protection law. Information on how to exercise these rights is contained in CS's Funding Privacy Notice or you can contact CS's **Data Protection Officer**.

If you have any concerns with how CS has processed your personal information, you should contact CS' Data Protection Officer in the first instance, as CS would welcome the opportunity to work with you to resolve any complaint. If you are still dissatisfied, you can submit a complaint to the **Information Commissioners Office**.

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## Making a complaint

As an organisation, we will always listen to and respond to any concerns that you may have. If you would like to make a complaint about either the service you have received from Creative Scotland or the way we have handled your application, we have a process that you can use.

Please note that Creative Scotland does not have an appeals process and for this reason, we are unable to accept complaints that relate solely to the decision we have made rather than how we have made it.

For more information, please visit the Complaints section of our website: [www.creativescotland.com/resources/our-publications/policies/complaints-handling](http://www.creativescotland.com/resources/our-publications/policies/complaints-handling)

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## Freedom of Information (FOI)

Creative Scotland is committed to being as open as possible. We believe that the public has a right to know how we spend public funds and how we make our funding decisions. You can see details of our FOI handling on our website here: [www.creativescotland.com/foi](http://www.creativescotland.com/foi)

We are listed as a public authority under the Freedom of Information Act 2000. By law, we may have to provide your application documents and information about our assessment to any member of the public who asks to see them under the Freedom of Information Act 2000. We may not release those parts of the documents which are covered by one or more of the exemptions under the Act. Please see the Freedom of Information website at [www.itspublicknowledge.info](http://www.itspublicknowledge.info) for information about freedom of information generally and the exemptions. We will not release any information about applications during the assessment period, as this may interfere with the decision-making process.

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December 2021

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